

Drop 2 Chords

By Jason Shadrick

Many novice guitarists stick to the garden variety bar chords when they first start playing jazz. These give the texture a more muddy feeling and don't sound too much like the voicings heard on many jazz albums.

The first thing I teach guitarists is how to create and use Drop 2 chord shapes. These are very easy to understand and almost instantly make your comping more authentic.

Creating a Drop 2 Voicing

In order to create a Drop 2 voicing you must first learn the basics of 7th chord construction. In order to have a 7th chord you must have four notes represented:

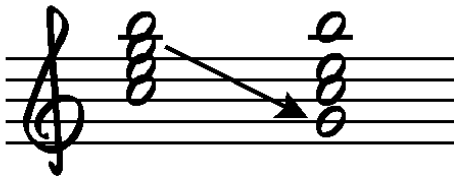
Root	3 rd	5 th	7 th
C	E	G	B

This is a C Major 7th chord in the key of C. Here is what it looks like on the staff:



This voicing is in root position, meaning that the lowest note of the chord is the root. In order to make this more playable on the guitar, we will raise it up an octave.

Next, we will take the 2nd note from the top (G) and lower it an octave:



This leaves us with a Drop 2 voicing for C Major Seventh:

The diagram shows a guitar fretboard with a C major 7th chord voicing. The notes are G4, A4, B4, and C5 on the top four strings. The 5th fret is indicated. Below the fretboard is a musical staff in treble clef showing the notes G4, A4, B4, and C5.

By extending this idea through all four inversions on the top four strings, it creates the following voicings:

Four diagrams show C major 7th chord voicings in different inversions on the top four strings. The first is the root position (5fr), the second is the first inversion (8fr), the third is the second inversion (10fr), and the fourth is the third inversion. Each diagram includes a fretboard diagram and a musical staff showing the notes.

The next step would be to lower the 7th of each chord to B \flat in order to make dominant 7th voicings:

Four diagrams show C dominant 7th chord voicings in different inversions on the top four strings. The first is the root position (5fr), the second is the first inversion (8fr), the third is the second inversion (10fr), and the fourth is the third inversion. Each diagram includes a fretboard diagram and a musical staff showing the notes, with a flat symbol indicating the lowered 7th.

Of course the next step would be lowering all of the 3rds to Eb to make minor 7th chords:

Four guitar chord diagrams for Cm7 are shown, each with its corresponding musical notation on a staff. The diagrams are labeled Cm7 and indicate the fret position: 4FR, 8FR, 10FR, and 12FR. The 10FR and 12FR diagrams have an 'x' over the first string, indicating it should be muted. The musical notation shows the chord voicings on a treble clef staff, with notes G, Bb, Eb, and C.

The final step would be to lower all of the 5ths to Gb to create Minor 7th Flat 5 chords:

Four guitar chord diagrams for Cm7(b5) are shown, each with its corresponding musical notation on a staff. The diagrams are labeled Cm7(b5) and indicate the fret position: 4FR, 7FR, 10FR, and 12FR. The musical notation shows the chord voicings on a treble clef staff, with notes G, Bb, Gb, and C.