

Guitar Theory: 7th Chords

Seventh chords are very common chords also. Much of jazz is based upon 7th progressions. The seventh note is one of the notes that really defines the sound of the chord. It's one of the strongest notes. A seventh chord can also be major, minor, augmented or diminished. Don't worry about augmented or diminished yet. But remember that the 3rd is the note that determines whether it is major or minor. The seventh is a bit different though. The seventh automatically assumes the seventh note is a flatted seventh, or the note a whole step (2 frets) above the octave of your tonic. If it is not, if it's only one fret above your tonic it's called a major 7th chord. A minor 7th chord is your flatted third plus the flatted 7th. It sound a bit confusing but we'll look at the charts.

As far as use of 7th chords, the 7th is used a lot in jazz and in country music. It naturally sounds twangy, not as uplifting as the major chord (not the major 7th.) It's a fun loving chord. And it's better for comping or rhythm than melodic use.

Now the major 7th is decidedly jazzy. It has a very soft, soft jazz feel. And it's pretty. It tends to work better melodically than the 7th.

The minor 7th also is very jazzy sounding, but it's more complex sounding than the major 7th. As with all minors, it doesn't lend itself to uplifting melodies. It is contemplative but can also be used to get your groove on.

The 7th chord formula is:

1 - 3 - 5 - b7

The major 7th chord formula is:

1 - 3 - 5 - 7

The minor 7th chord formula is:

1 - b3 - 5 - b7

So the root is 1, it tells you what chord letter to assign like A, B, C, D, E, F or G.

The 3 is a third above that	the 5 is a perfect fifth above 1	the 7 is a flatted 7th above 1
A = C# B = D# C = E D = F# E = G# F = A G = B	A = E B = F# C = G D = A E = B F = C G = D	A = G B = A C = Bb D = C E = D F = Eb G = F
So together the 7th Chords are as follows:		The minor 7th Chords are as follows:
A = A - C# - E - G		A = A - C - E - G

B = B - D# - F# - A
C = C - E - G - Bb
D = D - F# - A - C
E = E - G# - B - D
F = F - A - C - Eb
G = G - B - D - F

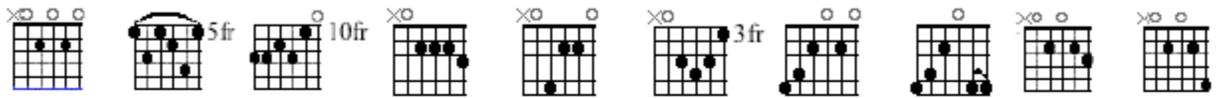
B = B - D - F# - A
C = C - Eb - G - Bb
D = D - F - A - C
E = E - G - B - D
F = F - Ab - C - Eb
G = G - Bb - D - F

The Major 7th Chords are as follows:

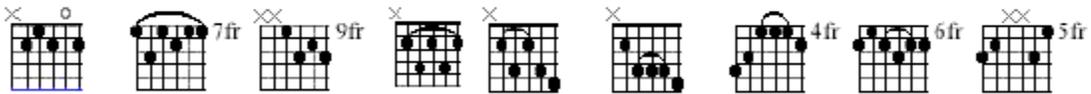
A = A - C# - E - G#
B = B - D# - F# - A#
C = C - E - G - B
D = D - F# - A - C#
E = E - G# - B - D#
F = F - A - C - E
G = G - B - D - F#

7th Chords (for minor 7th just flatten the 3rd ...move it down 1 fret)

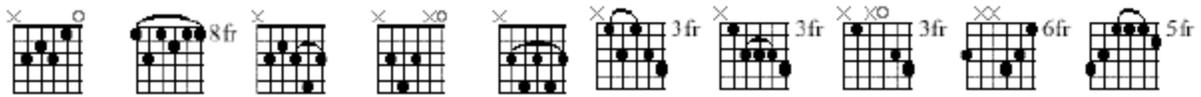
A



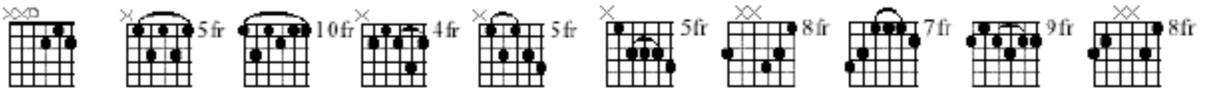
B



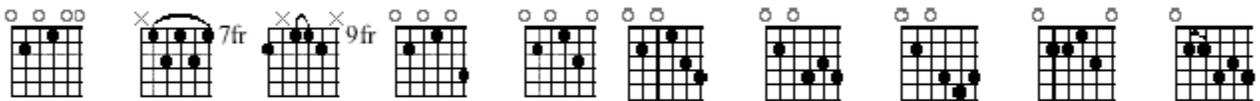
C



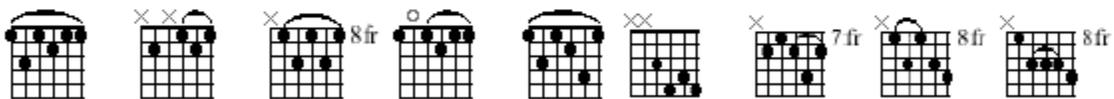
D



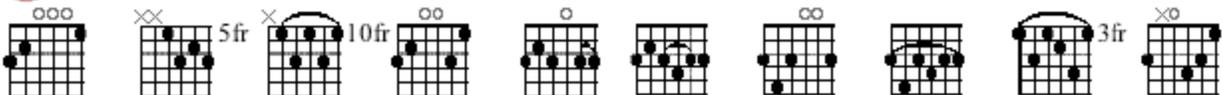
E



F



G



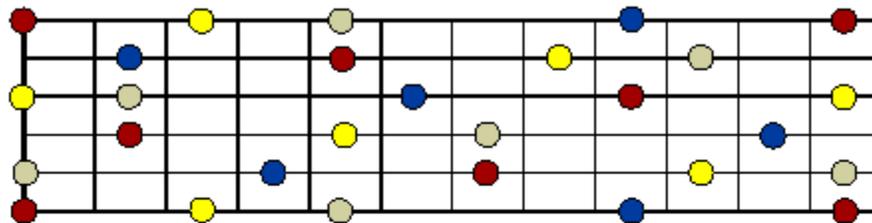
The chart ON THE NEXT PAGE shows the patterns for all of the tonics (1) - the major 3rds, 5ths and 6ths on the fretboard. (Remember for the minor of these chords simply move the 3rd a fret towards the headstock)

The charts above are a good quick reference. But if you really want to know the fretboard and the intricacies of these chords, the charts below are a much better way to learn them. They don't ignore the relationship between the notes of the chord and the rest of the notes on the fretboard.

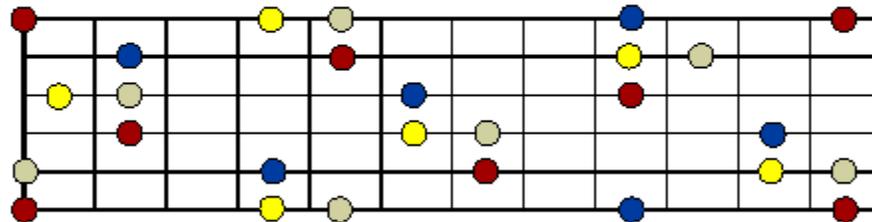
Guitar Theory: 7th Chord Fretboard Charts

-  = the tonic or 1
-  = the major 3rd
-  = the fifth
-  = the sixth

7th chord notes' pattern ... entire fretboard



major 7th chord notes' pattern ... entire fretboard



minor 7th chord notes' pattern ... entire fretboard

