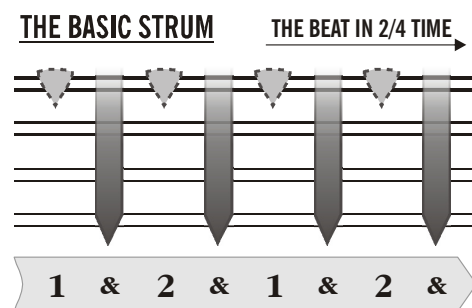
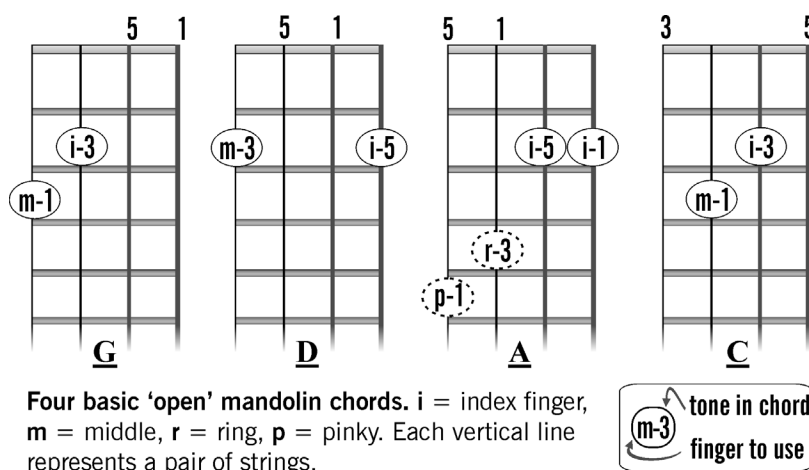


LEFT HANDED MANDOLIN CHORDS

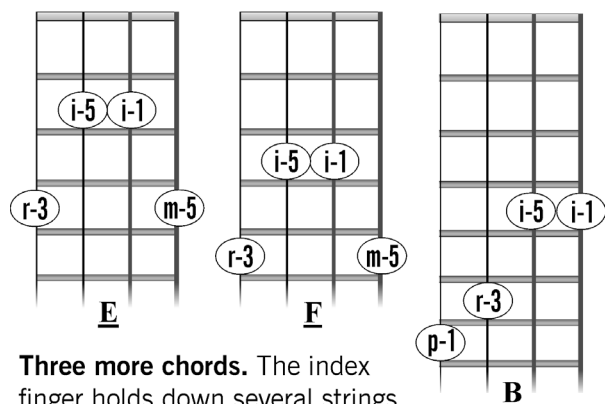
First: As you already saw in Meet Your Instrument (page 90), and Get Started (page 93), the mandolin is like a fiddle with frets so expect to gain insight into the mandolin by studying the information on the fiddle (page 121) and visa versa.

Chords: Most songs have just three chords: **1**, **4**, and **5**. With the four chords here you can play all the “**1-4-5**” songs in two keys, G and D. Being able to play in at least two keys allows you to sing most songs ‘rather comfortably’ regardless of their tonal range or your vocal range.



Strumming and ‘Chopping’: Study the Basic Strum chart to the left (and compare it to the strum chart for the guitar). First, pick the downbeat, **1**, then strum the Upbeat, and then pick the next downbeat, **2**, and so on... when playing alone and singing. When you’re jamming, the ‘**chop**’ is preferable. For ‘chopping’ you strum the Upbeat only, and dampen the strings as soon as you sound them, just like the banjo and Dobro ‘**chop**’. Read pages 110 & 116! The other players supply the down beats. For 3/4 time (waltz time) you strum two Upbeats for each downbeat, as shown for the guitar.

More Chords and the “Capo Principle”: The chords on the chart below, plus the ones above, are all you need to know to play most songs in several keys (i.e., G, D, C, A, and E). Take a moment and compare these chord charts. Do you see how E is simply the D chord ‘up the neck’ two frets? Now, just slide E up one more fret to play the F chord.



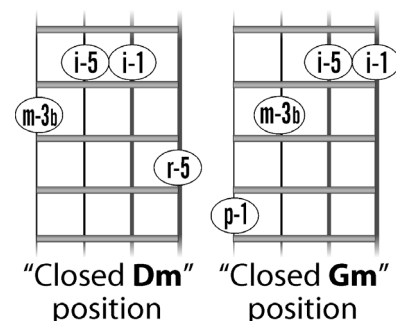
Three more chords. The index finger holds down several strings.

Likewise, can you see how A (above) is just G up two frets? Similarly, the B chord (left) is two frets up from A. The capo does the same thing as your index finger is doing here, allowing you to change the pitch to match your vocal range, yet maintain the same finger positions. So use a banjo capo for awhile if you like. See page 98, The Capo.

Minor Chords: Minor chords are made by flattening the 3rd tone of the chord. Chords E and B are useful examples. Carefully compare these chords with the fingering for ‘Dm’ and ‘Gm’ positions (below) respectively. To produce the minor, you move the finger which makes the 3rd tone down the neck one fret. Note: If sliding the ring finger down is awkward, use the middle finger instead. These two positions are “closed minor chords” with which

you can play any minor chord. Referring to Fig.2 on the next page, place your index finger on the root tone (i.e., 1 tone) of the chord you want to play. **Note:** All the chords on this page are presented according to **View #1 of The Nitty Gritty on Chords and Double Stops**, page 122. Studying this before too long may clear up some of the confusion, if any, about chords.

Closed Chords: “Closed G” and “Closed D” chords shown on the next page and the ‘Dm’ and ‘Gm’ chord (right) allow you to play every chord in every key using only a few finger positions. Wonderful!



The **ring finger** in “Closed G” and “Closed D” presses the “root” (1st) tone of the chord. *It* determines the actual chord being played (i.e., **View #1**, page 122). For ‘Dm’ and ‘Gm’, the position of the **index finger** determines the actual chord played. Alas, using the pinky in the complete closed chord patterns below can take a few years to master. In the meantime, just use the other three fingers and only lightly rest the pinky on ‘its’ string to dampen its sound. Also, as an intermediate step, try out the alternate “Barred” positions on page 133.

Moving around the finger board to play the chords you want using only these “Closed” positions is simple once you sense how it works in principle. The **1,4,5** chords follow a consistent pattern shown by the arrows in Fig.1. This is the same process the upright bass follows (see Fig.2, page 106), except that here you move right from the **1** chord to play the **4** chord... and so on. Studying the bass, page 106-108 may help you understand the principle better.

Use the finger board layout in Fig. 2 to find the Root ‘note’ of the key (and the chords) you want to play.

Your ring finger (**r**) determines the Root tone (and ‘note’) of the chord you are currently playing.

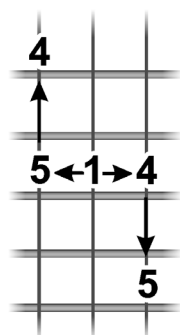


Fig. 1

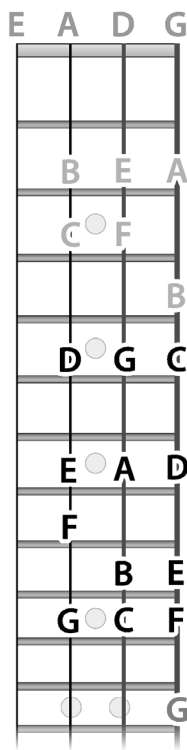
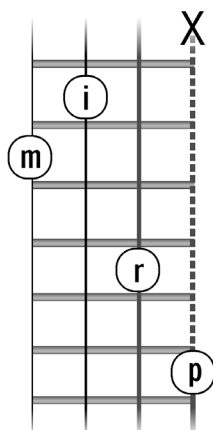


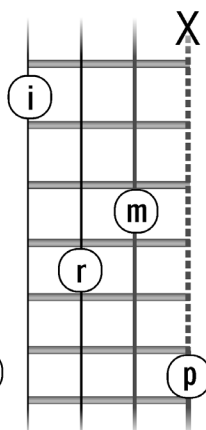
Fig. 2

Don't use your pinky, or play 'its' string (dashed X string), until you develop enough finger strength and coordination. Whatever you do though, strum only the strings you are currently pressing with your fingers!



“Closed G” position

Fig. 3



“Closed D” position

Fig. 4

Initially, play a few two chord songs like ‘Tom Dooley’ using just the “Closed G” (Fig.3). For example, to play a **1** chord in the key of B, (i.e., the B chord), place your ring finger on the ninth fret of the D string. To play the **5** chord simply shift your whole hand ‘left’ as Fig.1 shows. **Important!:** ‘left’ is toward the thinner strings; ‘right’ is toward the thicker strings; ‘down’ is toward the nut, ‘up’ is toward the bridge.

The “Closed G” pattern, with the ring finger on the G string works well for keys C-F. For keys G-C, use the D string. You can play most anything using the “Closed G”. The “Closed D” allows you to use the A string to play the **1** chord.

Did you notice, in Fig.1, the two places you can play the **4** and **5** chord? Actually, as Fig.1 suggests, you can play any chord you wish by sliding up, down, left or right using only two “Closed” chord positions (Fig. 3 and 4) and three

or four fingers. Now, the quickest way to master this is to play around, explore and experiment! Note: Generally, “Closed G” uses the G and D strings; “Closed D” uses the D and A strings. When you use your pinky finger, the “Closed G” uses only the D string, and the “Closed D” uses only the A string. Of course you can play these any way you like, as long as you just strum the stings you are pressing. Now to summarize...

If you’re using the “G” position on the D string for the 1 chord, then...

For the **4** chord: slide “D” ‘down’ two frets, or shift the “G” position ‘right’ (to thicker strings).

For the **5** chord: use “D” (ring finger stays on the same fret), or shift “G” ‘right’ and ‘up’ two frets.

For the **6m** chord: use ‘Dm’ (index finger stays on the same fret, but shifts to the right).

If you’re using the “G” position on the G string for the 1 chord, then...

For the **4** chord: shift “G” ‘left’ (over to the thinner strings) and ‘down’ two frets.

For the **5** chord: shift “G” ‘left’ (ring finger stays on the same fret).

For the **6m** chord: use ‘Gm’ (index finger stays on the same fret).

If you’re using the “D” position on the A string for the 1 chord, then...

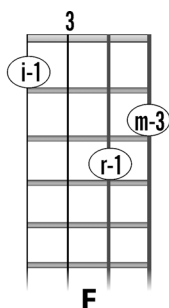
For the **4** chord: use “G” (ring finger stays on same fret).

For the **5** chord: slide “G” ‘up’ (toward the bridge) two frets.

For the **6m** chord: use ‘Gm’. Index finger slides ‘up’ two frets.

If your using the “D” position of the D string for the 1 chord, then... well... fiddle around and see!

APPENDIX 3: Mandolin Chords Supplement



Stage One: Initially, you'll use what we call 'open' chords as they are the easiest to make. They're called 'open' chords because some of the strings are not pressed down (i.e., they're left "open") These include the first four chords (G, D, A, C) shown at the top of page 118. These, along with an "open" F chord (left) give you the 1,4,5 chords for three keys: G, D, C.

Stage Two: After you are comfortable playing the 'open' chords, begin trying out "closed" chords, which give the mandolin's upbeat rhythm added punch. Follow the procedure given on page 119, using only three fingers initially and letting your pinky get acclimated to its role gradually. Or, alternatively, you can use the "Barred" procedure given below.

Barred Procedure: Using "Barred G" and "Barred D" positions (right), you can play any chords by sliding up and down the neck. This raises and lowers the pitch which changes the chord.

Referring to the keys layout chart, first place the **index finger** on the **Root** tone of the **1** chord (which equals the key). For keys **A–D**, you'll find this on the **G** string, and you'll use the "Barred G" position (above) to play the **1** chord. For keys **E–G**, you'll find it on the **D** string, and you'll use the "Barred D" position (above) to play the **1** chord. For example, in the key of **F**, the **1** chord is **F**. Thus you would place your index finger on the third fret of the **D** string as the keys layout chart shows, *and* you would use the "Barred D" position. Now here's how to do the other chords:

For keys A–D, do this: (Fig. A shows these moves.)

For the **1** chord: use "Barred G".

For the **4** chord: slide "Barred D" toward the nut two frets.

For the **5** chord: use "Barred D".

For keys E–G, do this: (Fig. B shows these moves.)

For the **1** chord: use "Barred D".

For the **4** chord: use "Barred G".

For the **5** chord: slide "Barred G" toward the bridge two frets.

Playing a Minor Chord: You can play any minor chord using one of the "Barred minor" positions (right). As above, the **R** with the arrow points out the string with the **Root** tone of the minor chord you want to play. For example, to play **B** minor, you refer to the keys layout chart and see that the **B** note is on the **G** string fourth fret. With this **Root** tone on the **G** string you find that you need to use the "Barred Gm" position with your **index finger** on the fourth fret.

And when you are ready: Follow the "Closed G" and "Closed D" process covered on page 119. You needn't use your pinky finger initially; just remember though to only strum the strings you are pressing down.

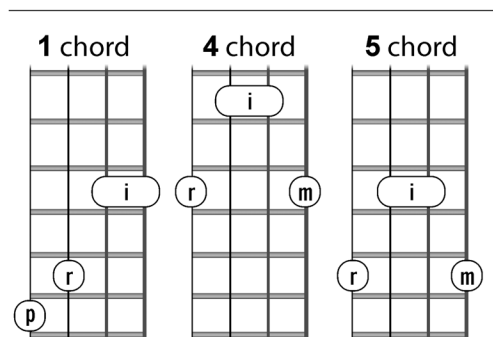
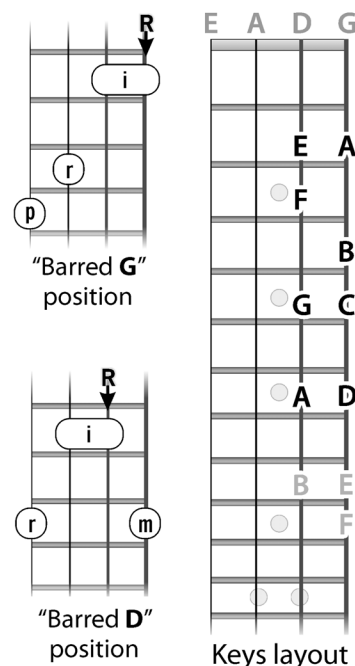


Fig. A

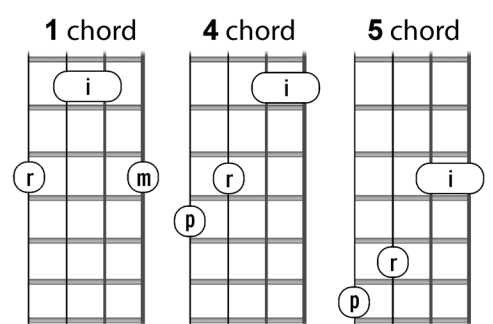


Fig. B

