

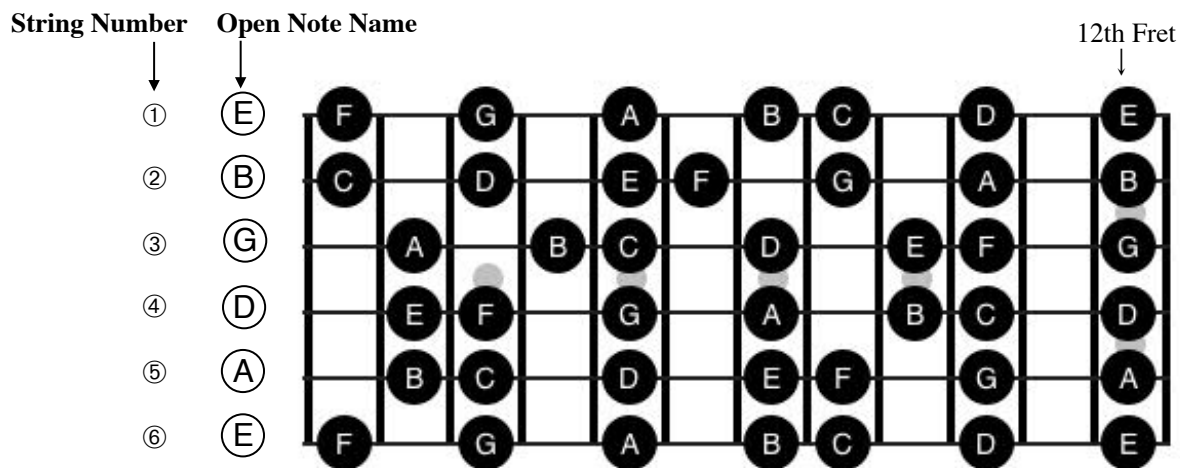
CHAPTER 1: FRETBOARD KNOWLEDGE

Memorizing the Fretboard

Before you begin learning to play melodies anywhere on the fretboard, you need to know the notes on the fretboard, so there will be some memory work before you get started playing up the neck. We'll start by learning the notes on each string. If you have been studying *Rhythm Guitar Book 3*, you may have already done this memory work.

Notes on the Fretboard

Fretboard Diagram – Natural Notes



The diagram above shows all the natural notes (no sharps or flats) from the open strings to the 12th fret. It may seem a little intimidating to memorize all these notes, but we'll take it step by step.

Memorize the Fretboard Step 1: Open Strings

You probably already know the open string names, but just in case, from 6th string to 1st string, the open notes are **E - A - D - G - B - E**. The easiest way to remember these notes is with this phrase:

Ed Ate Dynamite. Good Bye Ed.

Memorize the Fretboard Step 2: 12th Fret

Notice the 12th fret in Fretboard Diagram above. The 12th fret is one octave higher than the open string, so the note names are identical to the open strings. If you know the names of the open strings, you can also name all the notes at the 12th fret.

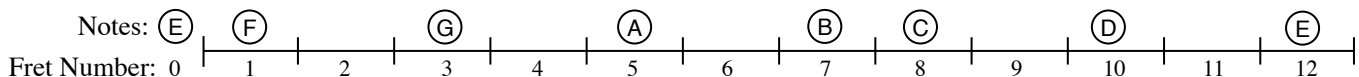
Memorize the Fretboard Step 3: The Musical Alphabet

The musical alphabet consists of the notes **A - B - C - D - E - F - G**, each note higher than the last. Once you reach “G,” the musical alphabet repeats on a higher set of **A - B - C - D - E - F - G** notes.

Memorize the Fretboard Step 4: Learn the 1st and 6th Strings

Strings 6 and 1 are two octaves apart, but they are both E strings, so the note names are the same.

1 1st and 6th String Notes



Starting with the open 6th string, **say and play** each note from low to high (left to right). Even though the note names are the same, repeat the exercise with the 1st string. Do this several times until you can comfortably say and play each note on the 6th and 1st strings from memory.

It's very important that you name the notes as you play them. By “saying and playing,” you'll begin to get a feel for the proper fret placement for each note.

Notice that **B/C** and **E/F** are always **one fret apart**.

Memorize the Fretboard Step 5: Whole Steps and Half Steps

In the 1st and 6th String Notes diagram above, most of the notes are two frets apart, but some of them are one fret apart.

- The notes that are two frets apart are separated by a **whole step**.
- The notes that are one fret apart are separated by a **half step**.

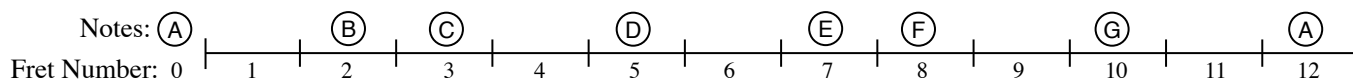
For the purposes of learning the fretboard, remember:

- 1) **B/C and E/F are always one fret apart (half step).**
- 2) **All other notes are two frets apart (whole step).**

Memorize the Fretboard Step 6: Learn 5th String

The 5th string lays out the musical alphabet from A to G.

2 5th String Notes

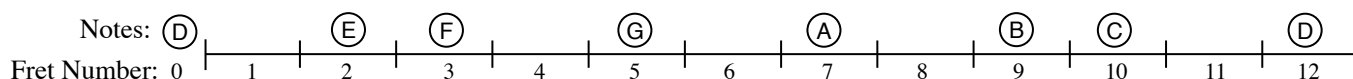


Starting with the open 5th string, **say and play** each note from low to high (left to right). Do this several times until you can comfortably say and play each note on the 5th string from memory. Continue to say and play the notes on the 6th string from memory.

Remember that **B/C** and **E/F** are always **one fret apart**.

Memorize the Fretboard Step 7: Learn the 4th String

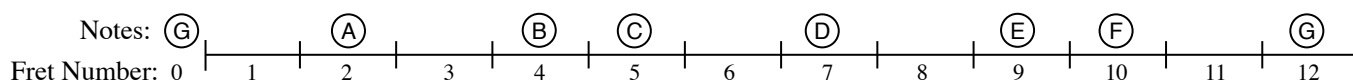
3 4th String Notes



As with the other strings, **say and play** each note on the 4th string from low to high, remembering the **B/C** and **E/F** half steps. Continue reviewing the other strings.

Memorize the Fretboard Step 8: Learn the 3rd String

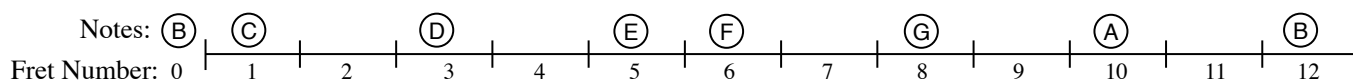
4 3rd String Notes



Say and play each note on the 3rd string from low to high, remembering the **B/C** and **E/F** half steps. Continue reviewing the other strings.

Memorize the Fretboard Step 9: Learn the 2nd String

5 2nd String Notes

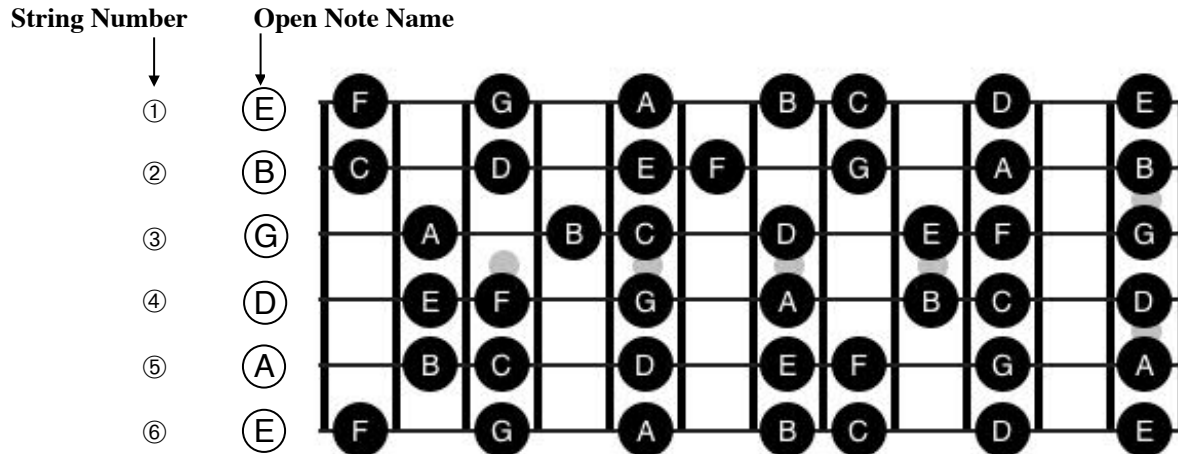


Say and play each note on the 2nd string from low to high, remembering the **B/C** and **E/F** half steps. Continue reviewing the other strings.

Fretboard Memory Exercises

Here is the full diagram of the notes up to the 12th fret again. Now that you can name the notes on each string from low to high, your next goal is to be able to instantly find any note on any string. The exercises on this page will help you with this.

Fretboard Diagram – Natural Notes



6 Fretboard Memory Exercise 1 – Backwards

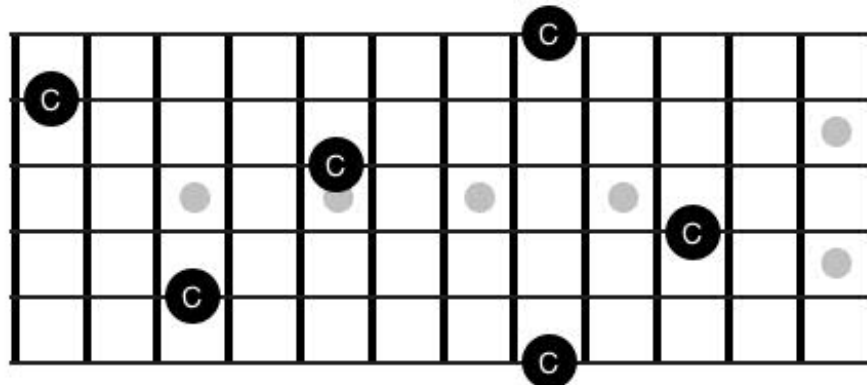
Once you are comfortable naming the notes on each string from the open string to the 12th fret, **say and play** the notes “backwards” on each string, starting with the 12th fret and working your way down to the open string.

7 Fretboard Memory Exercise 2 – Shuffle

After you are able to name the notes “backwards,” mix them up. Write the musical alphabet (A-G) on seven index cards, one note name per card. Shuffle the cards and **play and say** the notes on each string in whatever order the cards fall.

8 Fretboard Memory Exercise 3 – Single Note, Jumping Strings

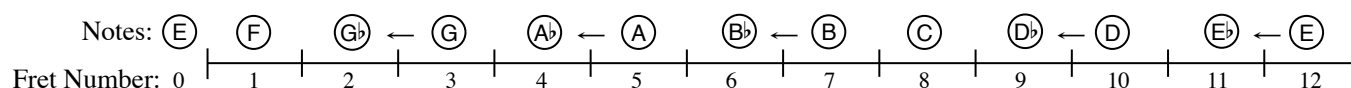
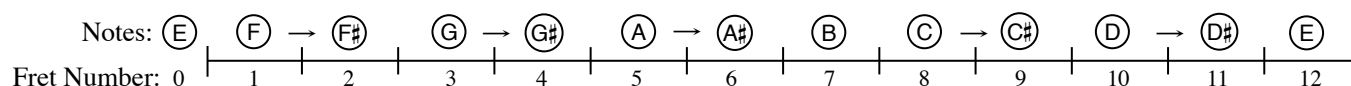
Pick a random note. We’ll use “C” as an example. Play the C closest to the left end of the fretboard, then play the next C to the right (3rd fret, 5th string), and then the next C to the right, working your way up the neck from left to right. Go through this process with two or three different notes each day.



Sharps and Flats on the Fretboard

The final step to memorizing the fretboard is to learn the sharps and flats. By now, you already know all the natural notes, so it's simply a matter of filling in the gaps. Raise any note one fret higher to make it a sharp, and play any note one fret lower to make it a flat. The example below shows how this applies to the 6th string.

9 1st/6th String Sharps and Flats



Once you fill in the gaps in this manner on the other strings, you'll know all the notes on the fretboard up to the 12th fret.

What about B#, E#, Cb, and Fb?

The notes B#, E#, Cb, and Fb don't appear in the string diagrams above. Remember that B/C and E/F are a half step apart. Technically, a B# and C are the same note, as are E# and F, Cb and B, and Fb and E. B#, E#, Cb, and Fb don't appear often, but you may see them occasionally in music outside this book.

Enharmonics

Enharmonics are discussed in *Melody Guitar Book 2*, but it's worth repeating the information here. If you look at the 6th String Sharps and Flats Diagram above, you'll notice that the following pairs of notes share the same fret: F# and Gb, G# and Ab, A# and Bb, C# and Db, D# and Eb. Notes that sound the same but are spelled differently are called **enharmonic equivalents**, or usually just **enharmonics**.

Fretboard Memory Exercise 3 – Again

Now that you know how to fill in the gaps between natural notes, go back to Fretboard Memory Exercise 3 on the previous page and do the exercise with random flat and sharp notes.

How long should I practice these memory exercises?

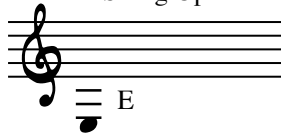

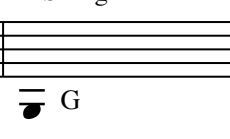
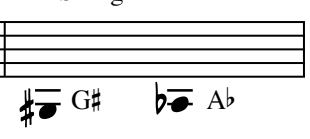
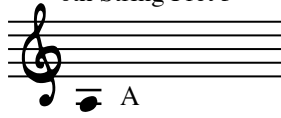
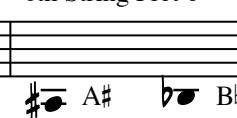
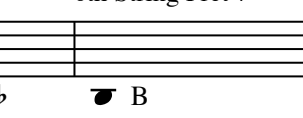
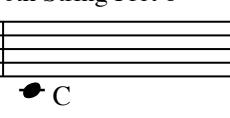
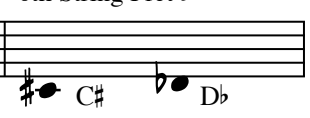
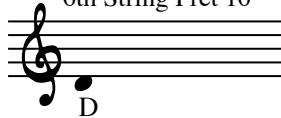
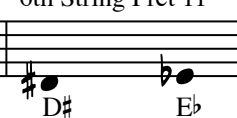
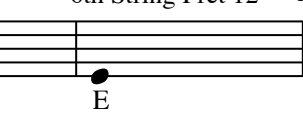
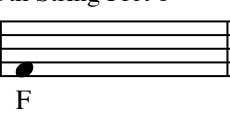
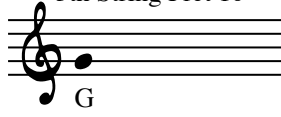
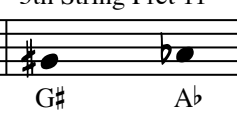
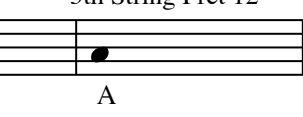
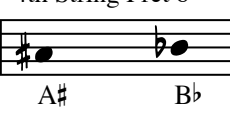
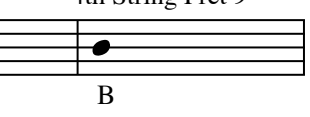

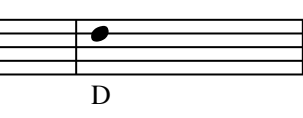






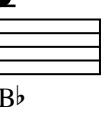
Move on from here even if you can't yet find each note instantly. While you are working through the next section, continue performing the fretboard memory exercises until they feel easy. This is all just academic knowledge right now. You'll remember the notes throughout the fretboard more and more easily as you practice the melodies and exercises in this book.

All Notes and Frets

In *Rhythm Guitar Book 3*, it is only necessary to remember the note names on each string. We'll take it a step further in *Melody Guitar Book 4* and learn which octave each of these notes is in. The chart below lists every note on the guitar from low E to high E, along with fret positions and string numbers. You'll find that most notes can be played in different areas of the fretboard.

This page is for reference only. You don't need to memorize this right now! You will gradually learn the fretboard as you work through this book.

10 Notes with String and Fret Positions

6th String Open	6th String Fret 1	6th String Fret 2	6th String Fret 3	6th String Fret 4	
					
5th String Open 6th String Fret 5	5th String Fret 1 6th String Fret 6	5th String Fret 2 6th String Fret 7	5th String Fret 3 6th String Fret 8	5th String Fret 4 6th String Fret 9	
					
4th String Open 5th String Fret 5 6th String Fret 10	4th String Fret 1 5th String Fret 6 6th String Fret 11	4th String Fret 2 5th String Fret 7 6th String Fret 12	4th String Fret 3 5th String Fret 8	4th String Fret 4 5th String Fret 9	
					
3rd String Open 4th String Fret 5 5th String Fret 10	3rd String Fret 1 4th String Fret 6 5th String Fret 11	3rd String Fret 2 4th String Fret 7 5th String Fret 12	3rd String Fret 3 4th String Fret 8	2nd String Open 3rd String Fret 4 4th String Fret 9	
					
2nd String Fret 1 3rd String Fret 5 4th String Fret 10	2nd String Fret 2 3rd String Fret 6 4th String Fret 11	2nd String Fret 3 3rd String Fret 7 4th String Fret 12	2nd String Fret 4 3rd String Fret 8	1st String Open 2nd String Fret 5 3rd String Fret 9	
					
1st String Fret 1 2nd String Fret 6 3rd String Fret 10	1st String Fret 2 2nd String Fret 7 3rd String Fret 11	1st String Fret 3 2nd String Fret 8 3rd String Fret 12	1st String Fret 4 2nd String Fret 9	1st String Fret 5 2nd String Fret 10	1st String Fret 6 2nd String Fret 11
					
1st String Fret 7 2nd String Fret 12	1st String Fret 8	1st String Fret 9	1st String Fret 10	1st String Fret 11	1st String Fret 12
		