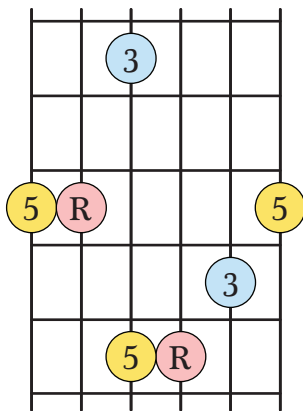


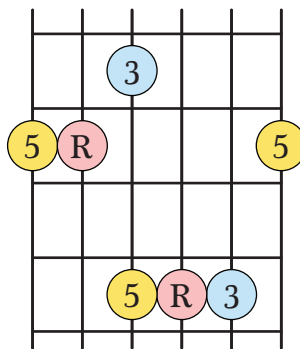
A Shape

In the middle diagram you'll find the A Shape triad. To the left, is the A Minor Shape: the result of flattening the thirds of the A Shape triad. To the right, we've taken all the 5ths of the triad and raised them a whole step to the 6th note of the scale, resulting in the relative minor of the A Shape: the G Minor (or Gm, for short) Shape.

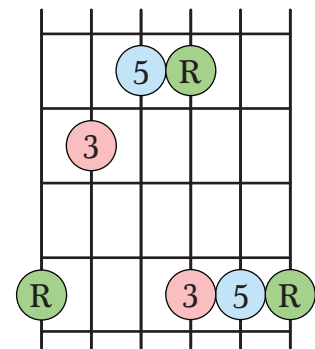
Am Shape Triad



A Shape Triad

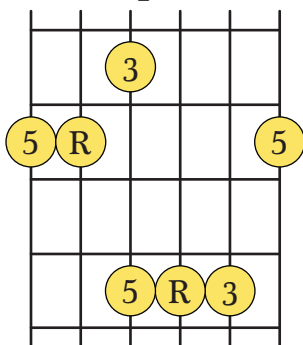


**Gm Shape
Relative Minor**

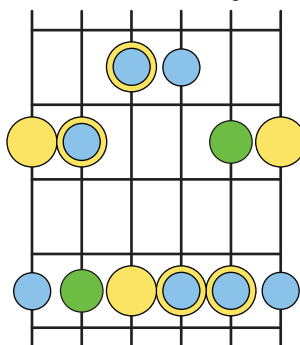


Again, we have a situation where the minor version of the A Shape is relatively straightforward (i.e. we just flat the thirds) and the relative minor shape shares two of the same notes with the A Shape, which means it's mostly the same footprint.

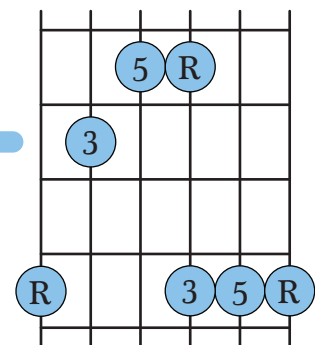
A Shape Triad



**A Shape + Gm Shape
+ 2nd note of Major Scale**

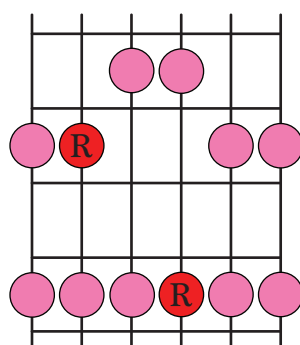


**Gm Shape
Relative Minor**



Just like with the C Shape Pentatonic scale, we can create the A Shape Pentatonic scale by combining the major and relative minor shapes, then adding the 2nd note of the major scale. In other words, we're adding the note a whole step up from the root. This is the A Shape Pentatonic Scale.

**A Shape
Pentatonic Scale**



A Shape

A few things are starting to become apparent. Let's look closely at them.

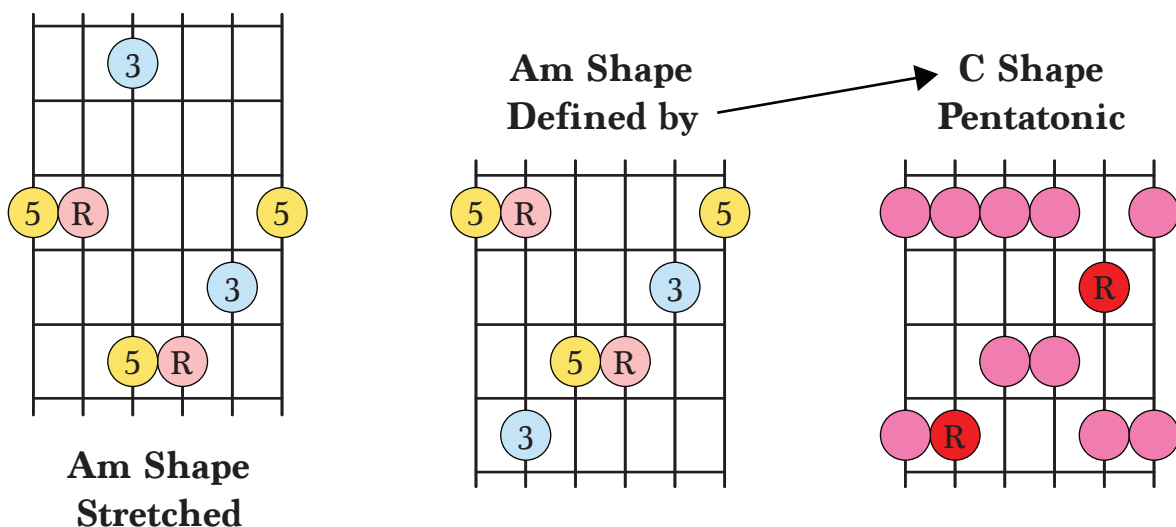
When we were working with the C Shape, there was a convenient situation. The relative minor of C is Am, and when we convert the C SHAPE to it's relative minor SHAPE, it was also an A Minor shape. That makes their CAGED relationship easy to remember.

Unfortunately, things aren't always that neat and tidy in the CAGED System. G Minor is NOT the relative minor of A Major, but the G Minor SHAPE is. F# Minor is the actual relative minor of A Major, but there isn't an F# Minor CAGED Shape. This is going to be a common theme as we move forward.

In my opinion, this is at least partly why it's so useful to represent the Major/Relative Minor Triad combination as a little ecosystem couched in a Pentatonic Shape - because the I chord shape will ALWAYS match the Major Pentatonic Shape - (e.g. A Shape Pentatonic will always contain an A shape I chord.) - and no matter what the relative minor shape is NAMED, it will always be nestled nicely into the pentatonic shape AND will always share two notes of the I chord shape.

As we will see when we break down the G Major Shape to G Minor shape conversion (and as we saw in the Am Shape from the previous lesson), there is something really cool about coupling a Major and relative Minor shape together. If we define the boundaries of a minor shape by flattening the thirds of a major shape, we'll usually run into a stretchy fingering situation. If we instead define the relative minor shape by the boundaries of the pentatonic scale, we'll always have a neat and tidy major & relative minor combination that share the same basic footprint, which makes the triads and scale easier to play.

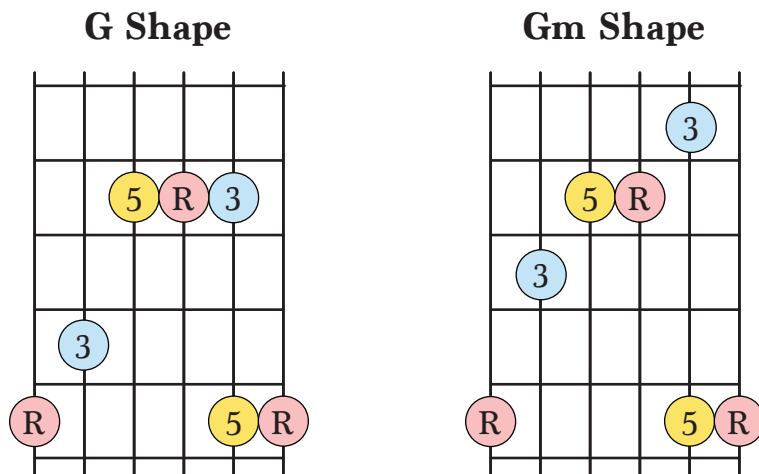
For example, if we define the Am shape as the "flatted thirds" version of an A Major shape, we get this stretched out thing on the left, but if we base the shape on the C Major Shape inside the C Shape Pentatonic, it's still very much an A Minor Shape, but it's perfectly nestled into the scale. This is what I mean when I say I prefer to define the minor shape boundaries by the Major Pentatonic scale they fit into.



A Shape

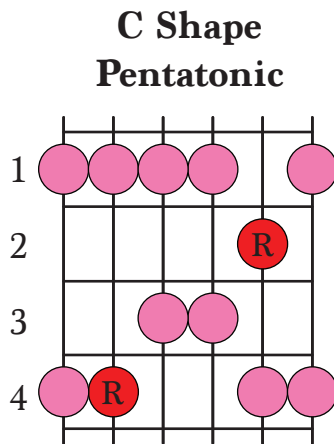
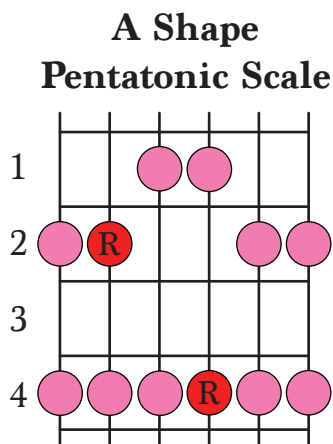
The A Minor shape could be defined a few ways, but if we bind the minor shape to the major pentatonic in this way, it's easier to see which fingers to use. As we continue, you'll see what I mean.

With the G Minor shape, we have a similar situation. If we just think of it as a G Shape with flat thirds, here is the result.



Visually, it makes sense, but when it comes to playability, it's a little awkward. The value in using the Pentatonic Scales as a shape-defining factor is that all but one of the Pentatonic shapes spans only four frets. We play guitar with four fingers. Let me explain.

Each CAGED Pentatonic Shape we've covered so far spans only four frets. Generally speaking (and there are always exceptions) it's nice to play "in a position." This kind of playing means that each of your fingers, in order, covers the notes on just one fret. For each Pentatonic Scale below, I've labeled which finger should play the notes on each fret.



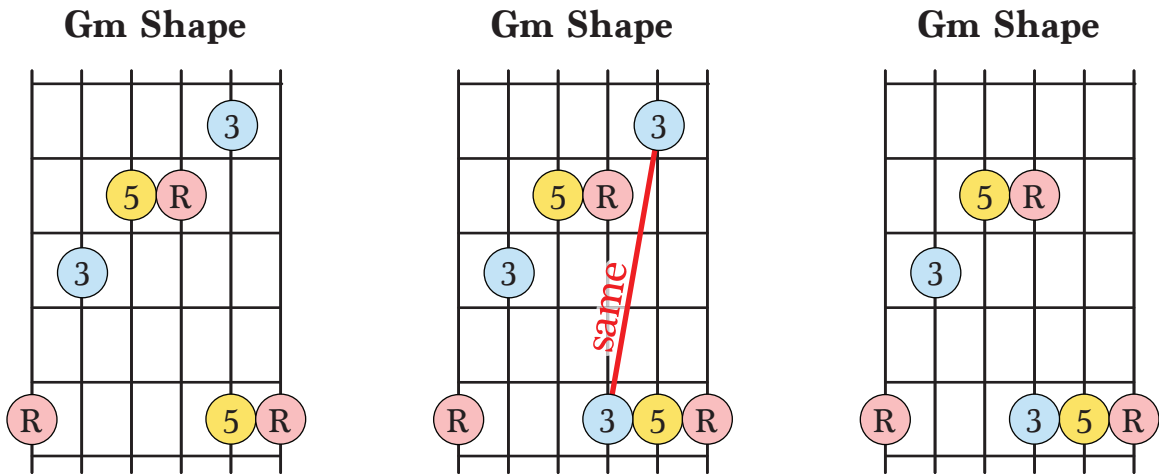
These shapes are moveable to any key. Wherever you'd like to play one of these shapes on the neck, see how it feels to "play in position" by sticking to this particular fingering.

We'll cover this in much more detail in the following lesson.

Essentially, if your first finger is playing only the notes on the 7th fret, your 2nd finger should only be playing notes on the 8th fret, your third finger should only be playing notes on the 9th fret, and your little finger (4th finger) should only be playing notes on the 10th fret. This is called "playing in 7th position" on guitar. Whatever fret your first finger is on, that's the name of the position.

A Shape

On the left is “flatted thirds” Gm Shape from the page before. You can see that this shape spans five frets, which is awkward to navigate. In the middle diagram, I’ve linked the flatted third on the B string to the exact same note on the G string. This allows us to use ALL the same notes from the Gm Shape on the left, but in a span of four frets instead of five.



As you work through the homework section, keep in mind that each Major Triad, Minor Triad, and A Shape Pentatonic scale are able to fit into a span of only four frets.