

JAZZ GUITAR CHORDS

**STRUCTURE AND
CONSTRUCTION**

#1 JOB FOR JAZZ GUITAR

- ▶ Most of the time, playing chords will be the most important job for your jazz ensemble guitar player
- ▶ For many younger players, jazz chords can seem complicated or overwhelming
- ▶ Even the best educators sometimes struggle to help their guitar players get the right chords under their fingers

CHALLENGES WITH YOUNG JAZZ GUITAR PLAYERS

- ▶ Guitar is a unique instrument, and the learning process for it can be a little bit different
- ▶ Many guitar players (even pretty good ones) learn “grip based” chords, scales, and arpeggios
- ▶ They have a finger pattern they know will work, but they don’t necessarily know what makes it work
- ▶ With a little coaching you can help them understand what they are playing, and improve their theory knowledge at the same time

TOOLS FOR YOUR JAZZ ENSEMBLE GUITARIST

- ▶ Basic 3 note jazz guitar chord structures that your guitar player can learn quickly
- ▶ How to alter these structures to create any basic chord quality you need for your repertoire
- ▶ Adding color tones and extensions to address specific chord types
- ▶ Rootless chord structures
- ▶ Voice leading options

ESSENTIAL CHORD VOICINGS PART 1

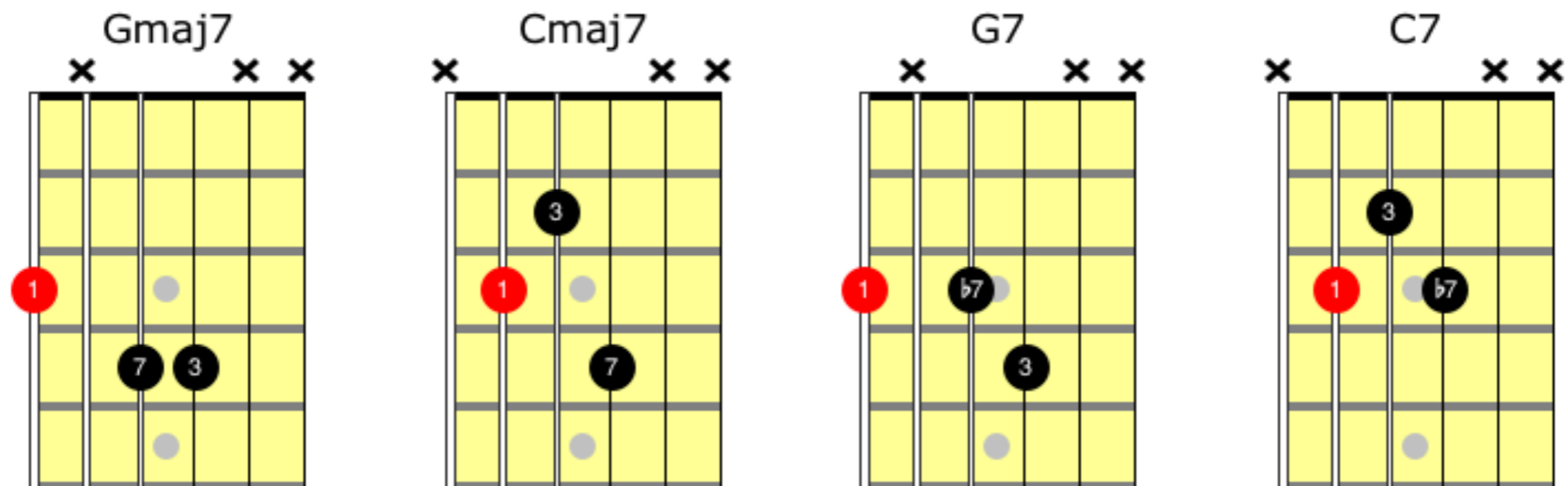
- ▶ **You're going to see 2 different chord structures for each chord quality**
 - ▶ One rooted on the 6th string
 - ▶ One rooted on the 5th string

- ▶ **Learning these chord voicings will help your guitar player**
 - ▶ Play the appropriate sounds throughout your repertoire
 - ▶ Start to understand how chord construction works
 - ▶ Develop the ability to alter their chord structures to get the chord they need

HOW TO READ CHORD DIAGRAMS

▶ All voicings are shown as chord diagrams

- ▶ Strings are shown with the 6th string on the far left, 1st string on the far right
- ▶ X = Don't play this string
- ▶ Numbers inside dots are chord tones (1, 3, 5, 7)
- ▶ The red dot is the root of the chord

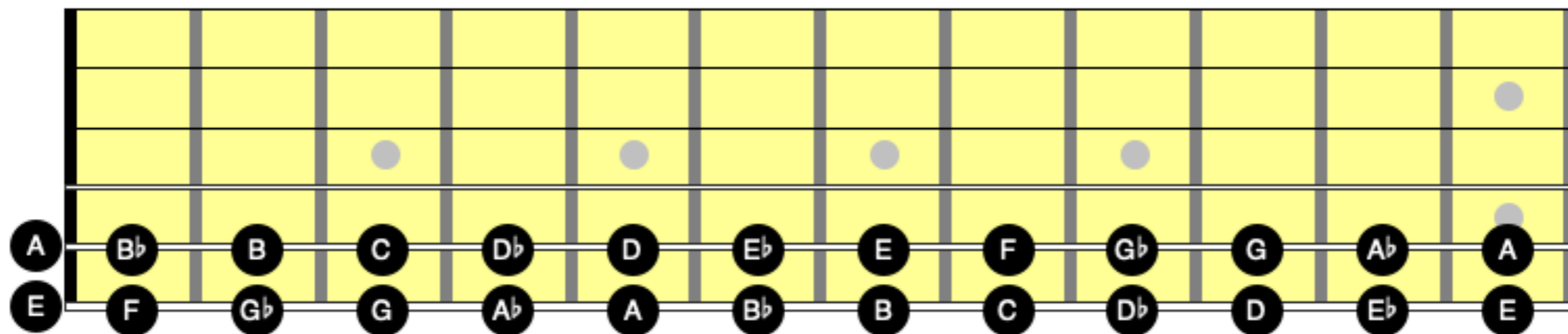


ESSENTIAL CHORD VOICINGS PART 2

▶ Movable voicings

- ▶ The root note determines what chord you are playing
- ▶ You can change key by moving the chord to a different fret
- ▶ Your student just needs to learn the notes on the 6th string, and the 5th string

Fretboard Map: 6th and 5th Strings



PLANNING CHORDS AND FRETBOARD MAPS

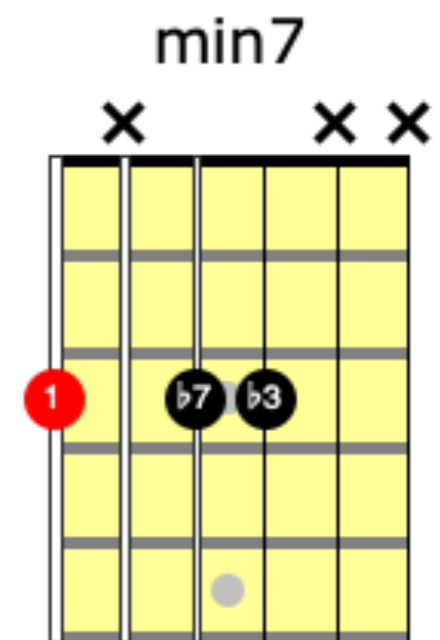
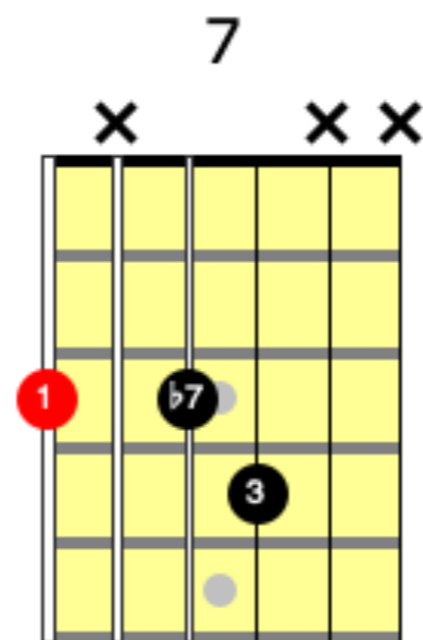
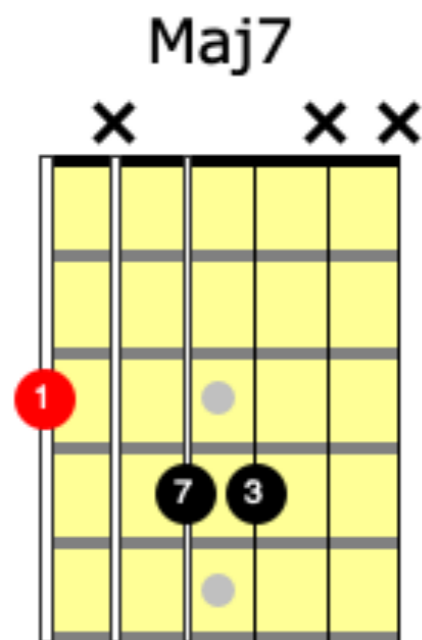
- ▶ **If your guitar player is new to jazz, it will be helpful for them to plan out what chords they are going to use throughout a song**
 - ▶ Help them get used to finding the right starting note for a given chord
 - ▶ Over time they will be able to find the right chords as they read through a chart

- ▶ **Fretboard maps will be a helpful resource for your students, especially at first**
 - ▶ Fretboard maps show you where notes are located on a given string and fret
 - ▶ It's like having training wheels for the notes on the guitar neck

BASIC JAZZ GUITAR CHORD STRUCTURES

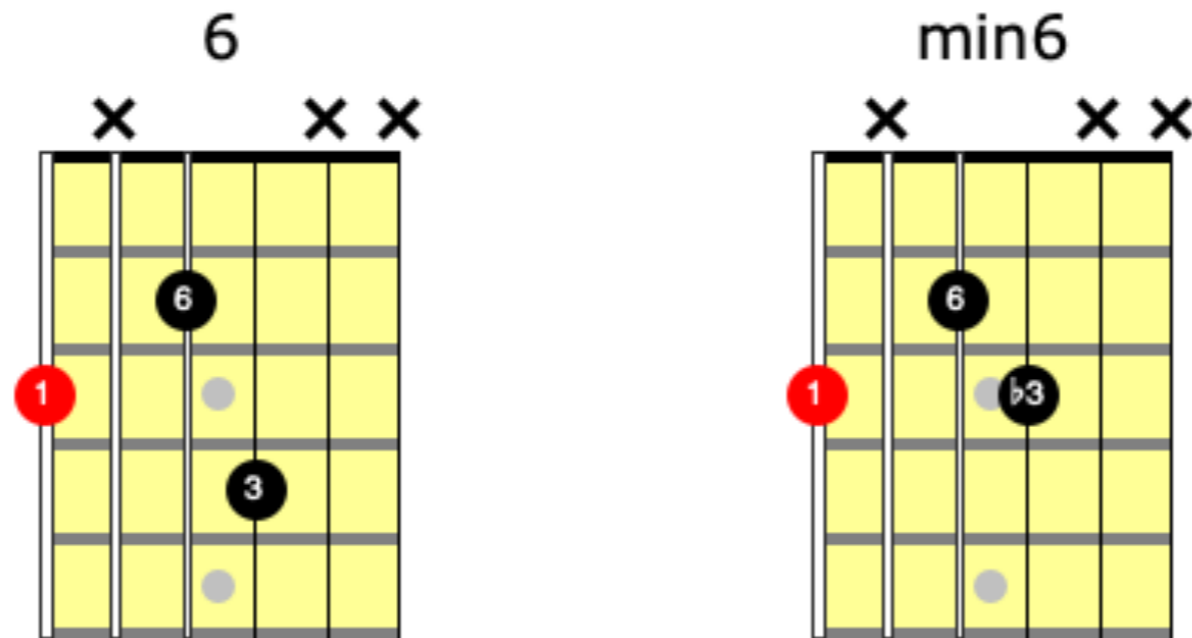
- ▶ 7th chords generally have 4 parts, or voices
 - ▶ 1, 3, 5, and 7
- ▶ For our purposes, we are going to leave out the 5 for now
 - ▶ While it's technically part of the structure, we don't need it all the time
 - ▶ This will give us clean presentations of the harmony
 - ▶ Avoid clashing with young piano players, or written horn parts

6TH STRING FORM - BASIC CHORD TYPES



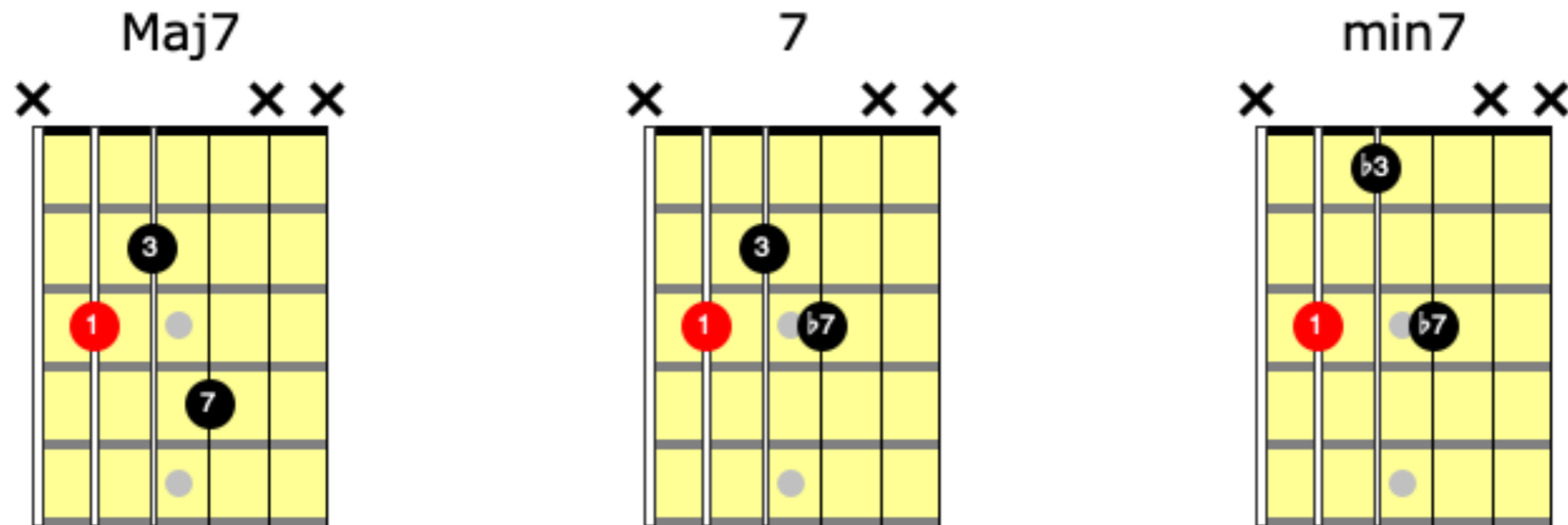
- ▶ Major 7th chord - 1 3 (5) 7 - Maj7, Δ7, M7
- ▶ Dominant 7th chord - 1 3 (5) b7 - 7 (also 9, #11, 13)
- ▶ Minor 7th chord - 1 b3 (5) b7 - min7, -7, m7 (also min9, min11)

6TH STRING FORM - BONUS CHORDS



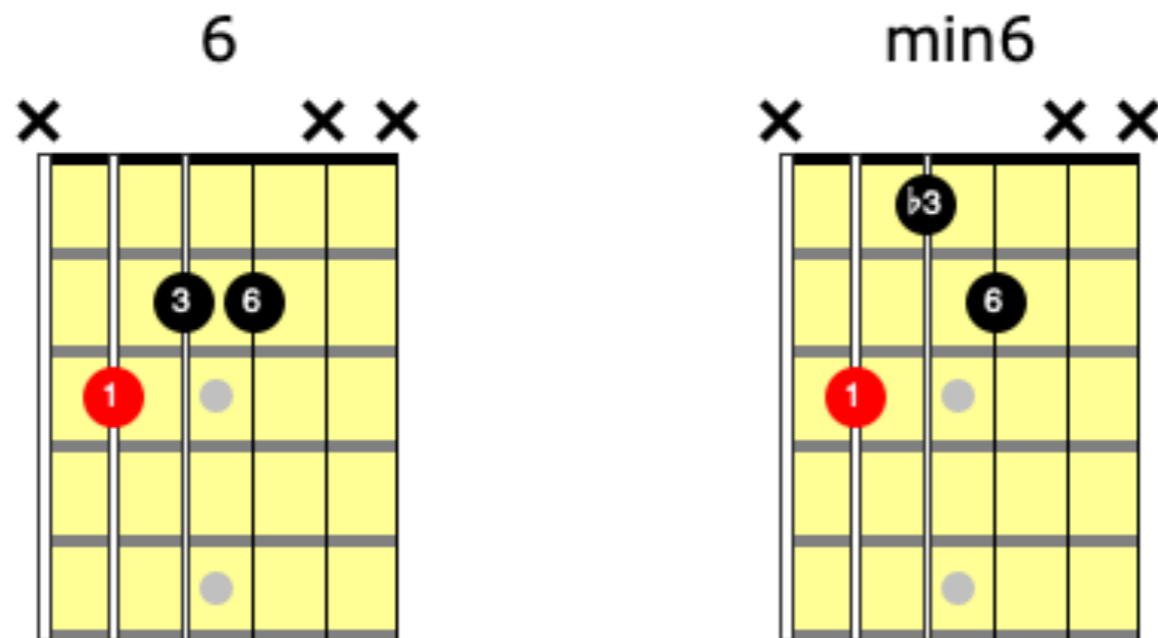
- ▶ Major 6th chord - 1 3 (5) 6 - 6, 6/9 (Also substitute for major triads)
- ▶ Minor 6th chord - 1 b3 (5) 6 - min6, min6/9 (Also substitute for minor triads)
 - ▶ Because there is no 5th, your minor 6 chord can be used in place of a diminished 7th chord ($^{\circ}7$)

5TH STRING FORM - BASIC CHORD TYPES



- ▶ Major 7th chord - 1 3 (5) 7 - Maj7, Δ 7, M7
- ▶ Dominant 7th chord - 1 3 (5) b7 - 7 (also 9, #11, 13)
- ▶ Minor 7th chord - 1 b3 (5) b7 - min7, -7, m7 (also min9, min11)

5TH STRING FORM - BONUS CHORDS



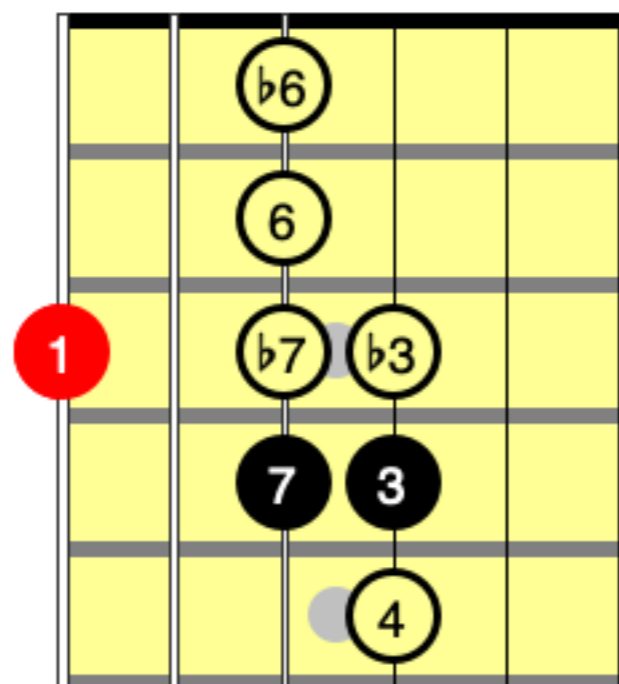
- ▶ Major 6th chord - 1 3 (5) 6 - 6, 6/9 (Also substitute for major triads)
- ▶ Minor 6th chord - 1 b3 (5) 6 - min6, min6/9 (Also substitute for minor triads)
 - ▶ Because there is no 5th, your minor 6 chord can be used in place of a diminished 7th chord ($^{\circ}7$)

CONCEPT – CHORD STRUCTURE MANIPULATION

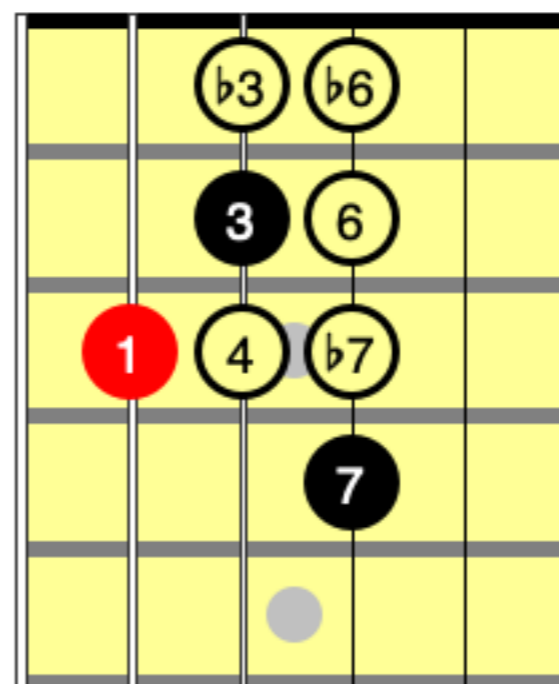
- ▶ Learning to manipulate chord structures will help your guitar player get a handle on basic chord construction theory
- ▶ It will also make their life easier because they won't have to memorize as many chord shapes
- ▶ Each note in a chord is a different voice that can be changed in order to create a different chord quality
- ▶ Coaching your guitar player a little bit to help them figure out how to change their chord shapes will help put them in control of how they sound

BASIC CHORD POSSIBILITIES

6th String
Options



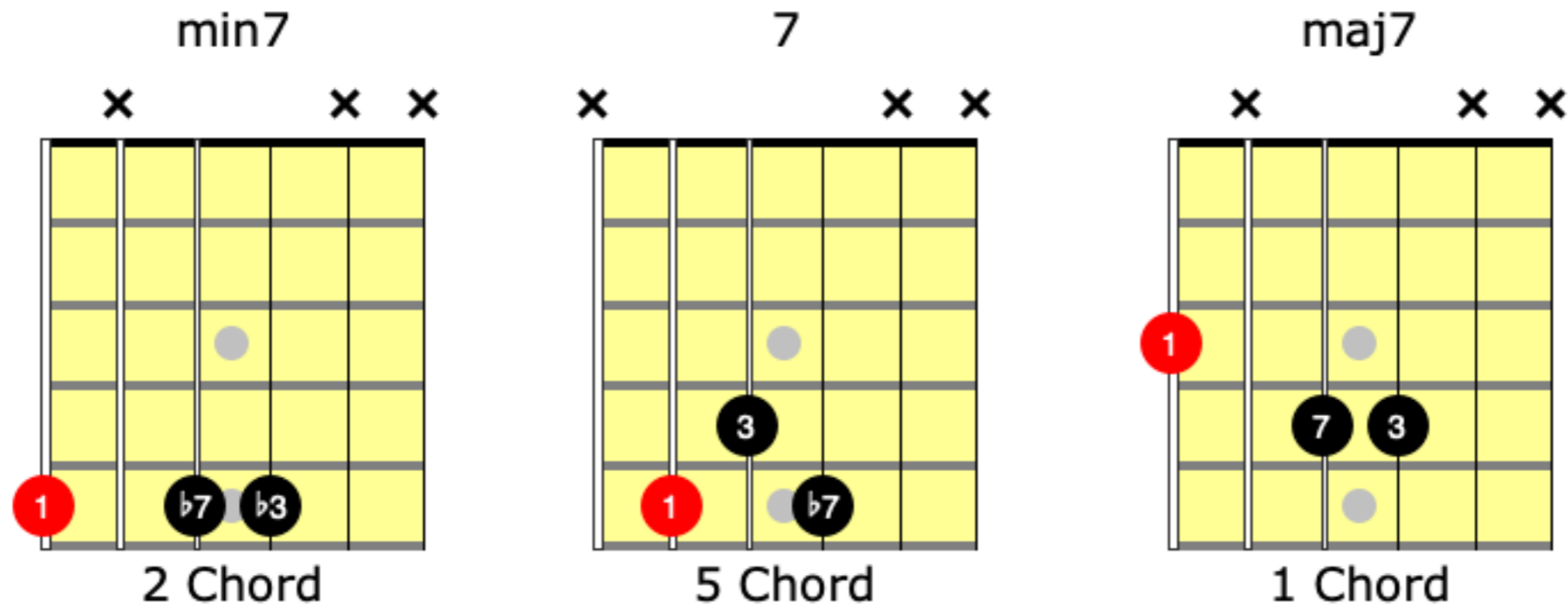
5th String
Options



VOICE LEADING AND JAZZ GUITAR

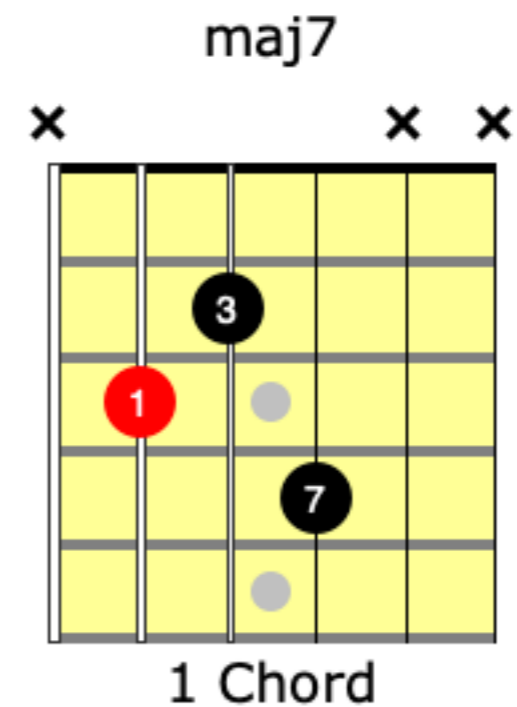
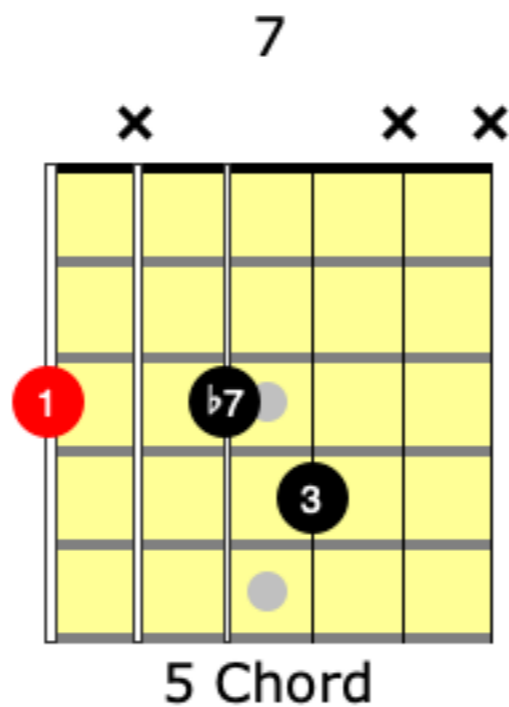
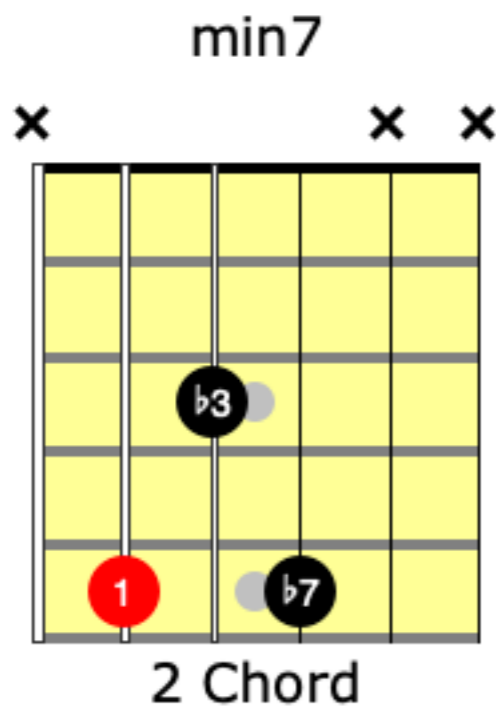
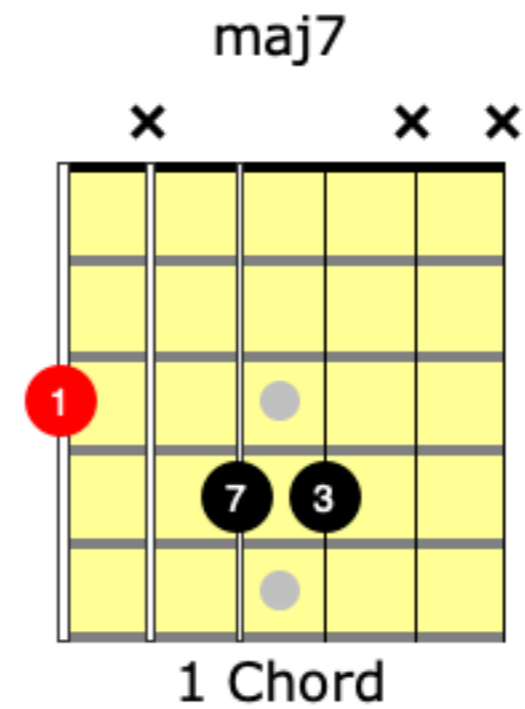
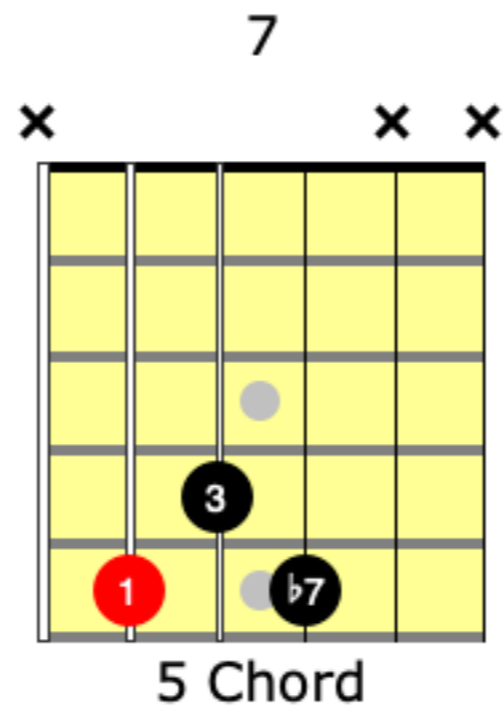
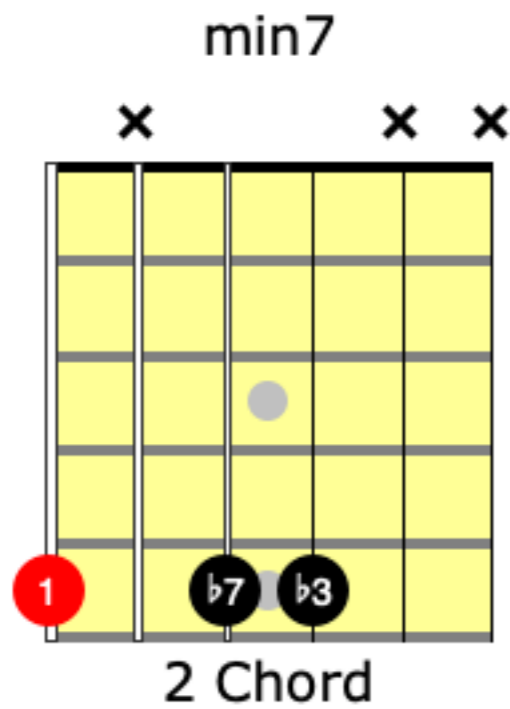
- ▶ One benefit of using the chords in this system is that your guitar player will be using good voice leading without ever thinking about it
- ▶ As long as they are finding the closest possible chord to play next, their chords should sound smooth and connected
- ▶ In some situations, they will have to jump up or down the neck, but for the most part there should always be a chord close by

2 5 1 PROGRESSIONS



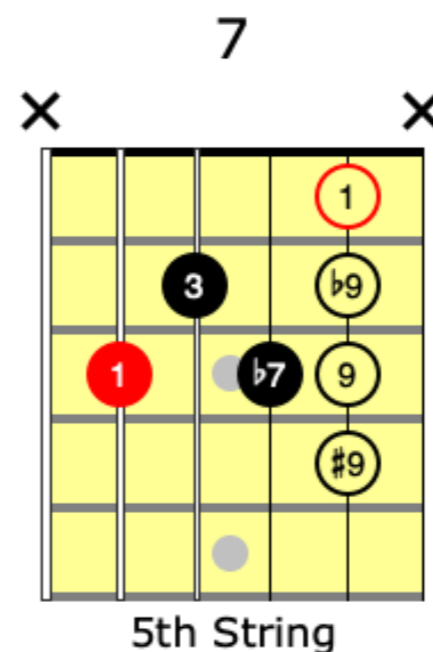
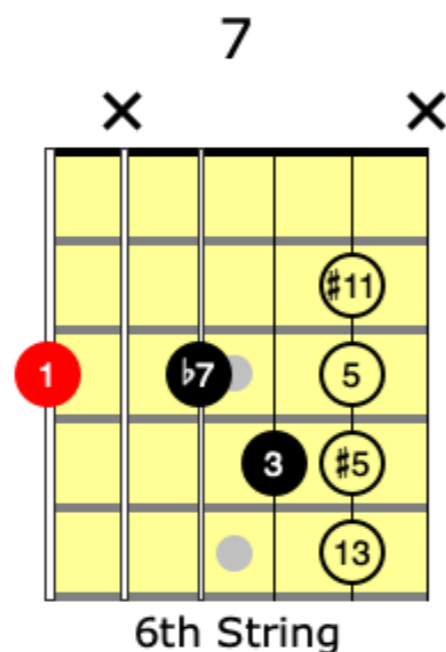
- ▶ 2 5 1 is commonly spelled using Roman Numerals: ii V I
- ▶ Arabic numerals are generally more familiar to younger students, so there's less for them to think about at first - you can always introduce roman numerals if you prefer
- ▶ Other than the root note, you can see that none of the notes have to move very far to get to the next chords

2 5 1 PATTERNS WITH BASIC CHORDS

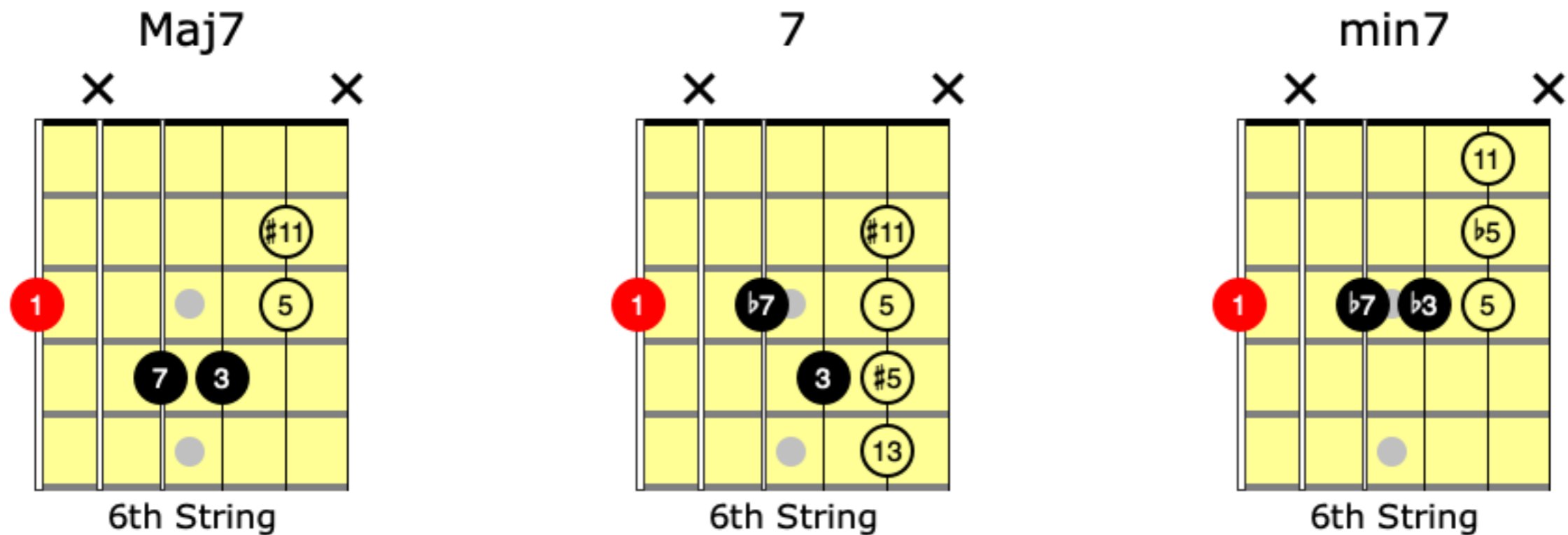


ADDING COLOR TONES & EXTENSIONS

- ▶ From the basic chord structures, your guitar player can easily add some extra color by adding a note to the 2nd string
- ▶ If the chord has a root on the 6th string, that extra note will be a 5th, or something related to it
- ▶ If the chord has a root on the 5th string, that extra note will be a 9th, or something related to it

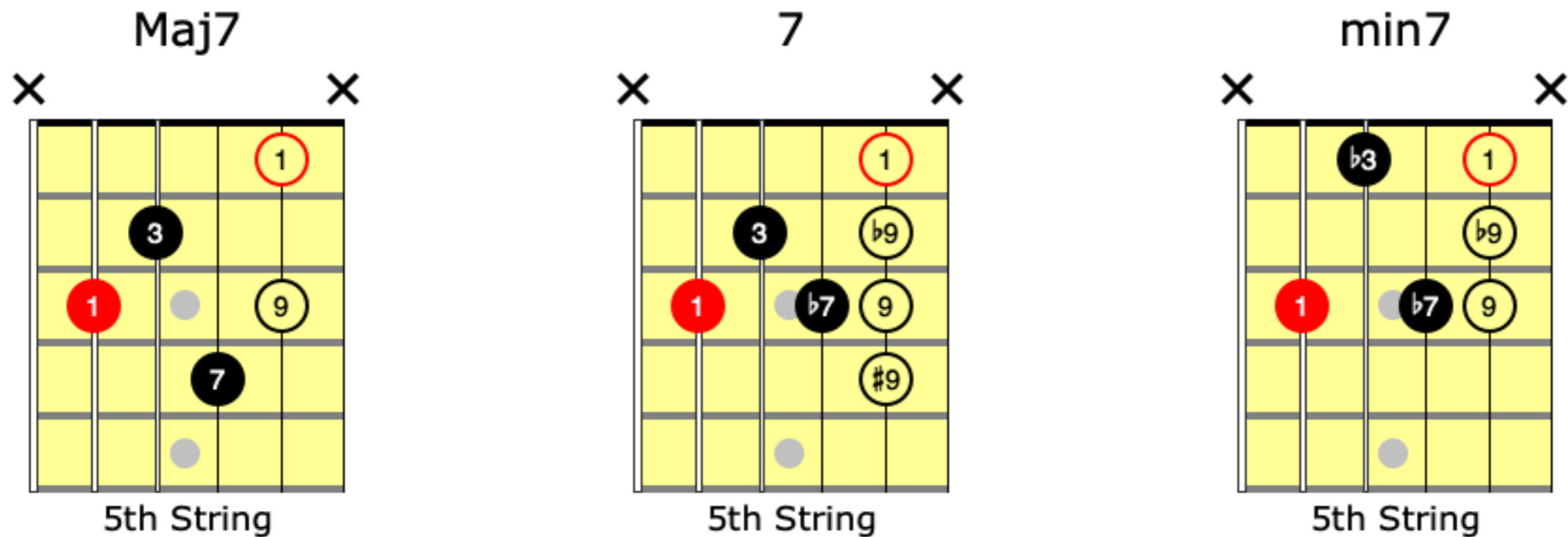


ONE COLOR TONE - 6TH STRING FORM



- ▶ These are the most common color tones/extensions for the basic 3 chord types
 - ▶ 5, b5/#11, #5/b13, 13
 - ▶ On the minor 7th, the b5 should only be used with a min7b5/ø7 chord

ONE COLOR TONE - 5TH STRING FORM



- ▶ These are the most common color tones/extensions for the basic 3 chord types
 - ▶ 1, b9, 9, #9 (1 is the root, so not technically a new color - still a good option)
 - ▶ On the minor 7th, the b9 should only be used with a min7b5/ø7 chord

CONCEPT – ROOTLESS CHORDS PART 1

- ▶ As your guitar player becomes more advanced, experimenting with rootless chords can be a good challenge
- ▶ Any of the chords earlier in this presentation can be played as “rootless chords”
- ▶ Just don’t play the note on the 6th or 5th string
- ▶ Your guitar player can still use the roots in the chord diagrams as a reference

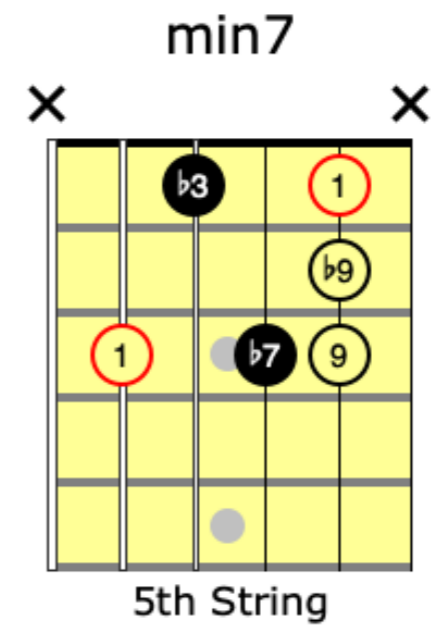
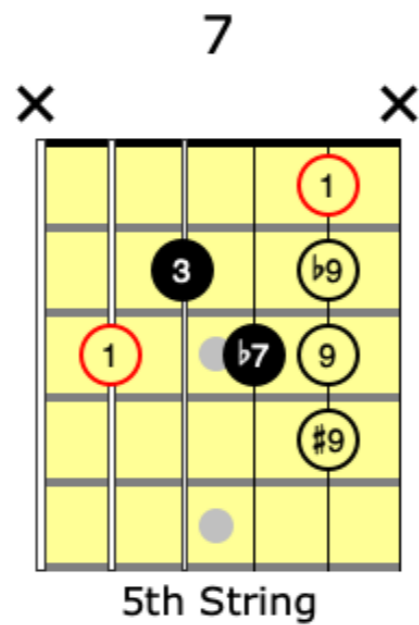
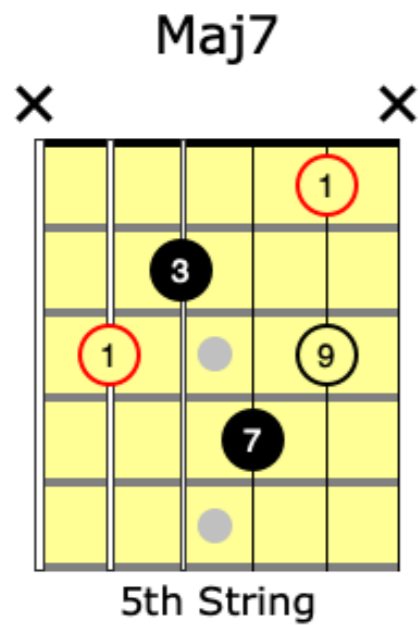
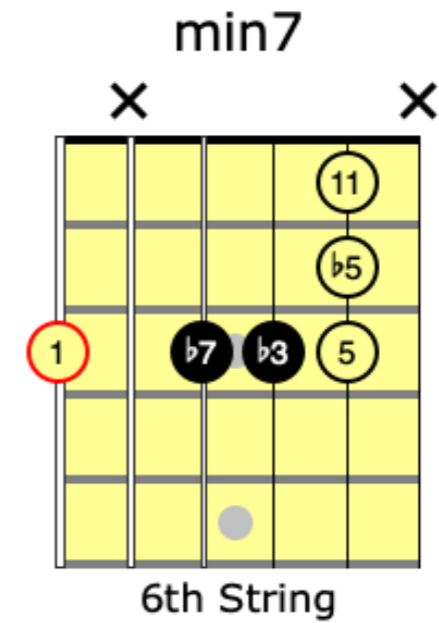
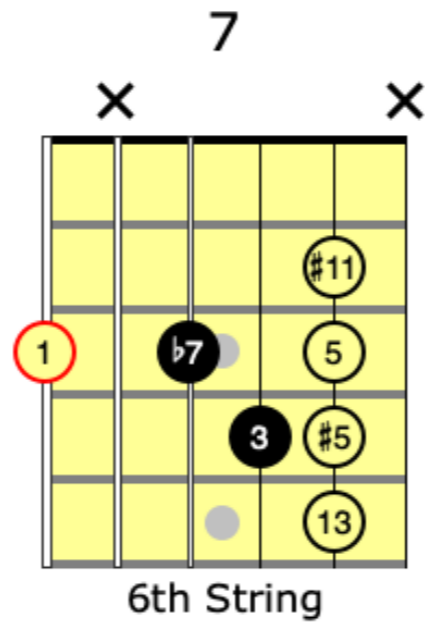
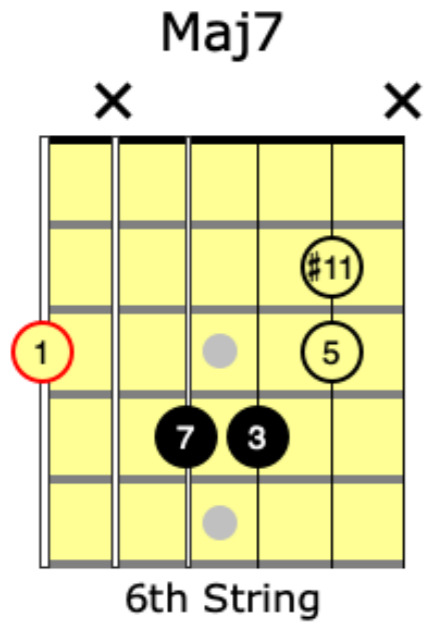
CONCEPT – ROOTLESS CHORDS PART 2

- ▶ If your guitar player is just getting started, I wouldn't recommend working on this until they are more comfortable
- ▶ Many guitar players are "grip based" - meaning they operate on specific hand shapes, rather than musical theory
- ▶ If they don't understand the parts of the chords in the first place, the idea of rootless chords will be too overwhelming
- ▶ To get your guitar player up to speed, work with them using the previous material from this presentation

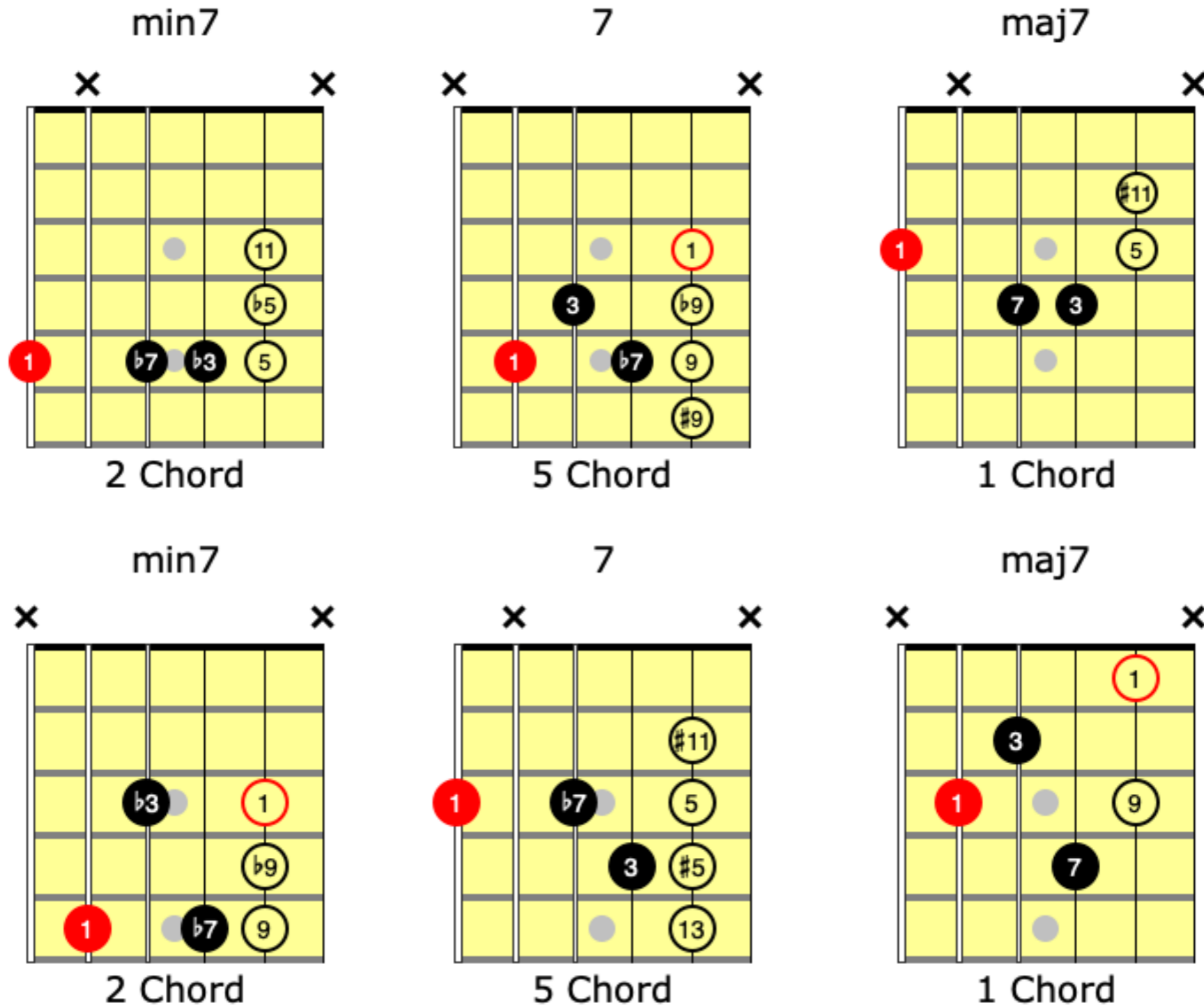
ABOUT IMPLIED ROOTS

- ▶ Guitar is a very visual instrument
- ▶ Even if your guitarist isn't playing the root of the chord, they will likely need to use it in order to get the rest of the notes in the right place
- ▶ On the next slide you'll see some of the diagrams used earlier, but with an open dot on the root note - indicating an implied root
- ▶ Think of this as training wheels - eventually they will just know which chord they are playing without thinking about it too much

ROOTLESS CHORDS WITH "IMPLIED ROOTS"



2 5 1 PATTERNS - 1 COLOR TONE



EXPERIMENTATION IS THE KEY

- ▶ Encourage your guitar player to experiment with these voicings, and help them figure out how to build the chords they need for your repertoire using the structures available
- ▶ This will help them much more than giving them a sheet of chord shapes to memorize

DOWNLOADS

- ▶ You can download the slides and handouts for this presentation and keep in touch at www.kylesmithguitar.com/omea2020