

Hit the Right Chord

■ Have you ever wondered how expert guitarists are able to figure out so many chord shapes and chord voicings (that is, alternative fingerings that are sometimes easier or a better way to bridge to other chords)? They practice, for one thing, but they also might have stuffed away in their gig bag a guitar chord encyclopedia, either in book or DVD form.

There are many of these invaluable guides on the market. One is the *Guitar Chord Encyclopedia* DVD, published by Hal Leonard Corp.; another is the *Handy Guide Guitar Chord Encyclopedia*, by Alfred Publishing. Each guide has its own method of presenting the thousands of

chords you can strum or pick on a guitar, but all use some variation on a guitar chord diagram.

Familiarize yourself with a guitar chord diagram by clipping the two examples below, which are based on the style you'll find in Hal Leonard guitar guides.

Specifically, these are two versions of a guitar chord diagram for the chord C suspended fourth. We include a reminder of how a suspended fourth chord is created, using both the intervals and scale degrees methods. Both diagrams assume that your guitar is in standard tuning: EADGBE. The C major scale is C,D,E,F,G,A,B.

CHORD TYPE
Suspended Fourth
INTERVALS
Prime, Perfect Fourth, Perfect Fifth
SCALE DEGREES
I, IV, V
EXAMPLE
C sus4 (C suspended fourth)
PLAY NOTES
C,F,G

An X means don't play that string.

An O means play this string open.

The dark black line is the guitar's nut.

This curved line is a barre, meaning one finger holds down more than one string.

A black dot indicates which notes to fret. The number indicates which finger to use—1 (index), 2 (middle), 3 (ring), and 4 (pinky).

The note names refer to which notes are being played, not the guitar's tuning.

For this voicing of Csus4, the index finger stretches across the fretboard. This type of chord is a "barre chord."

This number indicates at which fret, counting up from the nut, to play this chord; in this diagram it's the 8th fret.

Diagram 1 (Left): Shows a guitar fretboard with strings C, F, G, C, F from left to right. The 6th string (C) has an 'X' above it. The 5th string (F) has an 'O' above it. A dark line at the top represents the nut. A curved line (barre) is shown at the 8th fret, spanning all strings. Fingering: 1 (index) on the 8th fret of the 4th string (C), 1 (index) on the 8th fret of the 5th string (F), 3 (ring) on the 6th fret of the 3rd string (G), and 4 (pinky) on the 6th fret of the 2nd string (C).

Diagram 2 (Right): Shows a guitar fretboard with strings C, F, C, F, G, C from left to right. A curved line (barre) is shown at the 8th fret, spanning all strings. Fingering: 1 (index) on the 8th fret of the 1st string (C), 1 (index) on the 8th fret of the 2nd string (F), 3 (ring) on the 6th fret of the 3rd string (C), and 4 (pinky) on the 6th fret of the 4th string (F).

