

Introduction

Over the years, jazz musicians have used certain chords to evoke the sound of “jazz.” These chords usually have a more complex sound than what you’d hear in a folk, pop or rock song. Even the names of some of these chords is enough to tie your tongue in knots, as in $B\flat 13 \flat 5 \sharp 9$ - pronounced B flat 13, flat 5, sharp 9.

A “jazz chord” is any chord that contains added tones or extensions. Most of these chords are some type of 7th, 9th, 11th or 13th. They can contain lots of tension tones like $\flat 9$, $\sharp 9$, $\flat 5$ or $\sharp 5$.

You need to understand that there are really only three different types of chords: major, minor and dominant. Each of these groups contain both simple and complex chords. It’s not an easy matter to say exactly when a chord stops being simple and becomes complex. These are very subjective terms and what I once would have described as complex now sounds common and natural to me. Our ears and perception change. The longer you listen to the sounds of jazz, the more accustomed you become to the harmony.

This book will introduce you to a collection of chords from each of the three groups mentioned above: major, minor and dominant. Of the three different types, the dominant group is by far the largest.

The most basic jazz chord is the 7th chord. There are many different kinds of 7th chords: major 7th, major 7 $\flat 5$, minor 7th, minor 7 $\flat 5$, minor 7 $\sharp 5$, minor $\sharp 7$, dominant 7, dominant 7 $\flat 5$, dominant 7 $\sharp 5$ and diminished 7. Any study of jazz chords must begin with these chords. They form the foundation for all the larger chords like the 9th’s, 11th’s and 13th’s.

Most jazz songs are written in flat keys. The majority are composed by wind and piano players. The most common keys being F, $B\flat$, $E\flat$ and $A\flat$. Songs written by guitarists are in sharp keys. For guitarists, the easiest chords to play are those found in the keys of G, D, A and E. Few jazz songs are written in these keys. It’s for this reason that you have to learn movable chord forms if you want to play jazz standards—those tunes that form the backbone of the jazz repertoire.

The chords found in jazz standards break down into small common progressions. These progressions are in 2 or 4 measure segments. If you become familiar with these common progressions you'll be able to negotiate the changes in most songs. Examples 1 - 56 examine many of these standard chord sequences in a variety of locations and keys on the fingerboard.

Example 57 marks the beginning of actual chord progressions. Feel free to try your hand at these progressions at any time. You don't have to go through all of the examples in the book first. You could even start with example 57 if you wanted to.

Lastly, jazz is a difficult style to learn from a book. This is true of most styles. Because jazz relies so much on the "swing" feel, I'd highly recommend that you get the CD. I perform all of the examples in here with a jazz trio: guitar, bass and drums. There is a money back guarantee on this CD as well.

To order the CD, send a check or money order for \$10.00 (postage paid) to:

Crescent Records
1055 W. 17th Ave.
Eugene, OR 97402

or call 1-541-343-8184
or fax 1-541-343-1955



Be sure to specify the Jazz Chords CD.

I've also written a number of other books you may be interested in: *An Introduction to Chord Theory*, *Arpeggios*, *Chord Embellishments*, *Chord Orbits*, *Movable Chords*, *Scale Patterns*, *Practical Theory for Guitar*, *The Ultimate Guitar Chord Big Book*, *Jazz Chords*, *Barre Chords*, and *First Chords*.

You may correspond with me at the above address or via email:
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For a complete listing of my other publications and recordings, visit my web site at: www:crescentrecords.com

Don Latarski

Acknowledgements

Many thanks go out to Aaron Stang at Warner Bros. Publishing, my wife Kathy and son Spencer, my parents Richard and Vera Latarski, the supportive faculty and staff at the University of Oregon School of Music and to the many students throughout the world who encourage me with kind words and new ideas.

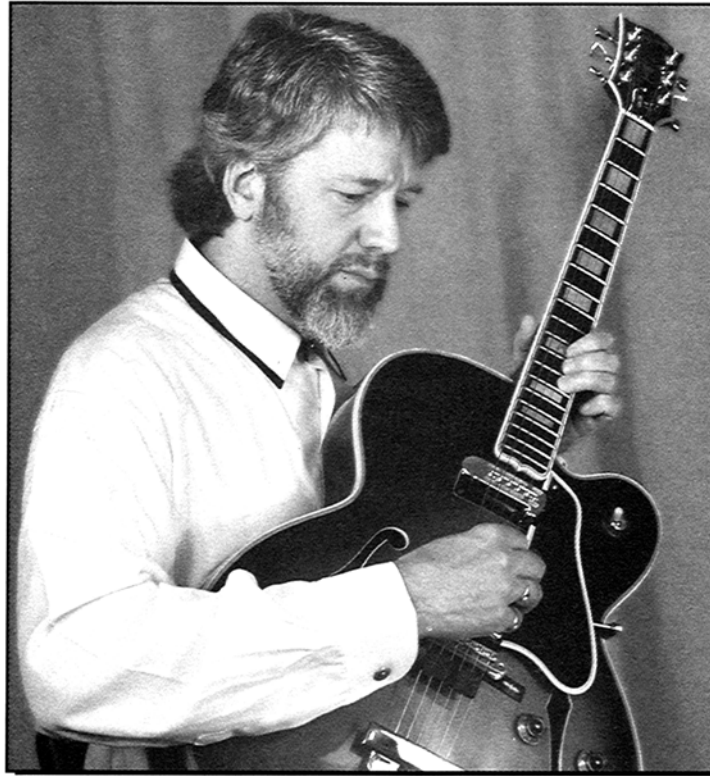


photo © Kathy Kifer

Bio for Don Latarski

Don Latarski has been playing the guitar since 1963. He's head of guitar studies at the University of Oregon School of Music and has been teaching there since 1981. He also teaches courses in jazz, funk and blues guitar performance as well as a theory course for guitarists.

He is also the author of a popular series of guitar instruction books: *An Introduction to Chord Theory, Arpeggios, Chord Embellishments, Chord Orbits, Movable Chords, Scale Patterns, Practical Theory for Guitar, The Ultimate Guitar Chord Big Book, Blues Chords, Barre Chords, and Jazz Chords*. A companion video to *Practical Theory for Guitar* called *Guitar Theory Basics* is also available. (Warner Bros. Publications)

Latarski's recordings include: *Haven, Lifeline, How Many Ways, Private Affair, NorthWest of December, Rue II and Deep Play*. His credits as both a leader and sideman are extensive and he currently leads both a jazz group, The Don Latarski Group with Marilyn Keller, and a blues group, Don Latarski and Rue de Blues. He performs over 100 gigs per year.

He's a prolific composer having written for television, video productions, radio and computer games as well as jazz and blues ensembles. He has written articles for *Guitar Player Magazine* and is a featured artist and contributor of teaching materials to *Notes On Call*.

Table of contents

How to read the chord forms - - - - -	6
Moving chords around on the fingerboard - - - - -	7
Locating notes on the fingerboard - - - - -	9
common jazz progressions 1 - 36 - - - - -	10 - 21
Turnarounds 37 - 56 - - - - -	21 - 28
jazz blues in C - - - - -	29
jazz blues in D - - - - -	30
jazz blues in F - - - - -	31
jazz blues in C minor - - - - -	32
jazz blues in B \flat - - - - -	33
The C blues - - - - -	34
The F minor blues - - - - -	35
The A \flat blues - - - - -	36

Appendix of Jazz ChordsMajor chords:

1- maj 6 - - - - -	38
2- maj 7 - - - - -	38
3- maj 7 \flat 5 (aka maj7 \sharp 11) - - - - -	38
4- maj 9 - - - - -	38

Minor chords:

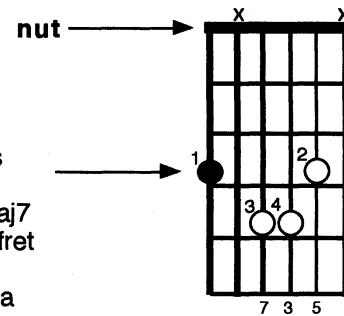
1- min 6 - - - - -	39
2- min 7 - - - - -	39
3- min \sharp 7 - - - - -	39
4- min 7 \flat 5 - - - - -	39
5- min 9 - - - - -	40

Dominant chords:

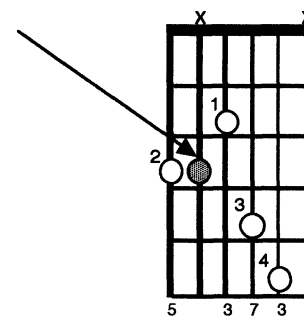
1- dom 7 - - - - -	40
2- dom 7sus - - - - -	40
3- dom 7 \flat 5 (aka dom7 \sharp 11) - - - - -	40
4- dom 7 \sharp 5 (aka aug.7) - - - - -	41
5- dom 7 \flat 9 - - - - -	41
6- dom 7 \sharp 9 - - - - -	41
7- dom 9 - - - - -	41
8- dom 13 - - - - -	42
9- diminished 7 - - - - -	42

How to read the chord forms

The solid black dot always shows you where the **chord root** is located. This is a very important note because it's the one you'll use to align the chord form to the correct location on the fingerboard. If you wanted to use this maj7 shape to play a Gmaj7, this black dot must be at the 3rd fret on the 6th string. The thick line at the top of some of the chords shows you the location of the **nut**. This is usually a piece of plastic, bone or metal that holds the strings in place near your tuning machines. When the nut is shown in a chord form, there will not be a fret indicator.

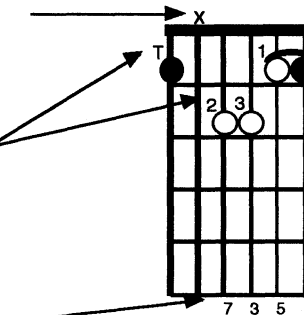


Some chords will not have a root. These chords will have a shaded dot which is called the “**assumed root**”. You aren't supposed to play this note. It's in the chord form to show you where the root would be. Use this note to align the chord shape at the appropriate fret. If you wanted to use this maj7 form to play a Cmaj7 chord, the shaded dot would have to be on the 3rd fret on string 5.



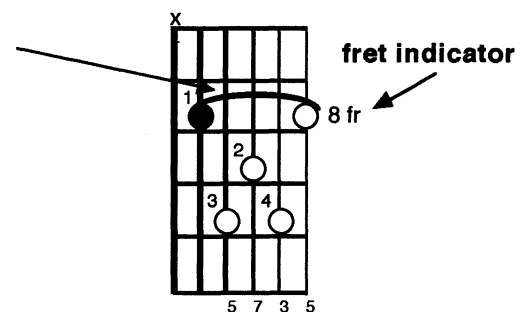
An **X** above a string means that you should avoid playing it. You can accomplish this by muting it with your fretting hand or if you're a fingerpicker, don't pluck them.

Fingerings are indicated by numbers next to the dots. **T** stands for **thumb**. Wrap your thumb up around the neck and hold down the note. The thumb will also work well to mute string 5 in this chord.



The small numbers under the chord form let you know what **chord tones** you're playing. This is very useful information in describing a chord's **voicing**.

The curved line represents a **barre form** chord. Play all of the notes under this line. In this chord, you'd be playing notes on strings 5 and 1 with your index finger. The **fret indicator** will tell you where to place the chord on the fingerboard.



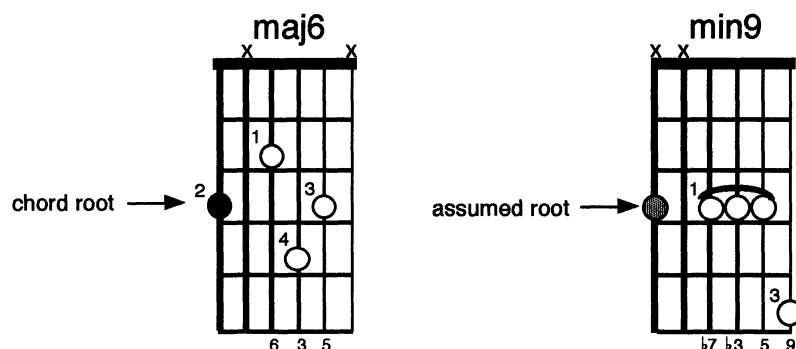
A word about fingerings

A suggested fingering is supplied with each chord form. Feel free to invent your own. In some cases, I've shown the same chord with more than one fingering. I know that many others are possible.

Moving chords around on the fingerboard

The chords you'll learn in this book are movable. Each form can be moved up and down the neck.

Each chord will contain one or more chord roots. The root note of a chord is always indicated by a solid black dot in the chord diagram. Some chords have more than one of these notes. A few don't have any roots. In these rare cases, the real root of the chord will be indicated with a dot that is partially shaded in. You don't play this assumed root note. It's included in the chord diagram to assist you in getting the chord aligned at the correct fret on the fingerboard.



The major 6 chord shown here will always be a major 6 chord no matter where you play it on the fingerboard. The only thing that will change when you move the chord around on the fingerboard will be the root. You must therefore learn the names of the notes on strings 6, 5 and 4 to most effectively use the chords in this book.

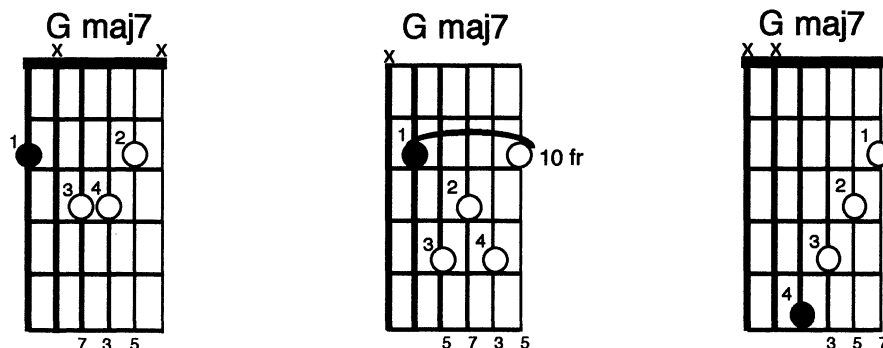
You can use the three fingerboard charts to help you align the chord roots for any chord form. If you placed the chord root of the major 6 chord on the third fret of string 6, then you would be playing a G6. If you moved this shape up so that the root was on the eighth fret of string 6, then you would be playing a C6 chord.

The process involved in using this system has only two steps:

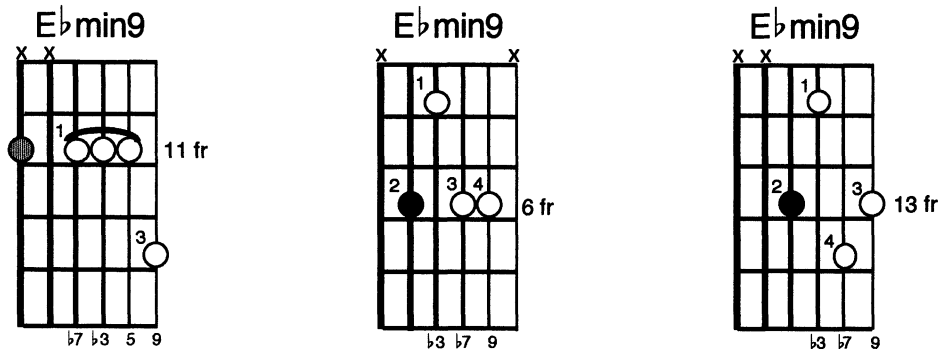
Step 1: Locate the correct chord root for the chord you want to play on string 6, 5 or 4.

Step 2: Place the solid black dot (the chord root) on the appropriate fret and string and complete the fingering for the other notes in the chord.

Here is an example of how this system works using some different major 7 forms. Notice that with each of these forms, the root is on a different string. All of these chords make the sound of major 7, but when properly aligned on the fingerboard, they all result in G maj. 7th chord. Note the fret indication to the left of the chord diagram. You can see that all of these frets mark the correct location of G notes on the fingerboard.

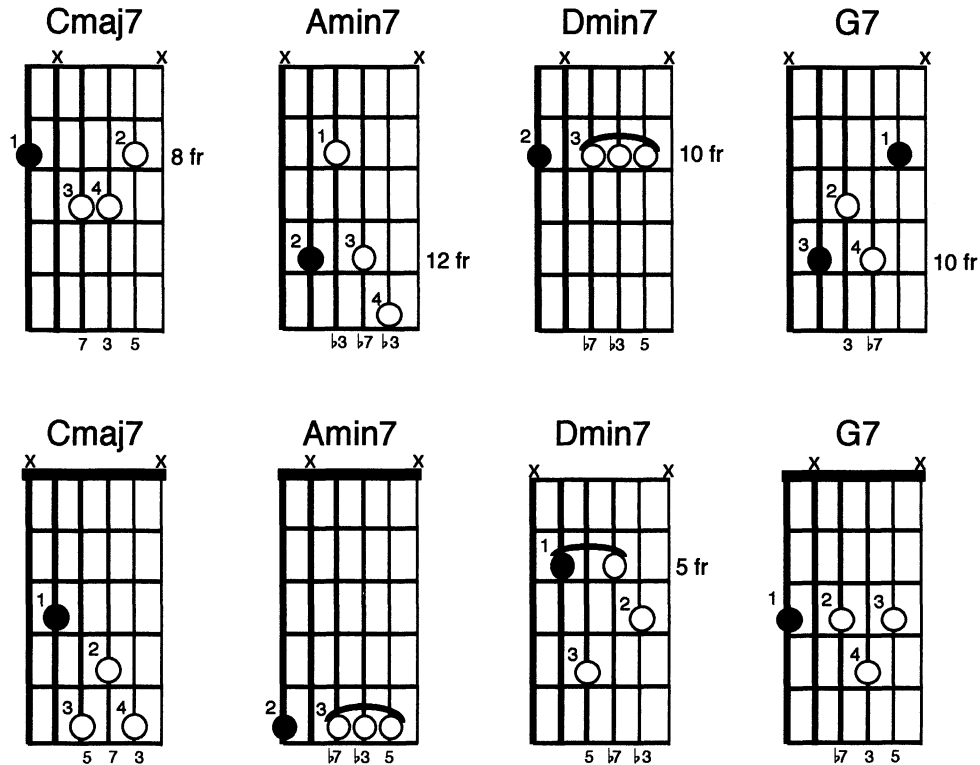


Here is another example using minor 9 forms and E \flat as the chord root.



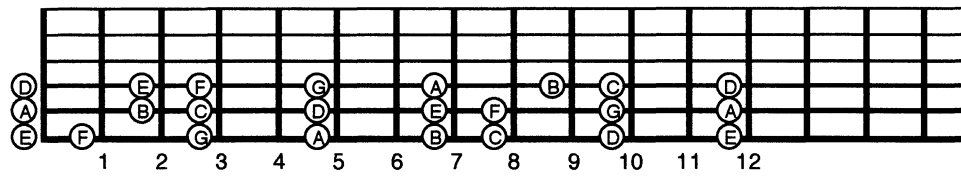
To make the movement from one chord to another as smooth as possible, look for the closest root to move to for the next chord. Here's an illustration of how this works: Let's say your progression is Cmaj7, Amin7, Dmin7 and G7. The first thing to do is to locate a C note. This could be on either strings 6, 5 or 4. Let's say we start with the C note at the 8th fret on string 6. You now want to find an A note, the root of the Am7, that's close by. This could be at the 5th fret of string 6 or the 12th fret of string 5. Now find a D note. This be at the 10th fret of string 6 or the 5th fret of string 5. Lastly, the G note of the final chord could be at the 3rd fret of string 6 or 10th fret of string 5.

Here are two of several possible ways to play through this progression using this approach:

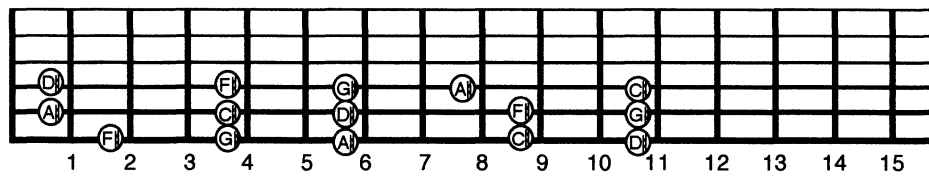


Locating chord roots on the fingerboard

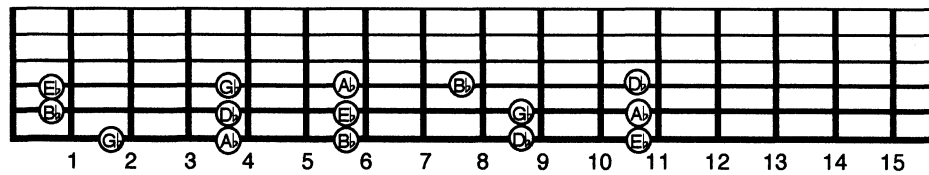
The Natural Notes (no sharps or flats)



The Sharped Notes

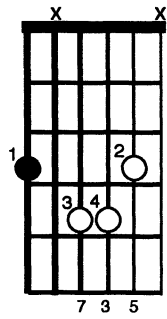


The Flatted Notes

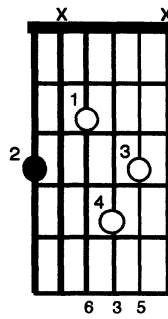


Example #1

Example #1 will get you started with some of the most important major chords: the maj6 and maj7. Both of these chords have the same root note on string six. Practice them slowly at first until your fingers feel comfortable changing from one chord to the next. Strum the chord four times per measure.



Gmaj7



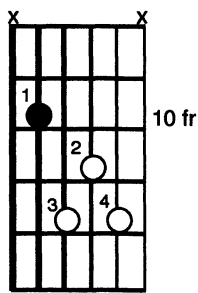
Gmaj6

Gmaj7

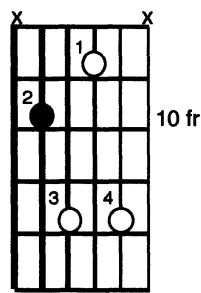
Gmaj6

**Example #2**

Example #2 uses the same chords found in example 2 but the root has changed. Make sure you get the roots aligned at the 10th fret on string 5.



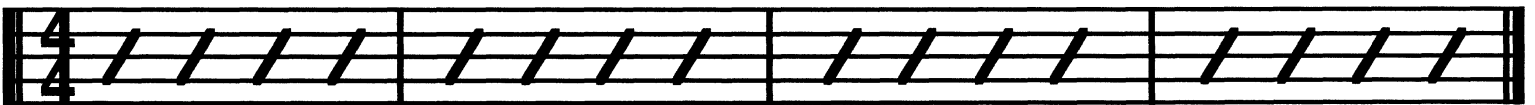
Gmaj7



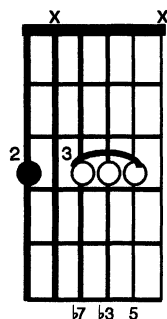
Gmaj6

Gmaj7

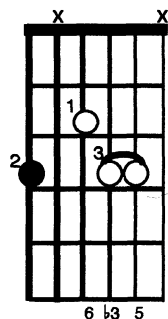
Gmaj6

**Example #3**

Example #3 is an introduction to the essential minor chords: the min7 and min6. Both of these chords have the same root note on string six. Practice them slowly at first until your fingers feel comfortable changing from one chord to the next. Strum the chord four times per measure.



Gmin7



Gmin6

Gmin7

Gmin6

