

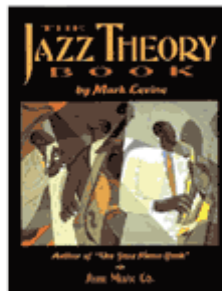


The Jazz Guitar Chord Book

By Dirk Laukens (www.jazzguitar.be)

This ebook shows you how to construct jazz guitar chords and how to play them on guitar. If you'd like to go more advanced, I can wholeheartedly recommend you the [Jazz Theory Book](#).

The Jazz Bible



Click [here](#) for more information...

The Theory

[p.2](#) [Jazz Guitar Chord Theory](#)

The Basic Chords

[p.18](#) [Major Guitar Chord Chart](#)

[p.19](#) [Minor Guitar Chord Chart](#)

[p.20](#) [Dominant Guitar Chord Chart](#)

[p.22](#) [Diminished & Other Chords](#)

More Advanced Chords

[p.23](#) [Advanced Major Chords](#)

[p.25](#) [Advanced Minor Chords](#)

[p.26](#) [Advanced Dominant Chords](#)

Other Jazz Guitar Resources

[p.28](#) [Some Useful Links](#)

[p.28](#) [An Amazing Jazz Guitar Course](#)

You are allowed to distribute this free e-book to others. It may however not be sold, edited, reprinted in electronic, print, web or other format without express written permission and without mentioning the author and www.jazzguitar.be Contact: dirk@jazzguitar.be

Jazz Guitar Chord Theory

In this tutorial I'll teach you how guitar chords are built and how this translates to the guitar.

Let's get started with the **C major scale**:

C Major Scale	C	D	E	F	G	A	B
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

All chords are based on **thirds** and there are 2 kinds of thirds (or 3rds) :

minor third	interval of 3 half notes	symbol : b3
major third	interval of 4 half notes	symbol : 3

Let's start by stacking 2 thirds on the first note (1) of the C major scale:

C	E	G
1	3	5

The result is a C major triad or C. From C to E is a major third and from E to G a minor third : every major chord has this structure. The thing to remember here is what we call the **chord formula**:

Chord formula for **major** chords: **1 3 5**

Something other things to remember:

- Another name for the 1 of a chord is the **root**.
- A triad is a chord with 3 notes
- A seventh chord is a chord with 4 or more notes

Let's do the same for note 2 of the C major scale:

D F A
1 b3 5

The result is a D minor triad or Dm.

From D to F is a minor third and from F to A is a major third : every minor chord has this structure.

Chord formula for **minor** chords: 1 b3 5

Let's skip a few notes and stack thirds on the 7 of the C major scale:

B D F
1 b3 b5

The result is a B diminished triad or Bdim.

From B to D is a minor third and from D to F is also a minor third : every diminished triad chord has this structure.

Chord formula for **diminished** chords: 1 b3 b5

I'll summarize and complete the other notes of the C major scale:

	Notes	Formula	Chord Name	Symbol
1	C E G	1 3 5	C major	C
2	D F A	1 b3 5	D minor	Dm or D- or Dmin
3	E G B	1 b3 5	E minor	Em or E- or Emin
4	F A C	1 3 5	F major	F
5	G B D	1 3 5	G major	G
6	A C E	1 b3 5	A minor	Am or A- or Amin
7	B D F	1 b3 b5	B diminished	Bdim or B°



[Band in a Box 2007](#) – This **intelligent automatic accompaniment program** for your computer allows you to practice playing chords with a **virtual band!**

[Click here for more information...](#)

Now, there are 2 ways to construct chords:

1. The first way starts from the **major scale**.

1. Find the **major scale** of a given key. If you don't know how to do this, learn it here: [How To Construct a Major Scale](#). If you need to find the notes of a Gm chord then find the G major scale : G A B C D E F#
2. Construct the **major chord** : 1 3 5. In our G major example that would be : G B D
3. Apply the **chord formula** to the major chord. The chord formula for minor chords is 1 b3 5. This means the 3rd of the major chord has to be lowered half a note : G Bb D

2. The second way involves some memorization and will be explained after we covered **seventh chords** and **tensions**.

Let's have a look at seventh chords, chords that contain 4 or more different notes and that are used a lot in jazz music.

We start again with the **C major scale** :

C Major Scale	C D E F G A B
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

The construction of seventh chords follows the same principle as the construction of triads : stacking 3rds on top of each other. Triads are made by stacking 2 thirds on top of the root. Seventh chords are constructed by stacking 3 thirds on top of the root.

Let's stack 3 thirds on the 1 of the C major scale :

C E G B
1 3 5 7

The result is a C major 7 chord or Cmaj7.

From C to E is a major third, from E to G is a minor third and from G to B is a major third : every major 7 chord has this structure.

Chord formula for **major 7** chords: **1 3 5 7**

Let's do the same for the 2nd note of the C major scale:

D F A C
1 b3 5 b7

The result is a D minor chord or Dmin7.

From D to F is a minor third, from F to A is a major third and from A to C is a minor third: every minor 7 chord has this structure.

Chord formula for **minor 7** chords: 1 b3 5 b7

Let's skip some notes and stack 3 thirds on top of the 5th note of the C major scale:

G B D F

1 3 5 b7

The result is a G dominant 7 chord or G7.

From G to B is a major third, from B to D is a minor third and from D to F is a minor third : every dominant 7 chord has this structure.

Chord formula for **dominant 7** chords: 1 3 5 b7

We'll skip some more notes and stack 3 thirds on top of the 7th note of the C major scale:

B D F A

1 b3 b5 b7

The result is a B half diminished chord or Bm7b5.

From B to D is a minor third, from D to F is a minor third and from F to A is a major third : every half diminished 7 chord has this structure.

Chord formula for **half diminished 7** chords: **1 b3 b5 b7**

I'll summarize and complete the other notes of the C major scale :

	Notes	Formula	Chord Name	Symbol
1	C E G B	1 3 5 7	C major 7	Cmaj7
2	D F A C	1 b3 5 b7	D minor 7	Dm7 or D-7 or Dmin7
3	E G B D	1 b3 5 b7	E minor 7	Em7 or E-7 or Emin7
4	F A C E	1 3 5 7	F major 7	Fmaj7
5	G B D F	1 3 5 b7	G dominant	G7
6	A C E G	1 b3 5 b7	A minor 7	Am7 or A-7 or Amin7
7	B D F A	1 b3 b5 b7	B half diminished	Bm7b5 or Bmin7b5



[The Brazilian Guitar Book](#) – Learn how to play authentic Brazilian guitar. Includes CD and fingerboard diagrams for people who are not great readers.

[Click here for more information...](#)

Let's have a look at a phenomenon called tensions.

Tensions are notes that are part of a chord, but are **not chord tones** (1 3 5 7).

Let's have a look again at the C major scale :

C Major Scale	C D E F G A B
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

If we construct a chord on C, we get a Cmaj7 :

C E G B
1 3 5 7

There are 3 notes left in the major scale that are **not chord tones** : **2, 4** and **6**. If we add these tones to the chord, they become **tensions**. Most of the time we play tensions an **octave higher** than the chord tones because else they might get in the way of the chord tones (the chord would sound 'muddy' most of the time). That's also the way they are notated: 2 becomes 9 ($2+7(\text{one octave})=9$), 4 becomes 11 and 6 becomes 13.

So if we add the 2 to Cmaj7 we get Cmaj9

C E G B D
1 3 5 7 9

The two other notes that are left, the **4** and **6**, are special cases in combination with a **major chord**. They are **avoid notes**: notes that are a half tone above a chord tone. Avoid notes sound **disharmonic** so they are almost never used.

If we have a look at the 4 of the C major scale we notice that it is a half note

above the e, what is the 3rd of Cmaj7. So the 4 (f) is an **avoid note** for Cmaj7.

A solution for this is to raise the 4 half a note : f becomes f# and is no longer an avoid note and the basic scale is no longer C major, but C Lydian (see [jazz guitar modes](#)). This chord would be called Cmaj7(#11).

The 6 is also a special case in combination with major chords. Most of the times when we add a 6 to a major chord, the 7 is omitted and there is no octave added to the 6. This is because the 6 and 7 might get in each other's way.

So if we add the 6 to C major we get a C6 :

C	E	G	A
1	3	5	6

The same goes for **6** in combination with a **minor chord** : the 7 is omitted. If we add the 6 to Dm7 we get Dm6 (Look out : the 6 is no longer A because the root of the chord changed to D. The six is now B (D E F# G A **B** C#):

D	F	A	B
1	b3	5	6

The **4** is **not an avoid note** in combination with **minor chords** because it is two half tones above the b3 and not one half. We can safely add the 4 to Dm7 and we get Dm11:

D	F	A	C	G
1	b3	5	b7	11

The **4** is also a special case in combination with **dominant chords**. When a 4 is added to a dominant chord, the 3 is omitted. Chords like these are called **sus4 chords** and often function as a delay for a dominant chord.

Sus4 chords often come with a 9 on the guitar :

G	C	D	F	A
1	4	5	b7	9

There's also a thing called altered tensions (b9, #9, b5, b13). This topic is covered later in another lesson.

The different chord types and their tensions :

Chord Type	Added Note	Symbol	
Major	2	Cmaj9	
	4 #4	/ Cmaj7#11	avoid note. #11 comes out of lydian scale
	6	C6	omitted 7
Minor	2	Cm9	
	4	Cm11	
	6	Cm6	omitted 7
Dominant	2 b2 #2	C9 C7(b9) C7#9	b2 and #2 come out of altered scale
	4	C7sus4	
	6 b6	C13 C7(b13)	b6 comes out of altered scale



[The Serious Jazz Practice Book](#) – A unique plan for mastering scales, chords, intervals and various melodic patterns.

[Click here for more information...](#)

Here's a summary of the **chord formulas** we covered until now + some additional chord types :

Chord Type	Chord Formula
Major Triad	1 3 5
Minor Triad	1 b3 5
Diminished Triad	1 b3 b5
Augmented Triad	1 3 #5
Major 7	1 3 5 7
Minor 7	1 b3 5 b7
Dominant 7	1 3 5 b7
Half Diminished 7	1 b3 b5 b7
Diminished 7	1 b3 b5 bb7
Augmented 7	1 3 #5 b7
Suspended 4	1 4 5 b7
minor/major 7	1 b3 5 7

Let's look at a shortcut for constructing chords:

The first step is memorizing the **chords** and **chord tones** of the **C major scale** and the **chord formula's**:

Cmaj7	C E G B
Dm7	D F A C
Em7	E G B D
Fmaj7	F A C E
G7	G B D F
Am7	A C E G
Bm7b5	B D F A

1. You must be able to picture the chord types and chord tones of C major without thinking.
2. Now that you know the chords of C major, it's easy to find chords of other keys.

For example: to find the chord tones of Cm7:

1. You know the chord tones of Cmaj7: C E G B
2. You know the chord formula of Cmaj7: 1 3 5 7
3. You know the chord formula of minor 7: 1 b3 5 b7
4. Adapt the chord tones of Cmaj7 to the formula of minor 7: bring the 3 and the 7 a half note down
5. Conclusion: the chord tones of Cm7 are: C Eb G Bb

Example 2: the chord tones of Ddim7:

6. You know the chord tones of Dm7: D F A C
7. You know the formula of Dm7: 1 b3 5 b7
8. You know the formula of diminished 7: 1 b3 b5 bb7
9. Adapt the chord tones of Dm7 to the formula of diminished 7: bring the 5 and the 7 a half note down
10. Conclusion: the chord tones of Ddim7 are: D F Ab B

Example 3: the chord tones of F#7:

11. You know the chord tones of Fmaj7: F A C E
12. To find the chord tones of F#maj7 you just have to raise each chord tone half a note: F# A# C# E#
13. You know the formula of major 7: 1 3 5 7
14. You know the formula of dominant 7: 1 3 5 b7
15. Adapt the chord tones of F#maj7 to the formula of dominant 7 : bring the 7 a half note down
16. Conclusion: the chord tones of F#7 are: F# A# C# E

Now you know how to find the notes of a chord, but how do you translate this to the **guitar**?

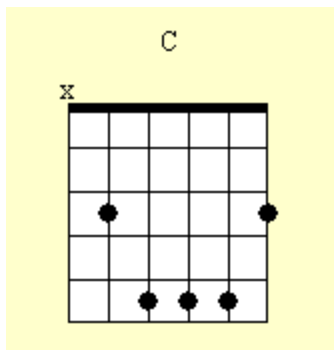
One thing you need to know is that not every chord tone is equally important :

- **3** and **7** are the **important** notes of a chord because they decide what kind of chord we are dealing with.
- The **1** is the **least important** note, because it is played by the **bass player** most of the time.
- The **5** is **not so important** either and can be disturbing sometimes.
- **Tensions** add **color** and **interest** to a chord, so it's preferable to use tensions instead of 1 and 5

Another thing you need to know is that **1 half note** equals **one fret** on the **guitar**.

Let's have a look at some examples:

We'll start with a C triad: C E G (1 3 5)



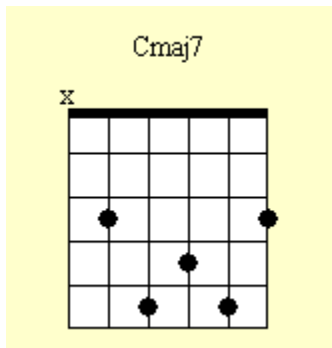
X15135 : C

from left to right (from low E string to high E string) we have:

- X: the low E-string is not played
- 1: the 1 or root of the chord is played on the A-string
- 5: the 5th of the chord is played on the D-string
- 1: again the root, but now on the G-string
- 3: the third is played on the B-string
- 5: the 5th is played again, but this time on the high E-string

You see that it is ok to duplicate chord tones, like the 1 and the 5 in our example, but this may sound a bit sluggish.

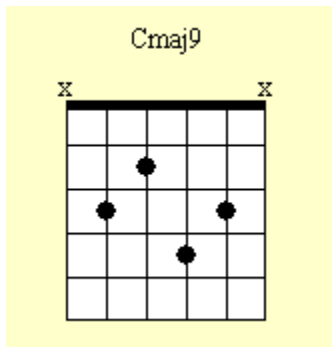
This chord doesn't sound very jazzy though, let's spice it up a bit:



X15735 : Cmaj7

Instead of duplicating the root on the G-string, we exchanged it for the 7 of the chord.

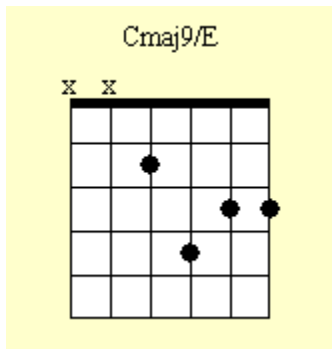
Now let's add some color :



X1379X : Cmaj9

We exchanged the 5th on the D-string for the 3rd and we changed the 3rd on the B-string to a 9.

This would be a nice chord if you're playing bossa nova, solo guitar or in duo setting, but if you play with a bass player and you don't want to get in his way, it's better to omit the root and to play on the higher strings only:



XX3795 : Cmaj9/E

Instead of playing the root of the chord, we now play the 5th on the high E-string.

A **chord** like this is called a **chord inversion**: a chord that has a note other than the root in the bass.

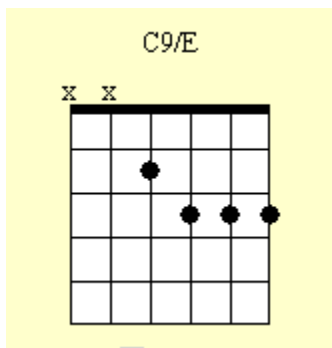
There are three types of **chord inversions**:

- First inversion: 3rd in the bass
- Second inversion: 5th in the bass
- Third inversion: 7th in the bass

In our example we have got a Cmaj9 chord with the 3rd (E) in the bass.

Now what needs to happen if we want to make this chord **dominant**? Simple: the 7 has to go a half note down (major is 1 3 5 7, dominant is 1 3 5 b7).

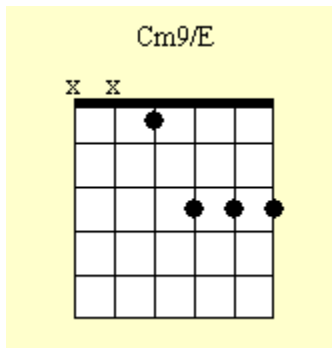
Have a look at the chord diagram:



XX3b795 : C9/E

And if we want to make this chord **minor**?

Starting from the dominant chord we have to lower the 3rd with half a note, as you can see here:



XXb3b795 : Cm9/E

Here's an exercise for you: I give you some chords and you need to find the chord notes (the solutions are on the next page) :

For example : Fm7 : F Ab C Eb

Now it's your turn :

Gm7 :

Abmaj7 :

C#maj7 :

A9sus4 :

B7 :

Edim7 :

Gdim7 :

D7b9 :

D#m7b5 :

Dmaj7 :

The solutions to the chord exercises:

Gm7 : G Bb D F
Abmaj7 : Ab C Eb G
C#maj7 : C# E# G# B#
A9sus4 : A D E G B
B7 : B D# F# A
Edim7 : E G Bb Db
Gdim7 : G Bb Db E
D7b9 : D F# A C Eb
D#m7b5 : D# F# A C#
Dmaj7 : D F# A C#

Did you pass the test? If not I suggest you reread the entire tutorial once again very slowly and make sure you understand all the parts.

That was it for the theoretical part. If you'd like to know more about jazz music theory, there's a book I can strongly recommend you (it's the jazz theory bible): [The Jazz Theory book](#) by Mark Levine

The next part is all about jazz chords on the guitar: the basic jazz guitar chord charts. These charts are essential knowledge and a good starting point for beginning jazz guitarists.

The part after that is about more advanced chords.

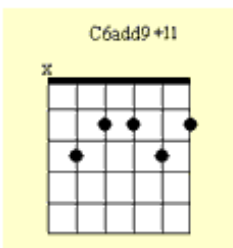
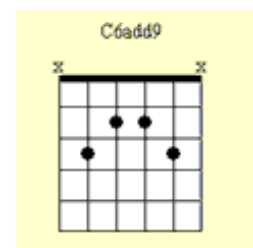
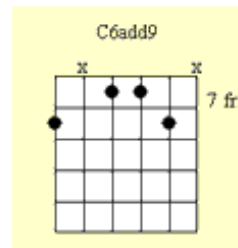
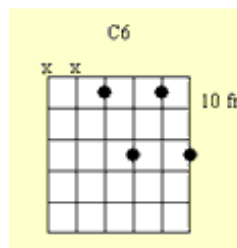
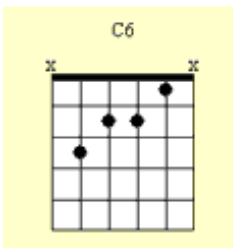
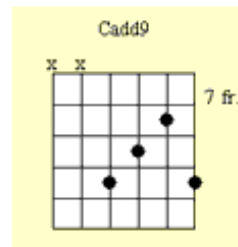
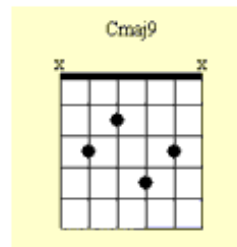
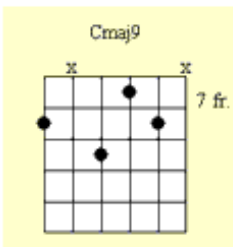
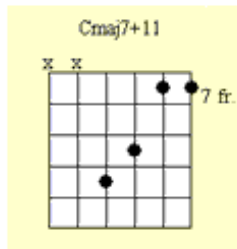
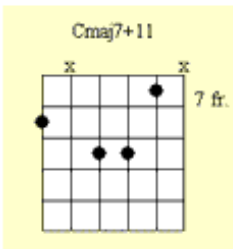
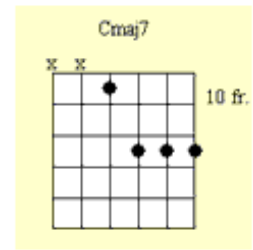
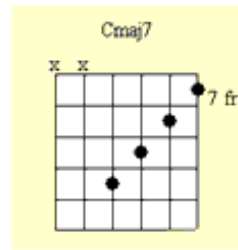
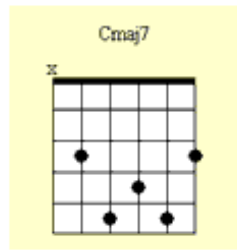
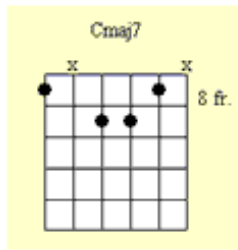
The best way to memorize chords is by actually using them. [Here's a list of the most popular jazz chord progressions](#). By playing chord progressions you see the chords in relation to each other, what makes it easier to memorize them.

The next step is playing jazz standards. For the most popular and most played jazz standards you'll have to buy yourself a [Real book](#), the bible of every jazz musician.

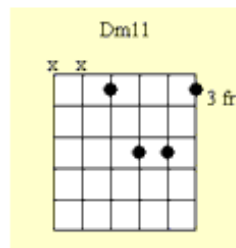
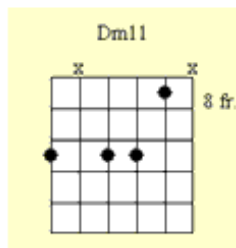
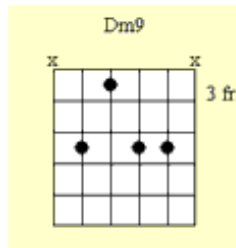
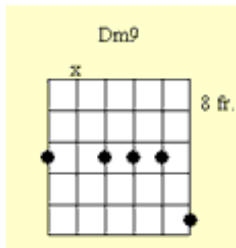
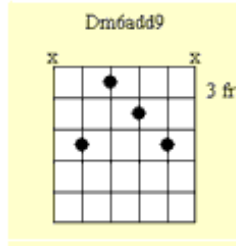
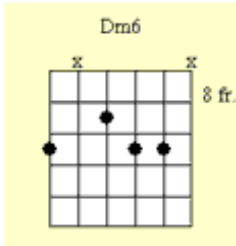
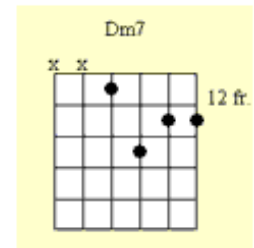
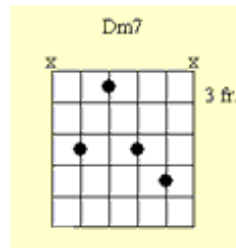
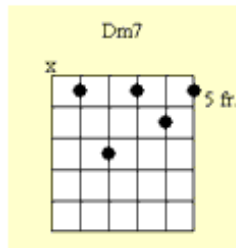
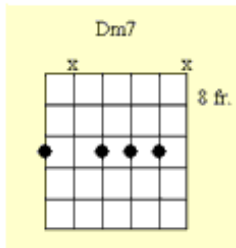
I suggest you flip the page and get your fingers going.

Enjoy!

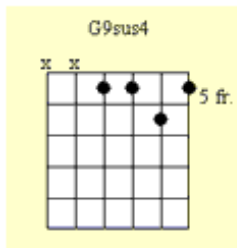
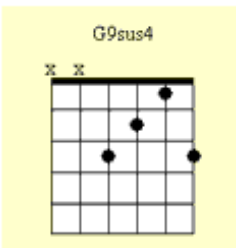
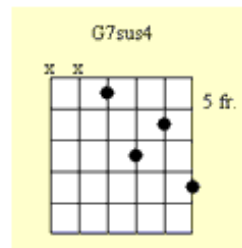
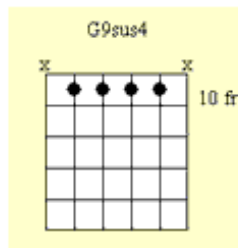
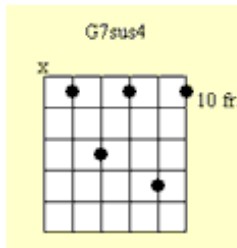
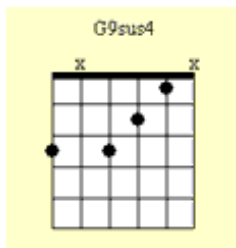
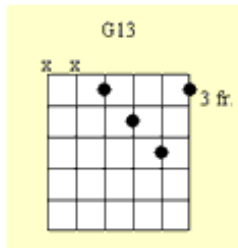
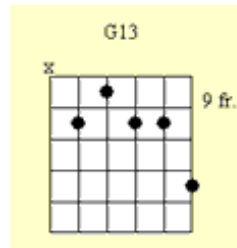
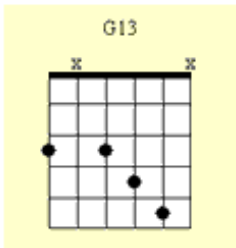
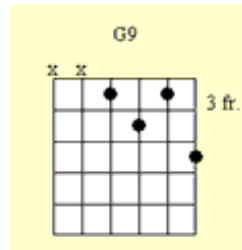
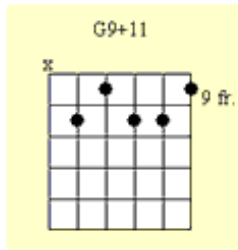
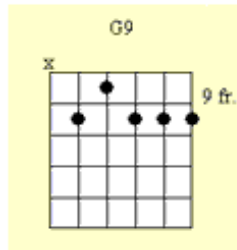
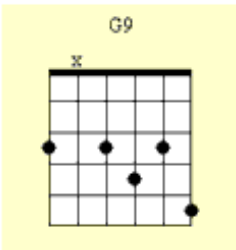
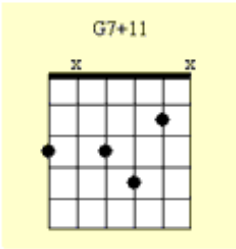
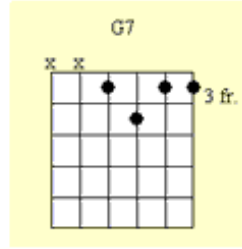
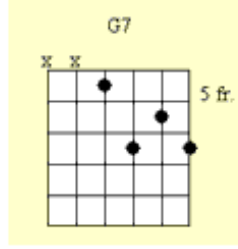
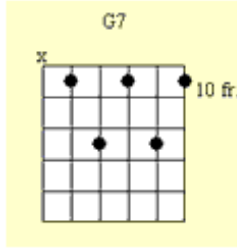
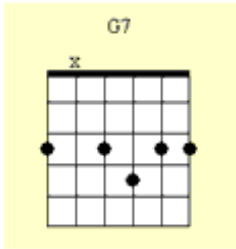
Major Chord Chart

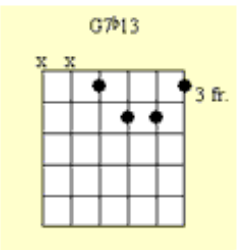
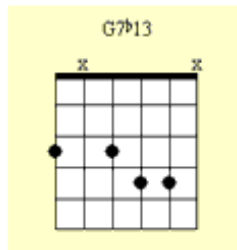
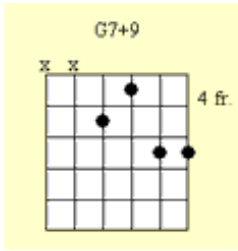
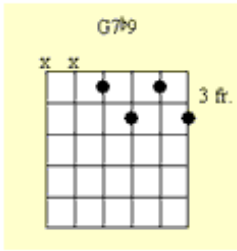
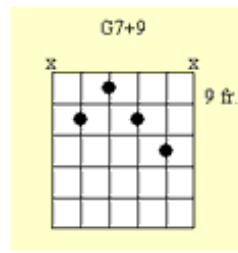
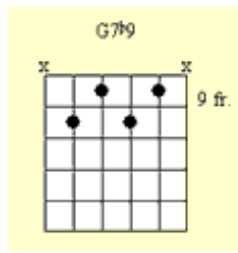
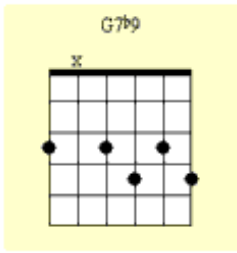


Minor Chord Chart

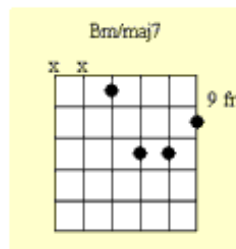
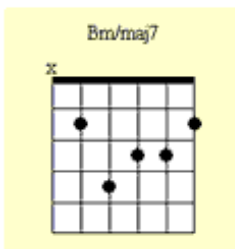
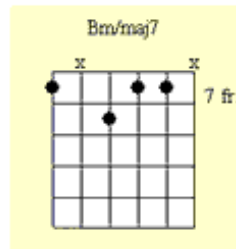
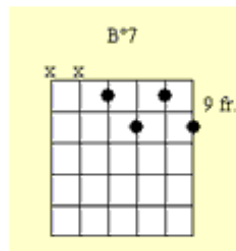
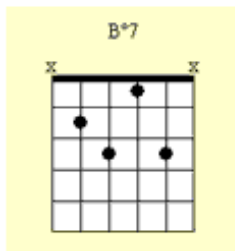
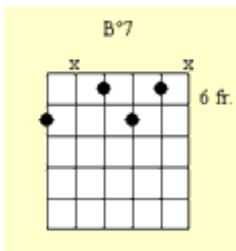
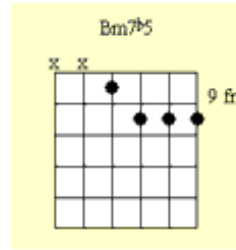
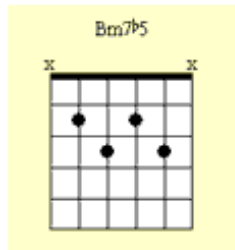
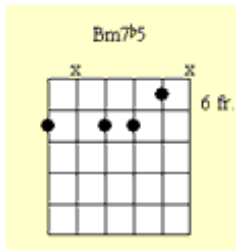


Dominant Chord Chart

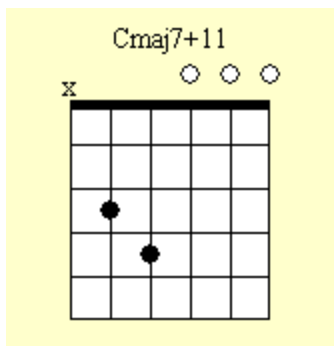
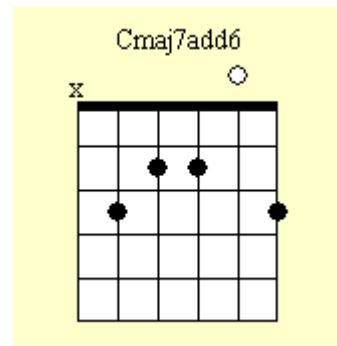
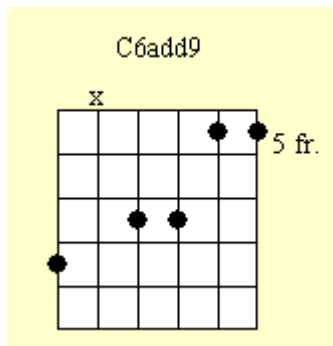
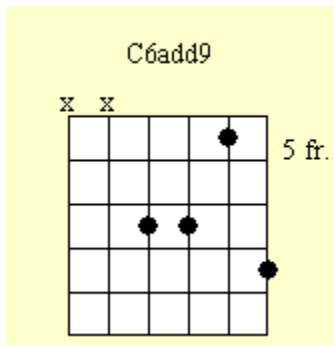
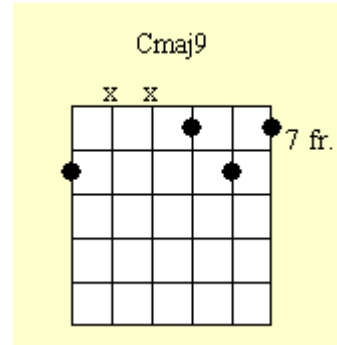
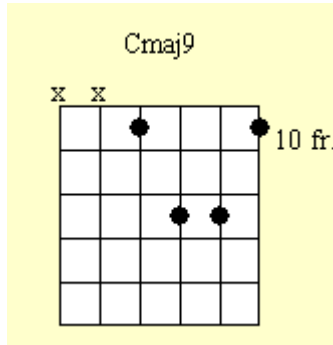
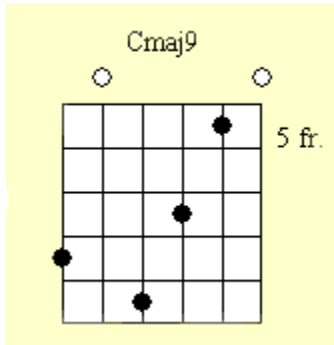
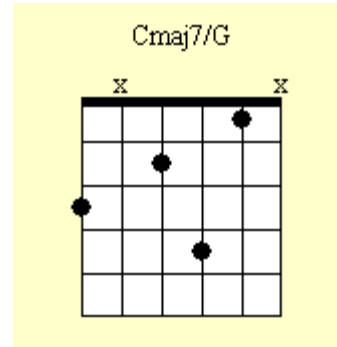
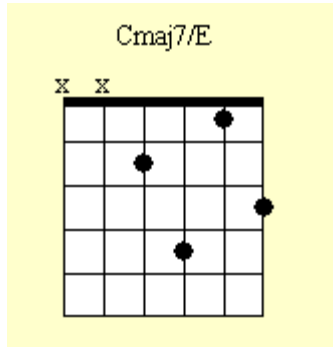
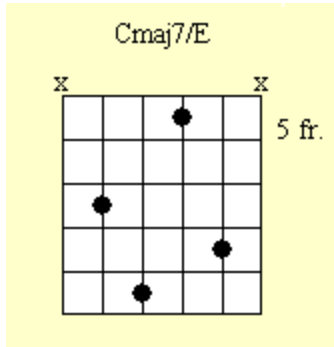


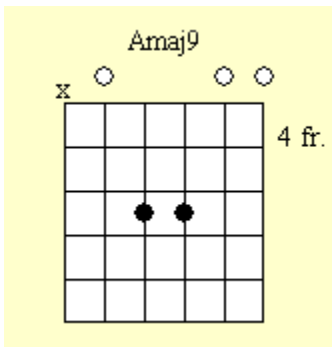
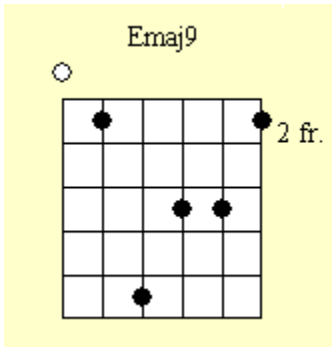
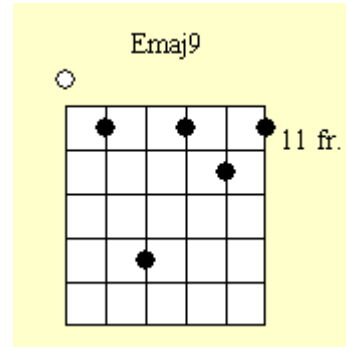
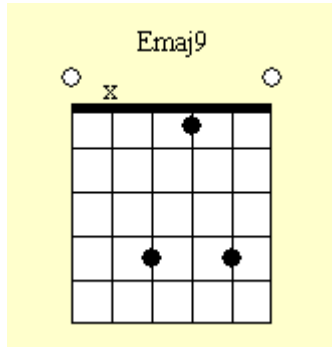
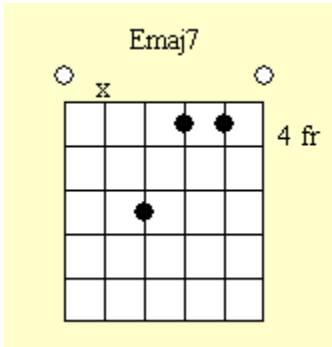
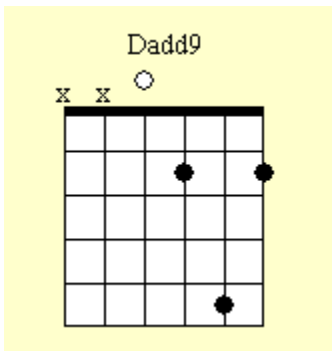


Diminished, Half Diminished & m/maj7

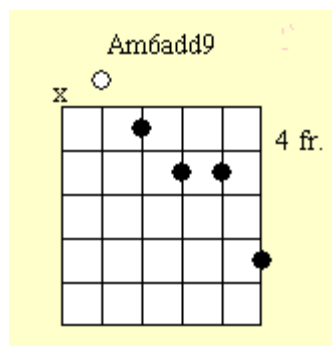
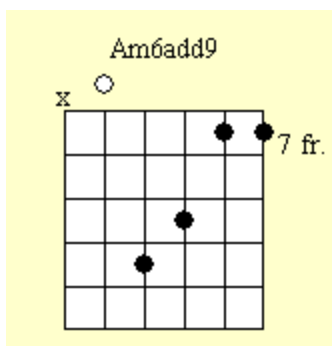
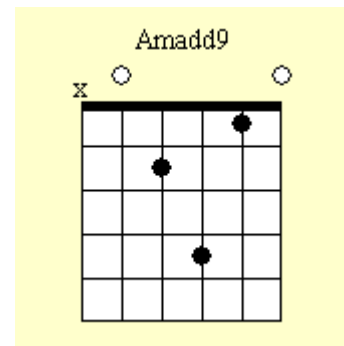
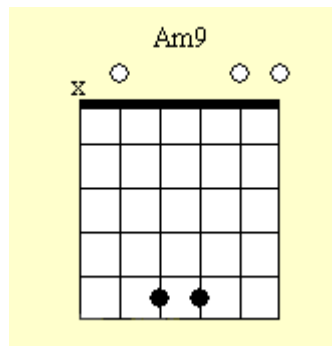
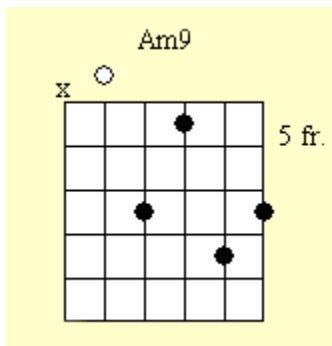
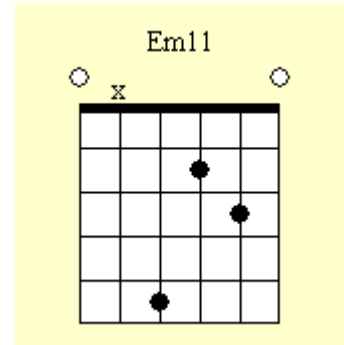
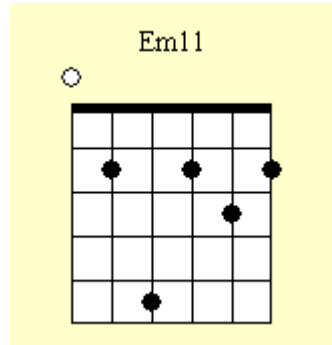
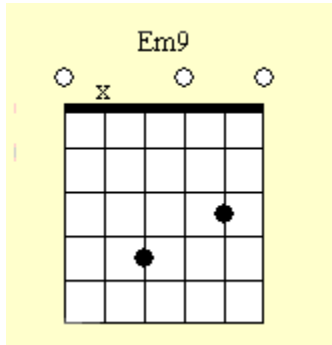
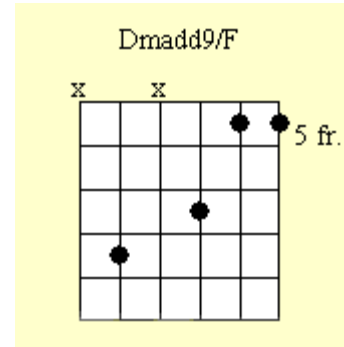
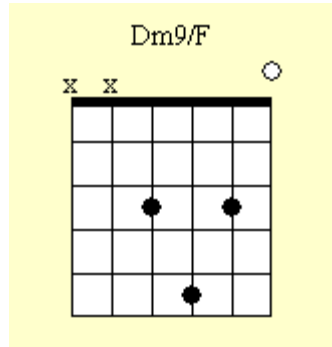
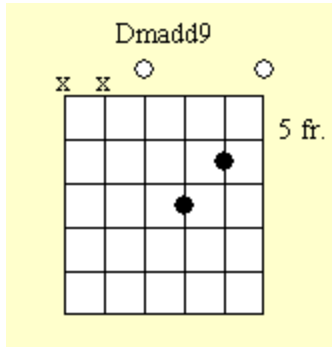


Advanced Major Chords



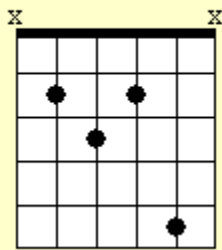


Advanced Minor Chords

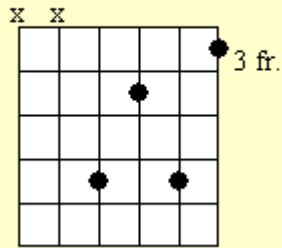


Advanced Dominant Chords

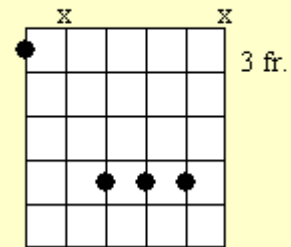
G13/B



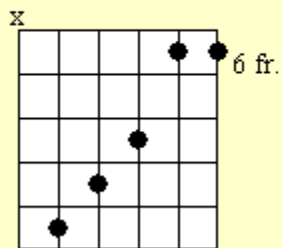
G7b9



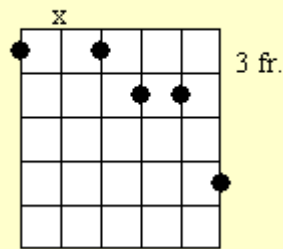
G7(b9,b5)



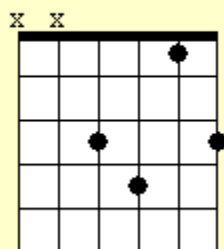
G7b13+9



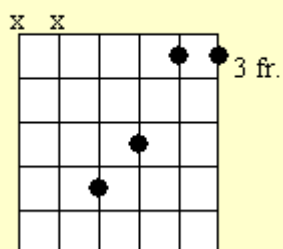
G7b13+9



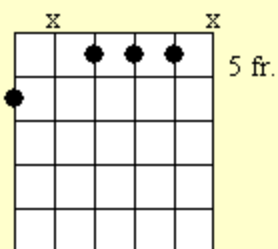
G7sus4



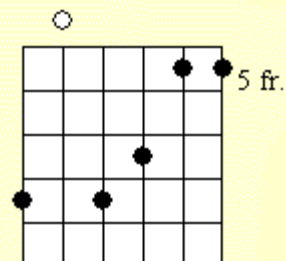
G7sus4b9



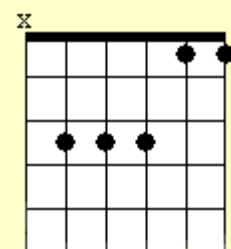
C7/Bb

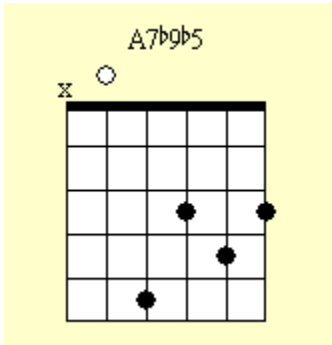
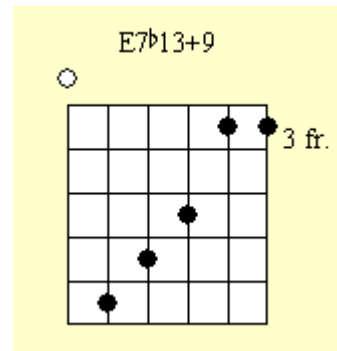
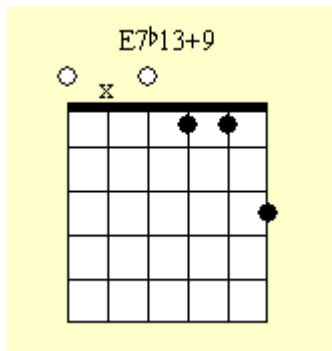
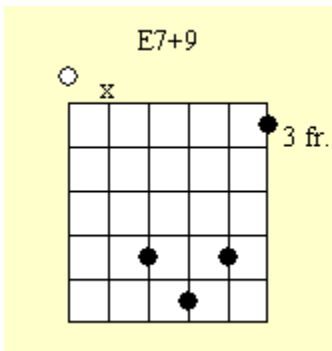


C13

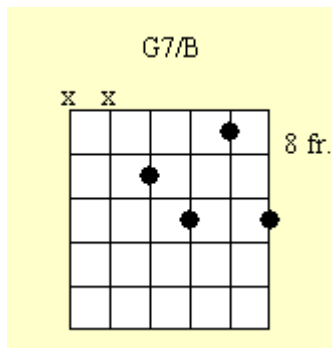
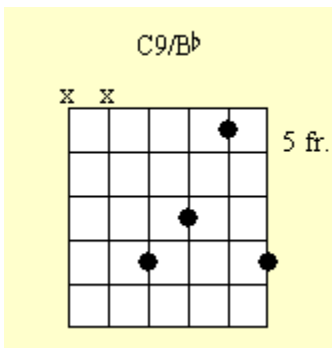


C7sus4





And here are two funk chords to finish:



Useful Resources

Other Jazz Guitar Chord Tutorials at Jazzguitar.be :

[The Jazz Guitar Chord in Fourths](#): about the construction of quartal voicings

[Basic Chord Inversions](#): basic chord voicings & inversions

[Blues Chord Progressions & Variations](#): variations on the 12 bar blues

[Jazz Chord Progressions](#): the most popular chord progressions in jazz

[Tritone Chord Substitution](#): theory, diagrams & examples

[Blues Chord Progressions](#): variations on the 12 bar blues progression

[Rhythm Changes](#): a guide to rhythm changes on the guitar

[Walking Bass](#): learn to walk on your guitar

[Steely Dan Chords](#): the mu major chord

Recommended eBook:

[Play What You Hear](#) by Chris Standring



A lot of guitarists will tell you they '**play by ear**', but the question is, do they? **No!** My experience is that a lot of guitarists who claim to play by ear actually play by following their fingers. By playing the same things over and over again they developed a **routine** that got stuck in their fingers.

Does this sound familiar?

The problem is most guitar books and courses don't teach you how to play what you hear. But here's the good news: Chris Standring's '[Play What You Hear](#)' jazz guitar course does exactly what the title says, teach you how to play what you hear.

This **eBook** teaches you to hear melodic phrases in relation to an harmonic background, rather than have to rely on rehearsed shapes and patterns.

Discover...

The Right Way To Learn How To Improvise

['Play What You Hear'](#) is the quickest and easiest way to learn how to play what you hear inside your head. The ebook is divided into 4 comprehensive sections:

- **Part one** of the course concentrates on **melody**
 - guitar scales and their use

- diatonic sounds and their relative chords
- visualizing harmony
- melodic patterns
- much more...
- **Part two** is about **harmony**
 - embellishing chords
 - voice leading
 - chordal accompaniment
 - much more...
- **Part three** talks about **playing chord changes**
 - the bebop approach
 - the diminished scale
 - various types of resolutions (b9 resolution, #5#9 resolution, ...)
 - turnarounds
 - the melodic minor scale
 - the blues scale
 - much more...
- **Part four** is about **phrasing**
 - how to develop melodic phrases over moving harmonies
 - motifs
 - themes and variations
 - sequential resolutions
 - tritone substitution
 - real life examples where you can put to use the what you have just learned
 - much more...

All concepts in the book are clearly explained and illustrated:

- interactive diagrams
- **guitar tabs**
- standard notation
- audio examples
- play-along audio tracks

'Play What You Hear' comes in 2 versions:

- download version
- cd-rom version

Both versions have a **infinite money-back warranty!**

Listen what other guitarists say about ['Play What You Hear'](#):

"Chris - Your course is simply the best!!!!!!! I appreciate the time you spent on attention to detail, making it fun, making it real and most of all it holds your

*attention. A great boon for those serious but struggling like me. I, like many, have stacks of guitar course books that I briefly managed to get into but then they went on to make great dust collectors. What really encouraged me to buy your course is that you have such a high spirit and great attitude for the art of music and it shows in the way you've designed this course, and on top of that when I first went to your web site and heard you playing, well, you know who I thought it was..... George Benson sounds like you; not the other way around. Well done!" - **Garland Tabb** PWYH v.2.3 student*

*"The best lessons I ever had in such a short amount of time! The CD has greatly improved my understanding of jazz and sight reading and improvising and knowing the fretboard. It's really given me a big boost of confidence - yours sincerely **Steven Kuno**th - PWYH v.2.0 student.*

*"Dear Chris, I've been working with your course for a few weeks and am really pleased with it. It provides a lot of the structure I was looking for, seems comprehensive, and lets me control the pace. The embedded tunes are a great asset as well. On top of all that, I was stunned at your responsiveness to personal emails--a bonus I hadn't anticipated! All in all I'm having a fine time. The course delivers far beyond the amount I paid for it. I'd recommend it highly!" Thanks" **Tod Schneider** PWYH V.2.0 course student*

'Play What You Hear' has the ability to take your guitar playing to the next level. Highly **recommended!**

[More information about 'Play What Your Hear'...](#)