

Major Related Chords

A (A Major) : A - C# - E

The common chord fingering for an A chord (1) calls for the use of the first, second, and third fretting fingers to make the three fretted notes. However, players with large hands may experience difficulties with placing the three fretting fingers so close together on the fretboard, especially if the neck of their guitar is relatively narrow. A different option for fingering the A common chord would be to use the second fretting finger to fret both the 4th and 3rd strings, and the third fretting finger to fret both the 3rd and 2nd strings (2). In another useful voicing for the A chord, the notes on the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th strings are all fretted with a partial barre made with the index finger, and the high A at the fifth fret of the 1st string is included, which gives the chord a different sound and character (3). Still another voicing for the A harmony combines the partial barre at the second fret with an A bass note at the fifth fret of the 6th string. Since the 5th and 1st strings are not included in this chord voicing, and there are no open notes, it is a movable chord fingering.

It has already been pointed out that a second inversion A chord can be made by including the open 6th string, which can be done either with the common chord fingering (5), or with the chord fingering that includes the high A on the 1st string (6). A second inversion A chord can also be made by omitting the 5th string from the common chord fingering (7). The same can be done with the alternate voicing that includes the high A (8), resulting in a chord fingering with no open notes, and therefore another movable chord fingering. A first inversion A chord can be made by combining the partial barre at the second fret with the C# at the fourth fret of the 5th string (9), which again results in a

movable chord fingering, since the 1st and 6th strings are not included in the chord. It is also possible to include the open 1st string in the A/C# chord (10). This can be done by raising the partial barre up off the fretboard over the 1st string so as to allow the open E to sound freely.

There are four barre forms for the A chord, all of which are given below as Bb chords (up one fret) to show how the chord fingerings are fashioned. The first of these (11) combines the bass note Bb at the first fret of the 5th string with a partial barre at the third fret over the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th strings. Notice that in this case the partial barre is made with the fourth fretting finger, and that neither the 6th nor the 1st string is included in the chord. It is also possible to include the 1st string in the chord fingering (12). This can be done by making a barre over the first five strings at the first fret, using the third finger to make the partial barre at the third fret, and raising the third finger up off the fretboard over the 1st string to allow the F at the first fret to sound. Do not concern yourself if you are unable to execute this technique, because in truth there is not much advantage to including the 1st string in terms of the sound and usefulness of the chord. Either variant of the A barre chord can be converted to a second inversion voicing, in the first case (13) by making a partial barre with the index finger on the 5th and 6th strings, and in the second case (14) by extending the full barre at the first fret over all six strings.

CHORD	6th	5th	4th	3rd	2nd	1st
1. A	X	O	2(1)	2(2)	2(3)	O
2. A	X	O	2(2)	2(2,3)	2(3)	O
3. A	X	O	2(1)	2(1)	2(1)	5(4)
4. A (movable)	5(4)	X	2(1)	2(1)	2(1)	X

5. A/E	O	O	2(1)	2(2)	2(3)	O
6. A/E	O	O	2(1)	2(1)	2(1)	5(4)
7. A/E	X	X	2(1)	2(2)	2(3)	O
8. A/E (movable)	X	X	2(1)	2(1)	2(1)	5(4)
9. A/C# (movable)	X	4(4)	2(1)	2(1)	2(1)	X
10. A/C#	X	4(4)	2(1)	2(1)	2(1)	O
11. Bb (A barre)	X	1(1)	3(4)	3(4)	3(4)	X
12. Bb (A barre)	X	1(1)	3(3)	3(3)	3(3)	1(1)
13. Bb/F (A barre)	1(1)	1(1)	3(4)	3(4)	3(4)	X
14. Bb/F (A barre)	1(1)	1(1)	3(3)	3(3)	3(3)	1(1)

A7 (A 7th) : A - C# - E - G

The A7 common chord fingering (1), which is arguably one of the most frequently used chords in all of acoustic guitar music, has a well balanced sound in spite of the fact that, like any 7th chord, it has an audible tendency to resolve to a chord (D or d) the root of which is a fourth higher. By comparison, an alternate voicing for A7 (2), in which the 7th of the chord (G) is sounded at the third fret of the 1st string rather than by the open 3rd string, has a much edgier and more urgent sound than the common chord fingering. A third variant of A7 (3), since there is no 3rd in the chord fingering, can also be considered and substituted for an am7 chord.

Second inversions of the two main A7 chords can be made in the same way that the second inversion A chords were made, namely either by including the

open 6th string (4 and 5), or by omitting the 5th string (6 and 7). Notice that the four-string A7/E chord with the 7th on the 1st string (7), since it contains no open notes, is a movable chord fingering. The same is true for the A7/C# chord fingering (8), which is the most feasible and least challenging first inversion voicing for A7. Both of the two main A7 chord fingerings can also be made above a barre, as shown below for Bb7 chord fingerings (9 and 10), with the barre made at the first fret. As with the first two A7/E chord voicings, the two A7 barre forms can be converted to second inversion voicings by including the 6th string under the barre (11 and 12).

CHORD	6th	5th	4th	3rd	2nd	1st
1. A7	X	O	2(2)	O	2(3)	O
2. A7	X	O	2(1)	2(1)	2(1)	3(2)
3. A7	X	O	5(2)	O	5(3)	O
4. A7/E	O	O	2(2)	O	2(3)	O
5. A7/E	O	O	2(1)	2(1)	2(1)	3(2)
6. A7/E	X	X	2(2)	O	2(3)	O
7. A7/E (movable)	X	X	2(1)	2(1)	2(1)	3(2)
8. A7/C# (movable)	X	4(4)	2(1)	2(1)	2(1)	3(2)
9. Bb7 (A7 barre)	X	1(1)	3(3)	1(1)	3(4)	1(1)
10. Bb7 (A7 barre)	X	1(1)	3(3)	3(3)	3(3)	4(4)
11. Bb7/F (A7/E barre)	1(1)	1(1)	3(3)	1(1)	3(4)	1(1)
12. Bb7/F (A7/E barre)	1(1)	1(1)	3(3)	3(3)	3(3)	4(4)