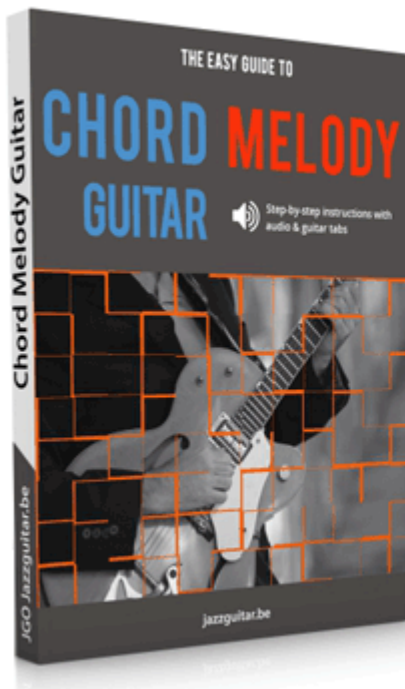


DROP 2 CHORDS



The Easy Guide To

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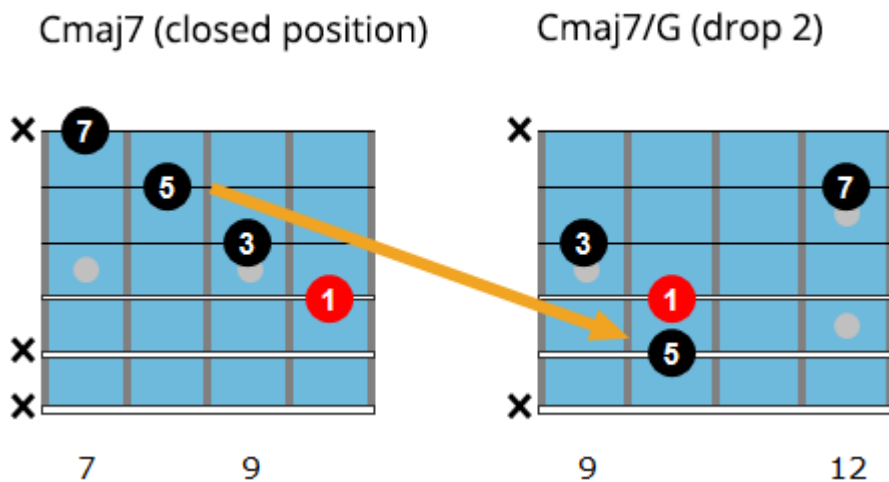
Drop 2 chords are the most popular chord voicings in jazz guitar, and serve a wide variety of purposes, including comping, soloing and chord melody. They have been used by many of the great jazz guitarists including Joe Pass and Wes Montgomery. By understanding how drop 2 chords are built you can quickly learn to play them over the entire neck, and begin to use them to comp or solo over your favorite tunes.

Chances are you are already using drop 2 chords in your guitar playing. Having a good understanding of drop 2 voicings can be a valuable tool for players of any experience level when comping or improvising a chord solo.

What is a Drop 2 Chord?

Drop 2 chords are seventh chords that are built by dropping the second highest note of a closed position chord down one octave, making that note the bass note of the chord.

In the following example, we start from a Cmaj7 chord in closed position. The second highest note is the 5th (G), that is dropped down one octave to create a **drop 2 voicing**. The result is a Cmaj7/G. The 7th is moved to the B-string, in order to put the voicing on 4 adjacent strings:



Drop 2 chords are **open position chords** and are important for guitar players because these chords are easy to play on 4 adjacent strings.

Drop 2 Chord Chart

On the following **chord chart** you will find major, dominant, minor, half diminished and diminished drop 2 chords and their inversions.

Major Drop 2 Chords & Inversions

Bass on String 6

A fretboard diagram for the bass on string 6, showing four Major Drop 2 chords. The fretboard has six strings and six frets. The notes are as follows:

- Cmaj7/G:** 3rd fret (blue), 5th fret (blue), 7th fret (blue).
- Cmaj7/B:** 5th fret (orange), 7th fret (orange), 1st fret (orange).
- Cmaj7:** 7th fret (black), 1st fret (black), 3rd fret (black).
- Cmaj7/E:** 1st fret (red), 3rd fret (red), 5th fret (red), 7th fret (red).

Labels below the fretboard: **Cmaj7/G** (blue), **Cmaj7/B** (orange), **Cmaj7** (black), **Cmaj7/E** (red).

Bass on String 5

A fretboard diagram for the bass on string 5, showing four Major Drop 2 chords. The fretboard has six strings and six frets. The notes are as follows:

- Cmaj7:** 1st fret (black), 3rd fret (black), 5th fret (black), 7th fret (black).
- Cmaj7/E:** 3rd fret (red), 5th fret (red), 7th fret (red), 1st fret (red).
- Cmaj7/G:** 5th fret (blue), 7th fret (blue), 1st fret (blue), 3rd fret (blue).
- Cmaj7/B:** 7th fret (orange), 1st fret (orange), 3rd fret (orange), 5th fret (orange).

Labels below the fretboard: **Cmaj7** (black), **Cmaj7/E** (red), **Cmaj7/G** (blue), **Cmaj7/B** (orange).

Bass on String 4

A fretboard diagram for the bass on string 4, showing four Major Drop 2 chords. The fretboard has six strings and six frets. The notes are as follows:

- Cmaj7/E:** 1st fret (red), 3rd fret (red), 5th fret (red), 7th fret (red).
- Cmaj7/G:** 3rd fret (blue), 5th fret (blue), 7th fret (blue), 1st fret (blue).
- Cmaj7/B:** 5th fret (orange), 7th fret (orange), 1st fret (orange), 3rd fret (orange).
- Cmaj7:** 7th fret (black), 1st fret (black), 3rd fret (black), 5th fret (black).

Labels below the fretboard: **Cmaj7/E** (red), **Cmaj7/G** (blue), **Cmaj7/B** (orange), **Cmaj7** (black).

Dominant Drop 2 Chords & Inversions

Bass on String 6

A fretboard diagram for the bass on string 6, showing four dominant drop 2 chords. The fretboard is divided into four sections, each with a chord name below it. Fingerings are indicated by colored circles with numbers 1-5, and the flat 7th is indicated by a 'b7'.

- C7/G**: Fret 2 (3), fret 3 (b7), fret 4 (1), fret 5 (5).
- C7/Bb**: Fret 3 (1), fret 4 (5), fret 5 (b7), fret 6 (3).
- C7**: Fret 4 (b7), fret 5 (3), fret 6 (1), fret 7 (5).
- C7/E**: Fret 5 (5), fret 6 (b7), fret 7 (3), fret 8 (1).

Bass on String 5

A fretboard diagram for the bass on string 5, showing four dominant drop 2 chords. The fretboard is divided into four sections, each with a chord name below it. Fingerings are indicated by colored circles with numbers 1-5, and the flat 7th is indicated by a 'b7'.

- C7**: Fret 2 (b7), fret 3 (1), fret 4 (5), fret 5 (3).
- C7/E**: Fret 3 (5), fret 4 (b7), fret 5 (1), fret 6 (3).
- C7/G**: Fret 4 (3), fret 5 (b7), fret 6 (1), fret 7 (5).
- C7/Bb**: Fret 5 (b7), fret 6 (1), fret 7 (5), fret 8 (3).

Bass on String 4

A fretboard diagram for the bass on string 4, showing four dominant drop 2 chords. The fretboard is divided into four sections, each with a chord name below it. Fingerings are indicated by colored circles with numbers 1-5, and the flat 7th is indicated by a 'b7'.

- C7/E**: Fret 1 (1), fret 2 (3), fret 3 (5), fret 4 (b7).
- C7/G**: Fret 2 (3), fret 3 (b7), fret 4 (1), fret 5 (5).
- C7/Bb**: Fret 3 (1), fret 4 (5), fret 5 (b7), fret 6 (3).
- C7**: Fret 4 (b7), fret 5 (3), fret 6 (1), fret 7 (5).

Minor Drop 2 Chords & Inversions

Bass on String 6

Diagram showing four chord shapes for Bass on String 6:

- Cm7/G** (Blue): Root on String 6, 1st fret. Fingering: 1 (String 4, 1st fret), 5 (String 4, 3rd fret), b7 (String 3, 1st fret), b3 (String 3, 3rd fret).
- Cm7/Bb** (Yellow): Root on String 6, 3rd fret. Fingering: 1 (String 4, 3rd fret), 5 (String 4, 5th fret), b3 (String 3, 3rd fret), b7 (String 3, 5th fret).
- Cm7** (Black): Root on String 6, 5th fret. Fingering: 1 (String 4, 5th fret), b7 (String 3, 5th fret), b3 (String 3, 7th fret), 5 (String 2, 5th fret).
- Cm7/Eb** (Red): Root on String 6, 7th fret. Fingering: 1 (String 4, 7th fret), 5 (String 4, 9th fret), b3 (String 3, 7th fret), b7 (String 3, 9th fret).

Bass on String 5

Diagram showing four chord shapes for Bass on String 5:

- Cm7** (Black): Root on String 5, 1st fret. Fingering: 1 (String 4, 1st fret), b7 (String 3, 1st fret), b3 (String 3, 3rd fret), 5 (String 2, 1st fret).
- Cm7/Eb** (Red): Root on String 5, 3rd fret. Fingering: 1 (String 4, 3rd fret), 5 (String 4, 5th fret), b3 (String 3, 3rd fret), b7 (String 3, 5th fret).
- Cm7/G** (Blue): Root on String 5, 5th fret. Fingering: 1 (String 4, 5th fret), 5 (String 4, 7th fret), b3 (String 3, 5th fret), b7 (String 3, 7th fret).
- Cm7/Bb** (Yellow): Root on String 5, 7th fret. Fingering: 1 (String 4, 7th fret), 5 (String 4, 9th fret), b3 (String 3, 7th fret), b7 (String 3, 9th fret).

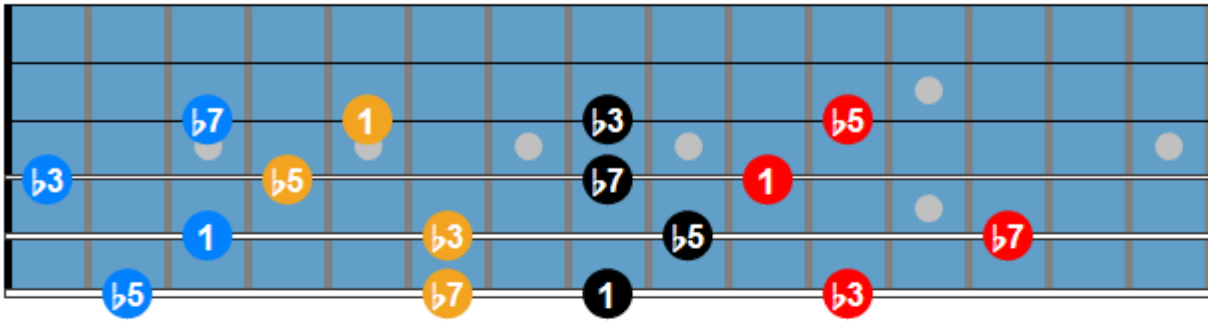
Bass on String 4

Diagram showing four chord shapes for Bass on String 4:

- Cm7/Eb** (Red): Root on String 4, 1st fret. Fingering: 1 (String 3, 1st fret), b7 (String 2, 1st fret), b3 (String 2, 3rd fret), 5 (String 1, 1st fret).
- Cm7/G** (Blue): Root on String 4, 3rd fret. Fingering: 1 (String 3, 3rd fret), 5 (String 3, 5th fret), b3 (String 2, 3rd fret), b7 (String 2, 5th fret).
- Cm7/Bb** (Yellow): Root on String 4, 5th fret. Fingering: 1 (String 3, 5th fret), 5 (String 3, 7th fret), b3 (String 2, 5th fret), b7 (String 2, 7th fret).
- Cm7** (Black): Root on String 4, 7th fret. Fingering: 1 (String 3, 7th fret), b7 (String 2, 7th fret), b3 (String 2, 9th fret), 5 (String 1, 7th fret).

Half Diminished Drop 2 Chords & Inversions

Bass on String 6



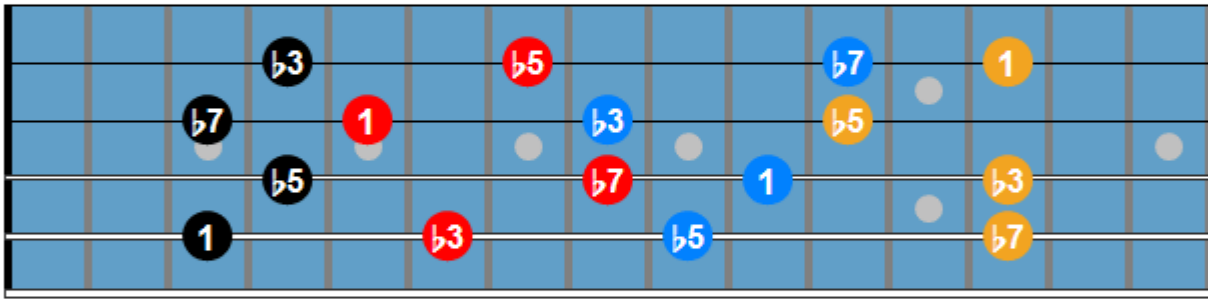
Cm7b5/Gb

Cm7b5/Bb

Cm7b5

Cm7b5/Eb

Bass on String 5



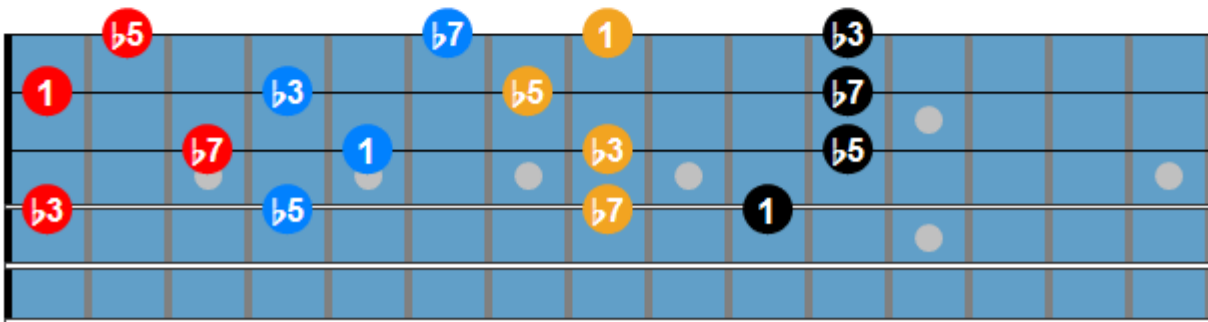
Cm7b5

Cm7b5/Eb

Cm7b5/Gb

Cm7b5/Bb

Bass on String 4



Cm7b5/Eb

Cm7b5/Gb

Cm7b5/Bb

Cm7b5

Diminished Drop 2 Chords & Inversions

Bass on String 6

A fretboard diagram for the bass on string 6, showing four diminished drop 2 chords. The frets are numbered 1 through 7. The notes are as follows:

- Gbdim7:** Fret 1 (b3), Fret 2 (b5), Fret 3 (b7), Fret 4 (1).
- Adim7:** Fret 2 (b3), Fret 3 (b5), Fret 4 (b7), Fret 5 (1).
- Cdim7:** Fret 3 (b3), Fret 4 (b5), Fret 5 (b7), Fret 6 (1).
- Ebdim7:** Fret 4 (b3), Fret 5 (b5), Fret 6 (b7), Fret 7 (1).

The labels **Gbdim7**, **Adim7**, **Cdim7**, and **Ebdim7** are positioned below their respective chord diagrams.

Bass on String 5

A fretboard diagram for the bass on string 5, showing four diminished drop 2 chords. The frets are numbered 1 through 7. The notes are as follows:

- Cdim7:** Fret 1 (b3), Fret 2 (b5), Fret 3 (b7), Fret 4 (1).
- Ebdim7:** Fret 2 (b3), Fret 3 (b5), Fret 4 (b7), Fret 5 (1).
- Gbdim7:** Fret 3 (b3), Fret 4 (b5), Fret 5 (b7), Fret 6 (1).
- Adim7:** Fret 4 (b3), Fret 5 (b5), Fret 6 (b7), Fret 7 (1).

The labels **Cdim7**, **Ebdim7**, **Gbdim7**, and **Adim7** are positioned below their respective chord diagrams.

Bass on String 4

A fretboard diagram for the bass on string 4, showing four diminished drop 2 chords. The frets are numbered 1 through 7. The notes are as follows:

- Ebdim7:** Fret 1 (b3), Fret 2 (b5), Fret 3 (b7), Fret 4 (1).
- Gbdim7:** Fret 2 (b3), Fret 3 (b5), Fret 4 (b7), Fret 5 (1).
- Adim7:** Fret 3 (b3), Fret 4 (b5), Fret 5 (b7), Fret 6 (1).
- Cdim7:** Fret 4 (b3), Fret 5 (b5), Fret 6 (b7), Fret 7 (1).

The labels **Ebdim7**, **Gbdim7**, **Adim7**, and **Cdim7** are positioned below their respective chord diagrams.

How to Build Drop 2 Chords

Drop 2 chords are built by dropping the second highest note of a four-way close chord to the bass.

In the following example, we make the second highest note (G) of a **Cmaj7** chord in root position, one octave lower so it becomes the bass note. The result is what we call a drop 2 chord:

The image illustrates the construction of a drop 2 chord. It shows two examples: a Cmaj7 chord and a Cmaj7/G chord.

Top Example: Cmaj7 to Cmaj7/G

The top part shows a treble clef staff with a Cmaj7 chord (notes: C4, E4, G4, B4) and a Cmaj7/G chord (notes: G2, C3, E3, G3). An orange arrow points from the G4 note of the Cmaj7 chord to the G2 note of the Cmaj7/G chord, indicating the drop of the second highest note to the bass.

The bottom part shows a bass clef staff with the same two chords. The Cmaj7 chord is shown with fret numbers 7, 8, 9, 10 on strings 4, 3, 2, 1 respectively. The Cmaj7/G chord is shown with fret numbers 12, 9, 10, 10 on strings 4, 3, 2, 1 respectively. An orange arrow points from the 9th fret on string 3 of the Cmaj7 chord to the 10th fret on string 1 of the Cmaj7/G chord, indicating the drop of the second highest note to the bass.

Fretboard Diagrams

Below the notation are two fretboard diagrams for a guitar. The left diagram shows a Cmaj7 chord in root position with fret numbers 7, 8, 9, 10 on strings 4, 3, 2, 1 respectively. The right diagram shows a Cmaj7/G chord with fret numbers 12, 9, 10, 10 on strings 4, 3, 2, 1 respectively. An orange arrow points from the 9th fret on string 3 of the Cmaj7 chord to the 10th fret on string 1 of the Cmaj7/G chord, indicating the drop of the second highest note to the bass.

Drop 2 chords are built across adjacent strings (string sets 6543, 5432 and 4321) and have the following intervals:

- Type 1: **R 5 7 3** or C G B E (derived from the 2nd inversion of a chord)
- Type 2: **3 7 R 5** or E B C G (derived from the 3rd inversion of a chord)
- Type 3: **5 R 3 7** or G C E B (derived from a root position chord)
- Type 4: **7 3 5 R** or B E G C (derived from the 1st inversion of a chord)

Fig. 1 shows these four inversions written out in the key of C across the three different string groups:

Fig.1

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Cmaj7

5 Cmaj7

Cmaj7

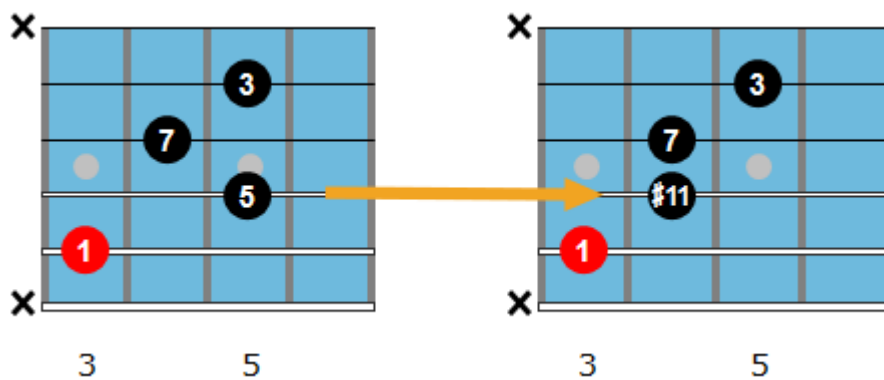
How to Build Common Drop 2 Voicings

Once we have learned to play the different inversions of Maj7 drop 2 chords across the three string sets, we can begin to check out the other “common” drop 2 chord types.

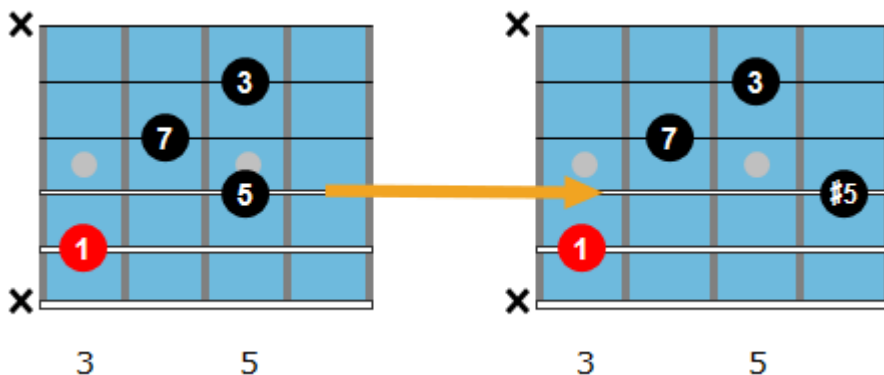
Learning these different chords can seem like a daunting task, but with a few simple steps we can play all of these chords with relative ease. Instead of treating each of these different chords as separate fingerings, we can look at them as **variations of the Maj7 chord we already know**.

Start by holding the root position CMaj7 chord that we learned in Fig. 1. Now, by moving only one finger we will turn it into four different types of chords:

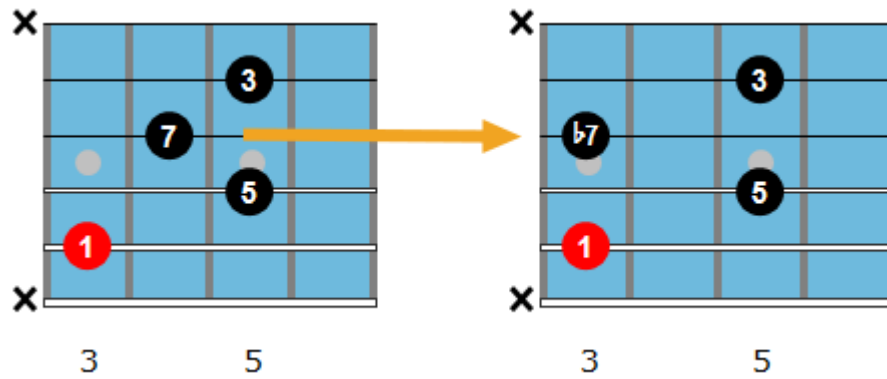
- By moving the 5th down a fret you'll have a **Cmaj7#11**.



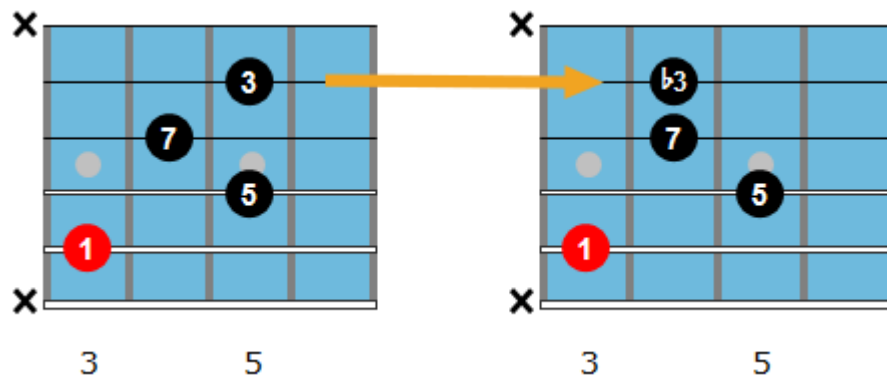
- Move the same note (the 5th), up a fret and you get a **Cmaj7#5**.



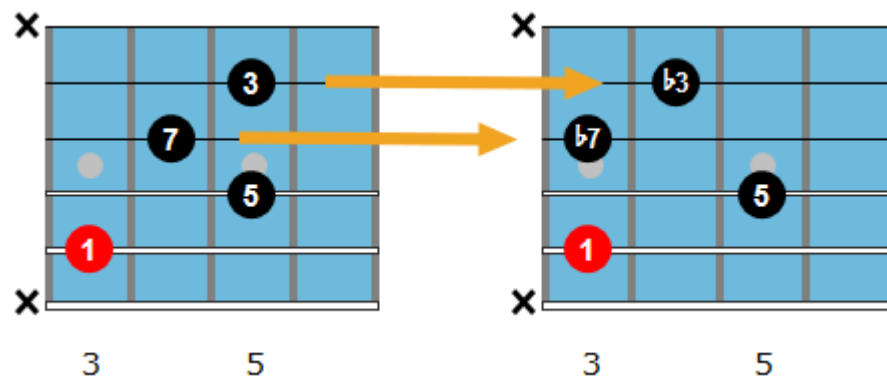
- Move the 7th down by a fret and you get a **C7**.



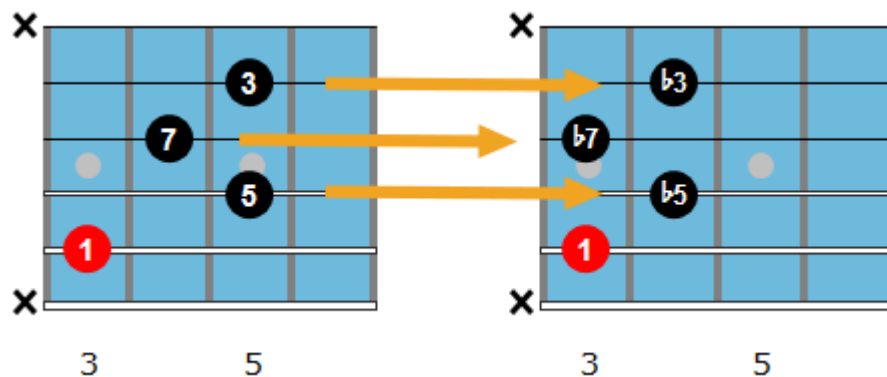
- If you lower the 3rd by one fret, you'll get a **Cm/maj7**.



- Lower the 3rd and 7th by one fret, and you get a **Cm7** chord:



- Lower the 3rd, 5th and 7th by one fret, and you'll get a **Cm7b5** chord:



Drop 2 ii V I Exercise

Here's a good exercise that will help you **memorize the drop 2 voicings**. Play the drop 2 chords over a ii V I in C major. Start with the Dm7 voicing in root position on the 12th fret and descend down the neck, while making as little change possible between chord changes.

The exercise sounds a bit mechanical played like this, but is **effective for learning the positions of drop 2 chords** on the fretboard.

[Click here to listen to example 1](#)

12th fret exercise:

Measure	Chord	T	A	D	G
1	Dm7	13	13	14	12
2	G7	13	12	12	12
3	Cmaj7	12	12	12	10
4	A7(b9)	12	11	12	11

5th fret exercise:

Measure	Chord	T	A	D	G
1	Dm7	10	10	10	10
2	G7	10	8	10	9
3	Cmaj7	8	8	8	9
4	A7(b9)	9	8	9	8

9

Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷ A⁷(b⁹)

8 6 7 7
7 6 7 5
7 5 5 5
5 5 5 5

13

Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷ A⁷(b⁹)

3 2 3 3
3 3 3 3
3 1 4 2
8 8 8 7

17

Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷ C^{6/9}

6 5 7 5
6 5 5 5
3 2 4 5
3 2 2 3

Here's the **backing track**:

[Click here to play the backing track](#)

Harmonizing Melodies

Drop 2 chords are often used for harmonizing melodies and chord solos. In the example below, the **G major scale** (the top note of the chords) is harmonized.

2 things you need to keep in mind when **harmonizing melodies**:

- **Chord tones** (in this case G B D F#) are harmonized with major drop 2 voicings (inversions).
- **Non-chord tones** (in this case A C E) are harmonized with diminished drop 2 voicings.

The image shows a musical staff in G major (one sharp) with a treble clef. The G major scale is written across the staff. Above the staff, the chord Gmaj7 is indicated. Below the staff, eight chords are listed, each corresponding to a note in the scale: Gmaj7/F#, F#dim7, Gmaj7, Adim7, Gmaj7/B, C#dim7, Gmaj7/D, and Gmaj7/F#. Below the chords, a guitar fretboard diagram is shown with strings labeled T, A, B, and E. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-4 on the strings.

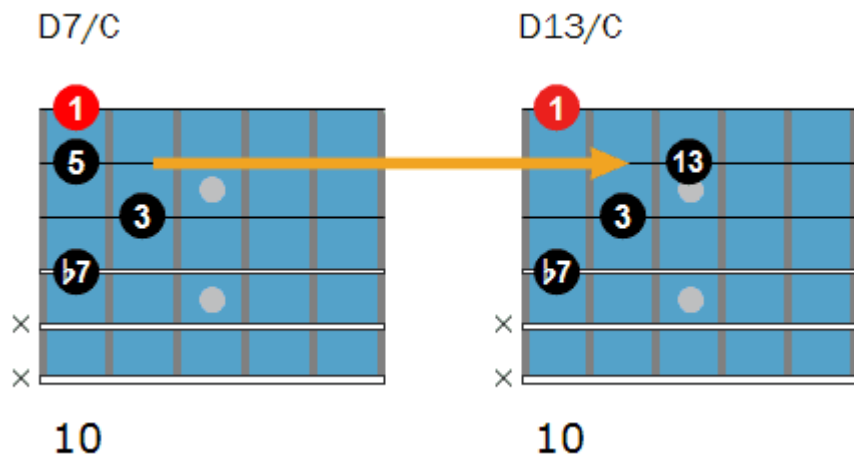
Chord	Fret	T	A	B	E
Gmaj7/F#	3	3	4	4	4
F#dim7	5	4	5	4	4
Gmaj7	7	7	7	5	7
Adim7	8	7	8	7	7
Gmaj7/B	10	8	11	9	10
C#dim7	12	11	12	11	11
Gmaj7/D	14	12	12	12	12
Gmaj7/F#	15	15	16	16	16

Variation In Chord Comping

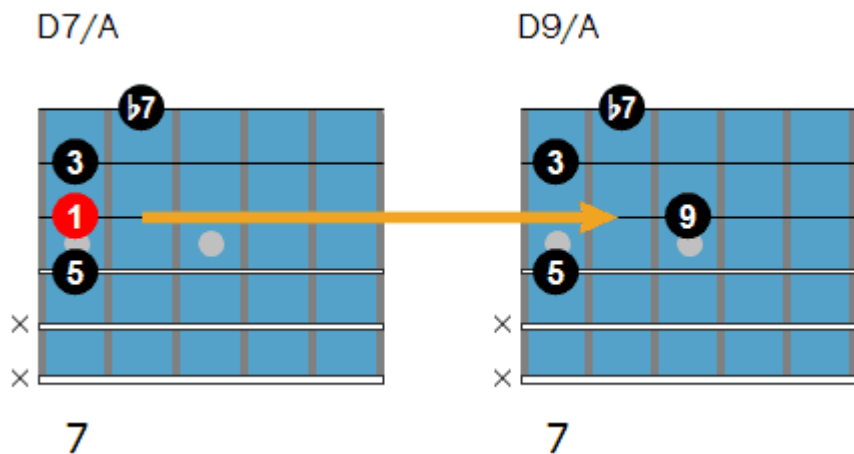
You can use these drop 2 scales to harmonize melodies, do chord solos, but also **bring variation in your chord accompaniment**. Here's an example on a ii V I in G major. All chords used are drop 2 chords, except the Gmaj7 in the 3th bar, that's a 4-way close voicing.

To make the D7 chord in the 2nd bar a little **more interesting**, I made some modifications to the plain drop 2 chords.

Instead of just playing the normal D7/C drop 2 inversion, I exchanged D7's 5th on the second string with the **13th**:



In the next voicing I exchanged D7's root note with the **9th**:



[Click here to listen to example 2](#)

Am⁷ D⁷ G^{maj7} 4-way close voicing

Am⁷ Bdim⁷ Am⁷/C D⁹/C D⁹/A F#dim⁷ G^{maj7} G^{maj7}/B A^{dim7} G^{maj7} G^{dim7}

8	8	10	12	10	10	8	5	2	2	10	8	7	7	7	6
8	8	9	10	12	12	7	4	3	3	8	7	7	7	7	5
9	9	10	12	11	11	9	5	4	4	11	8	7	7	7	6
7	7	9	10	10	10	7	4	5	5	9	7	5	5	5	5

Am⁷ Am⁷/G

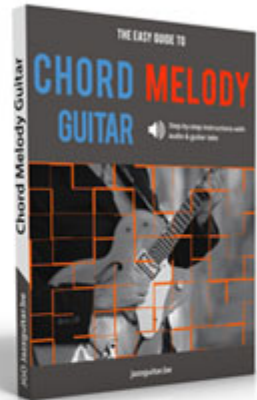
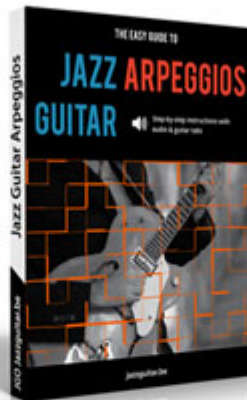
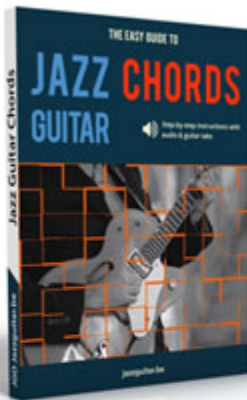
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More chord charts:

- [17 Essential Jazz Guitar Chords](#)
- [Shell Chords for Jazz Guitar](#)
- [Drop 3 Chords & Inversions](#)

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