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EASY

Major ii V I Comping



Easy Major ii V I Comping

Easy and Essential ii V I Chords for Guitar

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Published By: Guitar for Life LLC
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Table of Contents

How to Use This eBook

The ii V I Progression and Variations

Essential Jazz Comping Rhythms

Picking Hand Variations

Chord Ornamentations

Shell Chords

Shell Chords with Basslines

Guide Tones

Four-Note Chords – Common Shapes

Four-Note Chords – Extensions

Voice Leading – Rootless Triads

Voice Leading – Rootless Chords

Jazz Standard Comping Studies

About the Author

How to Use This eBook

The material in this eBook is built to give you everything you need to go from day 1 to a confident level of comping in a jazz style.

While the material is laid out in an easy to understand fashion, you want to make sure you practice the material with specific variations.

This intro chapter shows you how to get the most out of each and every exercise in this eBook.

ii V I Progression and Variations

Though the ii V I is the most common progression in jazz, there are variations that you need to work on in your studies as well.

This book covers those variations by providing exercises over both ii V I IV and ii V I VI progressions.

If you want to use these chords over a ii V I only, just leave out the last chord of any exercise.

This is done to prevent repeating too many exercises for all the different variations.

So, if you find a ii V I IV progression you enjoy, just leave off the IV chord to make it a ii V I progression.

This allows you to learn fewer examples but cover more ground in your comping studies and performing.

Short and Long Progression Backing Tracks

To avoid redundancy, the examples in this eBook are written out over either the short or long versions of a progression.

In order to get the most out of any exercise, practice those chords over both the long and short backing tracks in your studies.

This prepares you to use these chords in your comping over any jazz standard, no matter how long the progressions.

Rhythms, Ornaments, and Picking

After you learn any chord progression, you need to take it beyond the basic rhythms laid out in each example.

Using the examples at the start of this eBook, you apply various rhythms, picking alterations, and ornaments to any exercise you learn.

This adds a musical element, as well as an improvisational element, to your comping workout.

It also emulates a live situation, where you have to react in the moment to the soloist and adjust your comping accordingly.

Jazz Standard Studies

Each chapter finishes with a chord study over a famous jazz standard.

Start by learning each standard as written, using the audio example for help with rhythm and timing.

After you can play a chord study as written, put on the backing track and use the chords from that chapter to comp over the tune.

This means using chords you know to comp over jazz standards in real time.

Comping in real time isn't easy, but give it a shot with each chapter. The more you do it, the easier it gets.

The chord studies give you a kick start with this concept, so make sure to take it a step further to elevate your comping with each chapter.

Mixing and Matching

The first goal for any exercise is to memorize the chords, then run them in different keys and with different picking etc. variations.

From there, once the chords are solid, you want to mix them together, so take chords from 2 progressions and blend them in your playing.

The ultimate goal is to be able to use chords you learn in the moment to create new chord combinations over tunes.

Start by working the exercises as written, then combine them as you take them to the different backing tracks and tunes in this eBook.

Chord Ornamentations

The last way to jazz up any chord progression in this eBook is to add ornaments.

Ornaments use chords outside of the written changes to create interest in your playing.

This means adding chromatic chords to your comping, which gives you a Joe Pass vibe, but it's also tough to do at first.

After you are comfortable with the rhythms and picking patterns above, add in one of these ornaments to your practice routine.

Ornaments bring a seriously jazzy sound to your comping, so they're worth the time spent learning them in the woodshed.

Approach Chords

Approach chords are where you play a chord one fret below or above the chord you're on, then resolving into the target chord from there.

This means playing C#m7-Dm7 or Ebm7-Dm7 to target a Dm7 chord.

In the example below you start on the diatonic chord, but you don't have to do that with approach chords.

You can start on the approach chord and resolve it from there.

Work this example until it's comfortable, then add approach chords to your comping over any progression in this eBook.

Audio Example 24

Dm⁷
G⁷
Cmaj⁷
A⁷(b⁹)

	6	5	6	7	6	7	5	6	5	5	6	5
T	5	4	5	6	5	6	4	5	4	3	4	3
A	7	6	7	7	6	7	5	6	5	5	6	5
B	5	4	5	5	4	5	3	4	3	4	5	4

Double Approach Chords

With double approach chords, you use two chromatic chords from above or below to target the underlying chord.

If you have Dm7 as your target chord, you can play Em7-Ebm7-Dm7 or Cm7-C#m7-Dm7.

Here's an example of double approach chords to check out before adding this ornament to any progression in this eBook.

Audio Example 25

Dm⁷
G⁷
Cmaj⁷
A⁷(b⁹)

	4	5	6	5	6	7	7	6	5	7	6	5
T	3	4	5	4	5	6	6	5	4	5	4	3
A	5	6	7	5	6	7	7	6	5	7	6	5
B	3	4	5	3	4	5	5	4	3	6	5	4

Enclosures Chords

You can also add enclosure chords to your comping with any progression in this eBook.

Enclosure chords are when you play a shape on fret higher, then one fret lower, then the chord you're on.

For example, you play Ebm7-C#m7-Dm7 when Dm7 is the target chord of the enclosure.

Here's an example over a ii V I VI progression to try out.

Once you have this concept down, use it to expand any progression you learn in the following chapters.

Audio Example 26

The musical notation for Audio Example 26 shows a ii V I VI progression with enclosure chords. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one flat, and four measures of music. Above the staff are the chord names: Dm7, G7, Cmaj7, and A7(b9). Below the staff are the fretboard diagrams for the Tenor (T), Alto (A), and Bass (B) positions, showing the fingerings for each chord.

	Dm7	G7	Cmaj7	A7(b9)
T	7 5 6	8 6 7	6 4 5	6 4 5
A	6 4 5	7 5 6	5 3 4	4 2 3
B	8 6 7	6 6 7	6 4 5	6 4 5
	6 4 5	6 4 5	4 2 3	5 3 4

Four-Note Chords – Common Shapes

You're now ready to add four-note chords to your comping workout.

These chords use the 1-3-5-7 intervals, except the 6 chords (1-3-5-6) and the 7b9 chords, (b9-3-5-b7).

Though they don't have any colors beyond the basic chord tones, these are essential shapes that set you up for rootless chords later on.

The goal is to memorize the progressions, then mix them together in your playing to create your own combinations of chords.

As well, this isn't an exhaustive list of every possible four-note chord shape, but it's a solid primer to add these chords to your comping.

Players such as Joe Pass and Barney Kessel loved to use these chords, and they're the foundation for everything going forward.

Have fun working on these shapes as you reach the next level in your jazz comping journey.

6th String Bass

To begin, you learn progressions where the iim7 chord has its root note on the 6th string.

After you can play this first example as is, take it to other keys, as well as work it over both the short and long backing tracks in your practicing.

Audio Example 59

Audio Example 59 shows a four-bar progression in the key of D major. The chords are Bm7, E7, Amaj7, and F#7(b9). The guitar fretboard diagrams are as follows:

Bar	Chord	T	A	B	7
1	Bm7	7	7	7	7
2	E7	9	7	9	7
3	Amaj7	5	6	6	5
4	F#7(b9)	5	6	4	6

You now switch out the VI7b9 chord for a IVmaj7 chord in bar four.

Work this progression as is.

Then, when ready, add in new rhythms, ornaments, and picking patterns to take these shapes further in your playing.

Audio Example 60

Audio Example 60 shows a four-bar progression in the key of D major. The chords are Bm7, E7, Amaj7, and Dmaj7. The guitar fretboard diagrams are as follows:

Bar	Chord	T	A	B	7
1	Bm7	7	7	7	7
2	E7	9	7	9	7
3	Amaj7	5	6	6	5
4	Dmaj7	7	6	7	5

Here, you work in the VI7b9 chord in bar four, and use a different E7 chord in bar 2.

Once you have these shapes down, mix them up with chords from the previous examples to expand them in your workout.

Audio Example 61

Audio Example 61 shows a four-measure progression in the key of D major. The chords are Bm7, E7, Amaj7, and F#7(b9). The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/8 time signature. The guitar fretboard diagrams show the following fingerings:

Measure	Chord	T	A	B	7
1	Bm7	7	7	7	7
2	E7	5	7	6	7
3	Amaj7	5	6	6	5
4	F#7(b9)	5	6	4	5

Here you replace the VI7b9 chord with a IVmaj7 chord in bar four of the progression.

Work these chords over both the long and short backing tracks in multiple keys.

Then, take them to jazz tunes as you expand upon these shapes in your studies.

Audio Example 62

Audio Example 62 shows a four-measure progression in the key of D major. The chords are Bm7, E7, Amaj7, and Dmaj7. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 3/8 time signature. The guitar fretboard diagrams show the following fingerings:

Measure	Chord	T	A	B	7
1	Bm7	7	7	7	7
2	E7	5	7	6	7
3	Amaj7	5	6	6	5
4	Dmaj7	7	6	7	5

5th String Bass

Here are examples that all begin with the root note of the iim7 chord on the 5th string.

Memorize each one and work them in different keys, then start to mix them together to create your own combinations of chords.

The first example uses the VI7b9 chord in bar four and the Dmaj7-D6 voicings in the third bar of the progression.

Audio Example 63

The musical notation for Audio Example 63 consists of a treble clef staff and a guitar fretboard diagram. The chords are: Em7, A7, Dmaj7, and B7(b9). The fretboard diagram shows the following fingerings for the strings T, A, and B:

String	Bar 1 (Em7)	Bar 2 (A7)	Bar 3 (Dmaj7)	Bar 4 (B7(b9))
T	8	9	7	7
A	7	8	6	4
B	9	9	7	7
B	7	7	5	5
B				6

As a variation, here are the same chords with the IV chord in bar four, replacing the VI7b9 chord from the previous example.

Work this progression as is, then add in different ornaments, rhythms, and picking patterns as you expand these shapes in your playing.

Audio Example 64

Em⁷ A⁷ Dmaj⁷ Gmaj⁷

T	8	9	7	7	3	3
A	7	9	6	4	4	4
B	9	7	7	7	4	2
B	7		5	5	3	3

Here, you add in a new A7 chord, as well as use the VI chord in place of the IV chord in bar four.

Make sure to learn this progression first, then mix it with other chords and progressions from this chapter in your studies.

This allows you to quickly draw upon any of the chords you learn when comping in real time over any jazz standard.

Audio Example 65

Em⁷ A⁷ Dmaj⁷ B7(b9)

T	8	5	7	7	7
A	7	6	6	4	5
B	9	5	7	7	7
B	7	5	5	5	6

You now move on to the ii V I IV progression as you learn new chords and combinations of chords in D major.

When D major is easy, take these shapes to other keys and to the short backing track in your workout.

Audio Example 66

Em⁷ A⁷ D^{maj7} G^{maj7}

T	8	5	7	7	3	3
A	7	6	6	4	4	4
B	9	5	7	7	4	2
	7	5	5	5	3	3

Here you, use a different A⁷ and two new G^{maj7} shapes over a ii V I IV progression in D major.

Work these chords as is first, then add in different rhythms, ornaments, and picking patterns to expand them in your playing.

Audio Example 67

Em⁷ A⁷ D^{maj7} G^{maj7}

T	8	9	7	7	7	7
A	7	8	6	4	7	5
B	9	9	7	7	7	7
	7	7	5	5	5	5

This progression uses a different chord shape over the A⁷ chord, V⁷, in a ii V I IV progression.

After you have this new example down, mix it with the previous one to hear how those two different chords compare on the fretboard.

From there, take them to other keys, then to jazz standards, and you expand on these chords in your comping routine.

Audio Example 68

The image shows a musical progression for guitar. The top staff is a treble clef with four chords: Em7, A7, Dmaj7, and Gmaj7. Below the staff are four columns of fretboard diagrams for the top four strings (T, A, B, and 4th). The fret numbers are as follows:

String	Em7	A7	Dmaj7	Gmaj7
T	8	5	7	7
A	7	6	6	7
B	9	5	7	7
4th	7	5	5	5

4th String Bass

You now move on to starting each progression with the iim7 chord on the top-4 strings.

The first progression mixes drop 2 and drop 3 chords as you outline a ii V I VI progression.

Work this in a few keys, then add in different rhythms, new picking patterns, and various ornaments in your studies.

Audio Example 69

Chord progression: $A\flat m7$, $D\flat 7$, $G\flat maj7$, $E\flat 7(b9)$

	7			6
T	7	6	2	2
A	8	4	3	3
B	6	4	3	1
			2	2

Here's the same example but with a drop 3 chord over the $D\flat 7$, instead of the drop 2 in the previous example.

Work this new progression in a few keys, then play it along with the previous example to compare the two.

Sometimes changing one chord in a repeating progression is all you need to create interest in your comping.

These two progressions are an example of that concept in action.

Audio Example 70

Chord progression: $A\flat m7$, $D\flat 7$, $G\flat maj7$, $E\flat 7(b9)$

	7	4		6
T	7	6	2	2
A	8	4	3	3
B	6	4	3	1
			2	2

Here you use the top-4 strings to outline the Gbmaj7 chord in this ii V I VI progression.

After you have this example under your fingers, play it back-to-back with the previous example for comparison.

Then, Mix those two versions together over the short and long backing tracks to take them a step further in your studies.

Audio Example 71

The image shows musical notation for four chords: Abm7, Db7, Gbmaj7, and Eb7(b9). Below the treble clef staff, there are four columns of guitar fingerings for the top four strings (T, A, B). The fingerings are as follows:

Chord	String	Fingering
Abm7	T	7
	A	7
	B	6
Db7	T	4
	A	6
	B	4
Gbmaj7	T	6
	A	6
	B	4
	B	4
Eb7(b9)	T	6
	A	5
	B	5

You now learn a few variations of the previous chords over the ii V I IV progression.

Make sure to work this, and every, progression over the short and long backing tracks in multiple keys in your practice routine.

This is tough to do, and takes some time, but it's the best way to get to the point where you can apply these shapes in real time over tunes.

Audio Example 72

Abm7 Db7 Gbmaj7 gmaj7

The musical notation for Audio Example 72 consists of a treble clef staff with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb) and a 7/8 time signature. The chords are: Abm7 (first measure), Db7 (second measure), Gbmaj7 (third measure), and gmaj7 (fourth measure). The guitar fretboard diagrams below the staff show the following fingerings:

	7		2	2	4	4
T	7	6	3	3	3	1
A	8	4	3	3	4	4
B	6	4	3	1	2	2

Here's a variation of the previous example to add to your practice routine and comping vocabulary.

Again, the goal for this chapter is not to only use the chords in the examples together, the goal is to mix them up over time.

So, after you have these chords memorized, mix them up with shapes from earlier in this chapter in your comping studies.

This helps you develop the skill needed to draw upon any of these chords in your comping in real time over jazz standards.

Audio Example 73

Abm7 Db7 Gbmaj7 gmaj7

The musical notation for Audio Example 73 consists of a treble clef staff with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb) and a 7/8 time signature. The chords are: Abm7 (first measure), Db7 (second measure), Gbmaj7 (third measure), and gmaj7 (fourth measure). The guitar fretboard diagrams below the staff show the following fingerings:

	7	4	6	6	2	2
T	7	6	6	4	4	4
A	8	4	6	6	3	1
B	6	4	4	4	2	2

Tune Up Tune Study

To help you take these four-note shapes to a musical situation, here's a chorus of comping over the jazz standard Tune Up.

Go slow with this study to get the most out of it, and build-up tempo over time as you piece this study together in your playing.

Here are the steps to working this study in the practice room:

- Learn the chord shapes without rhythms.
- Add the rhythms in one bar at a time.
- Write out the counting if needed.
- Play each bar with a metronome until the rhythm is solid.
- Add the bars together to form four-bar phrases.
- Add the four-bar phrases together to form the whole study.
- Work the whole study with a metronome until it's at speed.
- Play the study with my audio example.
- Play the study with the backing track.

After you can play this study with me, and with the backing track, comp over this tune and make it your own.

You can do this by playing the shapes below but changing the rhythms, or you can keep the rhythms and change the chord shapes.

Or, you can add in different comping ornaments, picking hand variations, or other creative items in your playing.

Lastly, put on the backing track and comp over this tune and make up the chords, rhythms, and ornaments, all in the moment.

Learning chords is important, just like learning rhythms and ornaments, but applying them to tunes is where the rubber hits the musical road.

Have fun with this study and with comping over this tune in your playing.

When you've got a handle on this study, you're ready to move on to the next chapter in this eBook.

Audio Example 74

Em⁷ A⁷ Dmaj⁷

T	3	3	9	9	7	7	5	5
A	3	3	8	8	6	6	7	7
B	2	2	7	7	7	7	4	4
					5	5	5	5

Dm⁷ G⁷ Cmaj⁷

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

Cm⁷ F⁷ Bbmaj⁷

T	4	8	10	10	10	10	6	6
A	3	8	8	8	10	10	7	7
B	5	8	10	8	8	8	7	5
		8	8	8			6	6

Em⁷ A⁷ Dmaj⁷

T	7	7	5	5	7	7	7	7
A	8	8	6	6	6	6	4	4
B	7	7	5	5	7	7	7	7
			5	5	5	5	5	5

Chord Shapes in This Chapter

To help you work on these chords further, here are the chord shapes from this chapter in chord grids to use as a reference.

If you forget a chord, or want to quickly grab a chord you learned from this chapter to apply elsewhere, here they are.

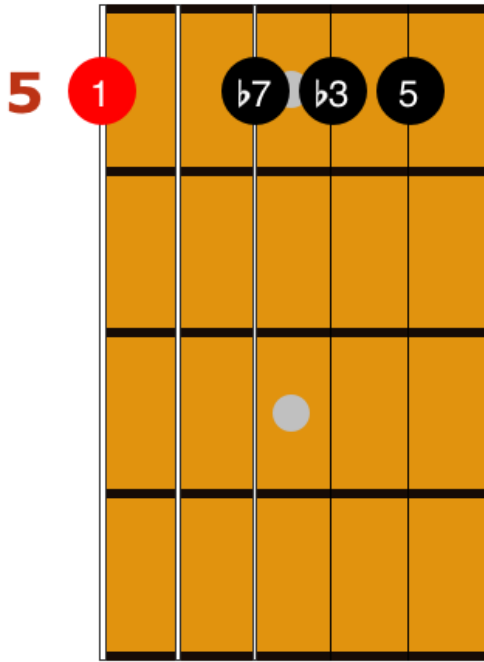
The chords are divided into types, so m7-7-maj7/6-7b9, to make them easier to find.

As well, the chords are presented here as neck diagrams for those that prefer that method of learning and memorizing chords.

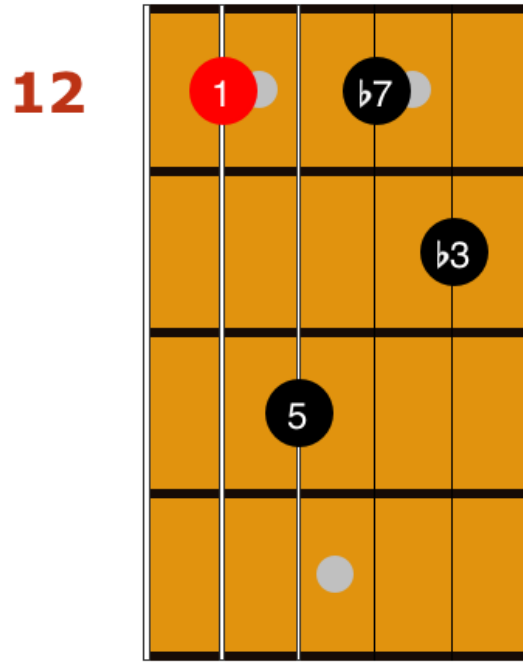
m7 Chords

Here are all the m7 chords used in this chapter to use as a reference in your studies.

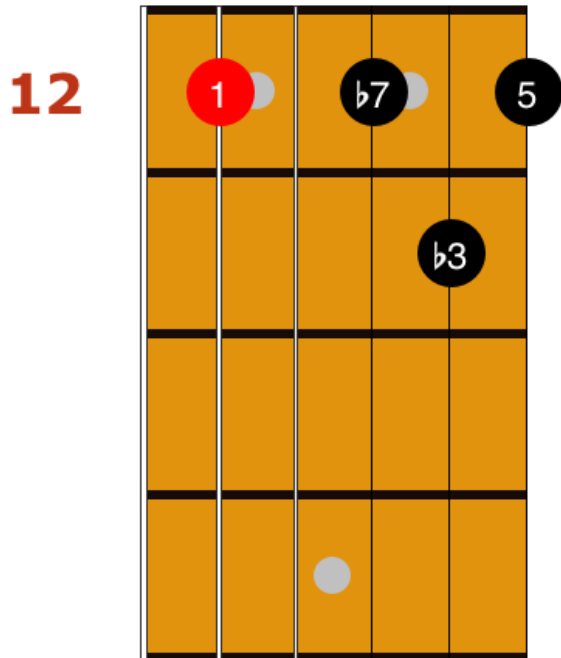
Am7



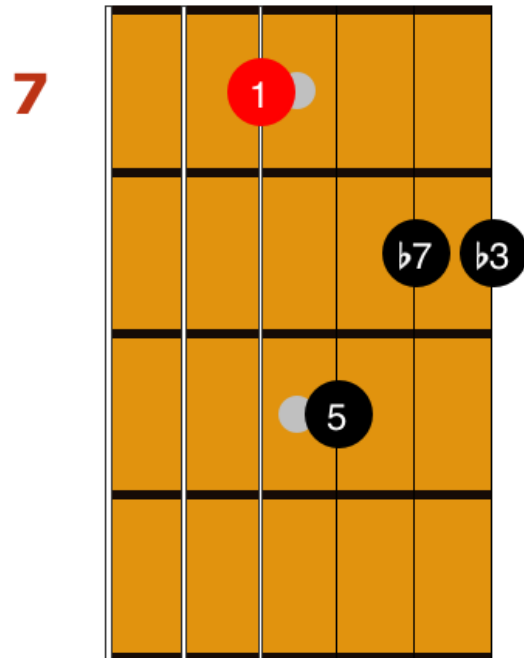
Am7



Am7



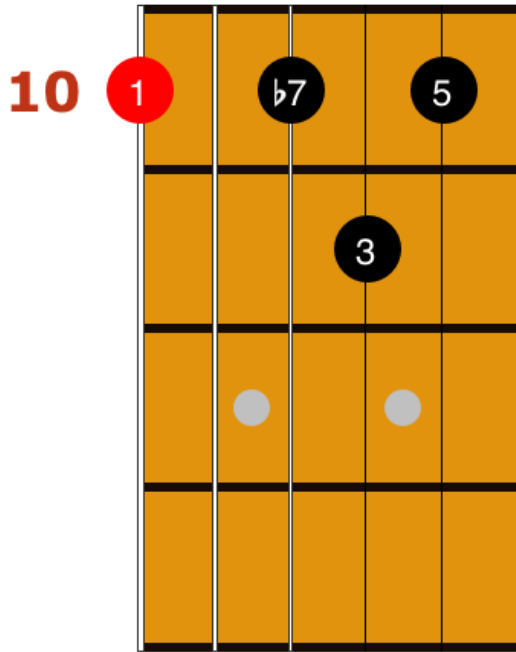
Am7



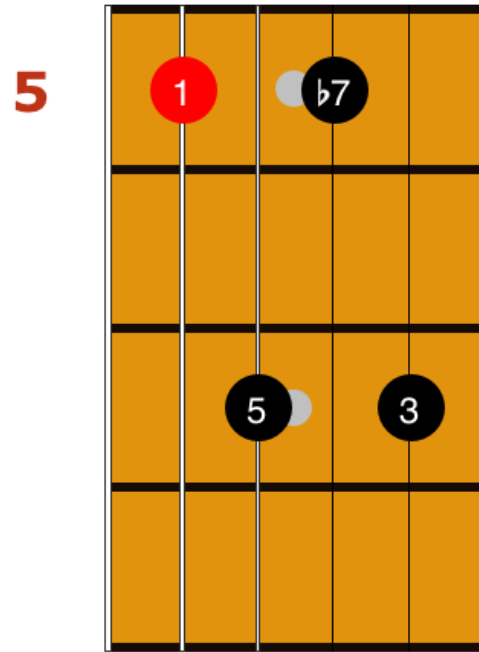
7 Chords

Here are all the 7th chords used in this chapter to use as a reference in your studies.

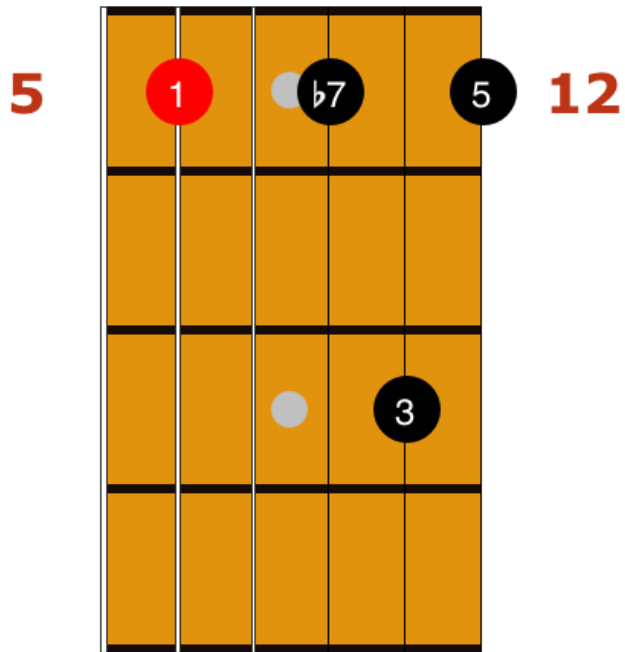
D7



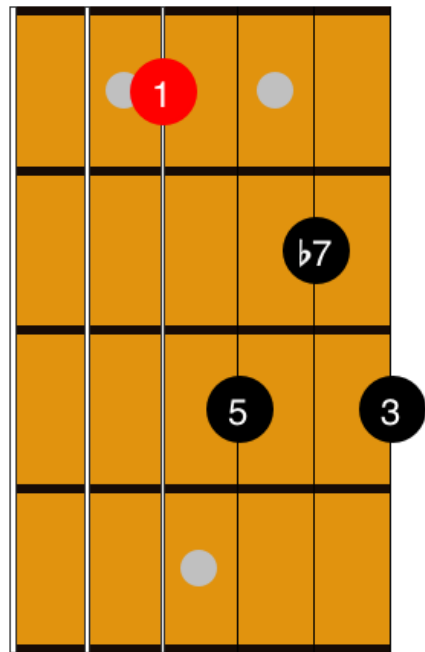
D7



D7



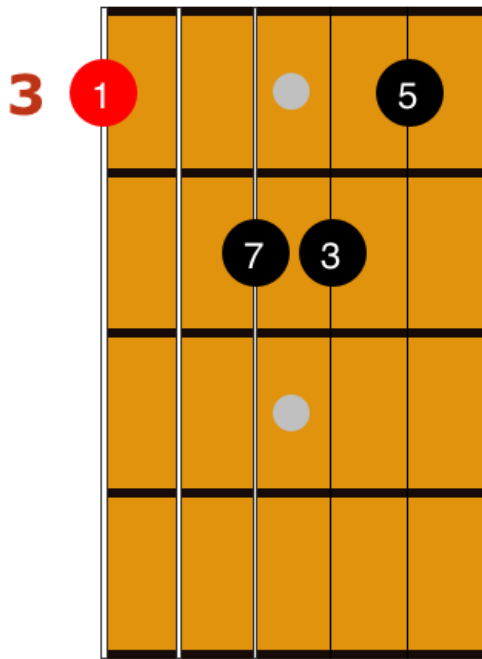
D7



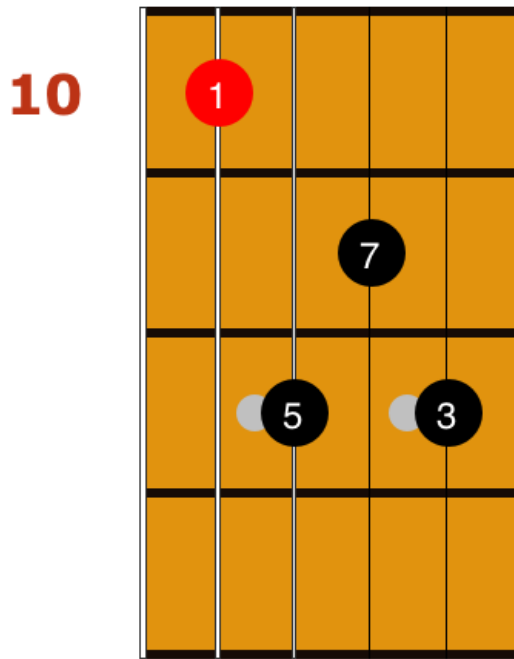
Maj7 Chords

Here are all the maj7 chords used in this chapter to use as a reference in your studies.

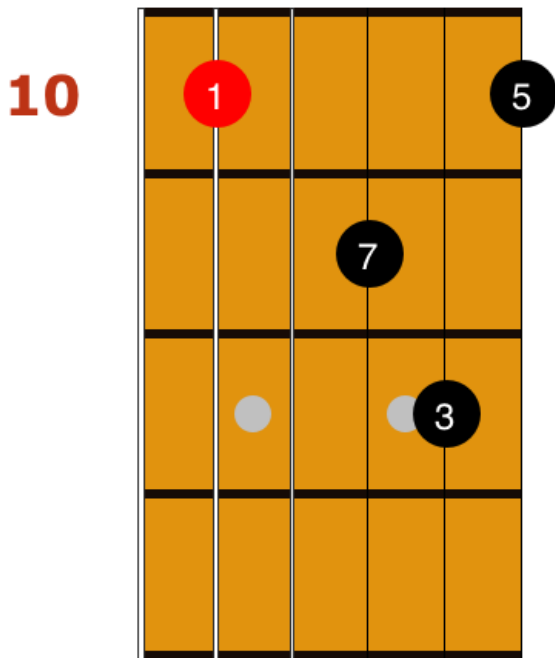
Gmaj7



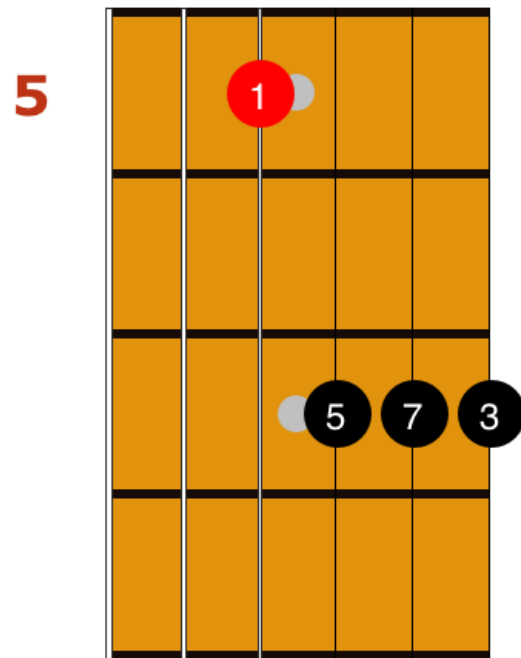
Gmaj7



Gmaj7



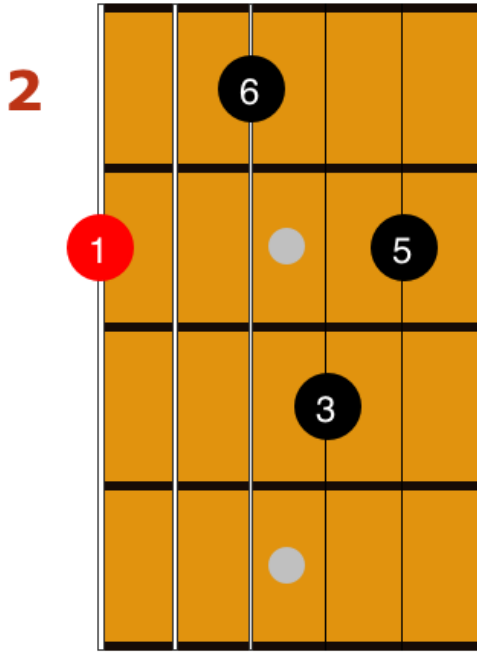
Gmaj7



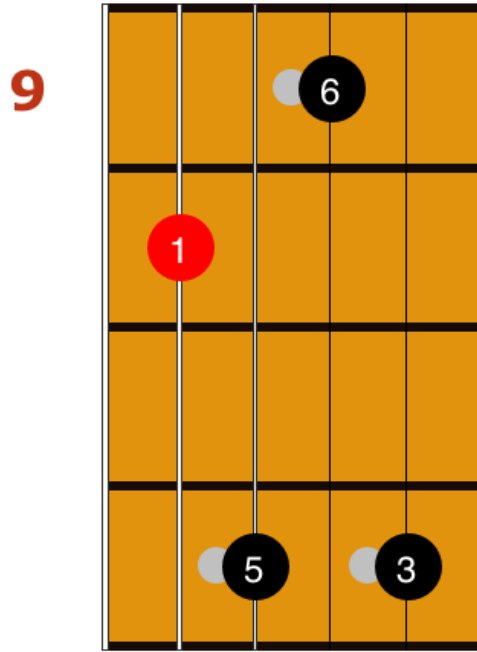
6 Chords

Here are all the 6 chords used in this chapter to use as a reference in your studies.

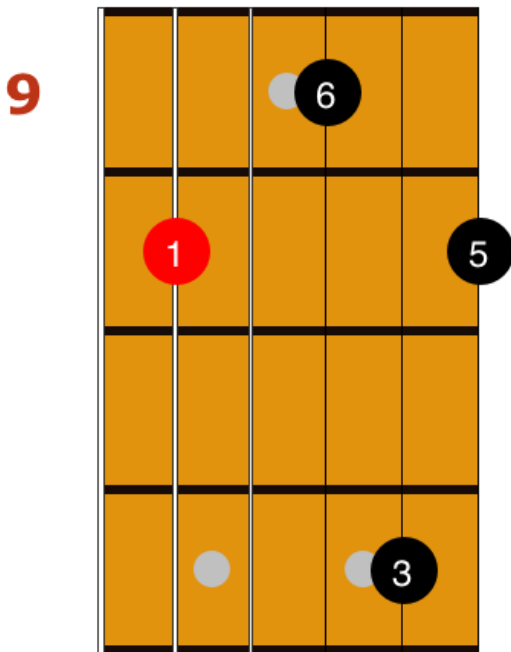
G6



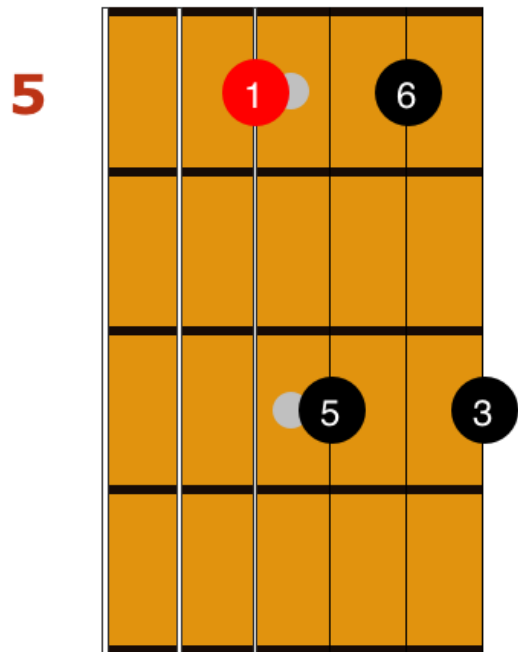
G6



G6



G6

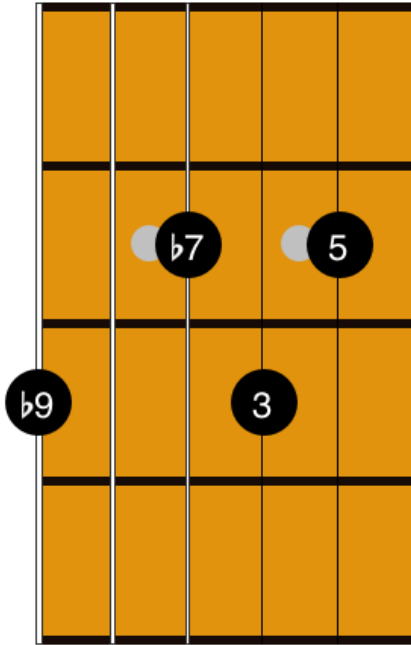


7b9 Chords

Here are all the 7b9 chords used in this chapter to use as a reference in your studies.

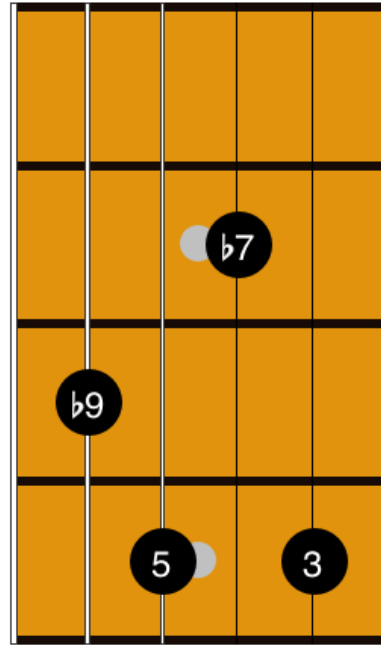
E7b9

11



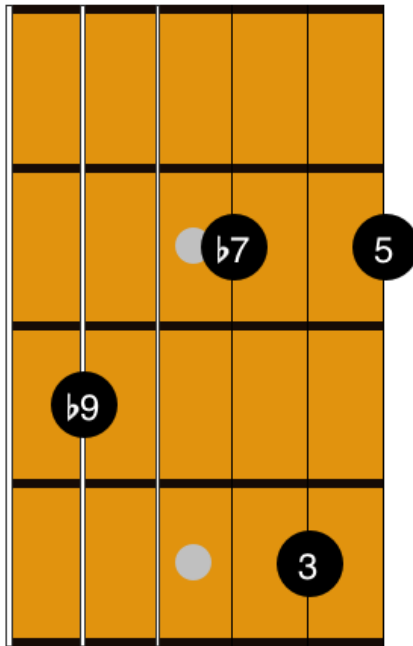
E7b9

6



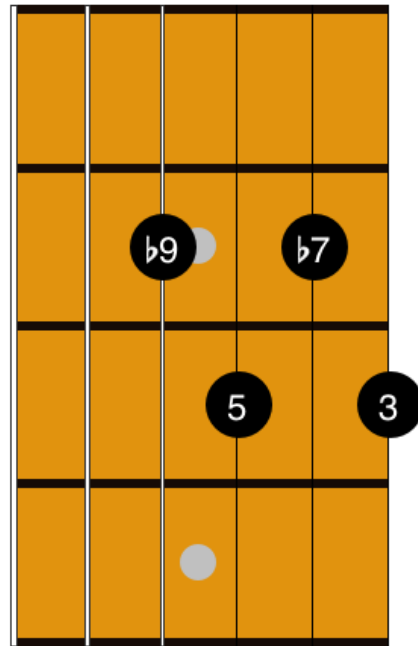
E7b9

6



E7b9

2



About the Author

I grew up listening to rock, and I still love that music. But, it's soloing I really love, and that's what drew me to blues and jazz.

My love of blues and jazz has taken me from small town Canada around the globe.

I studied at three of the top jazz programs in the world, starting with McGill University, then Western Michigan, and finishing with a Doctorate from the University of Illinois (UIUC).

I've taught over 6000 private jazz guitar lessons, and my students range from beginners, to music Professors at NYU, and everything in between.

I've also taught jazz guitar, popular music, and music business at universities in Canada, the US, the UK, Brazil, and Nepal.

I've played over 2500 gigs in 8 countries and shared the stage with Randy Brecker, Stefon Harris, and Slide Hampton.

Some of my favorite gigs were at:

- Lincoln Center
- International Association for Jazz Education Conference
- NuJazz Festival (Brazil)
- Savassi Jazz Festival (Brazil)
- International Jazz Day Festival (Nepal)

Jazz and blues have been in my life for 20 years, and every day I'm glad I found these great genre.

Because of this, I want to share this love of blues and guitar with you.

You never know where it'll lead you.