

POWER CHORDS

Power chords consist of only two pitches: the root (the name of the chord) and the 5th. They are in essence the bottom part of the F and Bm style barred chords that we have already learned. Two power chord shapes are most prevalent in modern pop music: one based on the E String and one based on the A String.

Form 1

e —————
 B —————
 G —————
 D —(f+2)——
 A —(f+2)——
 E —(f)——

Form 2

e —————
 B —————
 G —(f+2)——
 D —(f+2)——
 A —(f)——
 E —————

Form 1 example (A5)

e —————
 B —————
 G —————
 D —7——
 A —7——
 E —5——

Form 2 example (D5)

e —————
 B —————
 G —7——
 D —7——
 A —5——
 E —————

The name of each power chord comes from the name of the lowest pitch. For example, in form 2 above the chord is “D5” because 5th fret on the A String is the note D. Thus, memorizing the notes of the E and A strings will allow you to know the names of all of the power chords on those strings. Use the chart below.

	Nut												12 th Fret											
E	F	F#	G	G#	A	A#	B	C	C#	D	D#	E	F	F#	G	G#	A	A#	B	C	C#			
B	C	C#	D	D#	E	F	F#	G	G#	A	A#	B	C	C#	D	D#	E	F	F#	G	G#			
G	G#	A	A#	B	C	C#	D	D#	E	F	F#	G	G#	A	A#	B	C	C#	D	D#	E			
D	D#	E	F	F#	G	G#	A	A#	B	C	C#	D	D#	E	F	F#	G	G#	A	A#	B			
A	A#	B	C	C#	D	D#	E	F	F#	G	G#	A	A#	B	C	C#	D	D#	E	F	F#			
E	F	F#	G	G#	A	A#	B	C	C#	D	D#	E	F	F#	G	G#	A	A#	B	C	C#			

What you will need to have memorized:

Fret:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
A String:	A	A#/Bb	B	C	C#/Db	D	D#/Eb	E	F
E String:	E	F	F#/Gb	G	G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb	B	C

Power Chord Examples:

Brain Stew – Green Day (Strumming: all downs)

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-7-7--5-5--4-4--3-3-2-2-| -7-7--5-5--4-4--3-3-3-3-2-2-2-2-|
-7-7--5-5--4-4--3-3-2-2-| -7-7--5-5--4-4--3-3-3-3-2-2-2-2-|
-5-5--3-3--2-2--1-1-0-0-| -5-5--3-3--2-2--1-1-1-1-0-0-0-0-|
    
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Smells Like Teen Spirit – Nirvana (Strumming: D U D [D U D U] D D)

e	----- ----- ----- -----
B	----- ----- ----- -----
G	-----3-3- -----6-6- -----3-3- -----6-6-
D	-3--3-3-xxxx-3-3- --6--6-6-xxxx-6-6- -3--3-3-xxxx-3-3- --6--6-6-xxxx-6-6-
A	-3--3-3-xxxx-1-1- --6--6-6-xxxx-4-4- -3--3-3-xxxx-1-1- --6--6-6-xxxx-4-4-
E	-1--1-1-xxxx----- --4--4-4-xxxx----- -1--1-1-xxxx----- --4--4-4-xxxx-----

Holiday – Green Day (Strumming: D D U for each chord)

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E|-----|-----|
B|-----|-----|
G|-10-10-10--6-6-6-----8-8-8---|-10-10-10--6-6-6-----8-8-8---|
D|-10-10-10--6-6-6--6-6-6--8-8-8---|-10-10-10--6-6-6--6-6-6--8-8-8---|
A|--8--8--8--4-4-4--6-6-6--6-6-6---|--8--8--8--4-4-4--6-6-6--6-6-6---|
E|-----4-4-4-----|-----4-4-4-----|
    
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