

Triads on High Strings

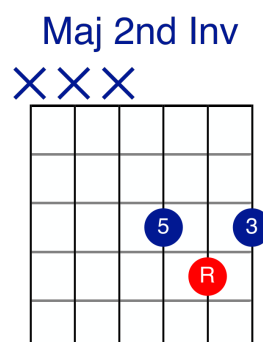
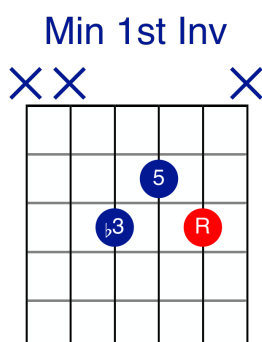
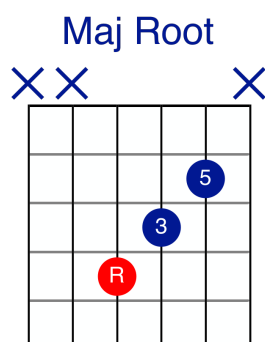
The diagrams in these pages show how to play major, minor, diminished, and augmented triads on adjacent strings 1-2-3 and 2-3-4. These triads are useful for:

- Solo guitar playing
- Improvising using chords
- Enabling you to play something different if there is more than one guitarist playing. (One guitarist can play standard chords while you play chords on the high strings.)
- These triads are not as useful if the guitar is the only instrument playing chords. If you are the only accompanist, you're better off playing standard open or moveable chords.

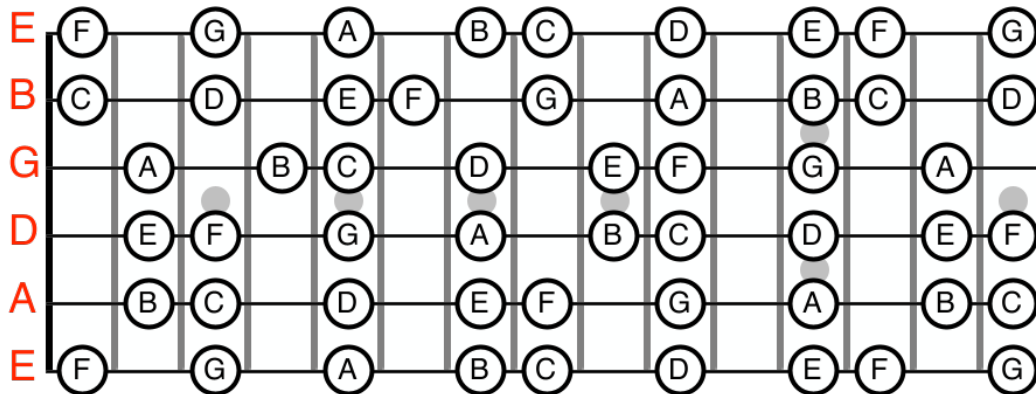
These triads are moveable. You'll have to know the notes on strings 1, 2, 3, and 4 to put them to use. You'll find fretboard diagrams on the next page, and you can [watch this video](#) for some help with learning the fretboard.

About the Diagrams

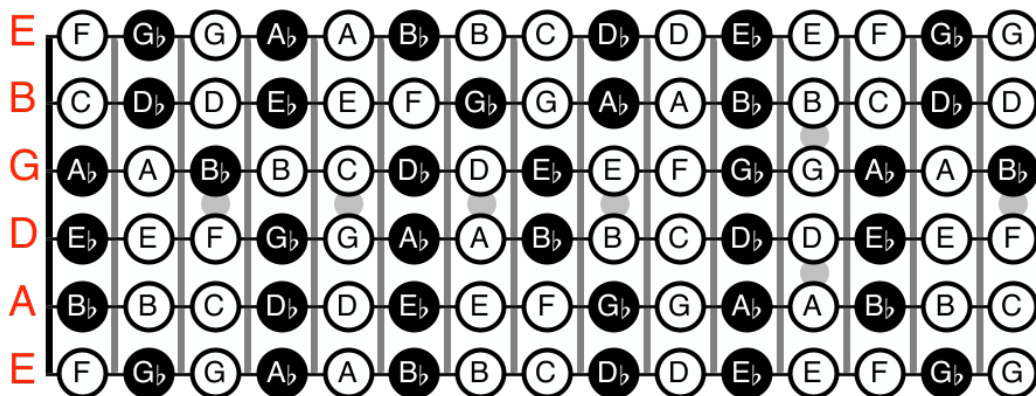
- Each diagram names the chord type (major, minor, augmented, or diminished), and whether the chord is in root position, 1st inversion, or 2nd inversion.
- **Root position** = The **root** of the chord is the lowest sounding note.
1st inversion = The **3rd** of the chord is the lowest sounding note.
2nd inversion = The **5th** of the chord is the lowest sounding note.
- The root, 3rd, and 5th are labeled inside the diagrams.
- For more on chord construction, check out the [Guitar Theory Modules playlist](#).



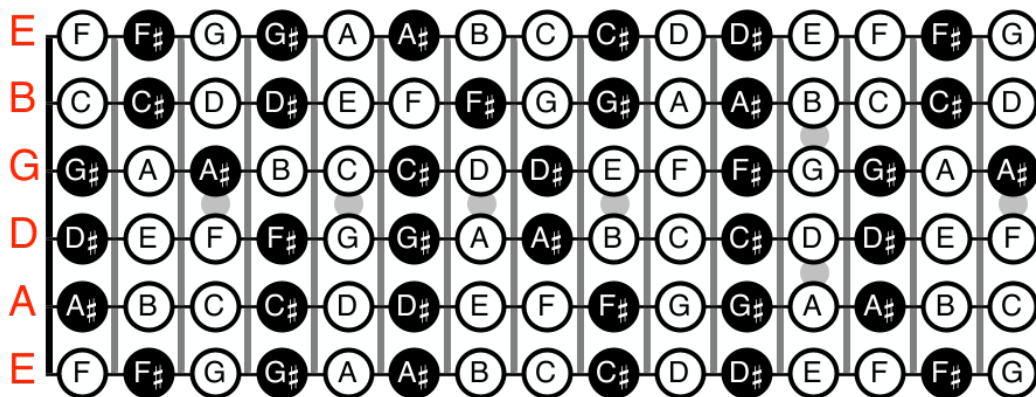
Natural Notes up to the 15th Fret



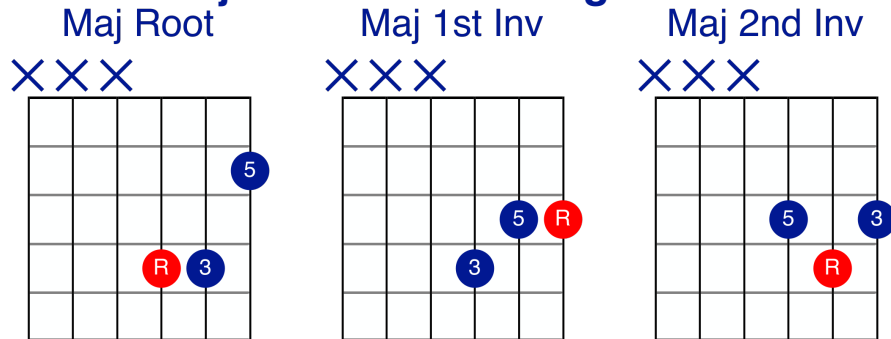
Filling in the Gaps with Flats



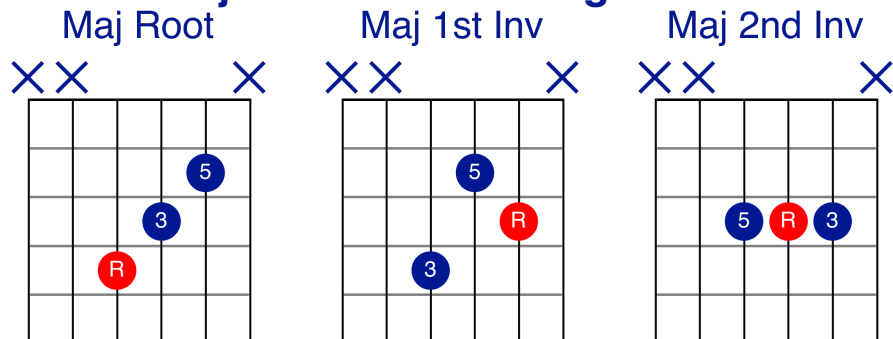
Filling in the Gaps with Sharps



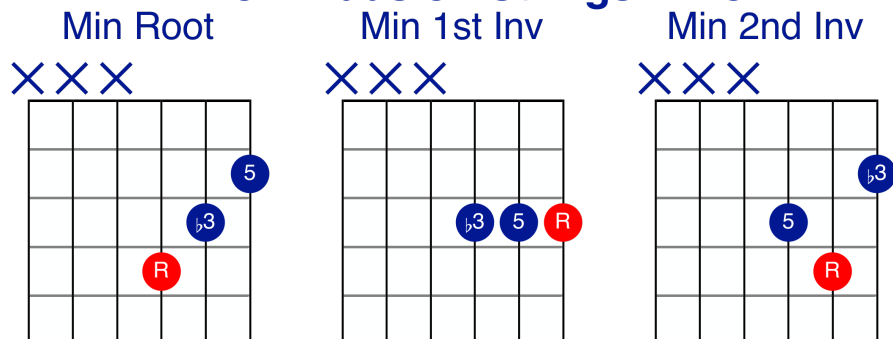
Major Triads on Strings 1-2-3



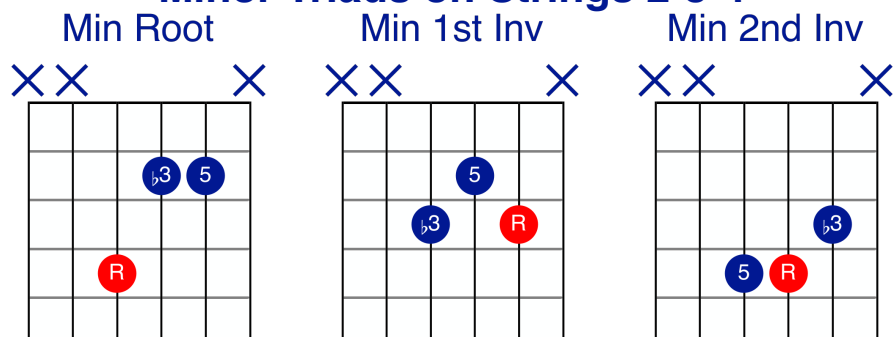
Major Triads on Strings 2-3-4



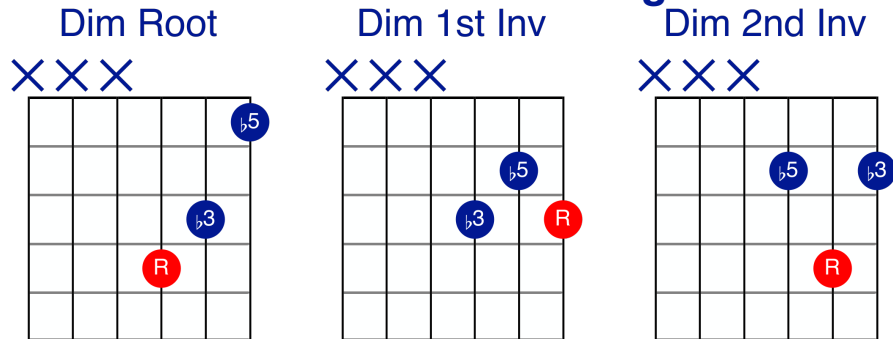
Minor Triads on Strings 1-2-3



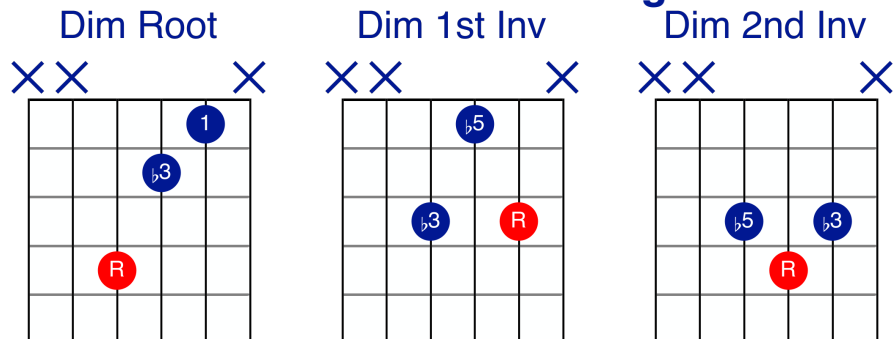
Minor Triads on Strings 2-3-4



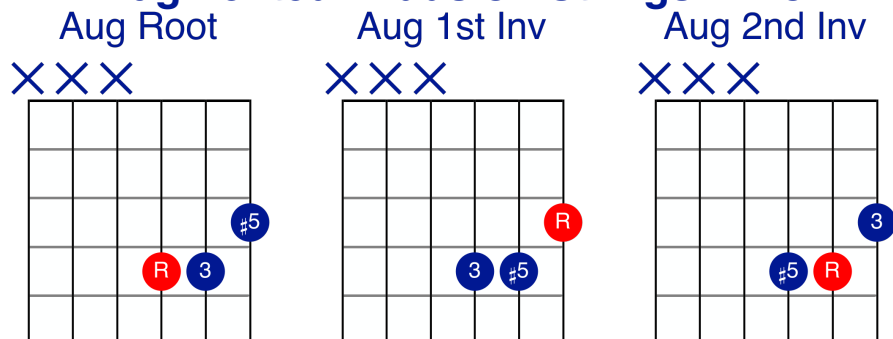
Diminished Triads on Strings 1-2-3



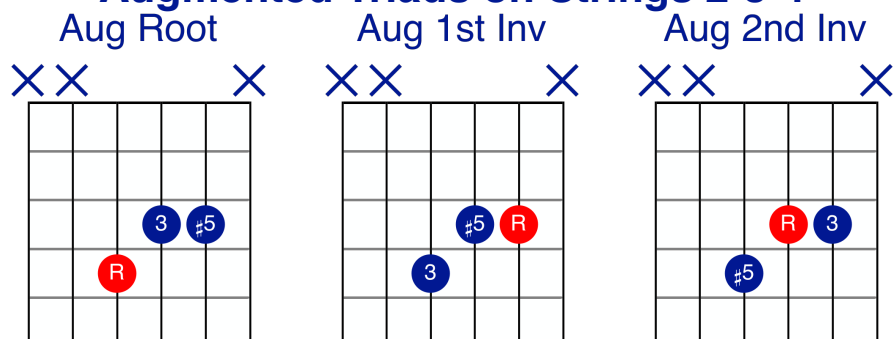
Diminished Triads on Strings 2-3-4



Augmented Triads on Strings 1-2-3



Augmented Triads on Strings 2-3-4



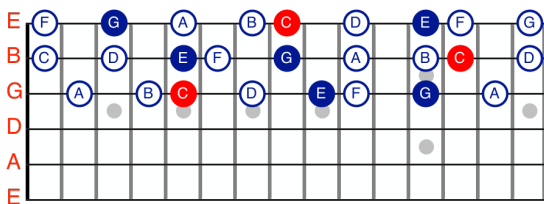
How to Practice High String Triads

Find All Inversions of Each Chord Type

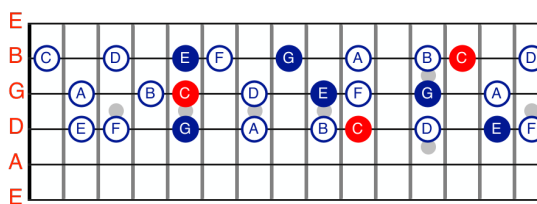
- On strings 1-2-3, play any major triad in root position, 1st inversion and 2nd inversion.
- Then, playing the same root note, do this with minor, diminished, and augmented triads.
- Do the same on strings 2-3-4.
- Then pick another root note and repeat the entire process.

Example: C major, minor, augmented, and diminished triads

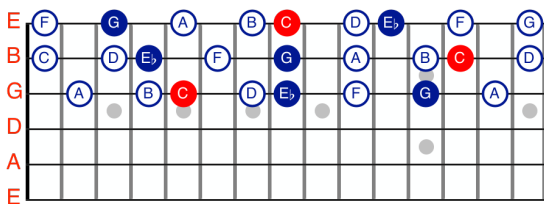
C Major on Strings 1-2-3



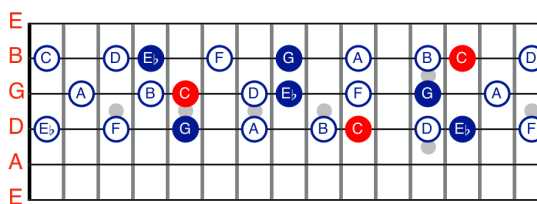
C Major on Strings 2-3-4



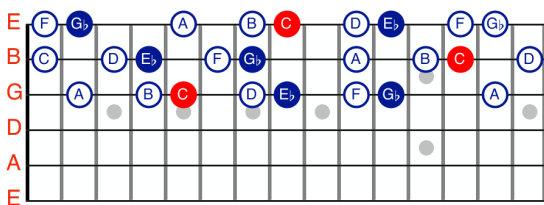
C Minor on Strings 1-2-3



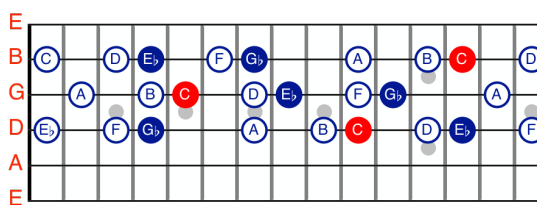
C Minor on Strings 2-3-4



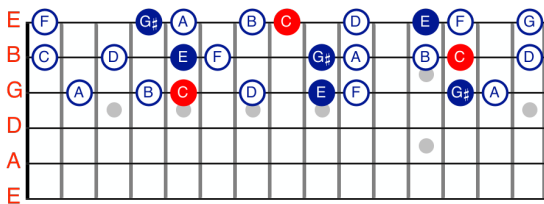
C Diminished on Strings 1-2-3



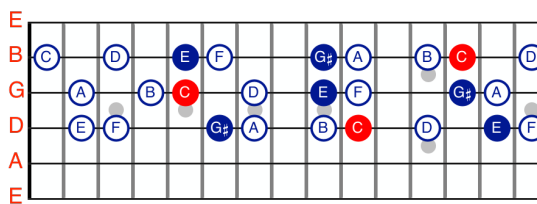
C Diminished on Strings 2-3-4



C Augmented on Strings 1-2-3

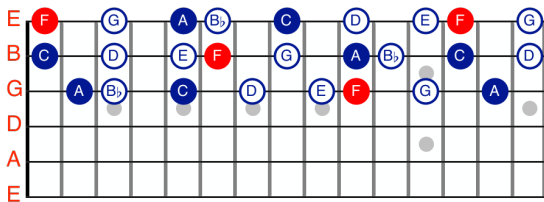


C Augmented on Strings 2-3-4

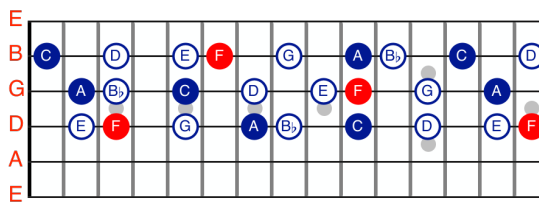


Example: F major, minor, augmented, and diminished triads

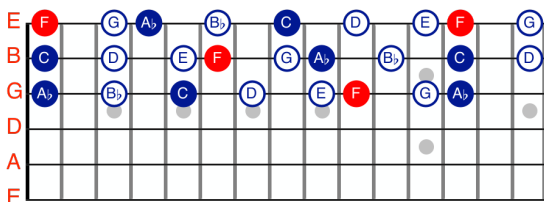
F Major on Strings 1-2-3



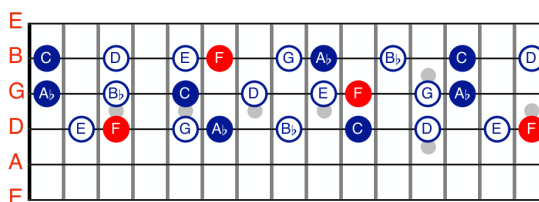
F Major on Strings 2-3-4



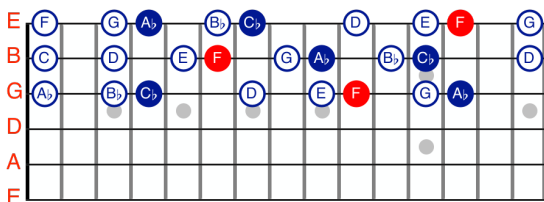
F Minor on Strings 1-2-3



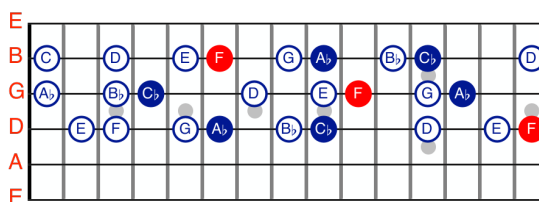
F Minor on Strings 2-3-4



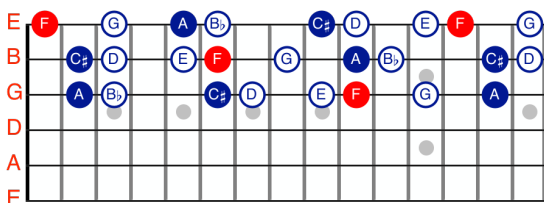
F Diminished on Strings 1-2-3



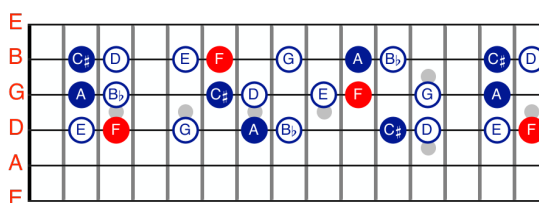
F Diminished on Strings 2-3-4



F Augmented on Strings 1-2-3



F Augmented on Strings 2-3-4



At first, this type of chord practice will take will take some time as you puzzle out each inversion. Like anything else in music, this will get easier and faster over time. I recommend practicing these inversions on just 2-3 root notes per practice session.

This whole process will be **much** easier if you know enough theory to be able to name the root, 3rd, and 5th of any given triad. If you're looking for theory instruction from a guitarist's point of view, check out the [Guitar Theory Modules playlist](#).

Practice Chord Progressions

The most practical way to learn to play high string triads is to play them in actual chord progressions.

- Play a simple chord progression. It could be something as simple as Happy Birthday, although you'll ideally want to find a song that includes both major and minor chords. (Diminished and augmented triads are much less common.)
- On strings 1-2-3 only, play the first chord of the song or progression in any inversion (root position, 1st inversion, or 2nd inversion).
- Play the rest of the chords in the song on the same set of strings, **keeping them in the same area of the fretboard**. You'll find that some chords may be in different inversions than your starting chord.
- Once you've worked this out, start the first chord in a different area of the fretboard in a different inversion. Go through the same process on strings 2-3-4.

This lesson covers triads only. If you run into some more complex chords, you can make some substitutions:

- Dominant 7 (e.g. C7, G7) – Play a major triad.
- Minor 7 – Play a minor triad.
- 7#5 – Play an augmented triad.
- Diminished 7, Minor 7b5 (aka Half-Diminished) – Play a diminished triad.

Scarborough Fair Example

On the next page, you'll find a lead sheet for **Scarborough Fair** in the key of A minor. This song only has four chords: A minor, C major, G major, and D major.

On pages 9-10, you'll see four ways you could potentially play high string triads for **Scarborough Fair**. In the fretboard diagrams on pages 9-10, each chord is played in the same area of the fretboard as the starting chord.

SCARBOROUGH FAIR

ENGLISH FOLK SONG



1. Are you go - ing to Scar - bo - rough Fair? _____
 2. Tell her to make me a cam - bric shirt. _____
 3. Tell her to wash it in yon - der dry well. _____
 4. Tell him to buy me an a - cre of land. _____
 5. Tell him to plough it with a ram's horn. _____
 6. Are you go - ing to Scar - bo - rough Fair? _____



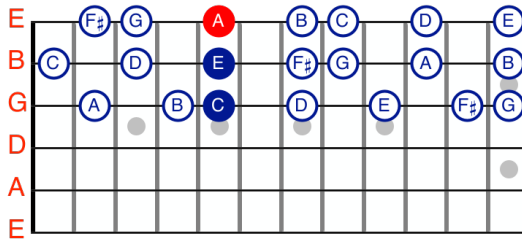
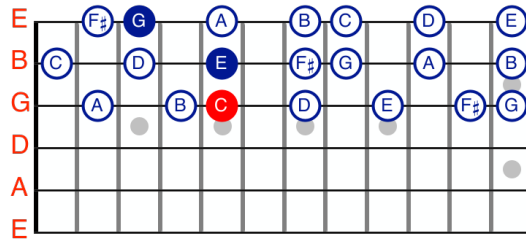
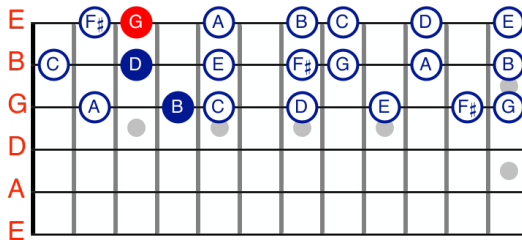
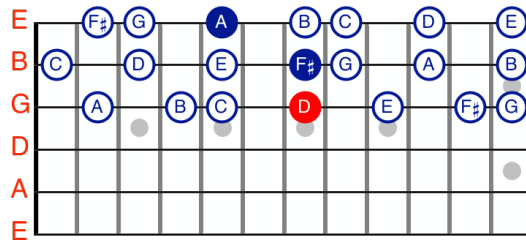
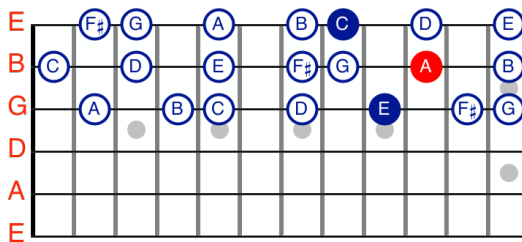
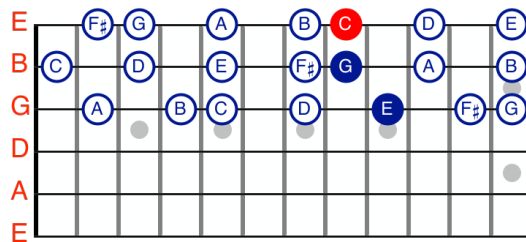
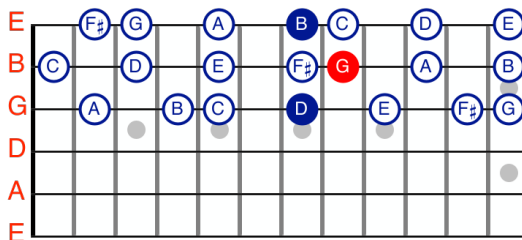
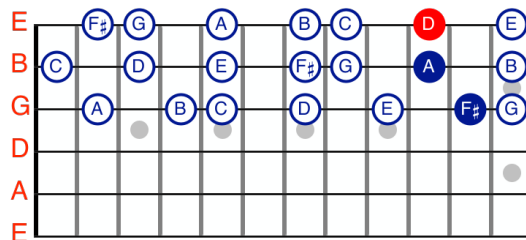
Pars - ley, sage, rose - mar - y and thyme, _____ Re -
 Pars - ley, sage, rose - mar - y and thyme, _____ With -
 Pars - ley, sage, rose - mar - y and thyme, _____ Where
 Pars - ley, sage, rose - mar - y and thyme, _____ Be -
 Pars - ley, sage, rose - mar - y and thyme, _____ And
 Pars - ley, sage, rose - mar - y and thyme, _____ Re -



mem - ber me to one who lives there. _____
 out a thread or fine need - le work. _____
 ne'er a drop of wa - ter e're fell. _____
 tween the sea - shore and the sea sand. _____
 plant it all over with one pep - per corn. _____
 mem - ber me to one who lives there. _____

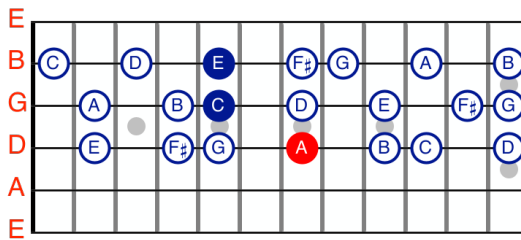


She once was a true love of mine. _____
 Then she'll be a true love of mine. _____
 Then she'll be a true love of mine. _____
 Then he'll be a true love of mine. _____
 Then he'll be a true love of mine. _____
 She once was a true love of mine. _____

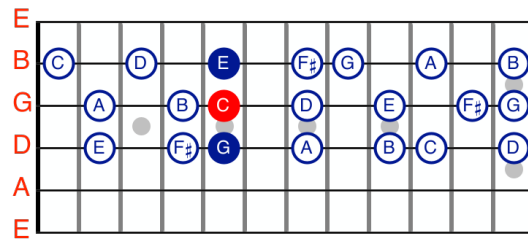
Scarborough Fair Chords, 1st Set (Strings 1-2-3)**A Minor, 1st Inversion****C Major, Root Position****G Major, 1st Inversion****D Major, Root Position****Scarborough Fair Chords, 2nd Set (Strings 1-2-3)****A Minor, 2nd Inversion****C Major, 1st Inversion****G Major, 2nd Inversion****D Major, 1st Inversion**

Scarborough Fair Chords, 3rd Set (Strings 2-3-4)

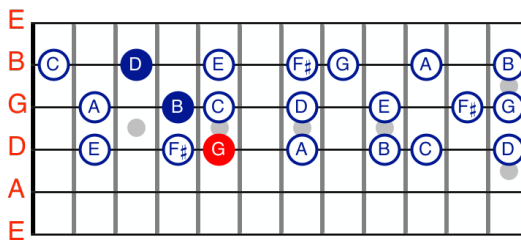
A Minor, Root Position



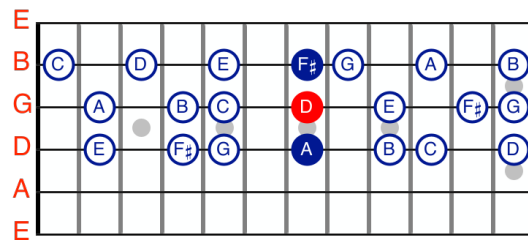
C Major, 2nd Inversion



G Major, Root Position

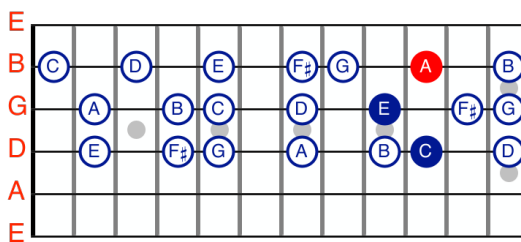


D Major, 2nd Inversion

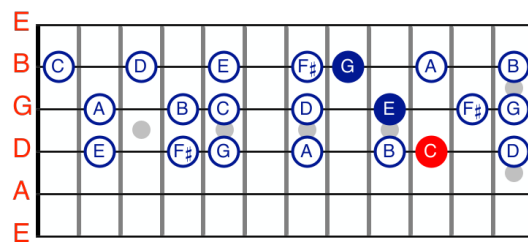


Scarborough Fair Chords, 4th Set (Strings 2-3-4)

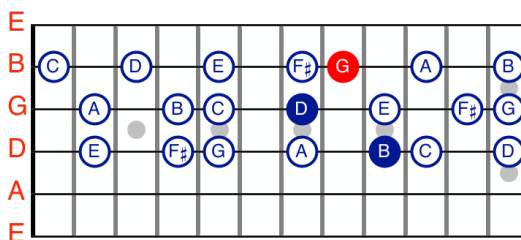
A Minor, 1st Inversion



C Major, Root Position



G Major, 1st Inversion



D Major, Root Position

