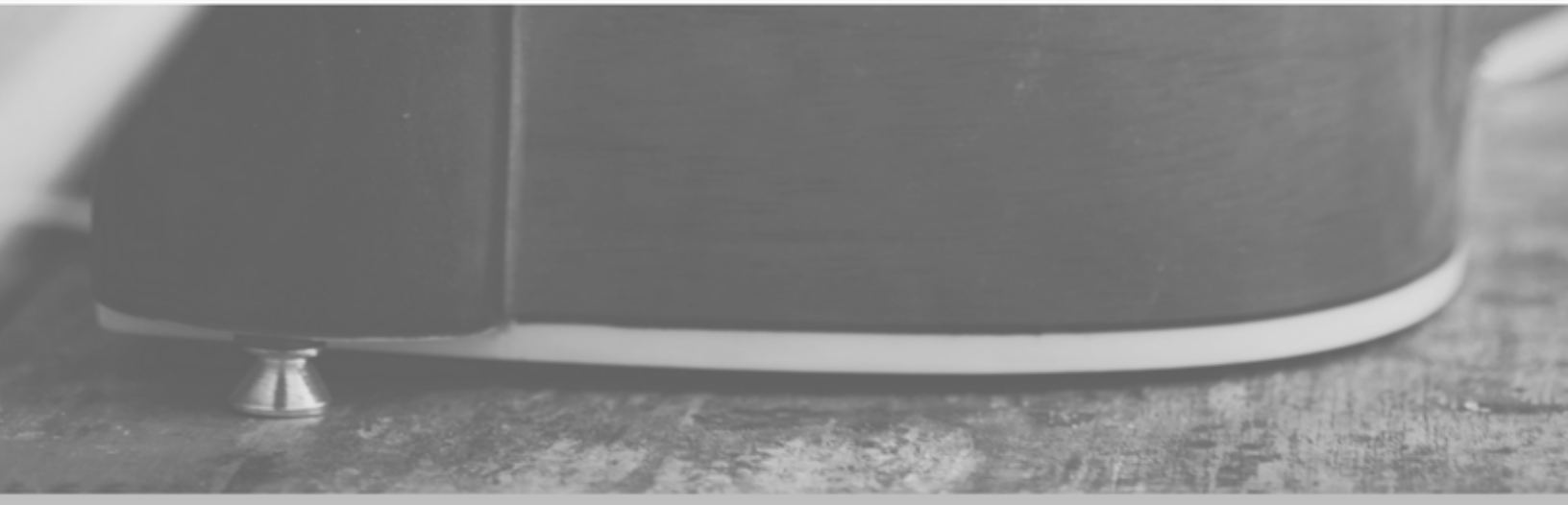


HOW TO USE A CAPO

Tips and tricks for beginners and experts



Chris Vacher

www.chrisvacher.com @chrisfromcanada

As a guitar player on a worship team, one of the must-have tools in your kit is a capo. Some guitar players are purists about using (or not using) capos but for 99% of you, knowing how to use a capo properly and what it does will serve you very well. Whether you play on your worship team, lead worship, perform as a singer/songwriter or play in a band, guitar players need to know how to use a capo.

Three quick chapters on how to use a capo -

1. Basics of using a capo
2. How to use a cut capo
3. Advanced capo ideas

So let's get right to it – how to use a capo with some of the basics of what it does.

CHAPTER 1 - BASICS OF USING A CAPO

What does a capo do?

In short, putting a capo on the neck of the guitar raises the pitch of the strings by one semitone for each fret. When a capo is placed on the first fret, each string played is raised by one semitone. When the capo is on the second fret, each string played is raised by two semitones. And so on...

This comes in handy for guitar players when you have songs written in keys which aren't the easiest to play with guitar chord shapes like F, Bb or Eb. For example, a guitar player can easily play chords in the key of A with the capo on the first fret so that each of those chords are raised by one semitone, giving us the chords we need in the key of Bb.

Let's stay with this idea for a second and look at how the chords we play in the *key of A* are affected when we have the capo on the first fret:

Chord Played On Guitar:	***Capo on 1st Fret, Chord Sounds Like:***
A	*Bb*
Bm	*Cm*
A/C#	*Bb/D*
D	*Eb*
E	*F*
F#m	*Gm*
E/G#	*F/A*

So you can see how a capo can really quickly get you out of a jam if you're a guitar player and given a chart in a key that has some chords which aren't too easy to play on guitar.

If you're able to get a capo chart that has the capo'd chords printed or even if you could stash a cheat sheet in your guitar case of chord/capo combinations, you will save yourself lots of time and frustration.

KEY	CAPO 1	CAPO 2	CAPO 3	CAPO 4	CAPO 5
A	A#/Bb	B	C	C#	D
A#/Bb	B	C	C#	D	D#/Eb
B	C	C#	D	D#/Eb	E
C	C#	D	D#/Eb	E	F
C#/Db	D	D#/Eb	E	F	F#/Gb
D	D#/Eb	E	F	F#/Gb	G
D#/Eb	E	F	F#/Gb	G	G#/Ab
E	F	F#/Gb	G	G#/Ab	A
F	F#/Gb	G	G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb
F#/Gb	G	G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb	B
G	G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb	B	C
G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb	B	C	C#

I've put together a really quick capo cheat sheet which you can find at the end of this book. Go ahead and print the last page to keep with you in your guitar case.

What kind of capo should I get?

There are several kinds of capos out there which attach to the neck of the guitar in different ways – springs, screws, straps, etc. I'm going to suggest that there are two capos you should be looking at depending on your price range.



The first is the Kyser 6 String Capo for about $15. I have a few of these for my guitars and really like them – the tension is just right for what I need, the grip is pretty solid and I can move the capo really quickly between songs if I need to.



The second is the G7th Performance Capo which you should consider if your guitar has funky action or intonation. The beauty of this capo is that the strength of the clamp in the capo is adjustable. Want more pressure when you've got capo on the 1st fret than on the 7th fret? With this capo, no problem.

What else can I do with a capo?

Playing with a capo also becomes really useful if you've got more than one guitar player. Rather than both of you playing the same chords and the same parts, you can use your capo to play the same song with different chords, adding internal harmonies and chord voicings which weren't there before.

Another big bonus of using a capo is in songwriting. Using a capo allows you to try new song ideas in different keys very quickly so that you can find the sweet spot for that melody without having to spend a ton of time figuring out new chord changes and patterns in different keys. Playing with a capo is also a really great way to get deeper into music theory, if that interests you.

Most people are scared of understanding music theory but learning how some of these chords relate to one another with the capo as a tool can really improve your playing and your musicianship. Imagine being given a chord chart and knowing you can play that song in ANY key because you understand the relationship of the chords to one another and how your capo will help you play those chords. Bonus!

Again, make use of the capo cheat sheet at the end of this book which I've made for you and please pass it around!

So that's some pretty good basic info on how to use a capo. We'll continue this ebook by looking at the cut capo – what it is, how to use it and some fun examples of what it can do.

The final chapter will look at some advanced capo techniques and some ideas of using capos creatively and a little out of the box.

CHAPTER 2 - HOW TO USE A CUT CAPO

If you've been playing guitar for a while and have made a capo part of your regular arsenal, you may want to up your game a bit by becoming familiar with a cut capo and how it works. The cut capo really is one of those tools that can be a bit of a secret weapon in your setup and once you get a grasp on how they work it will become a tool that you use almost every time you play guitar and lead worship.

The most significant difference between a capo and a cut capo is the number of strings which are pressed down to the fretboard when the capo is applied. With a regular capo, all six strings are pressed down as though you're doing a barre chord. This results in the pitch of every string being raised one semitone for each fret where the capo is applied.



With a cut capo, the arm of the capo is cut – this might be a modified regular capo where the rubber is cut away or it might be like this cut capo that I use from Kyser which actually has a shortened upper arm.

See how the arm of the capo is only pressing down three of the six strings and leaving the low E, B and high E strings open?

What's the result? Instead of having all six strings raised by two semitones with this cut capo placed on the second fret, only the A, D and G strings are raised by two semitones leaving the low E, B and high E strings at their original pitch.

Original tuning:
E A D G B E
Cut capo tuning:
E B E A B E

If you are a guitar tuning freak and like to play with alternate tunings, you might recognize this as a variation of the very popular DADGAD tuning modified up a full tone. DADGAD is really useful in folk, singer/songwriter and Celtic music but can also be used in pop, rock or worship music in a way that adds lots of character to the chord voicings.

So you see that the cut capo just by default lends itself really well to songs which are played in E and can give you some alternate chord voicings to take advantage of this new tuning on your guitar.
A few cut capo chords in the key of E, relative to the capo on the 2nd fret:

E – 000200 or 004200
A – 320000 or 020000
B – x02200
C#m – x20200

Once you get familiar with these you will see that there are all kinds of inversions and beautiful harmonies that happen within these simple chord shapes. Even having that low E, B, E on the first three strings gives your guitar a really nice drone while you are able to play different melodic ideas on the higher strings.

But the cut capo can be used for songs in other keys, obviously. One of my favorite uses of the cut capo is to use it in songs in the key of A. I place the cut capo on the second fret just like before which allows me to use very finger-friendly chords like G, C9, Dsus and Em7 as I play. The beauty of the cut capo is that when I play the Dsus chord (actually sounding like an Esus chord thanks to the capo) I now have the option to let that low E string ring open, giving the chord the sound of a drop D tuning.

Cut capo chords in the key of A with the cut capo on the second fret:
A – 320033 or 3×0000
D – x32033
E – 000232
Esus – 000233
F#m – x22033

This may seem like a simple change and an idea that won't bring much impact to your playing but once you hear the way songs take on a new life when you play, you will see how useful a cut capo can be as a guitar player.

In the next chapter we'll look at some *next level ideas* for the capo and actually how you can use a regular capo and cut capo together at the same time to open up a whole new world of possibilities with your guitar.

CHAPTER 3 - ADVANCED CAPO IDEAS

So to wrap up this little book I wanted to write a chapter that talks about a few little advanced capo ideas that might help you take things to the next level. It's always fun to explore the tools we have at our disposal and how they can help us do things a little differently and maybe inspire some creativity.

Three quick advanced capo ideas.

First...

Try recreating the drop D sound or even the cut capo sound by taking a regular capo and flipping it to the other side of the guitar neck at the second fret. Rather than placing it across all six strings, let the low E string ring open. So you now have the low E string open and the capo across the A, D, G, B and E strings at the second fret.

Play a D chord shape moved up two frets from the capo but instead of muting the low E and A strings like you might do with a normal D chord, let them play. You get these notes: E B E B E G#. This is a beautiful open/drop E chord that puts the third of the chord on the highest string and from there you can do lots of variations. On the high E string play the third fret to get a suspended chord or leave that string open to create an E9 chord.

Experiment with different chord shapes with this capo configuration but you've basically created a drop D sound raised up two frets just by flipping your capo around to the other side.

Second...

One of my favorite things to do with a cut capo is use it in different keys. Pair a cut capo with a regular capo to create some beautiful sounds on your guitar. Instead of only using your cut capo for songs in E or A, try placing your regular capo on the third fret and your cut capo two frets higher on the neck than the regular capo. Play your cut capo chords and you're now playing in an open G tuning.
This can be amazing when you've got two guitar players on your team and you're lookintg for different voicings and tuning options. Again, experiment with this setup and find the sweet spot for your guitar!

Third...

This one came in the comments when I originally posted this mini ebook as a series of posts on my blog and it was something I had never heard of before but you should check this out. The SpiderCapo is a total rethink of the capo and seems like an incredible tool in your kit. It would definitely take some time to figure out all of the options but if you are a feature guitar player and looking for something very unique, this might be exactly the thing you need.

Check it out – www.spidercapo.com

IN CLOSING

If you haven't yet, make sure you grab the capo cheat sheet I've put together on the last page of this book.

If you've found this helpful, please let me know. I love interacting with worship leaders all over the world and the best way to reach me is by email at chrisvacher@gmail.com

I've been blogging since 2007 at www.chrisvacher.com and you can find more resources like this mini ebook on my blog. I am really focused on developing and sharing resources for worship leaders and would love to have you come by for a visit.

Of course I'm very active on twitter @chrisfromcanada and my facebook page www.facebook.com/chrisfromcanada and would be happy to connect with you there.

KEY	CAPO 1	CAPO 2	CAPO 3	CAPO 4	CAPO 5
A	A#/Bb	B	C	C#	D
A#/Bb	B	C	C#	D	D#/Eb
B	C	C#	D	D#/Eb	E
C	C#	D	D#/Eb	E	F
C#/Db	D	D#/Eb	E	F	F#/Gb
D	D#/Eb	E	F	F#/Gb	G
D#/Eb	E	F	F#/Gb	G	G#/Ab
E	F	F#/Gb	G	G#/Ab	A
F	F#/Gb	G	G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb
F#/Gb	G	G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb	B
G	G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb	B	C
G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb	B	C	C#

KEY refers to the note or chord you are playing relative to an open neck, ie. the chord without a capo.

CAPO refers to what the note or chord will sound like if you play it with the capo on the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th or 5th fret.

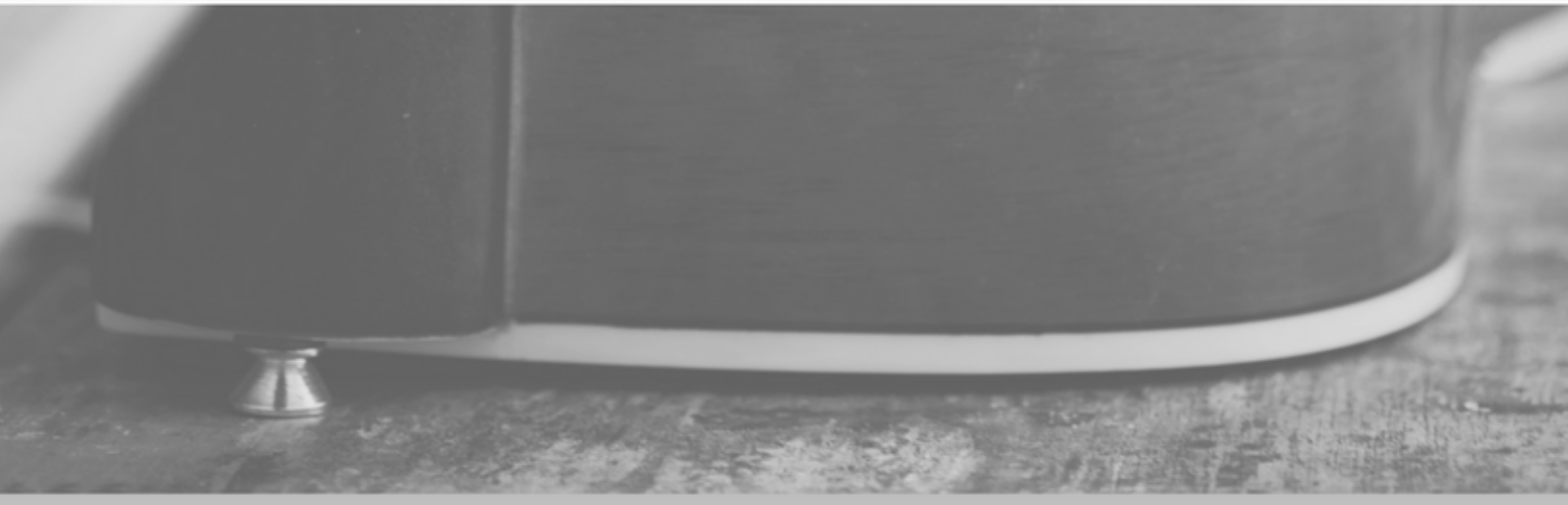
An Amajor chord played with the capo on the 2nd fret will sound like a Bmajor chord. A Cminor chord played with the capo on the 4th fret will sound like an Eminor chord.



HOW TO USE A CAPO

©2016 Chris Vacher. All rights reserved.

www.chrisvacher.com



Chris Vacher

www.chrisvacher.com @chrisfromcanada