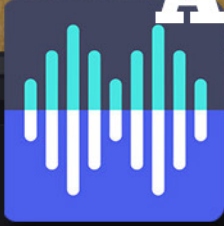# Guitar Songs Masters Academy

YOUR Favorite Songs, With YOUR Unique Sound

Alon Cooper

The 14 Most USEFUL Guitar Apps

Hey all!

I decided to write this resource after seeing a lot of "Best Guitar Apps" lists out there, while unfortunately most of them provide a lot of apps that are not actually very useful to the everyday guitarist. This list aims to be different, and was made after testing almost 200 apps throughout the years.

You'll find a variety of apps in here, some of them are useful for any guitarist, while others will be more relevant to different stages in your guitar studies.

Anyway — there's a lot of useful information here, and I am sure that you'll find some cool additions to your guitar life.

Enjoy my friend!

-Cooper

The Best Metronome / Drum Machine:

Drum Beats+
APP STORE / ANDROID

Metronomes and drum machines are a big part of my daily practice routine and will be of a major help to anyone in order to get your time keeping skills a lot better. Besides, it's always a ton of fun to play your favorite songs with some special / groovy drum beats - since the song feels totally different and fresh. For example, try Green Day's Time of Your Life with a funky blues beat and see what I mean. (;

The app currently has over 300 beats that were recorded by a real drummer, (not by a drum machine, like how it is in most similar apps) so it feels totally real. I plug it into my stereo system, choose one of the countless drumming patterns, push play, and it simply feels like there's a drummer in the room and I'm jammin' with a band.

My metronome of choice: For the best simple metronome, (when the drum grooves are too much) I use the app Metronome by Soundbrenner which has all the metronome features that you can think of, and it's free. However, usually I like using a physical metronome instead of an app - since it's a lot more intuitive.

I like chillin' and practicing at home while feeling like I have my own private drummer in my stereo system.
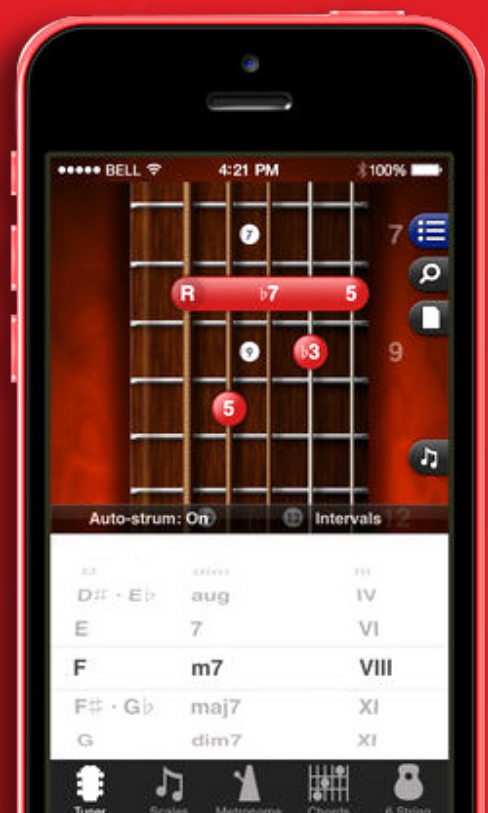
The Best Chord Dictionary And All-Round Guitar App:

Guitar Toolkit

APP STORE / (SEE ANDROID ALTERNATIVE BELOW)

Guitar Toolkit has a smooth and intuitive interface that'll show you literally any chord that there is on this planet - in any position along the fretboard. Just name the chord and it'll do the rest and show you some cool new ideas. It also has loads of other features such as a super-fast tuner, a scale library (with literally any scale that you can think of) a metronome, drum patterns builder, and more, so for me it's one of the most used guitar apps and some of the best 10$ I have spent in the App Store.

It also works just as well (and contains all the relevant chords, scales, etc.) for any other stringed instrument that you might play - from ukelele to mandolin and banjo.

***Android users**: Guitar Toolkit is not available yet, so instead I recommend Guitar Chords Book which covers the chord dictionary part very well. For the other functions - see the other apps below.

The Guitar Toolkit app has all the utilities that you can think of, including the most comprehensive chord library that I have seen. Unfortunately, it's only available for iPhones at the moment.

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The Best Tuner:

Guitar Tuna
APP STORE / ANDROID

There are at least a hundred tuners out there - but a lot of them are slow, not responsive, and not very accurate. Guitar Tuna is the best free tuner - very responsive and accurate.

My favorite feature is that it gives you a "lockdown" sound and visual cue when your guitar is perfectly tuned. Still, Guitar Toolkit is better if you are looking for a wider array of features in one app other than the tuner.

As much as tuner apps are nice, they are never as reliable and quick as tuners that attach to the headstock and work on the sound vibrations. (so that outside noises don't bother them) My favorite clip-on tuner used to be the So-There clip on(~20$).

However, a friend recently showed me the Polytune polyphonic tuner(~50$) which is my new favorite, because it lets you tune "on the fly" by telling you which strings are out of tune with just one strum across all of the strings, instead of the individual plucking we're all used to.
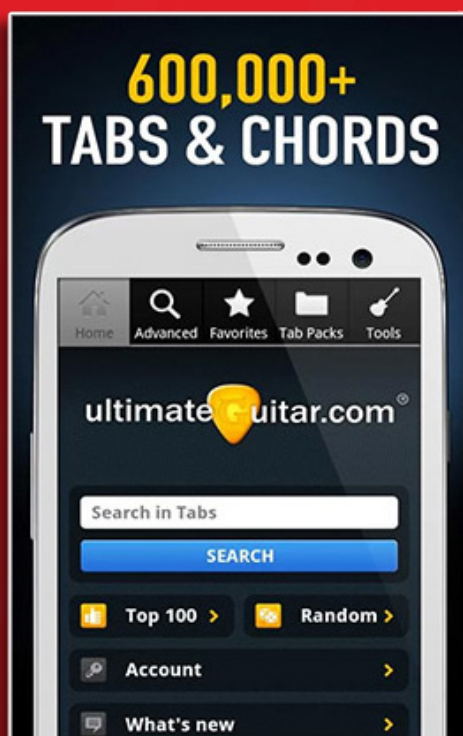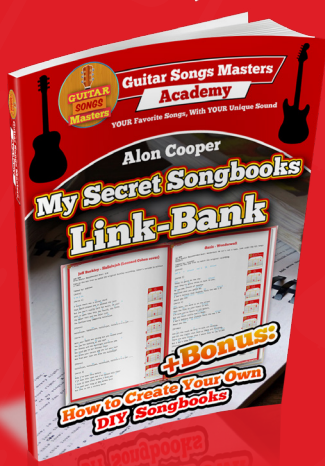
The Best Song's Chord Sheets App:

Ultimate Guitar
APP STORE / ANDROID

Ultimate Guitar Tabs is my go-to for song's chord sheets. It is the biggest and most comprehensive chords website / app and you can find correct chord sheets for almost any song that's out there, shown in a very convenient way - with auto scroll, transpose tools and other useful features that work well.

By the way - it's a lot more convenient to use with a tablet, so in case you have one - this is the time to get it out.

Another thing that I can recommend here instead of reading the chord sheets from a screen, is to print out your own personalized chord songbooks.I explain exactly how I did it with over 10 custom books - in this *other Guitar Songs Masters PDF resource:*

The Best "Real Book" App:
(Jazz Players - this one's for you)
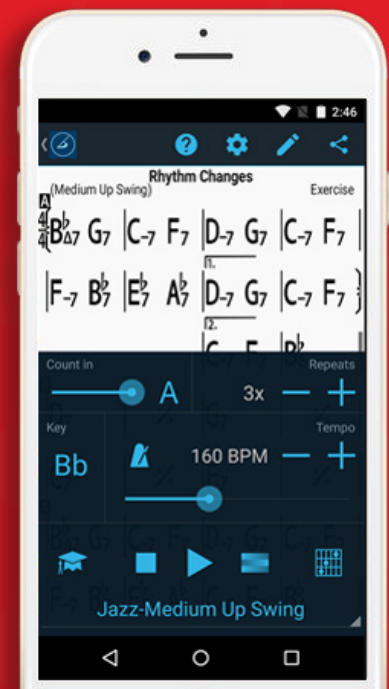
iReal Pro
APP STORE / ANDROID

The iReal Pro is similar to the Ultimate Guitar app, but it's geared more towards jazz players, and it has some very powerful features that the Ultimate Guitar app does not have. A bit of a learning curve, but once you get used to it and know all the features - it's a pleasure to use.

You can download chord sheets for thousands of songs, (mostly jazz standards) and the cool thing is that at the touch of a button you can tell the "included backing track band" to play the song at any key, tempo, or style that you choose. (New Orleans double-time Swing to folk, raggae or samba - and dozens more, it's really fun to play with it and it gives you some cool rhytmic ideas for your own "cover" of the song) You can also mute certain instruments, for example the guitar - so that you can "sit in" instead.

Plug it into a stereo system to enjoy the band at it's fullest.

Again - this app really shines on tablets' big screens - when it's a lot more comfortable to read the sheets.

The best companion for jazz players, but not only for them. The iReal Pro is a powerful app that not only shows chord sheets, but also renders backing tracks tailored to your taste and style.
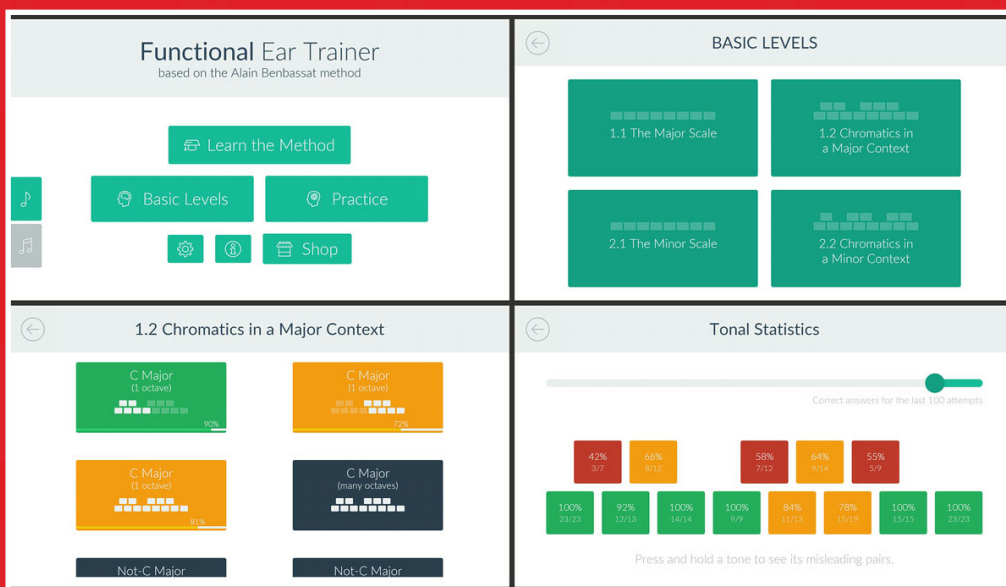
The Best Ear Training Apps:

Functional Ear Trainer
+ See two more apps in the next page.
APP STORE / ANDROID

If you're really interested in taking your music skills to the next level and you're willing to spend at least 5-10 minutes a day doing some ear training, I tried many apps and this is the one I'm seeing the most progress with by far, since it has a fresh approach for one of the key building blocks of ear training as a whole.

Instead of focusing on intervals (which is super important as well, and you'll learn it in the other apps featured below) - It focuses on learning to correctly identify the different scale degrees in the context of a song. For example - how the fifth degree of the scale ("The V") sounds like. As a result, you can identify specific notes in the context of real music - where it matters the most. The app also tracks your progress and improvement with detailed stats.

Bottom line - when playing lead guitar - my improvisations now sound a lot more "spot on". Instead of random finger noodlings, you'll slowly be able to hit the exact notes that you hear in your mind. Also - I can almost always figure out a chord progression and a melody of a song easily, which used to be a struggle for me. An amazing place to be at - that gives me a lot more freedom on the guitar.
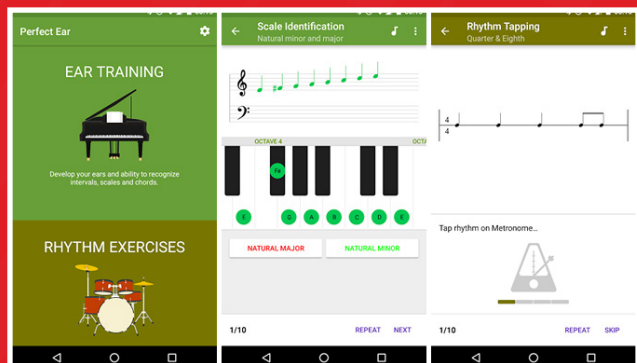
The Best Ear Training Apps:
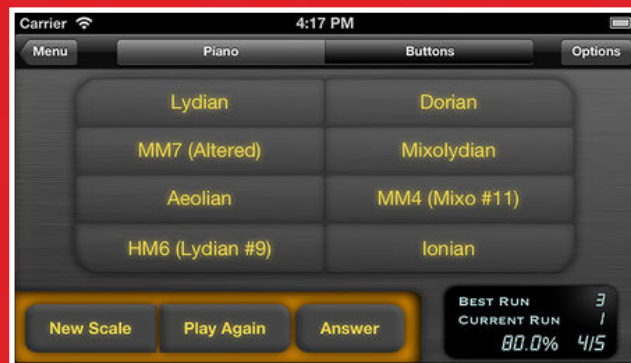
Good Ear Pro
APP STORE

Perfect Ear
ANDROID

Perfect Ear

Good Ear Pro

Besides this one, two other excellent ear training apps are Good Ear Pro for the iPhone and Perfect Ear for Android - which will help you work more closely on intervals, hearing chord qualities (maj7, Minor, etc), identifying different scales, and other essential building blocks of a great ear.

In ear training there aren't too many shortcuts, but if you have the motivation and persistence to use these apps for 5-10 minutes every day or at least 5 times a week - music will become a completely different experience for you. You will have a much clearer understanding of what's going on at any given moment, and how you can make it all sound even nicer.

The Best Jam Tracks / Scales Teacher App:

Jam Tracks
APP STORE / ANDROID

Whenever I try to practice my lead guitar skills - one option is to put on one of the backing tracks on YouTube, (for example by looking up "chicago blues jam track in G) but a more comfortable option for me usually is one of the many backing tracks apps that'll help you instantly have fun with your scales and solos studies.

My favorite is Guitar Jam Tracks by Ninebuzz - It's intuitive, you can easily switch keys, and you can choose from a variety of music genres. It'll give you a nice paved road for lead guitar improvement. Full version / Free version.

It also shows you all the scales you're gonna need for improvising, divided into positions that are easier to memorize, so even if you're new to the whole world of lead guitar - it got you covered.
*On an iPhone, make sure to close the Jam Tracks app after you run it, since it has a bug that makes it keep running in the background and draining the battery.

The Jam Tracks app is a convenient first step for beginners (or a toolkit for the advanced player) in the world of playing lead guitar and solos.

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The Best Transcribing Apps - for Learning Solos by Ear:

Transcribe+
APP STORE

Music Speed Changer
ANDROID

Another one that is very popular with the jazz students and the advanced players.

When you want to transcribe a piece of music, a solo, or any complex part (which in this context means - learning music by ear, either by writing it down or simply by playing it and not writing it down) - you need a comfortable tool to slow it down and to loop certain parts in it. These apps do that in the best and most intuitive way, and I use Transcribe+ very often in my solo studies.

The major downside of Transcribe+ on the iPhone (and currently with all the other competitor apps) is that it only works with songs that have been downloaded to your phone through iTunes, so it demands a bit of an upfront work.
(no direct support for Apple Music / Spotify yet)

These apps will make learning solos by ear a lot more convenient.

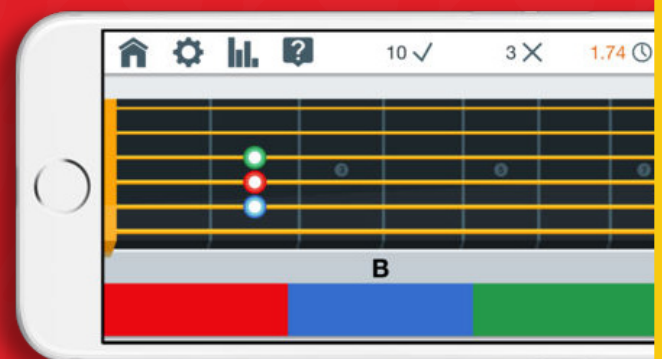# The Best Fretboard Notes and Triads Memorization App:

Fret Trainer
APP STORE / ANDROID

If you're into guitar theory, you probably noticed that this knowledge is almost useless on the guitar - unless you know where the different notes are located on the fretboard. Since there are so many notes, I struggled for a very long time with having them memorized completely, until I found a two-part system that finally made it all click for me. The first part is visualizing the fretboard using the moveable CAGED system, and the second one is using a memorization app that really fulfills its promises.

I tried a couple of fretboard learning apps in the past, but Fret Trainer is the most well-made and intuitive one. I have practiced with it daily for several weeks until I felt like I had it all down. I played it every day for around 5 minutes until I had a total of 5300 correct answers, and then realized that I don't need it anymore - and I can already recall all the notes immediately.😎 The app uses different games to make you remember notes within a fraction of a second - which is what it all comes down to when you're in the middle of a jam.

Also, they recently added the ability to memorize chord triads and four-note chords all over the fretboard as well - very useful for advanced players!

This is the color match, which is one of the modes that Fret Trainer offers to help you recall all the notes within a fraction of a second.
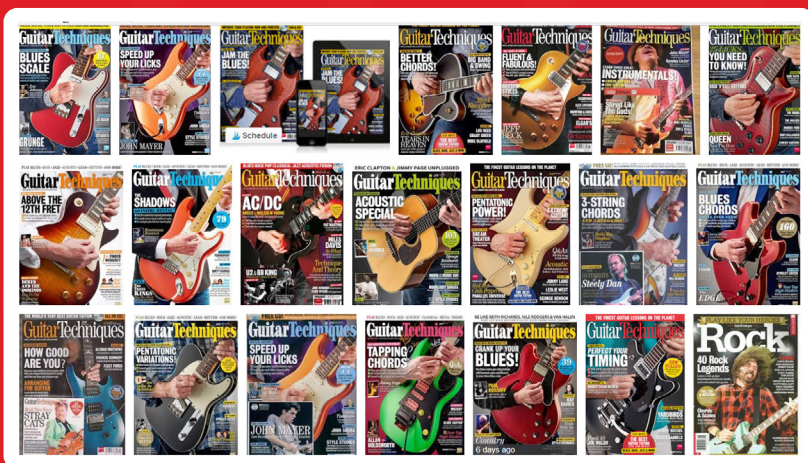
The Best Guitar Magazine App:

GT Guitar Techniques
APP STORE / ANDROID

I found out about Guitar Techniques magazine through their app, and was very pleased to find an incredibly high-quality monthly resource for some of the best guitar lessons that I have found online. It's the digital version of this popular magazine that's written by world-class instructors that you probably have heard about in other places, and even features interviews and guest lessons with masters such as Mark Knopfler, Paul Simon, Gary Clark Jr., etc.

The focus is always practically on improving your playing. (as opposed to some other magazines that are more scattered, or focus on gear / players / industry news and such) Each month the main topic of the issue is different - so you get to work on many different aspects of your playing. See some examples of random issues in the picture below.

And again - this one's much more convenient to read on tablets. A fun throwback to the days of written magazines.

The app of Guitar Techniques magazine will give you a bunch of practical lessons every month. Note that it's much easier to read on tablets.

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Useful Utility Apps for Musicians

The Best Audio Recorders:

Recorder+
APP STORE

Parrot
ANDROID

The default recorders on the iPhone and on most Android phones are nice, but lack some key features that this ones have. For simple recordings that are only meant for myself, I use my phone. This includes recording song sketches, band reharsals, and just myself playing and singing, so I can have an "archive" of my progress over time.

One of the two features that I love the most about those "fancier" recording apps is first of all that you can arrange your recorded files in folders. Especially after you start having a lot of recordings - it's a lot easier to sort them out by folders instead of just by dates - where soon enough your collection becomes a huge mess and you can't find stuff.

Another feature that I like a lot is the ability to record in higher quality wav files - which sound better even through the phone speaker, and especially through headphones.

For more serious home recordings (if you want to, let's say, upload your music covers to YouTube) so I recommend as a beginning to get a nice "field recorder" such as the Zoom H4n Pro that I have. The built-in little condenser microphones in it are great, and you can later grow into it by plugging in even better microphones when your equipment collection becomes richer.

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The Best Way To Organize Your Music Life and Creations:

The Notes App

I use the notes app very widely with music. Examples are to write down my repertoire list so I always remember what I can "take out of my sleeve" when I need a refresh. Also, to write down lists of songs that I want to learn, musical "enlightenments" that I get to regarding stuff that I want to do, lyrics to songs that I write and much more.

Check out this article I wrote about how to become a better and more organized musician with the notes app, I guarantee you'd be surprised and you might really like some of the ideas there: 7 Ways To Become A Better Musician With The Help Of… SMARTPHONE NOTES (?!)

If you don't know Evernote, it is also a very rich notes app and you might like using instead. I just prefer the original notes app since I find it more intuitive - mostly because it loads up way faster.

The Best "Inspiration Capturing" App:

The Camera and the Slo-Mo Option

The phone's video camera... Yep! Some people just don't use it often enough. Especially the 4k camera on the new phones, and the **slow-motion** options that allow you to later look at the stuff that other guitarists played - and break it down slowly in order to learn it - just like how you would from a record of your favorite guitar hero.

Sometime, if I am seeing some really good guy playing the guitar, a girl singing beautifully or a really special performance in any random show, I take a short vid with my phone to remember and inspire me later for my own ideas or learn it myself, instead of just counting on my memory.

I got to see this cool band in the Chicago House of Blues. (they are called the California Honeydrops and they are GOOD!) The leader (who plays trumpet in this pic) also played electric guitar in a unique, soulful jazz-blues style. Thanks to a couple of slow mo vids that I took, I was able to later slowly practice on his style and learn some of his moves.

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I hope you now have at least a couple of new and useful additions in your phone.

Best wishes for happy and fulfilling guitar journeys!

-Cooper

GUITAR SONGS Masters

Guitar Songs Masters Academy

YOUR Favorite Songs, With YOUR Unique Sound