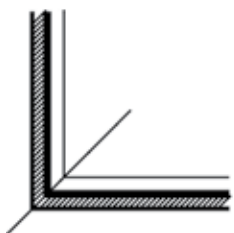
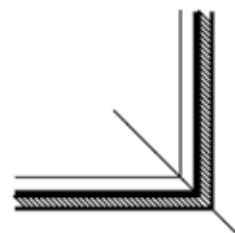


# UNLOCKING THE FRETBOARD

*Unpacking all triads and 7<sup>th</sup> chords in all inversions  
all across the guitar neck*



Sebastián Cruz  
2019



UNLOCKING THE FRETBOARD

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*all across the guitar neck.* Copyright © 2019 by Sebastián Cruz

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 camafeo notes

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[www.sebastiancruznotes.com](http://www.sebastiancruznotes.com)

To my family and to all my students past, present and future



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## INTRODUCTION


The guitar fretboard is such a puzzle that you can find as many methods and approaches to tackle the fingerboard as you can find guitarists. Among the hundreds of valuable method books there are tons of chord encyclopedias and compendiums that, although useful, it's hard not to get lost amidst hundreds of chord "shapes" without a deeper context.

This book offers an organization of chord material that opens up the fretboard and in the process, removes as much confusion as possible.

This is both a compendium and a basic method. The collection of triads, 7<sup>th</sup> chords, and inversions is not intended to be all-inclusive. Instead, I've broken down the voicings and string groupings to their bare essentials to provide a solid foundation to build upon. Like fundamental building blocks to a more complete understanding of the fretboard.

Since the method is simple it is approachable from an early stage of development, and its usefulness extends to the most advanced levels. I will detail further down the basic knowledge required to be able to start using this book. If you are unfamiliar with any of the preliminary concepts I've included links to videos with concise explanations. Most likely, as you peruse through these pages you'll find both familiar and unfamiliar things. I suggest taking your time so that you may "fill-in any holes" of your knowledge of chords.


For additional supporting materials go to [unlockingthefretboard.com](http://unlockingthefretboard.com)


Where this icon appears  it means that there's a relevant video on the website.

Where this icon appears  it means that there's a relevant PDF document on the website.

## BASIC REQUIREMENTS

A basic understanding of what chords, chord inversions, close position, and open voicings are 

You should know how to read a chord diagram 

You should know all the basic major, minor, and dominant 7<sup>th</sup> open string guitar chords 

You should be able to find any note on any string of the guitar

## THE METHOD

To organize what seemed like an overwhelming amount of information into something approachable I pared it down to basics by considering two fundamental aspects of guitar chords: *string groupings* and *chords inversions*.

I experimented with every combination possible until I found what I believe to be the most essential string groupings and voicings. For ease of presentation, I labeled the string groupings according to the lowest string used. For 7<sup>th</sup> chords, which are all in open voicings, I specified whether I used drop 2 or drop 3. Without getting too technical, drop 2 and drop 3 are just two ways to distribute seventh chords and open the close position voicings which are, for the most part, unplayable on guitar. Once the groupings

were found I ‘followed’ each shape consistently through all its inversions. You’ll notice that some of the commonly used shapes for chords are not in this book. For instance, barred chords or chords using all 6 strings. The reason for this is that I’m focusing on shapes without repeated notes so that I can move each chord tone to the next for the following inversion. Part of the power of this method is that you will not only learn a shape, but you’ll understand it. You’ll see the root, third, fifth, or seventh in every shape you play. Once these “building blocks” become natural to you, all other chords and shapes not covered in this book will be easily understood and seen as emerging from this fundamental material.

To internalize this material I came up with a practice protocol, explained later in detail, by creating 4 basic restrictions that come out of the two basic concepts of string groupings and chord inversions; and applying those restrictions to useful chords sequences moving by 4<sup>th</sup>s, major 3<sup>rds</sup> and minor 3<sup>rds</sup>.

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Diagrams are laid out visually in terms of *string groupings* and *chord inversions*

### *String Groupings*

Chords appear grouped based on which string has the lowest note. All the shapes with the lowest note on string ⑥ are part of the same grouping. Similarly, all strings grouped under ⑤ are said to belong to the same string grouping, and have their lowest note on the 5th string, and so on.

### *Chord Inversions*

I laid out the chord diagrams so that each inversion would be in the same column. In the case of triads, the first column is for root position, the next column is for 1<sup>st</sup> inversion and the third column is for 2<sup>nd</sup> inversion.

	Root Position	1 <sup>st</sup> Inversion	2 <sup>nd</sup> Inversion
OPEN VOICINGS			
	<b>Major</b>		
⑥			
⑤			
④			

...end of preview  
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