10 Easy Songs On Guitar

Looking for easy songs on guitar? Here’s a list of tracks that are perfect for absolute beginners. Let’s dive in!

In this Ultimate Guide you will learn:

- 10 easy guitar songs for beginners (we’ll walk you through each one)
- The 5 essential chords a beginner guitarist must know (they’re super-easy)
- 73 easy songs on guitar that you can play with those 5 chords
- 2 iconic guitar riffs that sound fantastic (and are EASY to play)
- 4 useful strumming patterns

If you’re looking for easy songs on guitar you’re in the right place. Let’s do it.
Finding easy songs on guitar can be tough for beginners

Jack and I often see guitar beginners get frustrated because they feel they’re not making progress as quickly as they’d like.

Often, there’s a specific song they want to learn but they can’t manage it.

This leads to frustration and a feeling that they are ‘not talented enough’. Are you in this camp?

99 times out of a 100 this frustration is due to people taking on songs that are simply unsuitable for beginners.

If you were teaching a child to swim, would you drop them into the deep end of the pool? Of course not. You’d put them in the shallow end, with inflatable arm bands or water wings. You’d make it EASY for them to stay on top of the water and make progress.

And that’s what we want to do for you in this lesson. Our motto as a company is: ‘Make Things Easy & Fun’.

Finding easy songs on guitar is difficult for total beginners because they can’t tell, at-a-glance, what will be easy or difficult. This is why so many guitar beginners bite off more than they can chew. And it’s why we created this epic list; a free resource for guitar learners all over the world.
Here are 10 easy songs on guitar that are perfect for guitar beginners

For each track we’ll give you a little context, teach you easy versions of the chords, a show you a few videos.

If you don’t like these songs you will still find super-useful tips in the walkthroughs. Remember, these are tips that you can apply with any song in the future.

1. ‘Shake It Off’ by Taylor Swift.

The first song we’re going to learn is ‘Shake It Off’ by Taylor Swift. This is an easy song on guitar because it only uses 3 simple chords.

This was a huge hit when it was first released. (This video has been played on YouTube more than a billion times!)

Why is this an easy song on guitar?

- It only has 3 chords in it.
- The chords can be played with just 2 fingers.
- The chords are the same all the way through.
- The strumming pattern is nice and simple.

What are the chords?

This is an easy song on guitar mainly because of the chords.
Important! The 3 chords you need to know for this song will be used in lots of other songs in this list too. (So we’re going to spend a bit of time on each chord to make sure you learn the easiest possible way to play them.)

The 3 chords are Am, C and G.

FYI: The full names of these 3 chords are “A minor”, “C major” and “G major”. As guitarists, we often only specify when a chord is minor. (So if someone says “G” or “C” they are actually referring to G major and C major.)

The first chord in this song is an A minor chord. Am is usually played like this:

[If you don’t understand this image you should read our guide: How To Read Guitar Chordboxes In 60 Seconds]

The super-easy way to play Am

We’re looking for super easy songs on guitar, so we need to make this as simple as possible.

With that in mind, we’re going to play an easy version of Am which is called Am7 (pronounced “A Minor Seven”).

It looks like this:
Can you see that we only need two fingers? Nice and easy.

We need to use our first finger and our second finger. Fingers 1 and 2.

Our second finger goes on the 2nd fret on the D string, and our first finger goes on the first fret of the B string.

To play this chord we strum from the A string.

To learn other easy ways to play Am check out this beginner lesson in our easy chords section.

**TOP TIP:** Whenever you need to play Am you can use Am7 as an easy substitute.

**The Super-Easy Way To Play C**

The next chord we need to know is C. (Or to use its full name “C major”.)
The standard C chord looks like this:

This is one of the most common guitar chords of all. But it’s very hard for beginners to play because it requires 3 fingers, spread over 3 frets. We need an easier version of C.

My favourite version of C for beginners is Cmaj7 (pronounced “C major seven”). It looks like this:

Two fingers. Nice and simple!

Usually, we play this chord with fingers 1 and 2. But if we’re moving to it after an Am7 then it’s easier to use fingers 2 and 3 because finger 2 is already in the right place! Try this. It’s a very useful tip.
Doing this means you don’t have to take your hand off the fretboard and for beginners this is a big help.

**Feel free to customise your chord transitions. There are multiple ways to play every chord. You don’t have to use the ‘recommended’ fingers.**

Can you see that part of our quest to find easy songs on guitar is about **ADAPTING songs to MAKE them easy?** This is a key point that we’d like you to take from this lesson.

“**Wouldn’t it be better for me to learn the ‘proper’ chord versions? I don’t want to take the easy way out, I want to learn properly!”**

This is a response I’ve heard hundreds of times.

Don’t feel that by using easy chord versions you aren’t learning ‘properly’. As guitarists we use different fingerings for chords all the time and we often use chord substitutions on the fly depending on the demands and feel of the track.

**Chord transitions, voicings and fingerings are a fluid thing and we want you to develop dexterity and control in ALL fingers. So mix it up.**

Using easy chord versions (or as I like to call them ‘stepping stone’ chords) is a progress accelerator.
The Super-Easy Way To Play G

The last chord we need to know here is G. As with our Am and C chords, there are lots of different ways to play G.

We usually play G like this:

![G chord diagram](image1)

But the version of G we’re going to use to make this as easy as possible is G6. It looks like this:

![G6 chord diagram](image2)

Can you see this is the same shape as the Cmaj7, just lower down?

We usually play G6 using fingers 1 and 2, as shown here. But if you were playing Cmaj7 before it using fingers 2 and 3, then you can simply move those 2 fingers down.

- You can use fingers 1 and 2 to play G6.
- You can use fingers 2 and 3 to play G6.
It’s up to you.

A great way to get faster at moving between chords is to be like a pool player and think one shot ahead. Modify your chord fingerings if it makes it easier to reach the next chord.

It’s time to play! How to strum ‘Shake It Off’

Now we know the chords to this track we can look at learning the song and consider the strumming pattern.

How To Play ‘Shake It Off’ – Video

Here’s a video of Jack explaining a strumming pattern you could use for this song.

https://player.vimeo.com/video/162004100

Ok, our quest to find easy songs on guitar is underway. Let’s move on!

2. ‘Radioactive’ by Imagine Dragons

The next song we’re going to learn is ‘Radioactive’ by Imagine Dragons.

This is an easy song on guitar and perfect for beginners.

This song is by US alt-rock band Imagine Dragons. It has loads of electronic music in it as well as some really cool guitar parts.

Why is this an easy song on guitar?

- The chords are easy.
- It’s not too fast.
• It’s the same all the way through.
• The strumming patterns are interesting and great fun to play.
• We get use a capo for the first time! (Don’t worry if you don’t have one yet, you can still play the track.)

How To Use A Capo

A capo looks like this:

We clamp it onto the guitar neck to raise the key. We do this for two reasons:

1. To change the tonality of the guitar’s chord voicing, and/or...
2. To make the song easier to play.

If you’re struggling to find easy songs on the guitar, you can often MAKE songs easy by using a capo. We won’t cover this in detail here, but just be aware that using a capo can often make songs easier to play (because changing the guitar’s key enables you to use easier chord shapes).

A capo changes the sound of the chords you play. They’re great fun!
For this track we need our capo on the 2nd fret.

Using a capo raises the key of your guitar.

The Five Chords Every Beginner Guitarists Needs To Know

The first five chords a beginner guitarist should learn are: Am, C, G, D and Em.

These are the most commonly used chords. For this track we need to use the first 4: Am, C, G and D.

We already know the first 3 of these chords and we’ve learned super-easy versions of each one.

The only new chord here is D (or to use its full name ‘D Major’).

The Easiest Way To Play The D Chord

A standard D chord looks like this:

(If you don't understand the above image please read our article "How To Read Guitar Chordboxes In 60 Seconds". It will make everything clear!)

This is a tough chord for beginners.

- It needs 3 fingers.
- It’s at the opposite side of the guitar neck to most of the notes in common chords like C, G and Em.
We need an easy version!

**This is Dsus2**

Don’t worry too much about what “Dsus2” means, just think of it as another way of playing a good old D chord.

I prefer my students to play this chord with their 1st and 3rd fingers because that will make it easy for them to graduate up to the full D. **Take a moment to compare the two chordboxes above and see what I mean.**

So in general, it would be best to use fingers 1 and 3 for this chord.

However, if you’re a TOTAL beginner and just want to get started exploring the guitar then you can obey your natural urge, which will be to play this chord with fingers 1 and 2.

To learn other ways to play D [read this lesson](https://www.nationalguitaracademy.com).

For most people, Dsus2 will be the hardest of the 4 chords we’re looking at today. That’s normal, don’t worry.

But I hope you agree these 4 chords are MUCH easier than their standard versions.
Now we know all the chords for our song, we can have a look at how it all fits together.

*Finding easy songs on guitar is about keeping things simple and constantly looking to adapt chords to make them flow.*

**Strumming Patterns and completing the song!**

Half the battle beginners face when learning new songs is simply knowing the chords well enough.

We can do something really simple to help with this: Try to strum each chord just once, in time.

By doing this before we attempt full strumming patterns it allows us to get a feel for the track and map out the chord transition ahead of time.

This builds muscle memory and makes a big difference. It will help us get us to a point where we can change between chords smoothly.
Remember this audio has a capo on the 2nd fret. If you don’t have a capo, you can still play the chords as shown above. (You will be playing in a lower key than the recording, but it will still sound fine.)

Let’s look at a strumming pattern we could use for this track:
https://vimeo.com/162006310

3. ‘Stand By Me’ by Ben E King

The next song we’re going to look at is “Stand By Me” by Ben E King. A classic and a nice, easy song on guitar.

This song came out in 1960 and was listed as one of top 500 songs of all time by Rolling Stone Magazine.

**Why is this an easy song on guitar?**

- It has just four chords.
- It has great strumming patterns in it which help you improve your rhythm.
- The chords are the same all the way through.
- It’s a classic that most people like. (A good track to add to your repertoire.)

**What are the chords?**

The chords we need to know for this song are **G, E minor, C and D**.

We’ve already covered **G, C and D**.

Em (or to use its full name “E minor”) is an easy chord to play. It looks like this:
This is one of the most common guitar chords of all. It’s perfect for beginners because:

- It’s easy. It only requires two fingers.
- It’s compact. The two fingers are close together and on the same fret.
- It sounds good. It has a very full sound.
- It’s simple. You don’t have to worry about missing any strings out, you can just strum all 6 strings.

So step by step:

1. Place your 1st finger on the 2nd fret of the A string.
2. Place your 2nd finger on the 2nd fret of the D string.
3. Strum all the strings.

To learn other ways of playing Em, read this lesson from our Easy Chords section.

Now we know all the chords for ‘Stand By Me’ we can get stuck in and learn the song.

**How to play ‘Stand By Me’**

Strum each chord once, remember this helps our chord changes and muscle memory.
Take a look at this video from Jack explaining this strumming pattern:
https://vimeo.com/162008094

**Top Tip:**
Forget about ‘talent’. **Anyone can learn guitar.** Talent can influence how quickly you learn, sure, but it’s a tiny part of the overall equation. Practice beats talent every time!

**Checkpoint...**

Ok, our search for easy songs on guitar is gaining momentum. This one is a little trickier, the chords are ok, but the strumming is a bit harder.

**4. ‘Breakfast at Tiffany’s’ by Deep Blue Something.**

![Chord diagrams for Dsus2, G6, Asus2]

The next song we’re going to learn is ‘Breakfast at Tiffany’s’ by Deep Blue Something.

This is an upbeat track that’s great song for beginners.

**Why is this an easy song on guitar?**

- It uses only 3 chords.
- The strumming pattern is great fun to play.
- It’s excellent for developing rhythm.
- We can learn about song structures.

**Chords we need to know:**
The chords we need to know are **D, A and G**.

Three chords for a song? Nice!

**Lots of great songs have just 3 or 4 chords.**
We already know D and G, we learnt them earlier, so let’s look at the A (or to use its full name “A major”).

**The easiest A chord of all**
The full version of A looks like this:

![A chord diagram](https://www.NationalGuitarAcademy.com)

This is a bit of a squeeze for most beginners. (Especially people with chunky fingers.)

We need an easier version. Even though this may seem a little like cheating, it doesn’t matter: **The whole goal of this is to create music and have fun.**

**To keep moving forward as a guitarist you must keep playing regularly.** Finding easy songs on guitar and adapting songs to MAKE them easy is a critical skill for a new guitarist to master.
The A chord we’re going to learn here is **Asus2**. It looks like this:

![Asus2 chord diagram]

Assemble it like this:

1. Put your first finger on the 2nd fret of the D string.
3. Strum from the A string.

If you want to learn other easy ways to play A, read [this lesson](https://www.nationalguitaracademy.com) from our Easy Chords section.

An easy way to remember this chord is it’s the same hand shape as Em, but one string higher.

**In Breakfast At Tiffany’s, there are two different sections.**

They use the same chords, but in a different order.

- The verse chords are: Dsus2, G6, Asus2
- The chorus chords are: Dsus2, Asus2, G6

Now we have the chords underneath our fingers, let’s look at some strumming patterns we can use for each section.
Now let’s look at some riffs!

As a general rule, riffs are note-based rather than chord-based, so this song is a bit different to the ones we’ve looked at so far.

Some of the best guitar songs for beginners are riff based and we’re going to look at two of them.

5. ‘Seven Nation Army’ by The White Stripes

This is aimed at electric players, but there’s no reason we can’t play this on acoustic too.

Why is this riff so well suited to beginners?

- The main riff can be played on one string.
- It’s great for moving our fingers around the fret board. (You have to cover a lot of ground.)

The main riff of this song can be played on the A string.

If you want to learn more about all the guitar notes and how the fretboard fits together read this lesson: Guitar Notes Explained: A Guide For Beginners

How To Play Seven Nation Army

The frets we are going to use are:

- 7th fret
- 10th fret
- 5th fret
- 3rd fret
- 2nd fret

Here’s the tab:
So we go 7th fret, 7th fret, 10th fret, 7th fret, 5th fret, 3rd fret, 2nd fret.

Check out this video to see more on how to play this riff:

https://vimeo.com/162009505

**Consider your guitar sound**

When playing rock guitar riffs it’s really important to think about what sound you want from your amplifier.

- Do you want to use a clean or distorted sound?
- What about reverb? Will it help your sound blend in or stand out?
- Which pickup could you use?

**Remember there is no right or wrong here. As long as you find something you like and it inspires you, that’s really all that matters.**

**6. ‘Sunshine Of Your Love’ by Cream**

The next riff we’re going to look at is from “Sunshine Of Your Love”, an awesome rock track by British band Cream.

This is one of the most iconic guitar riffs of the 1960s.

**Why is this an easy song on guitar?**

- It’s just one-note picking and not too fast.
- It uses more than one string, so is great for getting beginners around the fretboard more.
- It sounds awesome and is SUPER easy to get under the fingers.
It’s one of the most famous riffs of all time.

For the A string, we need to use:

- 5th Fret
- 3rd Fret

For the E string, we need to use:

- 5th fret
- 4th fret
- 3rd fret

Finally for the D string the only fret we need to use is:

- 3rd fret

The only frets we need to use are the 3rd, 4th and the 5th frets.

Check out the tab:

Check out this video from Jack to learn more:

https://vimeo.com/162001371
7. ‘Pompeii’ by Bastille

The next song we’re going to look at is ‘Pompeii’ by English indie rock band, Bastille.

**Why is this an easy song on guitar?**

- It uses just four chords.
- It has a simple structure.
- It’s easy to play.

**Can you guess what 4 chords we’ll use?**

The four most common chords of all: C, G E minor and D.

We already know these chords and their easier ‘stepping stone’ versions, so we’re pretty much ready to rock.

**For C we’ll play Cmaj7**

![Cmaj7 diagram]

www.NationalGuitarAcademy.com
For G we’ll play G6

We’ll play Em as usual

For D we’ll play Dsus2
*Finding easy songs on guitar is about keeping things simple and constantly looking to adapt chords to make them flow.*

**It’s capo time again!**

If you have a capo, put it on the second fret. If you don’t have a capo, buy one!

- I love [Jim Dunlop trigger capos](https://www.dunlop.com/). They are brilliant, easy to use and built like tanks. They are more expensive than the cheaper plastic (and awful elastic) capos, but they last a lifetime.

- Overall, they are much better value and much more pleasant to put on and take off. (I’ve had mine for 20 years and it’s still going strong.)

You can still play this track without the capo, it will still sound good, but you will be playing in a lower key to the recording. (That doesn’t really matter at all, but I’m just letting you know so you understand why it sounds different to the recording.)

Our Verse and Chorus use the following chords: C, G Em, D

To get used to the changes between these chords, we can strum each chord once before we move on to the next one.

The post-chorus chords are: C, G, D

Once you’ve got the chord changes down you can start to apply some strumming patterns like those in this video:

[https://vimeo.com/162011362](https://vimeo.com/162011362)

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8. ‘The Joker’ by the Steve Miller Band

![Chord diagrams](https://www.dunlop.com/en/guitar/chords.html)
Our next song is a classic, it’s The Joker by The Steve Miller Band. This is an easy song on guitar because the chords are so straightforward.

This song was released in the 1970s and topped the US billboard charts in 1974. It’s been covered by loads of different artists like Jack Johnson, The Smashing Pumpkins and even Mike Myers in his movie The Love Guru!

**Why is this an easy song on guitar?**

- Just 3 chords.
- The chords are simple.
- These quick chord changes will help you get faster at transitions.

This song uses the same three chords, but they swap around in different sections. This makes things a little bit more interesting.

**Verse:** G, C, D, C, then repeat. (So these chords repeat themselves until we get to the chorus.)

**Chorus:** Our chorus is slightly different, it uses the same chords but it repeats some of them.

This makes it really fun to get under our fingers and is also an added challenge as it can be tricky to go back and forth between chords! Great for practice.

The chords go in this order:

- G, C, G, C
- G, C, D, C

Seems like a lot of G’s and C’s right? It is, it’s great practice as it gets us moving our right hand and requires good timing.

**How To Play ‘The Joker’ Video**

https://vimeo.com/162012618
9. ‘Get Lucky’ by Daft Punk

This song was made popular by Pharrell Williams and French dance act, Daft Punk. It has sold over 9.3 million copies worldwide, making it one of the best-selling songs of all time!

This is an easy song on guitar because the chord pattern doesn’t change at all.

**This song has just four chords: Am, C, Em, D**

You already know all 4 chords, so we should be in business straight away!

The chords should sound like this:

You’ll also be pleased to know that this song is the same all the way through.

This song is really funky, so Jack has come up with an awesome strumming pattern you can try. (Feel free to develop your own though.)

**To play this track in its native key you need to put a capo on the 2nd fret.**

Remember, you don’t have to use the capo. It will still sound great without it.

Here is Jack with a video of the song:

[https://vimeo.com/162014068](https://vimeo.com/162014068)
10. The ‘Universal’ Four-Chord Song

So you might be wondering, as you’ve reached number ten on the list.... Where is the tenth song?

Well I’m about to let you in on a little secret. There are four chords which let us play HUNDREDS of different songs.

Sounds ridiculous, right? Well I can understand why you’d think so, but you really can play hundreds of songs with just these four chords.

A band called the Axis of Awesome put this video together that demonstrate this better than words could ever explain. Check it out:

Same four chords all the way through. Pretty cool, huh?

What are these chords?

These chords are: C, G, Am, F

We’ve already covered the first 3 chords, so let’s look at the F.

(Once you’ve mastered the F chord you will never have a problem finding easy songs on guitar again.)

A standard F looks like this:
This is way too hard for a beginner. Here’s a few easier options, starting with a thinner F:

And my favourite for beginners, the Fmaj7:
You can also reduce the chord of F to just these 3 strings. (Overall, I prefer the above version though.)

Check out this video from Mike on easy ways to play F chords:

**If you want more help with F chords, read our lesson on F chords here.**

**Putting the epic four-chord song together!**

So now we have all of our chords for our four-chord song: C, G, Am, F

Here’s what they sound like when you put them all together.

As you improve, you should play them like this for the best balance between sound quality and ease-of-use:

- Notice that in this chord pattern, your first finger never leaves the fretboard? It stays in one place.
- You only ever move fingers 2 and 3.
With the 4 above chords, played in this way, you can play the 73 songs listed below.

You’ll should less trouble finding easy songs on guitar now!

(You could also use other voicings of C, G, Am and F, like we looked at earlier in this lesson, but this arrangement makes the most sense, overall, for the four-chord song.)

Easy Songs On Guitar 1-10

1. Journey – “Don’t Stop Believin’”
2. James Blunt – “You’re Beautiful”
4. Alphaville – “Forever Young”
5. Jason Mraz – “I’m Yours”
6. Train – “Hey, Soul Sister”
7. The Calling – “Wherever You Will Go”
8. Elton John – “Can You Feel The Love Tonight” (from The Lion King)

Easy Songs On Guitar 11-20

11. Lady Gaga – “Paparazzi”
12. U2 – “With Or Without You”
13. The Last Goodnight – “Pictures of You”
14. Maroon Five – “She Will Be Loved”
15. The Beatles – “Let It Be”
16. Bob Marley – “No Woman No Cry”
17. Marcy Playground – “Sex and Candy”

Easy Songs On Guitar 21-30
22. a-ha – “Take On Me”
24. Eagle Eye Cherry – “Save Tonight”
25. Toto – “Africa”
26. Beyoncé – “If I Were A Boy”
27. Kelly Clarkson – “Behind These Hazel Eyes”
28. Jason DeRulo – “In My Head”
29. The Smashing Pumpkins – “Bullet With Butterfly Wings”
30. Joan Osborne – ” One of Us”

Easy Songs On Guitar 31-40
31. Avril Lavigne – “Complicated”
32. The Offspring – “Self Esteem”
33. The Offspring – “You’re Gonna Go Far, Kid”
34. Akon – “Beautiful”
35. Timbaland featuring OneRepublic – “Apologize”
37. Bon Jovi – “It’s My Life”
38. Lady Gaga – “Poker Face”
40. Red Hot Chili Peppers – “Otherside”

41. The Gregory Brothers – “Double Rainbow Song”
42. MGMT – “Kids”
43. Andrea Bocelli – “Time To Say Goodbye”
44. Robert Burns – “Auld Lang Syne”
45. Five for Fighting – “Superman”
47. Missy Higgins – “Scar”
48. Alex Lloyd – “Amazing”
49. Richard Marx – “Right Here Waiting”
50. Adele – “Someone Like You”

Easy Songs On Guitar 51-60

51. Christina Perri – “Jar of Hearts”
52. Crowded House – “Fall At Your Feet”
53. Red Hot Chili Peppers – “Under the Bridge”
54. Daryl Braithwaite – “The Horses”
55. Pink – “U + Ur Hand”
56. The Fray – “You Found Me”
57. 3OH!3 – “Don’t Trust Me”
58. Tim Minchin – “Canvas Bags”
59. Blink-182 – “Dammit”
60. Kasey Chambers – “Not Pretty Enough”

Easy Songs On Guitar 61-73

61. Alicia Keys – “No One”
62. Amiel – “Lovesong”
63. Bush – “Glycerine”
64. Thirsty Merc – “20 Good Reasons”
65. Lighthouse Family – “High”
66. Red Hot Chili Peppers – “Soul to Squeeze”
67. Banjo Patterson – “Waltzing Matilda”
68. Bic Runga – “Sway”
69. Ben Lee – “Cigarettes Will Kill You”
70. Michael Jackson – “Man in the Mirror”
71. Mika – “Happy Ending”
72. The Cranberries – ”Zombie”
73. Natalie Imbruglia – “Torn”

Pretty amazing, right? I’m sure you’ll find something in there that you will like!
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