



Understanding Guitar Chord Theory

Triads & 7th Chords

Major And Minor Triads

Triad is just another name for 3 note chord. Here is the formula to create the most common forms of triads.

Major Triad: Root - Major 3rd - Perfect 5th

Minor Triad: Root - minor 3rd - Perfect 5th

The diagram illustrates the construction of Major and Minor Triads. It shows guitar chord diagrams for G (Major) and Em (Minor), and their corresponding musical notation on a treble clef staff.

G (Major Triad): The guitar diagram shows the root note G on the 3rd string, 2nd fret, and the major 3rd (B) on the 2nd string, 2nd fret. The perfect 5th (D) is represented by an open circle above the 4th string, 2nd fret. The musical notation shows the notes G (Root Note), B (Major 3rd), and D (Perfect 5th) on the treble clef staff.

Em (Minor Triad): The guitar diagram shows the root note E on the 6th string, 1st fret, and the minor 3rd (G) on the 5th string, 1st fret. The perfect 5th (B) is represented by an open circle above the 4th string, 1st fret. The musical notation shows the notes E (Root Note), G (Minor 3rd), and B (Perfect 5th) on the treble clef staff.



Dominant 7th And Minor 7th Chords

A dominant 7th chord is just another name for a 7th chord and looks like this: **G7**. The dominant part refers to the function of the 7th chord in a chord progression (different lesson), and distinguishes it from a major 7th chord which looks like this: **GMaj7** or **GM7**.

Here are the formulas for the dominant 7th chord and the minor 7th chord. Both are just triads with the addition of a note that is a minor 7th interval from the root.

Dominant 7th: Root - Major 3rd - Perfect 5th - minor 7th

Minor 7th: Root - minor 3rd - Perfect 5th - minor 7th

The diagram illustrates the construction of G7 and Em7 chords. It shows two guitar fretboards: G7 (Root on G, Major 3rd on B, Perfect 5th on D, minor 7th on F) and Em7 (Root on E, minor 3rd on G, Perfect 5th on B, minor 7th on D). Below the fretboards, a musical staff shows the notes for each chord: G7 (G, B, D, F) and Em7 (E, G, B, D). The notes are labeled with their interval names: Root Note, Major 3rd, Perfect 5th, and Minor 7th.

Chord	Interval	Note
G7	Root Note	G
	Major 3rd	B
	Perfect 5th	D
	Minor 7th	F
Em7	Root Note	E
	Minor 3rd	G
	Perfect 5th	B
	Minor 7th	D



Interval Chart

Interval Name	Steps (Tones)
Minor 2nd	$\frac{1}{2}$
Major 2nd	1
Minor 3rd	1 $\frac{1}{2}$
Major 3rd	2
Perfect 4th	2 $\frac{1}{2}$
Augmented 4th (Tritone)	3
Perfect 5th	3 $\frac{1}{2}$
Minor 6th (Augmented 5th)	4
Major 6th	4 $\frac{1}{2}$
Minor 7th	5
Major 7th	5 $\frac{1}{2}$
Octave	6

REMEMBER:

In this lesson when we talk about intervals we are describing the interval from the root of the chord. For example a major Triad consists of 3 notes: 1) the root note, 2) a note that is a major 3rd (or 2 steps) from the root note, 3) a note that is a perfect 5th (or 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ steps) from the root note.

If the root note was G, then the chord would consist of G (Root), B (Major 3rd from the root) and D (perfect 5th from the root).