SOFTWARE & TECH

Waiting For My Real Life To Begin Chords

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Introduction: The Enduring Appeal of Colin Hay’s Masterpiece

There are songs that simply entertain, and then there are songs that feel like they were written specifically for your own life. **“Waiting For My Real Life To Begin”** by Colin Hay belongs firmly in the latter category. Originally released on his 2001 album *Company of Strangers*, the track gained a massive resurgence in popularity after being featured in the television series *Scrubs*. Its gentle, introspective melody and poignant lyrics about patience, self-discovery, and the quiet moments between major life events have made it a staple for singer-songwriters and guitar enthusiasts alike. For anyone looking to learn this beautiful piece, understanding the **Waiting For My Real Life To Begin chords** is the first step toward unlocking its emotional depth. This article will provide a complete guide to playing the song, exploring its structure, and capturing its unique, melancholic yet hopeful spirit.

The Song’s Musical DNA: Key and Tuning

Before diving into the specific **Waiting For My Real Life To Begin chords**, it is essential to understand the song’s harmonic foundation. Colin Hay performs the song in the key of **C Major**, which is one of the most accessible keys for guitarists, especially beginners. However, there is a subtle but important detail: Hay often uses a **capo on the 5th fret** when playing live, or he uses chord shapes that emulate a higher voicing. For the purposes of this tutorial, we will focus on the open chord shapes that form the backbone of the song, which can be played without a capo in standard tuning (EADGBE). If you want to match the exact pitch of the original recording, placing a capo on the 5th fret and using the shapes we will discuss is the way to go. For most players, however, the open position chords sound fantastic and are easier to transition between.

Core Chord Shapes You Will Need

The beauty of this song lies in its simplicity. You do not need barre chords or complex jazz voicings to capture its essence. The primary **Waiting For My Real Life To Begin chords** are fundamental open chords. Here is the core vocabulary:

- C Major (C) – The home chord. Gives the song a bright, resolved feeling.
- G Major (G) – Provides a strong sense of movement and lift.
- A Minor (Am) – This is the heart of the song’s melancholy. It introduces the emotional weight and longing.
- F Major (F) – The trickiest of the bunch, but essential. It adds tension that resolves beautifully back to C.

While these four chords cover the majority of the song, there is a fifth chord that appears in the chorus to add a touch of color: **G/B** (G with a B in the bass). This is a simple variation of the G chord, where you place your third finger on the high E string, 3rd fret, and keep the rest of the G shape.

Deconstructing the Verse Chord Progression

The verses of “Waiting For My Real Life To Begin” are where the story unfolds. The chord progression is cyclical and hypnotic, mirroring the feeling of being stuck in a routine or waiting for a change. The standard progression for the verse using the basic **Waiting For My Real Life To Begin chords** is as follows:

C → G → Am → F

This is one of the most common chord progressions in popular music (I-V-vi-IV in the key of C). However, the magic is in the rhythm. Colin Hay plays this with a distinct, arpeggiated fingerpicking pattern that gives each chord space to breathe. When strumming, it is tempting to rush through this progression, but the song demands restraint. Each chord deserves a full measure (four beats) before moving to the next. The F chord, in particular, should ring out fully before resolving back to the C chord.

Rhythmic Feel and Strumming Pattern

Getting the rhythm right is more important than hitting every single note perfectly. The song is played in a moderate 4/4 time signature, usually around 72-76 BPM (beats per minute). For beginners learning the **Waiting For My Real Life To Begin chords**, a simple down-up-down-up strumming pattern can work initially. However, to capture the true feel of the track, try a pattern that emphasizes the bass notes.

1. The Bass Note Pick: Start each chord by picking the root note on the low E or A string with your thumb (if fingerpicking) or a downstroke with the pick. For C, pick the A string (3rd fret). For G, pick the low E string (3rd fret). For Am, pick the A string (open). For F, pick the A string (1st fret).
2. The Strum: After the single bass note, strum the remaining strings gently. This creates a “boom-chick” feel that is characteristic of folk and soft rock.

This pattern (Bass note followed by a strum) is repeated twice per chord, giving you a slow, deliberate groove. This is the secret to making the song sound “full” even with just one guitar.

The Chorus: Lifting the Melody

The chorus of “Waiting For My Real Life To Begin” introduces a slight shift in the chord sequence to elevate the emotional intensity. While the verse circles around the same four chords, the chorus breaks the cycle to provide a sense of hope and resolution. The chorus progression using the **Waiting For My Real Life To Begin chords** typically goes:

Am → F → C → G/B → Am → F → G

Notice the introduction of the **G/B**chord. This is a subtle change, but it creates a beautiful ascending bass line that leads the ear upward. When you play the C chord and then move to G/B, you are walking the bass note from C (3rd fret, A string) down to B (2nd fret, A string), which feels like a natural pull toward the Am that follows.

Chord Transition Tips for the Chorus

The transition from G/B to Am can feel awkward for beginners. Here is a quick tip to make it smoother: When playing **G/B**, use your ring finger (3rd finger) on the high E string (3rd fret) and your middle finger (2nd finger) on the A string (2nd fret). Keep your index finger free. To move to **Am**, simply slide your middle finger down to the D string (2nd fret) and place your index finger on the B string (1st fret). This keeps your hand in a similar position, making the change faster and cleaner. Mastering this transition is key to playing the **Waiting For My Real Life To Begin chords** fluently without pauses.

The Bridge and Instrumental Sections

For those who want to go beyond the basic strumming and chords, the bridge and instrumental sections of the

song offer a chance to explore more nuanced voicings. The bridge often involves a similar chord palette but played with different dynamics. Usually, the bridge will stand on a During the instrumental break, many guitarists choose to add embellishments like hammer-ons and pull-offs on the B and high E strings.

For example, when playing the **C** chord, you can experiment by adding your pinky to the high E string (3rd fret) and pulling off to the open string. This adds a melodic flourish that mimics the vocal melody. These small additions turn a simple chord progression into a rich, expressive performance. When practicing the **Waiting For My Real Life To Begin chords**, spend time exploring these small variations—they are what separate a basic cover from a moving performance.

Lyrical Context and Emotional Connection

Why do the **Waiting For My Real Life To Begin chords** resonate so deeply with audiences? Part of the answer lies in the lyrics. The song is about the state of limbo—the period in life when you are not where you want to be, but you are not exactly where you started either. Lines like “I could while away the hours, conferrin’ with the flowers” and “It’s not that I don’t understand, I just don’t know where I stand” speak to a universal human experience.

Musically, the **Waiting For My Real Life To Begin chords** in C Major support this lyrical theme perfectly. The C chord feels like home, but the constant return to Am and F creates a cycle of tension and release that mirrors the emotional journey of waiting. The music never feels entirely resolved until the final chord rings out, which perfectly encapsulates the feeling of looking back on a difficult period with newfound clarity. When you play this song, you are not just playing chords; you are telling a story of patience, resilience, and the quiet hope that change is coming.

Common Mistakes and How to Avoid Them

Even experienced guitarists can stumble when learning a new song. Here are the most common pitfalls specific to the **Waiting For My Real Life To Begin chords** and how to overcome them:

Rushing the F Chord Transition

The F chord is the bane of many beginner guitarists. When playing this song, the transition from Am to F often causes a pause. **Solution:**Do not try to barre the entire F chord immediately. Use the simplified version: Place your index finger on the B string (1st fret) and your middle finger on the high E string (1st fret). Leave the low E string out (xx3211). This gives you the essential notes of the F chord without the difficult barre. You can add the full barre later as your finger strength improves.

Strumming Too Aggressively

This song is delicate. Strumming too hard makes it sound like a rock anthem, which misses the point entirely. **Solution:**Focus on dynamics. Play the verses softly and increase your volume slightly during the chorus. Use your pick lightly, or better yet, use your fingers. A soft thumb strum on the lower strings and a light index finger strum on the higher strings can produce a much warmer tone.

Ignoring the Bass Notes

As mentioned earlier, the bass notes are crucial. Simply strumming all six strings on every chord can create a muddy sound. **Solution:**Practice picking the root note first, then strumming. For C, pick the 3rd fret on the A string. For Am, pick the open A string. This gives the chord progression a solid foundation and a professional sound.

Beyond the Basics: Adding Fingerstyle Embellishments

Once you have mastered the chord shapes and transitions, the next step is to make the song your own.

Waiting For My Real Life To Begin chords lend themselves beautifully to fingerstyle guitar. Instead of strumming, try picking out the individual notes of each chord in a pattern. A standard Travis picking pattern (alternating bass notes with melody notes on the offbeat) works wonderfully.

Try this simple fingerpicking pattern for the

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