
Linear Guitar--
A slightly different approach to learning guitar chords
Brian R. Baer

Linear Guitar – *a slightly different approach to learning chords and the guitar neck.*

Place your thumb in the middle of the back of the guitar neck. For reference, I refer to playing **up-the-neck** on guitar as going towards the sound hole and **down-the-neck** as going towards the tuning keys.

I encourage using 3 fingers on each hand for the first three lessons. Chord with the left hand and pluck with the right. Of course, use the opposite hands if you have a properly strung left-handed guitar. However, if you are a beginner, I would encourage you to play right-handed, as there are many more right-handed guitars in the world and since you are using both hands anyway, why not try it out. I have known many left-handed people who play great guitar right-handed. Just a thought…

Remember, in the beginning, you are using **only 3 strings and 3 fingers**. Ignore the other strings for now and try not to strike them. (They will come later, I promise.)

Anyway, go to lesson one and look at that simple major shape. Try and memorize the location of the root note and name the chord. It sometimes helps just to pick out the names at the neck markers (dots) and try to remember them first. Then print a **chords & lyrics** page off of the internet for any song that you are familiar with. Familiarity is the important part here as you need to know when something sounds right to you. I would recommend starting with a simple, 3 chord song. Folk, rock, or country music all offer a lot of choices here, but it really doesn't matter at this point.

Next, try and slide the **3-string chord** (know as a ***triad*** in music circles) up or down the neck until you reach proper chords over the approximate correct words. This will be very slow at first, but that is the same for almost everybody. Your fingers have to get used to working together and your finger tips will probably be sore for a while until the repetition helps build up callouses. **Add the minor shape** when you feel ready to move your fingers. Pluck the 3 strings together and individually, listening for any dud sounds. Each string should ring clearly. If you find one deadened, you probably need to either change the angle at which the finger tip contacts the string or make sure that another finger isn't brushing against it and stopping the vibration.

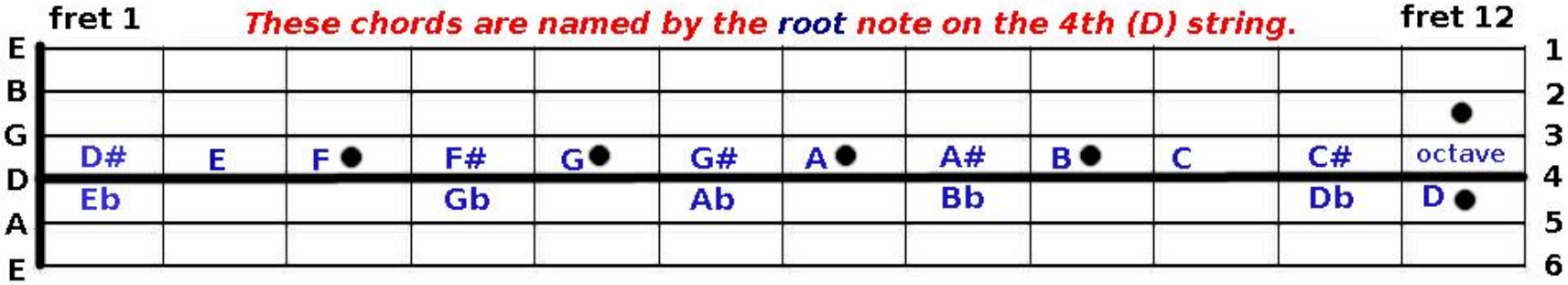
Here is the trick. With this method, you can ***instantly play the major and minor chords of all 12 keys***.
Many beginning guitarists are fine with a G C D sequence, but panic when they come across an Eflat (Eb) or an F sharp minor (F#m). You will already have them at your sore fingertips.

Spend all the time you need on lesson one. You are your own boss. When you're ready, try lessons two and three. They all use the same 3 fingers and 3 strings, but in different ways to form the chords. Learn the names of notes at the different frets and mix and match the chord variations that you've discovered.

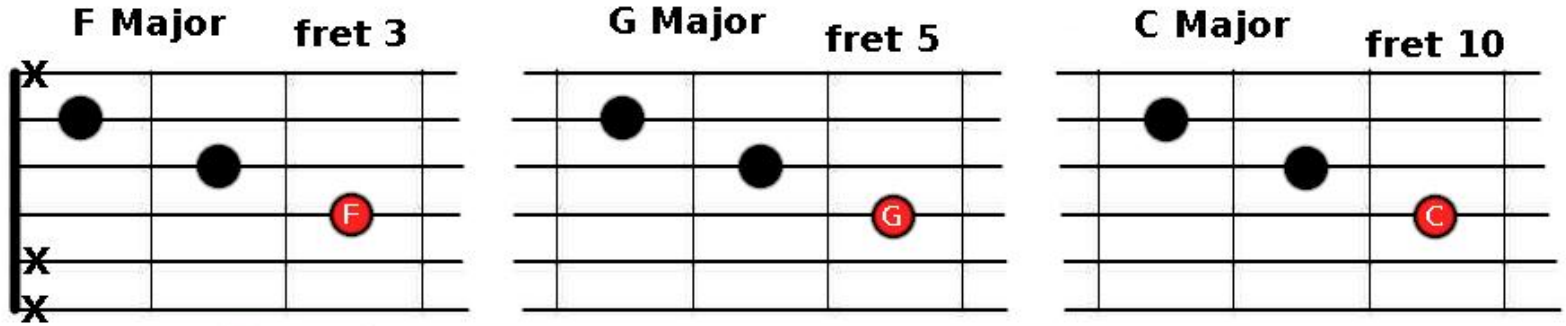
Lesson four adds another finger and string. Lesson five starts to open up the whole world. At that point, you'll be able to apply your new-found knowledge and master any song. Good luck. *(*As a **bonus**, the 3-string chord shapes **all work** on a standard-tuned **banjo**; add 5 frets for the **ukelele**, however, the 4th string is one octave higher.*)*

Brian Baer 3/12/22

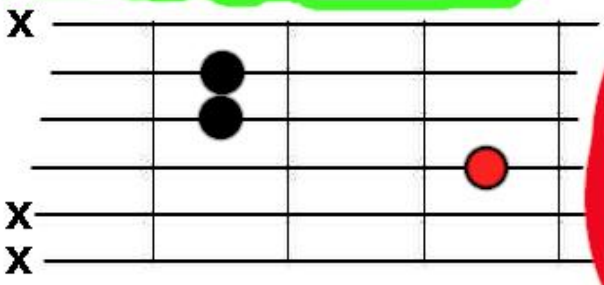
Lesson One "The Fmaj7-Shape"



Use only strings 4, 3 & 2 to form these chords (D, G & B strings).



This is the 3 string minor shape.
It is the same at every fret.



(try typing the letters **w d v** on a keyboard to get the top to bottom motion feeling for this root chord*)*

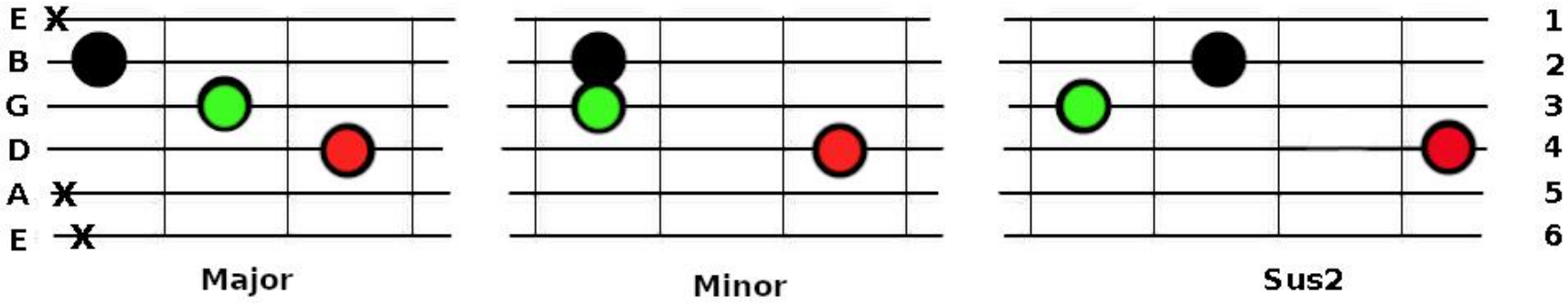
Chords are named by the root note (marked in red).

Using only 3 strings, you always have a full chord. Major chords are 1st, 3rd & 5th of a scale; minor are 1st, flatted 3rd and 5th of the same scale.

Switching from major to minor only required lowering the middle note by one-half step (one fret).

All frets on the guitar are half step increments.

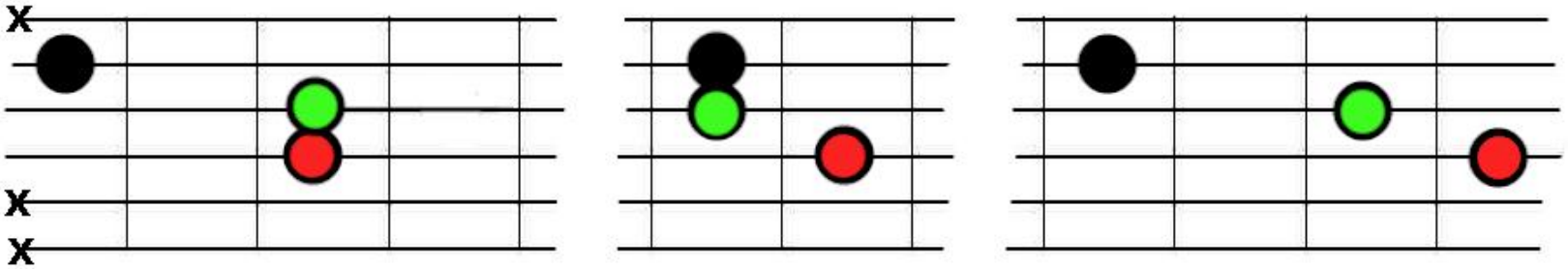
Fmaj7 shape reference



Major

Minor

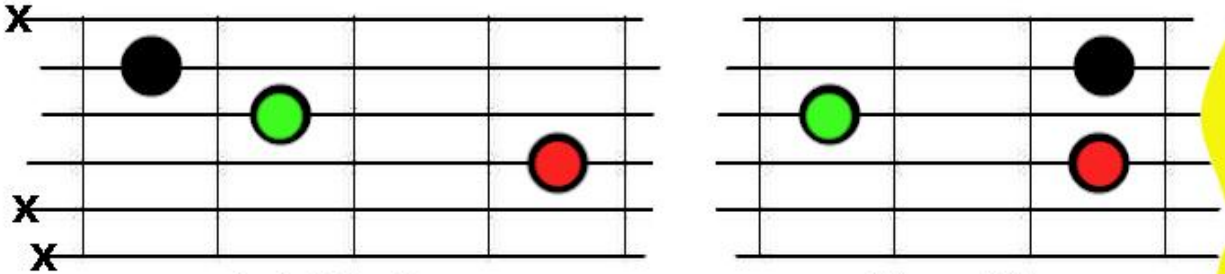
Sus2



Sus4

Augmented

(#11)



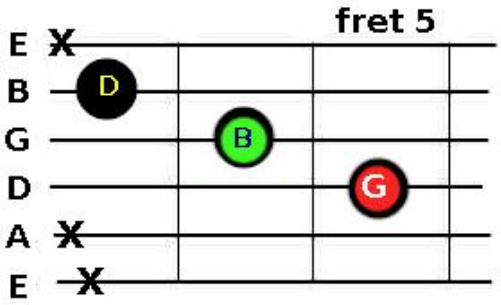
Diminished

Minor 6th

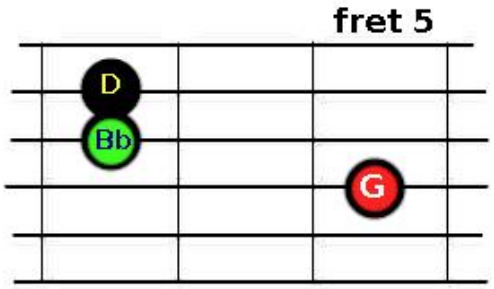
Please note that the root (red) note stays in a fixed position for all of these 3-note chord variations.

Fmaj7 shape reference

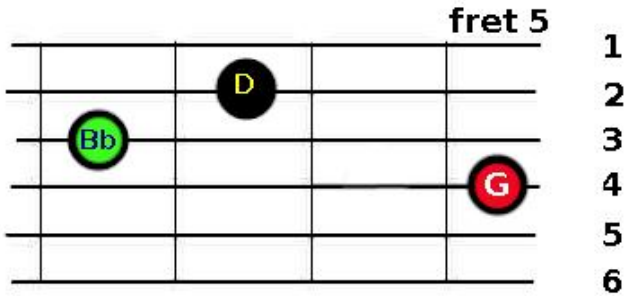
Examples in G



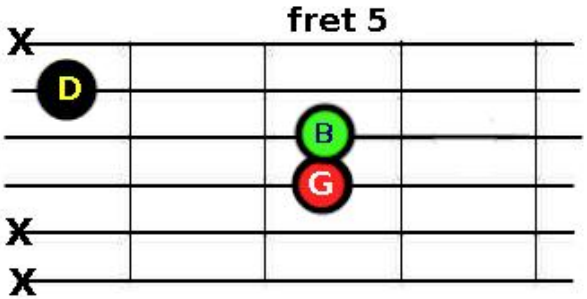
G Major



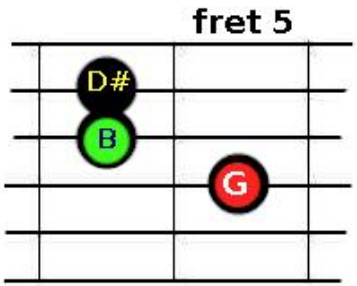
G Minor



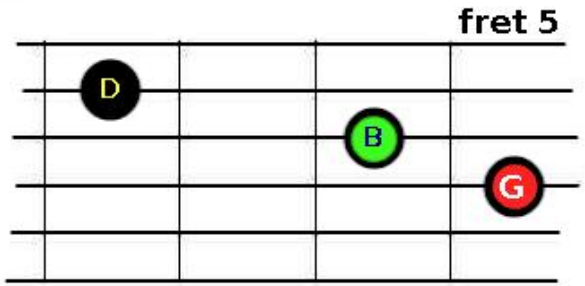
G Sus2



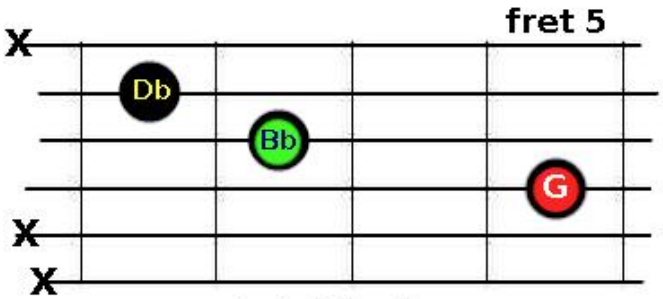
G Sus4



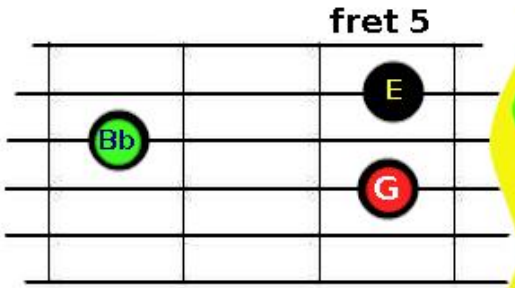
G Augmented



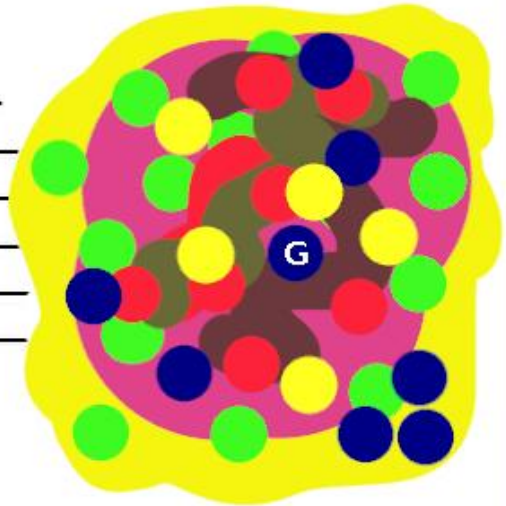
G (#11)



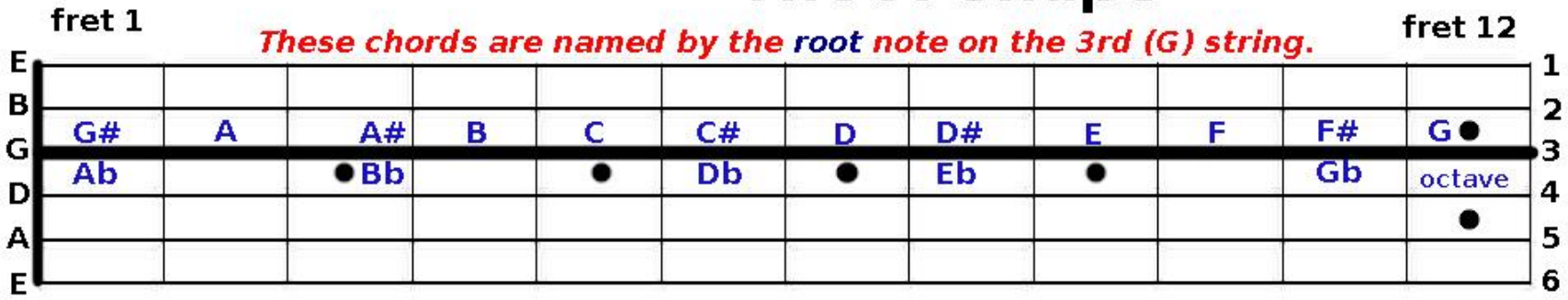
G Diminished

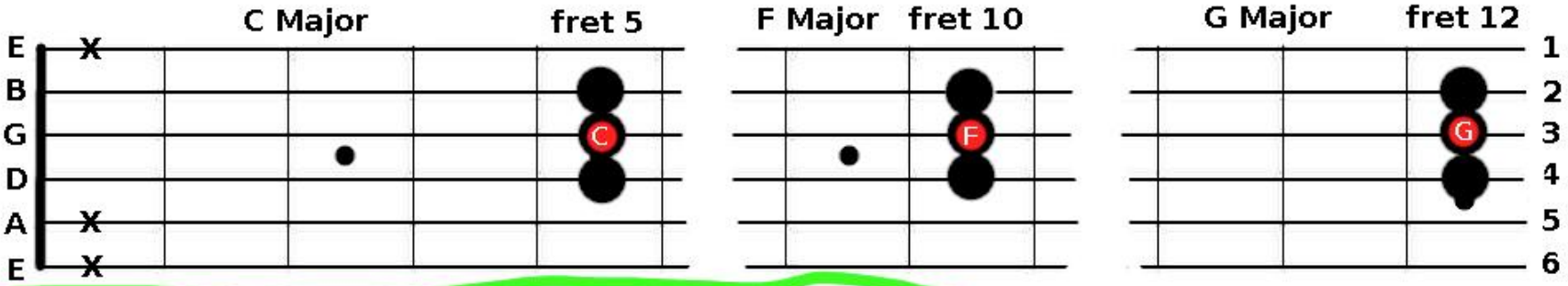


G Minor 6th

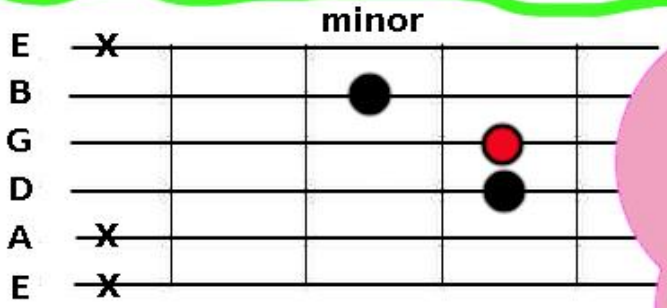


Lesson Two "The A-Shape"





All minor chords with this shape lower the note on the B-string by one-half step. This is always one fret back.



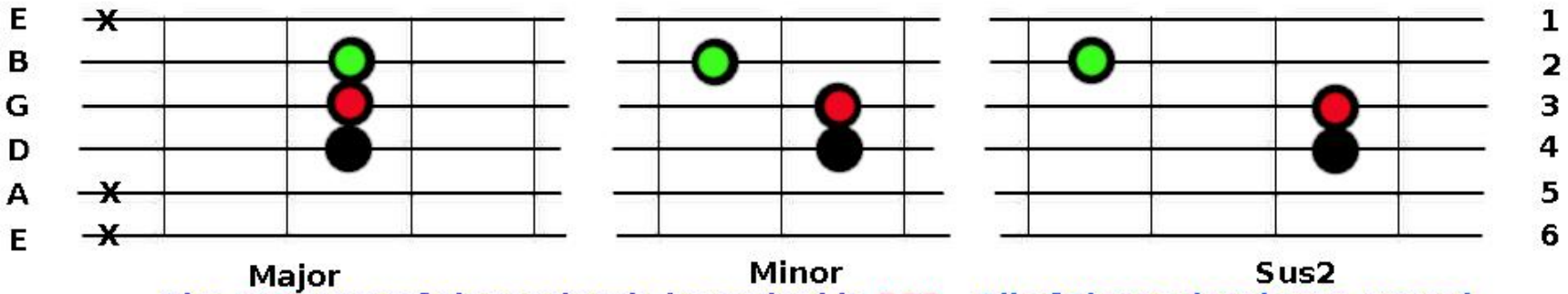
In the western world, a major key consists of 8 notes.

For example, the key of C major includes the notes C D E F G A B C(octave).

Each note is separated from the next by either a half or a whole step.

An octave includes all 12 of the half-steps.

A shape reference

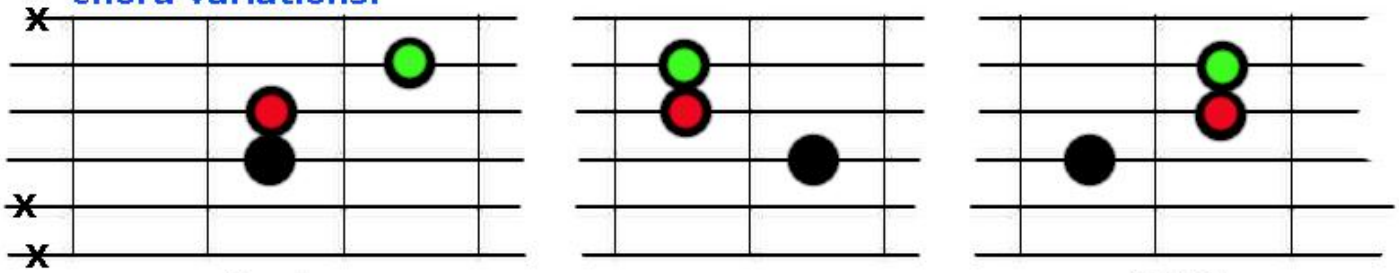


Major

Minor

Sus2

The root note of these chords is marked in RED. All of these chords are named in reference to that root. Note that it stays in the same position for all of the chord variations.

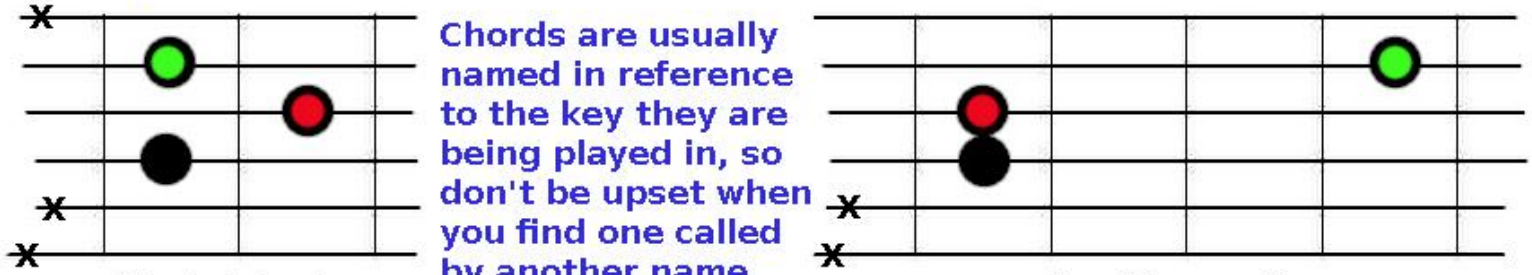


Sus4

Augmented

(#11)

The same chord can have many different names.

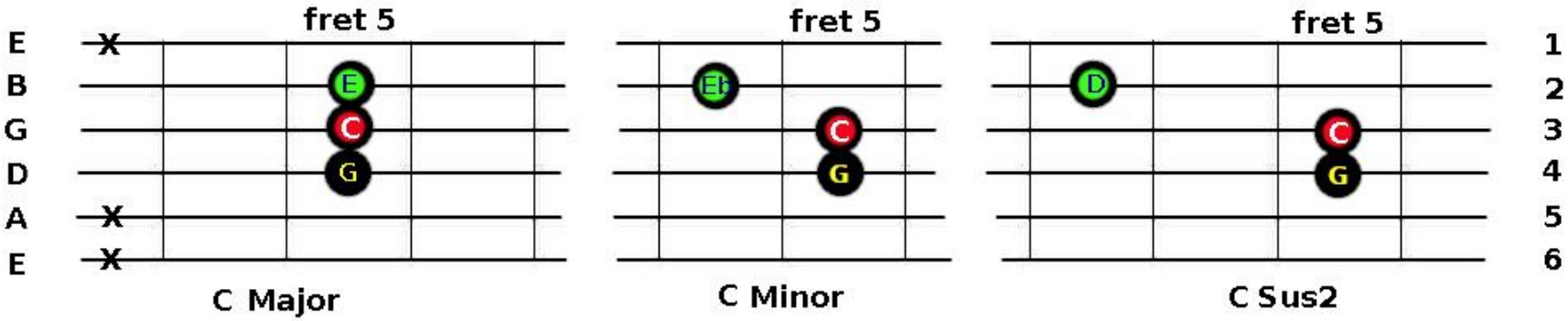


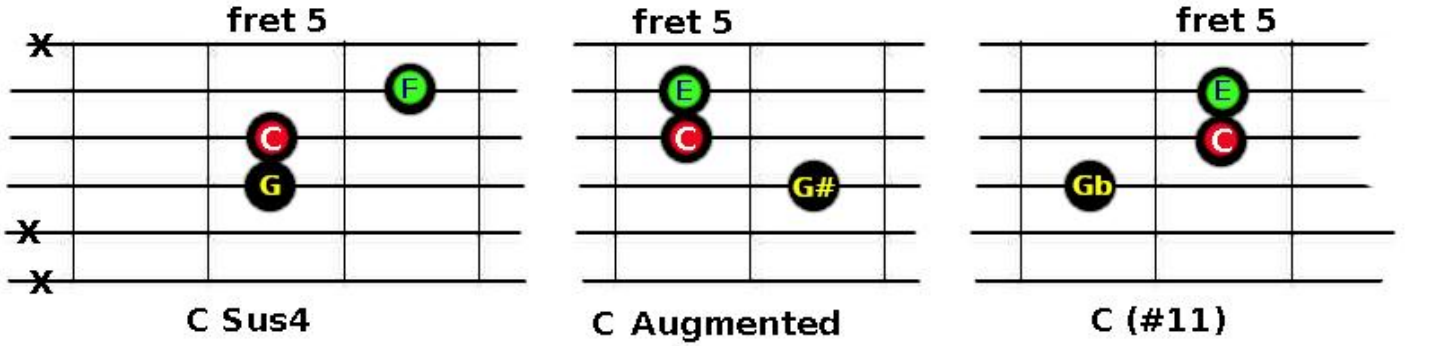
Diminished

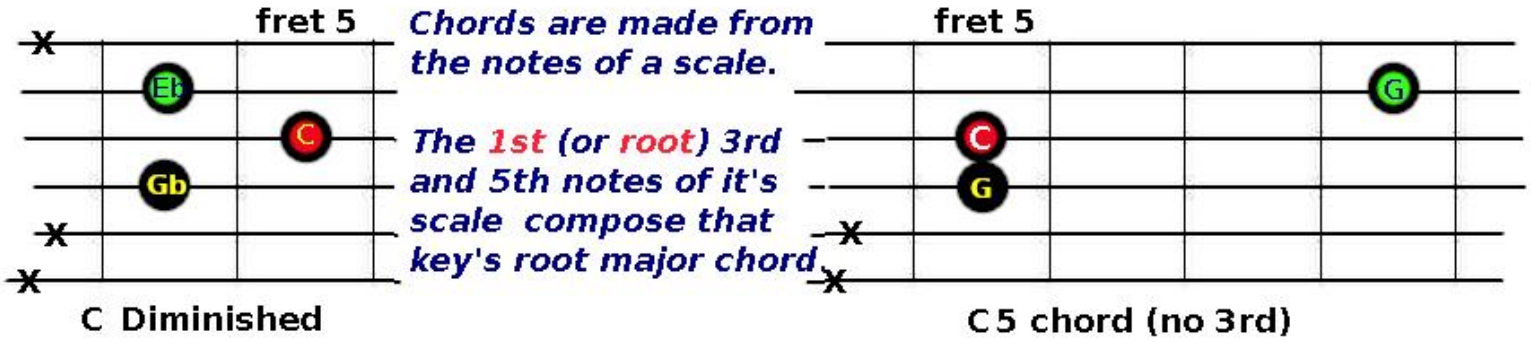
Chords are usually named in reference to the key they are being played in, so don't be upset when you find one called by another name.

5 chord (no 3rd)

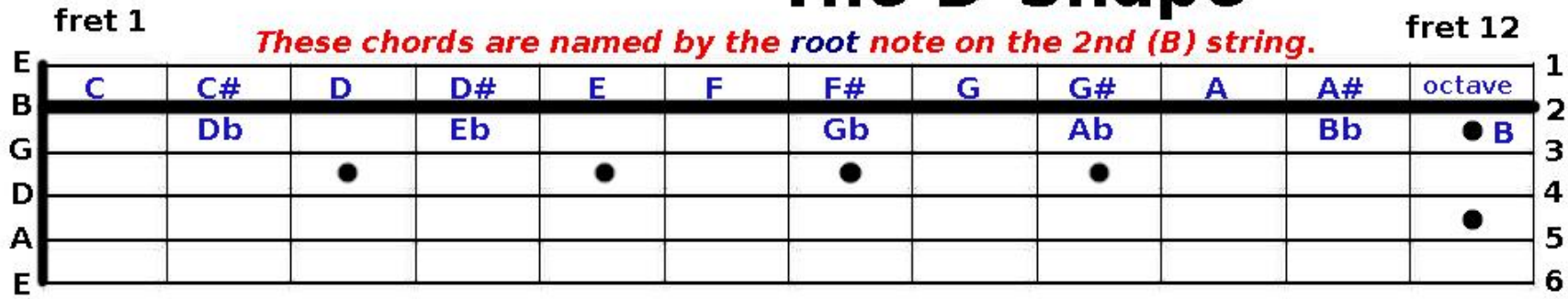
A shape reference Example in C



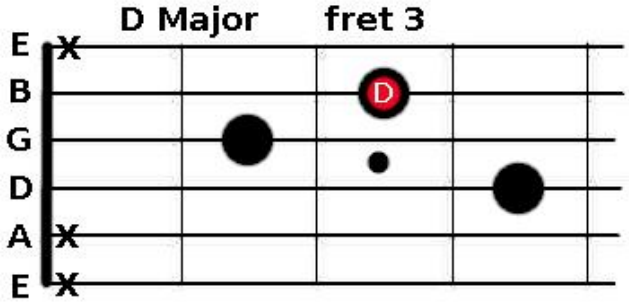


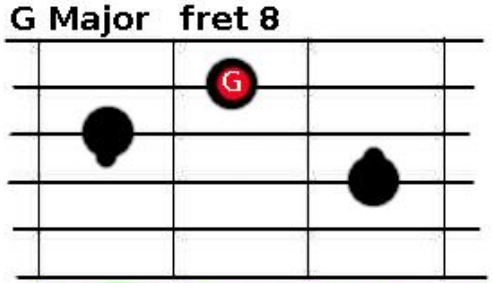


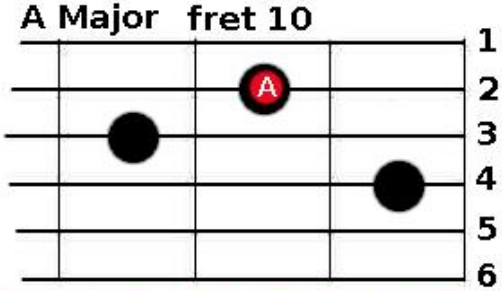
Lesson Three "The D-Shape"

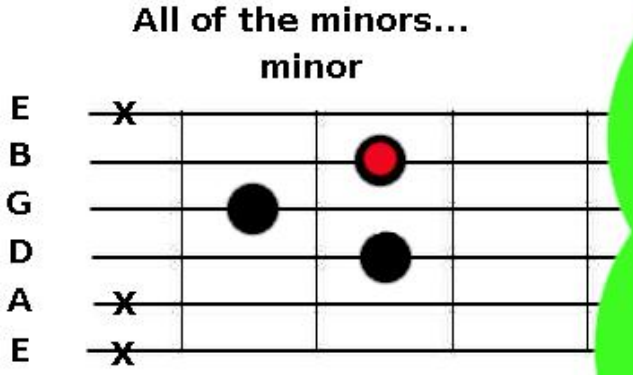


(if fingering is difficult, try typing the letters **f e x** on a keyboard to **feel** the motion of laying out this chord shape from left to right)*









Major chords consist of 3 notes in a given scale. The 1st, the 3rd and the 5th.

Minor chords also have 3 notes, the 1st and 5th remain unchanged, but the 3rd is lowered one-half step.

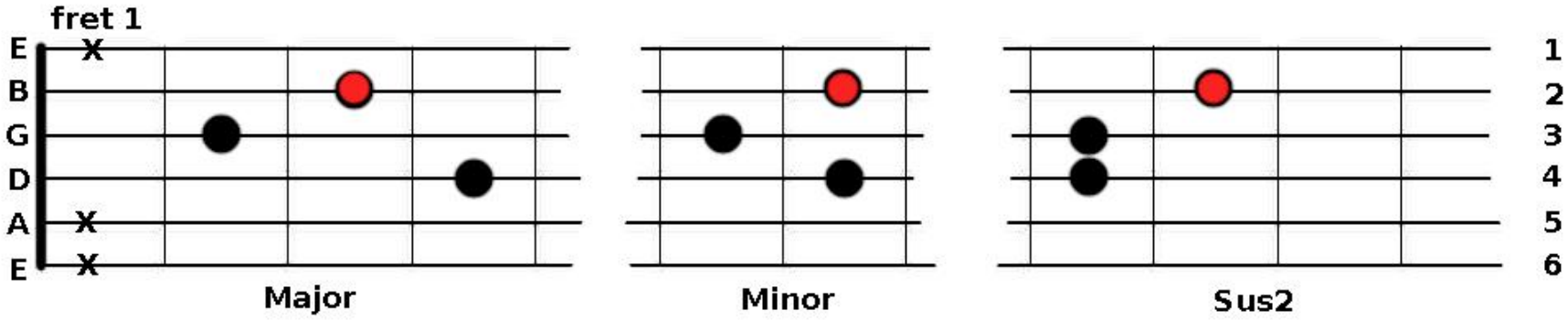
C scale: C (1st or root); D (2nd); E (3rd); F (4th); G (5th); A (6th); B (7th); C (octave or 8th)

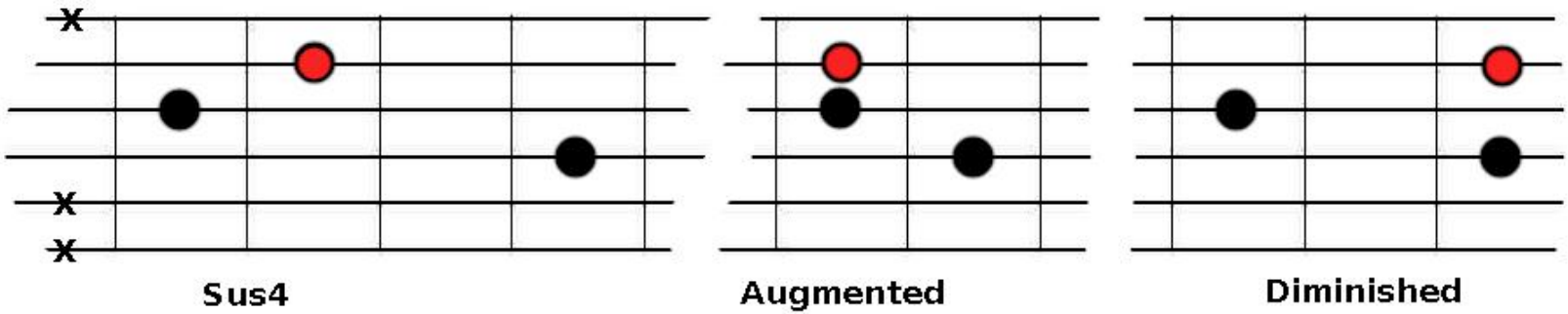
C Major = C E G (1st, 3rd, 5th)

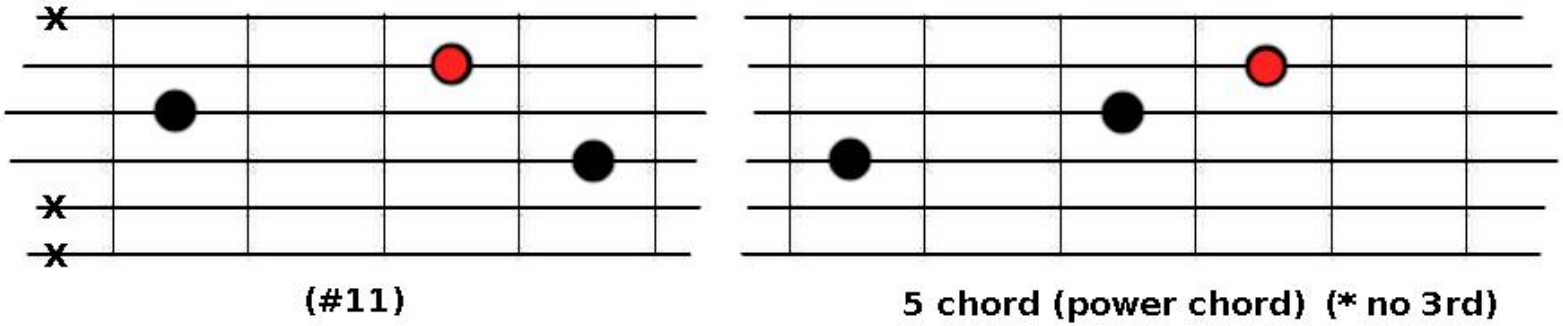
C Minor = C Eb G (1st, flatted 3rd, 5th)

Identifying the relationships of notes in a key is the trick to building all of the advanced chords.

D shape reference

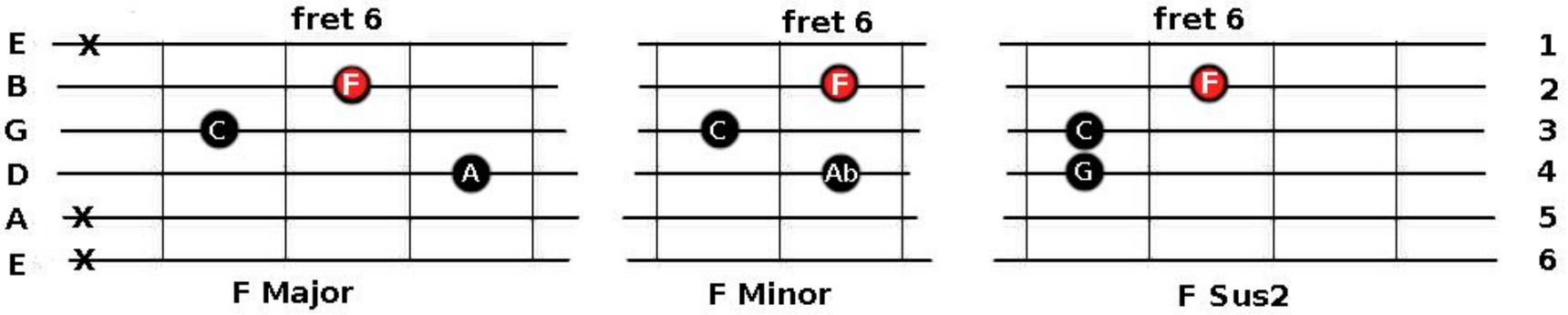






D shape reference

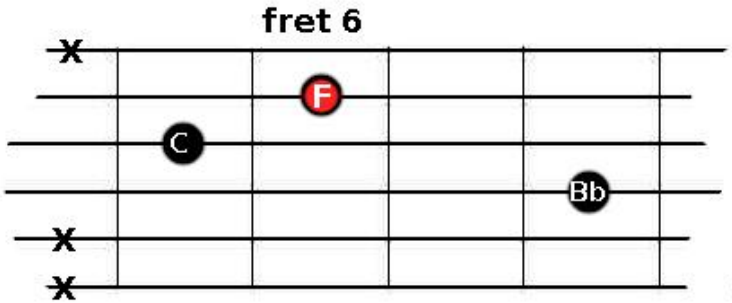
Example in F



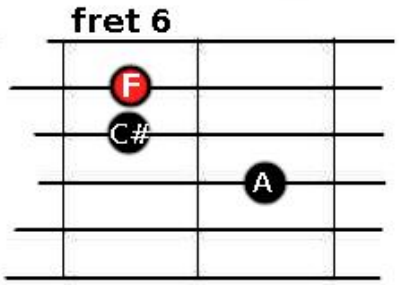
F Major

F Minor

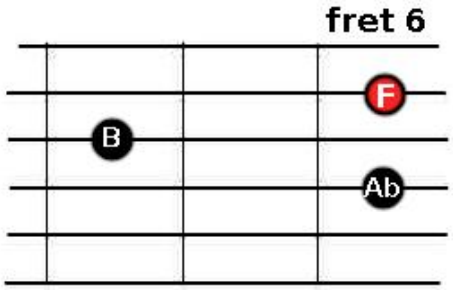
F Sus2



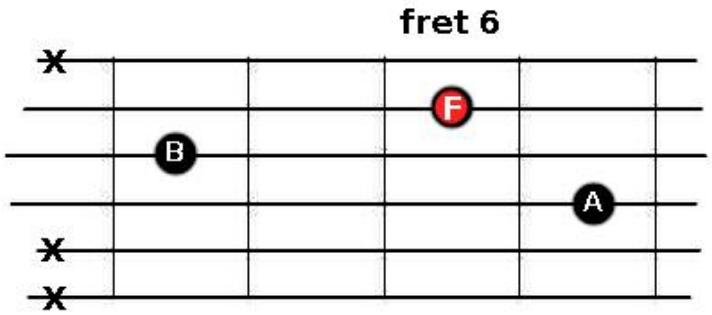
F Sus4



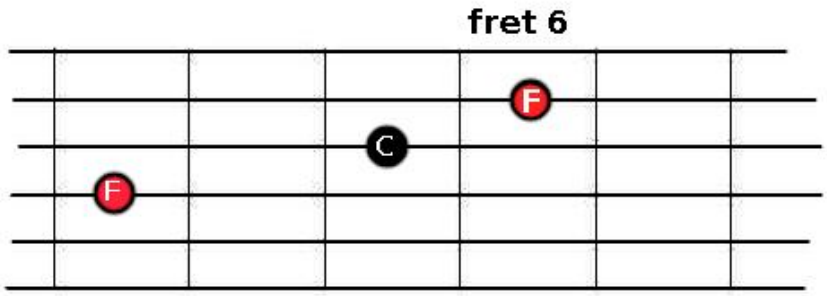
F Augmented



F Diminished

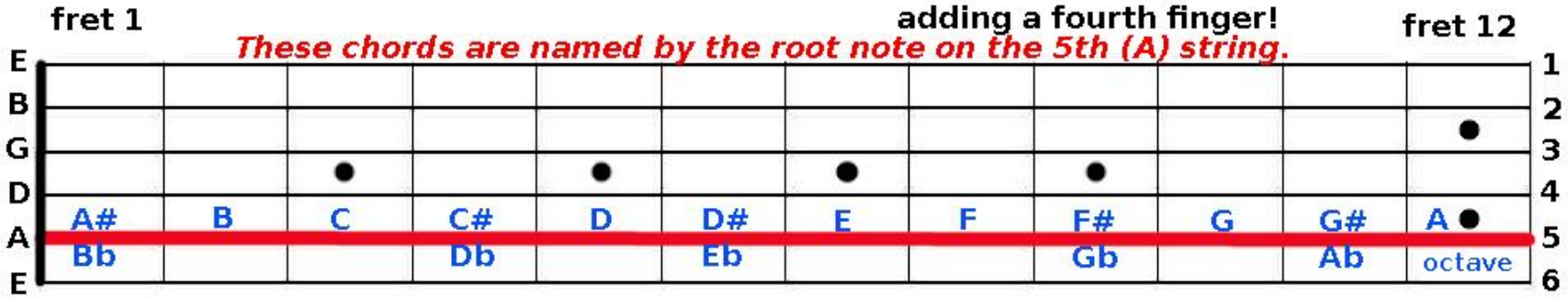


F(#11)

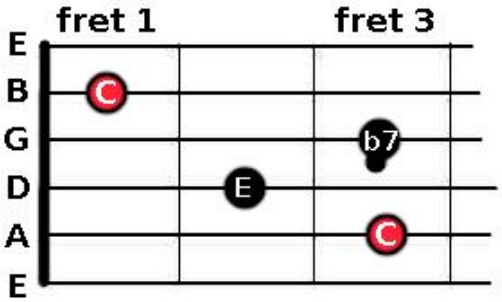


F 5 chord (power chord) (* no 3rd)

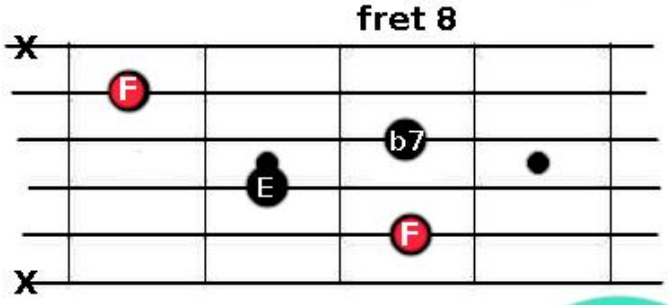
Lesson Four - The C7-shape...



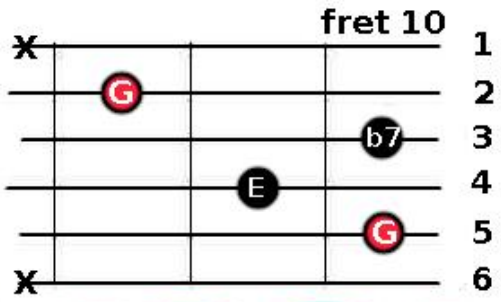
C7



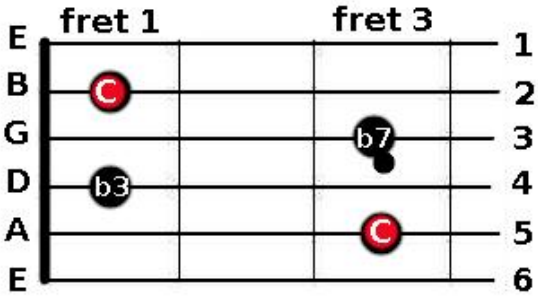
F7



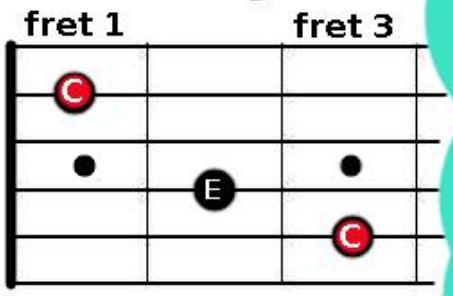
G7



Cm7



C Major



Scale Degree **relates to the relative position of a note in a given key.**

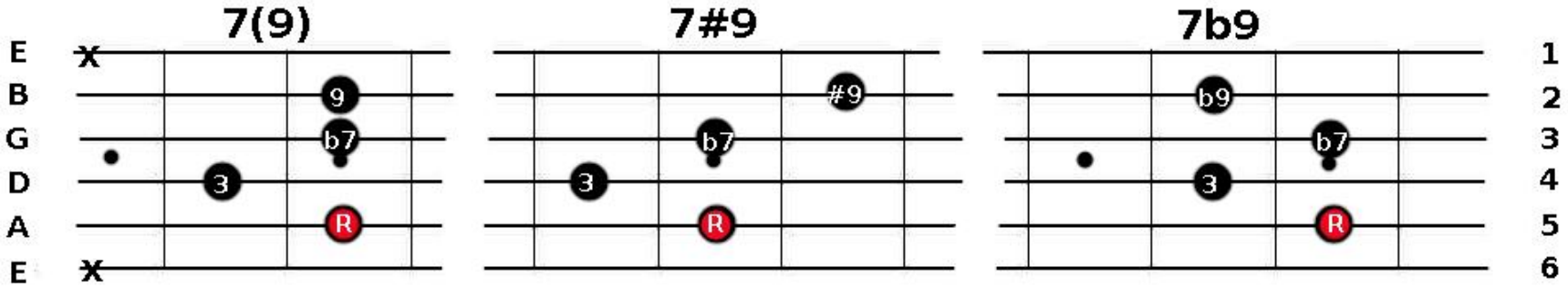
i.e. The key of C is as follows:

Note:	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C
Scale Degree:	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

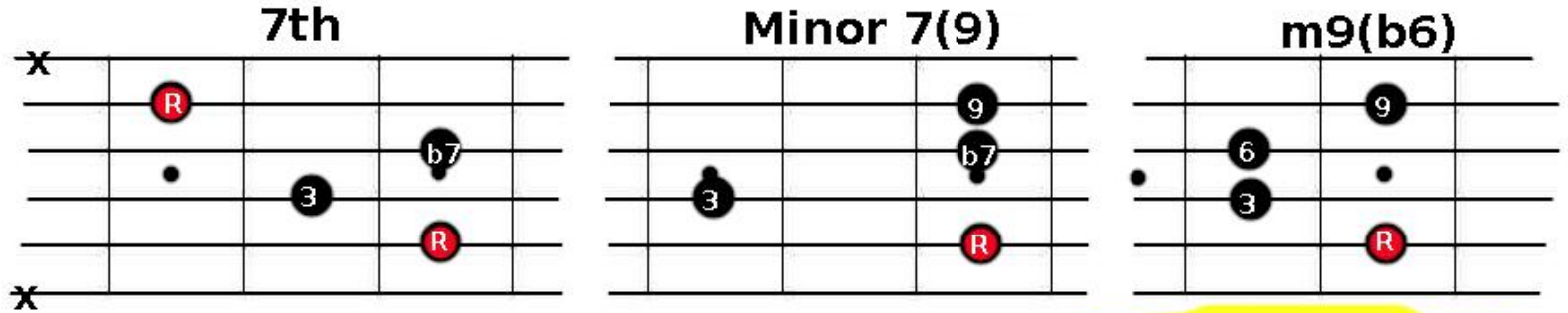
For C7, the 7th degree (B) is lowered by 1/2 step to Bb.

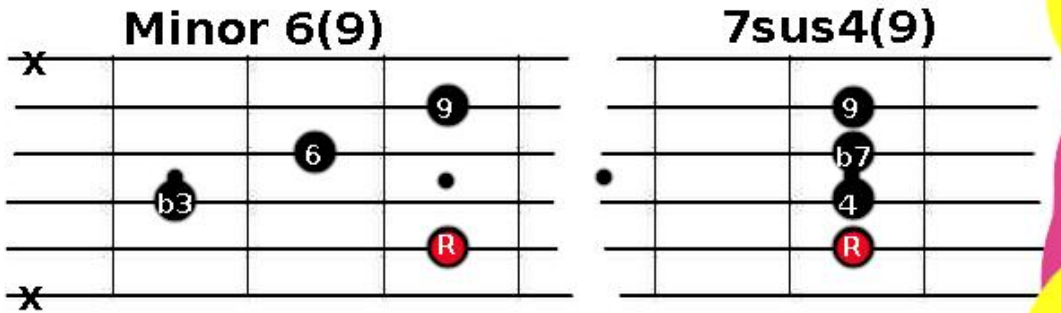
All chords follow this rule.

C7 shape reference



Remember, the *red circle* is the root (1st) of the chord.



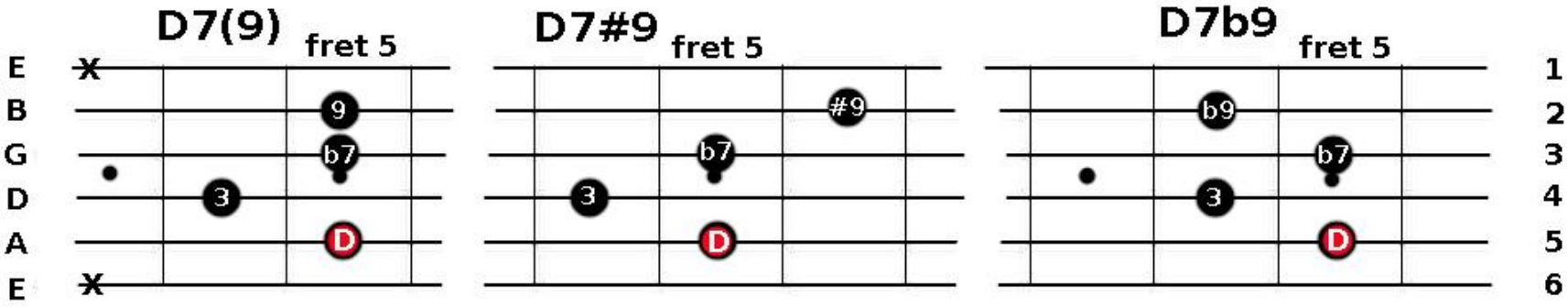


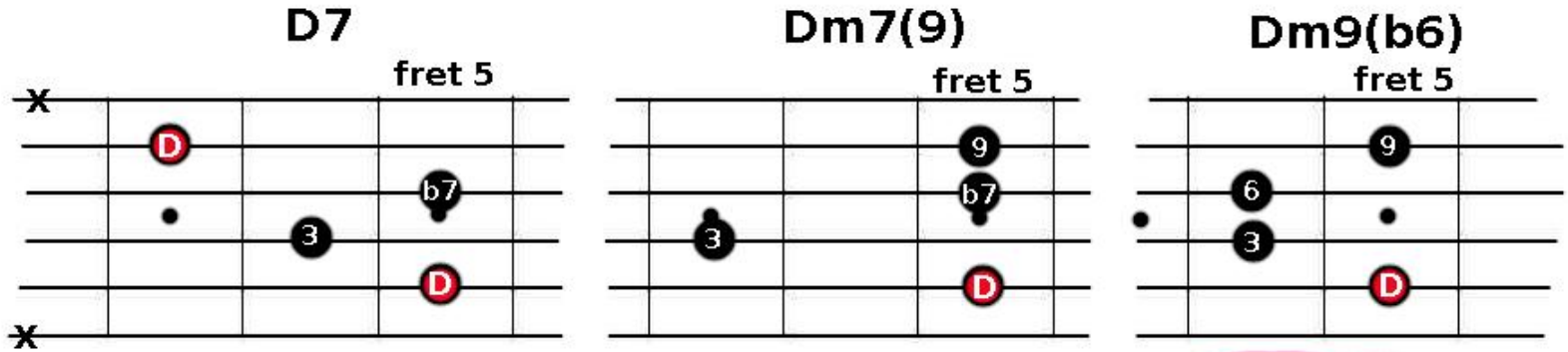
9th's, 11ths, & 13th's are technically supposed to be an octave above their relevant 2nd, 4th & 6th notes.

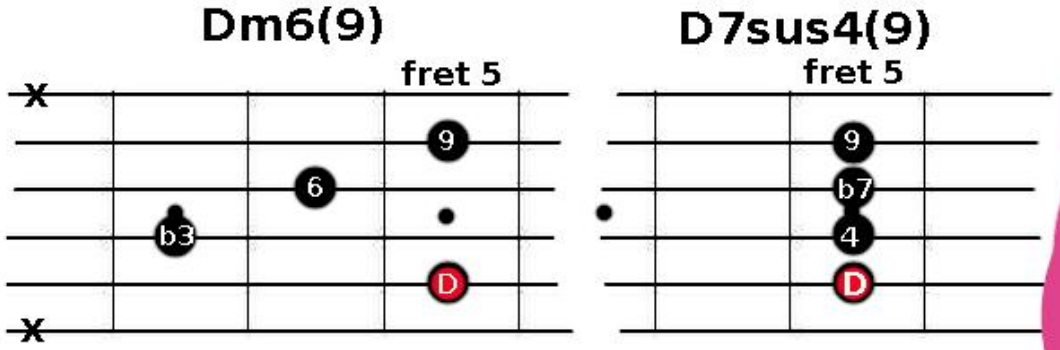
ON a piano, this works, on a guitar, it does not. Nor can we play more than 6 notes at a time (i.e.a full 13th chord requires 13 notes and 2 hands).

Guitarists are allowed to cherry-pick the notes of those chords in many variations, with major emphasis placed on the 3rd, 7th or 9ths and often omitting the root note.

C7-shape Group - Examples in D







Since each scale has 8 notes (counting the octave), how do we get to 9?

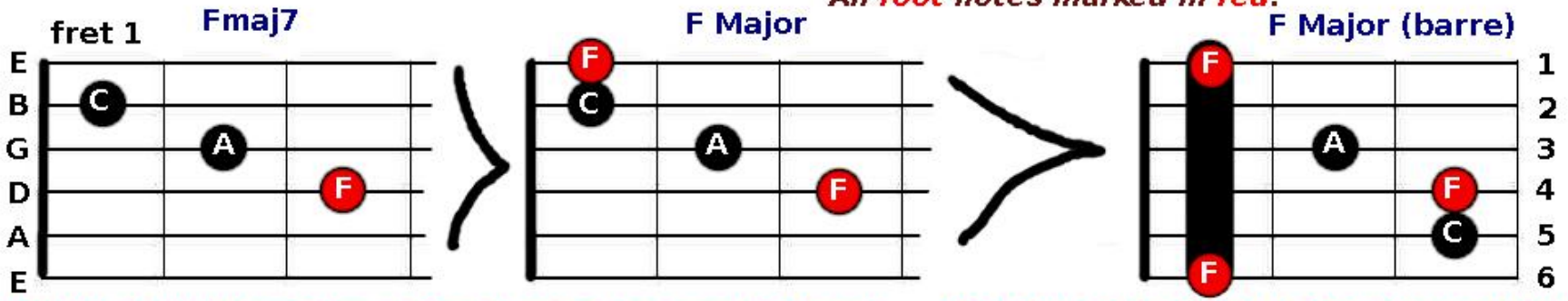
EASY - The 9th degree is the second degree raised an octave. (i.e. in key of C, D is the second degree note)

The 11th is an octave 4th and the 13th is an octave 6th. To form a major 7th, the 7th degree is not flattened.

Lesson Five - "Adding fingers and more strings!!!"

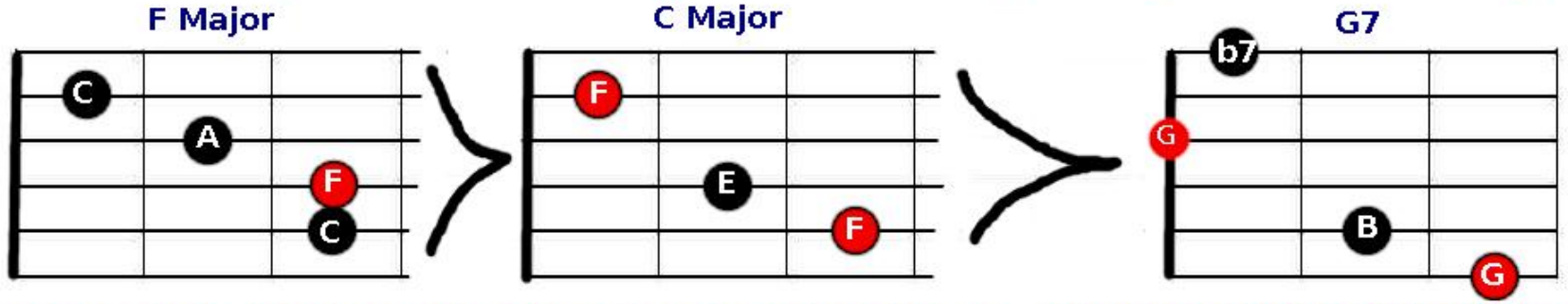
All root notes marked in red.

UNMARKED STRINGS ARE OPEN



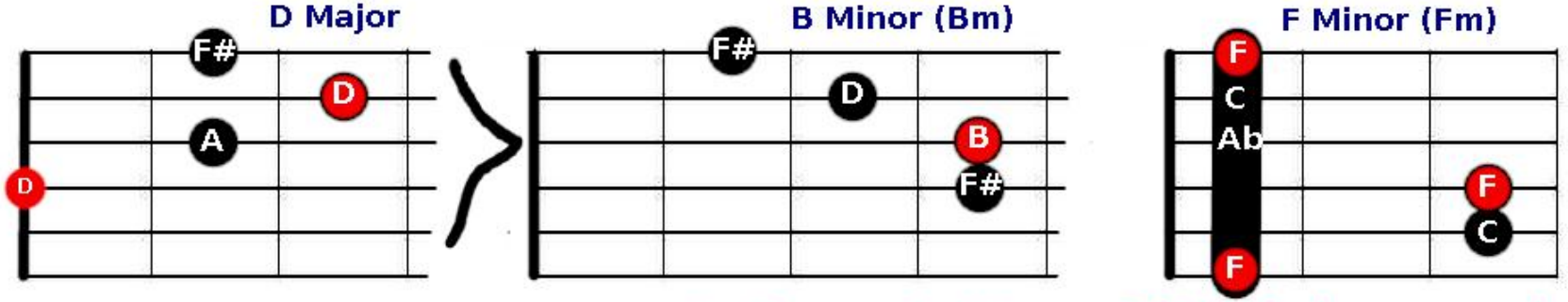
Fmaj7 adds 1st string at first fret to become F chord.
Also know as F Major. This is the 4 string version.

F Major becomes our first barre chord.
Lay first finger across all 6 strings.



Here, we start with the Fmaj7 shape, then leave first finger in place and vertically move the next two 1 string each.

Now we move first finger down and other two up to top 2 strings.

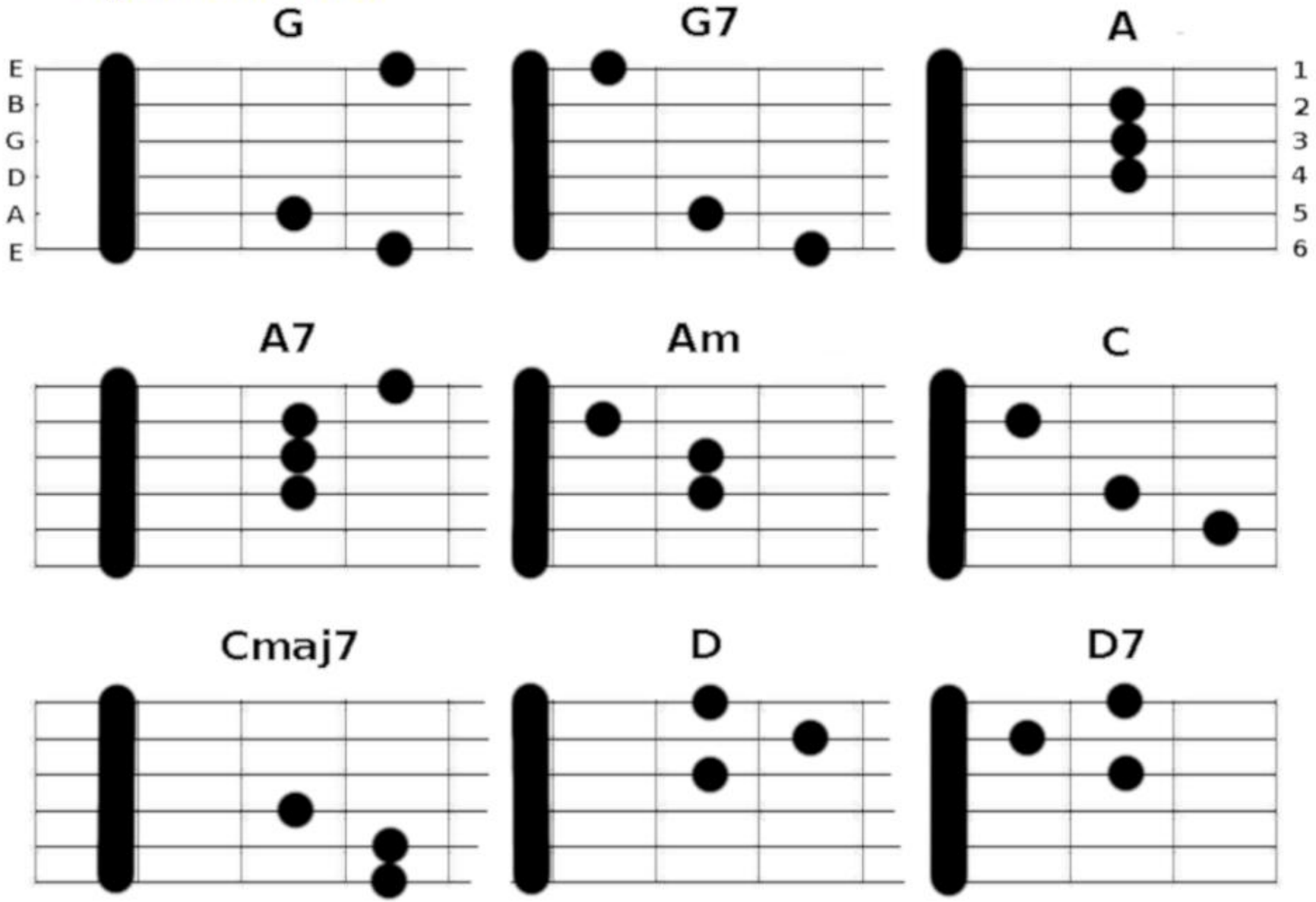


This is another D shape. Finger #1 on bottom, #2 on 3rd string & #3 on 2nd string.

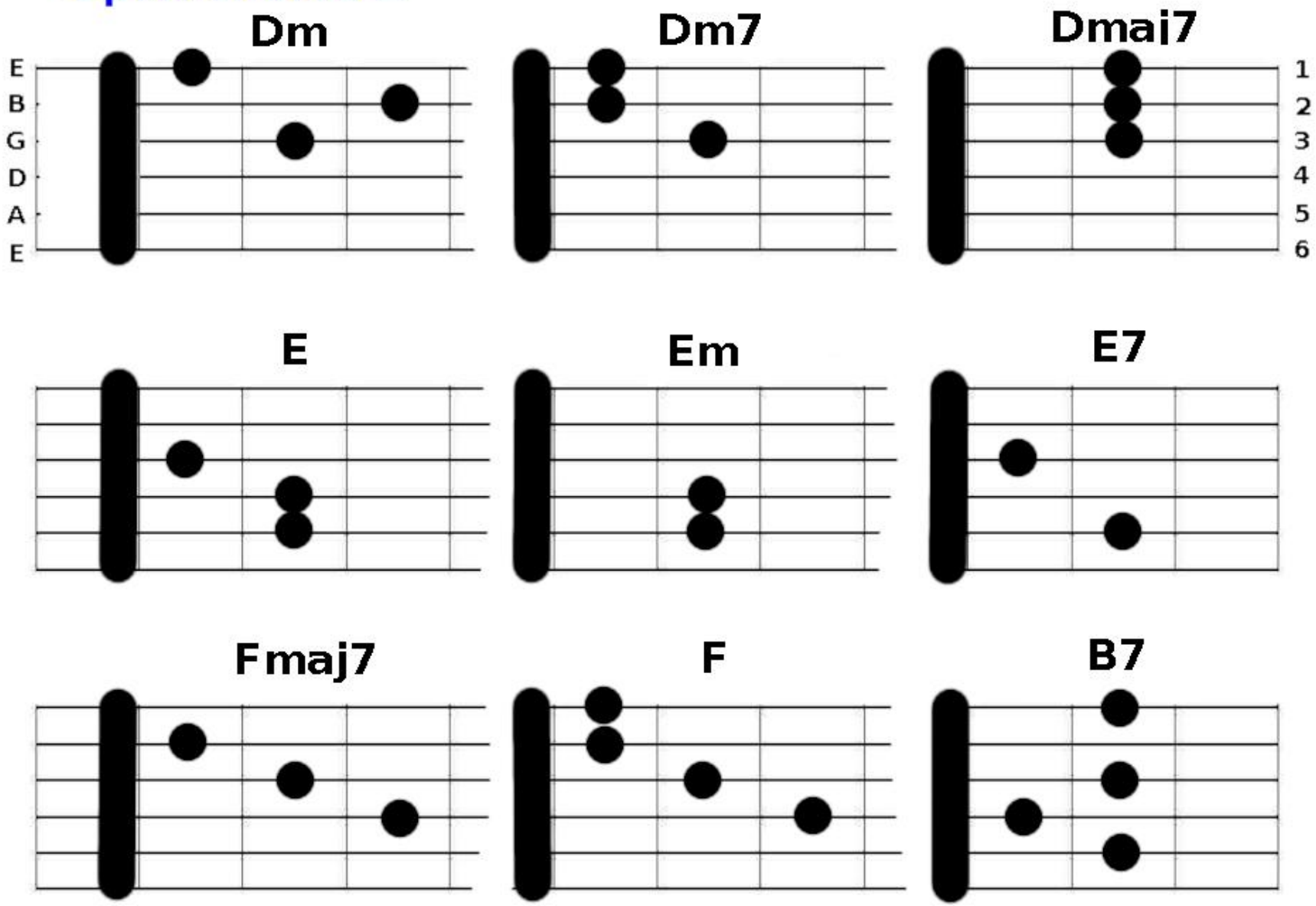
Bm is often used with D. It uses the A reference minor at fret 2.

This is the barre example of the full F minor chord. It is fully moveable too.

Open Chords 1



Open Chords 2



Open Chords 3