

Suspended Chords

This is a brief explanation of where “sus4” or “sus” chords come from, followed by several sus4 and 7sus4 chord diagrams.

The first example shows a standard 1-4-5-1 progression in the key of G major. The second example shows the D chord embellished by holding the G note over from the C chord. That G note is called a **suspension**.

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Normally, the G note from the C chord (beat 2) would resolve down to the F# in the D chord. That F# is the 3rd of the D major chord. The held over G functions as a **4th**, which is a half step higher than the 3rd.

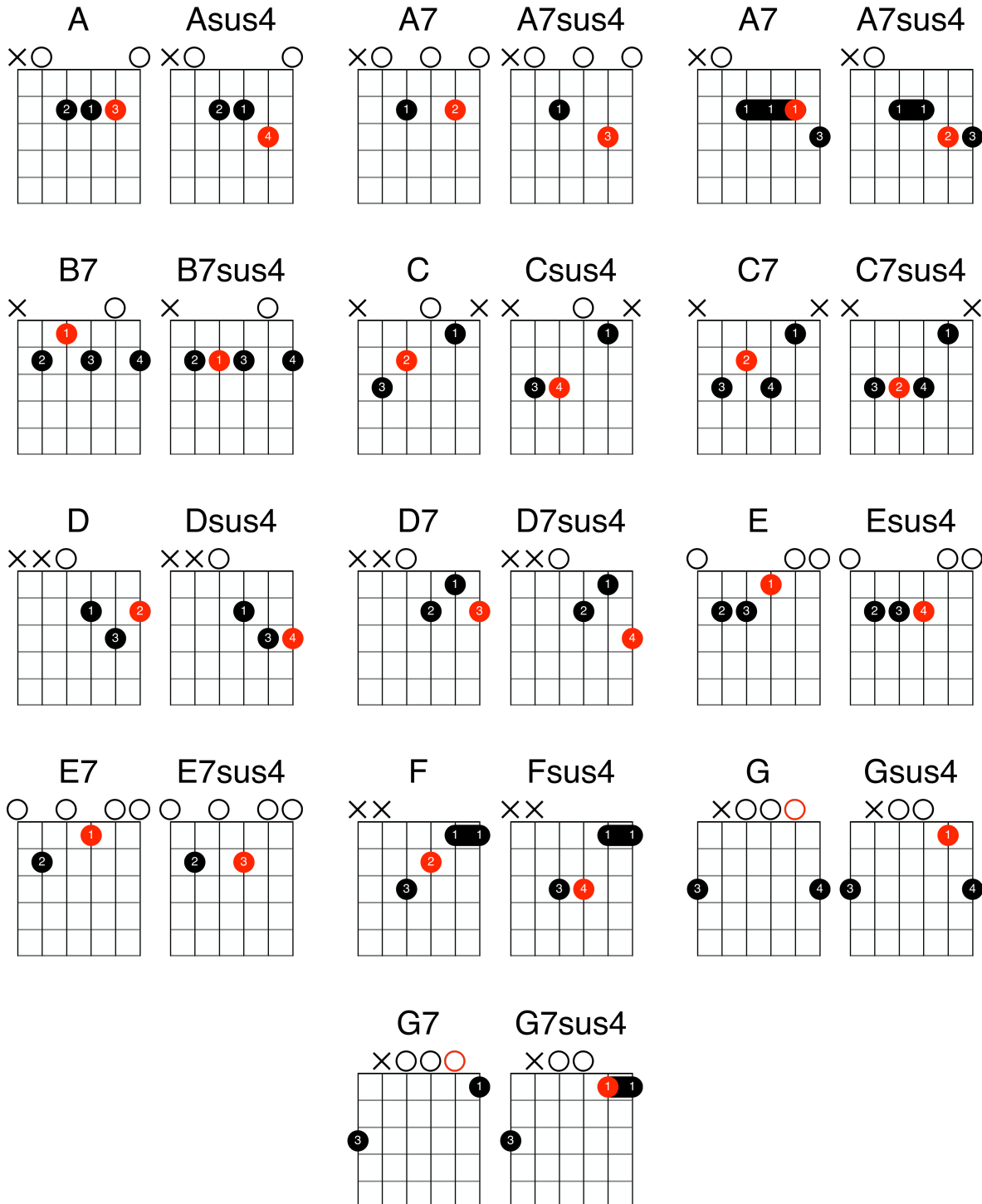
In non-classical music, this D with the suspension is called **Dsus4** or just **Dsus**, with the 4th implied.

In earlier music (Renaissance, Baroque, and Classical periods), suspensions were set up by holding a note over from the previous chord. In modern music, suspended chords often come out of the blue, or are **unprepared**. Either way, when you see a suspended chord, what’s happening is that the **3rd of the chord is raised to a 4th**. This also applies to 7th chords, shown in the following example.

The first example shows a progression: G (beat 1), C (beat 2), D7 (beat 3), G (beat 4). The second example shows G (beat 1), C (beat 2), D7sus4 (beat 3), D7 (beat 4), G (beat 5).

Open Sus4 Chords

The red circles in these diagrams represent the 3rd of the chord for major and 7th chords or the 4th for suspended chords. In each pair of diagrams, the 3rd from the major or 7th chord is raised one fret to become the 4th in the suspended chord.



Moveable Sus4 Chords

These suspended chords are moveable. To use them, you need to know the names of the notes on the fretboard, or at least strings 5 and 6, so you know where to place the root.

