Seventh Chords

A seventh chord (aka 'dominant seventh') is notated with its root note followed by a '7'. An 'A' seventh chord, for example, would be notated as 'A7'. Below are examples of various seventh chord shapes.

Open Chord Shapes

From any major chord shape, only one note needs to be changed or altered in order to play a seventh chord. For each of the chord shapes shown right, only one note needs to be changed from the standard 'E', 'A', or 'D' chord shapes to play the respective seventh chords.

Moveable Chord Shapes

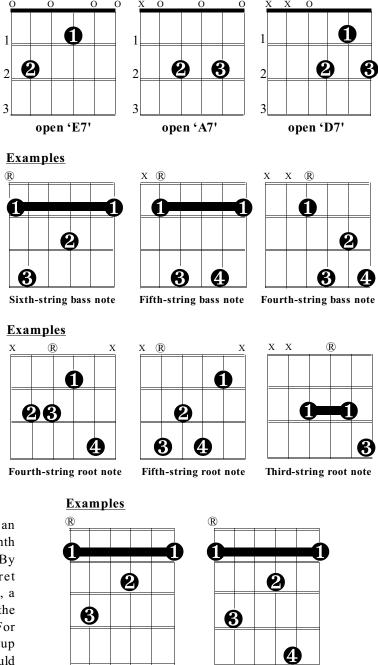
Each of the three open seventh chord shapes from the previous section is *moveable*, with the root or bass note of each chord determining the letter name for each moveable shape. Each moveable chord shape shown right can produce twelve potential seventh chords.

Alternate Chord Shapes

The unique makeup of a seventh chord allows for many *seventh chord voicings* on guitar. Each of the chord shapes shown right is moveable. As a point of reference, the root note of each chord shape is shown above its corresponding string.

Alternate Chord Shapes

The example to the right shows an *alternate chord voicing* for a seventh chord with a sixth-string bass note. By extending the fourth/'pinky' finger to fret an additional note on the second string, a variation in tone or color is added while the chord still remains a seventh chord. For example, the same four notes that makeup an 'A7' chord ('A', 'C \sharp ', 'E', 'G') would be found in both the standard and alternate seventh chord shapes shown right.



Standard shape

(A7 - fifth fret)

Alternate shape (A7 - fifth fret)