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Lesson 3: Good Posture and Form

In this lesson, you will learn:

- How to correctly hold the guitar
- The 4 steps for using the chord hand properly
- How to hold the pick properly

Application Exercises:

1. Go through each step of the posture lesson several times until you feel comfortable with each step

Notes from Eric:

As a beginner, using good posture and technique is one of the most important things to learn. Using good form will help you learn easier and quicker than any thing else. Most of your guitar playing problems will be solved if you learn to use good form.

Learning Good Posture and Form

There are three major areas of concern when learning how to play with great form.

Three main areas:

1. Holding the guitar
2. Using the chord hand
3. Holding the pick

Follow this system closely. When you encounter problems, refer back to this section.

Holding the Guitar

Start in a chair or a stool without arm rests.

1. Hold the guitar on your right leg.
2. With your right hand, reach around the guitar and place your open hand over the sound hole or the pickups.
3. With your left hand, reach up and grab the neck around the 3rd fret. Thumb over the neck, other fingers under.
4. Now, slightly push the neck of the guitar out away from your body.
5. Make sure your left elbow is hanging out away from your body and your forearm is parallel to the ground.

Important:

- ❑ Do not push your left elbow into your side. Keep it hanging out there.
- ❑ You want a slight angle on the face of the guitar so that you can see the strings and the frets when you look down.
- ❑ The neck should have a slight angle out from your body so that your hand and left arm are not too close to your body.

This is a picture of correct posture:



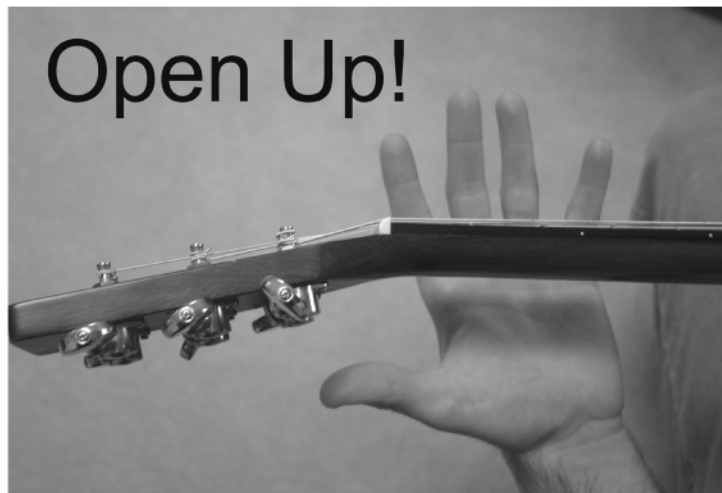
4 Steps for the Chord Hand

Follow these 4 easy steps to position your hand for playing chords.

Open Up... Line Up... Grab... Tilt!

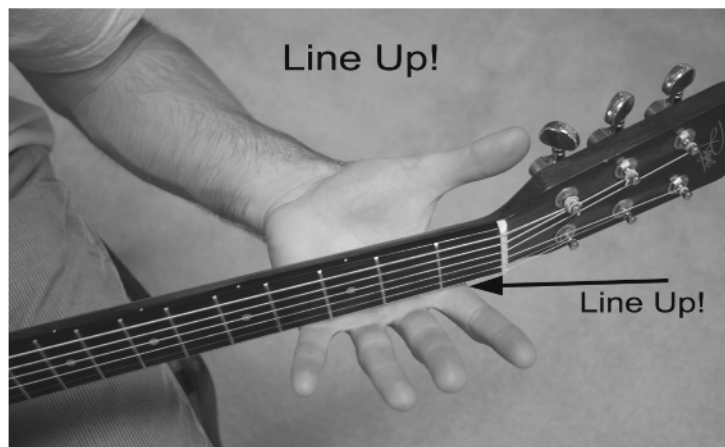
Open Up!

Open up your left hand. Hold your hand open directly under the neck around the 3rd fret keeping your wrist straight and your forearm parallel to the floor.



Line Up!

Line up the underside of your knuckles with the bottom of the guitar neck and then touch the neck with your hand.



Grab!

Now “grab the neck” just like a baseball bat. Your thumb should be hanging over the neck and your fingers on the fret board.



Your hand is in place now to play a chord. The most important step comes next.

Tilt!

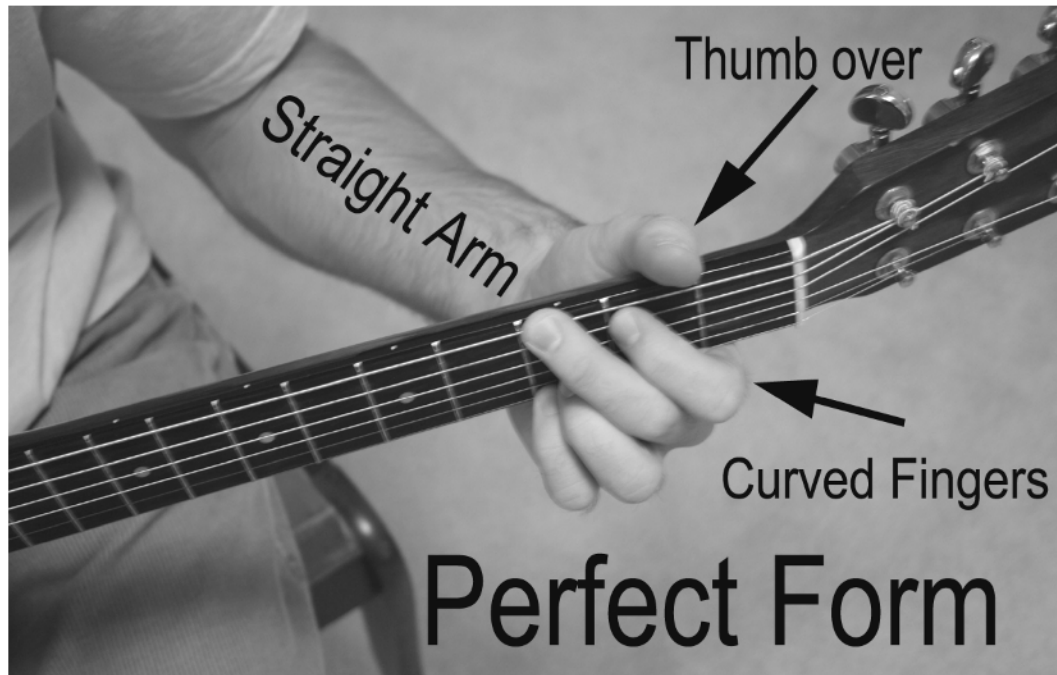
Slightly tilt your hand down to the floor while keeping the thumb and pointer finger gripping the neck. Let your pinky drop towards the floor while relaxing your fingers.



The picture above is an exaggeration to show how you are going to tilt. Once you understand, tilt just slightly so that your fingers will reach the frets to make a chord.

Once you have completed the 4 steps, you should be holding the neck between the base of the thumb and the base of the pointer finger.

Keep a slight bend in your wrist. You should be able to make the G Chord and any other open chord easily using this good posture.



Depending on what chord you are making, you will tilt your hand back and forth slightly while keeping your thumb close to the top of the neck. Keep practicing until it feels comfortable to you.

This is one of the most important lessons about your posture and technique. Follow the steps and pictures closely until you master your form.

Keep in mind:

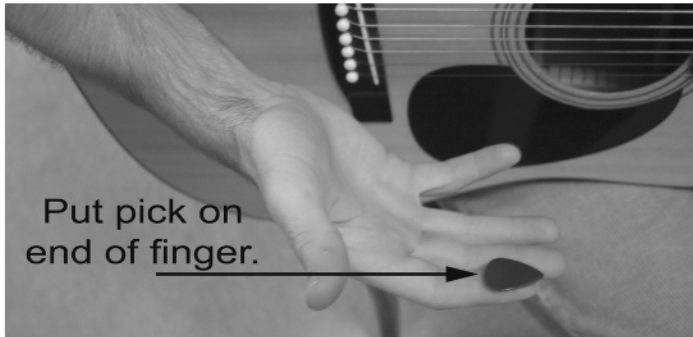
- You should have a slight bend in your wrist that feels comfortable.
- Your wrist should not be extremely bent.
- Your thumb can hang on the neck or rest on the back of the neck. It depends on the chord or the scale.
- You should not feel pain in your hand or your wrist while making chords.

- You need to build your muscles. This will take time so be patient.

Holding the Pick

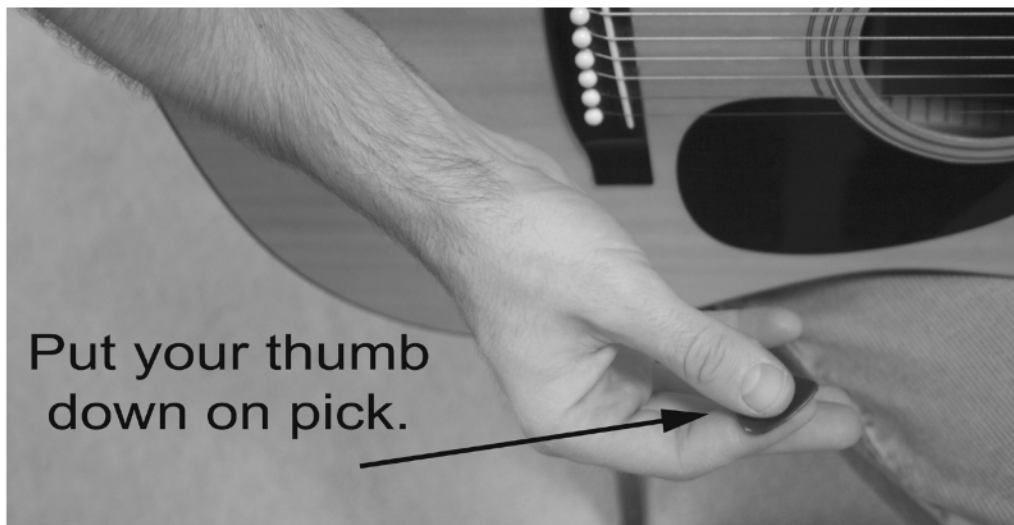
Step 1

You will start by holding the right hand out with your palm facing you. Lay the guitar pick on the tip of your first finger as shown.



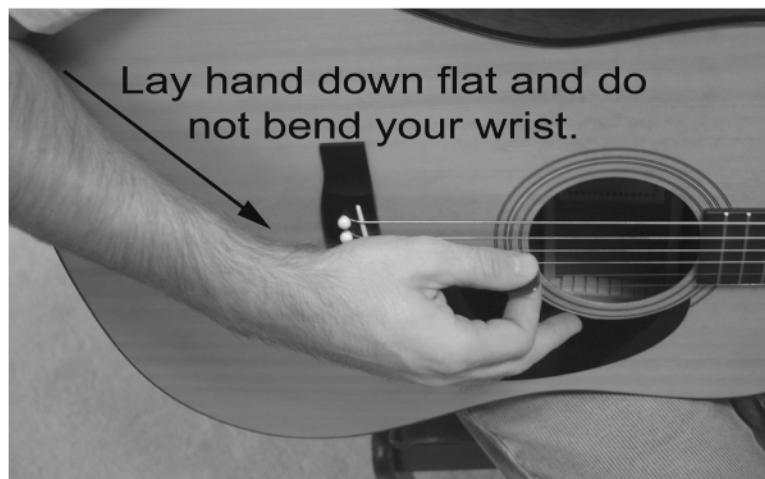
Step 2

Reach over with your thumb and hold the pick between your thumb and your pointer finger. This is where the pick should generally be.



Step 3

Point the end of the pick towards the strings. Leaving your hand relaxed and open, point the pick toward the string and rest your pinky on the face of the guitar right below the strings on the pick guard. This is your base position for holding the pick.



Make sure you put your pinky down on the pick guard.

Important Pick Holding Rules

1. Do not hold the pick too tight. You need to hold it firmly, but leave a little play in the pick for strumming. You want your pick to pivot a bit in your fingers.
2. Just a slight bit of the tip of the pick should be hanging out. You will have most of the pick between your thumb and pointer finger.
3. You only need the tip to stick out to play the strings. You need to be able to feel the strings with your fingers. This will take practice.
4. NO FLOPPY PICK. You only need a small tip of the pick to play with. See picture below.

