

Drop 3 Chords & Inversions

In [Chords](#) on July 28, 2015 at 10:04 am

A favorite of jazz guitarists such as Joe Pass, who used these shapes to perfection in his solo guitar performances, drop 3 chords are ideal to use when playing in a solo or duo setting.

While they might take a bit of time to get under your fingers, having a strong understanding of drop 3 chords will greatly expand your Jazz guitar comping, chord soloing, and chord melody playing. Experiment with the fingerings for these chords as **different hand sizes** will use different fingerings

Here's why drop 3 chords are so popular:

- With a strong sense of bass in each chord (the lowest notes are always on the 6th or 5th strings), **drop 3 chords** will give you that fat-bottom sound when covering the low end in a bassless duo or trio setting.
- Because there is a string skip in every shape, drop 3 chords are ideal for solo guitar playing, as they keep the **bass notes** involved in your voicings, but separate them from the rest of the chord, allowing the melody line to stand out at the same time.

When practicing drop 3 chords, there are two main ways to get these chords under your fingers, before taking them to your **favorite Jazz standard** and applying them to tunes in your studies:

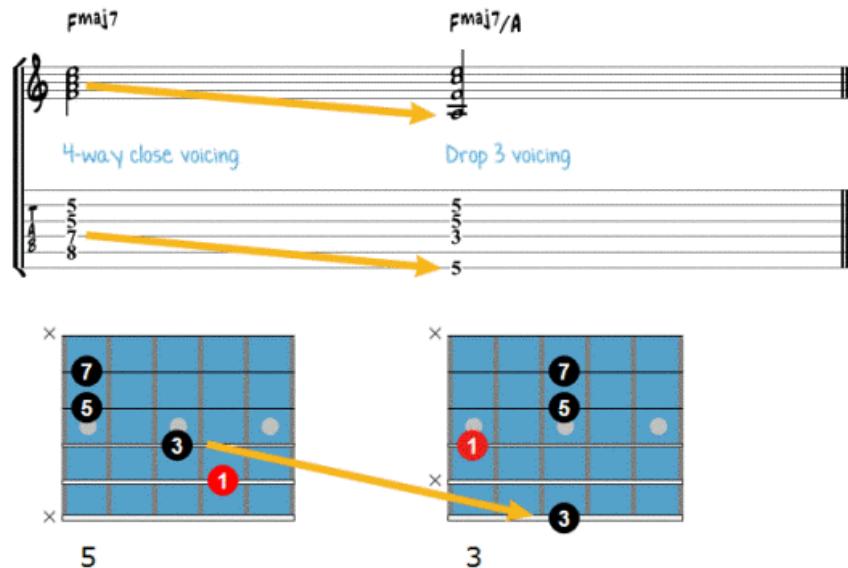
1. The first way to practice drop 3 chords is to learn all four inversions on **one string set** for a chord type:
 - Take Gmaj7 on the **6432-string set** and play all four inversions of that chord from memory.
 - Move on to Gmaj7 on the **5321-string set** and play all four inversions of that chord from memory.
 - From there, play all 8 Gmaj7 Drop 3 chords to cover the **entire fretboard**.
1. The second effective way to practice drop 3 chords is to work on **inversions** across all chord types:
 - Play the **root position**, 6432 string set, for Gmaj7, G7, Gm7, Gm7b5, and Gdim7 chords.
 - From there, play the **1st inversion**, 6432 string set, for Gmaj7, G7, Gm7, Gm7b5, and Gdim7 chords.
 - When you can do the 1st inversion, move onto the 2nd, and 3rd inversions for the 6432-string set, before **repeating the exercise** on the 5321-string set.

So grab your favorite guitar, set it to a warm, jazzy tone, and dig into these essential and fun to play jazz guitar chords...

Drop 3 chords & Inversions

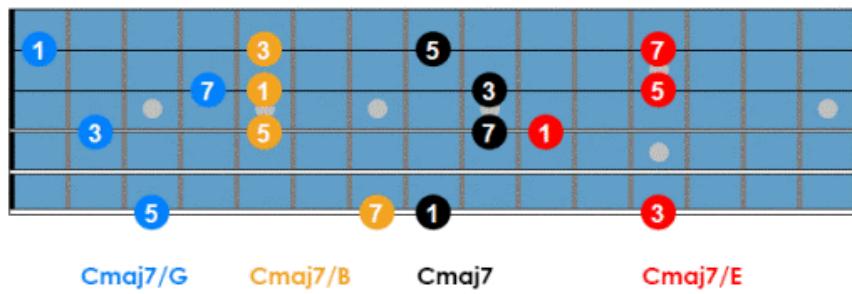
Drop 3 chords are usually the first voicings beginning jazz guitarists learn and are ideal to use in a solo or duo situation.

Drop 3 chords are build by dropping the Third Highest note of a Four-way close chord to the bass.

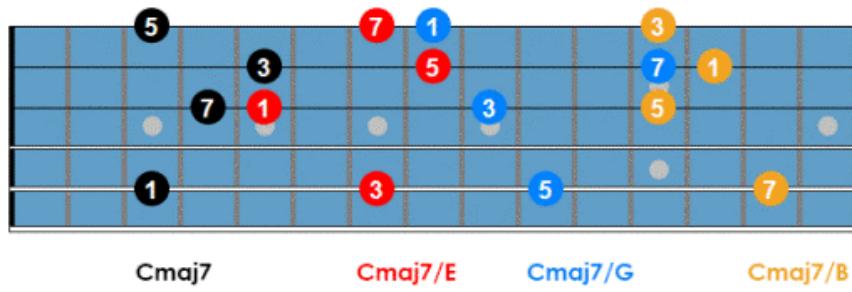


Major chords - Drop 3 chords & Inversions

Bass on String 6

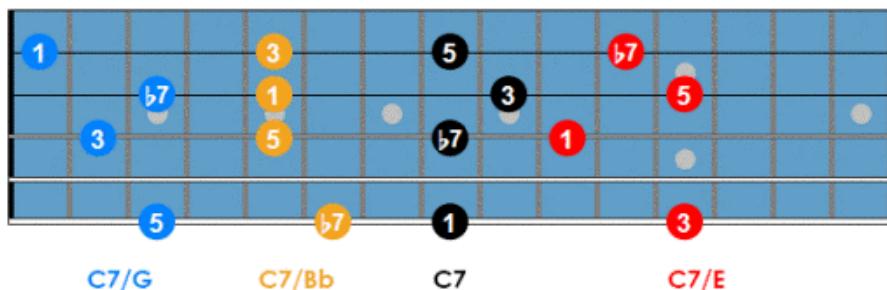


Bass on String 5

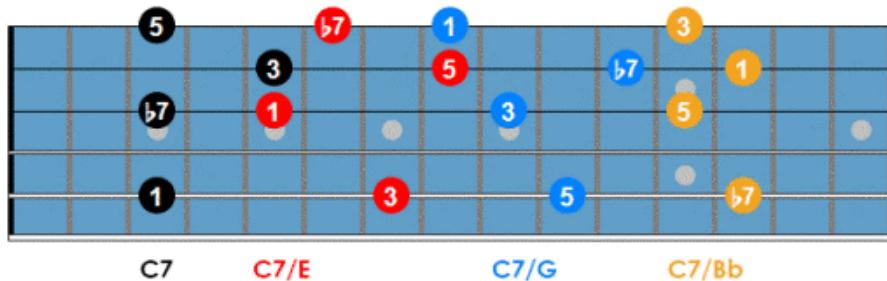


Dominant chords - Drop 3 chords & Inversions

Bass on String 6

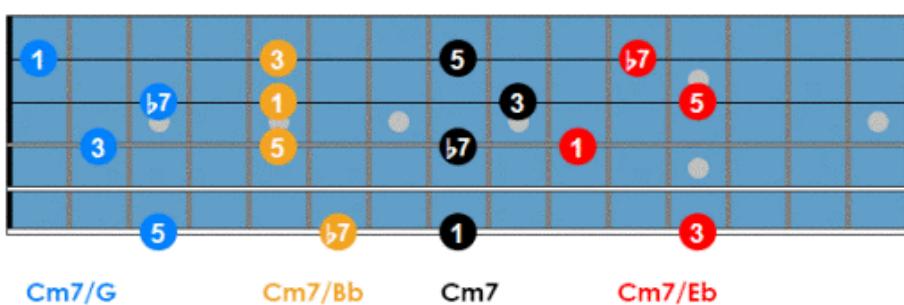


Bass on String 5

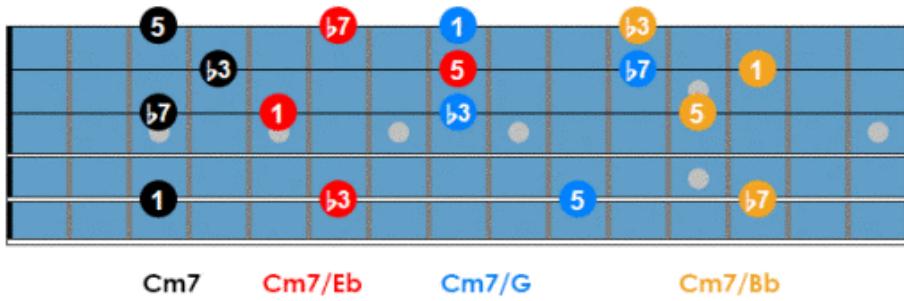


Minor chords - Drop 3 chords & Inversions

Bass on String 6



Bass on String 5



Half Diminished chords - Drop 3 chords & Inversions

Bass on String 6

Cm7b5/Gb **Cm7b5/Bb** **Cm7b5** **Cm7b5/Eb**

Bass on String 5

Cm7b5 **Cm7b5/Eb** **Cm7b5/Gb** **Cm7b5/Bb**

Diminished chords - Drop 3 chords & Inversions

Bass on String 6

Gbdim7 **Adim7** **Cdim7** **Ebdim7**

Bass on String 5

Cdim7 **Ebdim7** **Gbdim7** **Adim7**