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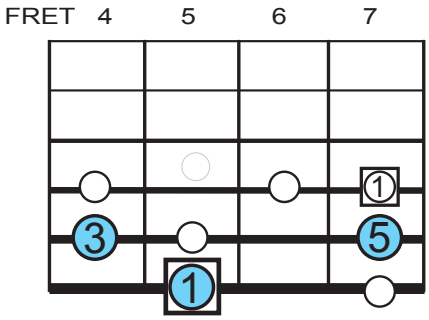
LESSON 9

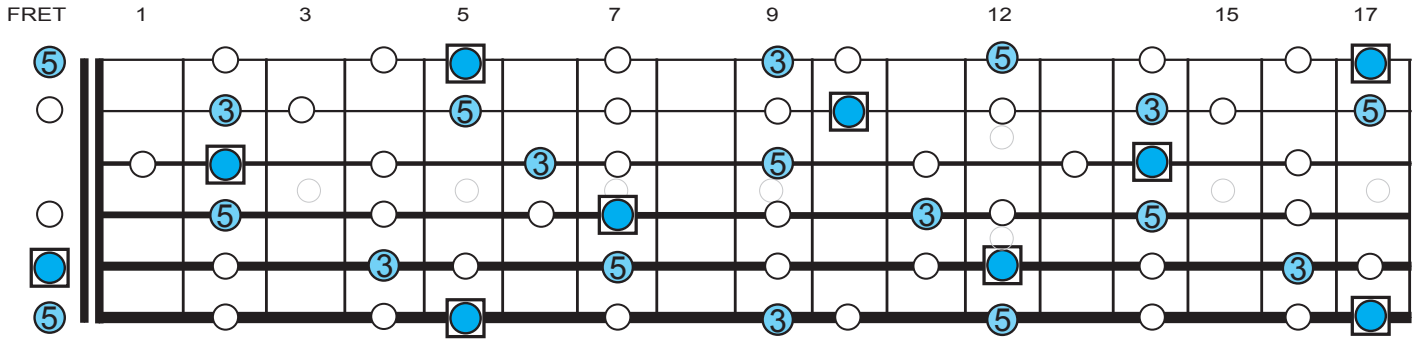
MAJOR TRIADS pt.1

Conventional triads come in 4 varieties - Major, Minor, Diminished and Augmented. Triads are the basic building blocks of Western harmony (chords).



By simply combining the 1st, 3rd and 5th notes of any major scale (in this case - A) you create the fomula or spelling for the mighty major triad.

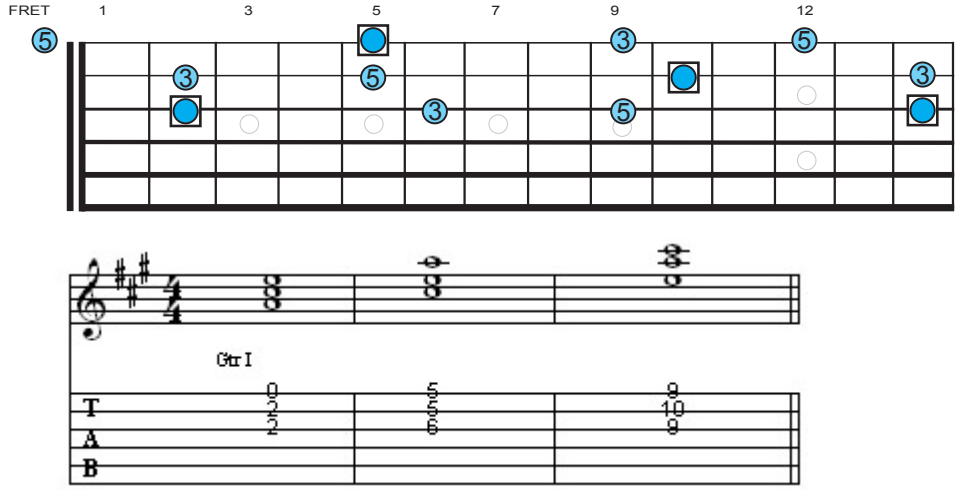
Going a step further we can place these 3 notes all over the fretboard with the help of octaves.



At this point you may be thinking 1. this looks a bit daunting and 2. just what are triads good for anyway? Answering the second point first, triads give your chord vocabulary a more melodic dimension (see fig. 1). Also they're a great way of outling chord changes during solos. A point not lost on jazz and metal players (see fig 2).

As for the first point, you need to break up the neck into sections bit by bit and slowly memorising the patterns that fall under each section. In this lesson and the next, we'll look at 2 ways of isolating the shapes. The first way is to isolate patterns as 3 note chord shapes (FIG. 1)

FIG. 1



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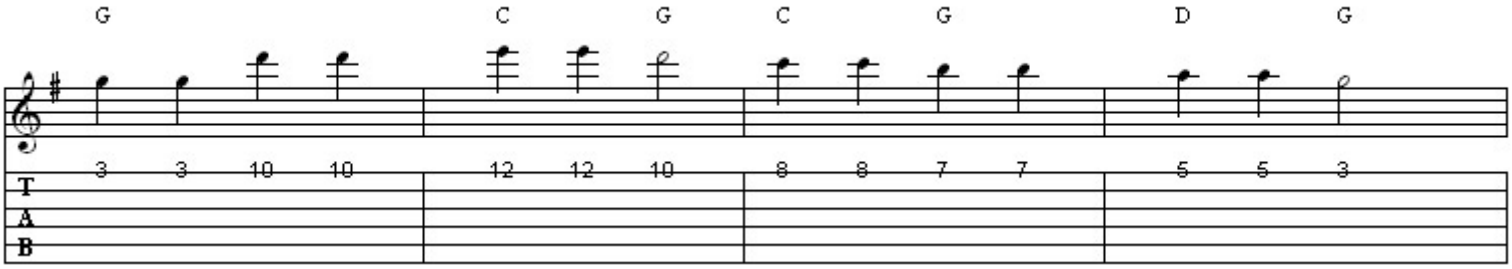
LESSON 9

MAJOR TRIADS pt.1

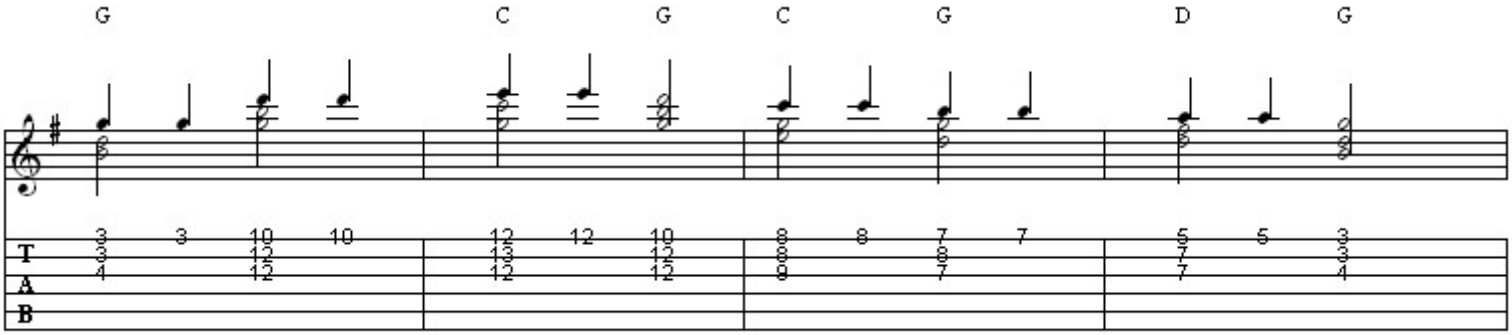
Here's some homework for you. Tab out the other triad shapes on the different string sets. The one already shown on fig.1 was on the EBG strings, so try the BGD, GDA and DAE string sets. You'll end up with 3 shapes on each set of strings.

Let's see some triads at work. Here's an excerpt from 'Twinkle Twinkle Little Star' The tune's identity will not be apparent if you use standard open position or barre chord shapes.



By using triads (based on the EBG string set as shown from fig.1) we can merge together the tunes harmony (chords) with its melody, thus giving it the best of both worlds.

Be aware that only 3 patterns are being used for this excerpt. They are the same ones as the fig 1. shapes.The only difference is they needed to be transposed to their respective chords of G,C and D



Here's some jargon busting for you

ROOT POSITION = the root note (or 1) is the lowest sounding note i.e. bass note.

1st INVERSION = the 3rd is the lowest sounding note.

2nd INVERSION = the 5th is the lowest sounding note.

CLOSE VOICING = means that all 3 notes are wthin the span of an octave,
(CLOSE POSITION) they're stacked as close as possible.

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