Chords in a key · G major

Build a chord on each note of the major scale and you get the key's seven chords.

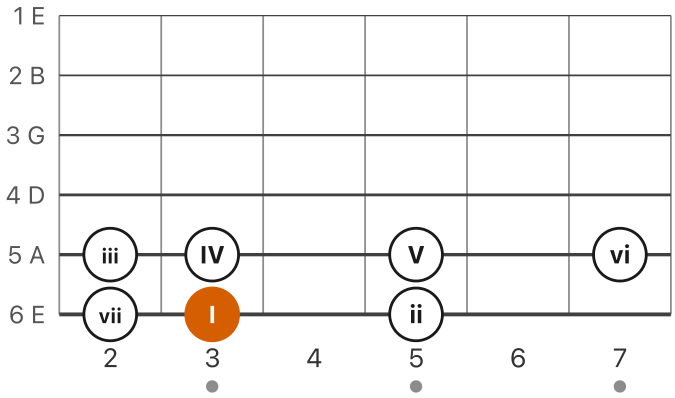
The pattern is the same in every key: major, minor, minor, major, major, minor, diminished.

Degree	Numeral	Chord	Quality	7th chord
1	I	G	major	Gmaj7 (Imaj7)
2	ii	Am	minor	Am7 (ii7)
3	iii	Bm	minor	Bm7 (iii7)
4	IV	C	major	Cmaj7 (IVmaj7)
5	V	D	major	D7 (V7)
6	vi	Em	minor	Em7 (vi7)
7	vii°	F♯°	diminished	F♯m7♭5 (viiø7)

WHERE THE ROOTS ARE: THE KEY MAP

Every chord in G within frets 2-7. Same layout in any key: just move the I.

Chord roots in G (vii is the diminished chord)



6th string: I at the root fret, ii two frets up, vii one fret back.

5th string: IV at the same fret, V two up, vi four up, iii one back.

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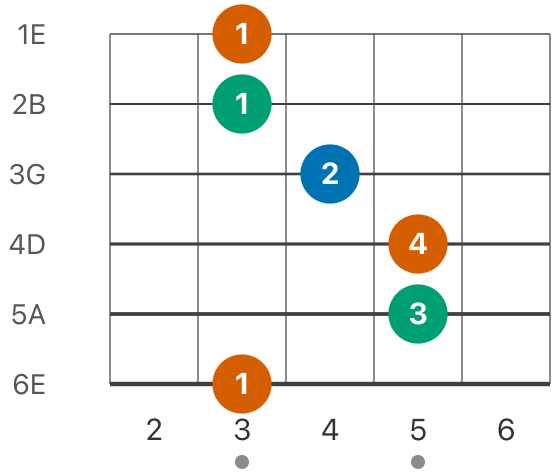
Chords in G · I, ii, iii, IV

All seven chords of G in one area of the neck, using shapes you know.

Roots on the 6th string for I, ii and vii; on the 5th string for iii, IV, V and vi.

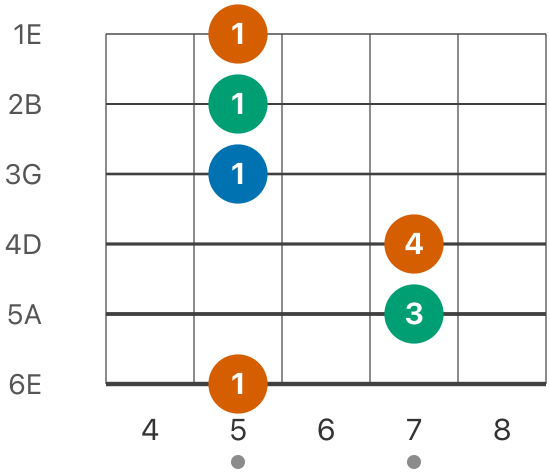
× = don't play that string.

I · G



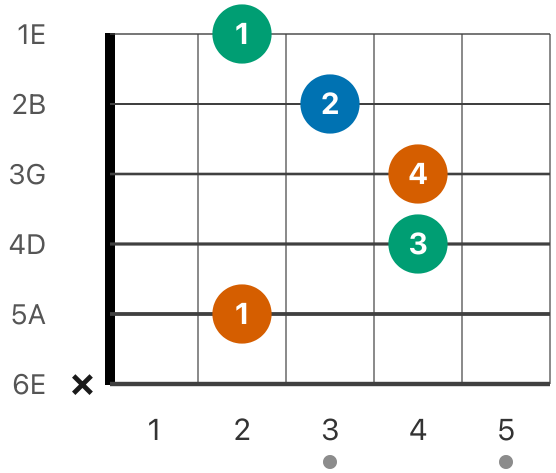
E shape, root on 6th string

ii · Am



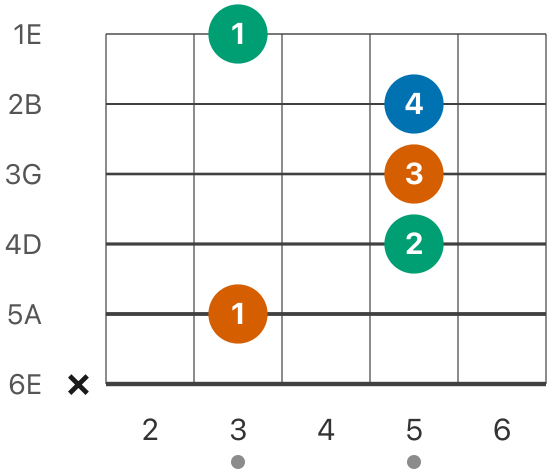
E minor shape, root on 6th string

iii · Bm



A minor shape, root on 5th string

IV · C



A shape, root on 5th string

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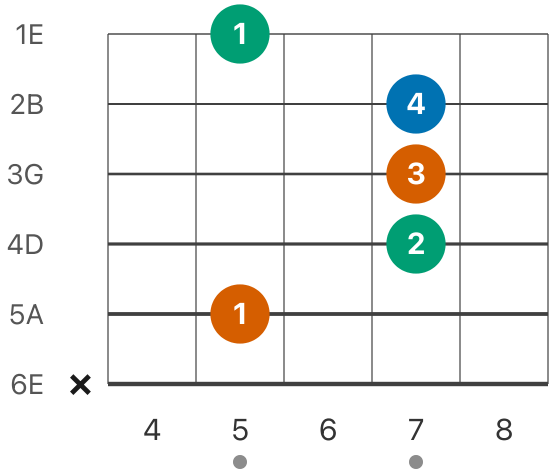
Chords in G · V, vi, vii

All seven chords of G in one area of the neck, using shapes you know.

Roots on the 6th string for I, ii and vii; on the 5th string for iii, IV, V and vi.

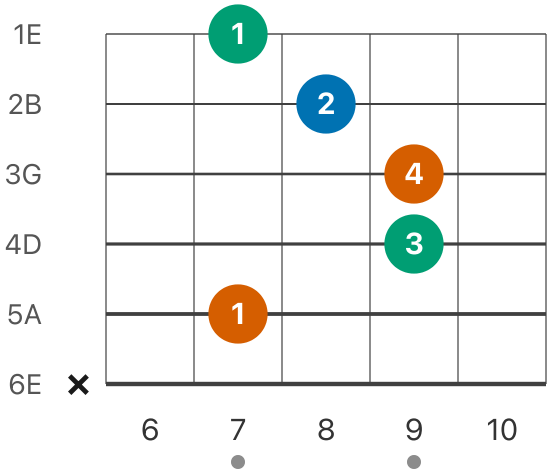
× = don't play that string.

V · D



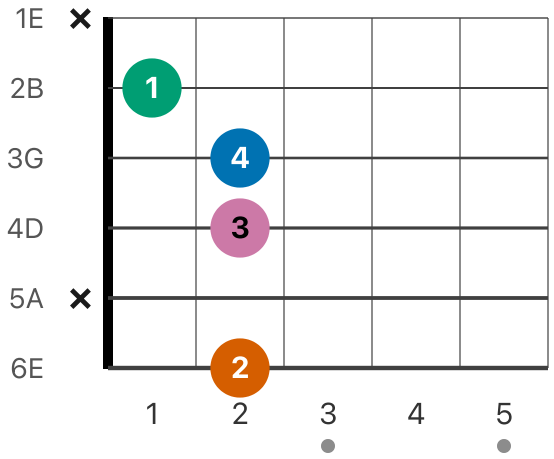
A shape, root on 5th string

vi · Em



A minor shape, root on 5th string

viiø7 · F♯m7♭5



m7♭5 jazz shape, root on 6th string

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Common progressions

Written in numerals so they work in any key. Examples in G.

Learn them with the key map: the I, IV and V are always right next to each other.

Progression	In G	Where you hear it
I – IV – V – I	G – C – D – G	Rock, country, folk
I – V – vi – IV	G – D – Em – C	Countless pop songs
I – vi – IV – V	G – Em – C – D	1950s doo-wop
vi – IV – I – V	Em – C – G – D	Pop, minor-sounding
ii7 – V7 – Imaj7	Am7 – D7 – Gmaj7	Jazz standards
I – IV	G – C	Two-chord jams, gospel

12-BAR BLUES IN G (I7, IV7, V7)

G7 I7	**G7** I7	**G7** I7	**G7** I7
C7 IV7	**C7** IV7	**G7** I7	**G7** I7
D7 V7	**C7** IV7	**G7** I7	**D7** V7

THE CHORDS IN ALL 12 MAJOR KEYS

Key	I	ii	iii	IV	V	vi	vii°
C	C	Dm	Em	F	G	Am	B°
G	**G**	**Am**	**Bm**	**C**	**D**	**Em**	**F♯°**
D	D	Em	F♯m	G	A	Bm	C♯°
A	A	Bm	C♯m	D	E	F♯m	G♯°
E	E	F♯m	G♯m	A	B	C♯m	D♯°
B	B	C♯m	D♯m	E	F♯	G♯m	A♯°
F♯	F♯	G♯m	A♯m	B	C♯	D♯m	E♯°
F	F	Gm	Am	B♭	C	Dm	E°
B♭	B♭	Cm	Dm	E♭	F	Gm	A°
E♭	E♭	Fm	Gm	A♭	B♭	Cm	D°
A♭	A♭	B♭m	Cm	D♭	E♭	Fm	G°
D♭	D♭	E♭m	Fm	G♭	A♭	B♭m	C°

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The relative minor · E minor

Every major key shares its seven chords with a minor key, its relative minor.

Start on the vi chord instead of the I. G major and E minor use exactly the same chords.

SAME SEVEN CHORDS, TWO KEYS

G major	**G** I	**Am** ii	**Bm** iii	**C** IV	**D** V	**Em** vi	**F♯°** vii°
E minor	**Em** i	**F♯°** ii°	**G** III	**Am** iv	**Bm** v	**C** VI	**D** VII

THE PATTERN

M = major · m = minor · d = diminished

Major key	**M**	**m**	**m**	**M**	**M**	**m**	**d**
Minor key	**m**	**d**	**M**	**m**	**m**	**M**	**M**

The minor pattern is the major pattern started on its 6th chord and wrapped around.

Tip: in a minor key the v is often played major (B or B7 in E minor). It pulls back to the i chord more strongly. That raised note comes from the harmonic minor scale.

THE CHORDS IN ALL 12 MINOR KEYS

Minor key	Major key	i	ii°	III	iv	v	VI	VII
Am	C	Am	B°	C	Dm	Em	F	G
Em	**G**	**Em**	**F♯°**	**G**	**Am**	**Bm**	**C**	**D**
Bm	D	Bm	C♯°	D	Em	F♯m	G	A
F♯m	A	F♯m	G♯°	A	Bm	C♯m	D	E
C♯m	E	C♯m	D♯°	E	F♯m	G♯m	A	B
G♯m	B	G♯m	A♯°	B	C♯m	D♯m	E	F♯
D♯m	F♯	D♯m	E♯°	F♯	G♯m	A♯m	B	C♯
Dm	F	Dm	E°	F	Gm	Am	B♭	C
Gm	B♭	Gm	A°	B♭	Cm	Dm	E♭	F
Cm	E♭	Cm	D°	E♭	Fm	Gm	A♭	B♭
Fm	A♭	Fm	G°	A♭	B♭m	Cm	D♭	E♭
B♭m	D♭	B♭m	C°	D♭	E♭m	Fm	G♭	A♭

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