SOFTWARE & TECH

Chris Young The Man I Want To Be Chords

PUBLISHED
November 25, 2026

REFERENCE
#1795582838887001

Unlocking “The Man I Want To Be” – Chris Young’s Heartfelt Ballad on Guitar

Chris Young’s **“The Man I Want To Be”** is a poignant country ballad that resonates deeply with listeners who have ever struggled with regret, redemption, and the desire to become a better version of themselves. Released as the third single from his 2008 album *The Man I Want To Be*, the track showcases Young’s rich baritone voice and a simple yet powerful acoustic arrangement. For guitarists, mastering this song is not only about learning a set of chords — it’s about capturing the song’s emotional weight through feel, dynamics, and timing. In this comprehensive guide, we will explore the chord shapes, progression patterns, strumming techniques, and performance tips that will help you play **Chris Young The Man I Want To Be chords** with authenticity and confidence.

Song Overview and Musical Context

Before diving into the chord diagrams, it helps to understand the song’s musical foundation. “The Man I Want To Be” is written in the key of **E major**and follows a moderate tempo (around 74 BPM) typical of heartfelt country ballads. The original recording features acoustic guitar, steel guitar, and gentle percussion, but at its core, the song relies on a repeating pattern of four primary chords. This simplicity makes the tune accessible to beginner and intermediate guitarists, while still offering room for expressive playing.

Why These Chords Work So Well

The chord progression revolves around the I – V – vi – IV (E, B, C#m, A) structure — a classic sequence used in countless pop and country hits. This progression creates a natural ebb and flow: the tonic (E) feels stable, the dominant (B) builds tension, the relative minor (C#m) adds melancholy, and the subdominant (A) offers a sense of resolution. When played in an open position, these chords ring out with warmth, perfectly complementing Young’s vocal melody.

Essential Chords for “The Man I Want To Be”

Below are the core chords you need to know for the song. All are open-position chords, meaning you can play them without a barre (except for the B major, which is commonly played with a barre across the second fret). If you prefer an alternative, you can capo the guitar and use simpler shapes — we’ll cover that later.

- E Major (E) – 022100
- B Major (B) – x24442 (or use B7 as a simpler substitute: x21202)
- C# Minor (C#m) – x46654 (or barre at 4th fret; alternatively play Am shape with capo)
- A Major (A) – x02220

Chord Fingerings and Tips

1. E Major: Place your middle finger on the 2nd fret of the A string (5th string), ring finger on the 2nd fret of the D string (4th string), and index finger on the 1st fret of the G string (3rd string). Strum from the low E string.
2. B Major: This is often the trickiest chord for beginners. Use your index finger to barre the 2nd fret across all six strings, then place your ring finger on the 4th fret of the D string (4th string), pinky on the 4th fret of the G string (3rd string), and middle finger on the 3rd fret of the B string (2nd string). Strum from the A string. Alternatively, play a B7 (x21202) which omits the root bass note but fits the harmony.
3. C# Minor: Barre the 4th fret with your index finger across all six strings, then form an Am shape with your ring and pinky on the 6th fret of the A and D strings. Or use a simplified version: x46650 (omit high E string).
4. A Major: Place your index, middle, and ring fingers on the 2nd frets of the D, G, and B strings respectively. Strum from the A string.

The Chord Progression Breakdown

The song follows a consistent pattern throughout most of the verses and chorus. Let's map it out by section.

Verse Progression

E – B – C#m – A(repeat for each line of the verse). Listen to the original recording: each chord typically lasts two beats (or one full measure in 4/4 time), creating a driving, conversational rhythm. The verse lyrics such as "I've burned every bridge that I've ever crossed" fit squarely over these changes.

Example strum pattern for verse:
Down – down – up – up – down – up (consistent eighth notes with an accent on the downbeats). Try muting the strings slightly with your palm for a percussive effect between chord changes.

Chorus Progression

The chorus retains the same four chords but with a slight energetic lift. You'll play: **E – B – C#m – A**(same sequence) but with a fuller strum and perhaps a slight pause before the final A chord to build tension. The chorus lyrics "I wanna be the man I want to be" can be emphasized by holding the E chord a little longer on the first word.

Bridge Section

In the bridge, the progression shifts to **F#m – G#m – A – B**(or sometimes F#m – A – E – B depending on the live arrangement). This creates a harmonic lift, moving away from the repetitive verse/chorus pattern. The F#m is played as a barre chord at the 2nd fret (244222) or as a simpler F#m7 (242222). The G#m is typically barre at the 4th fret (466444). For intermediate players, you can simplify the bridge by staying on the open-position chords: F#m (alternate: 202210), A (x02220), E (022100), B (x24442).

Outro

The song fades out over the E chord with a simple arpeggio or gentle strum. Many guitarists end with a single ringing E major, letting the final note decay naturally.

Strumming Patterns and Rhythm Tips

Capturing the feel of "The Man I Want To Be" requires more than just changing chords in time. Chris Young's studio version uses a mix of fingerpicking and light strumming. Here are three approaches you can try:

- Basic Downbeat Strum: Down, down, down, down (quarter notes) – easy for beginners but lacks dynamics.
- Country "Boom-Chick" Pattern: Play a bass note (root) on beats 1 and 3, then strum the rest of the chord on beats 2 and 4. This mimics the classic Nashville sound.

- Full Hybrid Strum: Use a down-up-down-up pattern with emphasis on the downbeats. For the bridge, switch to a lighter touch with softer strums.

Practice Tip

Begin by playing each chord for four slow counts, ensuring your transitions are clean. Then move to two counts per chord. Gradually increase tempo while maintaining a steady rhythm. Record yourself to check timing against the original track.

Using a Capo to Simplify the Chords

If barre chords like B and C#m feel challenging, you can place a capo on the **4th fret**and play the song using open-position shapes that are much easier. With a capo at the 4th fret, the chord names change as follows:

- Play C shape (x32010) !’ sounds as E
- Play G shape (320003) !’ sounds as B
- Play Am shape (x02210) !’ sounds as C#m
- Play F shape (133211 or xx3211) !’ sounds as A

This alternative is especially useful if you want to focus on singing while playing. The voicings are also fuller and ring out beautifully on an acoustic guitar.

Tips for Performing the Song

Dynamic Control

The emotional arc of the song starts softly (verse), builds in the chorus, and peaks in the bridge. Use a lighter touch on the verses — maybe even fingerpick single notes or use a soft brush strum. As you move into the chorus, increase the intensity of your strumming and perhaps add a little extra force on the downstrokes. During the bridge, let the chords ring out with more sustain.

Singing and Playing Together

Chris Young’s vocal melody often lands on the root note of the current chord. For example, when the chord is E, his voice often stays on or around the E note. Practice humming the melody while you strum the changes. A good starting point is to record the chord progression and then sing along, allowing you to focus on pitch without worrying about your fingers.

Embellishments

To add your own style, try walking bass lines between chords. From E to B, you can play an F# on the A string as a passing note. Between C#m and A, you can slide from the C#m shape up to the A shape. Small hammer-ons and pull-offs within the chord shape can also create a more organic, live feel.

Frequently Asked Questions About “The Man I Want To Be” Chords

What is the easiest way to play the B chord?

If the full barre B major is too difficult, you can play B7 (x21202) or simply play an open A chord shape with a capo on the 2nd fret, then transpose accordingly. For the non-capo version, a B major can be played as x24442 with a small barre, or you can mute the high E string and play x2444x.

Can I play this song with only four chords?

Yes, the verse and chorus use only E, B, C#m, and A. The bridge introduces additional chords, but you can omit the bridge entirely in a simplified cover and just repeat the verse/chorus pattern.

What key is the original song in?

Chris Young recorded 'The Man I Want To Be' in the key of E major. The guitar is 'Key Mand Standard' in the key of

How can I make the chords sound

Related Articles

- **Are James Blunt And Emily Blunt Related**
  URL: https://signage.openstack.org/are-james-blunt-and-emily-blunt-related.pdf
- **Was Remember Me Based On A True Story**
  URL: https://signage.openstack.org/was-remember-me-based-on-a-true-story.pdf
- **Ess Employee Self Service Costco**
  URL: https://signage.openstack.org/ess-employee-self-service-costco.pdf
- **The Case For Christianity By Cs Lewis**
  URL: https://signage.openstack.org/the-case-for-christianity-by-cs-lewis.pdf

TOPIC INDEX

#chris • #young • #man • #want • #be

DIGITAL EDITION

chris-young-the-man-i-want-to-be-chords

DIGITAL EDITION

chris-young-the-man-i-want-to-be-chords

DIGITAL EDITION

chris-young-the-man-i-want-to-be-chords

DIGITAL EDITION

chris-young-the-man-i-want-to-be-chords