

HOW TO USE A CAPO

If you try to sing a song and the key doesn't fit your voice, you may want to use a capo to raise the pitch. When playing with other musicians, inevitably you'll find people do songs in differing keys. A male singer will usually sing in a different key than a female vocalist. Fiddlers are fond of the key of D and the key of A. Horn players love, B \flat and F. Banjo players love G. Mountain dulcimer players love D. With the chart below, you can play in any key. If someone throws a key at you that you aren't familiar with, don't panic. Just whip out the trusty capo and place it on the appropriate fret.

When playing chords in the key of G:

Place the capo on the 1st fret to get the key of A \flat .

Place the capo on the 2nd fret to get the key of A.

Place the capo on the 3rd fret to get the key of B \flat .

Place the capo on the 4th fret to get the key of B.

Place the capo on the 5th fret to get the key of C.

When playing chords in the key of C:

Place the capo on the 1st fret to get the key of D \flat .

Place the capo on the 2nd fret to get the key of D.

Place the capo on the 3rd fret to get the key of E \flat .

Place the capo on the 4th fret to get the key of E.

Place the capo on the 5th fret to get the key of F.

When playing chords in the key of E:

Place the capo on the 1st fret to get the key of F.

Place the capo on the 2nd fret to get the key of F \sharp .

Place the capo on the 3rd fret to get the key of G.

Place the capo on the 4th fret to get the key of A \flat .

Place the capo on the 5th fret to get the key of A.

When playing chords in the key of D:

Place the capo on the 1st fret to get the key of E \flat .

Place the capo on the 2nd fret to get the key of E.

Place the capo on the 3rd fret to get the key of F.

Place the capo on the 4th fret to get the key of F \sharp .

Place the capo on the 5th fret to get the key of G.

To understand how a capo works, we need to be acquainted with the chromatic scale. (See chromatic scale on Pages 17 and 113.)

The notes of the chromatic scale are: C C \sharp D D \sharp E F F \sharp G G \sharp A A \sharp B C

When playing in any given key, we need to remember when sliding up one fret with the capo, we have moved up one note of the chromatic scale. For example, if you play a C chord with the capo on the first fret, you are in the key of C \sharp . If you slide it up to the second fret, you are in the key of D. The third fret is D \sharp and so on.

Tip: Two notes with the same name are called enharmonic tones. Notice that C \sharp is the same as D \flat . D \sharp is the same as E \flat . F \sharp is the same as G \flat . G \sharp is the same as A \flat . A \sharp is the same as B \flat . The choice of name depends on the key you are in. For more information on the subject visit guitarlessonsbybrian.com.