

Chord progression used for entire song

Fortunately, the entire song uses this one progression, over and over and over again:

| E | A . . G . . | B | E |

How to play the chords

This song only uses these 4 chords. There are different voicings you could use for each chord below (I'll get to that), but let's use these as a starting point. For the A-major, I'll typically use my index finger to barre the 2nd fret of the D/G/B strings (and not worry about playing the high E-string).

```

E ---0-----3-----
B ---0---2---0---4---
G ---1---2---0---4---
D ---2---2---0---4---
A ---2---0---2---2---
E ---0-----3-----
      E      A      G      B
    
```

For the E, you have some options. It sounds like Nirvana is playing an E5 or E "power chord" where the G string isn't ringing... this results in a sound that is neither major nor minor. To do this, I recommend letting one of your ringers rest gently upon the G string so that it muffles the sound (mutes the string). You also could get away with playing an E-minor if you like. Or, if you want to be like the famous blues guitarist Lead Belly who first made this song famous, you can use an E7. It's up to you.

```

E ---0---0---0---0---
B ---0---0---0---3---
G ---1---0---x---1---
D ---2---2---2---2---
A ---2---2---2---2---
E ---0---0---0---0---
      E      Em      E5      E7
    
```

If the B gives you issues, you can do a B power-chord (B5) or do an open shape to play B7.

```

E -----3-----
B ---4-----0---
G ---4---4---2---
D ---4---4---1---
A ---2---2---2---
E -----
      B      B5      B7
    
```

Bass transitions (licks and riffs)

If you want my video lesson, you can hear some bass note transitions I do to spice things up. A general tab for these can be heard here. It's important to listen along for context so you can hear the timing, etc. Also, while strumming the full chords – personally I stress the thickest 3-4 strings – which keeps the entire progression more bass-heavy in its sound.

```

E |-----0-----0-----3-----0-0---
B |-----0-----0-----2-----4-----4-----0-0---
G |-----1-----1-----2-----0-----4-----4-----1-1---
D |-----2-----2-----2-----0-----4-----4-----2-2---
A |-----2-----2-2-----0-----2-----0-2-----x-----2-2---
E |--3-0-0-----0h2h3-----3-----2-----0-0---
      E              A      G              B              E
    
```

As a practice exercise to be able to play these bass note riffs and licks, I recommend using this as a starting point. It only worries about the bass notes (no full chords yet), and helps you get a handle on the timing of things first.

```

E |-----|-----|-----|-----|
B |-----|-----|-----|-----|
G |-----|-----|-----|-----|
D |-----|-----|-----|-----|
A |-----2-----|---0-----|---2-----|-----|
E |--0-----|-----3-----|-----2-----|---0-----0-3---|
      E              A      G              B              E
    
```