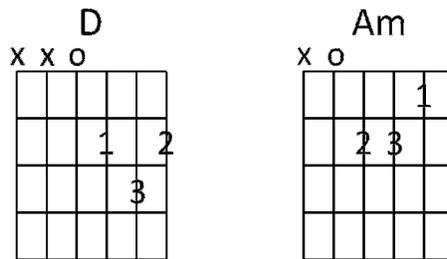


# How to Improve Your Chord Transitions

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Having a smooth transition from one chord to the next is a good sign of an experienced guitarist. Many times less experienced players may switch too late or too early, or may cut off the rhythm to give them self more time to change to the next chord. In this article you will find tips and exercises that will enable you to greatly increase your ability to play your chord progressions smoothly and in time. All these practicing tips will greatly benefit any chord change in any position. We will use chords D & Am for our example. Below are the open chord versions of each of those chords:



Before we go on I want you to do a self evaluation. Place your fingers in the **D** chord position, and then switch to the **Am** chord. Repeat this switching process at least 8 times as a sort of warm up. Now I want you to repeat this warm up again, but I want you to watch for 4 specific issues:

1. Are you lifting all 3 fingers as a group and placing them down as a group or moving them individually?
2. Are you over shooting your fingers' destinations?
3. Are any of your fingers at anytime moving in the opposite direction than they need to be?
4. Are your fingers an excessive distance from the fretboard when you release the chord?

If you notice any of these things then you now know some of the points you will need to work on. All of the things mentioned above result in more movement than necessary to transition from one chord to the next. Many guitarists don't even realize they have these issues. It's hard to solve a problem if you don't know from where it stems and most chord transition issues lie in the things I listed. Refer now to issue one. If you are moving 3 fingers individually instead of as

a single group it will literally take three times as long to move. This is usually a result of your fingers just not truly understanding how to move. The following steps will help develop your muscle memory in each finger. Practice moving one finger at a time; then two at a time; then three at a time and so on. For example when you practice switching from **D** to **Am** start by moving only your 1<sup>st</sup> finger from where it is in the **D** chord (3<sup>rd</sup> string, 2<sup>nd</sup> fret) to where it is in the **Am** chord (2<sup>nd</sup> string, 1<sup>st</sup> fret). Your finger should move in as straight of a line as possible. Repeat this until you can maintain consistent accuracy. Then go on to the remaining fingers and practice moving each of them individually in the same manner. Once you have done this with each finger you can practice moving two fingers at a time. From **D** to **Am** you have three different sets of two fingers; 1 & 2, 1 & 3, and 2 & 3. After practicing each set of fingers you can go on and move all fingers at once. Just make sure you can move each individual finger and each finger set accurately and consistently before going on to moving all the fingers at once.

Now let's quickly discuss issues 2, 3, & 4. If you over shoot your strings or move in the opposite direction than they need to move you will end up retracing the path your finger(s), and it will take you longer to reach your destination. This is also true if you allow your fingers to flail out away from the strings after releasing a chord position. To solve this simply move your fingers from one chord to the next at a very slow speed in which you have full control over the movement of your fingers. The speed at which you move can make all the difference. Over time you can increase your while practicing this. The steps taken to solve issue one will also assist in solving the fore mentioned issues.

Ultimately improving your chord transitions comes down to developing your muscle memory and minimizing your movement. Remember that the tips mentioned in this article can be applied to any chord change in any position. Practice these things as I have stated and you will experience quick results just as my own students have. I plan to soon release an instructional video on this topic that will supplement this article. Be sure to visit my website ([www.alexboccia.com](http://www.alexboccia.com)) and sign up to receive my newsletter so I can inform you when the video is up. Until then I am always available to answer questions by e-mail, so please feel free to contact me with your questions and thoughts.