

# Dobro Arpeggios, Exercises and Examples © 2018 Ivan Rosenberg

Diagram showing the locations of common chord triads on the high string (top line) for chords G, C, D, and Em. The fretboard is divided into four sections, each representing a chord. The fret numbers for the triad are indicated above the fretboard.

- G:** 0, 5, 9, 12
- C:** 2, 5, 10, 14
- D:** 0, 4, 7, 12
- Em:** 2, 5, 9, 14

Learn the location of common chord triads on the high string!

Diagram showing the locations of common chord triads on the high string (top line) for chords Am, Bm, C, and D. The fretboard is divided into four sections, each representing a chord. The fret numbers for the triad are indicated above the fretboard.

- Am:** 2, 7, 10, 14
- Bm:** 0, 4, 9, 12
- C:** 2, 5, 10, 14
- D:** 0, 4, 7, 12

Learn the location of common chord triad notes within the first 5 frets. here are some examples mostly using the 4 highest strings.

Diagram showing the locations of common chord triad notes within the first 5 frets for chords C, D, Em, and Am. The fretboard is divided into four sections, each representing a chord. The fret numbers for the triad are indicated above the fretboard.

- C:** 1, 2, 0, 1
- D:** 0, 4, 2, 0
- Em:** 2, 0, 0, 2
- Am:** 2, 2, 1, 2

**F** **G** **C/Am7/Em6/F9maj** **D/Bm7/F#m6/G9maj**

The diagrams show the following fret numbers for each chord:

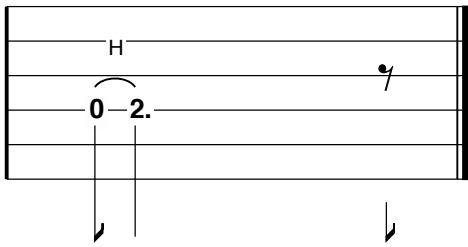
- F:** 3, 2, 1, 3
- G:** 5, 4, 3, 5
- C/Am7/Em6/F9maj:** 5, 5, 5, 5
- D/Bm7/F#m6/G9maj:** 7, 7, 7, 7

Here's an example of putting it all together over an Em chord: licks using the 2nd fret and open strings, moving up to the Em double stop at the 5th fret, moving up to play licks around the "E" position at the 9th fret, up to the 12th fret, where Em's relative major (G) is, then going back down through the same Em chord note outposts.

**Em** **H** **SI** **SI** **H** **SI** **Po**

The diagrams show the following fret numbers and notes:

- Diagram 1:**
  - Measure 1: 0-2 (H)
  - Measure 2: 0, 2.
  - Measure 3: 2-4 (SI)
  - Measure 4: 0-2 (H)
  - Measure 5: 3-5 (SI)
  - Measure 6: 5, 5
  - Measure 7: 9-7 (SI)
  - Measure 8: 8
- Diagram 2:**
  - Measure 1: 9
  - Measure 2: 12, 12
  - Measure 3: 14-12.
  - Measure 4: 9-7 (SI), 8
  - Measure 5: 9
  - Measure 6: 5, 5, 0, 0
  - Measure 7: 0-2 (H)
  - Measure 8: 4-2-0 (SI, Po)



There are many more combinations of chord notes, in various shapes/patterns, to be found. When deciding whether a "shape" or position is useful, decide if it's ergonomically playable on the Dobro. If it's too hard to play it cleanly and in tune, there's probably an easier way to get the notes we want. There are a few players who can play any note any time on the Dobro as fast as they like, but for most of us (me included), it's beneficial to focus on the places that make it easy to access the notes we need cleanly and in tune. Don't work hard if you don't have to!

You can get a lot of mileage out of straight bar positions; in addition to being a chord (e.g. C chord at the 5th fret), those notes have many other applications. For a song in the Key of G, for example, you can treat the C, E, and G notes at the 5th fret as a conveniently packaged sequence of melody notes--even when the song isn't on a C chord. Remember, there are two notes of an E minor chord at the 5th fret, and that C, E, and G are also 3 notes of an Am7 chord! Or for those of you who want to squeeze every chord you can out of the same notes, those 3 notes are also in an Fmaj9 chord, D9sus4 chord, and several others.

Of the above "alternative" uses for straight-bar chord positions, the minor chord applications are probably the most useful for most of us. When the band is playing an Am chord, you can play any string at the 5th fret and it should sound good, because the notes C, E, and G are the non-root notes of an Am7 chord. To remember this trick, you can always play the relative major of a minor chord. Also remember that when the band is playing an Em chord, you can play the high two strings of the 5th fret, which are E and G notes, the root and third of an Em chord. I use these minor chords and double stops ALL THE TIME, both as chords and as parts of melody lines.

Learn the common chord triad notes on the high string VERY WELL. This is one of the best things you can do to improve your melodic success and comfort level as you go up the neck and away from the straight bar chords.