

neil young tell me why chords

Neil Young Tell Me Why Chords: A Guide to Playing This Iconic Song

neil young tell me why chords are a favorite among guitarists who appreciate the raw emotion and simplicity that Neil Young brings to his music. This song, featured on his acclaimed album "After the Gold Rush," showcases his signature folk-rock style and heartfelt lyricism, making it a timeless piece for both listeners and players alike. If you've been searching for an easy yet expressive song to add to your repertoire, diving into the chord progression of "Tell Me Why" can be a rewarding experience.

Understanding the Essence of Neil Young's Guitar Style

Neil Young's guitar work is known for its straightforwardness combined with emotional depth. Unlike more complicated fingerpicking or technical solos, Neil Young often relies on open chords and simple strumming patterns that highlight the mood of the song rather than flashiness. For "Tell Me Why," the chords reflect this approach perfectly—they're accessible for beginners but allow for expressive playing that captures the song's reflective tone.

Why Learn Neil Young Tell Me Why Chords?

Learning the chords to "Tell Me Why" is not just about playing a tune; it's about connecting with a piece of musical history. This song embodies the 1970s folk-rock era and Neil Young's distinctive voice in songwriting. By mastering these chords, you gain insight into:

- The use of open chords to create a warm, natural sound
- How chord progressions can support storytelling in music
- Techniques for subtle dynamics in strumming and finger placement

Moreover, "Tell Me Why" is a great stepping stone for beginner guitarists looking to build confidence with chord transitions and rhythm.

The Core Neil Young Tell Me Why Chords Explained

At its heart, "Tell Me Why" uses a handful of basic chords that many guitarists will recognize. Here's a breakdown of the main chords you'll encounter:

- **G major (G)** - A staple chord that provides a bright, open sound.
- **C major (C)** - Adds a mellow tone and pairs well with G.
- **D major (D)** - Brings a bit of tension and release in progression.

- **Em (E minor)** - Introduces a somber, reflective mood.

These four chords form the backbone of the song, making it easy to memorize and play along with Neil Young's recording. The transitions between G, C, and D are standard in folk and rock music, while Em adds an emotional depth that complements the lyrics.

Chord Diagrams and Tips for Beginners

If you're new to guitar, here are quick tips to help you get these chords down smoothly:

- **G major:** Use your middle finger on the 3rd fret of the low E string, your index finger on the 2nd fret of the A string, and your ring finger on the 3rd fret of the high E string.
- **C major:** Place your ring finger on the 3rd fret of the A string, middle finger on the 2nd fret of the D string, and index finger on the 1st fret of the B string.
- **D major:** Put your index finger on the 2nd fret of the G string, your middle finger on the 2nd fret of the high E string, and your ring finger on the 3rd fret of the B string.
- **E minor:** Position your middle and ring fingers on the 2nd fret of the A and D strings, respectively, leaving other strings open.

Taking time to practice each chord slowly and switching between them in sequence will build muscle memory essential for playing "Tell Me Why" smoothly.

Mastering the Strumming Pattern for "Tell Me Why"

One of the defining features of Neil Young's playing on this track is the gentle, rhythmic strumming pattern. It's not overly complex but requires a steady hand and attentive ear to get the feel just right.

Basic Strumming Approach

The basic pattern alternates between downstrokes and upstrokes, typically following a relaxed 4/4 time signature. Think of it as a gentle rocking motion:

- Down, down-up, up, down-up

This pattern gives the song its flowing, contemplative rhythm, allowing the lyrics and melody to shine through.

Adding Dynamics and Expression

Neil Young is a master of dynamics—playing softly in some parts and more strongly in others to convey emotion. To emulate this:

- Start by strumming lightly during the verses to keep the mood intimate.
- Increase intensity slightly on the chorus or more emotive lines.
- Use your wrist rather than your whole arm to maintain control over volume and tone.

This subtlety can make your rendition of “Tell Me Why” more engaging and true to the original’s spirit.

Additional Tips for Playing Neil Young Tell Me Why Chords

Beyond just learning the chord shapes and strumming, there are a few other things to keep in mind to truly capture the essence of this song:

Use of Capo

Neil Young often uses a capo to adjust the key of his songs to better suit his vocal range or to achieve a particular tonal quality. For “Tell Me Why,” placing a capo on the 2nd fret can make it easier to sing along if you find the original key challenging.

Fingerpicking Variations

While the original recording leans mostly on strumming, experimenting with fingerpicking can add a unique touch. Try plucking the bass note of each chord followed by a gentle brush of the higher strings—this can bring out the folk influence more strongly.

Practice with the Original Track

Playing along with Neil Young’s recording of “Tell Me Why” is an excellent way to get the timing and feel right. Listen closely to how the chords change, the pace of strumming, and the emotional delivery. This auditory feedback is invaluable for improving your own performance.

Exploring Related Neil Young Songs and Styles

Once you're comfortable with the neil young tell me why chords, you might want to explore other songs by Neil Young that share similar chord progressions or stylistic elements. Songs like "Heart of Gold," "Old Man," and "Harvest Moon" offer great opportunities to expand your skills while staying within the folk-rock genre.

Additionally, studying Neil Young's use of open tunings, such as open D or open G, can inspire new ways to approach his songs and develop your own guitar voice.

Playing Neil Young's music is not only about technical skills but also about embracing the storytelling and emotional honesty that defines his work. "Tell Me Why" is a perfect example of this balance, making it a meaningful addition to any guitarist's collection.

Whether you're a beginner aiming to learn your first iconic song or an experienced player looking to connect more deeply with Neil Young's catalog, mastering the chords and techniques behind "Tell Me Why" opens the door to a world of heartfelt music.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the basic chords used in Neil Young's 'Tell Me Why'?

The basic chords used in Neil Young's 'Tell Me Why' are G, C, D, and Em.

How do you play the intro chords for 'Tell Me Why' by Neil Young?

The intro to 'Tell Me Why' uses a fingerpicking pattern on the chords G and C, creating a gentle and melodic sound.

Are there any capo instructions for playing 'Tell Me Why' by Neil Young?

Yes, to play 'Tell Me Why' in the original key, place a capo on the 2nd fret and use the chords G, C, D, and Em as if in open position.

Can beginners easily learn the chords for 'Tell Me Why' by Neil Young?

Yes, the chords for 'Tell Me Why' are relatively simple and consist of common open chords, making it suitable for beginners.

What strumming pattern works best for 'Tell Me Why' by Neil

Young?

A gentle down-down-up-up-down-up strumming pattern complements the folk style of 'Tell Me Why' very well.

Is there a specific fingerpicking pattern recommended for 'Tell Me Why'?

Yes, the song uses a Travis picking style pattern that alternates bass notes with higher strings to create a flowing rhythm.

Where can I find accurate chord charts for 'Tell Me Why' by Neil Young?

Accurate chord charts for 'Tell Me Why' can be found on popular guitar sites like Ultimate Guitar, Songsterr, and official Neil Young songbooks.

Are there any chord variations or embellishments in 'Tell Me Why' by Neil Young?

Yes, Neil Young uses hammer-ons and pull-offs within the chord shapes to add texture, especially in the Em and C chords.

How can I transition smoothly between chords in 'Tell Me Why'?

Practice slow chord changes between G, C, D, and Em, focusing on minimizing finger movement and maintaining the fingerpicking pattern.

Does 'Tell Me Why' use any alternate tunings for the guitar chords?

No, 'Tell Me Why' is typically played in standard tuning with a capo on the 2nd fret, using standard chord shapes.

Additional Resources

Neil Young Tell Me Why Chords: A Detailed Exploration of the Iconic Folk Ballad

neil young tell me why chords represent more than just a sequence of notes; they encapsulate the emotional depth and musical simplicity that have become hallmarks of Neil Young's songwriting. The song "Tell Me Why," featured on his 1970 album **After the Gold Rush**, combines poignant lyrics with a gentle yet intricate chord progression, making it a favorite among guitarists and fans of folk rock alike. Understanding the chords of "Tell Me Why" offers insight not only into the song's structure but also into Neil Young's approach to melody and storytelling.

Breaking Down the Neil Young Tell Me Why Chords

At its core, “Tell Me Why” employs a series of open chords that are accessible to beginner and intermediate guitarists, yet the way Neil Young arranges and strums these chords gives the song its distinctive feel. The main progression revolves around the chords G, C, D, and Em, which are staples in many folk and rock songs. However, what sets this song apart is the subtle use of fingerpicking and the rhythmic variations that Young incorporates, enhancing the emotional resonance.

The song is set in the key of G major, a key often associated with warmth and openness. The primary chords used include:

- G major
- C major
- D major
- E minor

These chords form the backbone of the song, creating a harmonic framework that supports the introspective lyrics. The progression typically follows a pattern similar to G - C - G - D, with occasional shifts to Em that add a melancholic undertone.

Chord Variations and Fingerpicking Style

Neil Young’s guitar technique in “Tell Me Why” is characterized by a gentle fingerpicking pattern that differs from straightforward strumming. This method allows each chord to ring out with clarity, emphasizing the song’s contemplative mood. The fingerpicking involves alternating bass notes and melody lines within the chord shapes, a common feature in folk music.

Additionally, Young occasionally employs chord variations such as Gsus4 or Cadd9 to add texture without complicating the song. These subtle embellishments help maintain the song’s simplicity while enriching the harmonic landscape.

Comparing Neil Young’s Chord Structure to Contemporary Folk Rock

When analyzing “Tell Me Why,” it’s useful to compare its chord progression to other folk rock songs of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Many artists of this era favored simple, diatonic progressions that allowed lyrics to take center stage. For example, Bob Dylan’s “Blowin’ in the Wind” and Joni Mitchell’s “Both Sides Now” also rely on basic chord sequences that provide a canvas for storytelling.

What distinguishes Neil Young’s approach is the combination of these classic progressions with his

unique vocal phrasing and guitar tone. The “tell me why chords” are not just functional; they serve an expressive purpose, mirroring the song’s themes of questioning and vulnerability.

Pros and Cons of Learning Neil Young’s Tell Me Why Chords for Guitarists

For guitarists interested in mastering “Tell Me Why,” the song offers several advantages:

- **Accessibility:** The chords are mostly open and standard, making them approachable for beginners.
- **Musicality:** The fingerpicking pattern introduces players to more nuanced playing techniques.
- **Emotional Expression:** The song’s structure encourages expressive playing, helping guitarists develop their interpretative skills.

However, there are some challenges:

- **Fingerpicking Precision:** Beginners may find the fingerpicking pattern difficult to master initially.
- **Timing and Dynamics:** Capturing the subtle rhythmic shifts requires careful listening and practice.

How to Incorporate Neil Young Tell Me Why Chords into Your Repertoire

For musicians aiming to add “Tell Me Why” to their setlist or personal practice, it’s important to focus on both the technical and emotional aspects of the song. Starting with mastering the chord shapes and transitions lays the foundation. Then, gradually integrating the fingerpicking pattern and dynamics brings the song to life.

Many online resources provide chord charts and tablature, often emphasizing the basic progression before introducing the more nuanced fingerpicking. Playing along with the original recording can also be invaluable for capturing the song’s mood.

Essential Tips for Playing “Tell Me Why” Effectively

1. **Practice chord transitions slowly:** Smooth changes between G, C, D, and Em are crucial.
2. **Focus on fingerpicking accuracy:** Start with simple patterns and build complexity.
3. **Pay attention to dynamics:** Use volume and attack to reflect the song's emotional shifts.
4. **Listen closely to Neil Young's vocal phrasing:** This can guide your rhythmic interpretation.

The Cultural and Musical Impact of "Tell Me Why"

Beyond its technical aspects, "Tell Me Why" stands as a testament to Neil Young's songwriting prowess. The chords serve not only as a musical foundation but also as a vehicle for conveying themes of introspection, doubt, and personal reflection. This song, like many in Young's catalog, showcases how simplicity in chord structure can foster profound emotional expression.

For musicians and fans exploring "neil young tell me why chords," engaging with the song offers a window into the folk rock movement's essence and Neil Young's enduring influence on guitar playing and songwriting.

In sum, the study of these chords reveals a balance between technical accessibility and expressive depth, making "Tell Me Why" a compelling piece for both learning and appreciation.

Neil Young Tell Me Why Chords

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involved in some seminal albums, including his eponymous debut solo album, *After The Gold Rush* and *Déjà Vu*. This is the story of how one of the most seminal artists of the last fifty years learned his trade, by delving in detail into every band, every twist and turn, and every track. Opher Goodwin is the author of many books on rock music and science fiction and taught the first 'History of Rock Music' classes in the UK. He was fortunate to spend the sixties in London, the epicentre for the underground explosion of rock music and culture, where he was able to see everyone from Pink Floyd, Hendrix and Cream to The Doors, Captain Beefheart and Roy Harper. He was introduced to Captain Beefheart in 1967 and attended that first amazing gig at Middle Earth. He never fully recovered but now lives happily in East Yorkshire, UK.

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no idea what you're doing? If you want to take your guitar playing to the next level, compose songs like you hear on the radio, and improvise your own music, then you need Fretboard Theory. Fretboard Theory by Desi Serna teaches music theory for guitar including scales, chords, progressions, modes and more. The hands-on approach to theory shows you how music works on the guitar fretboard by visualizing shapes and patterns and how they connect to make music. Content includes: * Learn pentatonic and major scale patterns as used to play melodies, riffs, solos, and bass lines * Move beyond basic chords and common barre chords by playing the types of chord inversions and chord voicings used by music's most famous players * Chart guitar chord progressions and play by numbers like the pros * Identify correct scales to play over chords and progressions so you can improvise at will * Create new sounds with music modes and get to know Ionian, Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, Mixolydian, Aeolian and Locrian * Add variety to your playing by using intervals such as thirds, fourths, and sixths * Increase your chord vocabulary by using added chord tones and extensions to play chord types such as major 7, minor 7, sus2, sus4, add9, and more * Learn how all the different aspects of music fit together to make a great song * See how theory relates to popular styles of music and familiar songs Fretboard Theory will have you mastering music like a pro easier and faster than you ever thought possible. Plus, it's the ONLY GUITAR THEORY RESOURCE in the world that includes important details to hundreds of popular songs. You learn how to play in the style of pop, rock, acoustic, blues, and more! This guitar instruction is perfect whether you want to jam, compose or just understand the music you play better. The material is suitable for both acoustic and electric guitar, plus it features many references to bass. Level: Recommended for intermediate level players on up. Video Fretboard Theory is also available as a 21-hour video series that is sold separately on the author's GuitarMusicTheory.com website. Visit the website and sign up for email lessons to sample the footage. Fretboard Theory Volume II When you're ready to take your playing to the next level, get the second book in the series, Fretboard Theory Volume II, which is also available as a 12-hour video series.

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Bachman's stories are candid and always entertaining. These are his best stories. The most memorable Vinyl Tap moments are all here, from Randy's Guitarology 101 to his favourite songs to be played at funerals. For fans of the radio show and perennial rock 'n' roll lovers from the sixties through to today, Randy Bachman's Vinyl Tap Stories invites readers to relive their favourite musical experiences. And for new fans, it opens up a joyous world of rock and popular music. Despite his success, Bachman is still "that kid from Winnipeg," and his enthusiasm for great music is as strong as ever. Funny, raucous, and engaging, Randy Bachman's Vinyl Tap Stories is irresistible.

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Infinite Craft - A crafting game where you can make anything. No really it's pretty much endless I think. Start with Water, Fire, Wind, and Earth and branch out to the rest of the universe

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I'm Not a Robot - Solve CAPTCHAs to prove your humanity once and for all in this puzzle game. Are you not a robot? We'll find out soon enough

Progress - Visualizing the world with progress bars. How long until the next minute? Christmas? Death of the universe?

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Life Stats - Find out what's happened in your lifetime

Internet Roadtrip - Take a virtual roadtrip through the internet with this interactive streetview experience

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