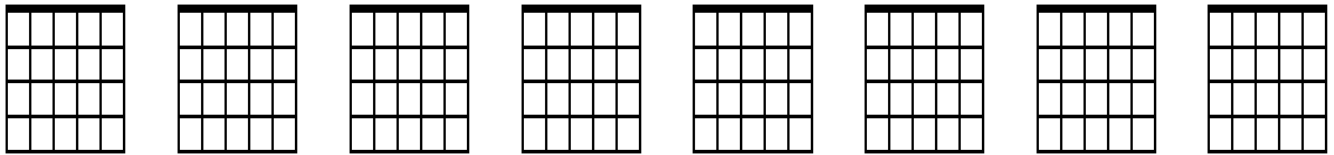


Any Jazz Chord

How to Play the Chords of ANY Jazz Tune Using Just 8 Easy Chord Shapes



by Jared Borkowski

soundguitarlessons.com

Contents

- Introduction 2
- Shell Voicings Explained 3
- Diagrams of Most Common Chords 4
- Diagrams of Less Common Chords 5
- What to Ignore 6
- Put it to the Test 7
- You Can Now Play Every Chord from Any Jazz Tune!. 8

Introduction

Imagine that you're jamming with friends. Things are sounding good and you're feeling pretty confident.

Then someone pulls out a lead-sheet of a jazz tune and asks you to play the chords while they play the melody.

You take a look and you see chords like *Gmaj9(#11)*, *C#min7(b5)*, *F#7(b9,b13)*, and *Bmin(maj9)*.

How would you do?

If your answer is "not so great" then I'm excited for you because you're about to learn a simple system for being able to play the chords of ANY jazz tune using just eight easy, moveable chord shapes.

I know it sounds too good to be true but it's very real.

The tradeoff must be that this is a beginner, stepping-stone method that doesn't sound legit and professional, right?

Nope! The best part is that even the best-of-the-best professional jazz guitarists not only use these shapes all the time, but they often opt for them over more complex and rich sounding chords in order to provide more space and clarity to the music they're playing.

This approach is about making sure that you have *at least two* accurate chord shapes that you can fluently jump to on the guitar for literally any chord type that exists in jazz harmony.

In addition, these chord shapes serve as an important foundation from which to build a knowledge of chord extensions, alterations, and more complex harmonic theory in the future.

I've been teaching this method for almost two decades and I'm excited for you to see how well it works. Good luck and happy practicing! :)

— Jared Borkowski

Shell Voicings Explained

With all extensions and variables included there are over 60 chord quality types, but all of them have an essential core that provides all the information needed for that chord.

In Jazz, these essential versions of chords are often referred to as *shell voicings*.

Shell voicings only include three notes: Typically the root, the 3rd, and the 7th of a chord. This creates a complete sound (and often a cleaner sound) and it's all we need.

The 5th of the chord isn't gone from the music, we just don't need to play it because it's implied.

Using shell voicings we can play any of those 60+ chord quality types accurately with only eight chord shapes by ignoring all the information that isn't 100% necessary.

The idea of not playing all those extra colorful notes might feel disappointing at first, but these simpler voicings are often more desirable to give breathing room to the melodic material which usually fills in the extra harmonic information.

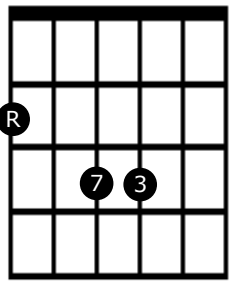
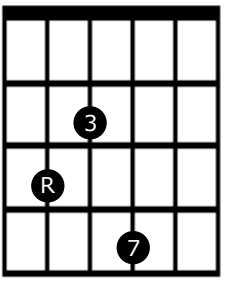
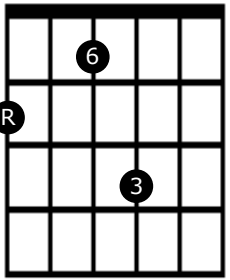
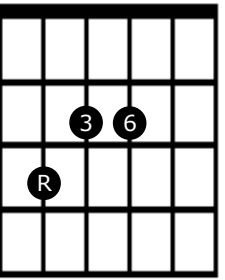
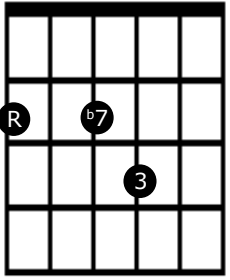
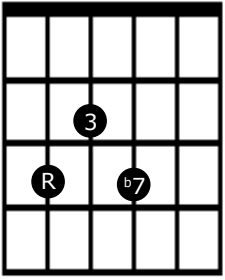
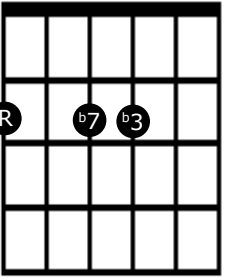
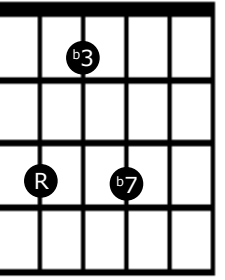
All those extra bits of information in the chord symbols are more there to tell an improviser which scales to use rather than what needs to be included in the accompaniment.

And until we have shell voicings *totally down*, and can easily play a version of *any chord* using them, we shouldn't be trying to play more complex chords anyway.

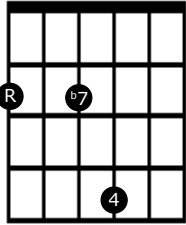
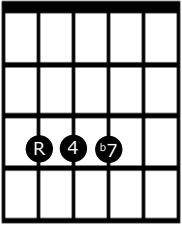
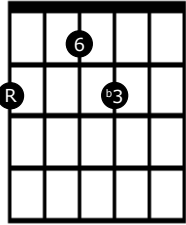
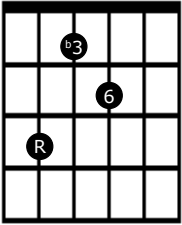
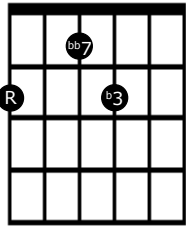
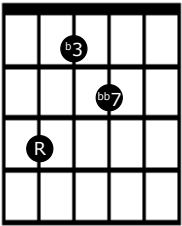
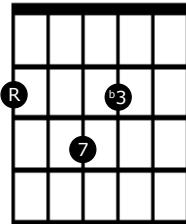
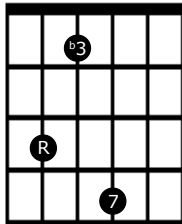
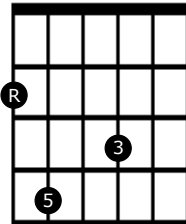
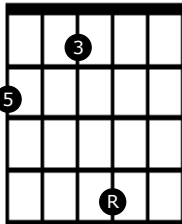
The following two reference pages contain all the chord shapes you need.

Any jazz chord can indeed be played with only eight shapes, but I've included two versions of each chord type so there are sixteen shapes total. I recommend memorizing the eight shapes along the 6th string first—that's everything you need—then adding the 5th string rooted chords later for variety and ease of switching.

Diagrams of Most Common Chords

#	Chord Name & Chord Tones	Chord Symbol Expressions	Shell Shape (6th String Root)	Shell Shape (5th String Root)
1	Major 7 (1, 3, 5, 7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maj7 • M7 • Δ • Δ7 		
2	Major 6 (1, 3, 5, 6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 • maj6 • M6 • Δ6 		
3	Dominant 7 (1, 3, 5, b7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 		
4	Minor 7 (1, b3, 5, b7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • min7 • m7 • -7 		
4	Minor 7 (b5), also called Half-Diminished (1, b3, b5, b7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ø • Ø7 • min7(b5) • m7(b5) • -7(b5) 	Same shapes as minor 7 because we aren't playing the 5ths of chords	

Diagrams of Less Common Chords

#	Chord Name & Chord Tones	Chord Symbol Expressions	Shell Shape (6th String Root)	Shell Shape (5th String Root)
5	Dominant 7 (Sus4) (1, 4, 5, ^b 7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7sus4 7sus 		
6	Minor 6 (1, ^b 3, 5, 6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> min6 m6 -6 		
Min6 and Dim7 use the same shape with different spellings				
6	Diminished 7 (1, ^b 3, ^b 5, ^{bb} 7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o o7 dim dim7 		
7	Minor-Major 7 (1, ^b 3, 5, 7)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> min(maj7) m(M7) -(Δ7) 		
8	Major Triad (1, 3, 5)	Just a letter with nothing else, (ie. 'C')		
Major triads are the only non-shell-voicing used in this method				
4	Minor Triad (1, ^b 3, 5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> min m - 	Interpret any minor triad as Min7	

What to Ignore

In order to not get hung up on complex chords while playing chord changes, ignore the following:

5ths of Chords

Shell voicings already automatically leave out the '5'. Remember, this isn't a cheap shortcut. Leaving the '5' out is a more open and often a more desirable sound.

Slash Chords (ie. G7/B)

The bottom letter of a slash chord is supposed to be played as the lowest note. Don't worry about this and let a bass player do it. No bass player? It's still *totally* fine to ignore it.

Extensions (ie. 9, b9, #9, 11, #11, 13, b13,)

These are not necessary tones. They add color and tension. You can easily learn how to add these later once you thoroughly know shell voicings. If you see any version of '9', '11', or '13' by themselves (like "D9" or "G-11") treat them as if they mean '7'.

Alterations (ie. "alt", b5, #5)

Alterations usually mean that the '5' or '9' of a chord get changed, and we're already ignoring those, so we're all good!

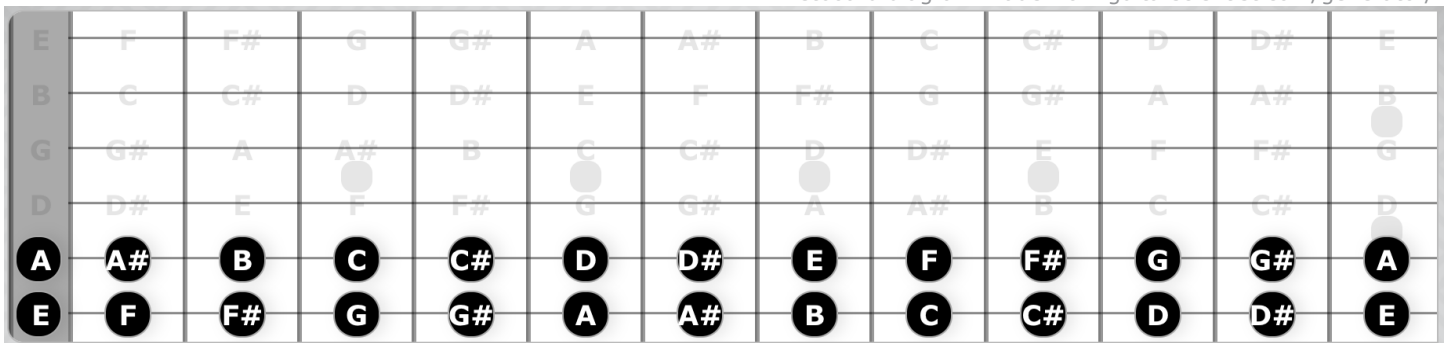
Put it to the Test

You're ready to give this a try.

Use the fretboard diagram below to find chord roots along the 5th and 6th string as needed.

NOTE: '#' (sharp) means that the note is a half step above it's natural version. All the '#' notes in this diagram are also 'b' (flat) versions of the natural note that is above it. If a chord symbol asks for a 'b' chord root, find the natural version of that note and then move it down a fret.

fretboard diagram made from guitarscientist.com/generator/



1. Grab a lead sheet for any jazz tune.
2. Go chord by chord (take your time).
3. Find the root note of the chord your looking for along the 6th or 5th string.
4. Find the chord shape needed from the diagrams on pages 4 and 5.
5. Adhere to the "What to Ignore" list as needed

You'll be able to make *any* chord you find

And these are accurate, legit chords that will work at a gig, in a jam session, for a recording, wherever!

A few famous Jazz songs to try this on:

- Fly Me to the Moon
- The Girl From Ipanema
- Autumn Leaves
- Dream a Little Dream of Me
- My Funny Valentine

You Can Now Play Every Chord from Any Jazz Tune!

Using as few as 8 chord shapes

Any jazz musician wanting to improvise, jam, or sing needs someone to provide the harmony/chords.

Now you have what it takes to do that!

Remember these exact chords are used in this way by serious, professional guitar players all the time. Even when someone has tons of fancy chord knowledge they'll still often opt for using shell voicings exactly in the way that you now know how to do (just because that's the sound they want).

Get comfortable with using these chords and tons of great playing opportunities can become available to you.

If you have any questions, or any suggestions for how to improve the experience of using this material, please send me an email:

jared@soundguitarlessons.com

If you found this useful and you know someone who might also enjoy and benefit from learning this free method, please direct them to:

anyjazzchord.com

Thanks, and happy practicing! :)

- Jared Borkowski