

CUT CAPO TRY THIS:

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Have you ever tried blending together more than one acoustic guitar when you're playing live? Wow!! Unless *both* players are very experienced *and* versatile, the sound can be... let's just say, less than desirable. Face it, we've all been there.

Last week I bought a used piece of sound gear online for my church. Talking with the seller on the phone, come to find out, he's a guitar player of "many years." So, naturally, I asked him if he's familiar with the cut capo. He responded that he's familiar with the capo as a "device" but never had heard of a 'cut capo.' Familiar with the *device*! That got me thinking about this article... There may be some of you out there who don't use a capo at all. Contrary to some purists' belief, I must argue that the standard capo is not a "*cheat stick*."

God tells us to play skillfully (Psalm 33:3)... Tell me, who's more skillful... a fisherman who can pull in a bass with a string and his bare hands OR a fisherman who carefully chooses his rod and reel? Just being able to do amazing feats with their hands doesn't make them more skillful. Why does someone select rosewood over mahogany, spruce over cedar, or ovangkol over maple? Choice of TONE! Choice of tone or sound is the same reason I choose to place a capo on fret 2, fret 7, or not at all.

Now, I'll slide off my soapbox and talk about blending. Let's play in the key of "E" (the cut capo key). The first guitar can play with the cut capo on fret two. The second guitar has choices... 1. Play open - this, to me would be a bit dull. It adds too much midrange. 2. Playing with a full capo on fret 2 with the chord shapes D, A, G, and Bm... this is essentially what the first guitar is doing without the droning strings. Here, the two guitars will "step on each other's toes." 3. Playing with a full capo on fret 4 with the chord shapes C, F, G, and Am. This could be a nice blend, however many of you don't like the shape of an "F" chord, and the voicing is still relatively close. 4. Playing with a full capo on fret 7 with the chord shapes A, E, D, and F#m. This would be my choice. The voicing is high enough to stay out of the way and also provides almost a mandolin or high-strung effect.

This example is for the key of "E." Working with other specific keys works just the same. It may take a little thought, but separating the guitars and what chord voicing they are playing will breathe fresh air into your music. Examples are... If you're playing in "A" the first guitar may play open standard chords while the 2nd guitar plays with a full capo on 5 and cut capo on 7. The key of "G" might have your first guitar playing open or with a full capo on 3 and cut capo on 5 while the 2nd guitar plays with a full capo on fret 9 using shapes A, E, and D.

An important key to remember is that the guitars need to stay out of each other's way. The cut capo can be a great way to achieve this. Here's my capo transposition chart.

SHAPE	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
A	B ^b	B	C	C#	D	E ^b	E	F
B ^b	B	C	C#	D	E ^b	E	F	F#
B	C	C#	D	E ^b	E	F	F#	G
C	C#	D	E ^b	E	F	F#	G	A ^b
C#	D	E ^b	E	F	F#	G	A ^b	A
D	E ^b	E	F	F#	G	A ^b	A	B ^b
E ^b	E	F	F#	G	A ^b	A	B ^b	B
E	F	F#	G	A ^b	A	B ^b	B	C
F	F#	G	A ^b	A	B ^b	B	C	C#
F#	G	A ^b	A	B ^b	B	C	C#	D
G	A ^b	A	B ^b	B	C	C#	D	E ^b
A ^b	A	B ^b	B	C	C#	D	E ^b	E

The numbers represent a fret with a 6-string capo. Play the chord shape on the left and you'll "hear" the chord listed under that capo number. For example, place a capo on fret 5, play a "D" shape, and you'll be playing a "G" chord. Apply this chart to the cut capo by following chord shapes E, B, A, C#m, F#m, and so on.

Keep Worshiping Him!