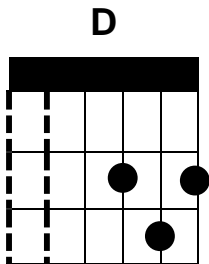


Playing D Major



Well, here it is... the beautifully understated D Major (or just 'D') chord.

Often, one of the first chords taught and, for many, a little problematic as it is a struggle to get a clean sound from each of the strings.

If this is happening for you then please take heart from knowing you are not alone and it is quite certain that, with some patience and persistence, you will be able to play this cleanly, smoothly and quickly. Even experienced guitarists can struggle when faced with a new chord grip but it is always worth the effort and time to learn to play it well.

Here are some reminders, and some tips, on how to get this lovely sounding chord grip 'into your fingers'.

Firstly, let's have some basic reminders about how to play it.

- Place your first finger on the 3rd thinnest string – the G string at the second fret
 - Place your second finger on the thinnest string – the high-e string at the second fret
 - Place your third finger on the 2nd thinnest string – the B string at the third fret
- Notice how this shape forms a kind of triangle with the point going toward the body of the guitar. Remember this shape and formation of fingers.
- We play the D Major chord by strumming the four thinnest strings.
 - Try slowly picking each string and listen to see if there is and buzzing sound, or a muted (not ringing) 'thip' 'thip' sound as you play any of the four strings.

If each note sounds clear then well done! You have already mastered D Major!

However, if you have got some lack of clarity (which is probably why you're reading this), then read on and I'll do my level best to guide you to the clean sound you seek.

When tackling any issues, first read through *all* of the advice on the next page then think about how you might apply it – which sequence is most important for you to consider and which points might need addressing in tandem?

Three likely causes for any problems are dealt with in some detail.

The advice here is given specifically for the D major chord but you will see how the same considerations can be applied to any new (problematic) chord grip.

Playing D Major

- **Firstly you may not be pressing the string hard enough.**

Take a short break from playing the chord and relax your hand and fingertips. When you are ready, focus on just that first problem string (you can remove the other fingers for now) and beginning with the lightest possible touch, gradually press more firmly whilst picking the string until you have a nice clean ring.

You should be aware that you do not need to press the string against the wood of the guitar neck. It is only necessary to push the string cleanly against the fret – the strip of metal that runs across the neck. You should not apply more pressure than is needed to get a clear sound.

Also note that your finger should be just behind the fret strip, not on top of it and not in the middle of, or towards the back of, the fret space. The closer the finger is to the fret strip, the less pressure you will have to apply to get a good sound.

- **Secondly, one of your other fingers may be touching the adjacent string as it is meant to vibrate.**

This can take a lot of experimenting to find the correct position for your fingers but it is quite certain that you will be able to do it. Have faith here and try not to get frustrated. If that is happening, take a break from it or talk to a fellow guitarist (like me!).

Again, take a short break from playing the chord and relax your hand and fingertips. When you are ready, focus on just the third finger on the 3rd fret of the B (2nd thinnest) string. See the image to the left and only play the position shown as a filled-in black dot. Now apply the correct pressure to have a clearly ringing note (see point 1 above) and then slowly pick the three thinnest strings, starting with the open G string, then fretted B string, and then the open high-E string.

If the G string buzzes, try repositioning your 3rd finger very slightly lower on the neck and try again until this open string rings clearly.

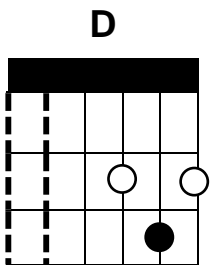
If the high-E string buzzes, try repositioning your 3rd finger very slightly higher on the neck and try again until this open string rings clearly. Now try the G string again. When adjusting your finger up or down, avoid bending the string.

If you can't fix the high-E string this way (yet!) or fixing the high-E string has caused the G string to buzz again then it is likely that your third finger is not pointing straight down toward the fretboard and is instead at an angle and so causing one or both strings to sound unclear. If so lower your thumb on the back of the neck of the guitar allowing your fingers to curl around further.

If that is not the case, then check you are not pressing too hard with your third finger causing the pad of the finger to spread and touch the next strings.

- **Thirdly, it could be the position and angle of your fretting hand.**

If your fingers are reaching for the strings diagonally across the fret then this can also cause your finger pads to touch on the adjacent strings. If this is the case you will need to rotate your wrist slightly (push it outwards from your body) so that your fingers (especially the last knuckle of each finger) can curve around to be placed perpendicular (pointing straight down) to the fretboard and less likely to cause string muting. They needn't be at a perfect 90°, but neither should they be at a 45° angle.



When the third finger is clear and the open strings also ring clearly then retry the full D shape. If you have further buzzing then apply these same points of advice to each finger.