

# William Leavitt Modern Method For Guitar

**Triads (3 Note Chords)**

**CONSTRUCTION**—from Major Scales...

Scale degrees

Major: 1 3 5

Minor: 1 b3 5

Diminished: 1 b3 b5

Augmented: 1 3 5#

**INVERSIONS**

chord degrees

Root First Second 3rd 2nd 1st 3rd  
Position Inversion Inversion Pos. Inv. Inv. Pos.

[1 in bass] [3 in bass] [5 in bass]

...PRACTICE THE FOLLOWING (ACROSS THE FINGERBOARD) C TRIADS.  
MEMORIZE THE CHORD SPELLING AND FINGERING....

C Major

C Minor

C Diminished

C Augmented

NOTE COMMON FINGER and STRING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MOST FORMS...

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William Leavitt's *Modern Method for Guitar* is a pivotal resource for guitarists seeking a comprehensive and structured approach to learning the instrument. This method is renowned for its clarity and systematic progression, making it an ideal choice for both beginners and those looking to refine their skills. Developed at the Berklee College of Music, Leavitt's approach integrates various musical concepts, techniques, and styles, allowing students to develop a well-rounded musicianship. This article delves into the intricacies of Leavitt's method, its structure, and its enduring impact on guitar education.

## Overview of William Leavitt's Philosophy

William Leavitt, an accomplished guitarist and educator, designed the *Modern Method for Guitar* to address the diverse needs of students in contemporary music. His philosophy emphasizes the

following key principles:

- **Comprehensive Learning:** The method covers a wide range of topics, including sight-reading, ear training, improvisation, and music theory.
- **Practical Application:** Skills learned through the method are immediately applicable in various musical contexts, promoting a hands-on approach to learning.
- **Progressive Structure:** The course is divided into three volumes, each building upon the skills acquired in the previous one, ensuring a logical progression.

This structured approach not only facilitates learning but also empowers students to explore their musical interests and develop their unique voice on the guitar.

## Structure of the Modern Method

The Modern Method for Guitar is divided into three volumes, each designed to guide students through progressively challenging material. Below is an overview of each volume:

### Volume 1

The first volume serves as the foundation for guitar playing. It introduces essential concepts and techniques, including:

1. **Basic Techniques:** Students learn fundamental techniques such as proper finger placement,

picking, and fretting.

2. **Notation and Tablature:** The method teaches how to read standard notation and tablature, enabling students to understand and communicate musical ideas effectively.
3. **Chord Progressions:** Basic open chords and their progressions are introduced, allowing students to play simple songs.
4. **Scales and Melodies:** The major scale is explored, along with simple melodies, setting the stage for improvisation.

Volume 1 emphasizes building a strong technical foundation while encouraging students to develop their musical ear and creativity.

## Volume 2

In the second volume, students delve deeper into more advanced techniques and concepts, including:

1. **Barre Chords:** Introduction to barre chords expands the range of harmonic possibilities available to students.
2. **Advanced Scales:** The minor scale and pentatonic scales are introduced, enhancing improvisational skills.
3. **Rhythm and Timing:** Students learn more complex rhythmic patterns and time signatures, crucial for playing in various styles.
4. **Improvisation:** Techniques for improvising over chord progressions are explored, encouraging

students to express themselves musically.

Volume 2 builds on the foundation laid in Volume 1, pushing students to explore new techniques and styles while developing their personal musical identity.

## Volume 3

The final volume focuses on mastering advanced concepts and refining existing skills. Key areas of study include:

1. **Extended Chords:** Students learn about seventh chords, ninth chords, and other extended harmonies, broadening their harmonic vocabulary.
2. **Jazz and Contemporary Styles:** The method incorporates various musical styles, including jazz, rock, and blues, allowing students to adapt their playing to different genres.
3. **Composition and Arrangement:** Techniques for composing and arranging music are introduced, encouraging students to create their own pieces.
4. **Performance Skills:** Emphasis is placed on developing stage presence and performance techniques, preparing students for live performance.

Volume 3 serves as a culmination of the skills developed throughout the method, equipping students for advanced playing and performance.

# Benefits of the Modern Method for Guitar

The Modern Method for Guitar offers numerous benefits for students at all levels:

## 1. Systematic Learning

The structured approach allows students to progress methodically, ensuring they master each concept before moving on to more complex material. This reduces frustration and enhances retention.

## 2. Versatility

With its comprehensive coverage of various musical styles and techniques, the method prepares students to play in multiple genres. Whether a student is interested in classical, jazz, rock, or blues, Leavitt's method provides the tools needed to succeed.

## 3. Focus on Musicianship

Leavitt's method emphasizes not just technical proficiency but also overall musicianship. By integrating ear training, sight-reading, and improvisation, students develop a well-rounded skill set that enhances their musicality.

## 4. Suitable for All Levels

Whether a complete beginner or an experienced guitarist, the Modern Method is adaptable to individual learning needs. Students can start from the beginning or select specific sections that align

with their interests and goals.

## Conclusion

William Leavitt's Modern Method for Guitar has established itself as a cornerstone of guitar education, providing a comprehensive and structured path for musicianship. Its focus on practical application, progressive learning, and versatility makes it an invaluable resource for aspiring guitarists. As music continues to evolve, Leavitt's method remains relevant, guiding countless students on their musical journeys. For anyone serious about mastering the guitar, engaging with this method promises not only skill development but also a deeper understanding and appreciation of music as a whole. Whether you are a beginner or an advanced player, the Modern Method for Guitar can unlock new possibilities and inspire creativity in your musical endeavors.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What is the main focus of William Leavitt's Modern Method for Guitar?**

The main focus of William Leavitt's Modern Method for Guitar is to provide a comprehensive approach to guitar playing, emphasizing sight reading, music theory, and technique through progressively challenging exercises.

### **Who is the target audience for Leavitt's Modern Method for Guitar?**

The target audience for Leavitt's Modern Method for Guitar includes both beginners and intermediate guitarists who are looking to improve their skills and knowledge of music theory while learning to read music.

### **How does Leavitt's method differ from traditional guitar teaching**

## methods?

Leavitt's method differs from traditional guitar teaching methods by incorporating a structured curriculum that focuses on reading standard notation, understanding chord progressions, and developing finger dexterity, rather than solely relying on tablature or by-ear learning.

## What types of musical styles does the Modern Method for Guitar cover?

The Modern Method for Guitar covers a variety of musical styles, including classical, jazz, and popular music, providing a well-rounded approach to guitar education.

## Is there a specific age group that benefits most from Leavitt's Modern Method for Guitar?

While Leavitt's Modern Method for Guitar is suitable for all ages, it is particularly beneficial for teenagers and adults who are serious about learning the guitar and wish to deepen their musical understanding.

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