

Chords

Where do they come from?

We will look at the key of C major.

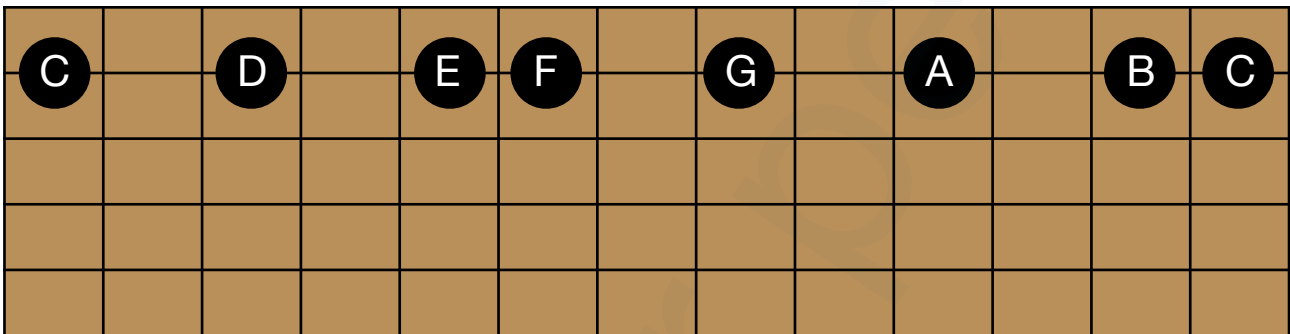
Everybody knows the sound of the major scale. Just sing 'do re mi fa sol la si do' and you've got it.

In the key of C the notes are

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

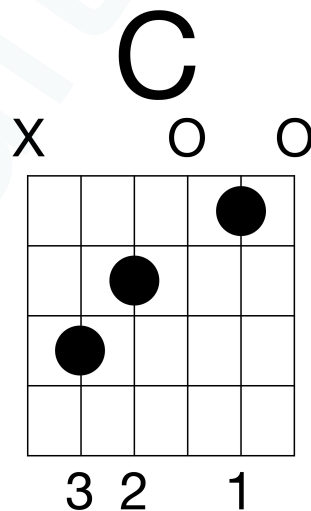
When you play it on the second string it's:

1 3 5 6 8 10 12 13

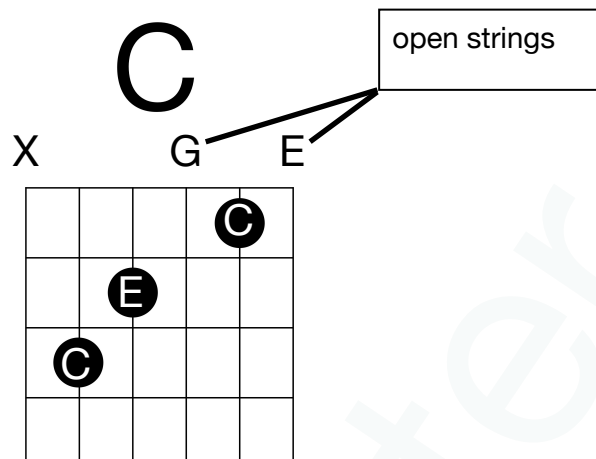


There are seven different notes in the major scale and we are going to build a chord on each note. So the major scale has seven notes and seven chords.

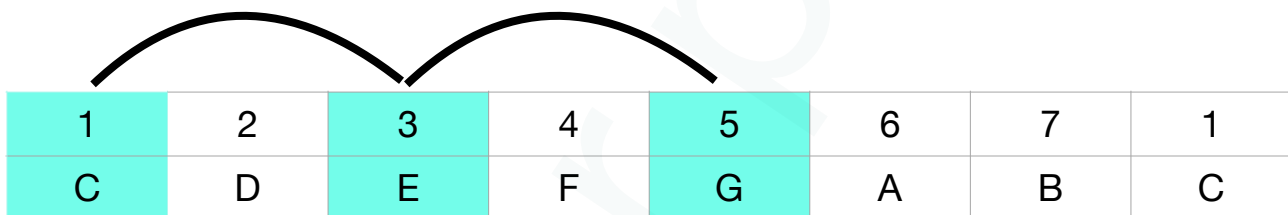
Let's look at the C chord



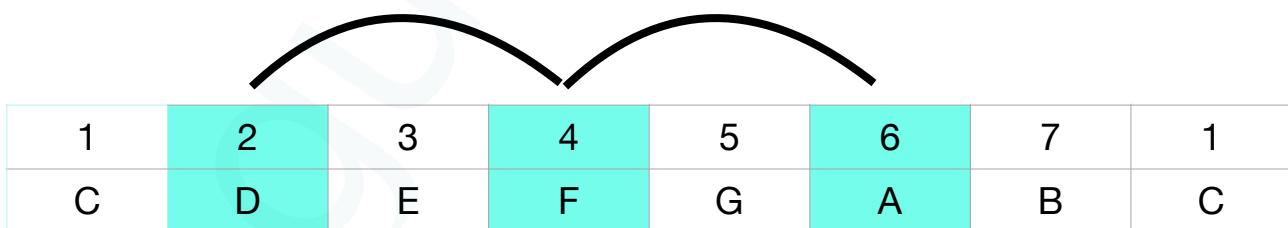
When you play the C chord in the first position you play five notes but when you look at the names you will see that there are only three different notes.



So the notes played in a C chord are C, E and G. When we go back to the C major scale you will see that C, E and G are the first, third and fifth note of the scale.

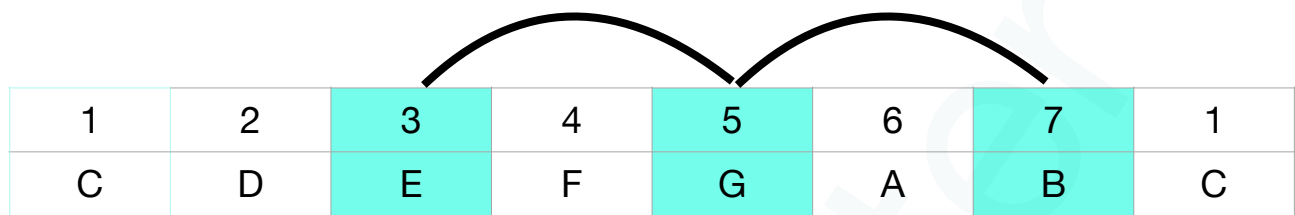


Knowing that we now can find the notes of the other chords. When we want to build a chord on the second note of the scale, the D, the notes of the chord will be:



So the three notes of the chord on the D are D, F and A

When we do the same with the third note E you will find that the three notes of the chord, the chord tones, are E, G and B



When you do that with all seven notes of the C major scale you will find that the chord tones are:

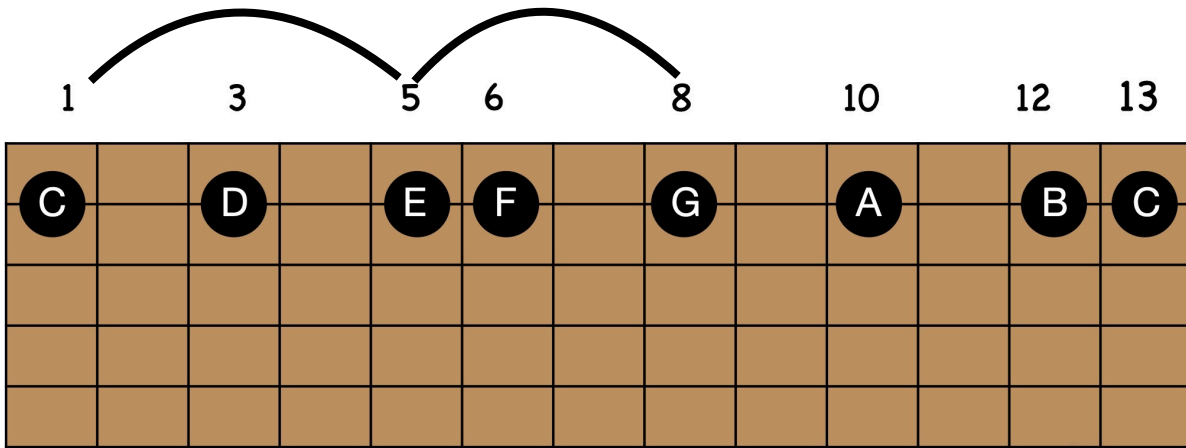
	1	3	5
1	C	E	G
2	D	F	A
3	E	G	B
4	F	A	C
5	G	B	D
6	A	C	E
7	B	D	F

Maybe you know that each key has major and minor chords and one diminished chord but which one is which.

To find out whether a chord is major, minor or diminished we have to look at the distance between the notes.

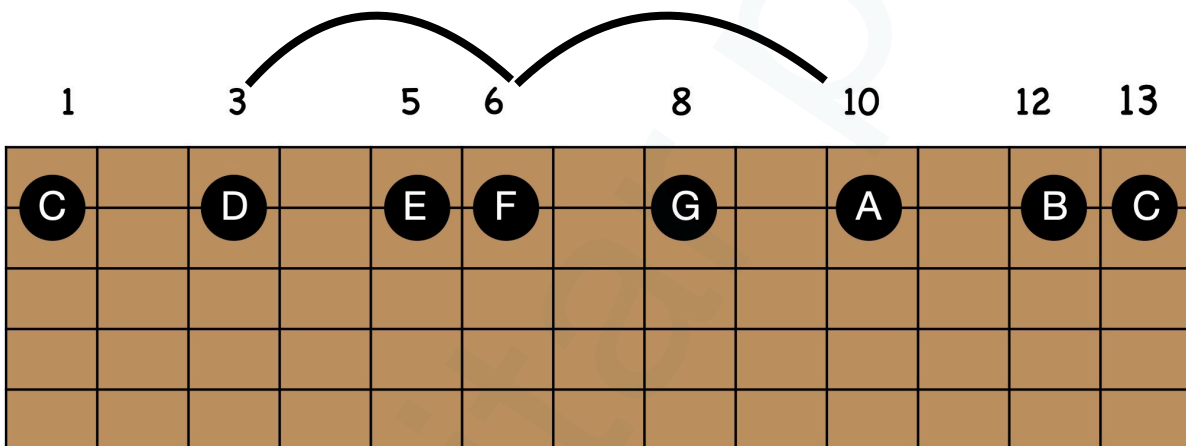
The first chord, the C, is made out of the chord tones C, E and G.

Lets go back to the figure on page 1 of the C major scale on the second string.



You can see that the distance between C and E is four half steps (from position 1 to 5) and the distance between E and G is three half steps (from position 5 to 8). (One position higher or lower is called a half step) So the C chord is C - 4 - E - 3 G

When you look at the second chord that's made out of D, F and A you will find that the distance between D and F is three half steps and the distance between F and A is four half steps.

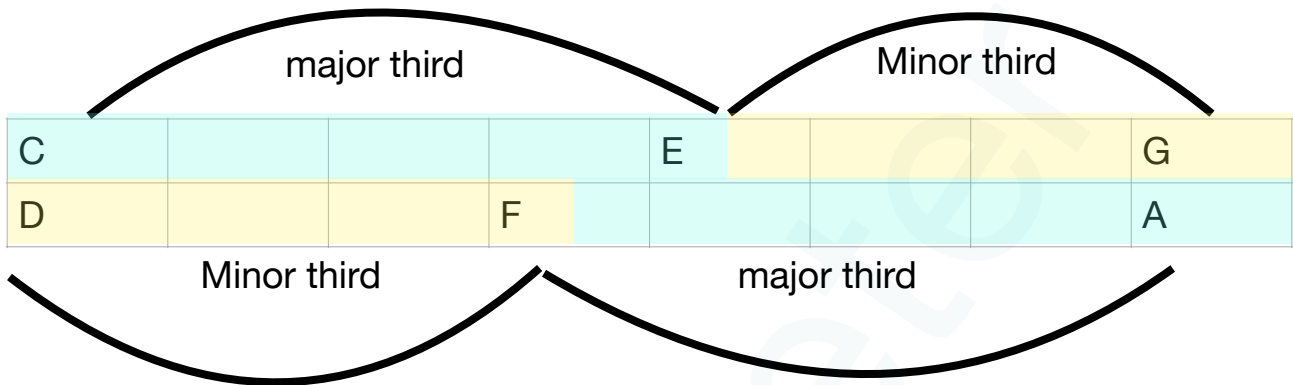


So the D chord is D - 3 - F - 4 A

The name of the distance between two notes is an interval. The name of the interval between the first and the third note (when there's one in between) is called a third.

When it's four half steps it's called a major third, when it's three half steps it's called a minor third.

So the C chord is made out of a major third (C-E) and a minor third (E-G).
 The D chord is made out of a minor third (D-F) and a major third (F-A).



Chords made of a major third and a minor third (C-E-G) are major chords.

Chords made of a minor third and a major third (D-F-A) are minor chords.

The chord tones in the key of C were.

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

When we look at the intervals of the chord tones in C we get this:

1	C	major third	E	minor third	G	C major
2	D	minor third	F	major third	A	D minor
3	E	minor third	G	major third	B	E minor
4	F	major third	A	minor third	C	F major
5	G	major third	B	minor third	D	G major
6	A	minor third	C	major third	E	A minor
7	B	minor third	D	minor third	F	B diminished*

So therefore the chords in C major are:

C major
 D minor
 E minor
 F major
 G major
 A minor
 B diminished

But with basic chords we only mention minor so in real life it's:

C
 D minor
 E minor
 F
 G
 A minor
 B diminished