Introduction to Jazz Guitar Chords and Comping Styles -by Mike Scott

The following lessons introduce some of the basics of jazz guitar chords. Topics include:

- 1. Some of the most common chord voicings used
- 2. Intervals
- 3. Triads
- 4. Seventh Chords, Drop 2 and Drop 3
- 5. Extensions and Sus chords
- 6. Quartal Chords
- 7. Freddie Green Style
- 8. Sample Comping Rhythms
- 9. Bossa Nova Style
- 10. Chords with Bass Line

The lessons will demonstrate an example in one key. Your assignment (what you need to practice!) is to learn to play them in all 12 keys. Some students have found they will need to write out a few examples in other keys first, but then can start working through the rest in their head without writing them out. For example, in the triad section the lesson shows possible ways to play a C major triad. You will then want to learn those for Fmaj, Gmaj, Dmaj, etc..

- 1. Practice it in the key that is shown first. Memorize it. Know the notes you are playing, not just the shape!
- 2. Choose another key to figure it out in. Many students will write it out at first. Memorize that key as well.
- 3. Then choose another key and continue. Once you have done it in 3 or 4 keys the rest should get a lot easier.

It's very important to learn the notes that are in each chord, not just the shape!

Give yourself a grade! As you work on each topic, critique yourself and your progress. I give my students the following self grading criteria for the triads as well as the drop 2 and 3 chords:

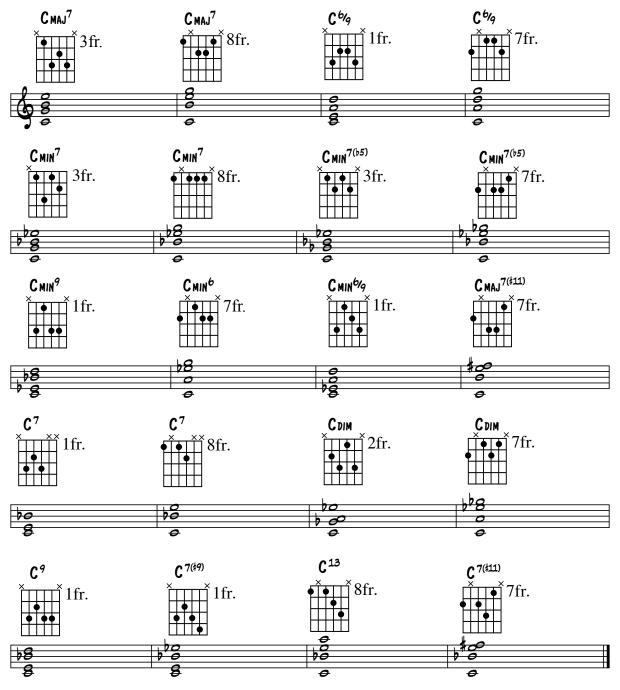
- A: You can play all the chord voicings and inversions (on all string sets) from memory and could identify the notes in each chord.
- B: You can play the chords in the key of C from memory and you can identify some of the notes in the chords. You can play some of the voicings in another key, but it takes you a little while to figure out each new key and may need to write them out first. Not always sure of the notes.
- C: You can play the voicings if you are looking at them and you could play them in another key if you write them out. You don't have any of them memorized.
- D or F: You really can only read the tabs that written out.

For the style lessons the idea is to learn what is written and then apply it to another song. For example, the Freddie Green style section gives an example over a blues and over the song "All of Me". Once you can play those, choose another song and figure out on your own how to play Freddie Green style on that song.

COMMON JAZZ GUITAR CHORDS

If you are somewhat new to jazz guitar chords, here are some of the most commonly used voicings.

These chords are all shown with a C root found on the 5th or 6th string. They can easily be moved throughout the neck of the guitar by lining up the root with another desired note. For example, the first voicing for Cmaj7 has it's root at the 3rd fret on the 5th string. To change this to a Dmaj7 you would move it up to the 5th fret.

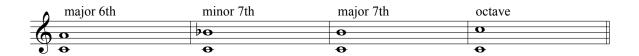


Intervals

An **interval** is the distance between two notes. Intervals can be described as harmonic if the two notes sound simultaneously or melodic if the two notes sound successively.







- 1. Find intervals from notes other than C.
- 2. Try playing different intervals on your guitar. (harmonic and melodic)

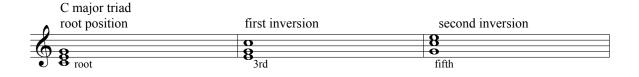
Triads

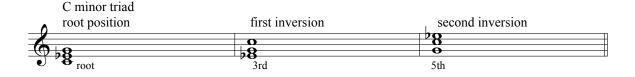
A **triad** is a three note chord. The three notes are called the **root**, **3rd**, **and 5th**. The intervals between the notes are major or minor thirds. There are four types of triads: **major**, **minor**, **diminished**, **augmented**.



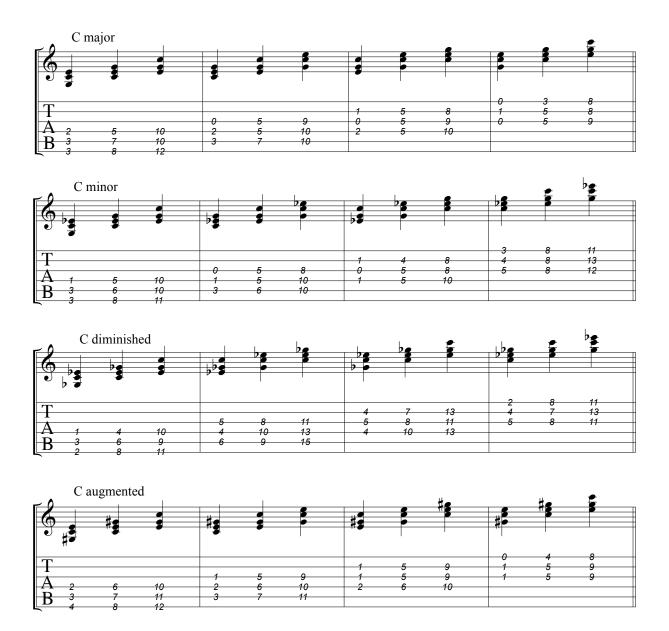
C major triad: C (major 3rd) E (minor 3rd) G C minor triad: C (minor 3rd) Eb (major 3rd) G C diminished triad: C (minor 3rd) Eb (minor 3rd) Gb C augmented triad: C (major 3rd) E (major 3rd) G#

Triads can also be inverted. An **inversion** is a chord with a note other than the root on the bottom. First inversion has the third on the bottom, second inversion has the fifth on the bottom.





Triads

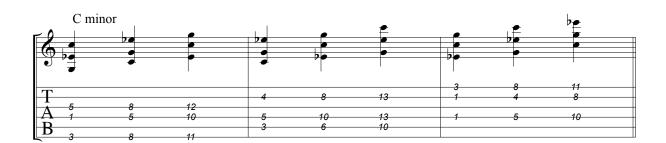


Assignment: Learn to do this in all 12 keys, memorized.

Triads (Spread Voicings)



For spread voicings you will find there is more than one way to play them. The tablature here shows one possibilty. Try and find others.

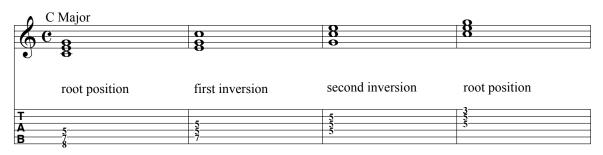


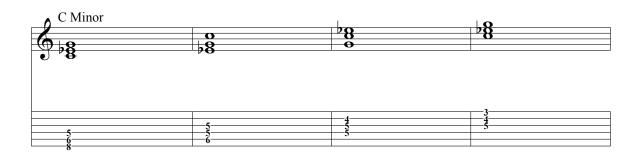


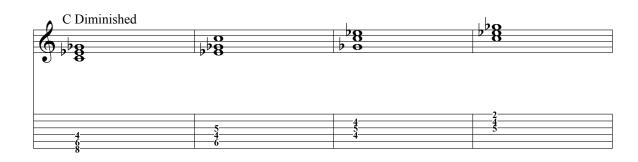


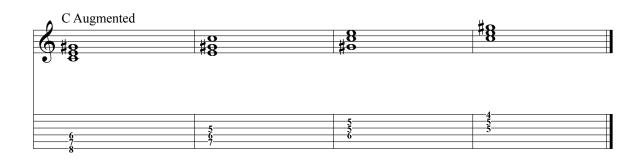
Practice these in all 12 keys.

Triad Inversions on Guitar (Moving across strings)







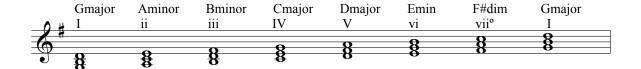


Diatonic Triads in the Major Scale

A triad can be built from each of the seven notes in the major scale. **Diatonic** triads use only notes belonging to the scale. Each major scale/key will contain three major triads, three minor triads, and one diminished triad.

Roman numerals are used to distinguish different triads (chords). Upper case for major, lower case for minor, lower case followed by a "o" for diminshed. Although it is not a diatonic triad in major keys, the augmented triad would be written as an upper case roman numeral followed by a "+" sign.



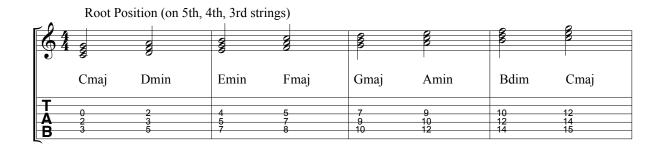


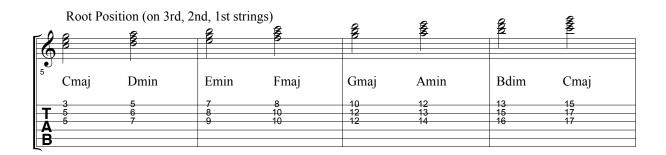


In every key the I, IV and V chords are major. The ii, iii, and vi chords are minor and the viio is diminished.

Learn this in all 12 keys!

Diatonic Triads in C Major

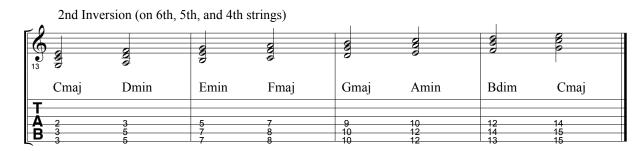




1st Inversion (on 4th, 3rd, 2nd strings)

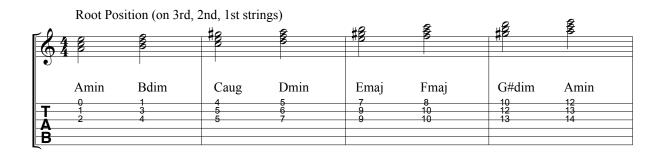
Cmaj Dmin Emin Fmaj Gmaj Amin Bdim Cmaj

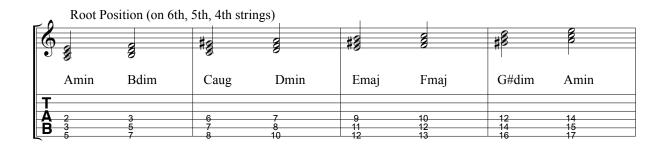
1 3 5 6 8 8 10 12 13 13 15 15 7 9 10 10 12 14

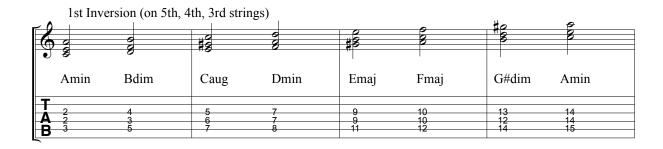


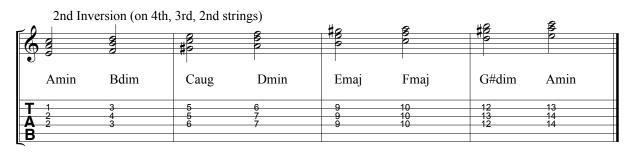
This page shows 4 examples, but of course you can do any inversion on each of the 4 string sets. Practice this in all 12 keys!

Triads from the A Harmonic Minor Scale



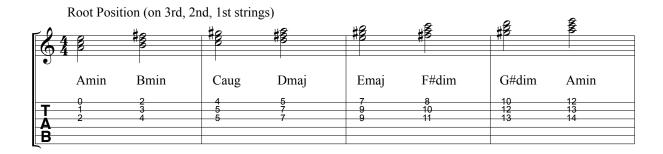


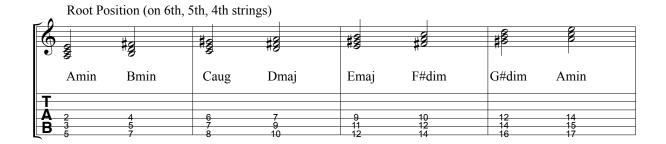


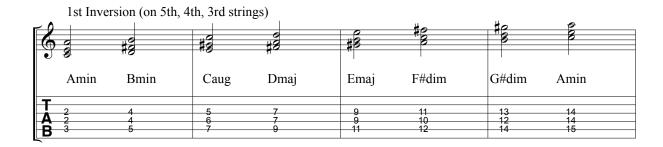


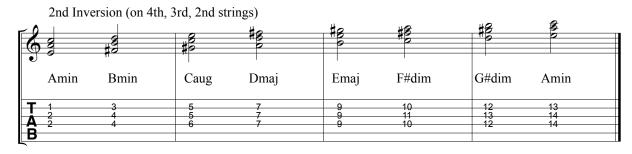
Practice in all 12 keys!

Triads from the A Melodic Minor Scale







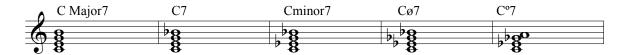


Practice in all 12 keys!

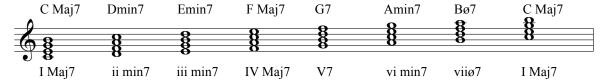
Seventh Chords

Seventh chords are triads with a note an interval of a seventh above the root added. There are five basic types of seventh chords: Major 7th, Dominant 7th, Minor 7th, Half-Diminished or Minor 7(b5), and Diminished 7th. With a C root the chords would be:

C Major7: C E G B C7: C E G Bb Cminor7: C Eb G Bb Cø7 or Cminor7(b5): C Eb Gb Bb C°7 or Cdim7: C Eb Gb Bbb(A)



Diatonic 7th Chords



Other types of 7th Chords

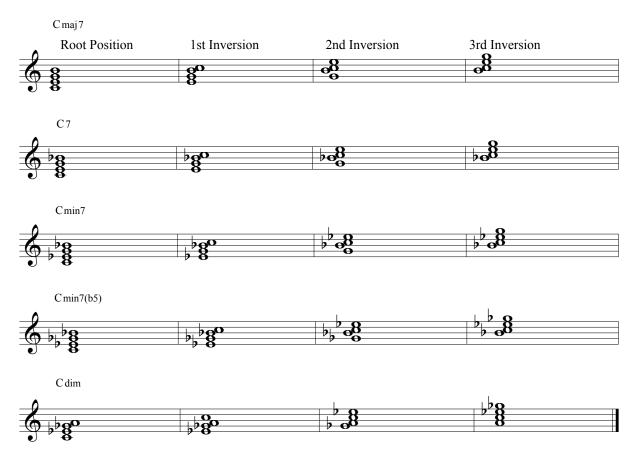
Cmin(Maj7): C Eb G B C+(Maj7) or C Maj7(#5): C E G# B C+7 or C7(#5): C E G# Bb Cdim(Maj7): C Eb Gb B



Like the triads, seventh chords can also have inversions.

However, on guitar they are often very difficult to play, and many times just not possible.

Try playing some of the following:



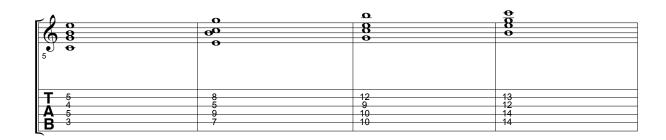
The above are referred to as close voicings. One way to make these work better on the guitar is to use what are called drop 2 and drop 3 voicings. A drop 2 voicing takes the second highest note of a close voicing and drops it to the bass. A drop 3 voicing takes the third highest voice and drops it. For example:

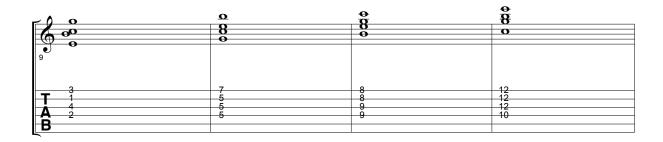


- Drop 2 Voicings -

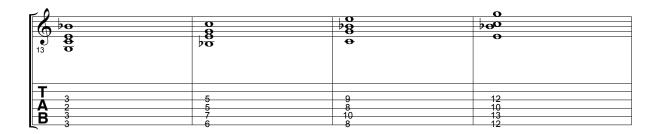
Cmaj7 - Drop 2 Voicings

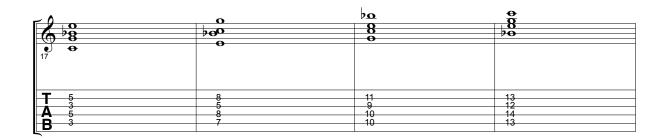
\$4 °° \$8	0 8 0	8 •	0 0 0
T			
4	5	Q	12
Ι Δ 2	Ĕ	l ŏ	1 10
2 5	7	10	10
I B	<u> </u>	110	14
L - 3	- 	<u> </u>	12

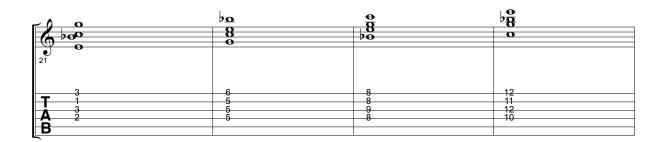




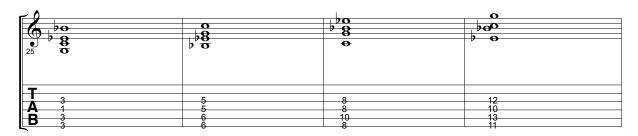
C7 - Drop 2 Voicings



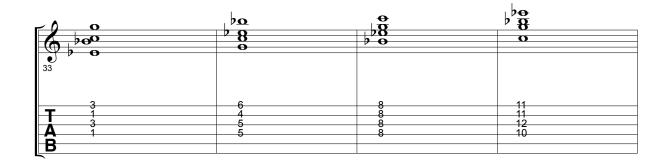




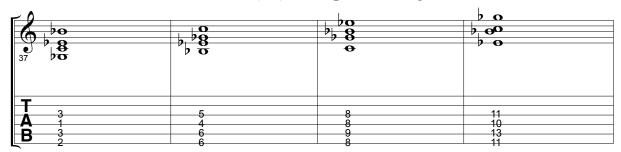
Cmin7 - Drop 2 Voicings



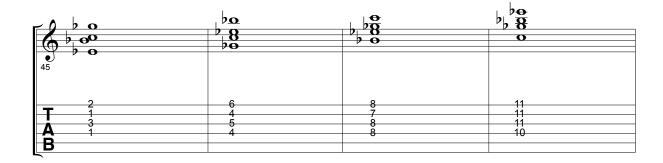
8 29) o	8	8	
T 4 3 5 B 3	8 5 8 6	11 8 10 10	13 12 13 13	



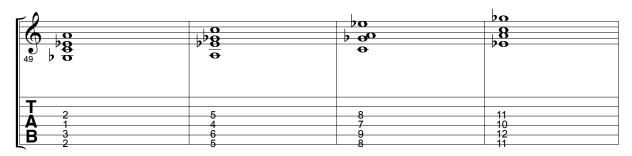
Cmin7(b5) - Drop 2 Voicings



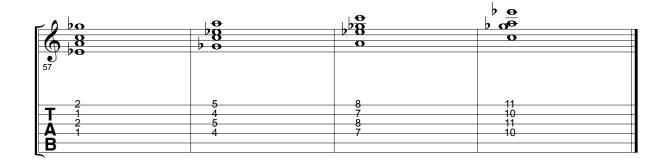
8 41	0	8	8	
T 4 A 3 B 3	7 5 8 6	11 8 10 9	13 11 13 13	



C, Eb, Gb, or A Diminished - Drop 2 Voicings

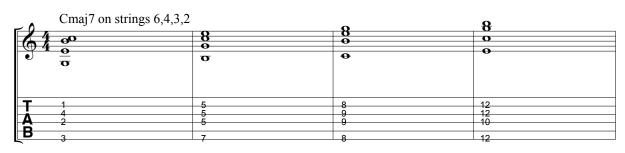


r 0 ->0	þo	•	b Q	
(h) b 00	8	9 0	0	
● 53				
T 4	7	10	13	
\mathbf{A} $\frac{2}{4}$	5 7	8 10	11 13	
B 3	6	9	12	



Practice all of the drop 2 chords in all 12 keys!

Drop 3 chords

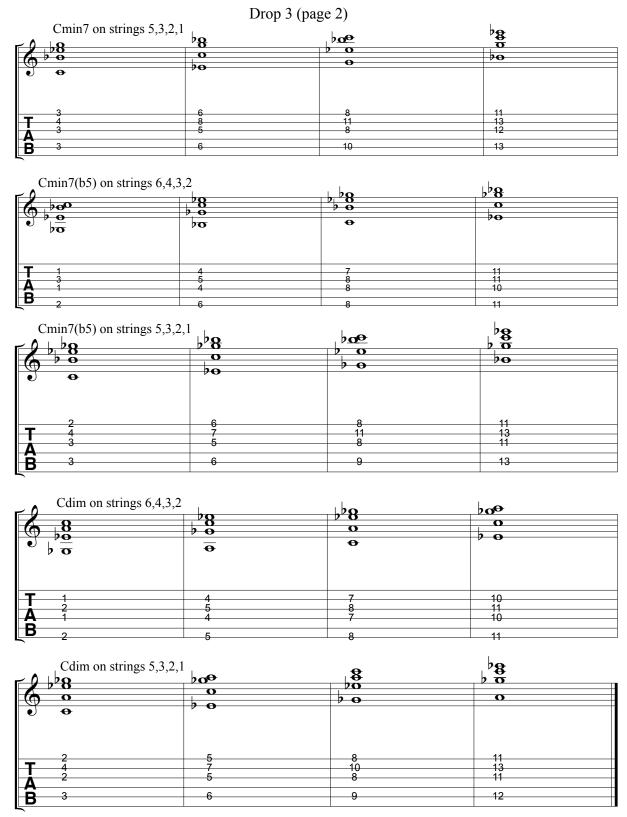


Cmaj7 on strings 5,3,	2,1	-0	8	
-	8	<u>oe</u>	<u> </u>	
4 8	0	0	0	
9	0	•		
• •				
3	7	8	12	
├ T 5	<u>8</u>	12	13	
Δ 4	5	9	12	
R 3	7	10	14	
[D				

C7 on strings 6	,4,3,2	0	,8	
6 500	8	90	O	
$\frac{\mathbf{o}}{\mathbf{o}}$	þo	Φ	•	
T 1	5	8	11	
3	5	9	12	
 A 2	5	8	10	
B 3	6	8	12	

C7 on strings 5,3,2,1	, S) <u>oe</u>	8
6 6	o o	0	Þo
€			
- 3	6	8	12
1 3 1 3	5	9	13 12
B 3	7	10	13

	10	β
8	198	0
0	<i>y</i> G	90
o	•	
4	- 8	11
5	8	_12
5	8	
6	8	11
	9	8



Practice in all 12 keys!

Common Chord Extensions

Some common extensions on major chords would include the 6th, the 9th, and the #11.

C 6	C 6	СМај9	C Maj7	C 6	C 69	
61 00	0 0 0	8	8	0	0	
7 4 8	0	8	8	8	•	
Т	5		3	2		
A	2		4	2	7 7	
В	3		3	3	8	

- 1. As with the seventh chords, it can be difficult to play these extended chords in root position on guitar and include every note. Notice the second voicing for C6 moves the E up an octave.
- 2. The fifth can often be omitted (as well as other chord tones) to make room for the extensions. Compare the two voicings for CMaj9 (5th omitted in 2nd). In the second voicing for C6/9 the third is omitted.
- 3. Both the 6th and the 9th are diatonic tones and can be included with any major seventh voicing.
- 4. Notice that C6 uses the same chord tones as Amin7. So all of those drop 2's and drop 3's for Amin7 could also be possible voicings for C6. A similar thing happens with CMaj9. If you take away the root you would be left with Emin7. You could then use drop 2 and 3 Emin7 voicings as options for CMaj9.

The #11 is also a common extension on Major 7th chords in jazz. On the I chord it is a non-diatonic tone, but on the IV chord it is a diatonic tone. The #11 could also be referred to as a #4 or b5. (see below)

C ⁶ (#11)	CMaj9(#11)	CMaj7(#11)	CMaj7(#4)
√ #8	#8	#00	Q
0 0	θ χ	θ	#0 •
• •	•	•	9
T 2	2	7	
1 3 1 2	4	9	4
A 2 R 3	2 3	9	4 3
<u>Г</u> р .		8	

The 6th and the 9th are also very common extensions on minor chords.

C min6	C min6	C min6	Cmin9	Cmin9	C min9	
-0	1.	8				
	70		18	18	О	=
\bigcirc \bigcirc	-00	0	h 8	20	100	
• 8	•	•	B	\ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \ \	▶8	
						-
T	4			3	3	
1	2			3		
LA	5	7		1	1	
D	3	,		3	3	
D	9	o o		9	9	
_		U				

The 6th and 9th work well with the min(Maj7) chord as well.

Cmin(Maj7)	Cmin(Maj7)	Cmin9(Maj7)	Cmin6(Maj7)	Cmin(Maj7)	Cmin9(Maj7)
\$ •8	8 •	8	8	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	8
Τ θ	4	3	0	8	10 8
A 0 B 3	5 3	4 1 3	2 1 3	8 9	8 9

A common extension on the minor7 and the minor7(b5) chord is the 11th. (Same note as the 4th)

Cmin11	Cmin11	Cmin11	1 1	Cmin11	Cmin11(b5)	1 1
r 9 8	<u> </u>	_ O	- -	- 	O	
6 5	₽8	- 8	⁷ 8	9 0	b ₂ 8	2,8
8	8	Φ	•	•	Φ	•
			(resolving to 3rd)			(resolving to 3rd)
Т	2	6	6 1	6	6	6 1
1	3	٥	9 7	0	2	3
A	1	5	5	0	1	3
D	3	3	3	0	3	3
D	3	3	3	8		3

Dominant 7th chords have the most possibilities for extensions. They can be both diatonic and non-diatonic. These include 9, b9, #9, #11 (same as #4 or b5), 13 (same as 6), b13 (same as #5).

C 9	C 9	C7(b9)	C 7(#9)	C 7(\$5)	C 7(#5)	C 7(#11)	C 13	C7(b13)
	110	100	1120	1 0	1 10	# o e	0	Þe
6 8	₽8	b, 8	þ o	3 ,8	₽ 98)" o	20	Þö
9 8	8	8	8	•	[†] ↔	•	•	Ф
Т	2	2	1	5	5	7	10	0
1	3	3	3	3	3	9	9	9
<u>A</u>	2	2	2	4	6	8	8	8
B	3	3	3	3	3	٥	Q	٥

Of course multiple extensions can be combined on the dominant chord as well. For example:

C 9(#11)	C7 ^{#11}	C7#9	C 13(69)	C 9(#11) O O (O)	C13(9)	C7#9
$\begin{array}{ccc} T & \frac{2}{3} \\ A & \frac{3}{2} \\ B & \frac{3}{3} \end{array}$	2 2 3 2 2 3	4 4 3 2 3	5 2 3 2 3	10 7 9 8	10 10 9 8	11 9 9 8

Sus (Suspended) Chords

Typically in a sus chord the 4th **replaces** the 3rd in either a triad, dominant 7th chord, or dominant 9th chord. It will often resolve down to the major or minor 3rd of the chord (shown below), but does not have to.

Csus	C sus C	Csus	Csus C	Csus	Csus C	Csus C min	Csus C min
		O	0 0	0	9 8		9 79
0 00	9 9	00	7 8	0	0 0	3 3	9 9
	0 0	1 0	1 1 0		6 5 5 5	0 0	6 4 5 5
B 3	3 2 3	3 3	3 2 3	5 3	5 5 3 3	3 1 3	5 5 3 3

C7sus	C7sus	C7sus	C9sus	C9sus	C13sus
~ 0 · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·		o		Ω	8
6 00	98	Þo	▶8	98	₽O
0 0	0	•	0	0	0
Т	_	_			
1	6	8	3	6	10 10
A	5	8	3	8	8
R	3		3		
[<u>D</u>		8		8	8

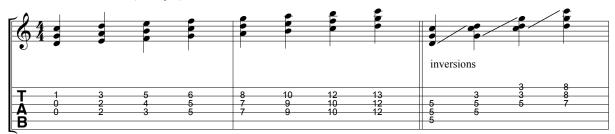
There are also voicings that can include both the 3rd and the 4th.

C(add4)	C7(add4)	C7(add4)	C7(add4)
	1 00	1 1 0	110
A	Þö	Þö	þ <mark>o</mark> o
() •		О	O
•) •	•	•	(O)
			0
T	6	5	1
1 0		9	1
Λ 9	9	3	3
Δ	8	3	3
R 10		3	(3)
D / 0	0	3	(3)
Ψ	' ŏ	'	<u>'</u>

Keep in mind: Depending upon the context they are used in, all these sus voicings and voicings with extensions can also be played without the root. And of course, practice these in all 12 keys!

Quartal Chords

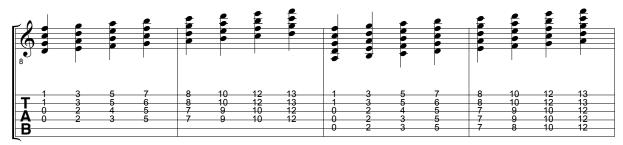
Quartal chords are chords built with the interval of a 4th rather than the 3rd used in traditional harmony. They can be constructed as 3 part voicings (like a triad), 4 part voicings (like a seventh chord), or more. Quartal chords can also have inversions. The following example constructs 3 part quartal chords from the D dorian scale (C major).



Although primarily made of perfect 4ths, you'll notice the augented 4th or tritone occurs as well. You will also notice in the inversions that they become a combination of 2nds and 4ths.



The following shows voicings using 4 and 5 part voicings. These are still all derived from the D dorian scale.



As you work on these, try to play the same voicing on different string sets as well. For example:

- 0	0	0		0
60	•	0	Ю	ŏ
9 0		O	O	О
12				
-				
	8	5		7
T 1 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2	8 13	5 10	1 -	6 12
A 0 5 10	12	3 9	3 9 10	5 10
R 5 10	12	8	8 14	10
<u>10</u>			13	

Quartal Chord Examples

1. This example shows quartal chords used for Dmin7. (Dorian)



2. This example shows quartal chords used for Emaj7(#11). (Lydian)

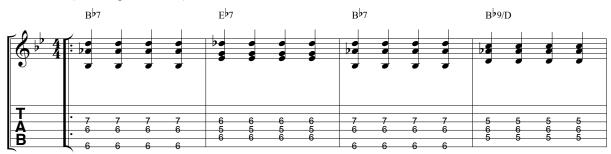


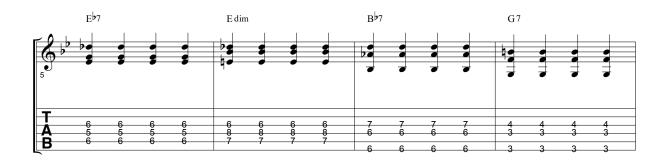
3. This example shows quartal chords used for A7sus. (Mixolydian)

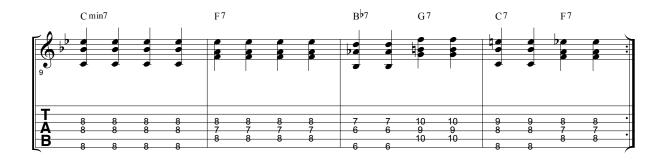


Freddie Green Style

B | Blues (1 chord per measure)

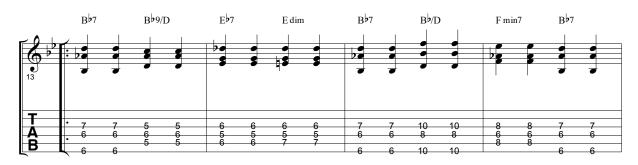


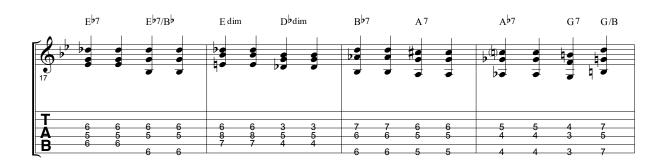


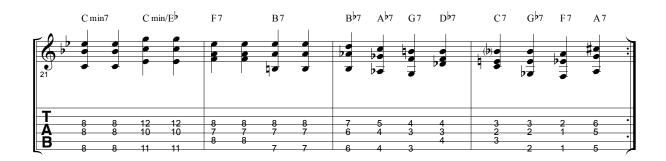


Often when playing with a bassist the notes on the 6th or 5th string can be omitted and the guitarist would just play the notes on the 3rd and 4th strings.

Bb Blues - changing voicings every 2 beats (or 1)

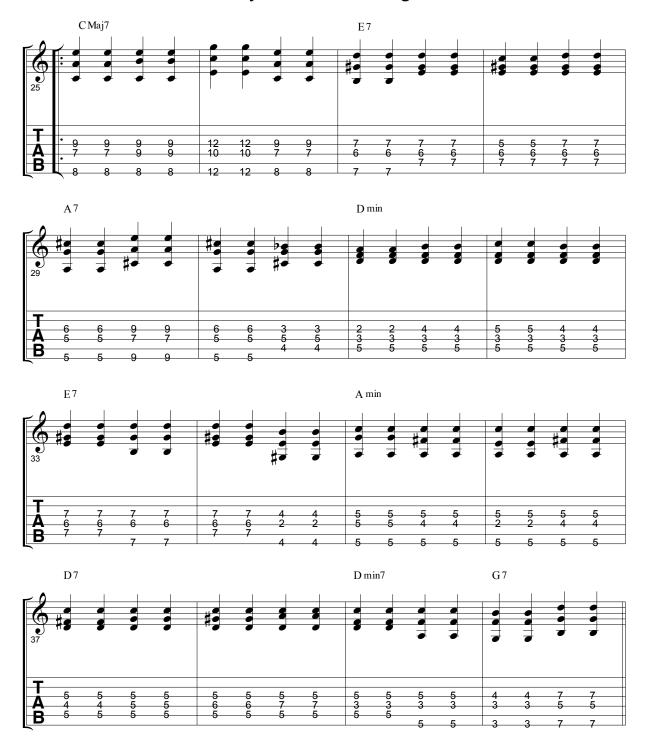


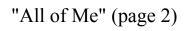


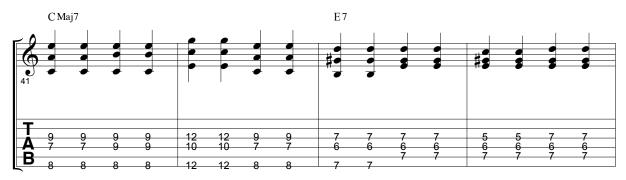


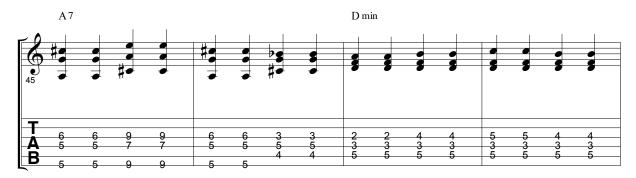
2 Freddie Green Style

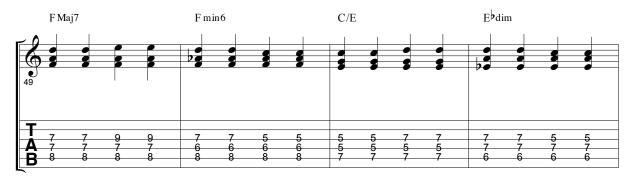
Freddie Green Style on Chord Changes to "All of Me"

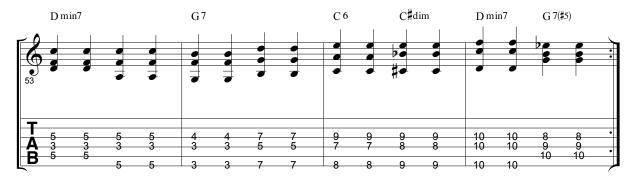












4 Freddie Green Style

EXAMPLE COMPING RHYTHMS

(TRY USING EACH RHYTHM TO COMP THROUGH A 12 BAR BLUES OR JAZZ STANDARD)



Some Chord Voicing Options for Autumn Leaves

(First 8 Bars)

	A min7	D 9	G Maj7	C Maj7	F#m7(\$5)	В7	Em6	
6 4	8 • •	8	8 0 0	8 •	8	#8 o o	0	0 00
T A B	5 5 5	5 5 4 5	3 4 4 3	5 4 5 3	10 9 10 9	7 8 7	8 6 9 7	

	A min7	D7	G Maj7	C Maj7	F#m7(\$5)	B 7(#9)	Em9	E min9
F #	8	00	Ω	00	0	0		±o_
9	o	O	0	<u>o</u>	8	# 8	6 0	OO
9	$\overline{f \Theta}$	•	σ	σ	⊕	πО	<u></u>	<u></u>
T	5	3	3	1	1	3	0	2
À	5 -5	5	4	4 2	2 2	2 1	0	0
В	5	5	3	3	2	2		

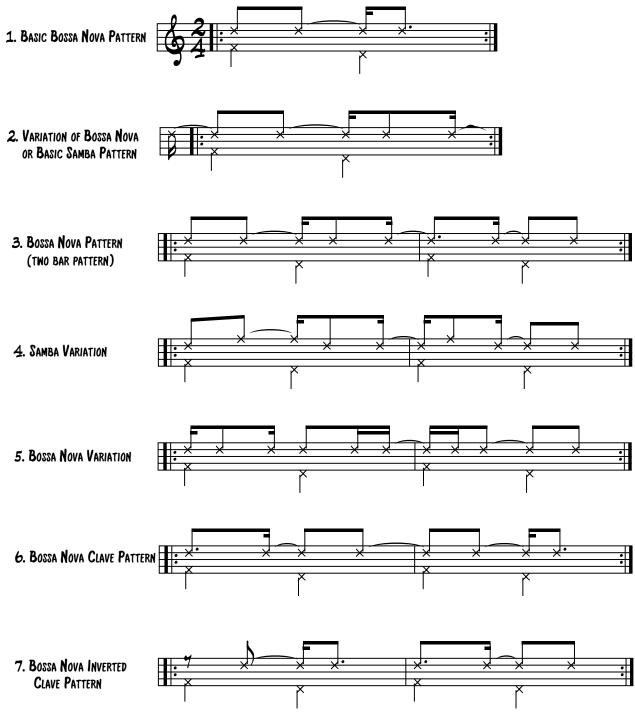
	A min7	D7	G Maj7	C Maj7	F#m7(b5)	В7	Emin6	
س ۵ 4	o o	<u>o</u>	O O	0	$\frac{\mathbf{e}}{\mathbf{e}}$	<u>o</u>	\mathbf{o}	
6	O	Ö	0	0	O	#8	#8 8	
17								
''								
	12	10	10	8	8	7	7	
Ţ	— <u>10</u> — <u>12</u>	10 11	8 11	8	7 9	7 8	5	
B	10	10	9	9	7	7	5	
<u></u>				l				

A min7	D9 8	G Maj7	CMaj7	F#m7(\$5)	# B 7(b9)	E min6	E min ⁶ 3 4 5 7 8 9 9 9 9 9 9 9
T 1 2 A 2 B	5 5 5 4	7 7 7 7 5	8 8 9 9	8 7 9 7	11 10 11 10	12 12 12 12 11	14 12 12 11 11

BRAZILIAN GUITAR STYLE

EXAMPLE BOSSA NOVA AND SAMBA RHYTHMS FOR THE RIGHT HAND

THE RIGHT HAND FINGERS PLAY THE MORE ACTIVE RHYTHMS (THE TOP VOICES OF THE CHORD), WHILE THE THUMB PLAYS THE QUARTER NOTE BASS FIGURE (USUALLY ON THE 5TH OR 6TH STRING). THE BASS SWITCHES FROM THE ROOT AND THE FIFTH OF THE CHORD AND IT'S BETTER TO PLAY THE FIFTH BELOW THE ROOT. IF THE ROOT IS ALREADY ON THE 6TH STRING IT'S OK TO STAY ON THAT NOTE.



(PRACTICE EACH EXAMPLE WITH A SINGLE CHORD AT FIRST, THEN TRY IT WITH A SIMPLE CHORD PROGRESSION)

NELSON FARIA'S BOOK "THE BRAZILIAN GUITAR BOOK" IS AN FANTASTIC RESOURCE FOR THIS STYLE.

So Danco Samba

Antonio Carlos Jobim



So Danco Samba - Page 2



BLUES WITH BASS LINE



Appendix

Various Chord Charts

