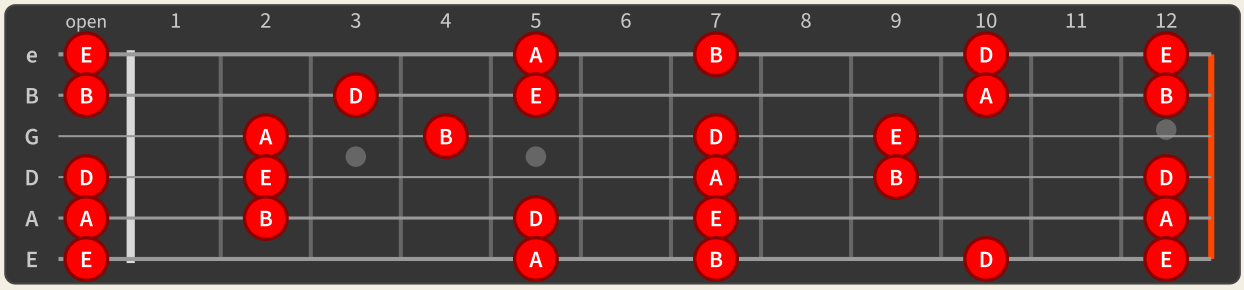
GUITARTRAINING.ONLINE · FREE MICRO COURSE

Spell BEAD

Learn the notes of the fretboard

FOUR NOTES · ONE SIMPLE TRICK · THE WHOLE NECK

B, E, A and D spell a word, so they are easy to remember. Learn where those four notes sit, move back one fret for their flats, and you already know 8 of the 12 notes. This short course shows you how, using the free Fretboard Notes tool and a metronome. The Triad Explorer's BEAD backing tracks are a bonus that comes with the Guitar Triads course.



Every B, E, A and D on the neck, open strings to the 12th fret, drawn the way the tools draw a fretboard. High E is the top line.

1 Why start with BEAD

There are 12 notes in an octave. Trying to learn all of them at once is a tall order. Start with four: **B, E, A and D**. They spell a word, they are four of the open strings, and they sit in a tidy pattern on every string. Once those are under your belt, the rest of the neck gets much easier, including the root note of a triad.

LEARN THESE
B E A D
They spell BEAD

→

MOVE BACK ONE FRET
B♭ E♭ A♭ D♭
The flat of each one

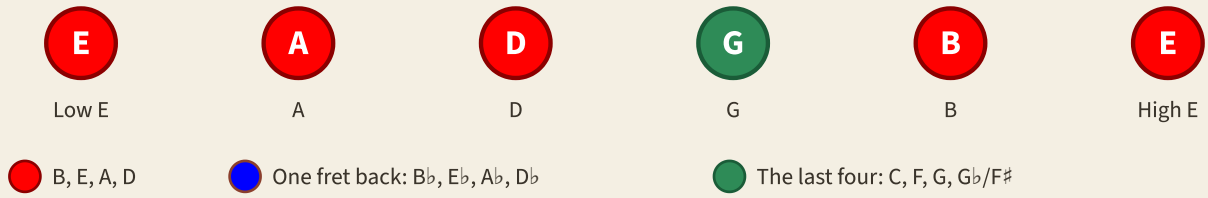
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THAT IS
8 of 12
notes in the octave

The last four are **C, F, G and G♭/F♯**. You will pick those up with a few landmarks, once BEAD and the flats are solid. Sharps are just the other name for the same frets: B♭ is the same note as A♯, E♭ is the same as D♯, and so on. This course uses flats, which matches the Fretboard Notes tool (Use Flats is on by default).

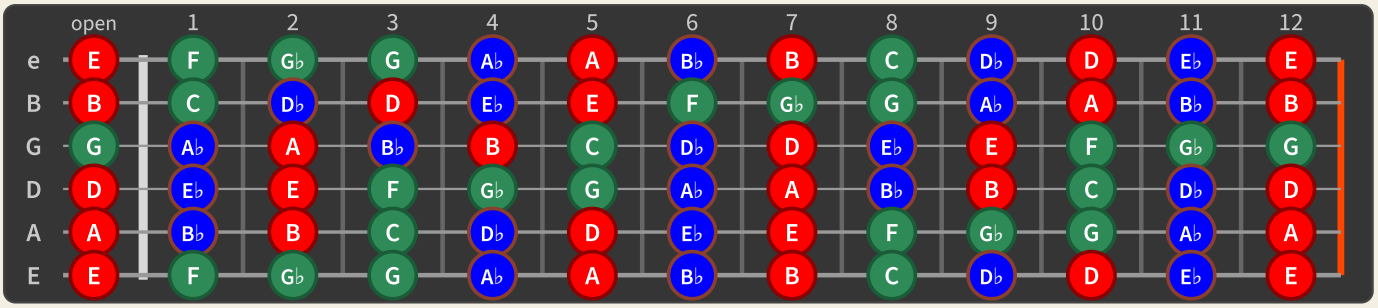
2 You already know some of them

Standard tuning, low to high, is E, A, D, G, B, E. Four of those six open strings *are* BEAD notes, and the leftover open string is G, one of the last four. So before you fret a single note, you already have a landmark for five letter names.

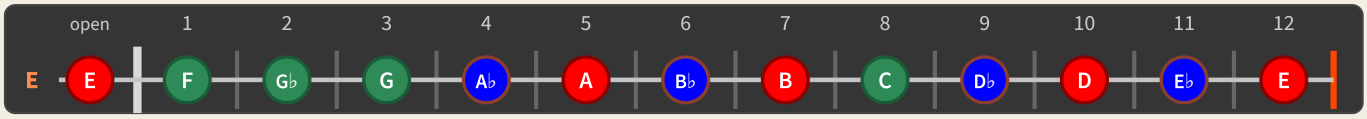


B, E, A, D — One fret back: B♭, E♭, A♭, D♭ — The last four: C, F, G, G♭/F♯

Here is the same idea across the whole neck, and then zoomed in on the low E. Red is BEAD, blue is one fret back, green is the last four. From the 12th fret the pattern starts again, an octave higher.



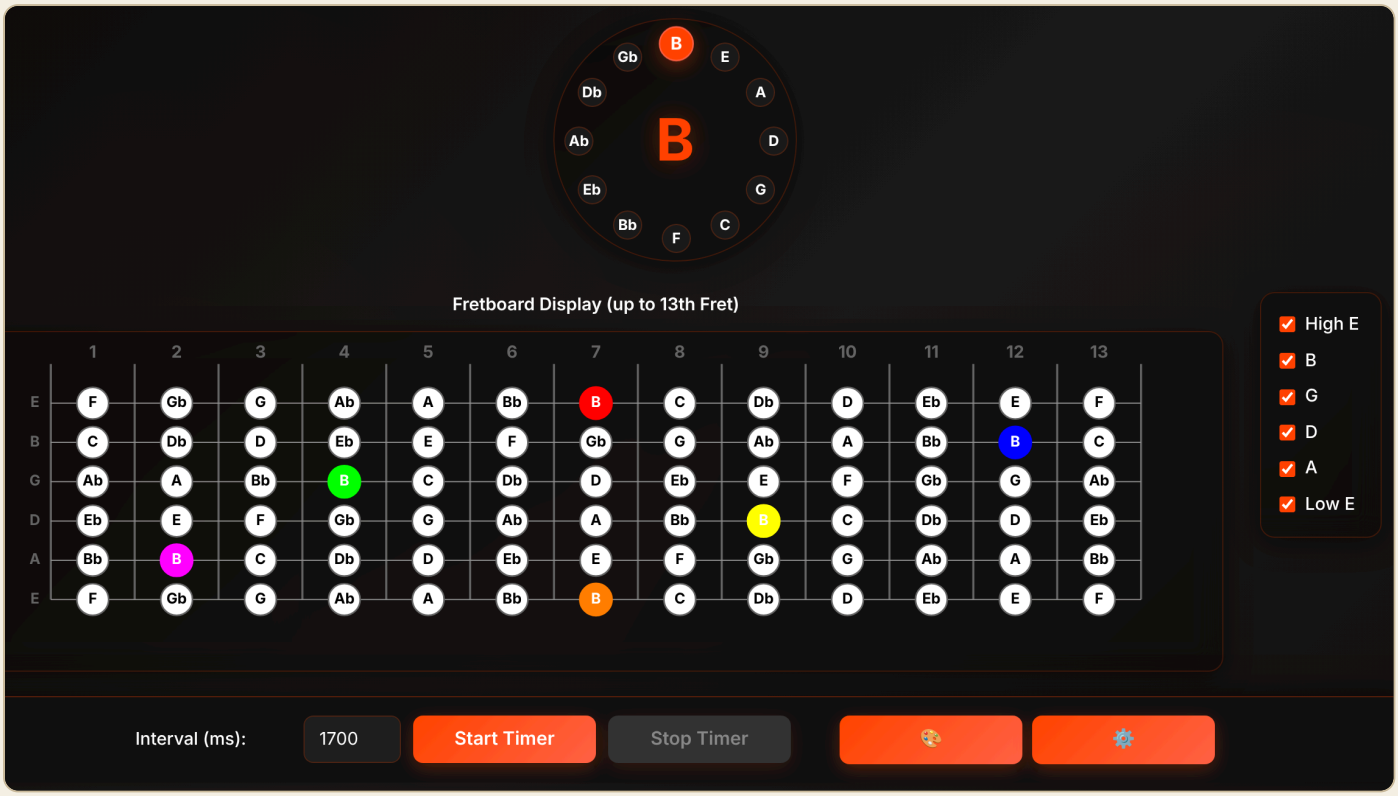
Low E string, open to the 12th fret



TRY THIS
Say the open low E out loud, then find A at fret 5, B at fret 7 and D at fret 10. Those four red dots are the whole BEAD pattern on this string. The blue dot sitting just behind each red one is its flat.

3 Using Fretboard Notes

The companion tool is **Fretboard Notes**, listed on the tools homepage and labelled *NOTES OF THE FRETBOARD* in the header. It is free, and it walks you through the notes with a timer, spoken names and a highlighted fretboard. Open it at **tools.guitartraining.online/fretboard/notesofthefretboard.php**.



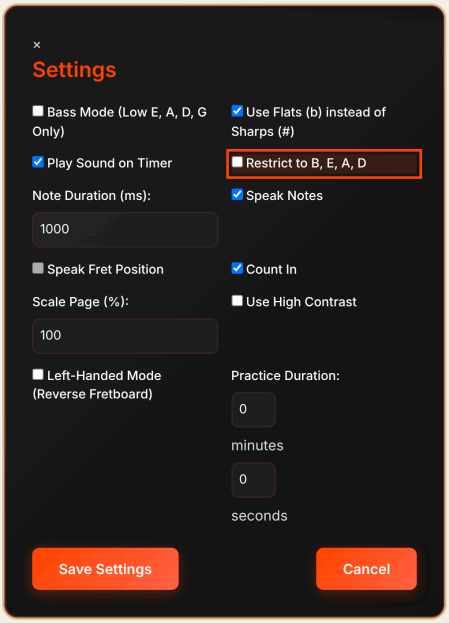
The live tool, with every string ticked and B selected on the circle of fourths. The coloured dots are every B on the board. The fretboard is labelled **Fretboard Display (up to 13th Fret)**, with high E at the top. Open strings are named on the left; the dots start at fret 1.

Restrict the timer to BEAD

1. Click the **cog button** on the right of the timer bar. Its tooltip is **Settings**.
2. Tick **Restrict to B, E, A, D**.
3. Leave **Use Flats (b) instead of Sharps (#)** ticked (it is on by default). Click **Save Settings**.
4. Tick the string checkboxes you want to practise: **High E**, **B**, **G**, **D**, **A** and **Low E**. Only **Low E** is ticked when you first open the tool, which is the best place to start.
5. Click **Start Timer**. If **Count In** is ticked (it is, by default) you will hear 4, 3, 2, 1, Go!, then the tool highlights B, then E, then A, then D, and repeats. The default **Interval (ms)** is 1700. **Speak Notes** says each name out loud; **Play Sound on Timer** also plays a tone.

The circle of fourths at the top still shows all 12 notes, even when the timer is restricted. Click any note to highlight every matching fret on your chosen strings, and to show it in the centre of the circle. The restriction applies to the timer, not to the circle. Click **Stop Timer** when you want to pause.

> **TRY THIS**
>
> Start with only Low E ticked and Restrict to B, E, A, D turned on. Try to say each note and put your finger on it before the tool speaks. When that feels easy, tick one more string. With only one string ticked, you can also tick Speak Fret Position in Settings, so the tool says the fret number as well as the name. That checkbox is greyed out when more than one string is ticked, as in the screenshot.



Settings. The box you need is **Restrict to B, E, A, D**. Click Save Settings after you tick it.

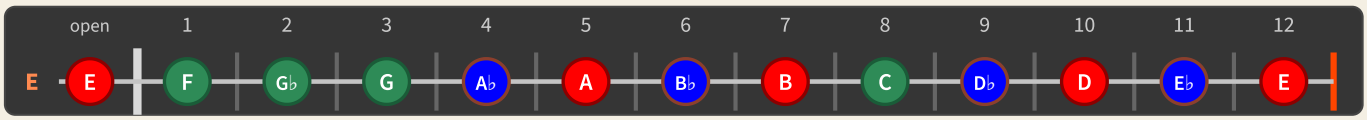
4 Move back one fret, and you double your knowledge

Every BEAD note has a flat sitting one fret behind it (towards the nut, or one fret lower in pitch). Learn where B, E, A and D are, then simply shift back one fret:

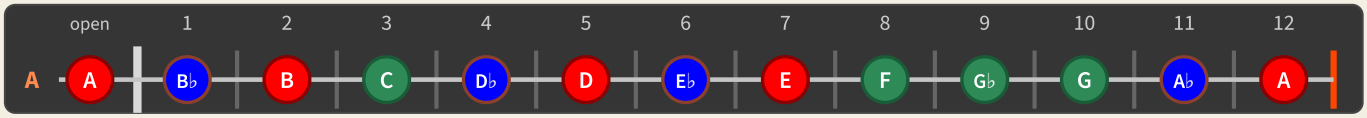
BEAD NOTE	ONE FRET BACK	THE OTHER NAME (A SHARP)
B	B♭	A♯
E	E♭	D♯
A	A♭	G♯
D	D♭	C♯

A sharp and a flat that share a fret are the same pitch with two names. That is called an **enharmonic**. You do not have to learn them twice. This course sticks with flats, as the tool does when Use Flats is on. If you ever untick that setting, the same frets will be labelled A♯, D♯, G♯ and C♯ instead.

Low E: each blue note is one fret behind a red BEAD note



A string: the same idea, starting from open A



On the low E, B is at fret 7 so B♭ is at fret 6; A is at fret 5 so A♭ is at fret 4; D is at fret 10 so D♭ is at fret 9; E is open and at fret 12, so E♭ is at fret 11. The A string starts on A, and the same one-fret shift applies.

> **TRY THIS**
> In Fretboard Notes, leave Restrict off and click B♭, E♭, A♭ and D♭ on the circle of fourths, one at a time. For each one, first find its BEAD neighbour one fret higher, then move back. You already know the hard part.

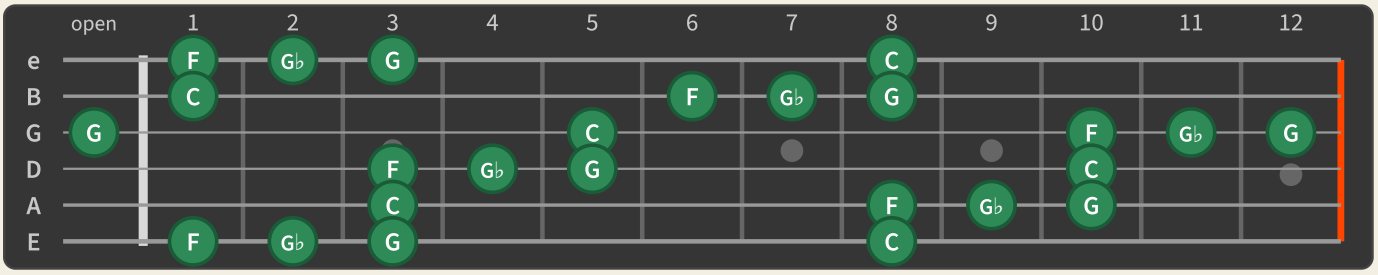
5 The last four notes

That leaves **C, F, G and G♭/F♯**. Two of them sit right next to notes you already know, because there is no sharp or flat between B and C, or between E and F.

NOTE	THE EASY LANDMARK	USEFUL PLACES TO FIND IT
C	One fret above any B	Fret 1 of the B string; fret 8 of the low E; fret 3 of the A string
F	One fret above any E	Fret 1 of both E strings; fret 8 of the A string; fret 3 of the D string
G	The open G string	Fret 3 of both E strings; fret 5 of the D string; fret 10 of the A string
G♭ / F♯	Between F and G, or one fret behind any G	Fret 2 of both E strings; fret 9 of the A string; fret 4 of the D string

G♭ and F♯ are two names for the same fret, just like the BEAD flats and their sharps. Once you can find G, move back one fret and you have it. After that, untick Restrict to B, E, A, D and use the timer on all 12 notes, still starting on one string.

A handy way to see the order: the tool's circle of fourths starts at B at the top and runs clockwise B, E, A, D, then G, C, F, then the flats B♭, E♭, A♭, D♭, G♭, and back to B. BEAD is the first four notes of that circle.



The last four notes only: C, F, G and G♭/F♯. Use the landmarks above to find them, then join them to the BEAD and flat notes you already have.

6 Practise the notes in time

When you can find B, E, A and D with the Fretboard Notes timer, put them to a pulse. The free **Metronome** at **tools.guitartraining.online/metronome/metronome.php** is all you need for this. Set it to 80 beats per minute, in 4/4. Give each note two bars (eight beats, or about six seconds): say **B** for two bars, then E, then A, then D, and repeat. Start on the low E string only, with Restrict to B, E, A, D still on in Fretboard Notes if you want a quiet check between changes.

A SIMPLE BEAD CYCLE, AT 80 BPM

B	E	A	D	THEN IT REPEATS
bars 1 and 2	bars 3 and 4	bars 5 and 6	bars 7 and 8	

A simple way to practise

1. Open Fretboard Notes with Restrict to B, E, A, D turned on, and only Low E ticked at first.
2. Open the Metronome in another window and set 80 bpm, 4/4.
3. Start the metronome. For two bars, find every B on your chosen string (or strings). Then E, then A, then D.
4. When that feels easy, tick one more string, still at 80 bpm. Slow the metronome if you need more time.
5. Later, turn Restrict off and run the same two-bars-each idea on the flats, then on all 12 notes.

TRY THIS

Keep Fretboard Notes open as a quiet quiz: click a note on the circle of fourths only after you have already put your finger on it. The tool confirms what you just found.

BONUS, WITH GUITAR TRIADS

The **Triad Explorer** has four backing tracks that cycle these same roots with a band: `BEAD Set 1 (E, 80 BPM)` through `BEAD Set 4 (E, 80 BPM)`, one track per string set, at the same 80 bpm pulse. They are a bonus that comes with the **Guitar Triads** course. Your Triad Explorer access code is included in the full Guitar Triads course. A locked preview is at **tools.guitartraining.online/triads/**.



A preview of the Explorer drop-down. These four BEAD tracks unlock with the Guitar Triads course.

If you already have Guitar Triads

Enter the access code from that PDF, choose a BEAD track, match its String Set number, tick Follow Chords, start at 0.5x, and find the root (B, E, A, D) as the chord changes. The skill is the same one you are building with the metronome.

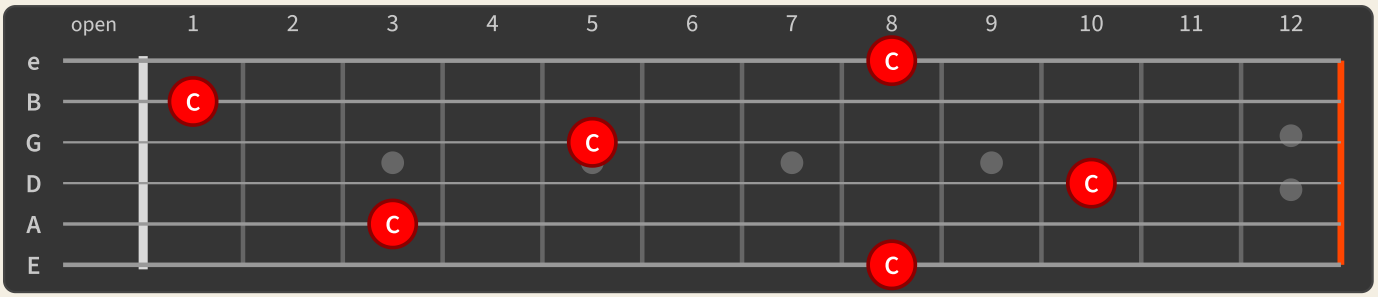
7 A seven-day practice plan

Ten minutes a day is enough. Keep the guitar in your lap and Fretboard Notes open, with the Metronome to hand when you practise in time. If a day feels shaky, repeat it before you move on. There is no prize for rushing the last four notes.

Day 1 10 MIN	**Low E only, BEAD only.** In Fretboard Notes, leave only Low E ticked, turn on Restrict to B, E, A, D, and start the timer at 1700 ms (slower if you like, by lowering Interval (ms)). Say each note and fret it before the tool speaks. With one string ticked you can also turn on Speak Fret Position.
Day 2 10 MIN	**Add the A and D strings.** Still restricted to BEAD. One new string at a time is better than all three at once. Notice how the same four notes form a pattern that simply starts on a different open string.
Day 3 10 MIN	**All six strings, still BEAD only.** When the timer feels comfortable, open the Metronome at 80 bpm and cycle B, E, A and D, two bars each, finding each root on the strings you have ticked.
Day 4 10 MIN	**The flats.** For every BEAD note you find, move back one fret and name the flat. In the tool, turn Restrict off and click B♭, E♭, A♭ and D♭ on the circle. Then repeat the same string plan from Days 1 to 3 with those four flats.
Day 5 10 MIN	**The last four, then all 12.** Use the landmarks: C is one fret above B, F is one fret above E, G is the open G string (and fret 3 of both E strings), and G♭/F♯ is one fret behind G. Then run the timer with Restrict off, still starting on one string.
Day 6 10 MIN	**Play along with a pulse on every string.** Metronome at 80 bpm, then a little faster if you are clean, cycling B, E, A and D for two bars each on all six strings. Keep aiming for the root of each name.
Day 7 10 MIN	**Find triad roots.** Pick any chord name you know (C, A, D, E, G, or a BEAD note) and find every root of it on the neck before you worry about the 3rd and 5th. Then look at the two courses below: you are ready for them.

8 Finding the root of a triad

A triad is three notes: a root, a 3rd and a 5th. The root is the note the chord is named after, and it is the most useful note to be able to find in a hurry. After a week with BEAD, a lot of those roots are notes you already know. A, D, E and B turn up constantly in beginner songs; C is one fret above B; G is the open G string; F is one fret above E. Identifying the root of a triad is much easier once those places are familiar, and the other two notes of the shape then have somewhere to sit.



Every C on the neck, open strings to the 12th fret. Each one sits one fret above a B, which you already know from BEAD. Find the red root first, then the 3rd and 5th have somewhere to sit. That is the start of Guitar Triads.

GUITAR TRIADS The natural next step. Every major, minor, diminished and augmented shape on all four string sets, with play-along tracks from the Explorer, including the BEAD tracks as a bonus. Your Triad Explorer access code is included in the full Guitar Triads course. A paid micro course at **guitartraining.online/triads** ($8)

HOW CHORDS WORK If you want the numbers behind those shapes: how 1, 3 and 5 make a triad, and how sevenths, ninths and thirteenths grow from the same idea. A paid micro course at **guitartraining.online/how-chords-work** (pay what you think it's worth, from $2)

Both courses live on guitartraining.online. Fretboard Notes and the Metronome stay free. Come back to this free course whenever the notes need a top-up: four letters, one fret back, and a couple of landmarks will get you home.