

The Magic of Open Strings

GUITAR FUNDAMENTALS

advanced

One thing a guitar has that no other instrument can replicate is the sound of open strings. The use of open strings automatically brings out the guitar part in any song. Knowing how to make the most of open strings is something that serious players should be familiar with. This lesson introduces several important open string concepts.

The song illustrated in the video is in the key of E. The key of E is perfect for open string uses because the two most important notes in any key, the root and the fifth, are the open string notes of E and B.

Open String Song Part 1: Thirds Combined with Open Strings

One technique to incorporate open strings is to combine them with thirds. Here is the example to the first part of the song as shown in the video. This is a descending E major scale played in thirds on the 3rd and 4th strings. Playing the scale on the 3rd and 4th strings allows you to add the open 1st and 2nd strings to create some beautiful sounds.

The diagram shows a descending E major scale in thirds on the 3rd and 4th strings. The fretboard diagrams are labeled with fret numbers: 12fr., 11fr., 9fr., 7fr., 5fr., 4fr., 2fr., and 0fr. The tablature below shows the string numbers (T, A, B) and fret numbers for each string.

	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
T	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
A	13	11	9	8	6	4	2	1
B	14	13	11	9	7	6	4	2

Open String Song Part 2: Suspended Chords

The second part of the song shows how suspended chords can be formed using open strings. Here the basic rhythm is shown, along with the chord forms used to incorporate the open strings.

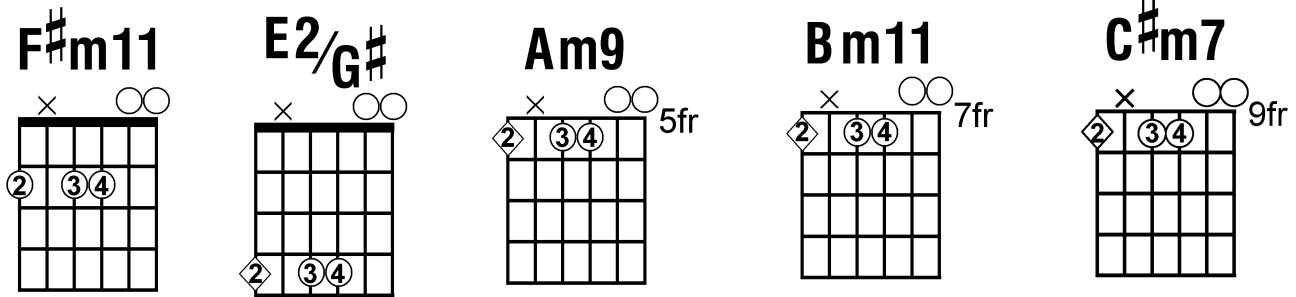
The diagram shows a 4/4 rhythm with four chords: A2sus (5fr.), A2 (5fr.), Bsus (7fr.), and B (7fr.).

Open String Song Part 3: F#m11 based Drone Chords

The third part of the song uses a simple technique of taking an open chord form, in this case an F#m11, and moving that form to other parts of the neck to make several other chords. To the right is the chord form that we will be using.

The diagram shows the F#m11 based Drone Chords form. The fretboard has an 'x' on the 1st string, an 'o' on the 2nd string, and fret numbers 2, 3, and 4 on the 3rd, 4th, and 5th strings respectively.

When the F#m11 form is moved to other parts of the neck, several new colorful chords are created.



You see that even in this simple song, you have created several wonderful sounds by combining simple ideas with the magic of open strings. Learn these various chord forms. Experiment with your own patterns and see what kind of open string magic you can create.

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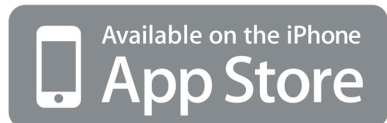
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