



# Getting Started Guide

*A FEW MINUTES READING TO SPEED UP YOUR  
GUITARLAYERS LEARNING*





*GuitarLayers enables you to study and analyze any kind of musical structure (Scale, Chord, Arpeggio) by allowing you to visualize automatically its shape (the disposition of its notes) on the guitar or bass Fretboard.*

*GuitarLayers is a very versatile software and for this reason it must be learned and valued according to its multiple aspects. This short guideline including different topics, will lead you to the understanding of the software by explaining to you the main functions which are making it so well-known among musicians all over the world.*

*GuitarLayers has a detailed operative manual we suggest to consult together with the several video tutorials which will guide you step by step to the use of the software. You can find this material at <http://guitarLayers.com>.*

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# ESSENTIAL GUIDELINES TO UNDERSTAND AND LEARN HOW TO USE THE SOFTWARE

## LET'S GET STARTED

Start by creating a new project (the easiest and most direct way is from the menu File) and select the type of guitar or bass you like. There are different types of instruments with different tunings and number of strings. In case you should be left-handed choose the left-handed Fretboard with inverted strings (you can invert back the strings of the instrument at any moment).

Pay attention to save your project while avoiding accidental modifications. The button "Lock" is an important feature of the project, you may even decide to use it after your project has finished.

*Have you noticed that you can reopen the project properties at any moment and change both the locking of the project and the direction of the Fretboard?*

## ORGANIZING YOUR CONTENTS ON GUITARLAYERS

Organize your projects within the Library as you wish; create one or more folders (even in this case the easiest and most direct way is doing that from the menu File) and use them to classify your projects according to the instrument, topic, etc.

This way you'll be able to find them more easily with a simple click as well as arrange them according to your needs.

If you want to extend the Fretboard Area remember to close the Library or the Text Area by using the buttons located on top of your left, just under the title bar.

*Have you noticed that if you simply click on the project within the Library it will be immediately available and it isn't necessary to save it? (the software will automatically do it for you)*

## A THEORY BASED APPROACH

The engine of Structure section is with no doubt one of the most powerful and innovative features of guitarLayers, just because enables you to build and manage Scales, Chords and Arpeggios by applying Inversions, Modes and Drop Voicings to them according to music theory concepts and rules.

Choose the type of structure (Scale, Chord, Arpeggio) and the Root you want work with and after that click on the button "Structures": the menu with the most common structures is at your disposal. Select the structure you want to work with and the notes forming it will appear on the Structure section Display.

If you decide to modify one single note in the selected structure, click on that note (in the Structure section Display) and a menu will show you all the functions you may need.

You can insert one single note between two other notes or add it at the beginning or at the end of the structure (pay attention because the scale notes must follow an ascending order within the octave).

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If you can't find the one you need among the common structures, or if you would like to experiment, insert the notes one-by-one by clicking on the first position available in the Structure section Display.

Use the Mode operator for the scales or the Inversion operators for the chords or the arpeggios, by using the related buttons placed under the Display in the Structure section.

Keep always in mind that you can visualize the notes forming the structure not only by name but also by the degree related to the Root you have selected (switch from "by name" to "by degree" by using the related button).

Now pay attention to the label containing the name of the structure. You may have noticed that even if you insert custom structures, the internal engine will recognize them, associate a name to them and visualize them automatically. You can even notice that in some cases this label will become yellow and can be clicked upon.

If you do this, a menu will appear showing the list of the equivalent structures (structures with the same notes but with a different harmonic function and name). Select one and this will become the current structure on the display (notice how the Root as well as the degree of every note change accordingly).

All these features will help you understand the scales and the chords structures according to the music theory point of view, before you start analyzing their arrangement and playability on the Fretboard.

*Have you noticed how among the equivalent chords names you can see rootless or incomplete structures?*

*Have you noticed that from the note menu you can also change the color of the bullet or its border?*

## ORGANIZING SHAPES ON THE FRETBOARD

After selecting the structure you need, arrange it on the Fretboard by applying the Fretboard Constraints you prefer and the chosen shape will automatically be created. You now are placed on the Fretboard Constraints section and, according to the type of structure you have chosen, guitarLayers will put at your disposal the most appropriate constraints to visualize it on the Fretboard.

If you have chosen a Scale type structure, you can apply constraints such as the String Set, the Vertical Shapes and the Custom Shapes. Use the String Set to visualize your structure on the set of strings you have chosen and, thanks to the versatility of the control buttons, choose a set of adjacent or not-adjacent strings.

Select, instead, Vertical Shapes to limit the number of frets to visualize the structure on them (e.g. from fret 3 to fret 7).

By using Custom Shapes constraint you can decide to visualize your structure on the Fretboard with a precise number of notes-per-string, for you to shape it, as you like, in endless ways.

If your structure is a chord, you can still have at your disposal the String Set constraint, the Combinatorial constraint, which allows you to choose one among all the possible combinations of the structure on the Fretboard and you can also use the Vertical Area constraint to visualize your chord in a specific portion of the Fretboard confined to a specific number of Frets.

The notes of the chords are normally arranged on the Fretboard with the same order as they appear on the Display and without repetitions. Use the "add doublings" button to visualize also those shapes of chords having repeated notes and not following the notes order as they appear in

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the structure Display. Pay attention, you can wait a little bit because, in some cases, your computer may have to calculate a huge number of combinations and take into consideration that many of them may not always be easily playable.

If you are studying an arpeggio, you have the largest number of constraints controls at your disposal in order to manage your structure on the Fretboard: The String Set, the Vertical Shapes, the Custom Shapes and the Combinatorial constraint.

Notice that the number of keys included in a Vertical Area, in Scales mode, is locked but anyway you can extend it by joining more vertical areas by pressing more buttons simultaneously on the Frets control, whereas if you choose Chords or Arpeggios modes you can modify the number of frets directly from the Frets Area button.

As well as in the Structure section you have a menu including structures with the most common scales, chords and arpeggios also, in the Fretboard Constraints section you can have at your disposal the common shapes of some specific structures (such as CAGED shapes).

The “Common” button will enable you to access to these shapes quickly.

Controls, and consequently the different operation modes, are many and it's for this reason that some functions are available thanks to keyboard modifiers [Ctrl], [Alt] and [Shift].

Place the mouse cursor over the button you are interested in, wait a few seconds and you'll see a small window showing the explanation of the functions as well as modifiers available for that button.

*Have you noticed how a shape, in case of Scales or Arpeggios, can be made up of more complete or partial structures by simply using the Sub-shapes control?*

## PUTTING IN MUTUAL RELATION THE SHAPES THROUGH LAYERS

Layers represent one of the most innovative features that guitarLayers may offer you.

Each Fretboard can overlap up to 8 Layers and visualize, on each of them, the shape of any structure you are interested in.

On the right of the Structure section you can find the Layers section. Notice how Layer 1 is always the lowest one and that occurs among the Layers buttons as well as on the guitar Fretboard.

Use the buttons [+] and [-] located at the bottom of this section, in order to add or remove a Layer, and notice also the buttons [<] and [>] which allow you to move a Layer from the bottom to the top and viceversa. This is a very important function considering that by simply overlapping the shapes the one at the top can hide the one at the bottom.

Try to keep in mind the concept of current Layer: the selected Layer (the one highlighted in the Layers list) is the one the musical structure shown in the Display is referred to. Also the buttons positioned on the top bar of the Fretboard Area operate on the current Layer while modifying the color, position, size, and opacity of the dots of a shape.

Finally, don't forget that, in order to be visualized on the Fretboard, a Layer must be on, or to be more specific, the red square button next to the one with the Layer's number must be on.

Remember that at least a Layer must always be on, and remember also that you can use the keyboard modifiers [Cmd] and [Shift] for multiple on/off operation.

*Dealing with constraints, have you noticed how in some contexts, by using the modifier [Alt] you can apply, for example, the same Vertical Area simultaneously to all Layers, of the same Fretboard, having the same constraint?*

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## ORGANIZING THE FRETBOARDS

A Project can contain more Fretboards that you may organize in one or more Groups. If you have a look at the button/menu located on top of your right, just under the title bar, you'll probably notice that they show the Group, the Fretboard and the current Layer. By clicking on them you'll be able to change the current selection, but you could create new ones, erase them, duplicate them or change their position.

Thanks to these buttons you can also copy or clone a Fretboard rather than a Layer or a whole Group. This could be a way to create your project shortly if there are a few differences among the structures (e.g. a summary of major or minor chords). Notice how the Fretboard area can show one single Fretboard (use the buttons with the Fretboard numbers positioned at the bottom in order to select it) or more than one by simply using the keyboard modifiers [Cmd] or [Shift] during the selection.

Don't worry about the Fretboards disposal, as this one will automatically occur on one or more columns thanks to the related button (Col). Notice also that by clicking the Spot button you can visualize only the portion of the Fretboard containing the Shape instead of the entire Fretboard.

The Text Area (the vertical area of text next to the projects list) will enable you to write down your notes about the Project.

When the Project is complete and you want to avoid accidental modifications, use the Lock button placed in the Project properties.

*Have you noticed how the two buttons at the bottom of the text area (Groups and Fretboards) clearly define if you are writing down a note about the whole Group or the single Fretboard?*

## AUTOMATIC HARMONIZATION OF THE SCALES

The harmonization of a scale is certainly a complex operation which may require, if done manually, a lot of time to organize the study material. GuitarLayers allows you to do it rapidly and with a few clicks.

Click the Structure button, select Chords or Arpeggios as a type of structures, and from the popup menu, go to the submenu Substructures and select one of the scales you have at your disposal in order to harmonize them.

Notice how the Structure Display is now divided in two areas. The one on the right will show you the harmonized scale (that is the scale you are harmonizing) whereas on the one on the left, you can insert note-by-note the structure (chord or arpeggio) you want to use to create the harmonization. By using the [<][>] yellow buttons which are located between the two sections, you can notice how harmonization occurs automatically. You can always apply Drop and Inversion operations to the structure and in addition, the software will always highlight the structures equivalent to the current one.

Keep on using the Fretboard Constraints to shape the chord or the arpeggio that harmonize the scale on the keyboard.

*Have you noticed how the red note in the Harmonized Scale represents the one on which harmonization occurs?*

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## PRINT AND EXPORT

Print and export functions, that you can find in the menu File, will enable you to print your contents quickly or export them in order to set up your study materials on paper, to prepare a presentation for a seminar or, if you are a teacher, you'll be able to prepare your lessons for your students.

When you use the File/Print item, the print preview will show you the content of the current Group. If you wish, always from this panel, you can further modify the content you are going to print by selecting a different Group or a specific Fretboard or even a single Layer.

Decide if you want to adapt colors, strings thickness, print the strings numbers, the number of frets and other options.

After applying all those settings, either print or export the whole page in PDF format.

Thanks to the export function you can have at your disposal the same standard options for selection and adaptation of the content, after pasting it in a word processor, moreover, you can choose among different graphic export formats on disk ( pdf, eps, png, jpg, tiff, bmp, etc..) and the desired resolution for your output image.

*Have you noticed that you can export image directly on disk or copy it in the clipboard in order to paste it for instance to your Pages document containing the lesson for your students?*

## LET'S BROADEN OUR KNOWLEDGE

Share your project through Import/Export functions.

Using guitarLayers, as often happens in music, isn't merely a strictly personal activity, but it can be a chance of growth and sharing activity. You can send or receive projects from your teacher or your friends or download them from the forum at <http://guitarLayers.com>

Select the item Export Project (always from the file menu) to export your current project or, if you are inside a folder, select export folder to export all Projects contained within it.

The software asks you to assign the file name you desire and the game is done.

In order to receive a Project from another guitarLayers user, use the item Import Project from the File menu (or through the contextual menus inside the Library) and don't worry about anything else. The software will automatically recognize if it concerns a single project or a whole folder adding everything to your library in the rightest way.

*Have you noticed that the button, Permanent Lock Mode, in the project properties prevents the exported projects from being modified from those who receive them?*

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