

Guitar Music Theory Cheat Sheet

The musical alphabet, the major scale formula, how chords are built and the chords of a key, on one page.

1. THE MUSICAL ALPHABET (ONE FRET = ONE HALF STEP)



No note between B and C or between E and F. Every other pair of natural notes has a sharp/flat between them.

2. THE MAJOR SCALE FORMULA



W = whole step (2 frets), H = half step (1 fret). Start the pattern on any note to get that note's major scale.

3. BUILDING CHORDS FROM THE SCALE

Chord	Formula	In C	Symbol
Major	1 3 5	C E G	C
Minor	1 $\flat$ 3 5	C E $\flat$ G	Cm
Dominant 7th	1 3 5 $\flat$ 7	C E G B $\flat$	C7
Major 7th	1 3 5 7	C E G B	Cmaj7
Minor 7th	1 $\flat$ 3 5 $\flat$ 7	C E $\flat$ G B $\flat$	Cm7
Power chord	1 5	C G	C5

4. THE CHORDS OF A KEY (SAME PATTERN IN EVERY MAJOR KEY)

I major C: C G: G	ii minor C: Dm G: Am	iii minor C: Em G: Bm	IV major C: F G: C	V major C: G G: D	vi minor C: Am G: Em	vii^o dim C: B ^o G: F ^o
--------------------------------	-----------------------------------	------------------------------------	---------------------------------	--------------------------------	-----------------------------------	--

5. Progressions that come from this

I-IV-V (G C D): folk, blues and rock and roll. I-V-vi-IV (G D Em C): countless pop songs. ii-V-I (Am D G): jazz. 12-bar blues: I III / IV IV I / V IV I V, often with 7th chords.