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.