

Practice Tips For Learning Chords

Learning a new chord requires patience. The hand pressing the strings to create the chord (left hand for right handed players) needs time and many repetitions to establish muscle memory.

The new chord may not sound pleasant at first (if it did you wouldn't need to practice!). Ignore the unpleasantness and practice anyway, repeating each step until the movement feels natural before moving to the next.

Look and touch (don't play)

- Watch your chord hand fingers correctly touch the chord shape
 - Pressing down is optional (especially when your fingers are sore)
- Release the chord by keeping the thumb in place on the back of the neck and opening the chord hand until the fingers are straight

Look away and touch (don't play)

- Watch your chord hand fingers touch the chord
- Look away from your chord hand or close your eyes
- Release the chord
- With eyes closed, touch the chord again
- Open your eyes to check the chord

Look and play

- Watch your chord hand fingers touch the chord
- Strum or pick the chord, listening for clear tones on all strings (this is less important when first learning a new chord—don't worry, it will improve)
- Release the chord

Look away and play

- Look away from your chord hand or close your eyes
- Touch the chord shape
- Strum or pick the chord (fix errors with eyes closed when possible)
- Release the chord

This process can also be used to make the movement between two chords natural and smooth. This method enhances the ability to play 'blind,' allowing use of the eyes for reading music and lyrics, and for interacting with other musicians and the audience.