Moveable Guitar Chords

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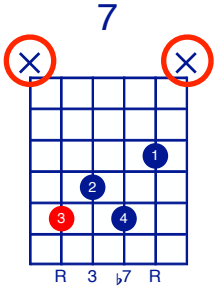
Two Moveable Chord Tips

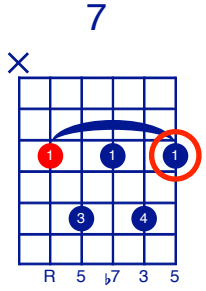
Several moveable chords require you to mute strings. The easiest way to do this is to hold your fingers flatter than when you play open chords, muting a string by lightly touching it with an unused portion of a finger.

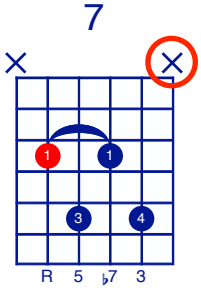
Mute with tip of 3rd finger



Mute with underside of 1st finger.

Sometimes you can leave a note out of a chord as long as it has all the necessary parts. For example, although one of these two diagrams leaves out the 1st string, they are both valid ways to play a 7th chord.

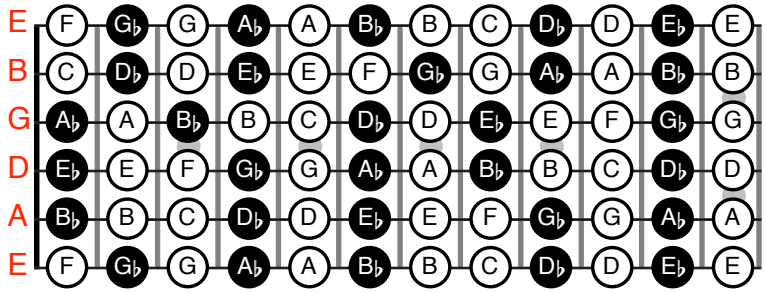




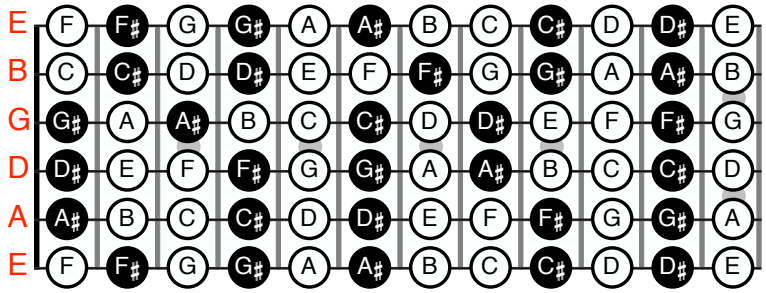
Fretboard Diagrams

The **root** is the note a chord is built on. The key to playing moveable chords is to form a chord shape and move it to wherever the root note of that shape is located. Most of the chords you play will have roots on the 5th or 6th string, but some of the chords in this book have roots on the 3rd or 4th string.

Natural and Flat Notes



Natural and Sharp Notes



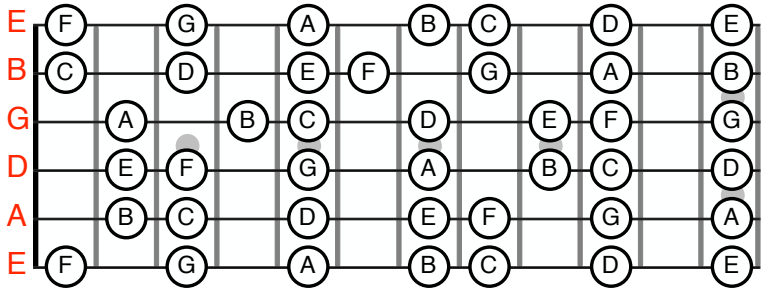
Enharmonic
The 6th string, 2nd fret can be named Gb (G flat) or F# (F sharp). Whether you call it sharp or flat depends on context, but it sounds the same no matter what name you give it. When two notes sound the same but are spelled differently, they are **enharmonic equivalents**. Every sharp note has a flat enharmonic equivalent and vice versa.

When you memorize the notes, learn to call each non-natural note as a sharp or flat note.

You can learn the notes on the fretboard as you learn moveable chords, but you can speed up the learning process with the fretboard memory tips on the next page.

Fretboard Memory Tips

Natural Notes
(No sharps or flats)



The musical alphabet consists of the notes **A-B-C-D-E-F-G** and then starts over again on a higher sounding **A-B-C-D-E-F-G**. The 5th string outlines the musical alphabet beginning on open A. The 6th string starts in the middle of the musical alphabet on E but then starts over again on A at the 5th fret.

The names of the notes at the **12th fret** are the same as the names of the **open strings**. The 12th-fret notes are one octave higher than the open string notes.

The **natural notes** (non-flats/non-sharps) are all **two frets** away from each other (**whole step**) except for **B/C** and **E/F**, which are always **one fret** from each other (**half step**). When you practice naming the natural notes up and down the same string, always move two frets except when playing B to C and E to F.

Fretboard Memory Exercises

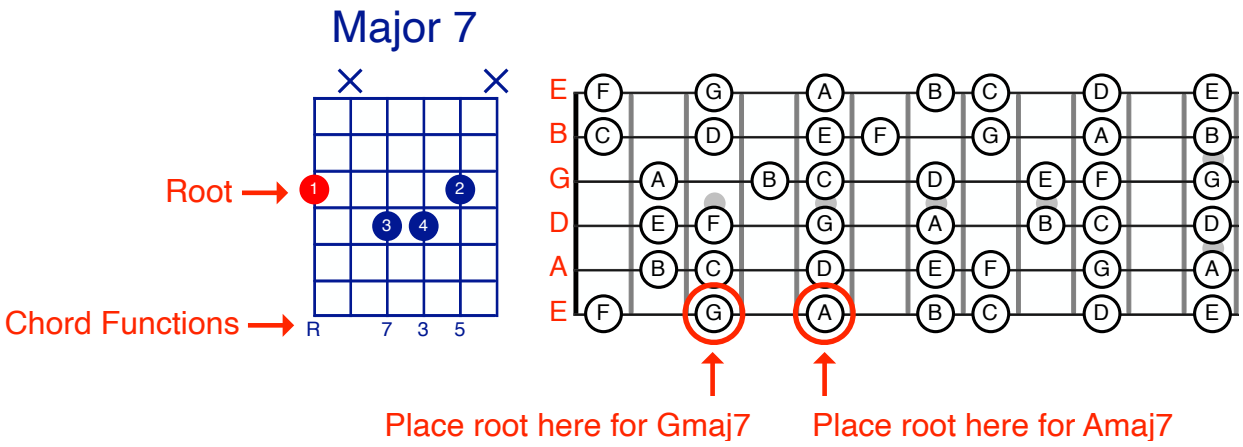
Memory Exercise 1: Sequential
- **Say and play** the natural notes on each string from low to high (left to right) up to the 12th fret.
- Then reverse. Start at the 12th fret, and **say and play** the natural notes from high to low.

Memory Exercise 2: Random
- Randomize the letters A through G on index cards or some other way.
- Find the notes on each string in whatever order they appear in your “deck” after shuffling. **Say and play** the notes.
- When this gets easy, add sharps and flats to your deck.

Memory Exercise 3: String Hopping
- Find the A on all strings, then find B on all strings, then C, etc. Don’t forget to **say and play**.
- When this gets easy, include sharp and flat notes.

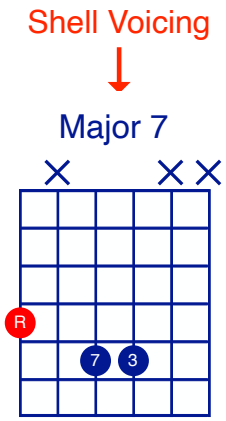
Using Moveable Chord Diagrams

The **red circle** in each diagram shows the root of the chord. **Place the root at the appropriate fret as you form the chord.** For example, if you place the root of this major 7 diagram on the 3rd fret, 6th string, you'll be playing Gmaj7. If you place the root of the same shape two frets higher, at the 5th fret, you'll be playing Amaj7. (Check out Guitar Theory Modules for more on chord construction and harmony.)



Shell Voicings

The second half of this PDF shows **shell voicing** diagrams. Commonly used in jazz and blues, shell voicings are 3-note chords that include only the essential notes. The major 7 at the top of this page includes a root, 3rd, 5th, and 7th. The 5th of the chord is usually the least important note. The major 7 shell voicing below includes the essentials: root, 3rd, and 7th.



Because you only play three notes, fingerings for shell voicings are flexible. For that reason, the shell voicing diagrams show the function of each note instead of fingerings.

Chord Labels

The same chord may be labeled in different ways depending on the composer or the publisher. Here are the most common labeling conventions.

Power Chords

Power chords are written with the number **"5.**" For example, **C5**. If an entire section or song is played with power chords, the music will sometimes simply include the instruction "Power Chords" at the start.

Major

Usually you'll just see the chord name for major chords. For example, "**C**." You will occasionally see a major chord labeled **ma** or **maj** (e.g. **Cma** or **Cmaj**).

Minor

A C minor chord may be labeled **Cmi, Cmin, or C–** with a **dash** (short for **minor**).

Dominant 7

Chords like C7, G7, etc. are dominant 7 chords, labeled with "**7**" (**C7**).

Major 7

May be labeled **maj7, ma7**, uppercase **M7,** or **Δ7**. The triangle is shorthand for **major**.

Minor 6

May be labeled **m6, mi6, min6,** or **–6**, with the **dash** being shorthand for **minor**.

Minor 7

May be labeled **m7, mi7, min7,** or **–7**, with the **dash** being shorthand for **minor**.

Minor 7b5

May be labeled **m7b5** or with various combinations of dashes (for minor) and flat signs for the lowered 5th: **Cmi7b5, Cmi7(-5), Cmin7b5, Cmin7(-5), or C-7(-5)**.
Min7b5 chords are also known as **half-diminished chords**, which are labeled with what looks like a "degree" sign with a slash cutting through it: **C**$^{\varnothing}$.

Diminished and Diminished 7

May be labeled **dim** or with the **diminished symbol (°)**. So C diminished can be written **Cdim** or **C°**. Similarly C diminished 7 can be written **Cdim7** or **C°7**.

Augmented

May be labeled **aug** or with a **plus** or **#5** signs (**C+, C+5, C#5**).

Sus Chords

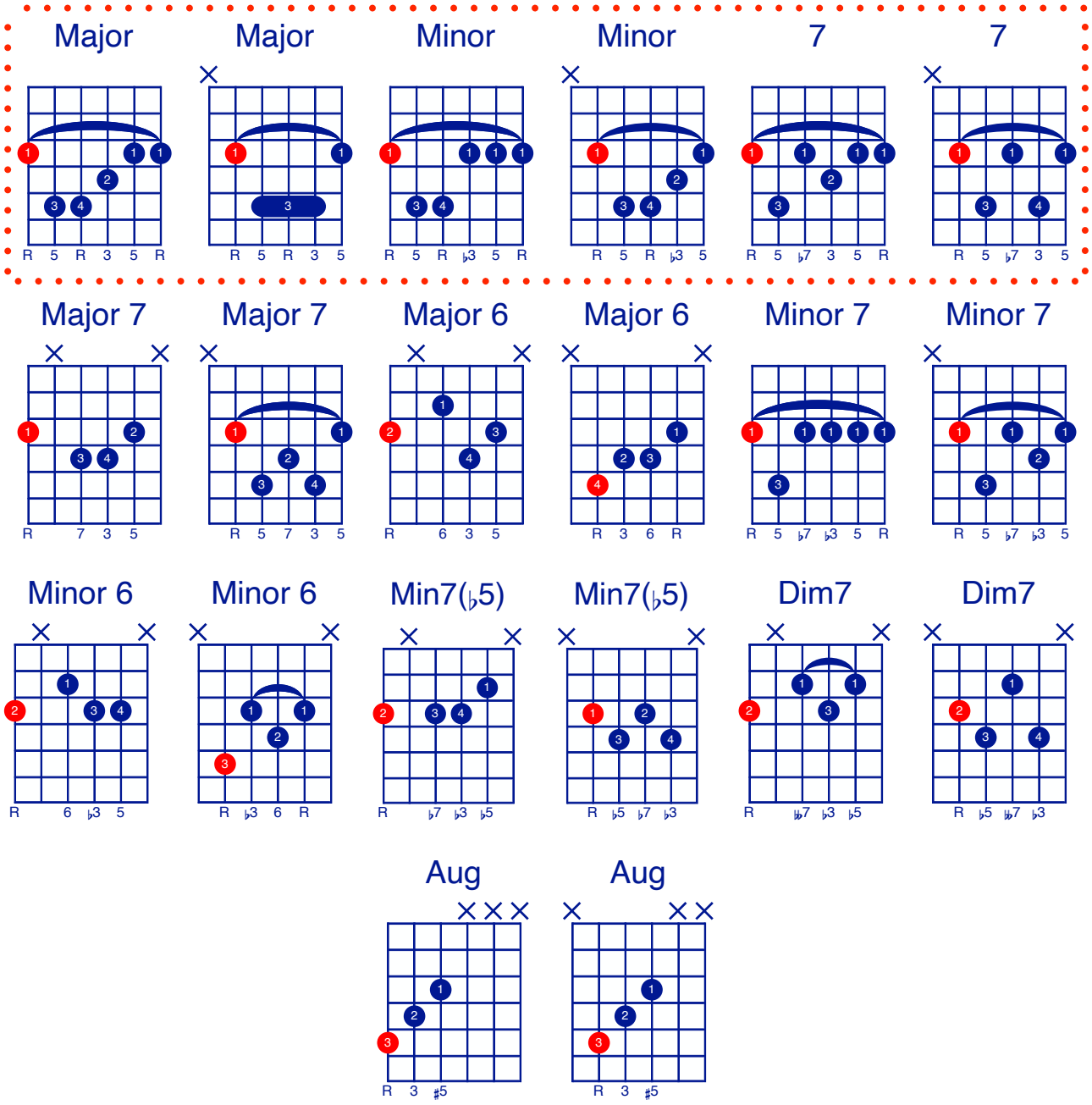
Usually labeled "**sus4**" and "**sus2**" for "**sus**" or **suspended** chords (**C7sus4** or **Csus2**). **Sus4** is the most common **suspended** chord, and you will often see a **sus4** chord written simply as "**sus**" (**C7sus**).

Moveable Chord Starter Set

You do **NOT** have to learn all the chords at once. As a matter of fact, you don't have to learn all the chords! You'll only remember the chords you use in songs, so the most practical approach is to **learn chords as you need them**. Focus on these more common shapes first, starting with **major, minor, and dominant 7 chord shapes**. (Reminder: Dominant 7 chords are labeled with just the number 7, for example, C7.)

Each type of chord in this starter set has one shape with the root on the 6th string and one with the root on the 5th string.

Learn top row first.

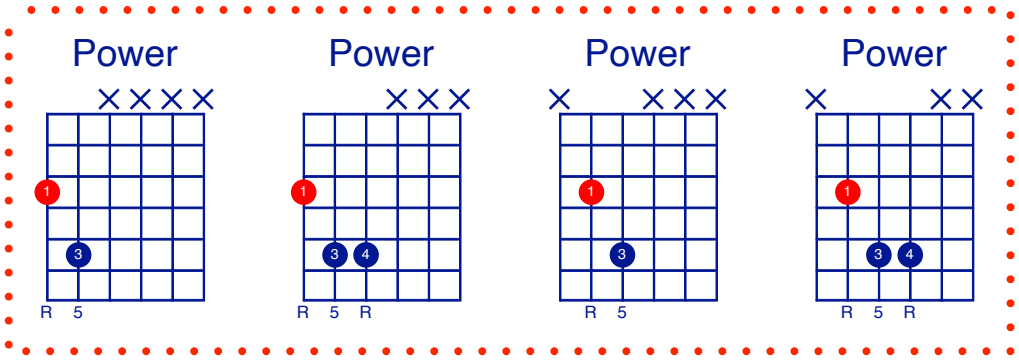


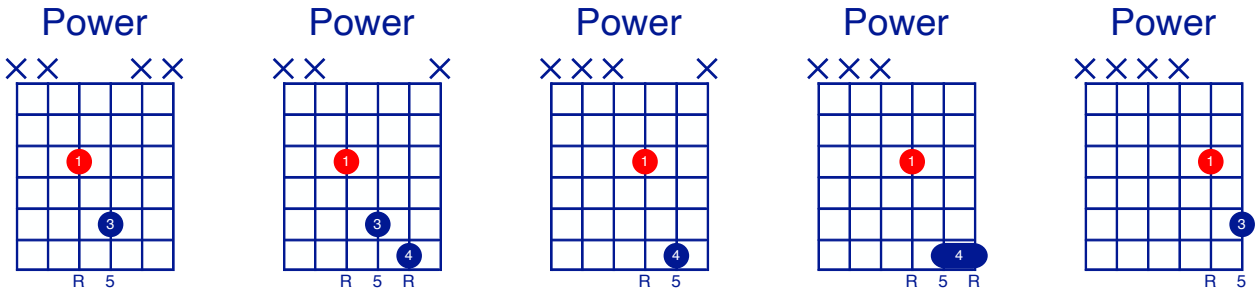
Moveable Power Chords: C5

- Power chords are shown with the number **"5"** (for example, **C5**).
- If an entire section or song is played with power chords, the music may simply include the instruction **"Power Chords"** at the start.
- A power chord includes a root and a 5th. Some of these shapes include one root and one 5th. Some include a root, a 5th, and another root.
- Power chords are most common in rock, pop, and some blues styles.
- For most types of playing, you'll play power chords with roots on the 5th or 6th string.
- Check out Guitar Theory Modules for more on chord construction and harmony.

Flatten your fingers to mute unwanted strings.

With roots on the 5th and 6th strings, the power chords in the **top row** are the most commonly played.

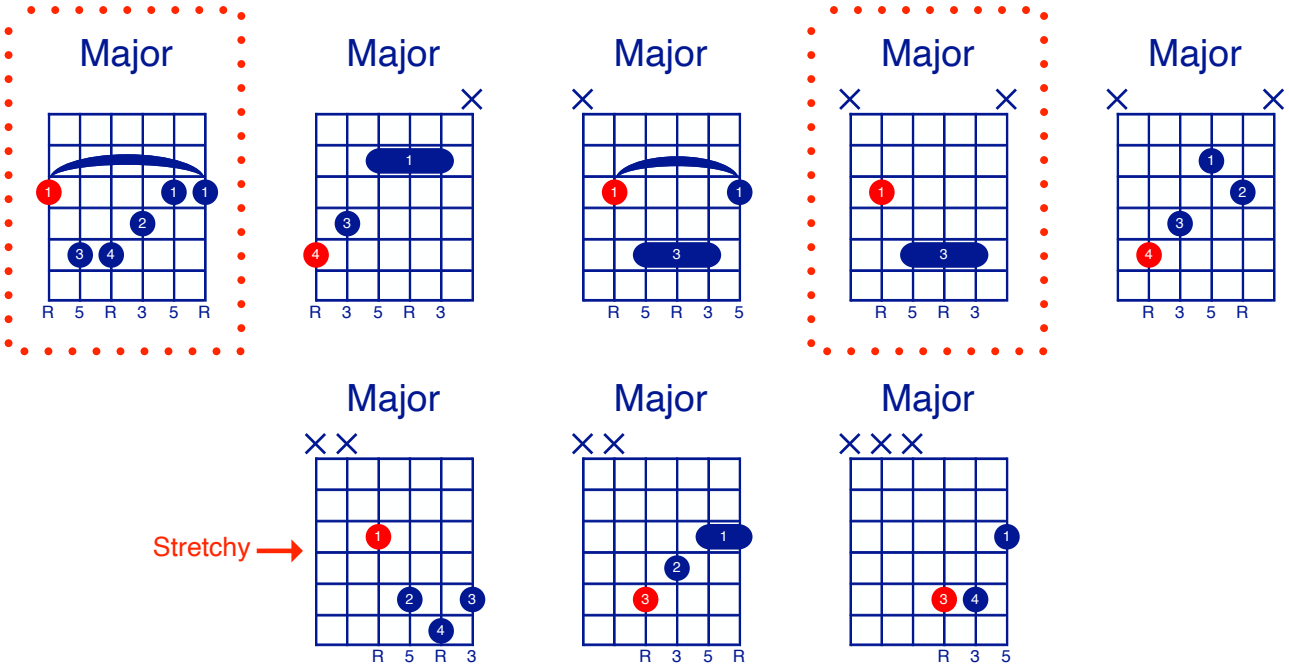




While most chords are played with combinations of downstrums and upstrums, power chords are usually played with all downstrums.

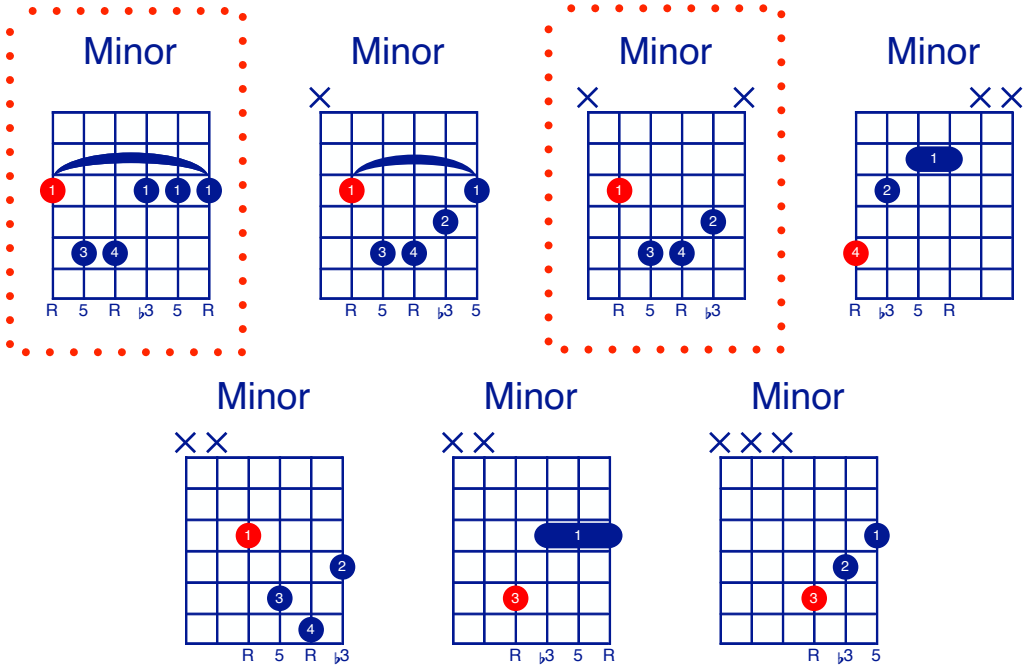
Moveable Major Chords

Learn the highlighted shapes first.



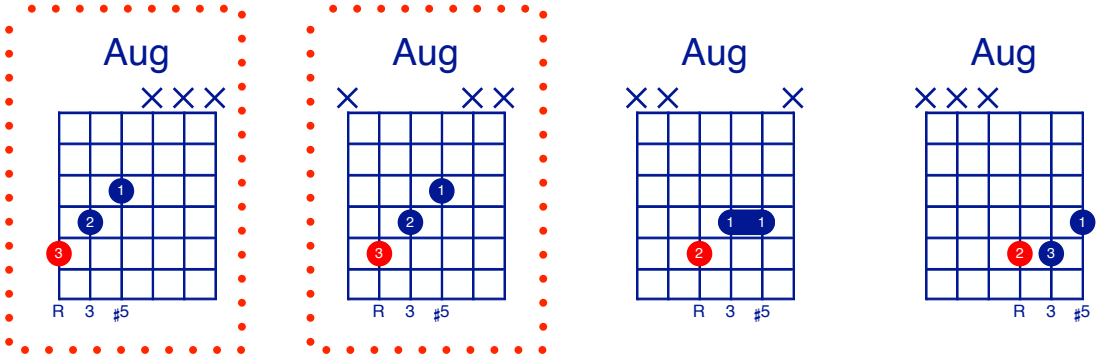
Moveable Minor Chords: Cm, Cmi, Cmin, C–

Learn the highlighted shapes first.



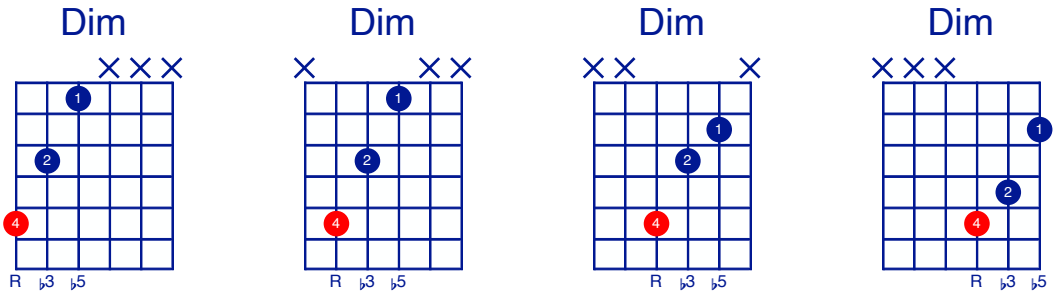
Moveable Augmented Chords: Caug, C+5, C(#5)

Learn the highlighted shapes first.



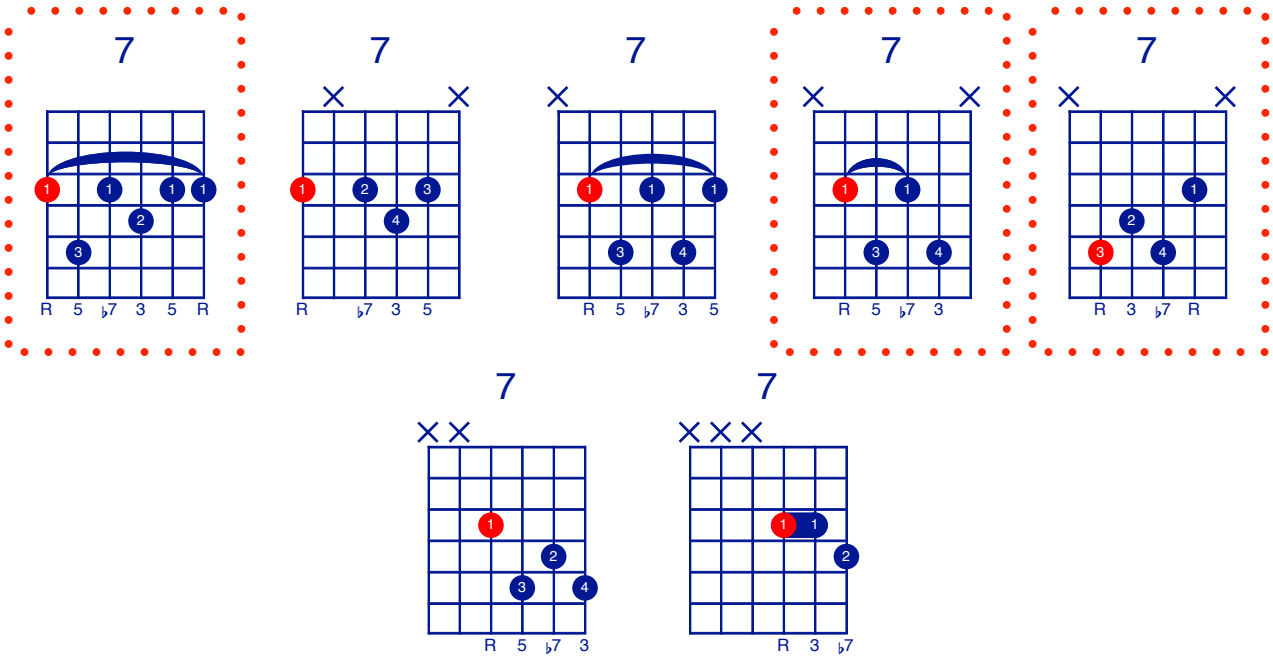
Moveable Diminished Chords: Cdim, C–5, C(b5), C°

These are diminished triads. Moveable diminished 7 chords are on page 14.



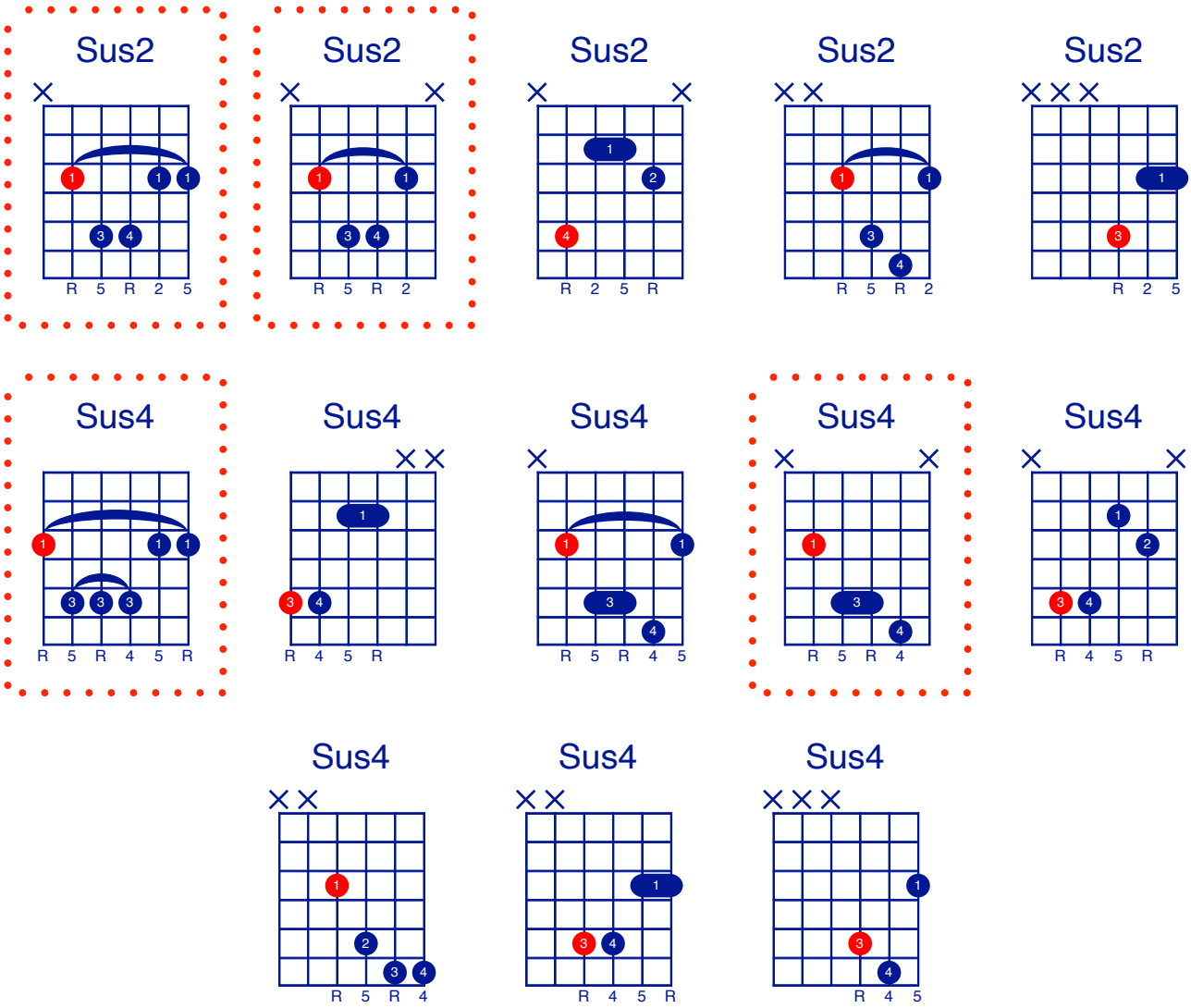
Moveable Dominant 7 Chords: C7

Learn the highlighted shapes first.

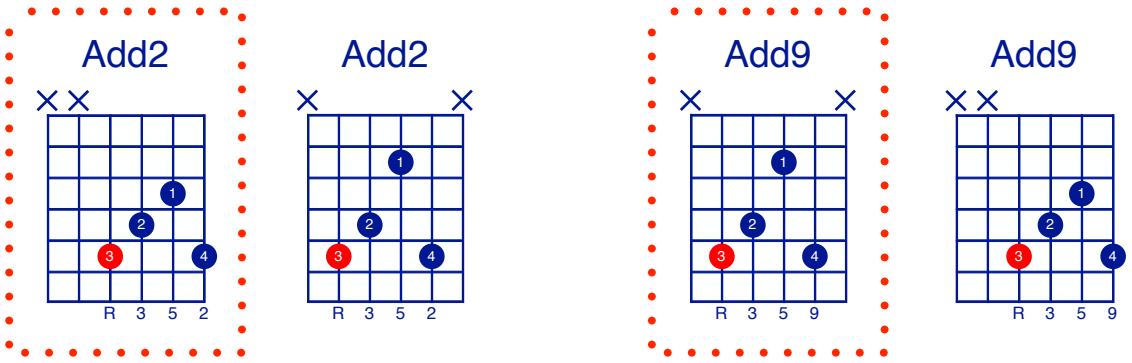


Major Sus and "Add" Chords: Csus2, Csus4, Csus, Cadd2, Cadd9

Learn the highlighted shapes first.

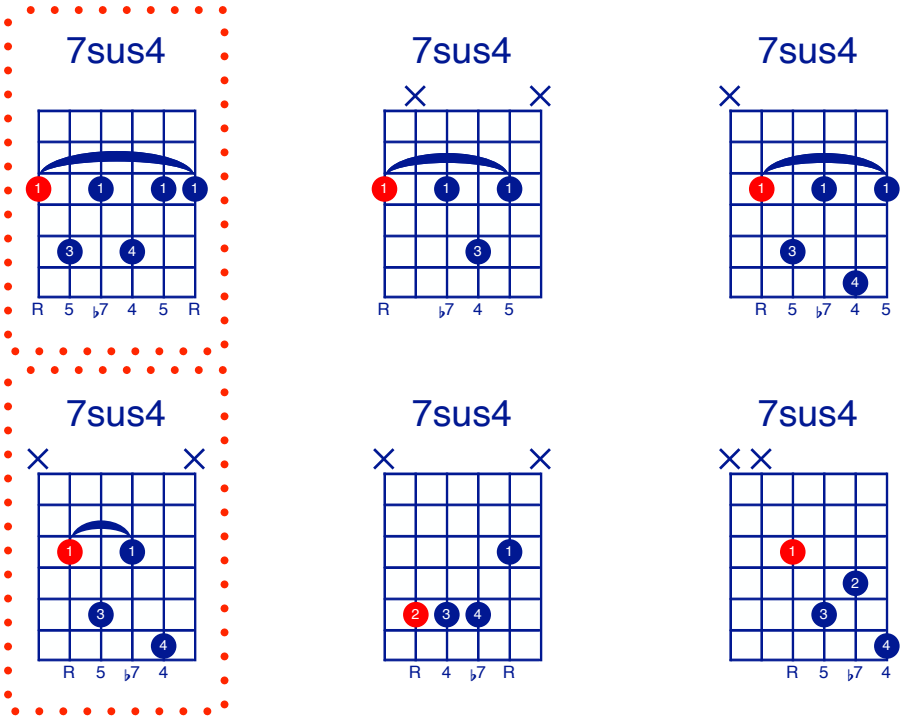


The moveable Add2 and Add9 chords share the same shapes on the guitar. Functionally, the interval of a 2nd and a 9th are the same. Because the way we play chords is limited by the number of strings, the layout of the fretboard, and hand size, it's more practical to use these shapes for both Add2 and Add9 chords.



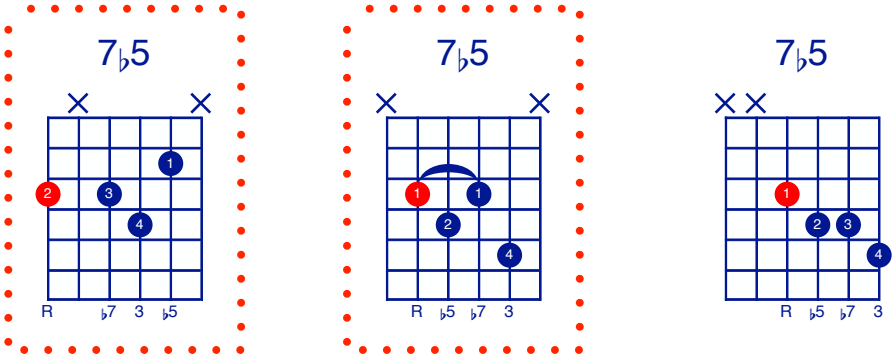
Moveable 7sus Chords: C7sus4, C7sus

Learn the highlighted shapes first.



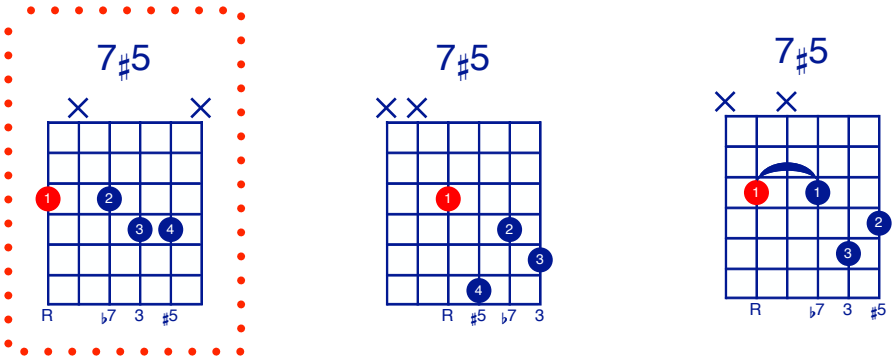
Moveable 7b5 Chords: C7b5, C7(–5)

Learn the highlighted shapes first.



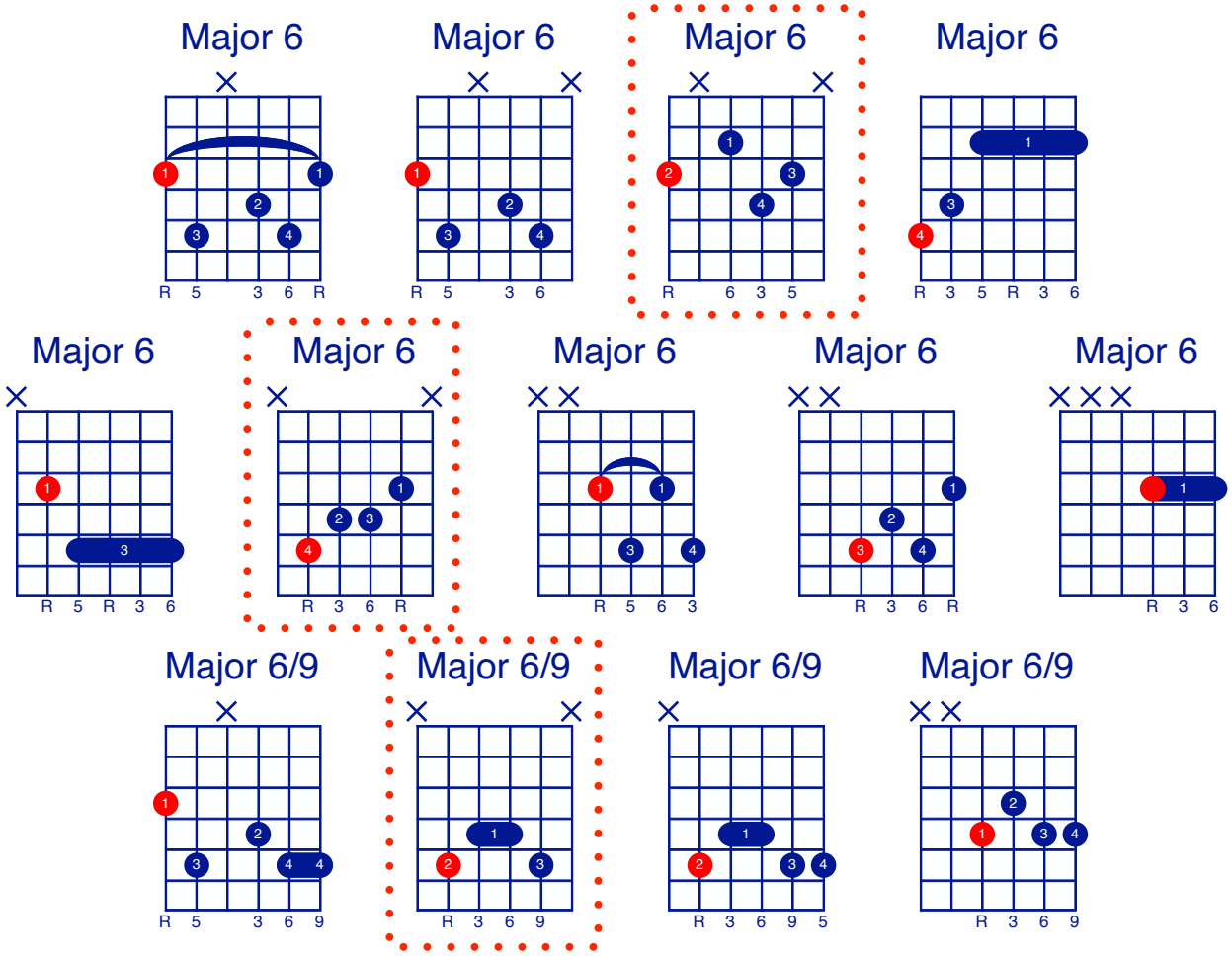
Moveable 7#5 Chords: C7#5, C7(+5)

Learn the highlighted shapes first.



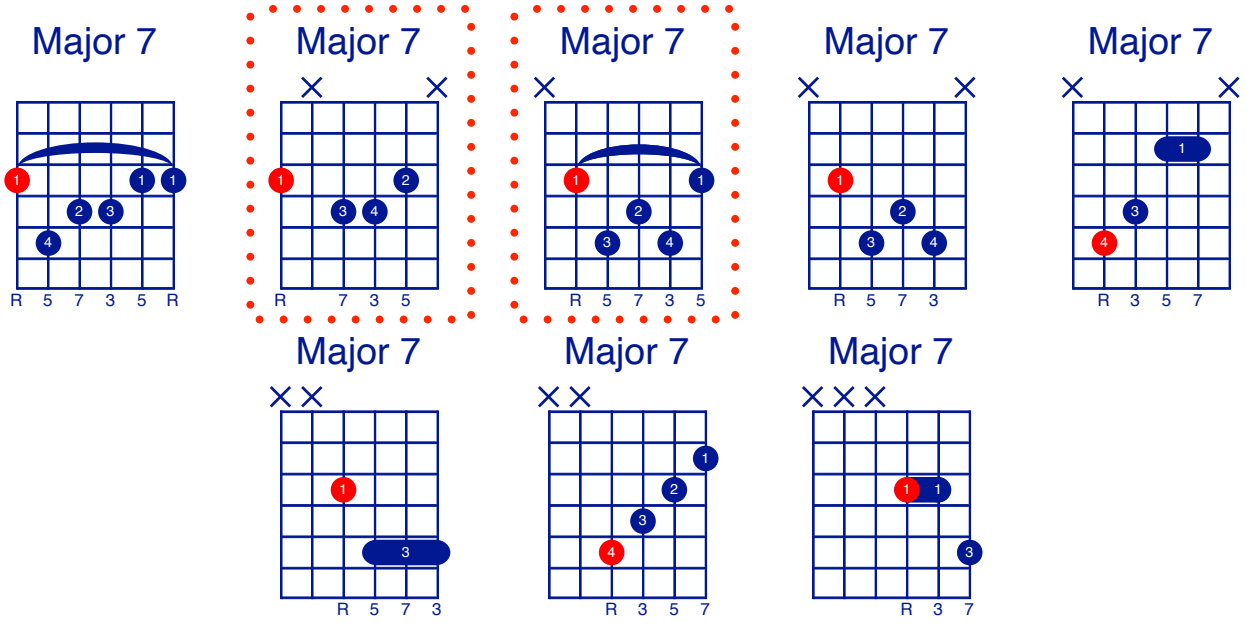
Moveable Major 6 and Major 6/9: C6, Cmaj6, C6/9, Cmaj6/9

Learn the highlighted shapes first.



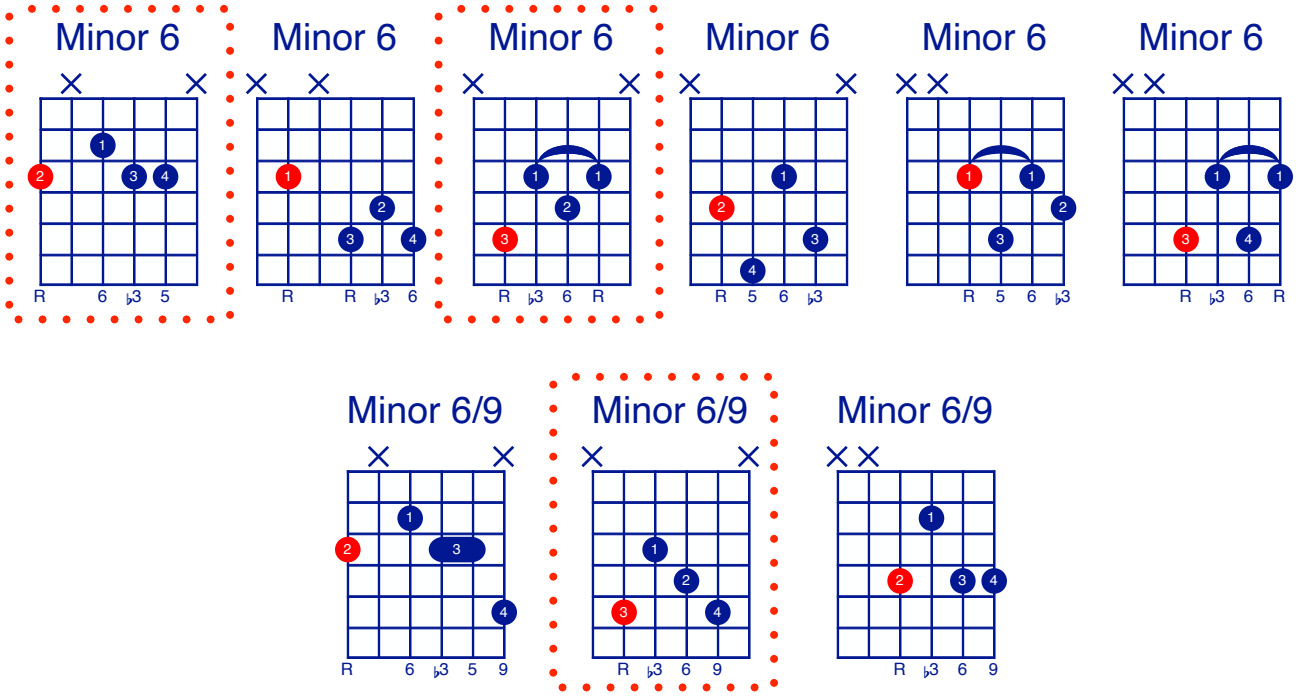
Moveable Major 7 Chords: Cmaj7, CM7, Cma7, CΔ7

Learn the highlighted shapes first.



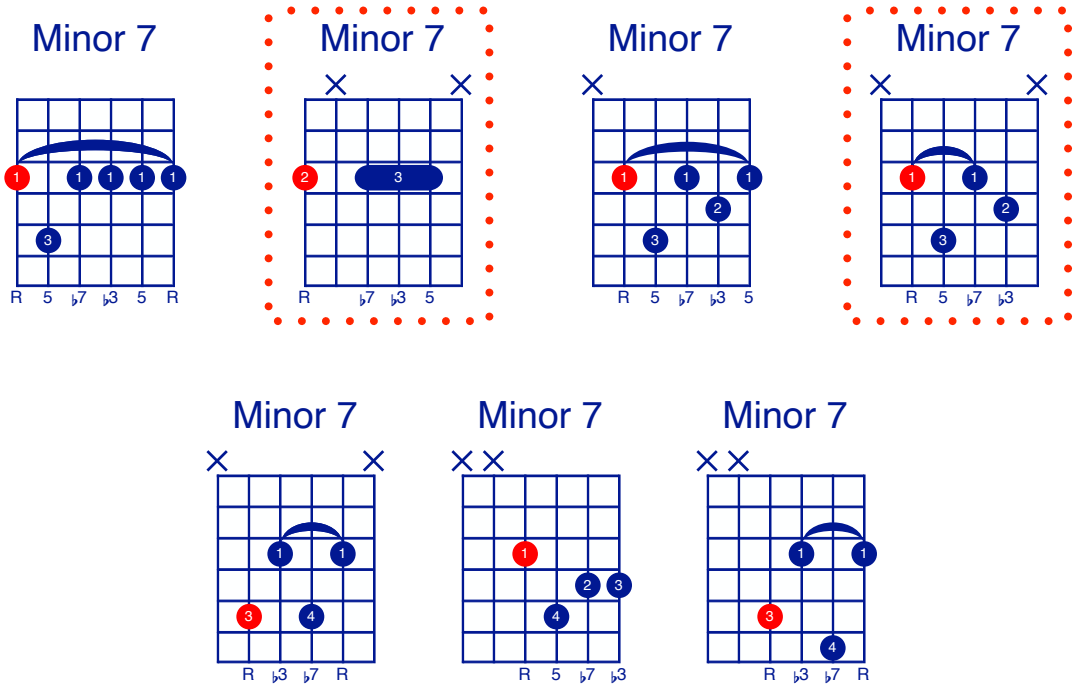
Moveable Minor 6 and 6/9: Cm6, Cmin6, C–6, Cm6/9, Cmin6/9, C–6/9

Learn the highlighted shapes first.



Moveable Minor 7 Chords: Cm7, Cmi7, Cmin7, C–7

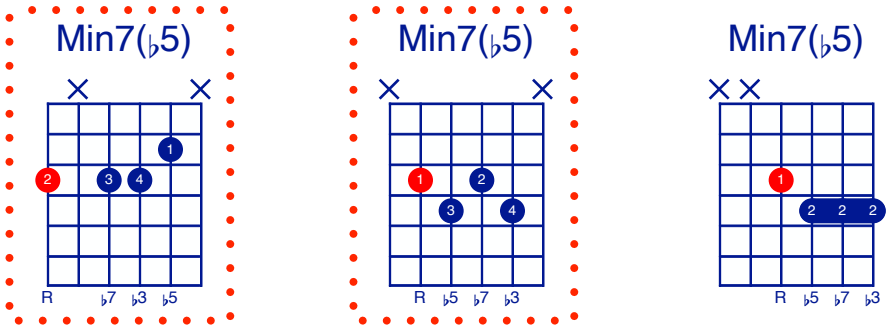
Learn the highlighted shapes first.



Moveable Minor 7b5 (Half-Diminished): Cm7b5, C–7(b5), C^{ø}

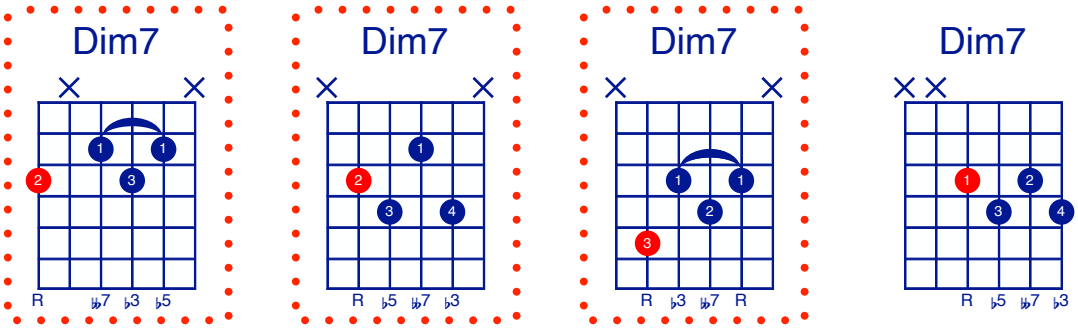
Minor 7b5 chords are also known as **Half-Diminished** chords. A half-diminished chord is shown by a diminished symbol with a diagonal slash. For example, C half-diminished is written : **C^{ø}**.

Learn the highlighted shapes first.



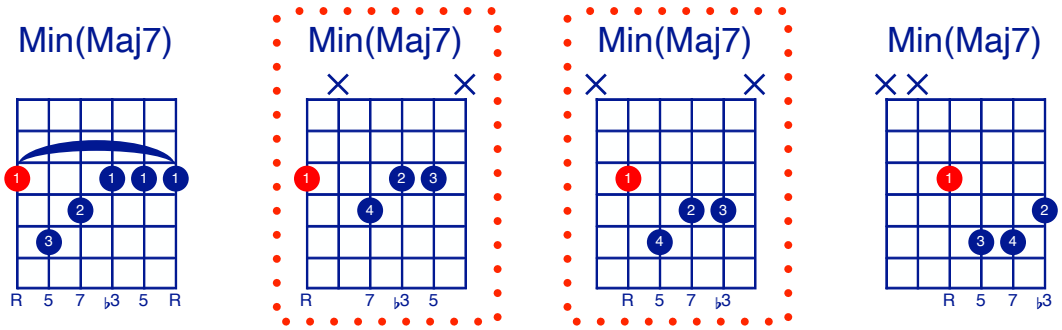
Moveable Diminished 7 Chords: Cdim7, C°7

Learn the highlighted shapes first.



Moveable Minor(Maj7) Chords: Cmin(maj7), Cmin(Δ7)

Learn the highlighted shapes first.



Moveable Extended Chords

Triads have a root, 3rd, and 5th, and 7th chords have a root, 3rd, 5th, and 7th. When the chord tones are stacked in 3rds, placed as closely to each other as possible, the furthest note from the root is the 7th. Each note is within an octave of the root.

Extended chords include notes that extend beyond the octave. The most common chord extension is the 9th, but it's not uncommon to see 11th and 13th chords, particularly in jazz.

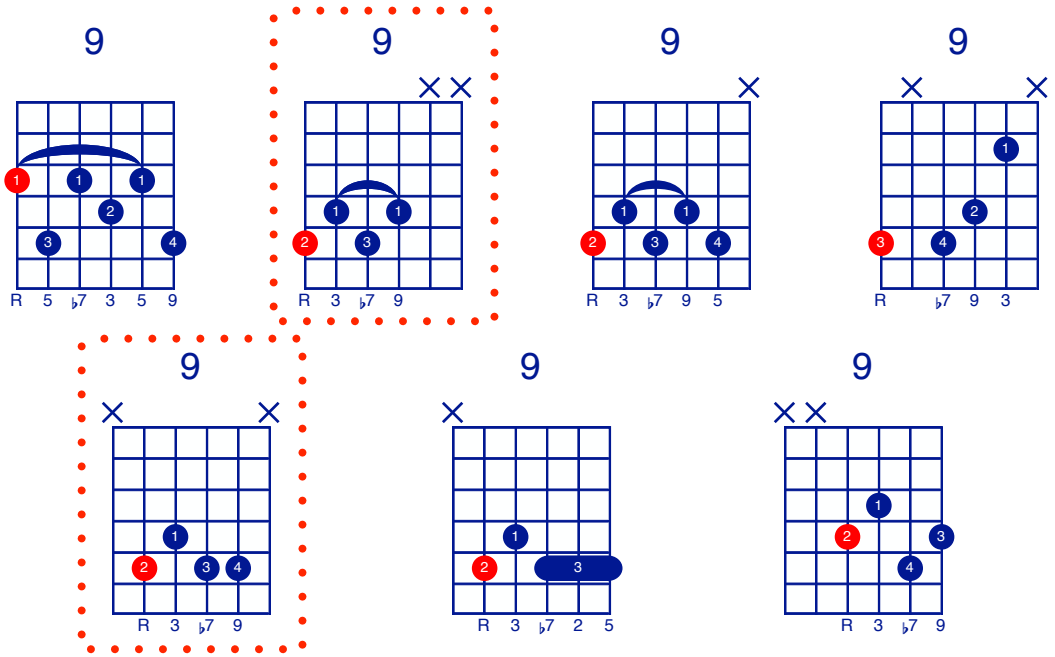
You don't have to play every possible note in an extension. This is good, because this isn't even possible on the guitar, which is limited to six strings, the layout of the notes, and hand size.

- A full 9th chord includes R-3-5-7-9. The essential notes to be played (and still call it a 9th) are R-3-7-9.
- A full 11th chord includes R-3-5-7-9-11. The essential notes are R-3-7-11.
- A full 13th chord includes R-3-5-7-9-11-13. The essential notes are R-3-7-13, and even if you play an instrument that could play all the notes (like a piano), you would still usually leave out the 11th.

Moveable 9th Chords: C9

A 9th chord is an extension of a dominant 7 chord. You can play a dominant 7 chord in place of a 9th chord (for example, C7 instead of C9).

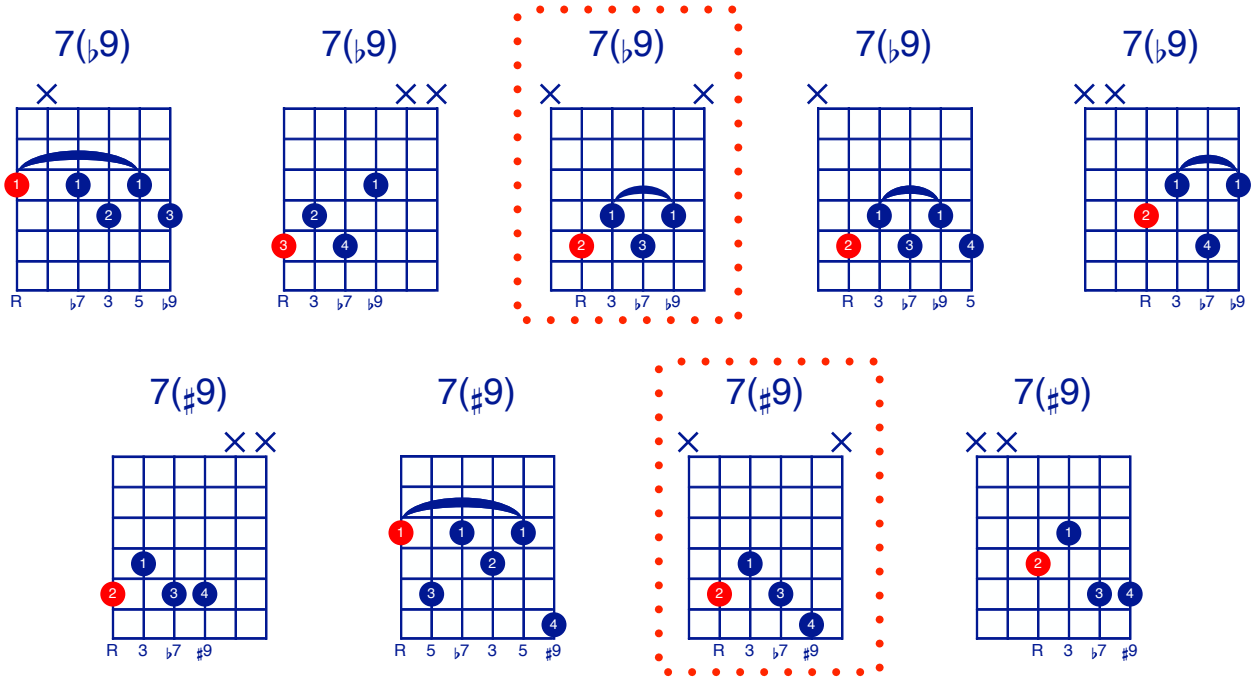
Learn the highlighted shapes first.



Moveable 7b9 and 7#9 Chords: C7(b9), C7(–9), C7(#9), C7(+9)

7b9 and 7#9 chords are both extensions of the dominant 7 chord. You can play a dominant 7 chord in place of either of these chord types (for example, C7 instead of C7b9 or C7#9).

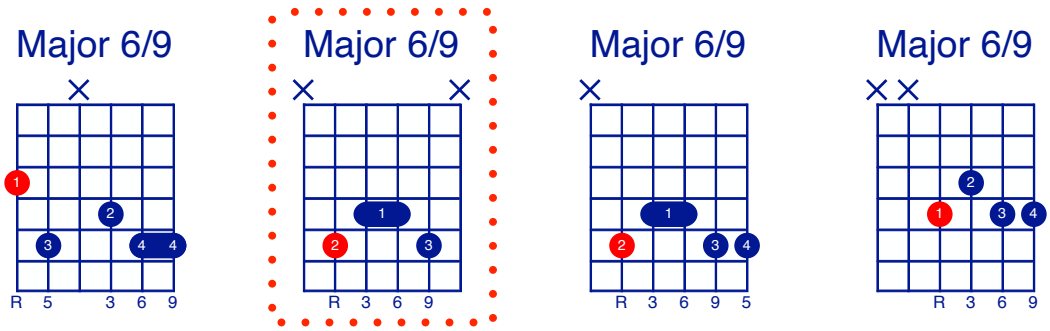
Learn the highlighted shapes first.



Moveable Major 6/9 Chords: C6/9

A major 6/9 chords is an extension of a major 6 chord. You can play a major 6 or even a major chord in place of a major 6/9 (for example, C or C6 instead of C6/9)

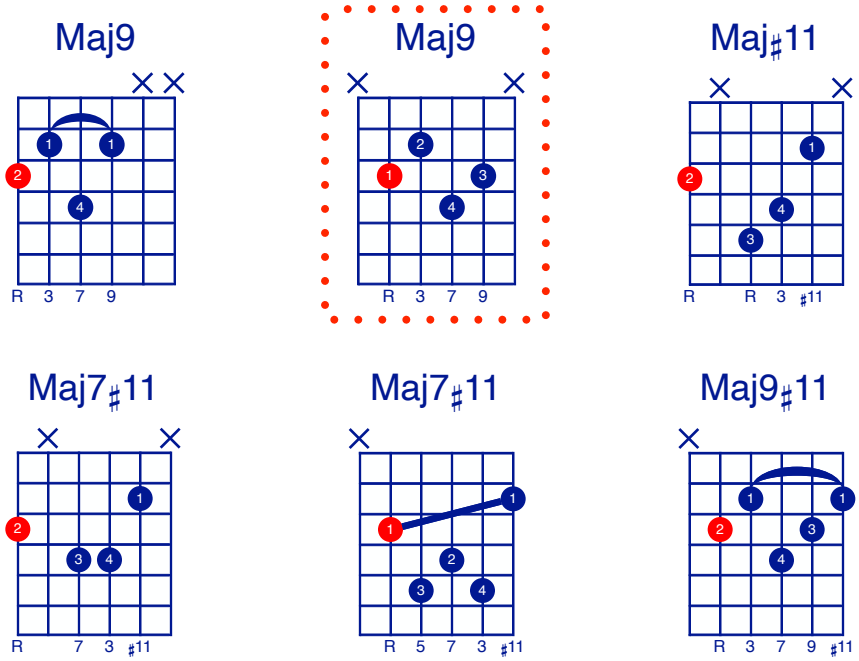
Learn the highlighted shape first.



Moveable Major 9 and 11 Chords: Cmaj9, CΔ9, Cmaj7#11, Cmaj9#11

These are all extensions of the major 7 chord. You can play a major 7 in place of all these chord types (for example, Cmaj7 instead of Cmaj9).

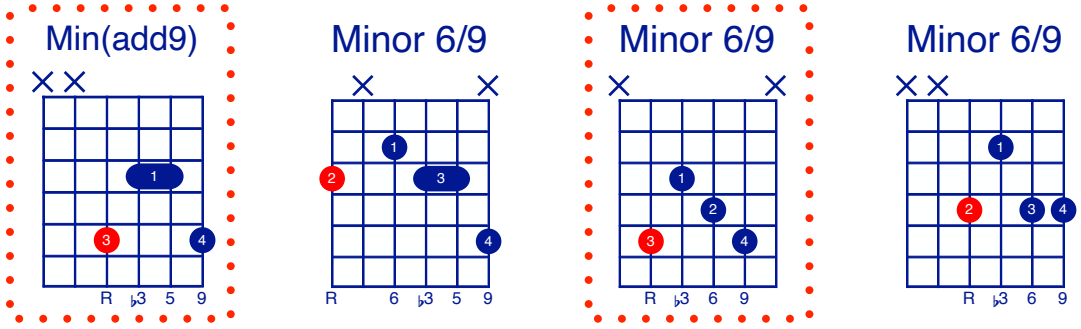
Learn the highlighted shape first.



Minor Add 9 and Minor 6/9: Cmin(add9), Cmin6/9

Minor(add9) is an extension of a minor chord. Minor 6/9 is an extension of a minor 6. You can play minor in place of minor (add9), for example, Cmin instead of Cmin(add9)), and you can play minor 6 or minor in place of minor 6/9, for example, Cmin or Cmin6 instead of Cmin6/9.

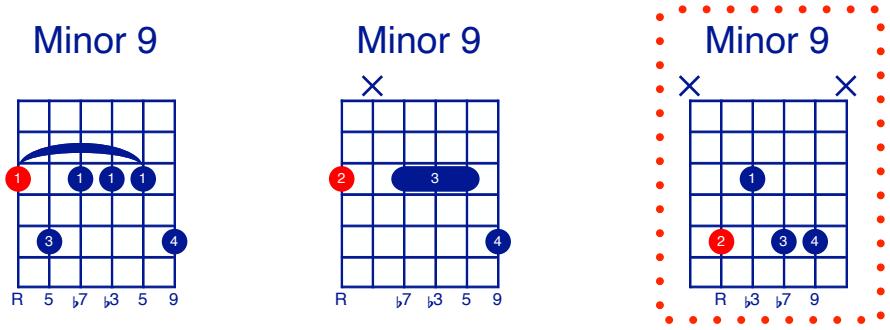
Learn the highlighted shapes first.



Moveable Minor 9 Chords: Cmin9, C–9

Minor 9 is an extension of the minor 7 chord. You can play a minor 7 or even a minor chord in place of minor 9 (for example, Cmin7 or Cmin instead of Cmin9).

Learn the highlighted shape first.



Moveable Minor 11 Chords: Cmin11

The minor 11 chord is an usual case. The minor 11 is an extension of a minor 7 chord, so **you can always play minor 7 or just minor in place of a minor 11 chord**.

A piano player can play a minor 7 chord with an 11th added. This isn't so easy for guitar players, who are generally able to play the minor 3rd of the minor 11 chord or the 11th, but not always both. There is a solution.

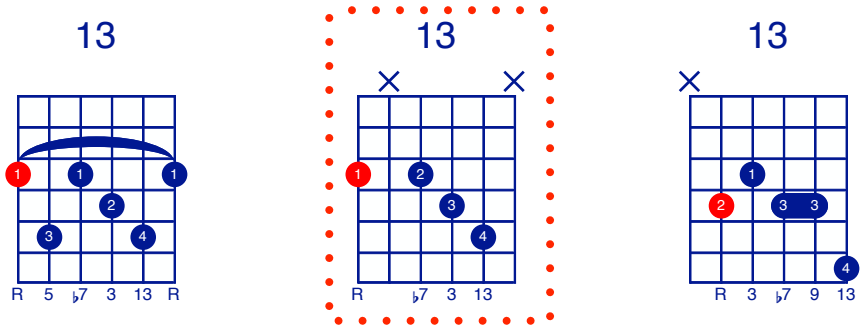
You can play a 7sus4 chord in place of a minor 11. Here's why. The 7sus4 chord does not include a 3rd. An 11th is an octave higher than 4th, so it can serve a similar function. If you play 7sus4 in place of a minor 11, your chord won't include the 3rd, so you need to decide which sound is more important to you at the time: the sound of a minor 3rd or the sound of the 11th.

I usually play a minor 7 in place of minor 11 when I'm accompanying a song with chords, but I'll play the 11th when playing solo guitar and the 11th is the melody note.

Moveable 13th Chords: C13

The 13th chord is an extension of the dominant 7 chord. You can play a dominant 7 chord in place of a 13th chord (for example, C7 instead of C13).

Learn the highlighted shape first.



What Are Chord Inversions?

We usually play chords in root position, meaning that the root is played as the lowest sounding note. With an inverted chord, one of the **non-root** chord tones is played as the lowest sounding note.

Triads can appear in root position, 1st inversion, or 2nd inversion.

Triad	Root is lowest	3rd is lowest	5th is lowest
	Root position	1st inversion	2nd inversion

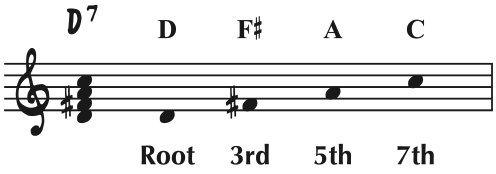
7th chords can appear in root position, 1st inversion, 2nd inversion, or 3rd inversion.

7th Chord	Root is lowest	3rd is lowest	5th is lowest	7th is lowest
	Root position	1st inversion	2nd inversion	3rd inversion

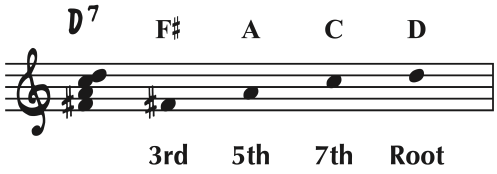
For example, D7 is spelled D-F#-A-C.

- If D (the root) is the lowest note, the chord is in root position.
- If F# (the 3rd) is the lowest note, the chord is 1st inversion.
- If A (the 5th) is the lowest note, the chord is 2nd inversion.
- If C (the 7th) is the lowest note, the chord is 3rd inversion.

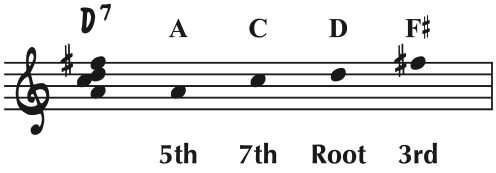
Root Position



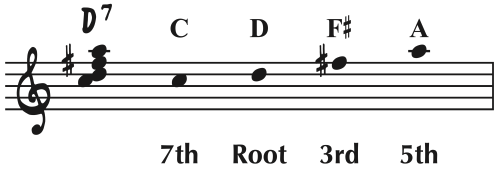
1st Inversion



2nd Inversion



3rd Inversion

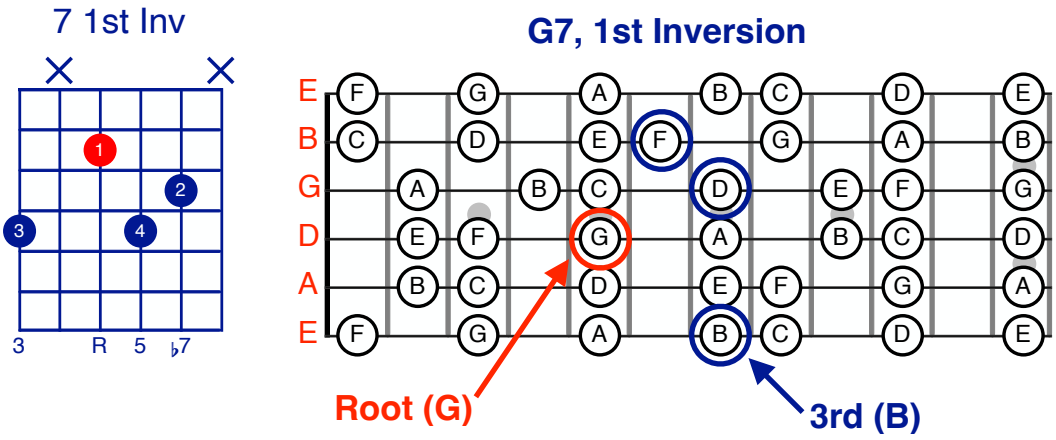


Using Moveable Chord Inversions

To play moveable chord inversions, you either have to know which string has the root and then use the root as a to find your position, or you have to be able to name the root, 3rd, 5th, and 7th and use the lowest sounding string as your guide.

Let's say you want to use the following moveable 1st inversion 7th chord shape to play a G7.

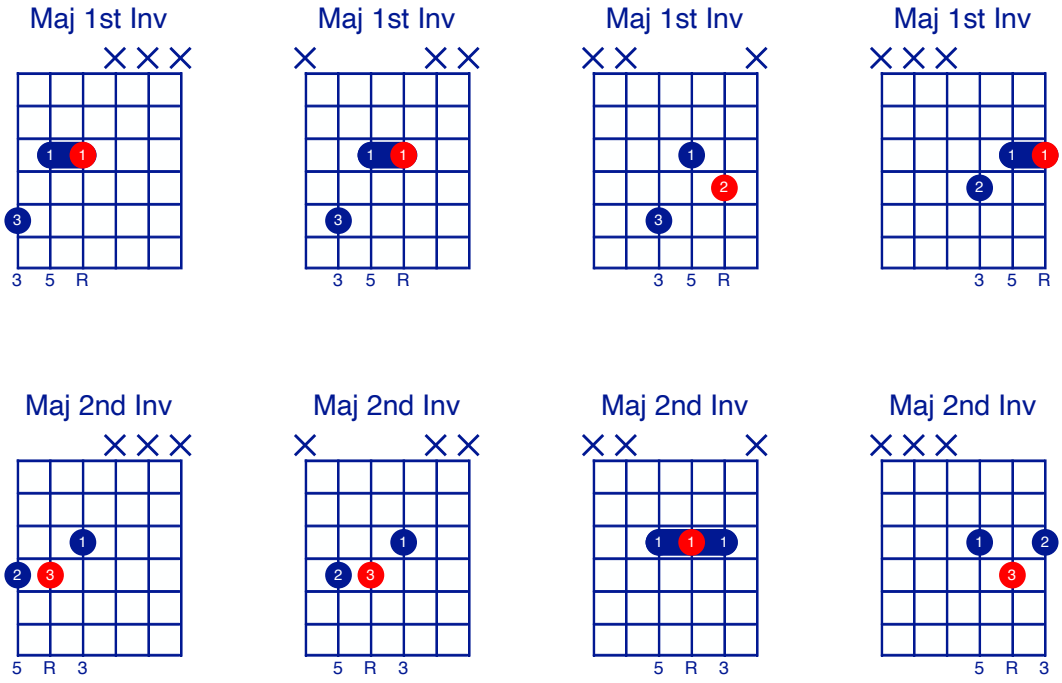
- The root is on the 4th string, so if you use the root as a guide, you would move the shape so that the root is played on the G on string 4, fret 5.
- Or if you know that the R-3-5-7 of G7 are G-B-D-F, you would use the 3rd of the chord (B) as your guide, placing that 3rd on the B note at string 6, fret 7. Either way, you end up in the right place. (Remember, chord labels R-3-5-7 etc. appear below the diagram.)



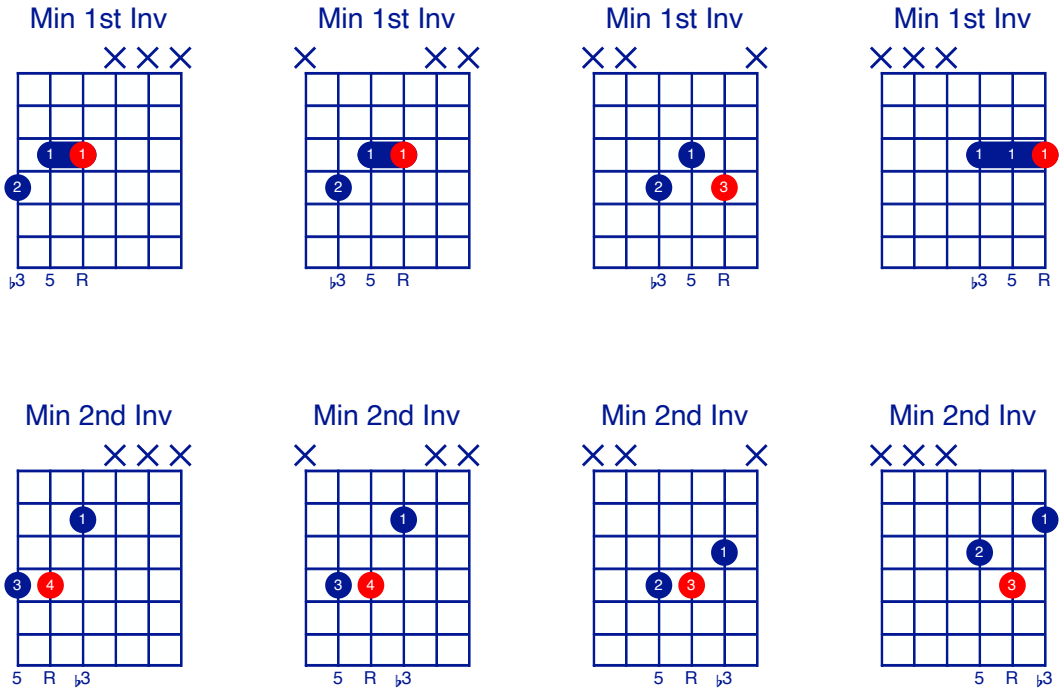
> Understanding music theory is a musical superpower for many things, including understanding chords and their inversions. Check out Guitar Theory Modules for more on chord construction and harmony.

We could go down a rabbit hole trying to figure out every possible inversion of every chord. Instead, I'll include only the more useful chord inversions starting on the next page. The chord types appear in roughly the same order as the root position chords in the previous pages, starting with major and minor triads.

Moveable Major Triad Inversions



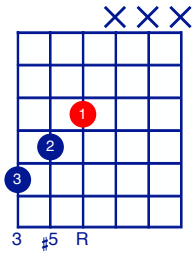
Moveable Minor Triad Inversions



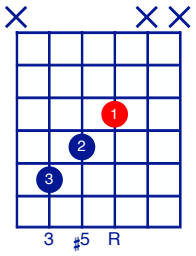
Moveable Augmented Triad Inversions

The 1st inversion and 2nd inversion shapes in each column are the same because the augmented triad is a symmetrical chord, with each chord tone being the exact same distance from its closest neighbor. Depending on context, **any note in an augmented triad can serve as the root**. Check out Guitar Theory Modules for more theory topics.

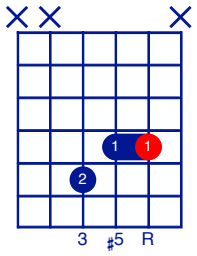
Aug 1st Inv



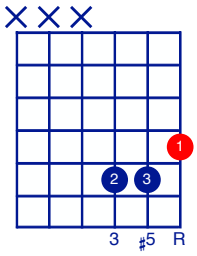
Aug 1st Inv



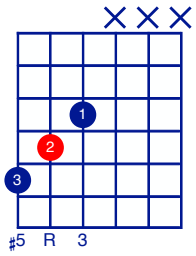
Aug 1st Inv



Aug 1st Inv



Aug 2nd Inv



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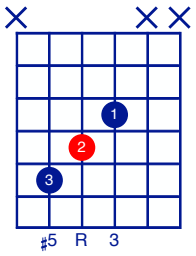

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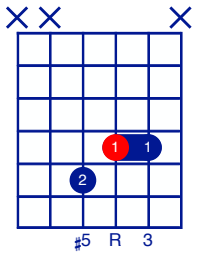

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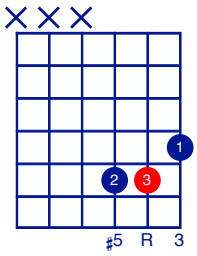
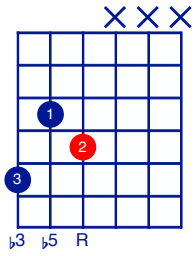
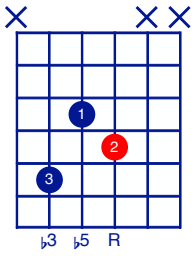


Moveable Diminished Triad Inversions

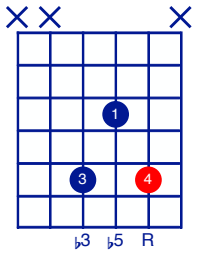
Dim 1st Inv



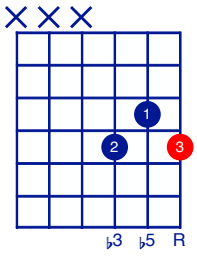
Dim 1st Inv



Dim 1st Inv



Dim 1st Inv



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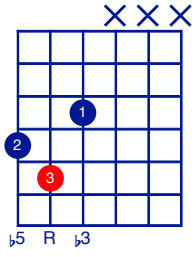

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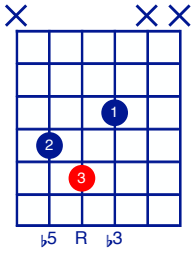

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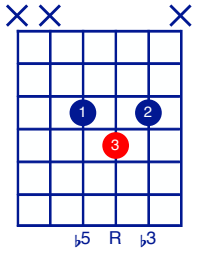

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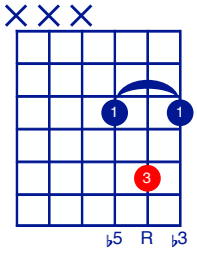
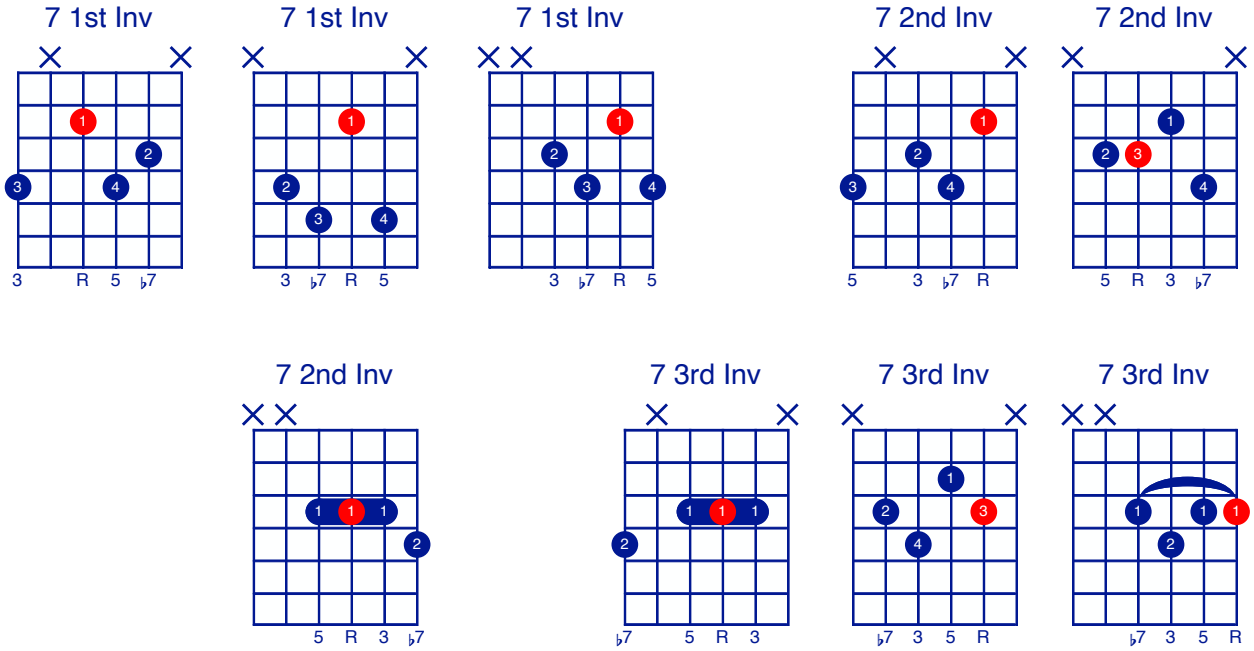
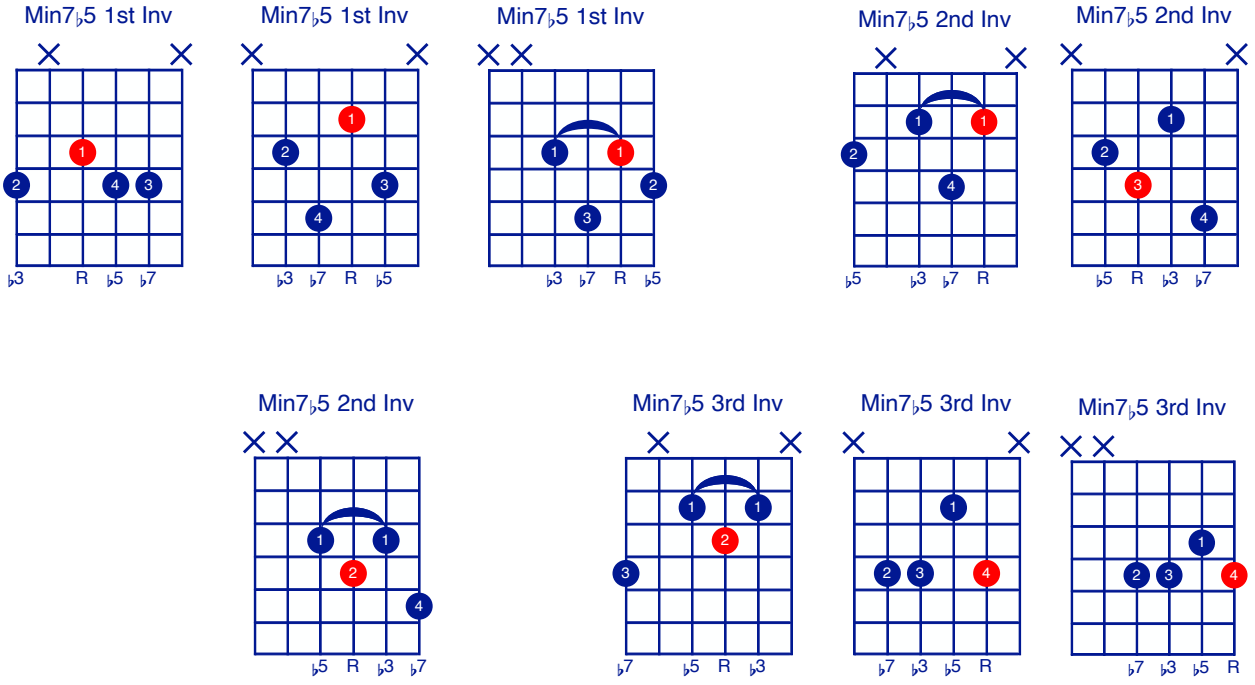


Moveable Dominant 7 Chord Inversions



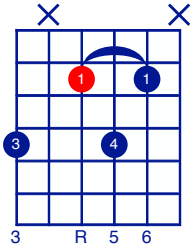
Moveable Minor 7b5 Chord Inversions (Half-Diminished)



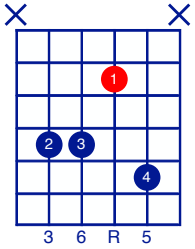
Moveable Major 6 Chord Inversions

It's not theoretically correct to name a major 6 with the 6th in the bass a 3rd inversion chord, but I'm going to call it that anyway for practical reasons.

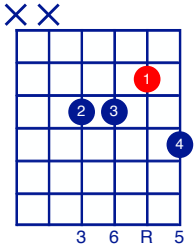
Maj6 1st Inv



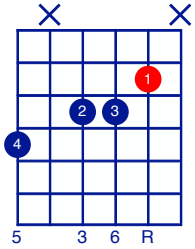
Maj6 1st Inv



Maj6 1st Inv



Maj6 2nd Inv



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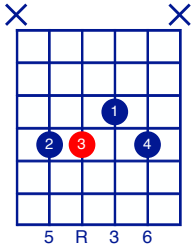

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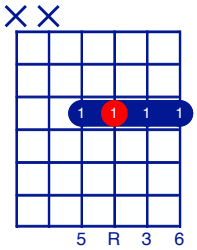
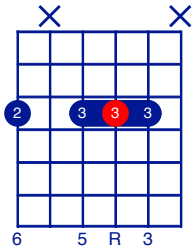


Maj6 3rd Inv



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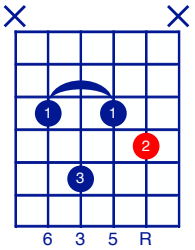

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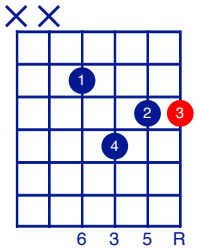
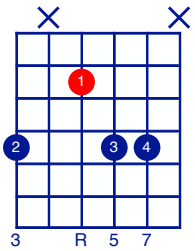
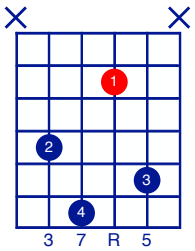


Moveable Major 7 Chord Inversions

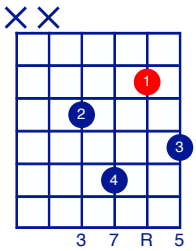
Maj7 1st Inv



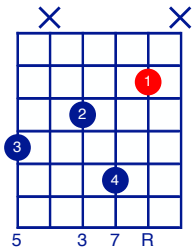
Maj7 1st Inv



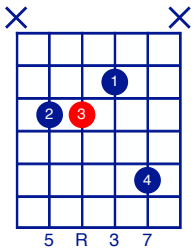
Maj7 1st Inv



Maj7 2nd Inv



Maj7 2nd Inv



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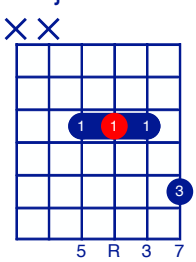
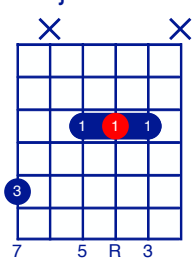
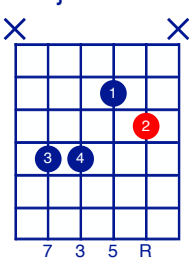


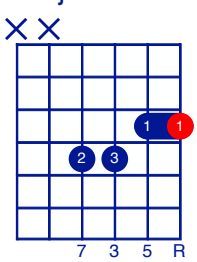
Maj7 3rd Inv



Maj7 3rd Inv



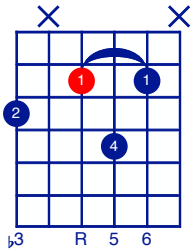
Maj7 3rd Inv



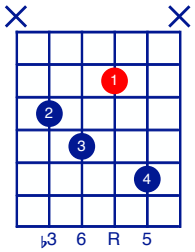
Moveable Minor 6 Chord Inversions

It's not theoretically correct to name a minor 6 with the 6th in the bass a 3rd inversion chord, but I'm going to call it that anyway for practical reasons.

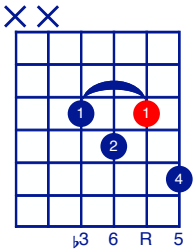
Min6 1st Inv



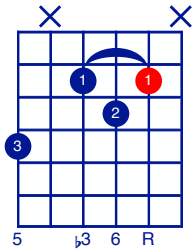
Min6 1st Inv



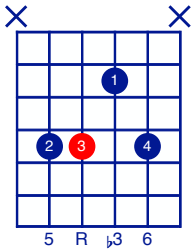
Min6 1st Inv



Min6 2nd Inv



Min6 2nd Inv



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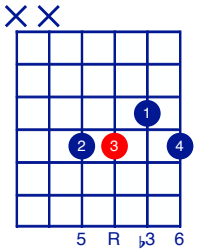

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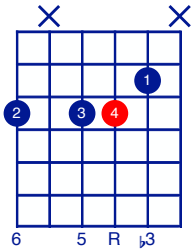

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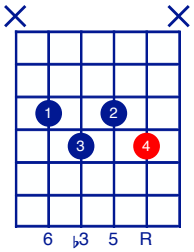

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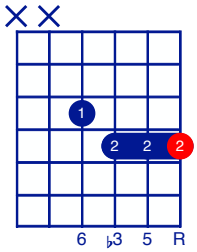
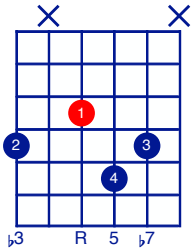
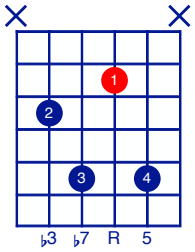


Moveable Minor 7 Chord Inversions

Min7 1st Inv



Min7 1st Inv



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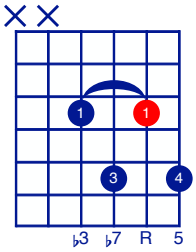
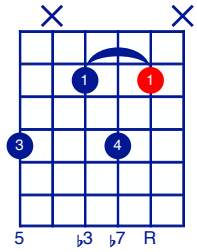
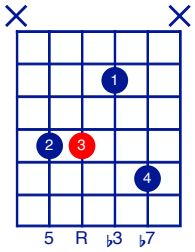


Min7 2nd Inv



Min7 2nd Inv



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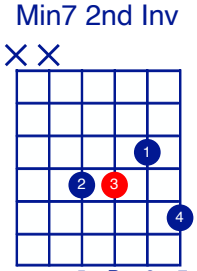

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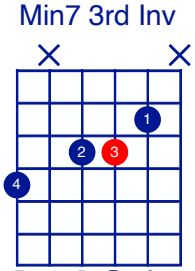
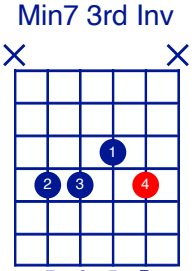
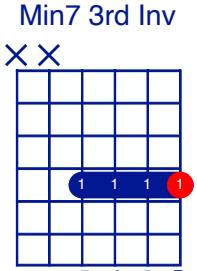


Min7 3rd Inv



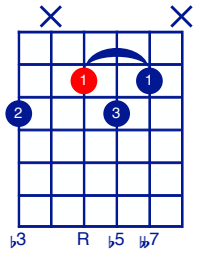
Min7 3rd Inv



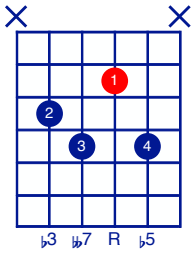
Moveable Diminished 7 Chord Inversions

The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd inversion shapes in each column are the same because diminished 7 is a symmetrical chord, with each chord tone being the exact same distance from its closest neighbor. Depending on context, any note in a diminished 7 can serve as the root. Check out Guitar Theory Modules for more theory topics.

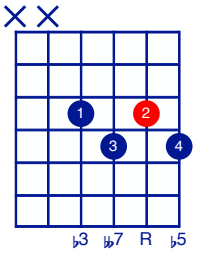
Dim7 1st Inv



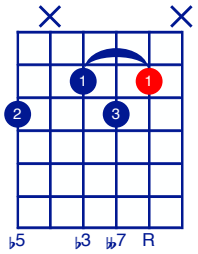
Dim7 1st Inv



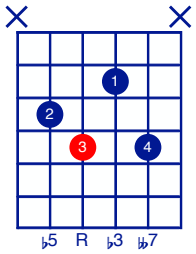
Dim7 1st Inv



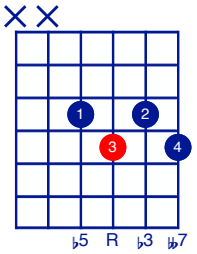
Dim7 2nd Inv



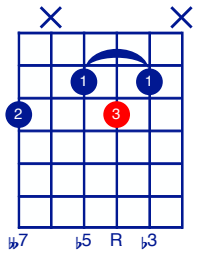
Dim7 2nd Inv



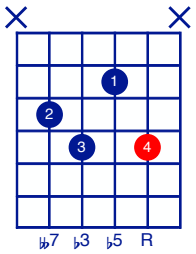
Dim7 2nd Inv



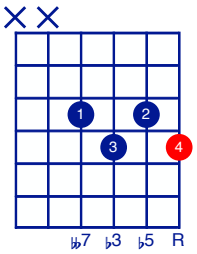
Dim7 3rd Inv



Dim7 3rd Inv



Dim7 3rd Inv



What Are Shell Voicings?

Shell voicings are 3-note chords that include only the essential notes. Shell voicings are especially effective in jazz and blues, although you can play them in any style.

With **6th chord shell voicings**, you generally play the **root, 3rd, and 6th**, leaving out the 5th. In **7th chord shell voicings** you generally play the **root, 3rd, and 7th**, also leaving out the 5th.

You'll find individual shell voicing diagrams starting on page 31, but first, an overview. On the next page, some diagrams have a major 3rd (3) with a row of notes moving chromatically from the 5th to another root. Other diagrams have a minor 3rd (b3) with the same row of chromatic notes.

The shell voicings in this book come from these diagrams. Except for the sus4 chords, you could simply use the overview diagrams starting on the next page. Use these tables to decipher the chord names.

Shell Voicings with Major 3rds

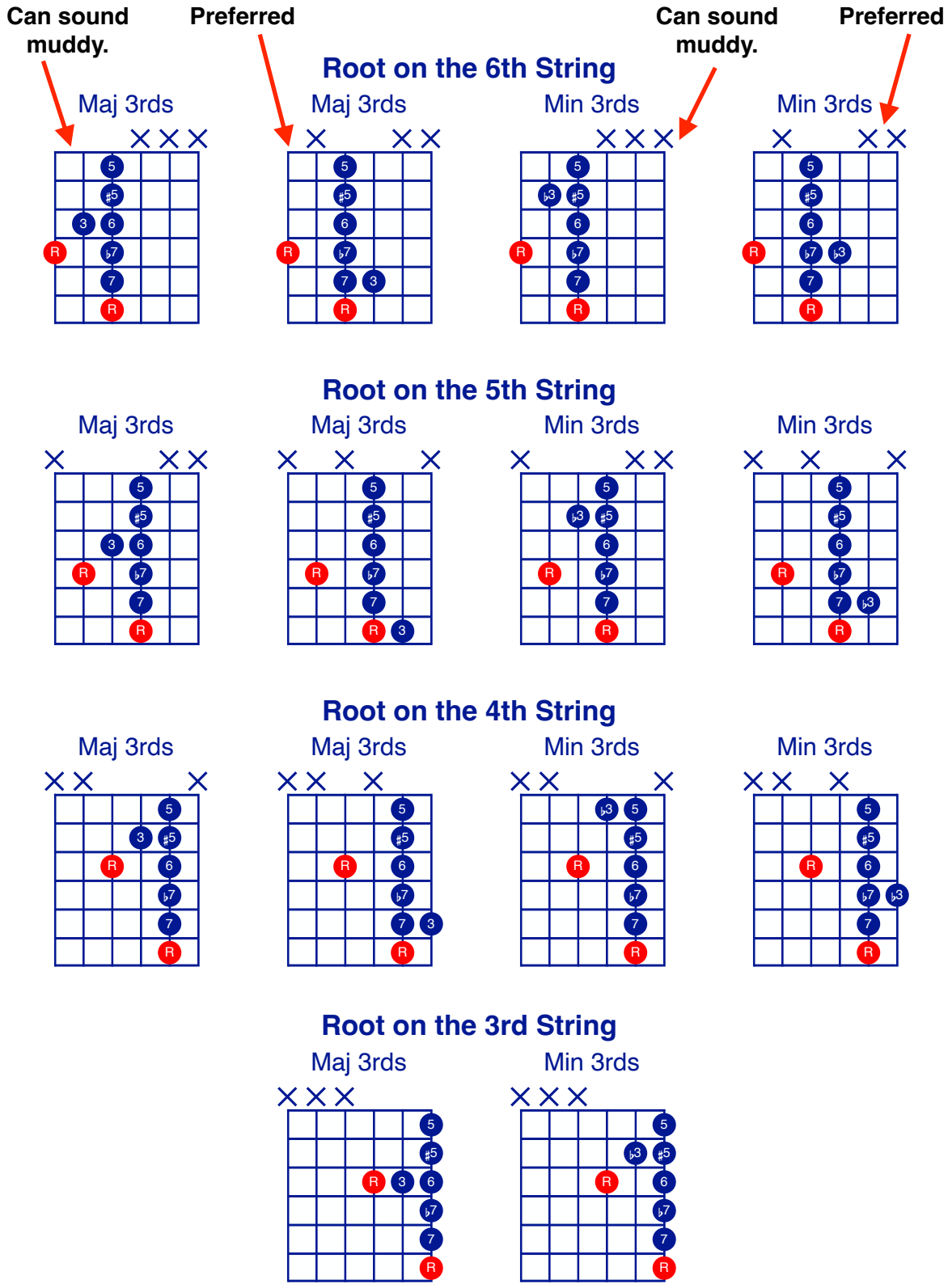
Root	Major 3rd (3)	Note Row	Chord Name
R	3	5	Major
R	3	#5	Augmented
R	3	6	Major 6
R	3	b7	Dominant 7 (7th Chord)
R	3	7	Major 7
R	3	R	Major

Shell Voicings with Minor 3rds

Root	Minor 3rd (b3)	Note Row	Chord Name
R	b3	5	Minor
R	b3	#5	Minor #5
R	b3	6	Minor 6
R	b3	b7	Minor 7
R	b3	7	Minor(Maj7)
R	b3	R	Minor

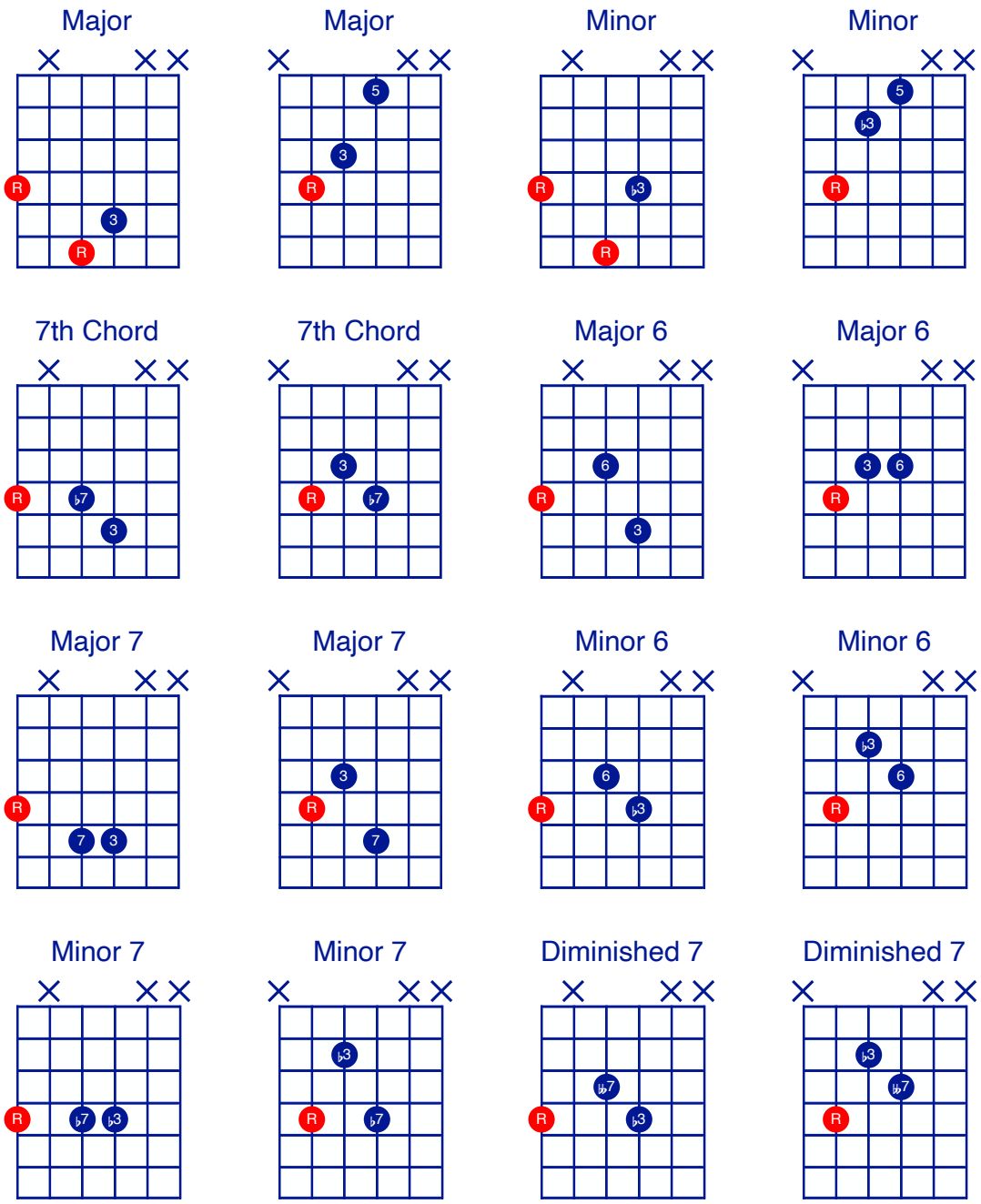
Shell Voicing Overview Diagrams

For general chord accompaniment, I recommend focusing on shell voicings with roots on the 5th and 6th strings.



Shell Voicing Starter Set

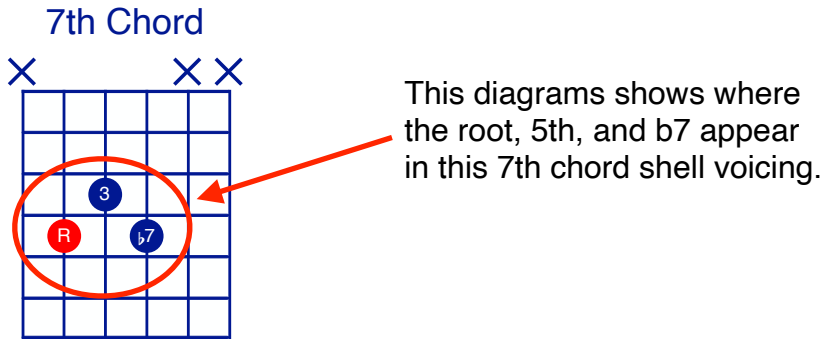
Shell voicings are especially useful in jazz and blues. With that in mind, I recommend learning the **7th, Minor 6, Minor 7, Major 6,** and **Major 7** shell voicings first.



Notice that the **Minor 6** and **Diminished 7** shell voicings are the same. The one note that makes the difference between these two chords is missing in shell voicings, so you can use the same shell voicing shapes for either chord type. Whether you call it Minor 6 or Diminished 7 depends on context.

About the Shell Voicing Diagrams

Because many shell voicing fingerings are flexible, fingerings are not included. Instead, **each circle in the diagram shows the function of each note (R, 3, 5, etc.)**.



- Shell voicings with the root on the 5th and 6th strings are good for general playing. **I recommend learning the 5th and 6th string root shell voicings first.**
- Shell voicings on higher sounding strings are especially useful for solo playing.
- **Don't hurt yourself if you find a particular shell voicing too stretchy!** There are plenty of shell voicings to choose from.
- Check out Three-Note Jazz Guitar Chords for a methodical approach to learning shell voicings.

Individual shell voicings appear by category:

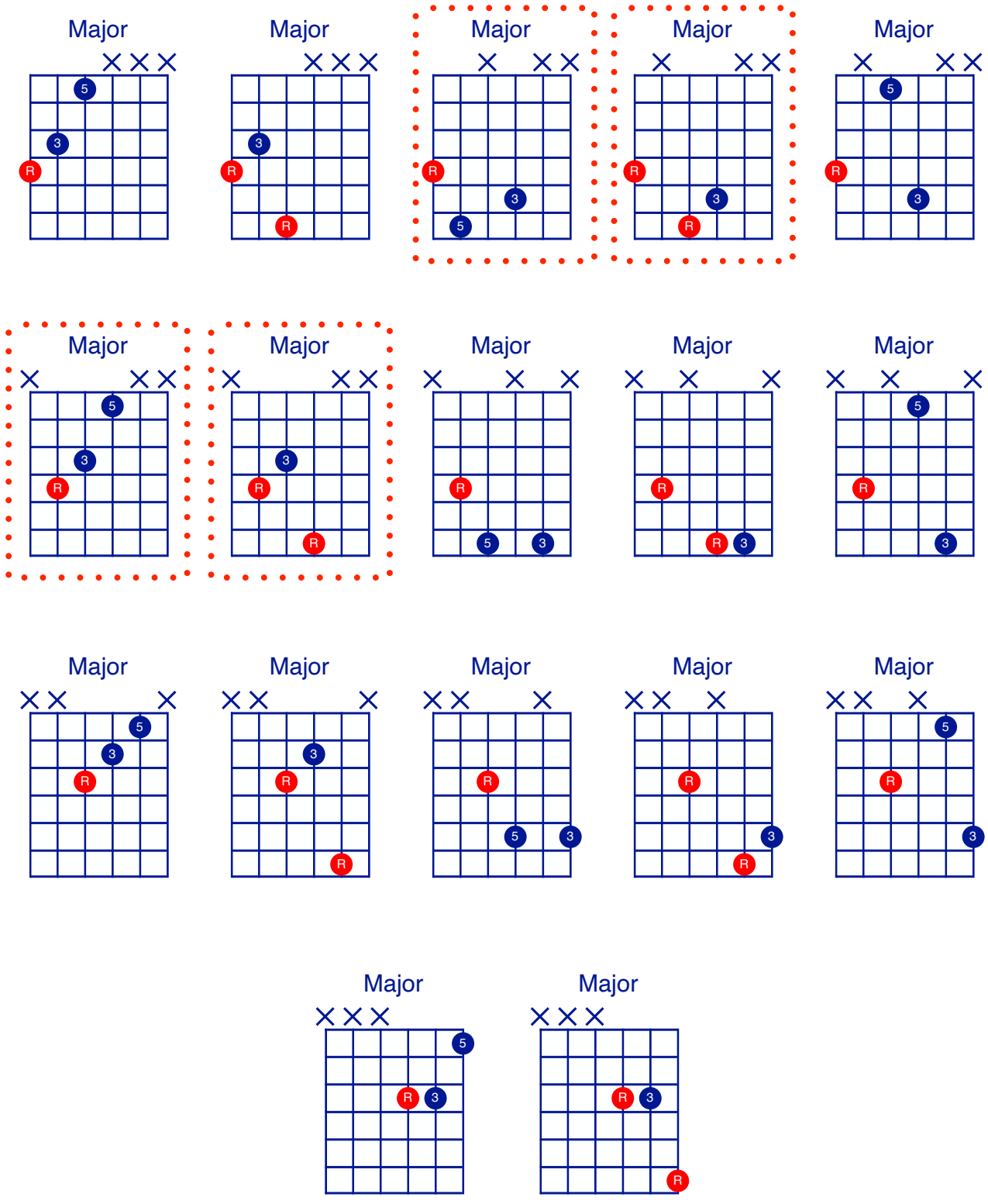
Major
Minor
Minor (#5)
Augmented
Dominant 7 (7th Chords)
Dominant 7 Suspended (7sus4)
Major 6
Major 7
Minor 6
Minor 7
Minor(Maj7)
Diminished 7

This book does not include **minor 7(b5)** (aka half-diminished) root position shell voicing diagrams. The 7th chord shell voicings leave out the 5th of the chord. **You can get away with playing a minor 7 shell voicing in place of a minor 7b5 chord because the 5th is absent.**

Major Triad Shell Voicings

A major triad shell voicing can include R-3-5 or two roots and a 3rd.

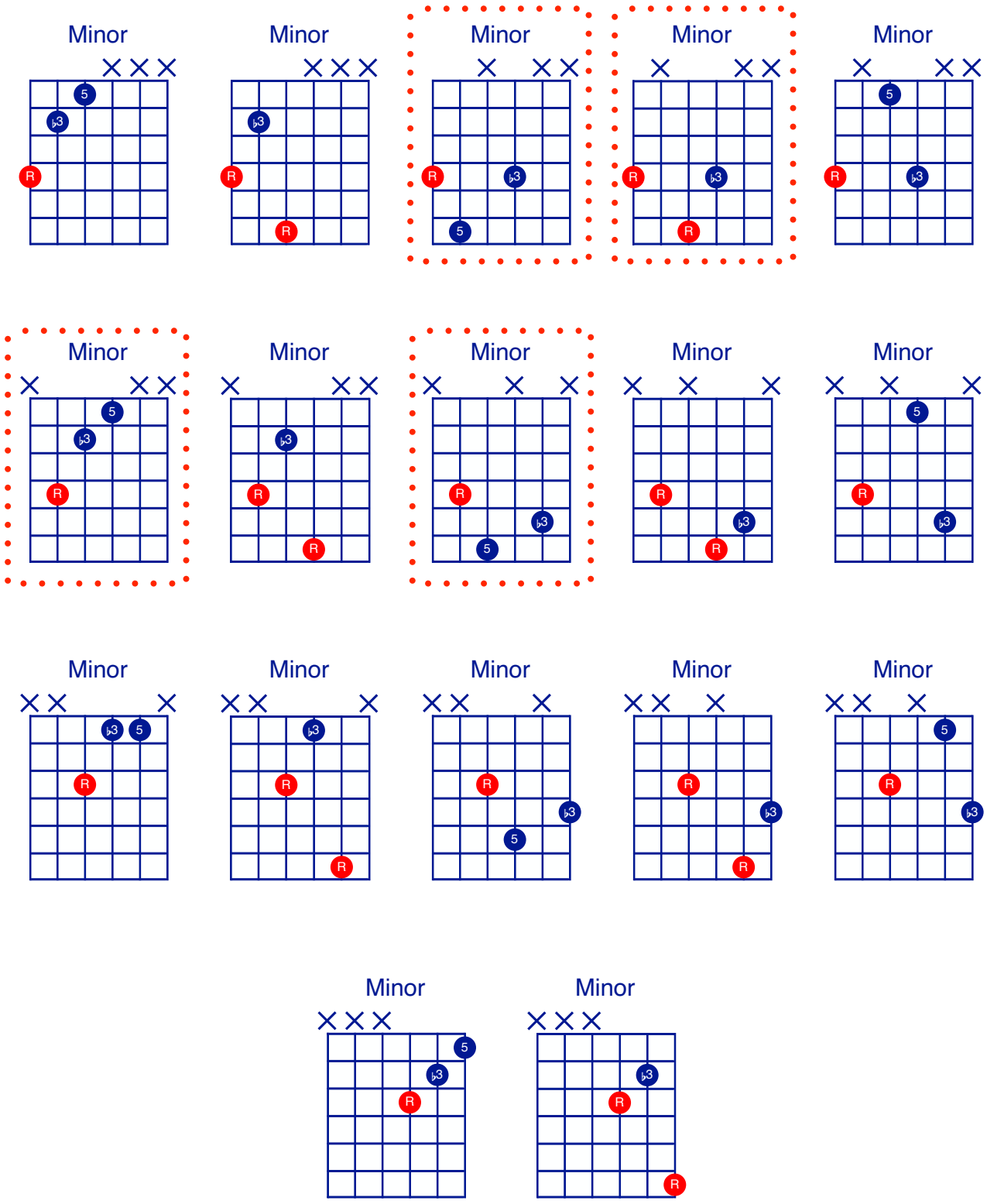
Suggestion: Learn the highlighted shell voicings first.



Minor Triad Shell Voicings

A minor triad shell voicing can include R-b3-5 or two roots and a minor 3rd.

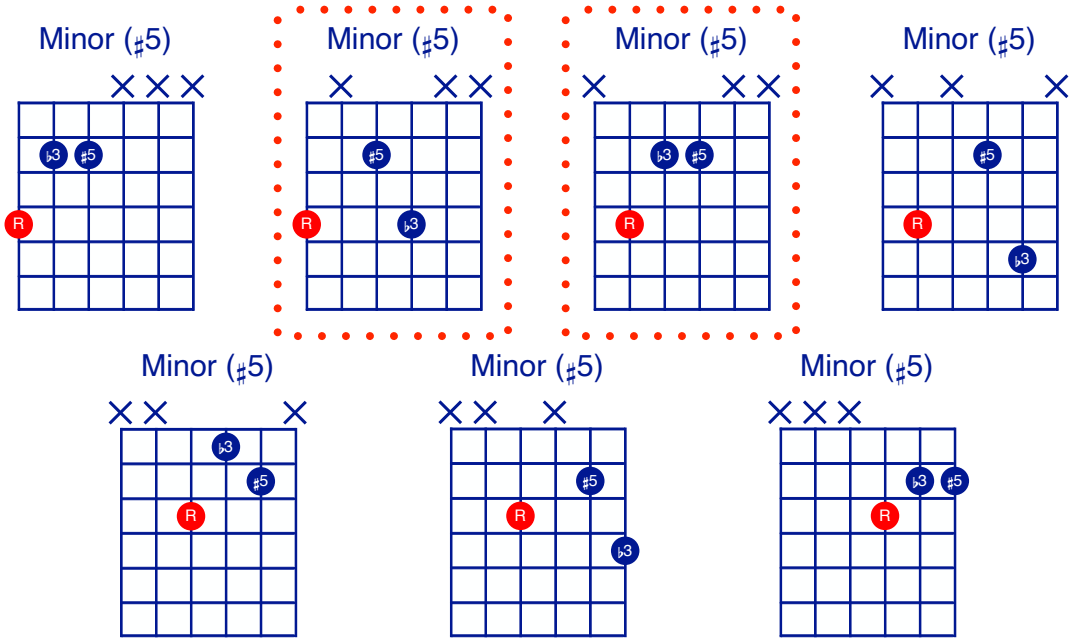
Suggestion: Learn the highlighted shell voicings first.



Minor (#5) Shell Voicings (R-b3-#5)

Not a common chord. The minor(#5) is used in the James Bond theme.

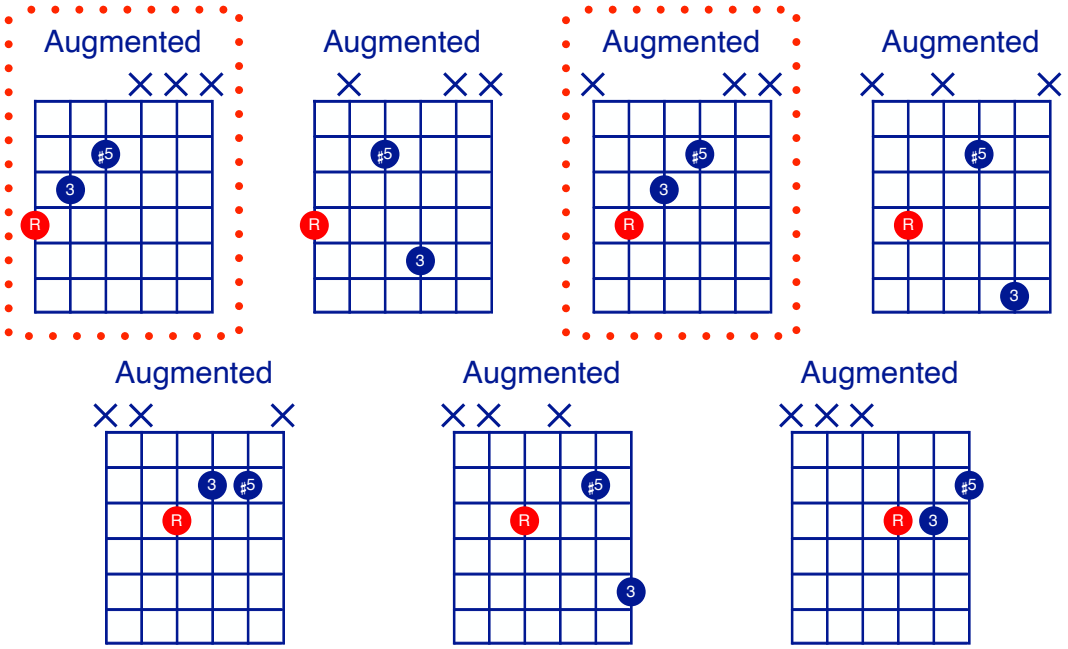
Suggestion: Learn the highlighted shell voicings first.



Augmented Triad Shell Voicings (R-3-#5)

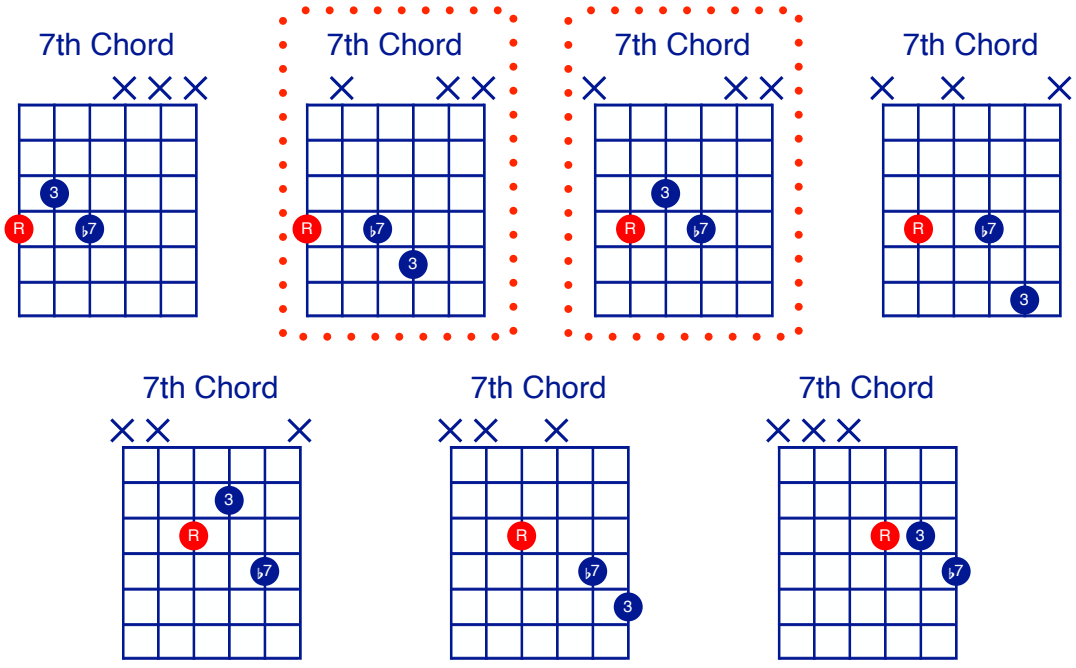
I mainly use augmented shell voicings with notes on adjacent strings, but the more spread-out voicings are useful in some situations and have a pleasant, open quality.

Suggestion: Learn the highlighted shell voicings first.



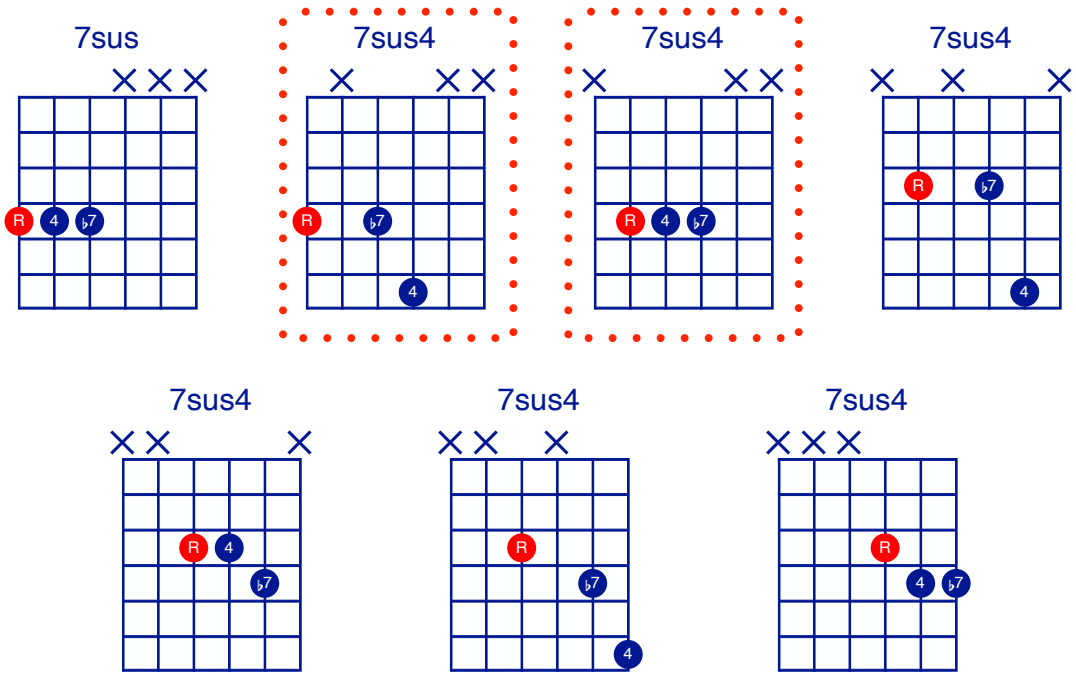
Dominant 7 (7th Chord) Shell Voicings (R-3-b7)

Suggestion: Learn the highlighted shell voicings first.



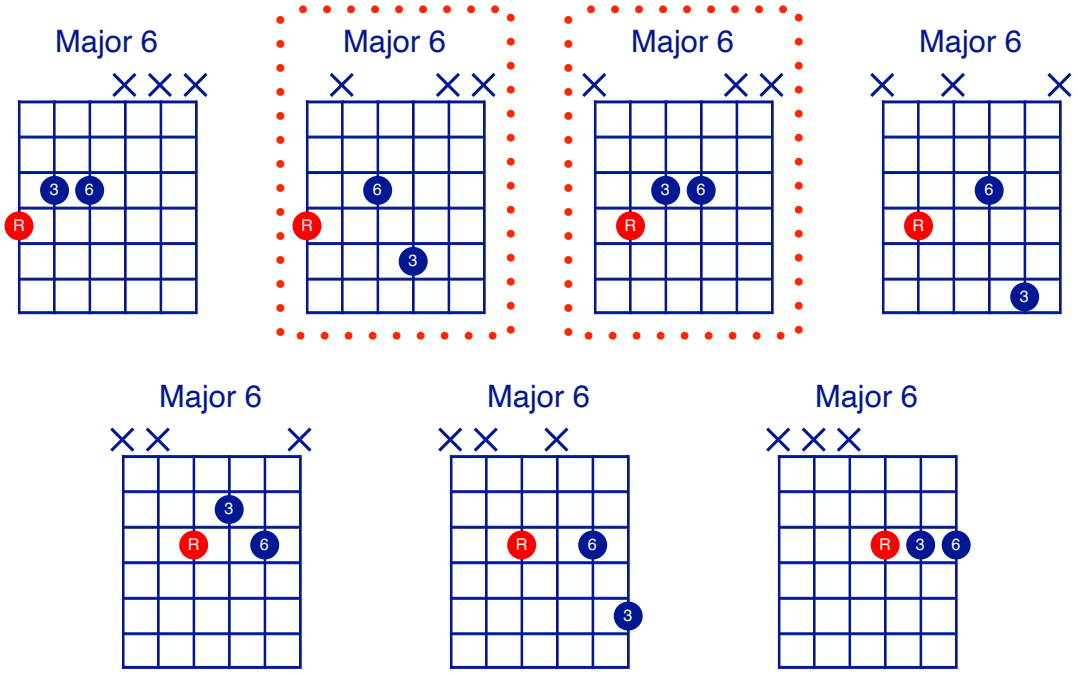
Dominant 7 Suspended (7sus4) Shell Voicings (R-4-b7)

Suggestion: Learn the highlighted shell voicings first.



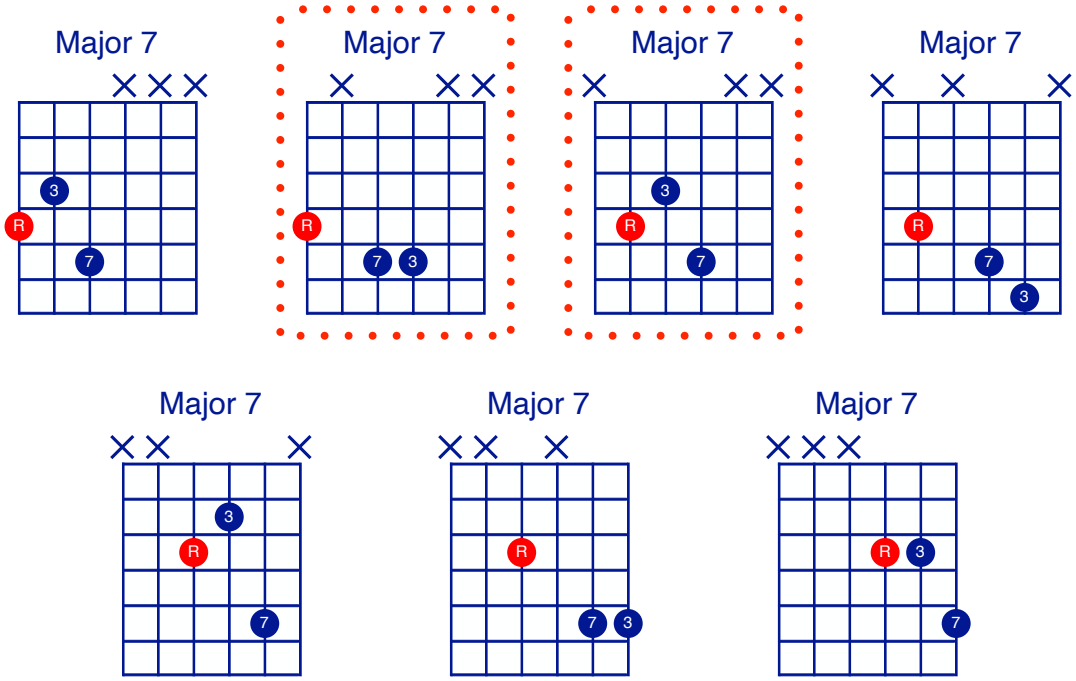
Major 6 Shell Voicings (R-3-6)

Suggestion: Learn the highlighted shell voicings first.



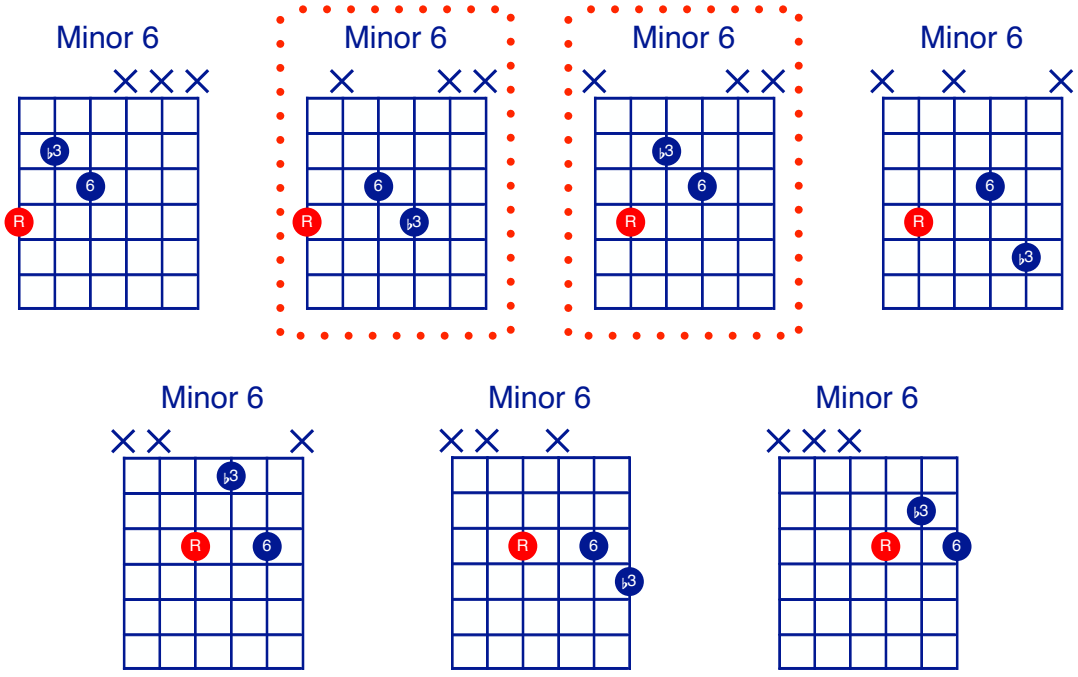
Major 7 Shell Voicings (R-3-7)

Suggestion: Learn the highlighted shell voicings first.



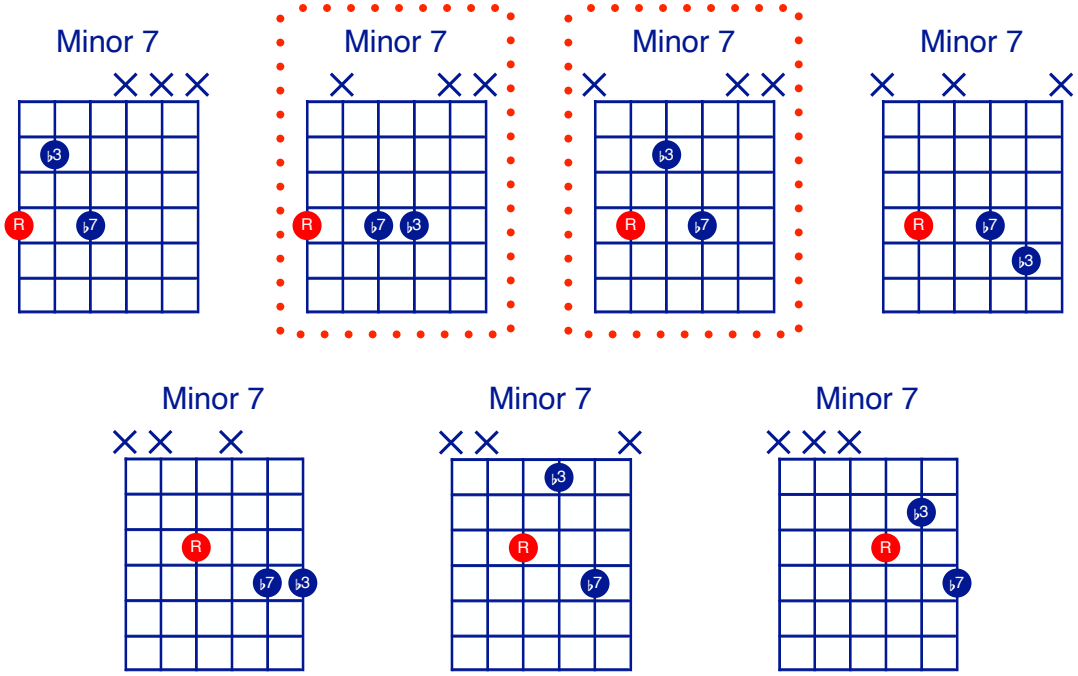
Minor 6 Shell Voicings (R-b3-6)

Suggestion: Learn the highlighted shell voicings first.



Minor 7 Shell Voicings (R-b3-b7)

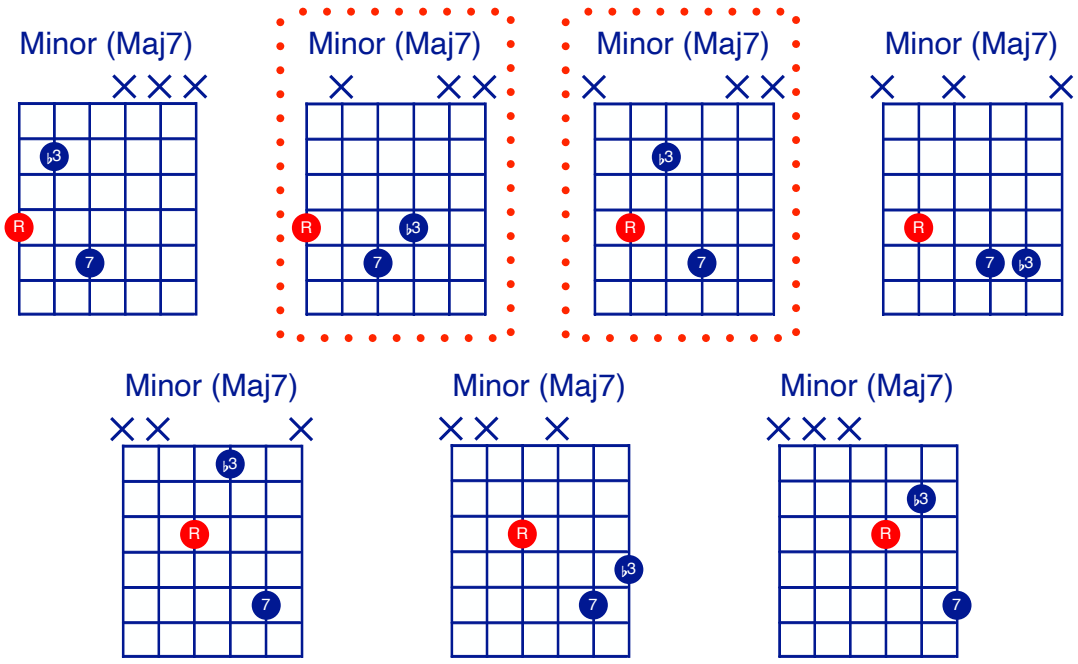
Suggestion: Learn the highlighted shell voicings first.



Minor(Maj7) Shell Voicings (R-b3-7)

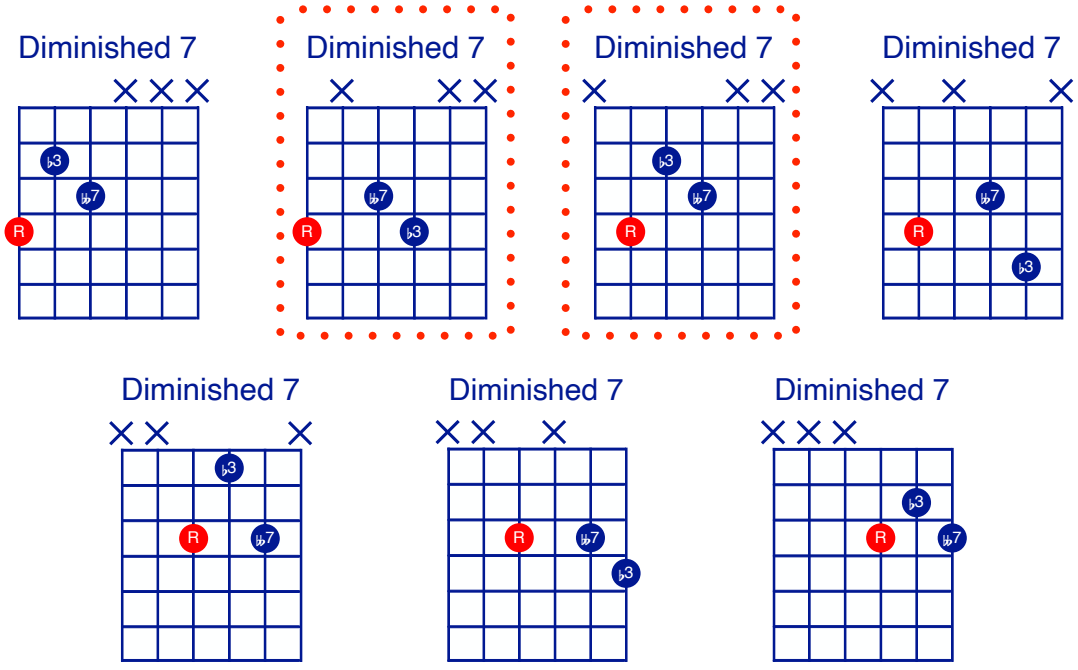
This less common chord usually appears in jazz standards.

Suggestion: Learn the highlighted shell voicings first.



Diminished 7 Shell Voicings (R-b3-bb7)

Suggestion: Learn the highlighted shell voicings first.



Simplifying Chords

Shell voicings only use three notes of a given chord, but even for bigger chords, the number of chord tones you can play is limited by the number of strings, the layout of the notes on the guitar, and hand size. It is often necessary to simplify more complex chords to make them playable on the guitar. To understand more of the theory behind this, check out Guitar Theory Modules.

Major Chord Types

- Major 11 and Major 9 can be simplified to Major 7.
- Major 6/9 chords can be simplified to Major 6.
- Major 7 and Major 6 can be simplified to Major triads.

Minor Chord Types

- Minor 11 and Minor 9 can be simplified to Minor 7.
- Minor 6/9 can be simplified to Minor 6.
- Minor 7 and Minor 6 can be simplified to Minor triads.

Dominant Chord Types

- 13th and 11th can be simplified to 9th chords.
- 9th chords can be simplified to 7th chords.

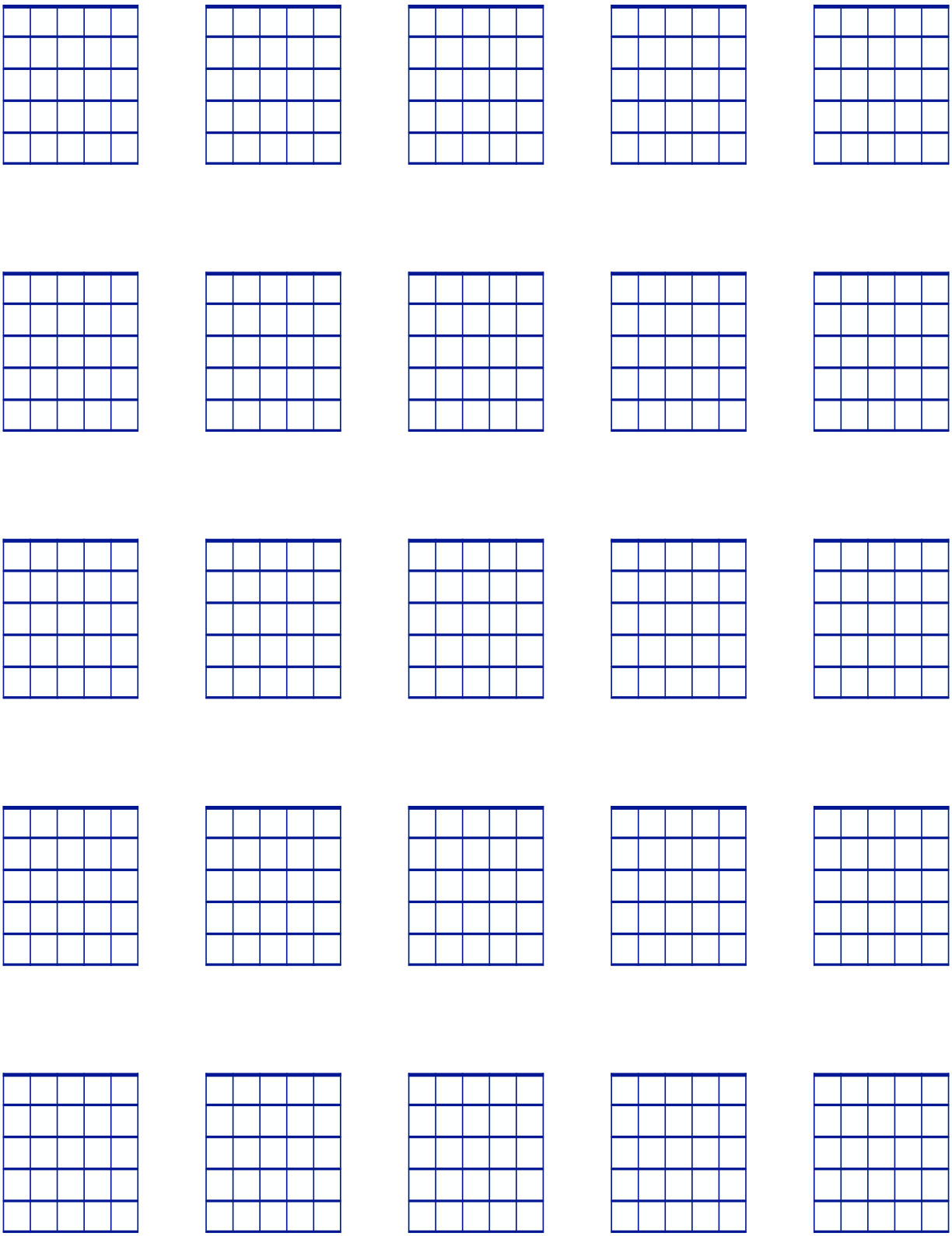
Miscellaneous

- 7#5 can be simplified to augmented or a shell 7th chord (with no 5th)
- 7b5 can be simplified to a shell 7th chord (with no 5th)
- Minor7b5 can be simplified to a shell Minor 7 (with no 5th)

Complex	Simpler	Simplest
Major 11 and Major 9	Major 7	Major
Major 6/9	Major 6	Major
Minor 11 and Minor 9	Minor 7	Minor
Minor 6/9	Minor 6	Minor
13th and 11th	9th	7th
	7#5	Augmented or Shell 7th
	7b5	Shell 7th
	Minor 7b5	Shell Minor 7

Blank Chord Diagrams

Print as many copies of this page as you like. Write more chords as you learn them.



Guitar Books and Music

Guitar Books: **www.godfreyguitarlessons.com/books**
Solo Guitar Arrangements: **www.godfreyguitarlessons.com/music**

Music Reading in Standard Notation

Melody Guitar 1
Learn to read and play melodies on strings 1-3.

Melody Guitar 2
Play melodies on all six strings and continue to learn important music reading concepts.

Melody Guitar 3
Continue to advance with more challenging melodies and music reading concepts.
Includes important scale forms as well as hammer-on and pull-off techniques.

Melody Guitar 4
Learn to play melodies anywhere on the fretboard.

Chord Books

Rhythm Guitar 1
An introduction to rhythm guitar with simplified chords.

Rhythm Guitar 2
Standard open chords, strumming, and fingerstyle patterns.

Rhythm Guitar 3
A deep dive into moveable chords, including standard bar chords plus jazz and blues chords.

First Moveable Guitar Chords
Four essential moveable chord types: major, minor, dominant 7, and power chords.

Three-Note Jazz Guitar Chords
A study in shell voicings for new jazz and blues guitarists.

Theory and Technique

Guitar Theory Modules
Music theory for guitarists. All examples relate to the fretboard.

Arpeggio Sequences for Guitar
64 major and harmonic minor arpeggios studies. Includes both standard notation and TAB.



GodfreyGuitarLessons.com