

# Drop 2 Chords & Inversions

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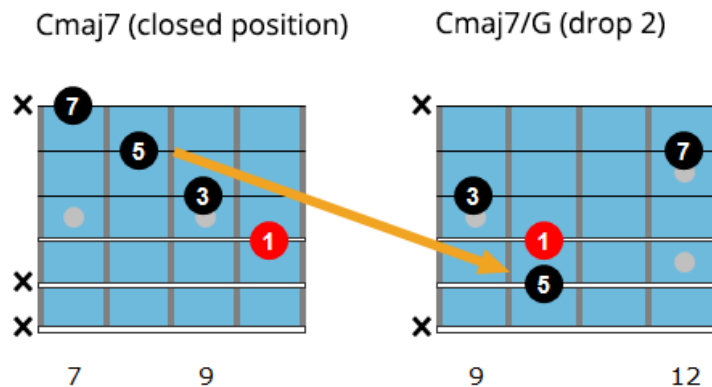
**D**rop 2 chords are the most popular chord voicings in jazz guitar, and serve a wide variety of purposes, including comping, soloing and chord melody. They have been used by many of the great jazz guitarists including Joe Pass and Wes Montgomery. By understanding how drop 2 chords are built you can 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:



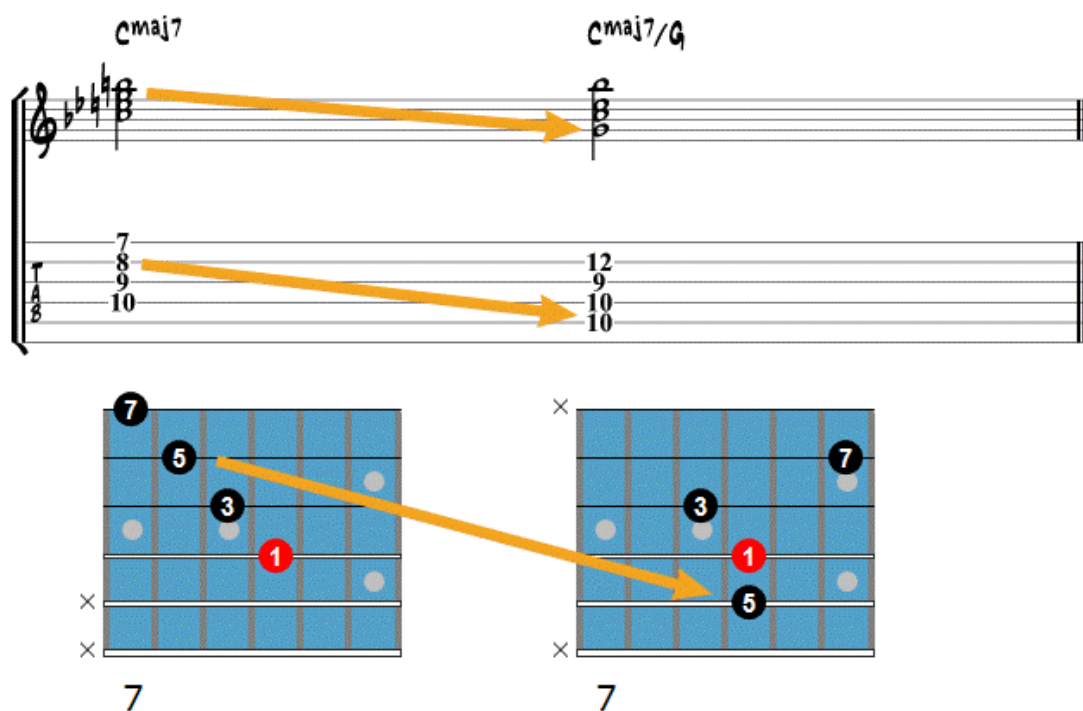
Drop 2 chords are **open position chords** and are important for guitar players because these chords are easy to play on 4 adjacent strings.

## 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.

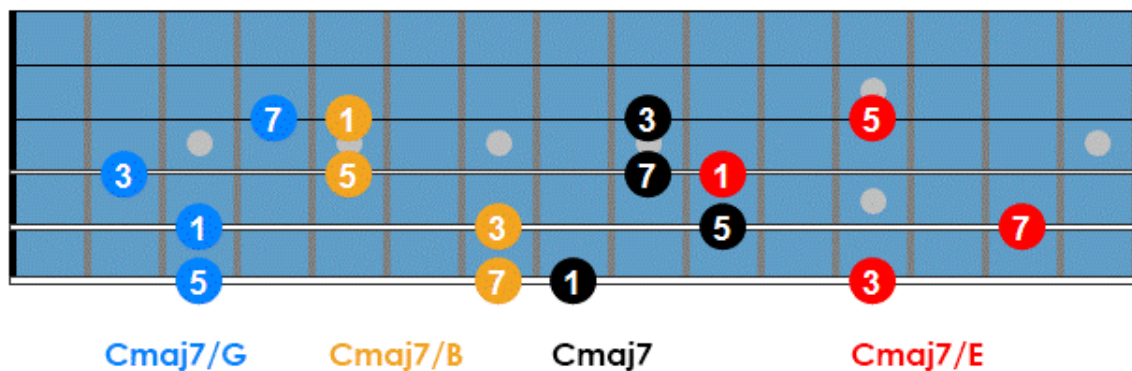
Drop 2 chords are the most popular chord voicings used in jazz guitar. They can be used for comping, soloing and harmonizing melodies.

Drop2 chords are build by dropping the second highest note of four-way close chord to the bass.

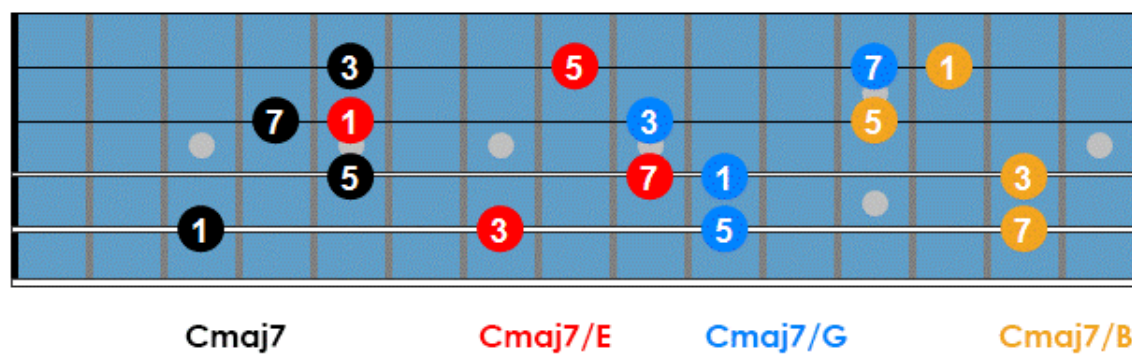


## Major chords – Drop 2 chords & Inversions

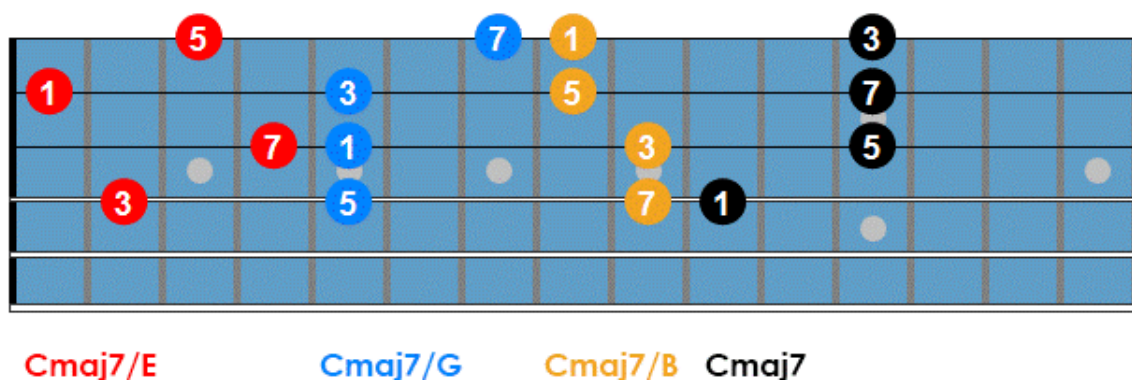
Bass on String 6



Bass on String 5

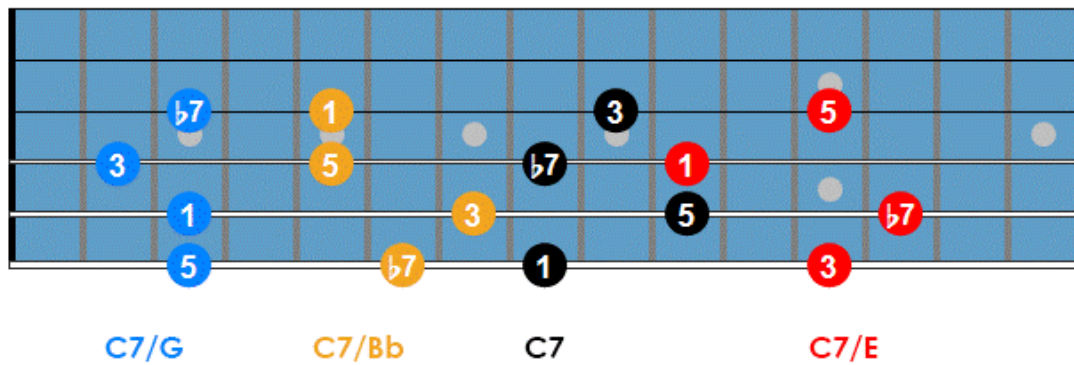


Bass on String 4

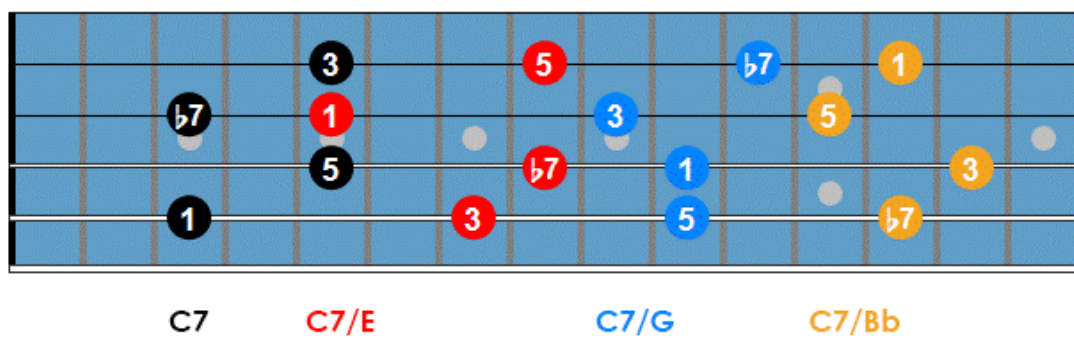


## Dominant chords - Drop 2 chords & Inversions

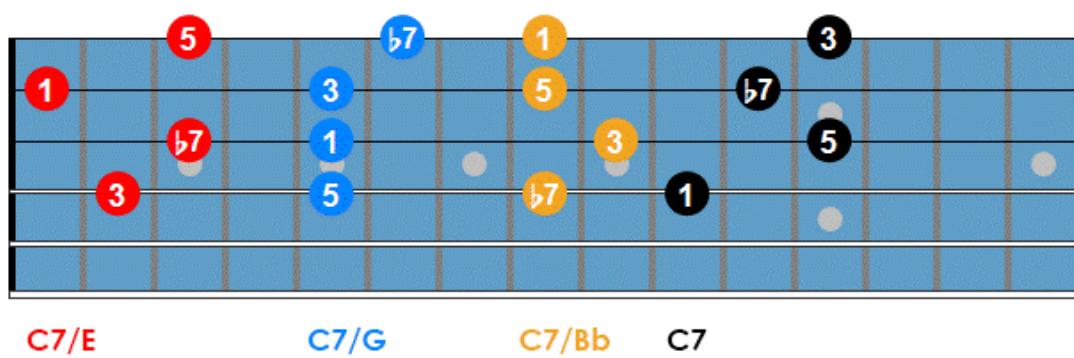
Bass on String 6



Bass on String 5



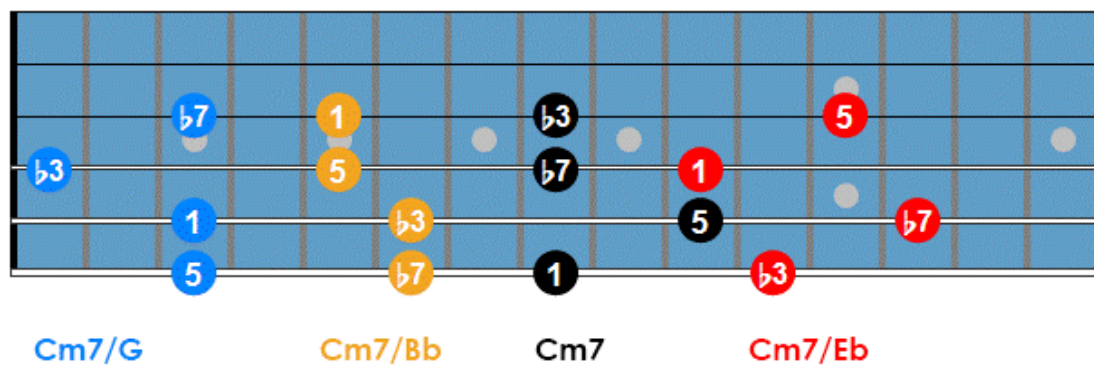
Bass on String 4



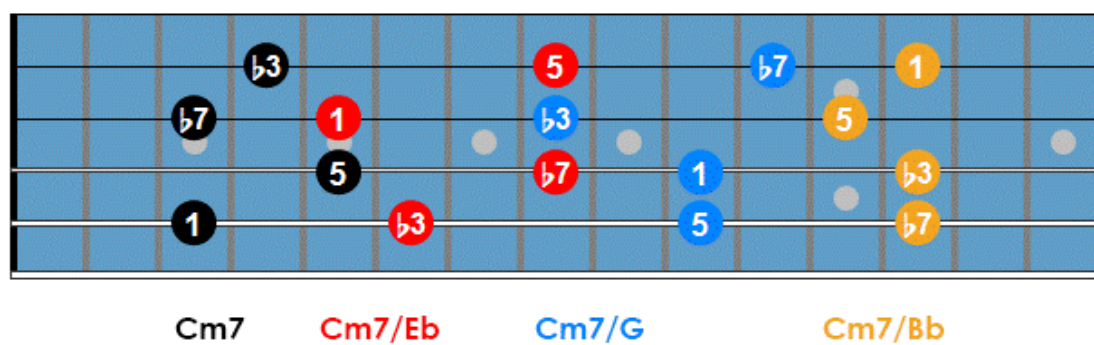


## Minor chords - Drop 2 chords & Inversions

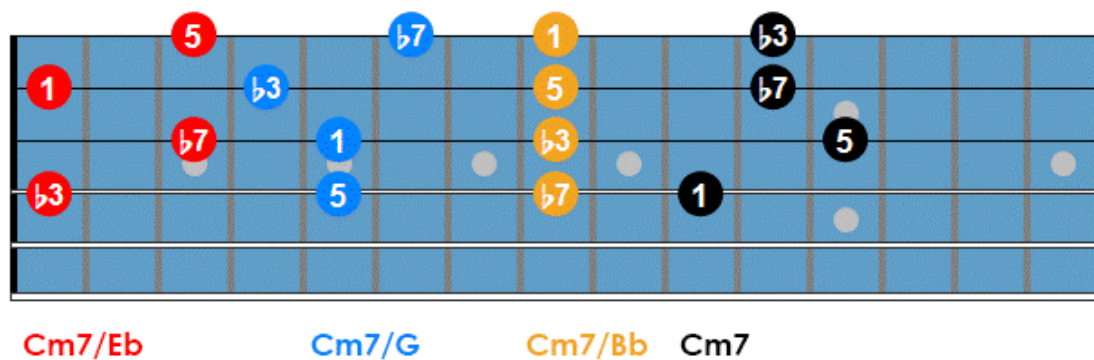
Bass on String 6



Bass on String 5

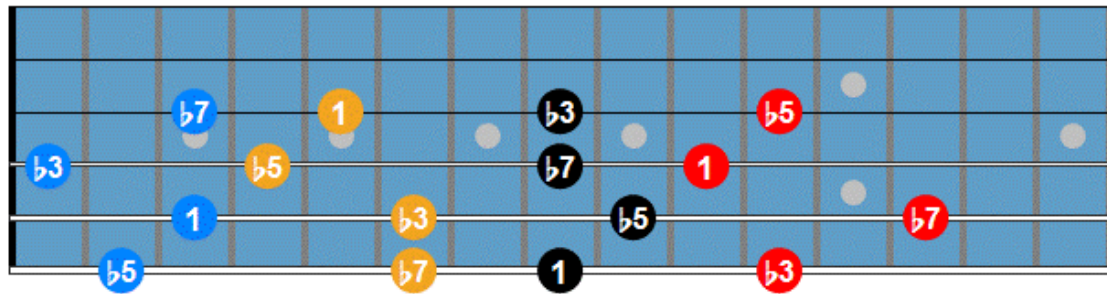


Bass on String 4



## Half diminished chords - Drop 2 chords & Inversions

Bass on String 6



Cm7b5/Gb

Cm7b5/Bb

Cm7b5

Cm7b5/Eb

Bass on String 5



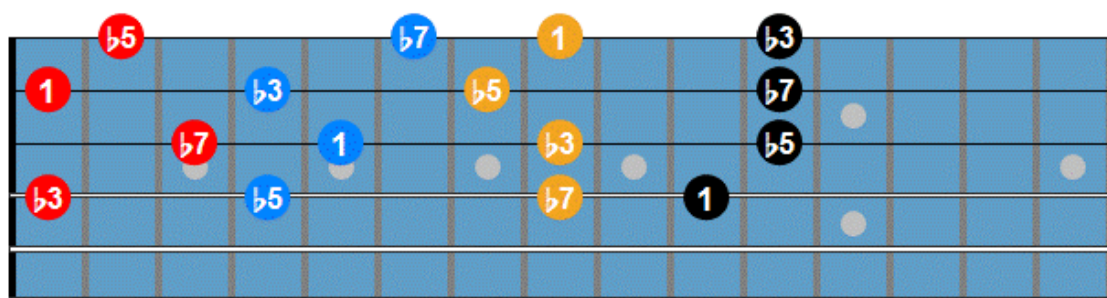
Cm7b5

Cm7b5/Eb

Cm7b5/Gb

Cm7b5/Bb

Bass on String 4



Cm7b5/Eb

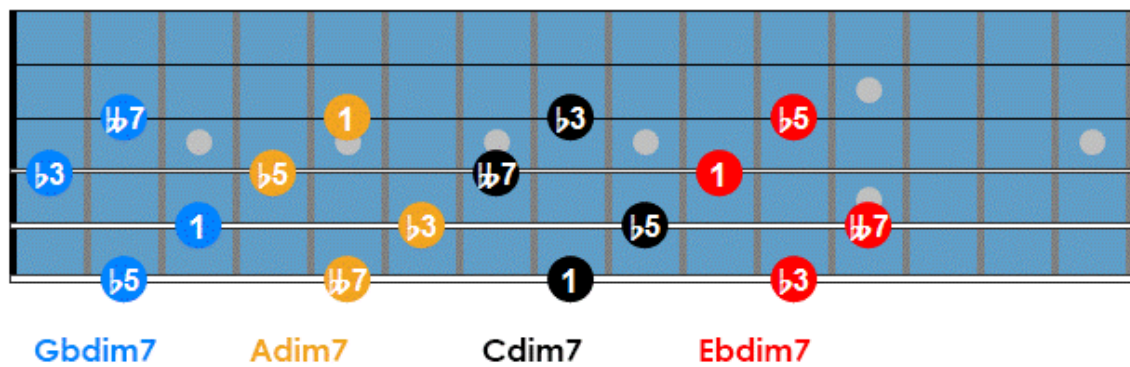
Cm7b5/Gb

Cm7b5/Bb

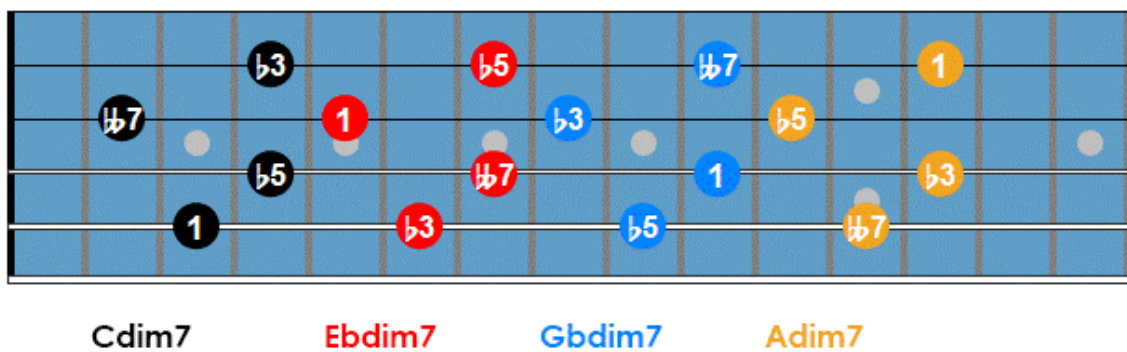
Cm7b5

## Diminished chords - Drop 2 chords & Inversions

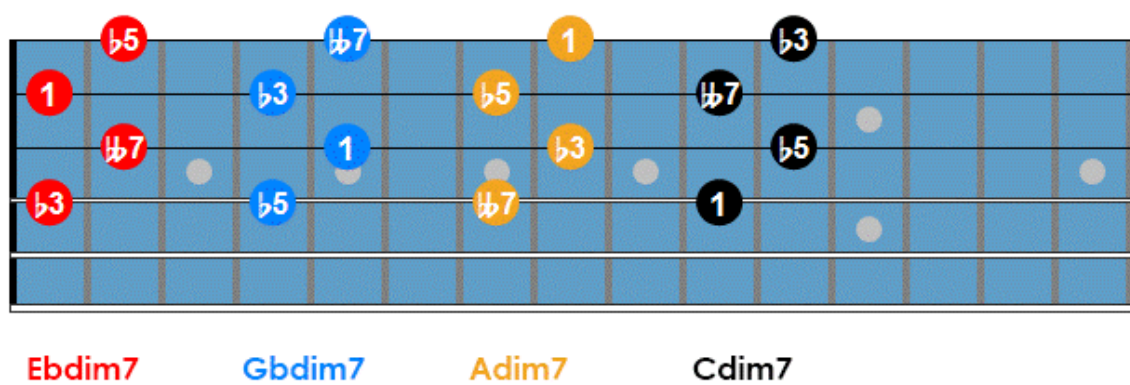
Bass on String 6



Bass on String 5



Bass on String 4

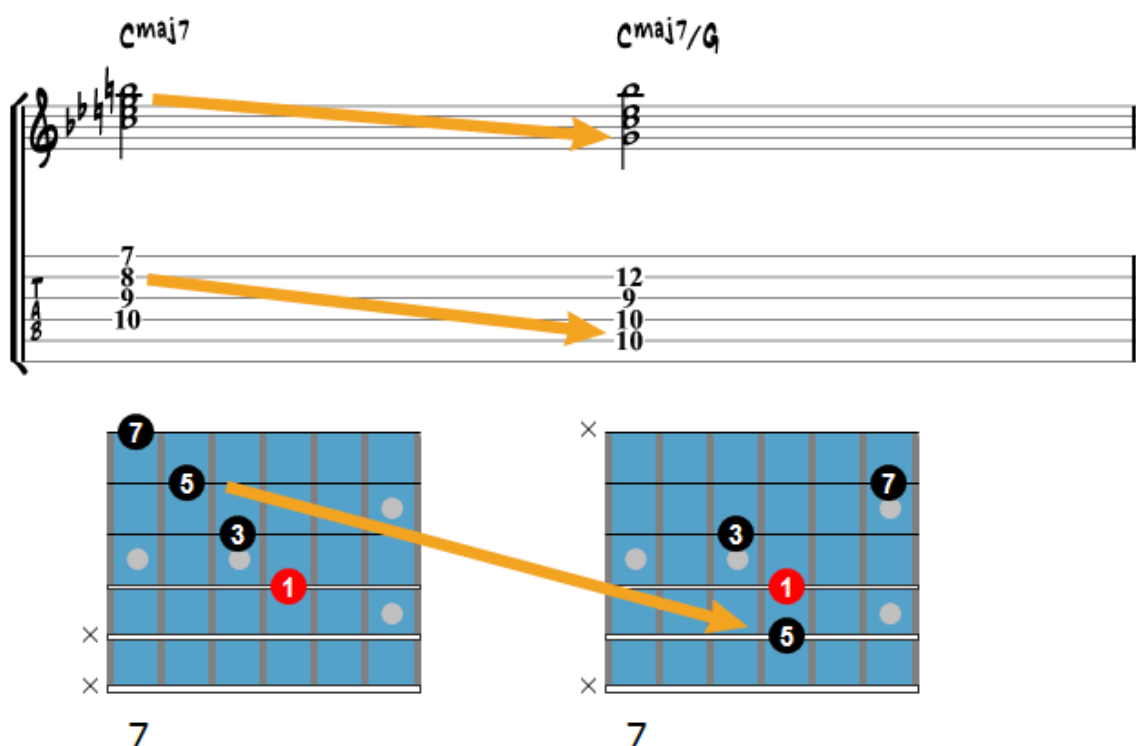




## How to Build Drop 2 chords?

*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:



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)

Note how R & 5 and 3 & 7, are always stacked next to each other. This intervallic arrangement helps give the drop 2 its signature sound.



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**

9 10 11 12

8 10 2 5

**5 Cmaj7**

5 6 7 8

3 5 9 1

**Cmaj7**

12 1 2 3

10 5 8

Detailed description: The figure displays three systems of musical notation and fretboard diagrams for the C major 7th chord in its first, second, and third inversions. Each system includes a treble clef staff with the chord name, a guitar tablature with four strings (T, A, B, E) and fret numbers, and four corresponding fretboard diagrams. The first system shows the 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th frets. The second system shows the 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th frets. The third system shows the 12th, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd frets. The fretboard diagrams are 5x5 grids representing the fretboard, with dots indicating the chord tones.

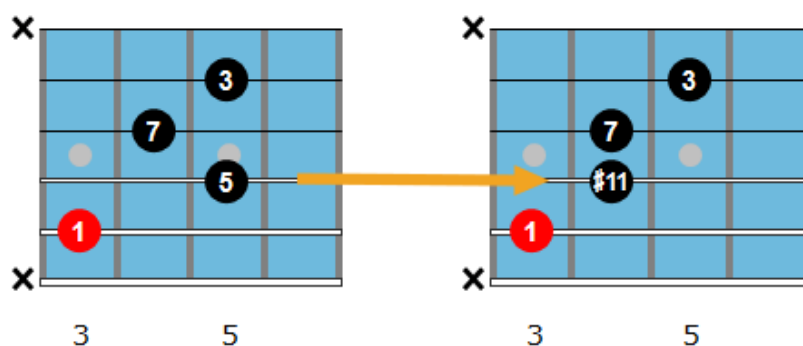
## How to Build common Drop 2 Voicings

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.

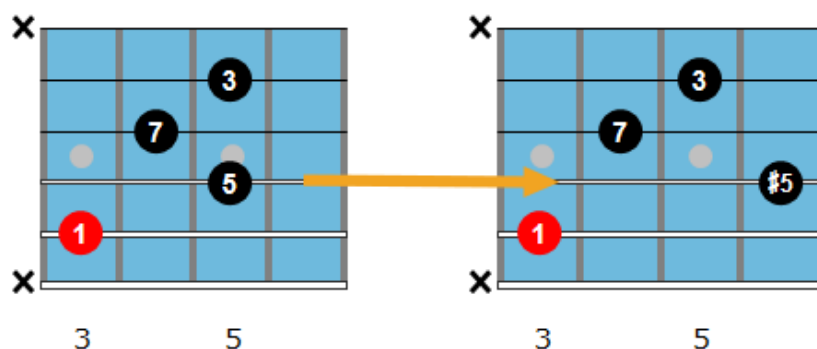
Learning these different chords can seem like a daunting task, but with a few simple steps, we can play all of these chords with relative ease. Instead of treating each of these different chords as separate fingerings, we can look at them as **variations of the Maj7 chord we already know**.

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:

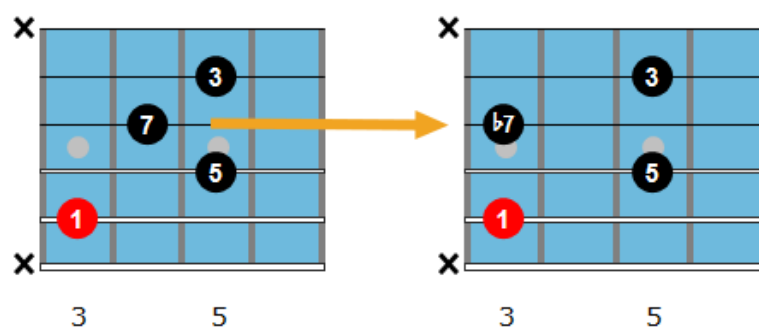
- By moving the 5th down a fret you'll have a **Cmaj7#11**.



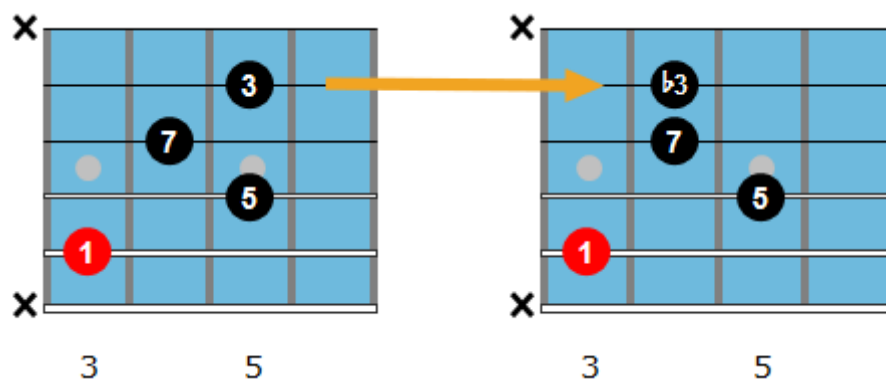
- Move the same note (the 5th), up a fret and you get a Cmaj7#5.



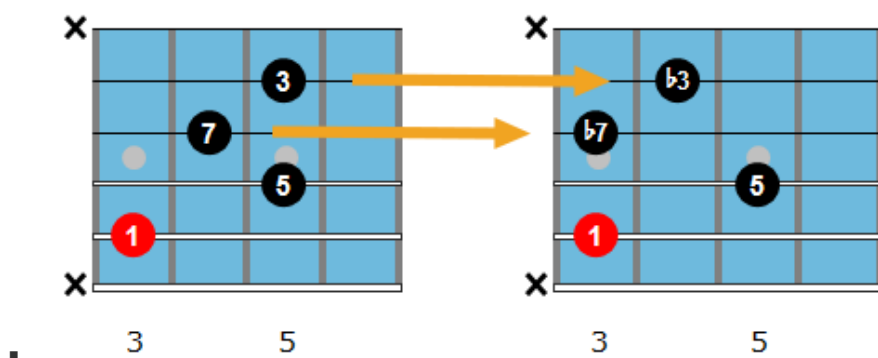
- Move the 7th down by a fret and you get a C7.



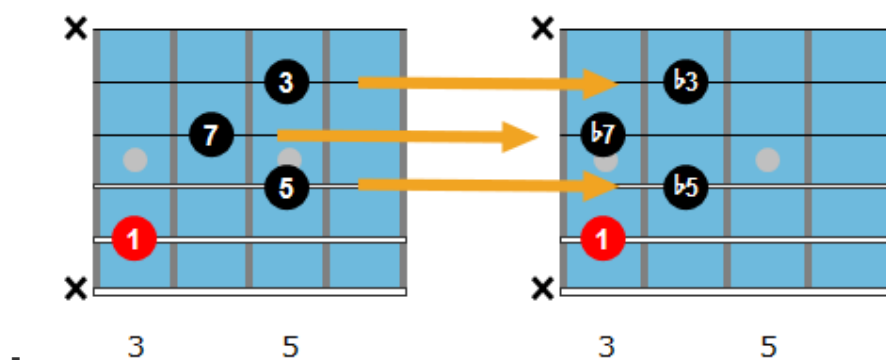
- If you lower the 3rd by one fret, you'll get a Cm/maj7.



- 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.

Diagram 1: Drop 2 chords in root position (12th fret).

Chord	Fret	Notes (Treble)	Notes (Bass)
Dm7	12	B, A, G	F, E, D
G7	12	F#, E, D	C, B, A
Cmaj7	12	B, A, G	F, E, C
A7(b9)	12	G#, F#, E	D, C, B

Diagram 2: Drop 2 chords (5th fret).

Chord	Fret	Notes (Treble)	Notes (Bass)
Dm7	5	B, A, G	F, E, D
G7	5	F#, E, D	C, B, A
Cmaj7	5	B, A, G	F, E, C
A7(b9)	5	G#, F#, E	D, C, B

Diagram 3: Drop 2 chords (9th fret).

Chord	Fret	Notes (Treble)	Notes (Bass)
Dm7	9	B, A, G	F, E, D
G7	9	F#, E, D	C, B, A
Cmaj7	9	B, A, G	F, E, C
A7(b9)	9	G#, F#, E	D, C, B



13

Dm7 G7 Cmaj7 A7(b9)

17

Dm7 G7 Cmaj7 C6/9

## 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.

Gmaj7

Gmaj7/F# F#dim7 Gmaj7 A dim7 Gmaj7/B C#dim7 Gmaj7/D Gmaj7/F#

3 5 7 8 10 12 14 15

3 4 7 7 8 11 12 15

4 5 7 8 11 12 12 16

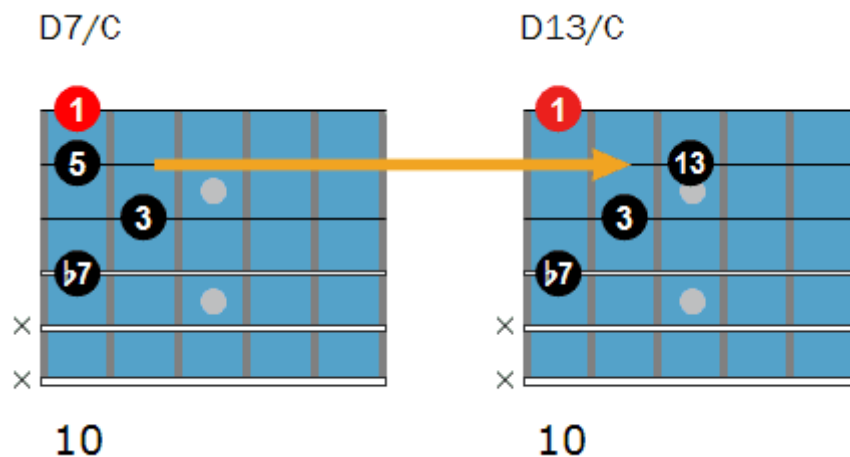
4 4 5 7 9 11 12 16

## Variation in chord comping

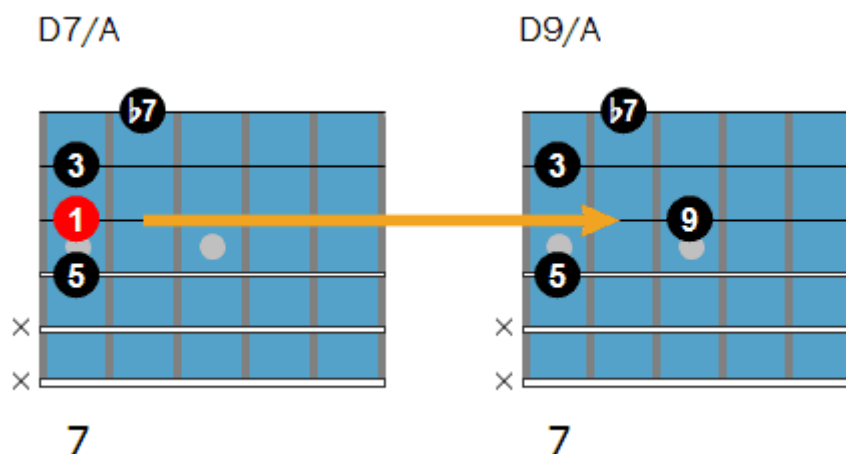
You can use these drop 2 scales to harmonize melodies, do chord solos, but also **bring variation in your chord accompaniment**. Here's an example on a ii V I in G major. All chords used are drop 2 chords, except the Gmaj7 in the 3th bar, that's a 4-way close voicing.

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**:



Am<sup>7</sup> D<sup>7</sup> Gmaj<sup>7</sup> 4-way close voicing

Am <sup>7</sup>	Bdim <sup>7</sup>	Am <sup>7</sup> /C	D3/C	D9/A	F#dim <sup>7</sup>	Gmaj <sup>7</sup>	Gmaj <sup>7</sup> /B	Adim <sup>7</sup>	Gmaj <sup>7</sup>	Gdim <sup>7</sup>
8 8 10 12	10 10 8 5	2 2 10 8	7 7 6	10 10 8 5	3 3 8 7	7 7 7 6	7 7 7 6	5 5 5 5	5 5 5 5	5 5 5 5

Am<sup>7</sup> 5

Am <sup>7</sup>
5