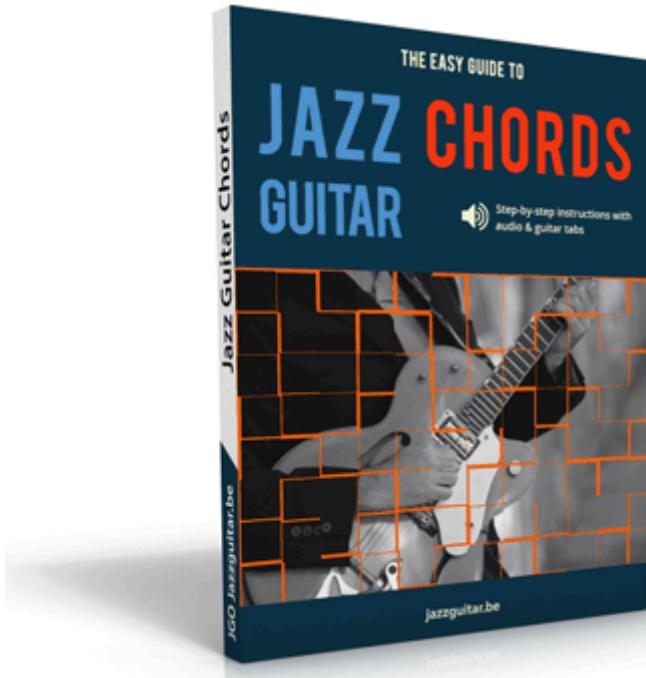


# 10 JAZZ GUITAR CHORD PROGRESSIONS



## *The Easy Guide To* **Jazz Guitar Chords**

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[Click here](#) to learn how to play jazz guitar chords. The material in this eBook will take you from day 1 of jazz guitar to comping over standards in no time...

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**C**hord progressions are a succession of chords played one after another and during a specified duration. On this page you'll find the **10 most popular chord progressions** in jazz, a list of songs that use similar chord progressions and the jazz guitarists who recorded these songs.

In this lesson you will learn how to **recognize these progressions** from a Roman Numeral standpoint, allowing you to quickly transpose them to other keys, as well as two different ways to comp through each progression on the guitar.

It's important that you learn to recognize these classic chord progressions and that you **practice improvising** over them, so grab your axe, turn up your amp and let's dig in to these 10 Must Know Jazz Guitar Chord Progressions!

# Jazz Guitar Chord Progression 1 - ii V I Major

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iim7	V7	Imaj7	%
Dm7	G7	Cmaj7	%

The 2 5 1 progression is without any doubt the **most popular chord progression** in jazz. I'm not going to give you a list with songs that use this progression, since a jazz standard without a II V I is almost unthinkable. Some jazz standard chord progressions are nothing more than a series of II Vs.

It can be found in countless tunes, in all 12 keys, and with many different permutations, both rhythmically and harmonically. For this reason, it is the **best place to start** when working on solidifying and expanding your jazz guitar progressions repertoire.

Btw, the % symbol means you have to repeat the chord of the previous bar.

Here are two examples of how to play this progression in the **key of C**:

[Click here to play this example](#)

The image shows a musical score and tablature for the C major II V I progression. The score consists of a treble clef staff with four measures. The first measure is labeled 'Dm7' above the staff, showing a C major chord (root position). The second measure is labeled 'G7' above the staff, showing a G dominant 7th chord (root position). The third measure is labeled 'Cmaj7' above the staff, showing a C major chord (root position). The fourth measure is labeled 'C6' above the staff, showing a C major chord (first inversion). The tablature below the staff shows the guitar strings (T, A, B) and the fret positions (10, 10, 10; 8, 8; 9, 9; 8, 8; 7, 7; 8, 8) for each measure. The tablature is aligned with the corresponding chords in the score.

[Click here to play this example](#)

## Jazz Guitar Chord Progressions 2 - Rhythm Changes

Imaj7	vim7	iim7	V7	iiim7	VI7	iim7	V7
Cmaj7	Am7	Dm7	G7	Em7	A7	Dm7	G7

This chord progression is the first A of a **Rhythm Changes**. 'Rhythm changes' are a kind of chord progression that use the same chord changes as '*I've Got Rhythm*', a song written by Gershwin in 1930. People started using this progression to jam on and so many different melodies came into being that use the same chord changes.

A list of standards that use this progression:

Song Title	Played By
Moose the Mooche	<a href="#">Pat Metheny</a>
Shaw Nuff	<a href="#">Barney Kessel</a>
Cheek to Cheek	<a href="#">George Van Eps</a>

Mean to Me

Barney Kessel

Isn't It Romantic

Tal Farlow

Long Ago and Far Away

Earl Klugh

Built around the I-vi-ii-V progression, with a slight variation between the first and second two-bar phrases, this chord progression can be **deceptively simple**, which is why a lot of guitarists don't dig deep when exploring this progression. But, for those that do lift the hood and explore these changes with a bit more detail, you can learn new and creative ways of outlining these oft-used chords, taking your Rhythm Changes comping to new levels of creativity at the same time.

Here are two examples of how to comp through these changes to help get you started:

[Click here to play this example](#)

The musical score consists of two staves. The top staff is a standard musical notation staff with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a 4/4 time signature. It features a series of chords: Cmaj7, Am7, Dm7, G7, Em7, A7, Dm7, and G7. The bottom staff is a guitar neck diagram showing six strings and three frets. Fret numbers 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9 are marked on the strings. The diagram illustrates a repeating pattern of chords: Cmaj7 (5), Am7 (5), Dm7 (5), G7 (3), Em7 (3), A7 (5), Dm7 (5), G7 (3). The strings are labeled T (Top String), A, B (Bottom String) from left to right.

[Click here to play this example](#)

A musical score for a jazz guitar. The top staff shows a treble clef, a 4/4 time signature, and a key signature of one sharp. It consists of eight measures of chords: Cmaj7, Am7, Dm7, G7, Em7, A7, Dm7, and G7. The bottom staff shows a standard six-string guitar neck with fret numbers. The first measure has notes at frets 8, 10, and 7. The second measure has notes at frets 6 and 5. The third measure has notes at frets 10, 9, and 7. The fourth measure has notes at frets 8, 7, and 5.

## Jazz Guitar Chord Progressions 3 - Descending ii V I

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Imaj7	%	(iim7	V7)
Cmaj7	%	Cm7	F7

Imaj7	%	(iim7	V7)
Bbmaj7	%	Bbm7	Eb7

Imaj7
Abmaj7

This is also a very common jazz chord progression. Used in tunes such as "How High the Moon" and "Tune Up," descending major ii V I's are a commonly used harmonic device that can prove to be kind of **tricky** when first learning to navigate these chords.

There are **2 modulations** in this progression:

- The chords start in the key of C major.
- They modulate to Bb major in the 3rd bar.
- They modulate again in the 7th bar, this time to Ab major.

Song Title	Played By
How High the Moon	<a href="#">Joe Pass</a>
Tune Up	<a href="#">Wes Montgomery</a>
Cherokee	<a href="#">Tal Farlow</a>
Joy Spring	<a href="#">Joe Pass</a>
One Note Samba	<a href="#">Charlie Byrd</a>
Solar	<a href="#">Pat Metheny</a>

When faced with descending harmonic patterns such as this, many of us simply repeat the same chords down two frets for each new key. While this can work, more advanced players will find ways to **ascend up the neck** as the chord progression descends, providing a nice harmonic contrast during these chords.

Here are two examples of how you could practice comping through these changes:

[Click here to play this example](#)

Cmaj7                    Cm7                    F7

T 8 8 | 8 8 | 8 8  
A 9 9 | 9 9 | 8 8  
B 8 8 | 8 8 | 7 7

Bbmaj7                    Bbm7                    Eb7                    Abmaj7

T 6 6 | 6 6 | 6 6 | 4 4  
A 7 7 | 7 7 | 6 6 | 6 6  
B 6 6 | 6 6 | 6 6 | 4 4

[Click here to play this example](#)

Cmaj7                    Cm7                    F7

T 12 12 | 12 12 | 11 11  
A 12 12 | 12 12 | 10 10  
B 10 10 | 10 10 | 10 10

Bbmaj7                    Bbm7                    Eb7                    Abmaj7

T 10 10 | 10 10 | 9 9 | 8 8  
A 8 8 | 8 8 | 10 10 | 8 8  
B 8 8 | 8 8 | 8 8 | 6 6

## Jazz Guitar Chord Progressions 4 - Dim7 Passing Chords

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Imaj7	#I°7	iim7	#II°7	iiim7	VI7
Cmaj7	C#°7	Dm7	D#°7	Em7	A7

Heard in tunes such as "Cherokee," the use of **Dim7 passing tones** to connect the Imaj7 and iim7 chords, as well as the iim7 and iiim7 chords, in any chord progression are a commonly used and important harmonic device that can spice up the playing of any jazz guitarist.

Dim7 chords not only add **harmonic tension** to this progression, but the **chromatic bass line** helps to build tension, which is then resolved to the iim7 and iiim7 chords in the following downbeats.

Song Title	Played By
Cherokee	Tal Farlow
Have You Met Miss Jones	Kenny Burrell
Joy Spring	Joe Pass
But Beautiful	Lenny Breau
Ain't Misbehavin'	Django Reinhardt

To get you started, here are two ways that you could work on comping these important chords in your practice routine:

[Click here to play this example](#)

A musical score for a guitar solo. The top staff shows six chords: Cmaj7, C#7, Dm7, D#7, Em7, and A7. The bottom staff shows the corresponding fingerings on the fretboard, starting from the 5th fret of the 6th string for Cmaj7 and ending at the 8th fret of the 6th string for A7.

Chord	Fret	String
Cmaj7	5	6
C#7	3	6
Dm7	6	5
D#7	7	5
Em7	8	6
A7	8	6

[Click here to play this example](#)

A musical score for a guitar solo. The top staff shows six chords: Cmaj7, C#7, Dm7, D#7, Em7, and A9. The bottom staff shows the corresponding fingerings on the fretboard, starting from the 12th fret of the 6th string for Cmaj7 and ending at the 12th fret of the 6th string for A9.

Chord	Fret	String
Cmaj7	12	6
C#7	11	6
Dm7	13	5
D#7	14	5
Em7	12	6
A9	12	6

## Jazz Guitar Chord Progressions 5 - Take the A Train

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<b>Imaj7</b>	%	<b>II7</b>	%
<b>Cmaj7</b>	%	<b>D7</b>	%

<b>iim7</b>	<b>V7</b>	<b>Imaj7</b>	%
<b>Dm7</b>	<b>G7</b>	<b>Cmaj7</b>	%

These chords, which feature the cool-sounding and **fun to play II7 chord**, are mostly associated with the classic Ellington track "Take the A Train."

The movement from **Imaj7 to II7 to iim7** is one that you will see in many different jazz guitar tunes, including the classic Bossa Nova track "Girl From Ipanema," and is therefore worth working on from both a comping and blowing standpoint.

Song Title	Played By
Take the 'A' Train	<a href="#">George Benson</a>
The Girl from Ipanema	<a href="#">Charlie Byrd</a>
Desafinado	<a href="#">Charlie Byrd</a>
Mood Indigo	<a href="#">Kenny Burrell</a>

Here are two ways that you can work on these chords in the woodshed to help get them under your fingers and in your ears:

[Click here to play this example](#)

Cmaj7

D<sup>9</sup>

T A B

5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4
3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4

A musical score for guitar. The top staff shows a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a common time signature. It features four measures of chords: Dm⁹, G¹³, Cmaj⁷, and C⁶. The bottom staff shows the guitar's six strings with fingerings: T (top string) and A (A string) for the first measure; B (B string) and 5 (G string) for the second; 5 (D string) and 4 (C string) for the third; and 5 (B string) and 3 (A string) for the fourth. The strings are numbered from 6 at the top to 1 at the bottom.

[Click here to play this example](#)

Cmaj7

D7

T 9 9 9 9 | 9 9 9 9 | 10 10 10 10 | 10 10 10 10  
A 9 9 9 9 | 9 9 9 9 | 10 10 10 10 | 10 10 10 10  
B 8 8 8 8 | 8 8 8 8 | 10 10 10 10 | 10 10 10 10

Dm7 G7 Cmaj7

## Jazz Guitar Chord Progressions 6 - I to IV

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I <sup>maj</sup> 7	(ii <sup>m</sup> 7      V7)	IV <sup>maj</sup> 7
C <sup>maj</sup> 7	Gm7      C7	F <sup>maj</sup> 7

For anyone that has played the **blues**, you know that the movement from a I chord to a IV chord is a commonly heard sound in the jazz-guitar idiom. While you may be most familiar with this progression from a jazz-blues standpoint, you can also apply this progression to a major key situation such as the one seen in the examples below.

Song Title	Played By
Satin Doll	<a href="#">Tal Farlow</a>
Cherokee	<a href="#">Tal Farlow</a>
Joy Spring	<a href="#">Joe Pass</a>
Have You Met Miss Jones	<a href="#">Kenny Burrell</a>
There Will Never Be Another You	<a href="#">George Benson</a>

Working on these two examples, in various keys, will help get this important sound into your ears and under your fingers, allowing you to confidently bring these changes to your jam sessions and gigs in no time:

[Click here to play this example](#)

Guitar chord chart showing four chords: Cmaj7, Gm7, C7, and Fmaj7. The chart includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a 4/4 time signature. The strings are labeled T (Top), A, and B (Bottom). The fingerings for each chord are: Cmaj7 (1, 3, 5), Gm7 (1, 3, 5), C7 (1, 3, 5, b7), and Fmaj7 (1, 3, 5).

[Click here to play this example](#)

Guitar chord chart showing five chords: Cmaj7, Gm9, C<sup>13</sup>, Fmaj9, and F<sup>6/9</sup>. The chart includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a 4/4 time signature. The strings are labeled T (Top), A, and B (Bottom). The fingerings for each chord are: Cmaj7 (1, 3, 5), Gm9 (1, 3, 5, 7), C<sup>13</sup> (1, 3, 5, 7, 10), Fmaj9 (1, 3, 5, 7, 9), and F<sup>6/9</sup> (1, 3, 5, 7, 8).

# Jazz Guitar Chord Progressions 7 - IV to iv

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I <sup>maj</sup> 7	I7	IV <sup>maj</sup> 7	iv <sup>m</sup> 7
C <sup>maj</sup> 7	C7	F <sup>maj</sup> 7	Fm7

iiim7	VI7	iim7	V7	I <sup>maj</sup> 7
Em7	A7	Dm7	G7	C <sup>maj</sup> 7

Used by countless jazz composers, compers and improvisers, as well as many pop musicians such as the **Beatles** to name buy one band, the IV to iv harmonic movement is one that every jazz guitarist needs to have under their fingers from both a comping and soloing standpoint.

The key to learning to play and hear this progression, is the movement from the **IV<sup>maj</sup>7 to the iv<sup>m</sup>7** chord.

Song Title	Played By
Moose the Mooche	<a href="#">Pat Metheny</a>
Shaw Nuff	<a href="#">Barney Kessel</a>
All of Me	<a href="#">George Benson</a>
All the Things You Are	<a href="#">Pat Metheny</a>
There Will Never Be Another You	<a href="#">George Benson</a>

Here are a few ways that you could comp through this progression to help get you started:

[Click here to play this example](#)

Guitar tablature for a 4-measure sequence in C major. The chords are Cmaj7, C7, Fmaj7, and Fm7. The strings are muted (z) in measures 1 and 2, and strummed in measures 3 and 4.

Chords: Cmaj7, C7, Fmaj7, Fm7

String positions:

T	5	5	5	5	5
A	4	4	5	5	4
B	3	3	3	3	3

Guitar tablature for a 6-measure sequence. The chords are Em7, A7, Dm9, G13, C6/9, and Cmaj7. The strings are muted (z) in measures 1, 3, and 5, and strummed in measures 2, 4, and 6.

Chords: Em7, A7, Dm9, G13, C6/9, Cmaj7

String positions:

T	3	3	5	5	3
A	4	2	2	3	4
B	2	2	3	3	3

[Click here to play this example](#)

Guitar tablature for a 4-measure sequence. The chords are Cmaj7, C7, Fmaj7, and Fm7. The strings are muted (z) throughout the entire sequence.

Chords: Cmaj7, C7, Fmaj7, Fm7

String positions:

T	12	12	12	12	12
A	10	10	10	10	10
B	10	10	10	10	10

Guitar tablature for a 5-measure sequence. The chords are Em7, A7, Dm7, G7, and Cmaj7. The strings are muted (z) throughout the entire sequence.

Chords: Em7, A7, Dm7, G7, Cmaj7

String positions:

T	10	9	8	8	7
A	9	9	9	9	7
B	9	9	9	9	5

## Chord Progressions 8 - Rhythm Changes Bridge (Bb major)

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III7	VI7	II7	V7
D7	G7	C7	F7

As we saw earlier, Rhythm Changes is a tune that is full of classic sounding, and must-know, chord progressions. Based off of the cycle of 5ths, the bridge to Rhythm Changes features **four 7th chords moving up by a 4th** with each new chord in the progression. Though there are only four chords, these changes can be tricky to master, and therefore are worth exploring.

To help you get started, here are a couple ways that you could practice playing the bridge to Rhythm Changes:

[Click here to play this example](#)

Guitar tablature for the first two chords of the Rhythm Changes bridge. The top staff shows a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. The bottom staff shows a bass clef and a 4/4 time signature. The first measure starts with a D7 chord (A, D, F#, C) and ends with a G7 chord (E, B, D, G). The second measure starts with a G7 chord and ends with a C7 chord. The tablature uses 'T' for the top string and 'B' for the bottom string. Fingerings are indicated above the strings: 5, 4, 5, 5 for the first measure, and 5, 4, 5, 5 for the second measure.

Guitar tablature for the last two chords of the Rhythm Changes bridge. The top staff shows a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. The bottom staff shows a bass clef and a 4/4 time signature. The first measure starts with a C7 chord and ends with an F7 chord. The second measure starts with an F7 chord and ends with a C7 chord. The tablature uses 'T' for the top string and 'B' for the bottom string. Fingerings are indicated above the strings: 3, 3, 3, 3 for the first measure, and 3, 3, 3, 3 for the second measure.

[Click here to play this example](#)

D7

Guitar tab for D7 chord. The top staff shows the chord progression: D7, G7, C7, F7. The bottom staff shows the fingerings: T2, A1, B0; T5, A3, B4; T8, A7, B7; T10, A10, B10; T13, A12, B12; T10, A9, B9; T7, A6, B5; T3, A4, B3.

C7

Guitar tab for C7 chord. The top staff shows the chord progression: D7, G7, C7, F7. The bottom staff shows the fingerings: T3, A2, B3; T6, A5, B5; T8, A8, B8; T12, A10, B10; T13, A13, B13; T11, A10, B10; T8, A7, B7; T5, A6, B5.

## Jazz Guitar Chord Progressions 9 - ii V I Minor

---

iim7b5	V7	im7	%
Dm7b5	G7	Cm7	%

Just like it's major-key cousin, the **minor ii V I progression** is found in countless tunes from many different composers and improvisers.

Featuring the ever-tricky **7alt chord**, this progression can be a bit tougher to master than the major-key version we say earlier, which is why it's important to continue to develop your minor ii V I vocabulary even for more experienced players.

Here are a couple of examples to help you get started with comping through this important group of 3 chords:

[Click here to play this example](#)

The musical score consists of two staves. The top staff is a treble clef staff with four measures. The first measure shows a Dm7b5 chord (D, F#, A, C) with a bass note of B. The second measure shows a G7alt chord (G, B, D, E, G) with a bass note of A. The third measure shows a Cm7 chord (C, E, G, B) with a bass note of A. The bottom staff is a bass staff with four measures. The first measure has a bass note of A. The second measure has a bass note of G. The third measure has a bass note of A. The fourth measure has a bass note of G.

[Click here to play this example](#)

## Jazz Guitar Chord Progressions 10 - Stray Cat Strut

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im7	im7/b7	bVI7	V7
Cm7	Cm7/Bb	Ab7	G7

Heard in the classic tune "Stray Cat Strut," this **minor-key turnaround** is one that every jazz guitarist should have under their fingers. With a distinctive bass line, simple yet effective harmonic movement, and a swinging feel, these four chords can add spice to any plain minor-turnaround from a soloing or comping perspective.

To get you started, here are two ways that you could comp through this important minor-key turnaround:

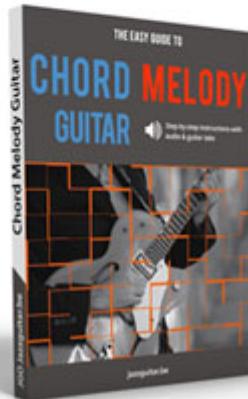
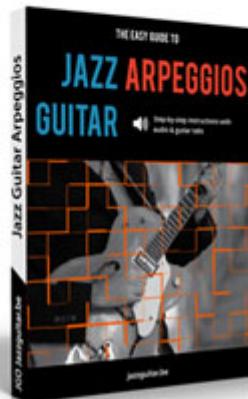
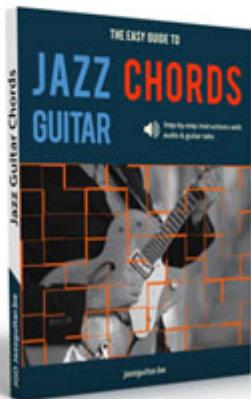
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A guitar chord chart in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat. The chart shows four chords: Cm7, Cm7/Bb, Ab7(#11), and G7 Alt. The first two chords have a common bass note of A. The third chord has a bass note of D. The fourth chord has a bass note of G. The strings are labeled T (Top), A, and B (Bottom). The fingerings for the chords are: Cm7 (T: 4, A: 3, B: 3), Cm7/Bb (T: 4, A: 3, B: 3), Ab7(#11) (T: 3, A: 5, B: 6), and G7 Alt. (T: 4, A: 3, B: 3).

[Click here to play this example](#)

A guitar chord chart in 4/4 time with a key signature of one flat. The chart shows four chords: Cm, Cm7/Bb, Ab7, and G7. The first two chords have a common bass note of A. The third chord has a bass note of D. The fourth chord has a bass note of G. The strings are labeled T (Top), A, and B (Bottom). The fingerings for the chords are: Cm (T: 8, A: 8, B: 10), Cm7/Bb (T: 8, A: 8, B: 8), Ab7 (T: 8, A: 7, B: 6), and G7 (T: 7, A: 6, B: 5).

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