

Introduction to the CAGED Theory & Diagrams

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Introduction:

This free resource is made available to anyone looking to expand upon their knowledge of the guitar fretboard. The CAGED theory at its heart is a simple concept, but one that will serve you for years. This resource follows my personal educational theory - to provide the student with the necessary tools and guidance in order to promote **self-discovery**. I've found that this approach is far more meaningful and is more likely to stick with the student than a lecture.

“Teach a man to fish” so to speak.

These charts represent how I use CAGED theory. At its most simple definition, the CAGED theory makes use of the open chords C, A, G, E, and D and transforms them into moveable shapes that we can plot all around the guitar neck. The charts follow the form of each of the open chords, but guides you to discover your own shapes.

The Diagrams:

Please refer to “Master Neck Diagram” on the next page for how to read these charts.

Notes with a red ring around them represent the root notes for that chord shape. Take the moveable C major shape for example and place the note with the red ring around it on the 8th fret of the A string. The note at the 8th fret on the A string is F, which means that if you follow the corresponding patterns on the diagram, you will be playing an F major chord.

Often times, you'll find that it is impossible to play all of the notes in the diagram. This is where the self-discovery part comes in. As you learn to use these diagrams, you will begin to create your own shapes. I have intentionally limited these diagrams to remove certain notes that just aren't useful in relation to the CAGED theory.

One Rule:

A chord is made up of the **root, 3rd, & 5th** (and sometimes the 7th) - your only requirement is that each chord you build must include all of those notes. They *are* allowed to be repeated.

If you follow that single rule, there are no wrong answers - only alternate choices.

For example: you may find that on acoustic guitar, in order to play a very full sounding chord you will need to use as many strings as possible. When playing with heavy distortion, it is good use fewer notes and to space them out far apart so they don't clash. In funk, you often only use 2 or 3 of the higher strings at a time.

Take these diagrams and study them. Visualize the corresponding open chord and explore different ways to build shapes around the guitar neck. Take your time and enjoy the process!

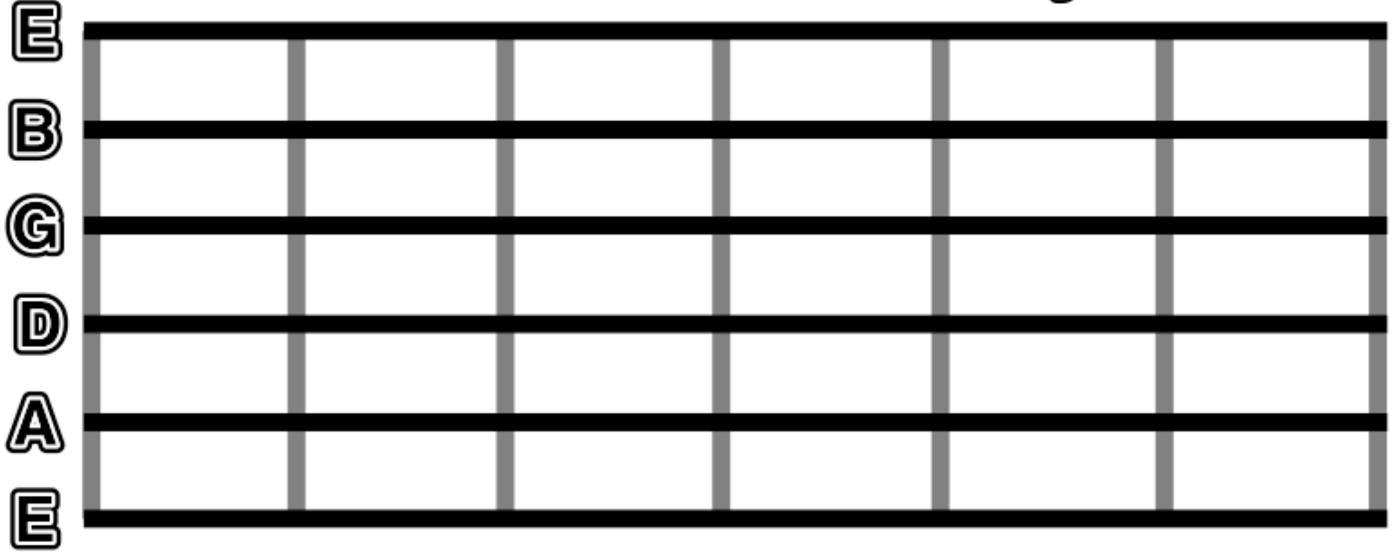
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Neck diagram master



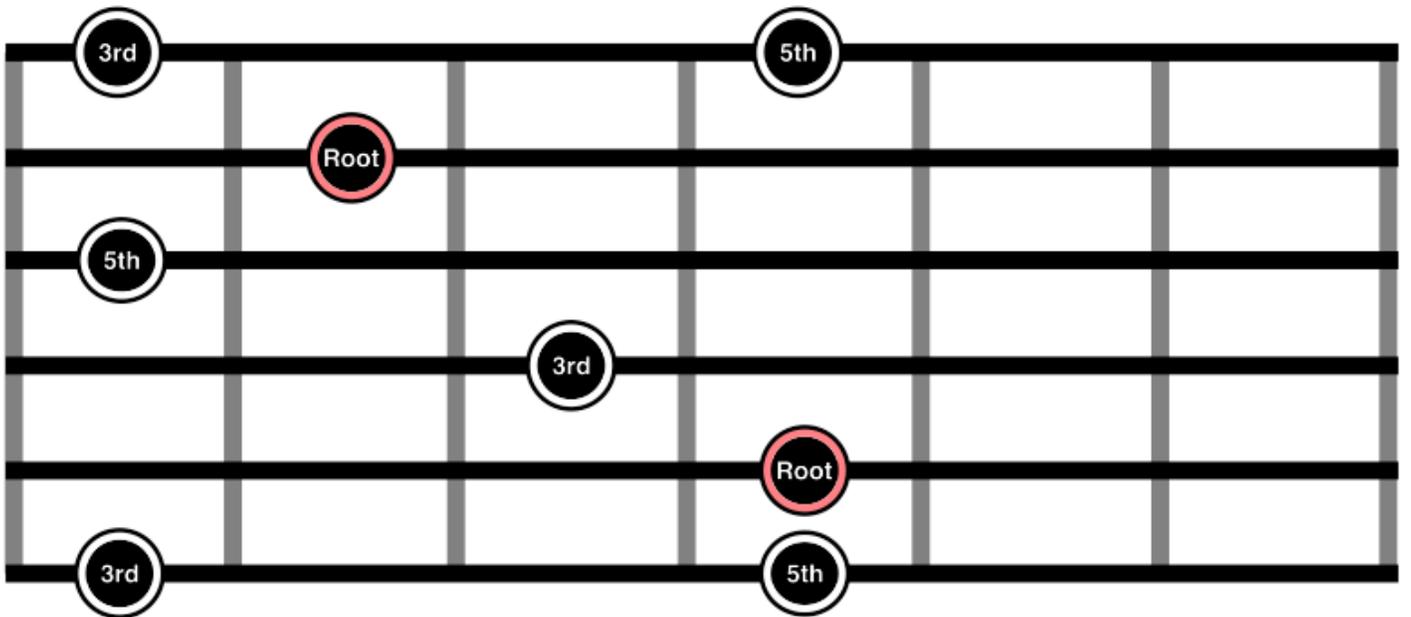
← Headstock Body →

Thickest ——— Thinnest



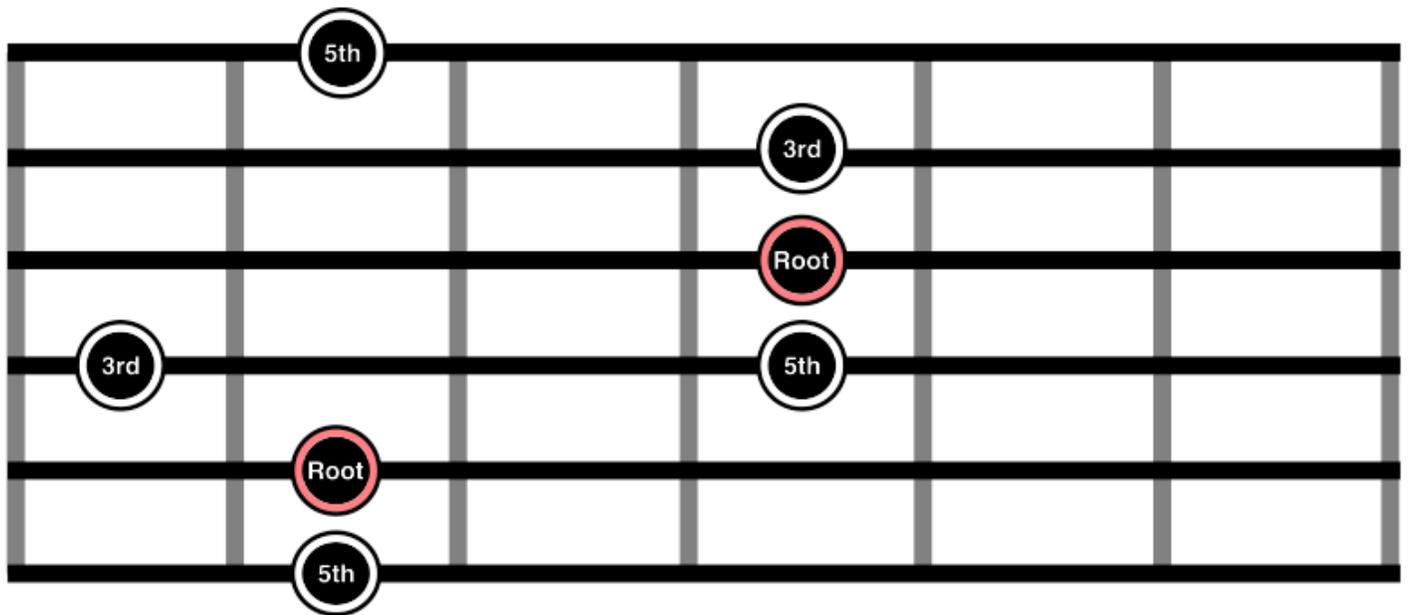
Moveable C major

Root



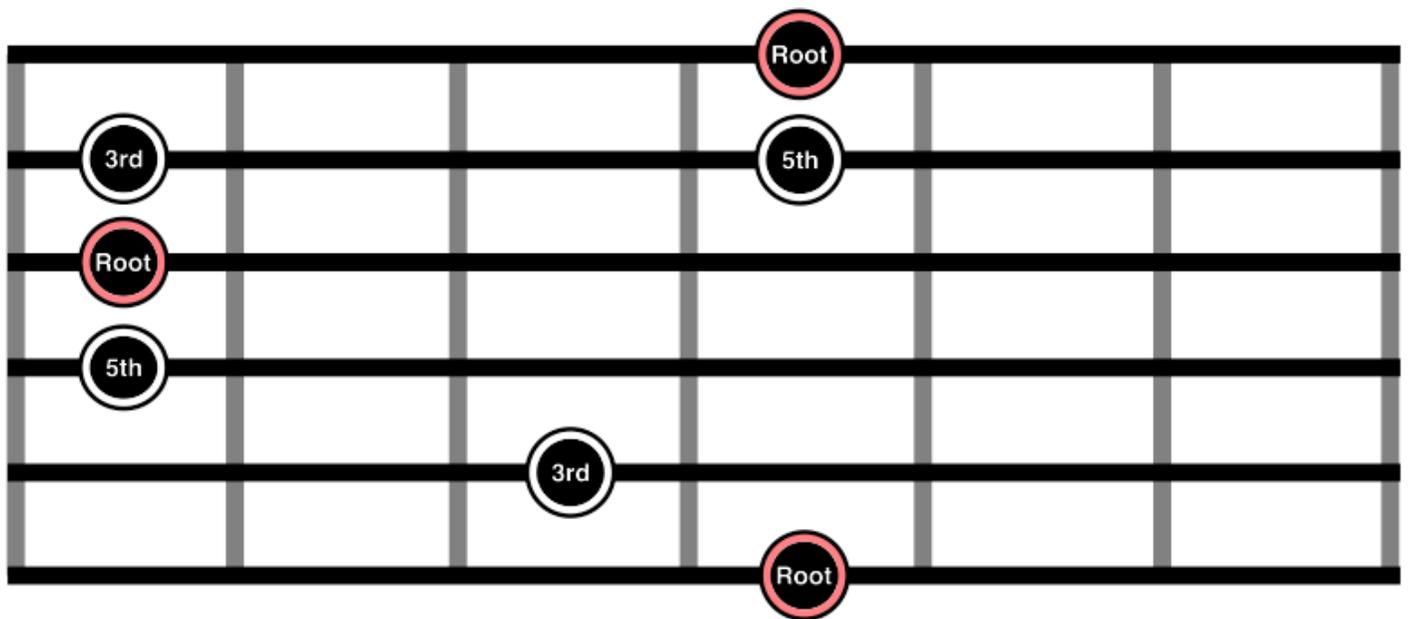
Moveable A major

Root



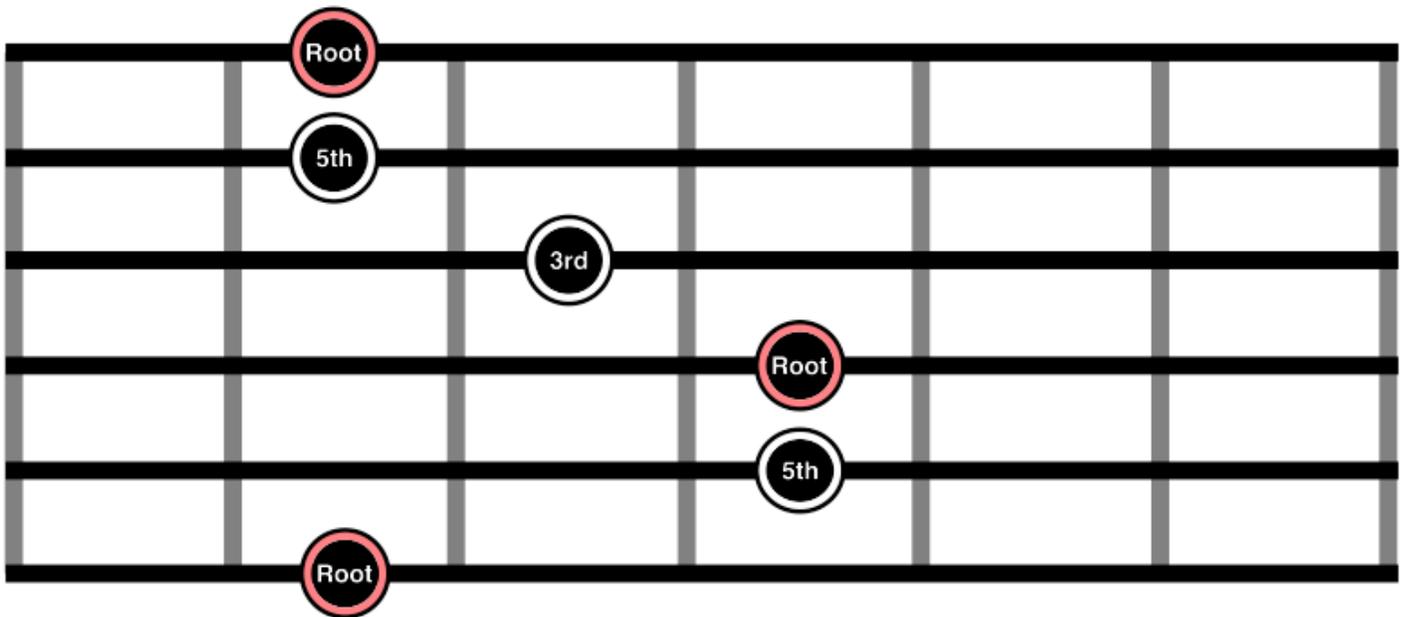
Moveable G major

Root



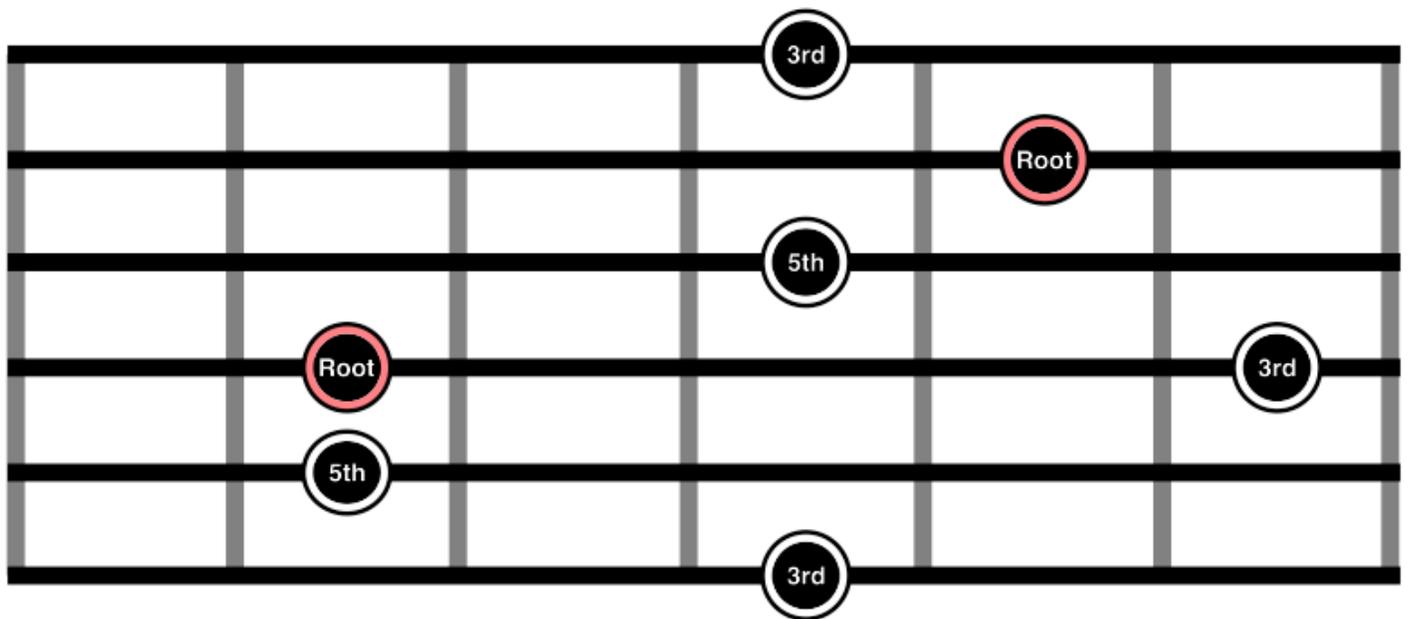
Moveable E major

Root



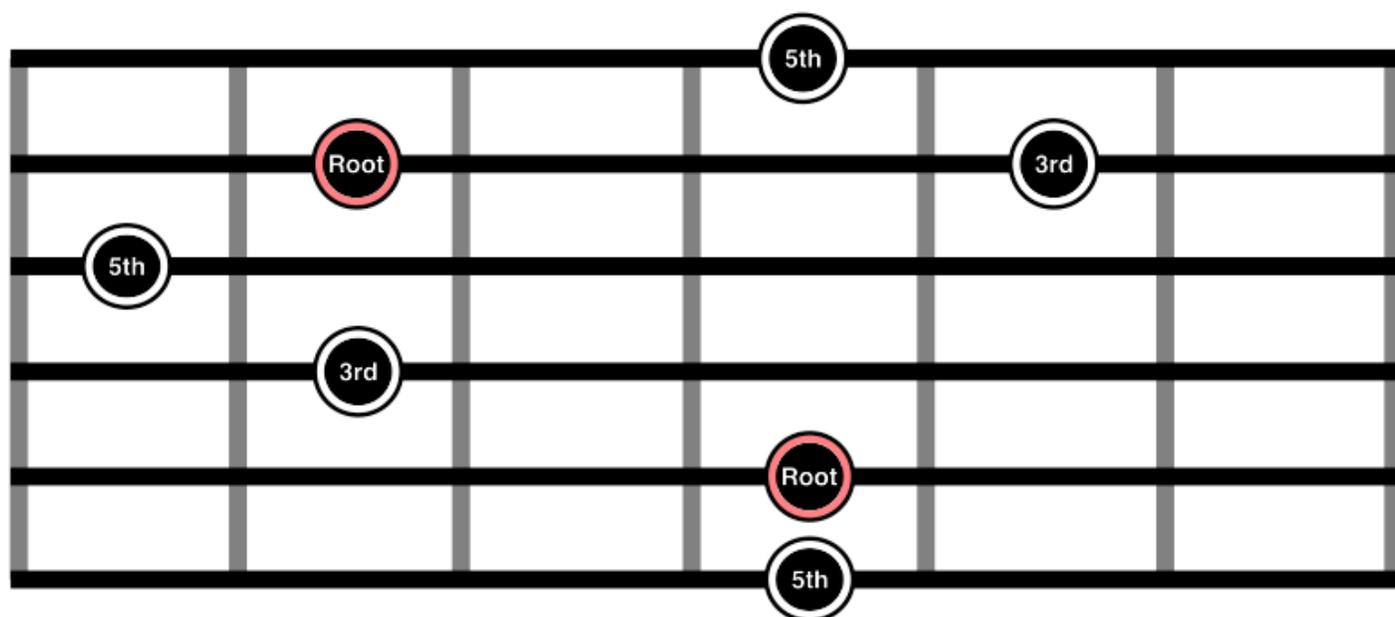
Moveable D Major

Root



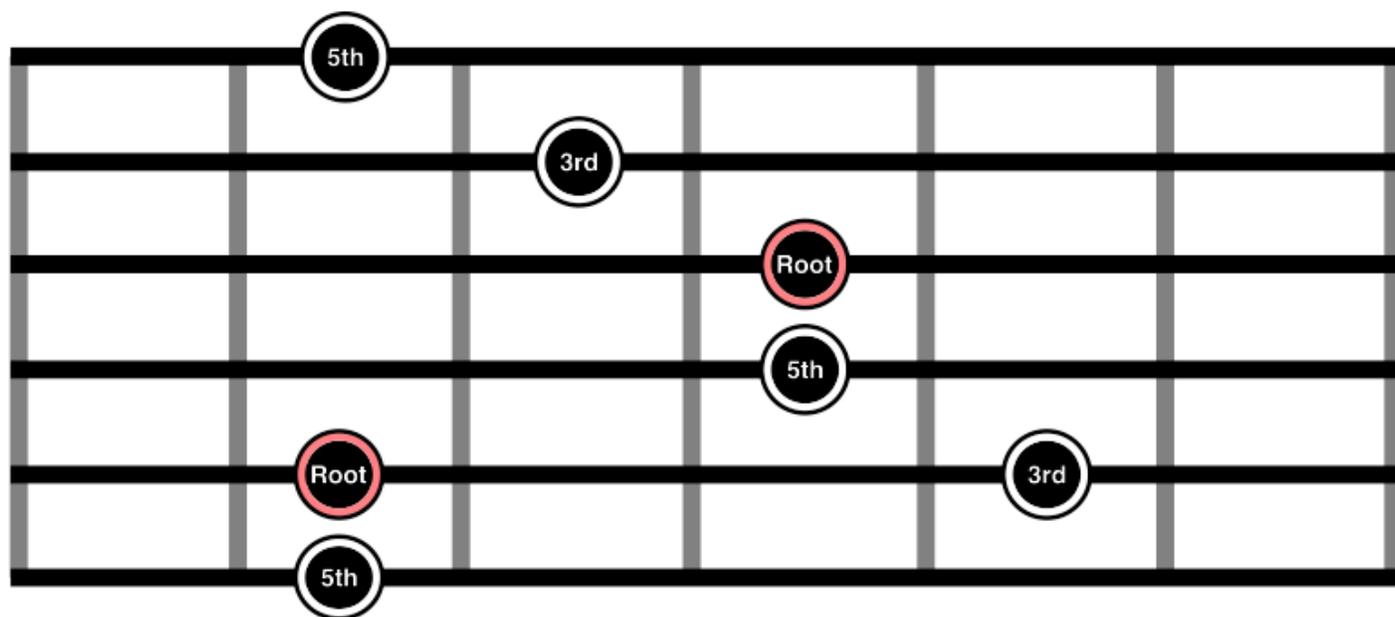
Moveable C minor

Root



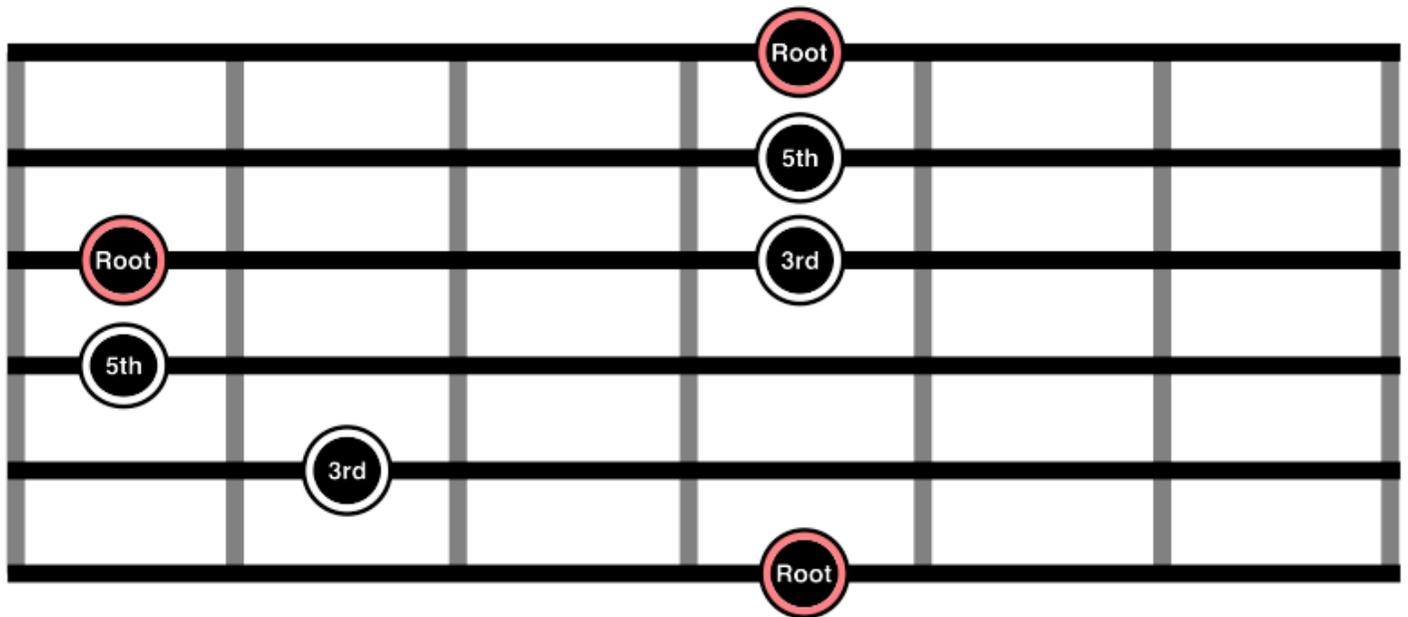
Moveable A minor

Root



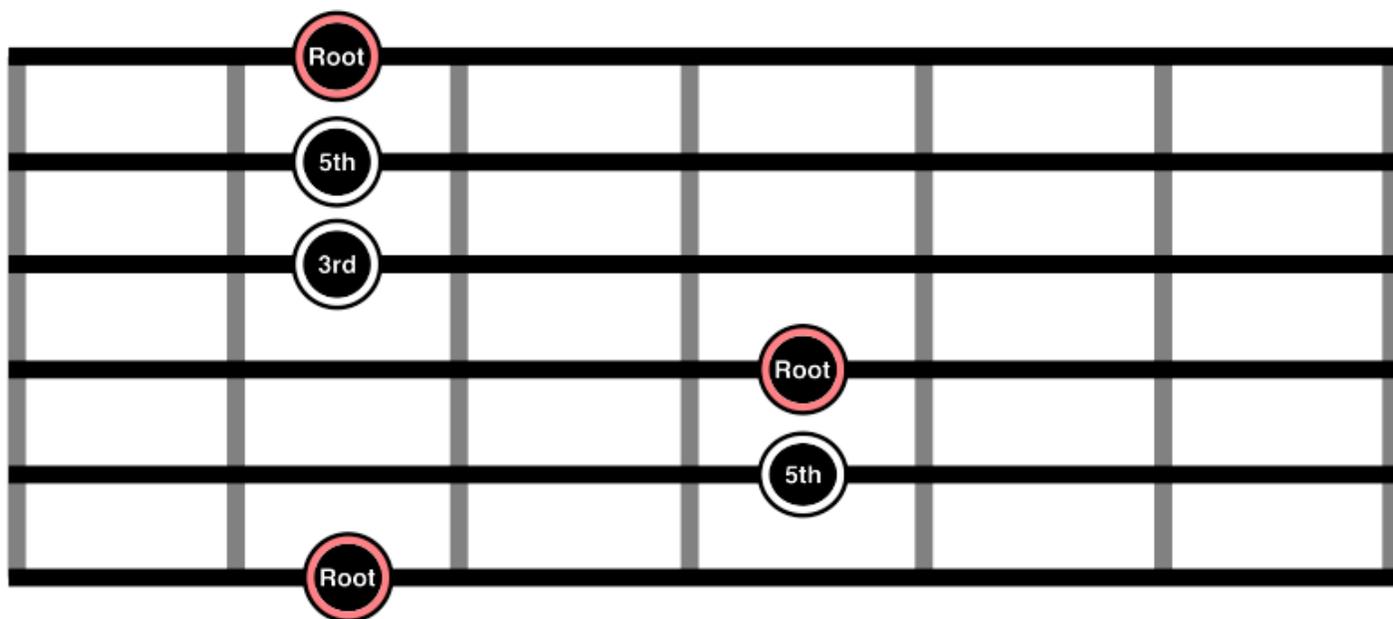
Moveable G minor

Root



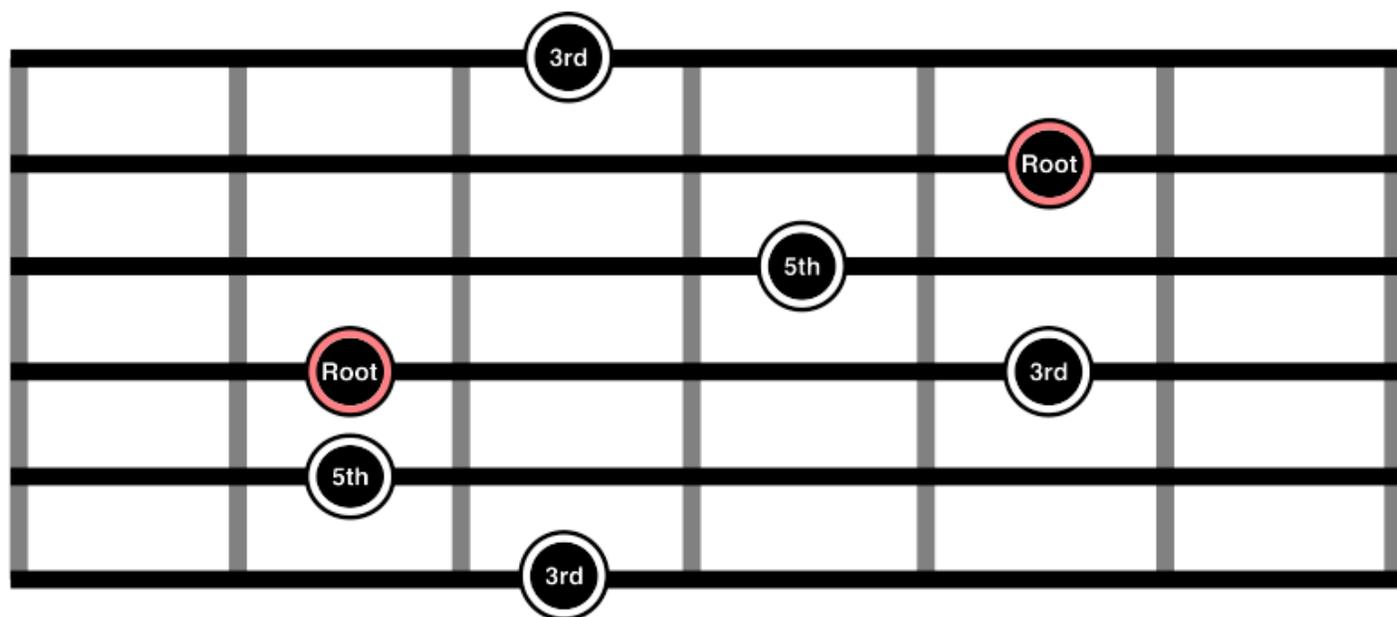
Moveable E minor

Root



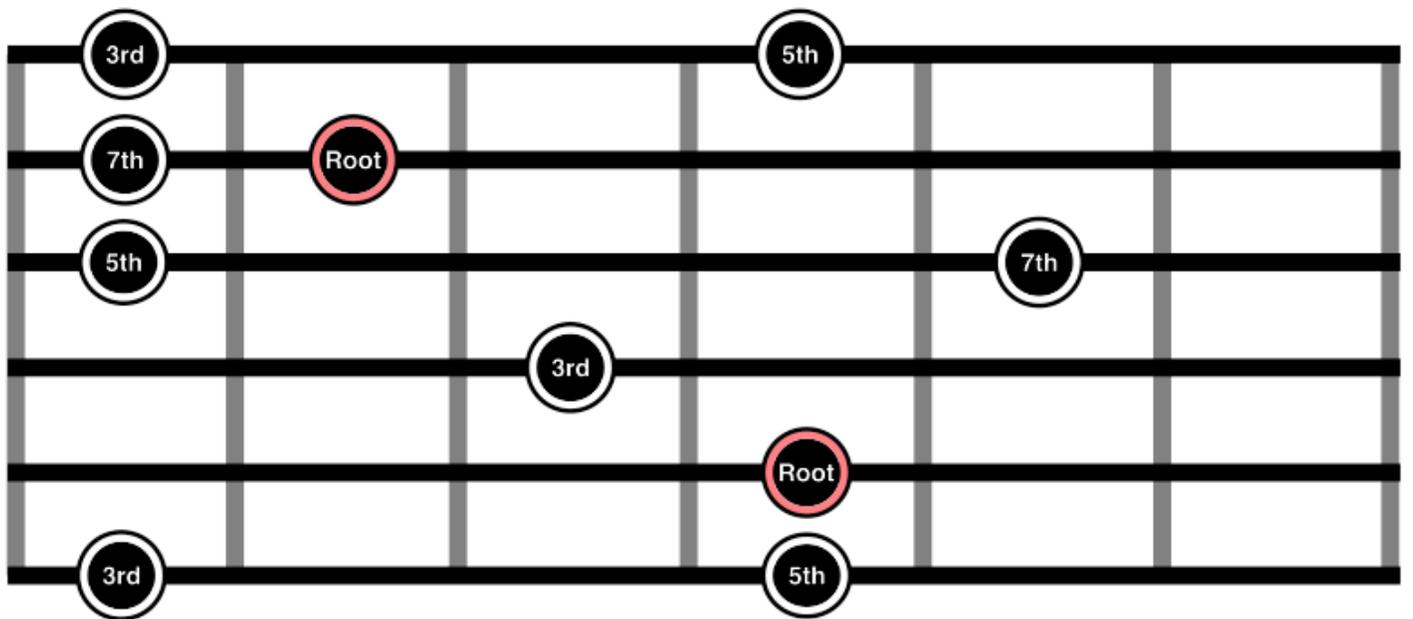
Moveable D minor

Root



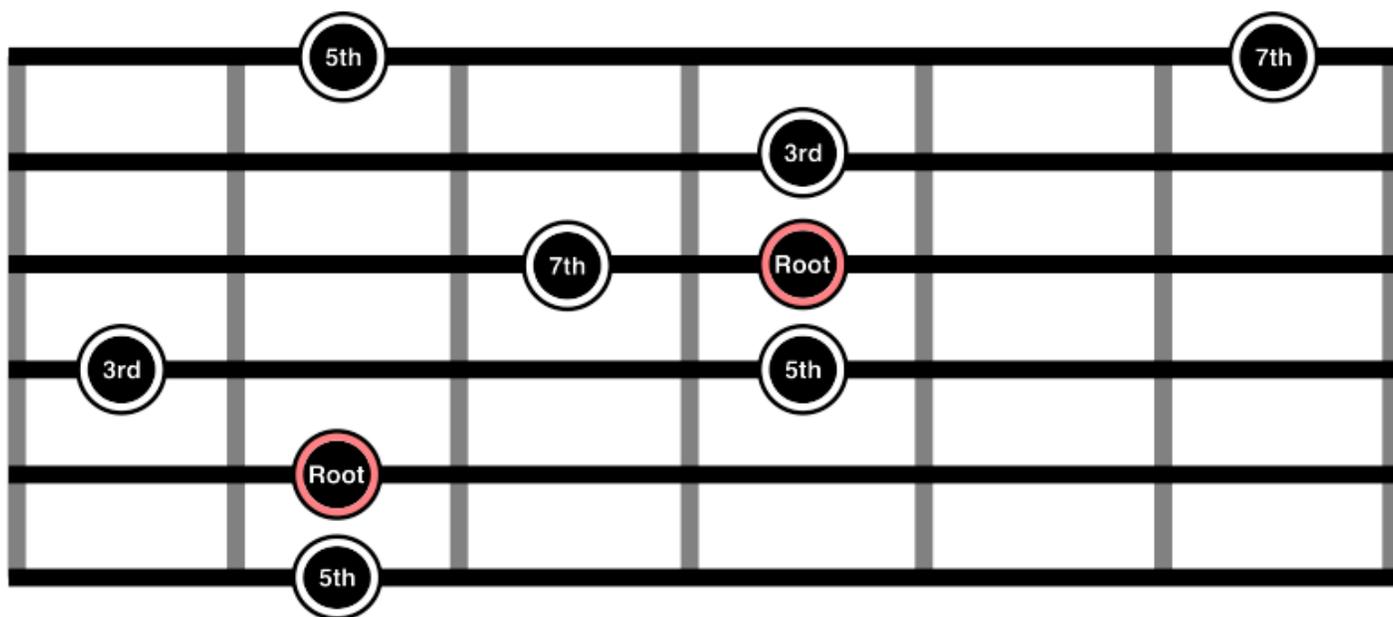
Moveable Cmaj7

Root



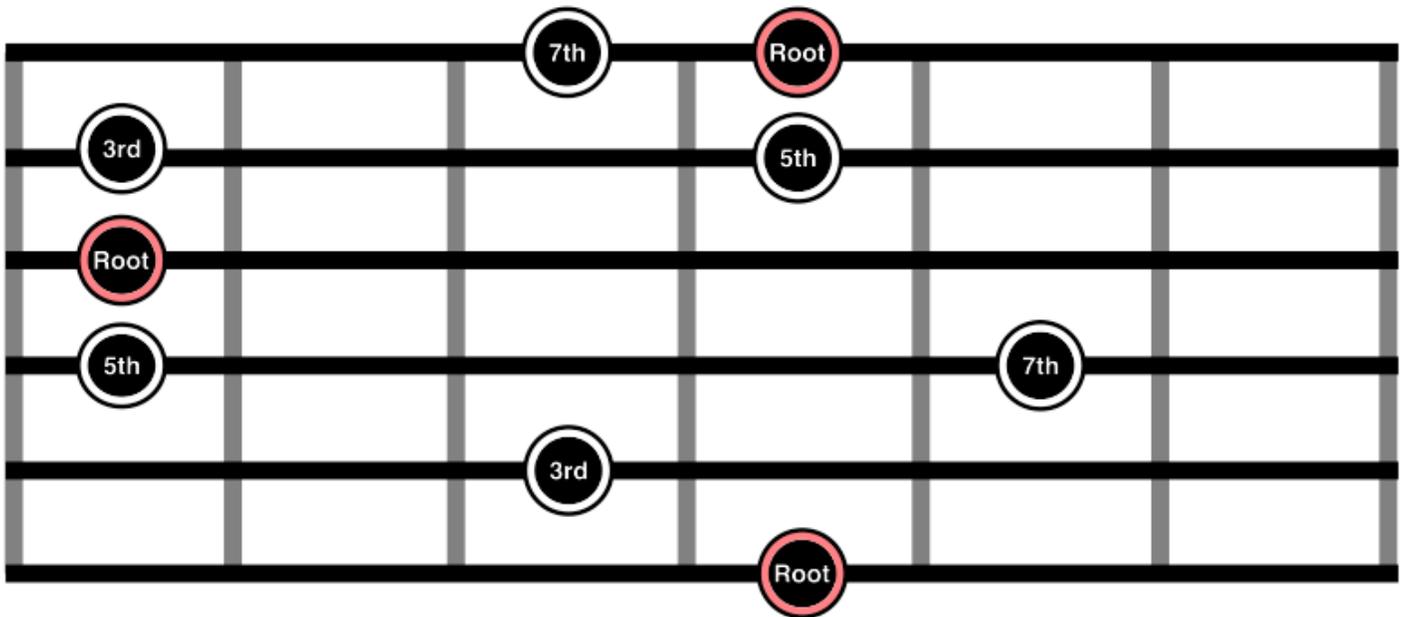
Moveable Amaj7

Root



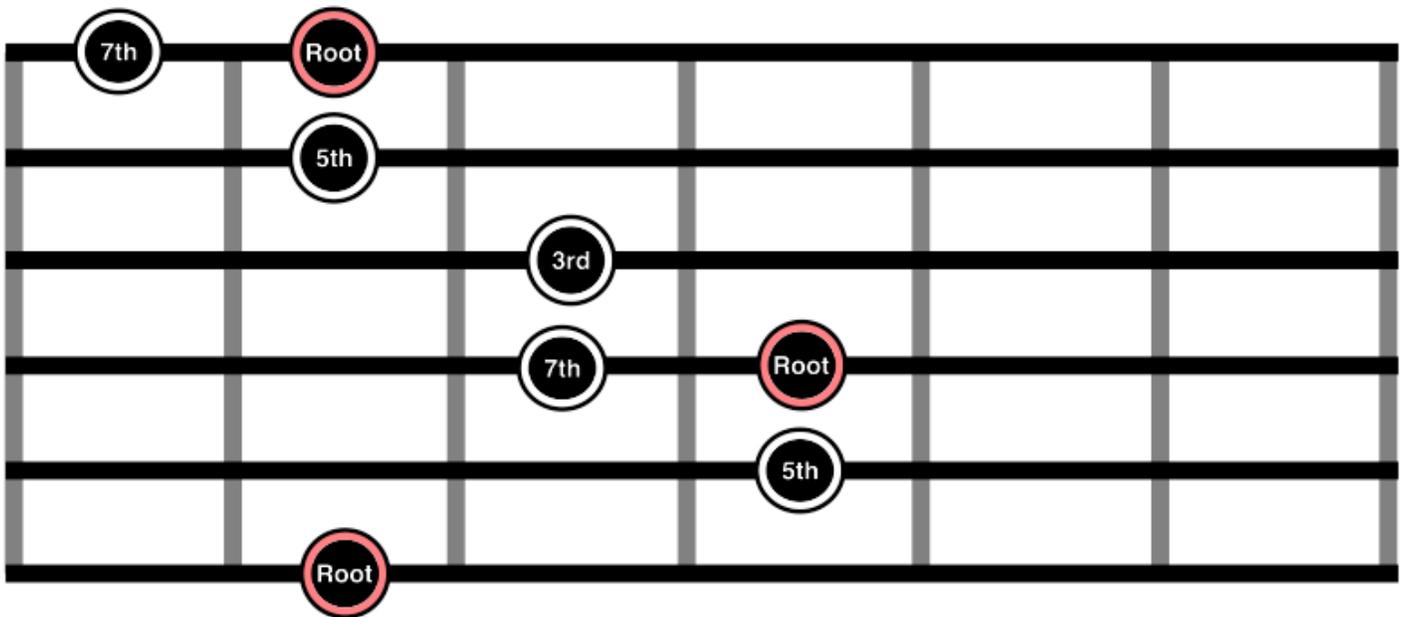
Moveable Gmaj7

Root



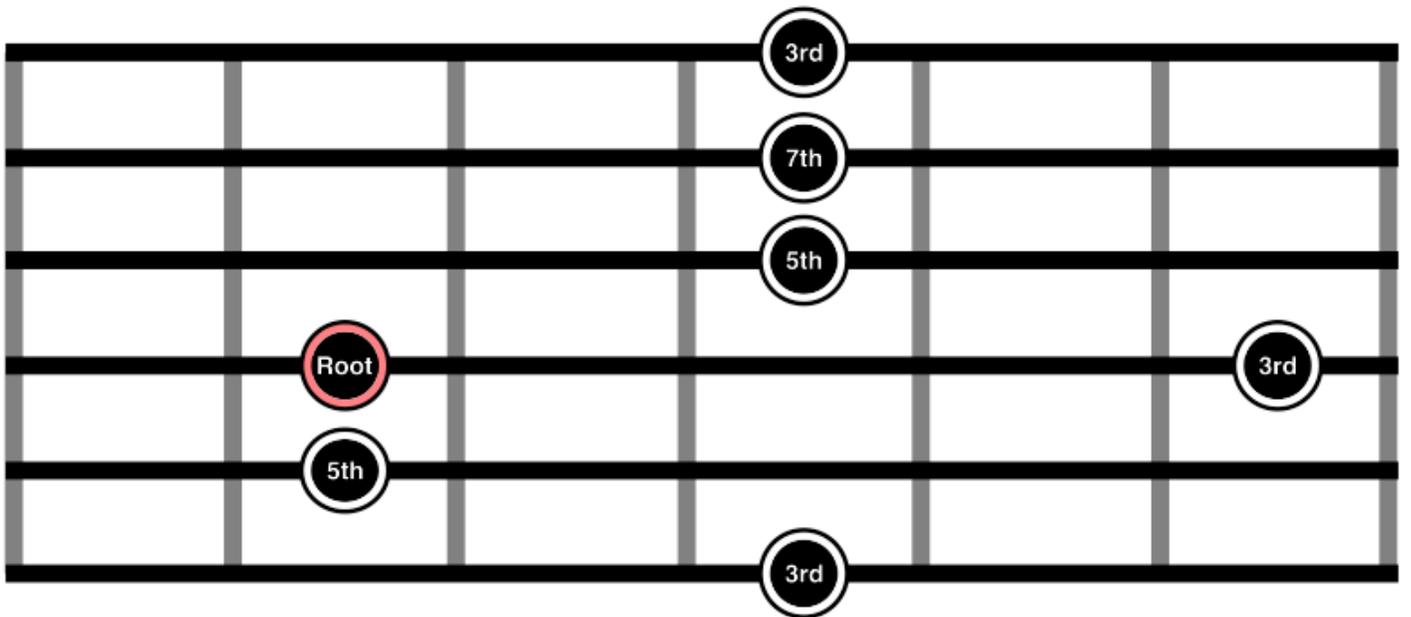
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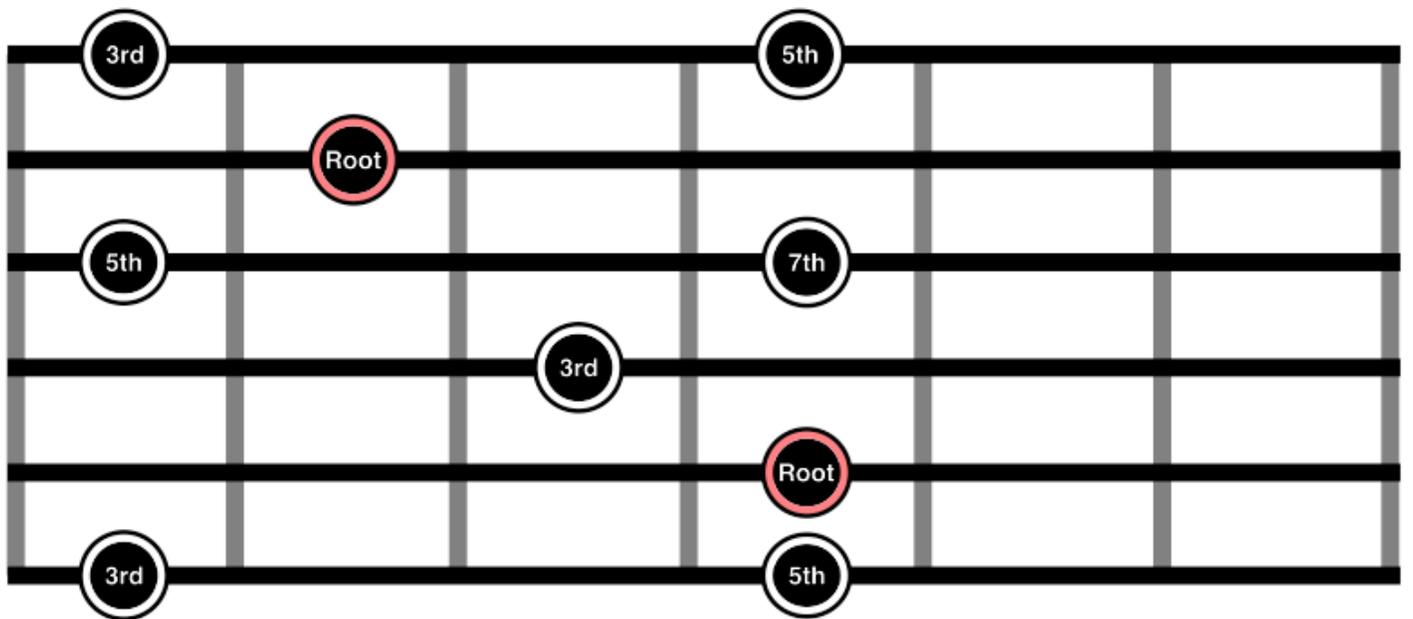
Moveable Dmaj7

Root



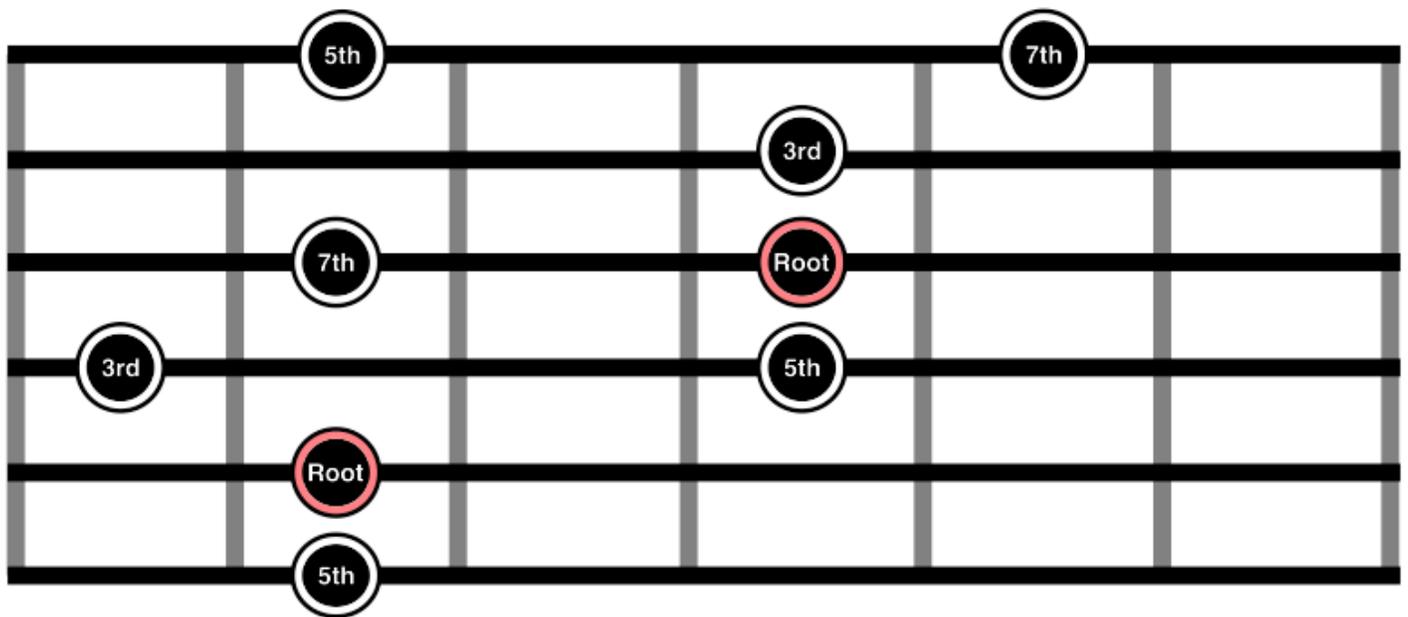
Moveable C7

Root



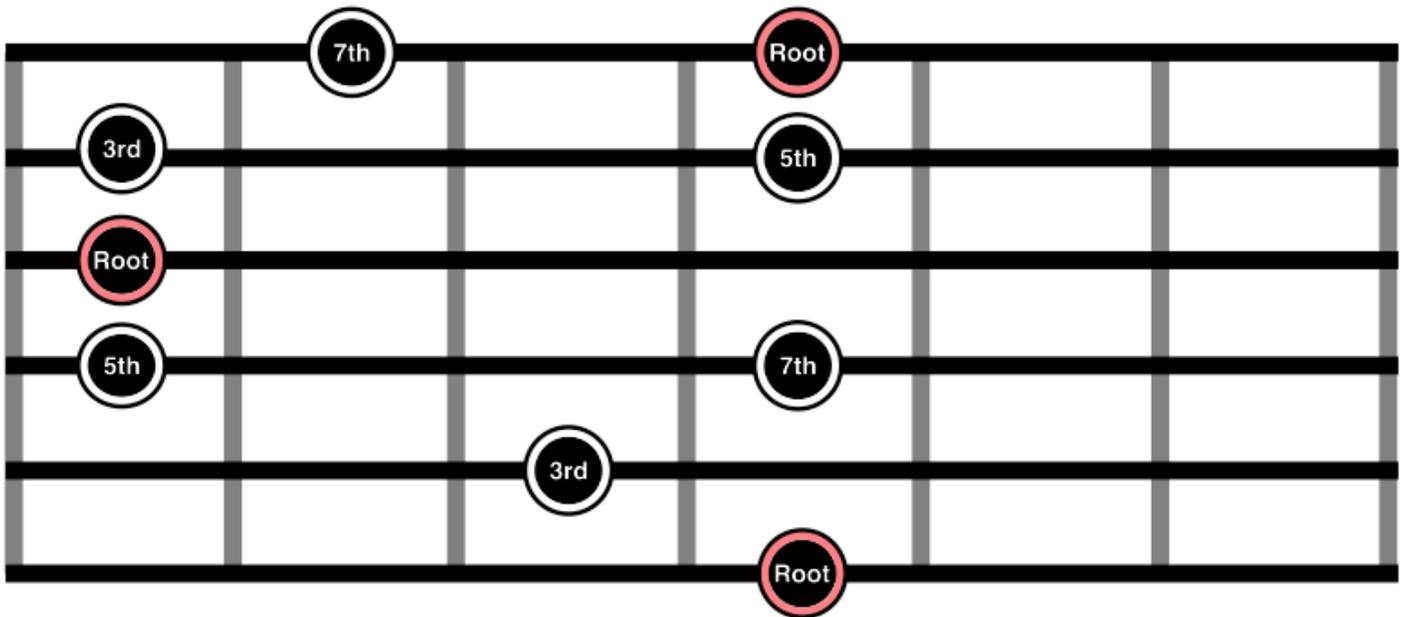
Moveable A7

Root



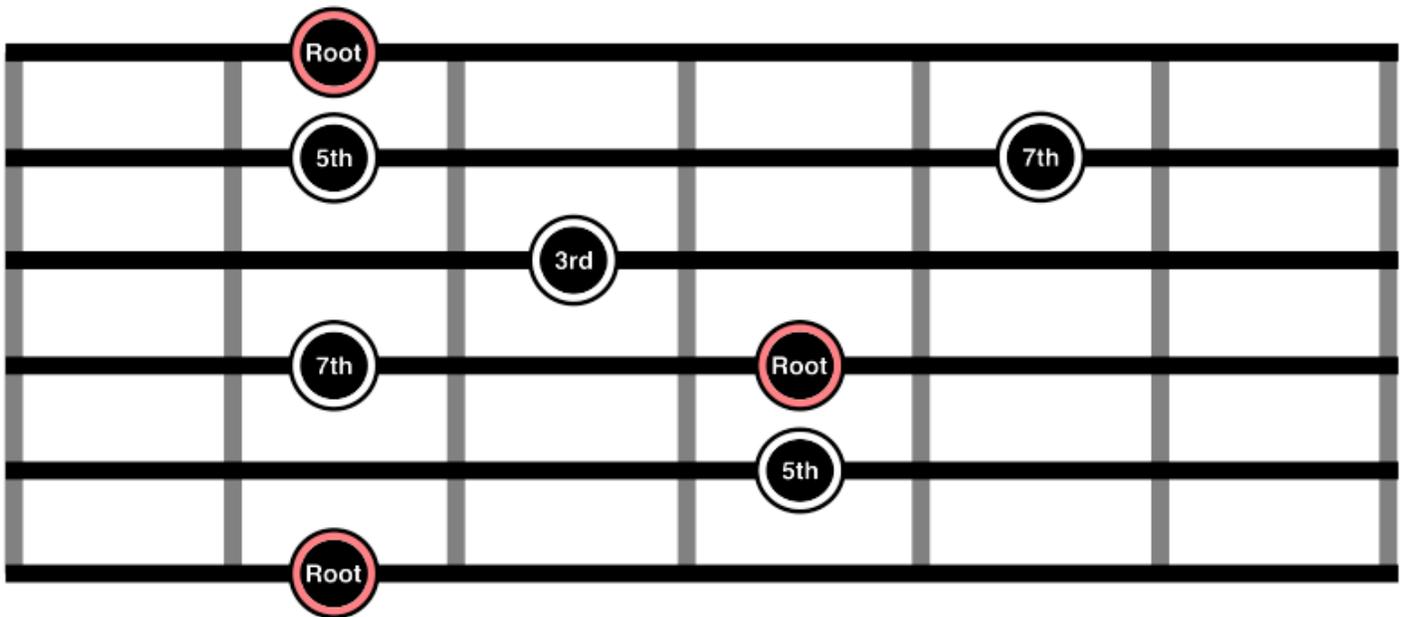
Moveable G7

Root



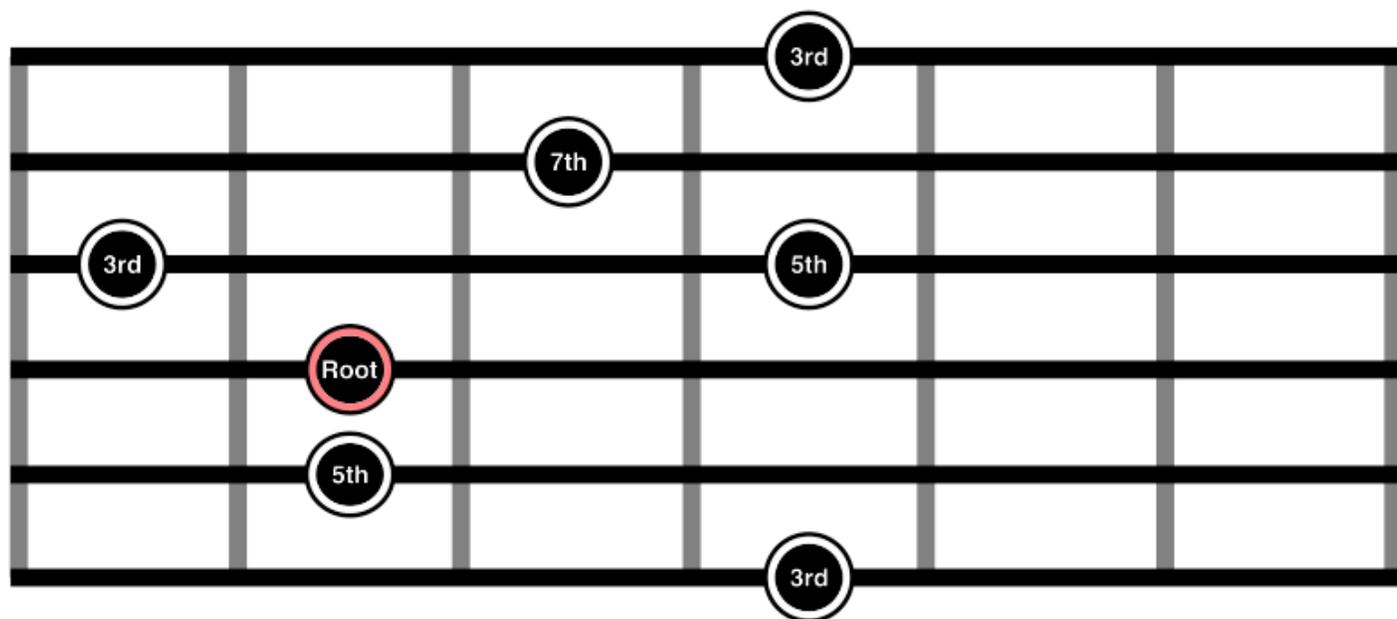
Moveable E7

Root



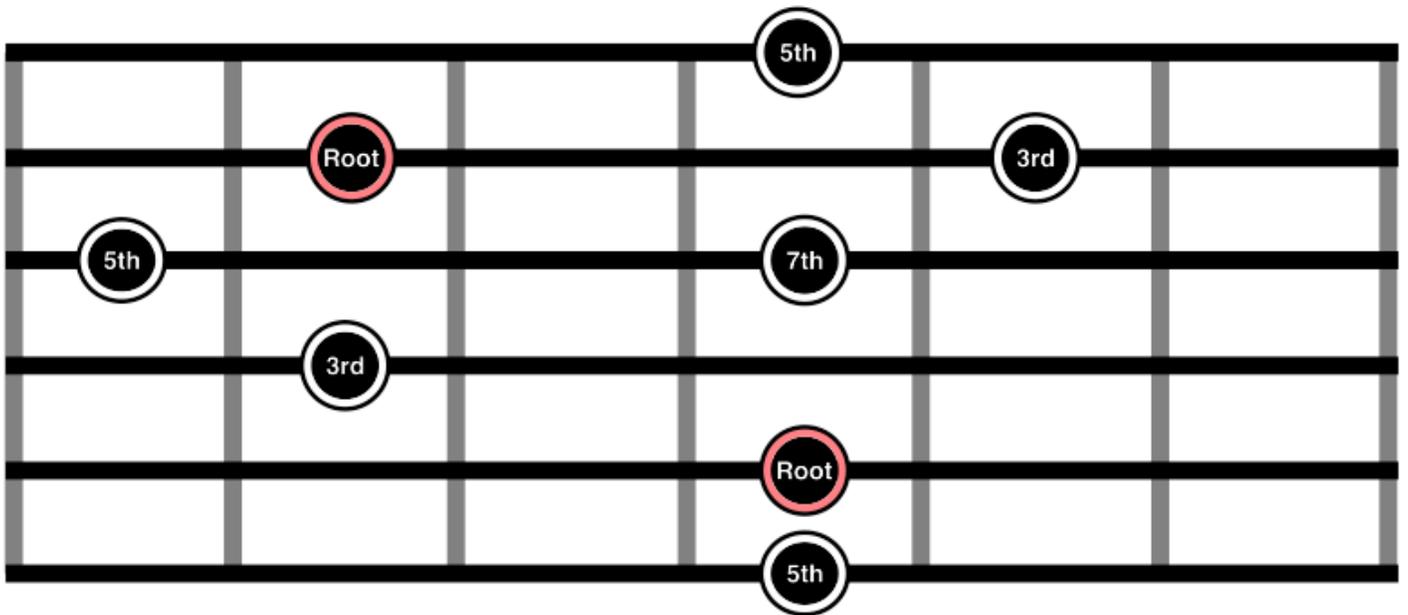
Moveable D7

Root



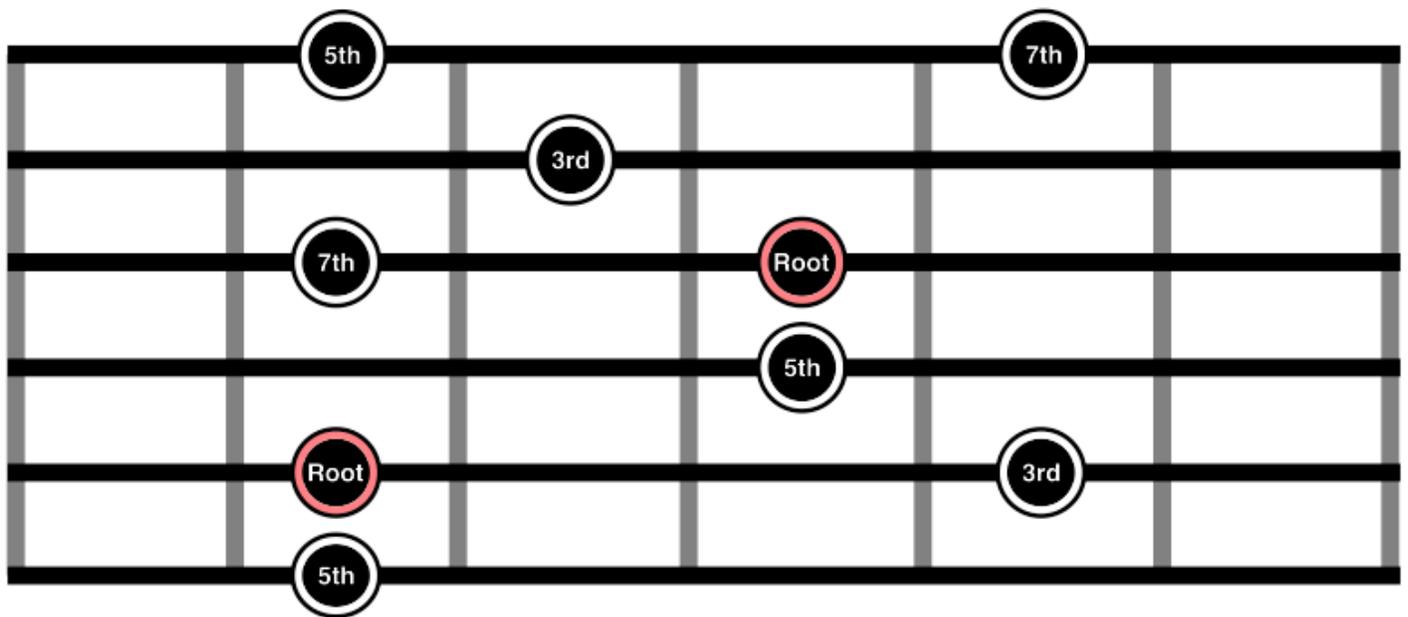
Moveable Cm7

Root



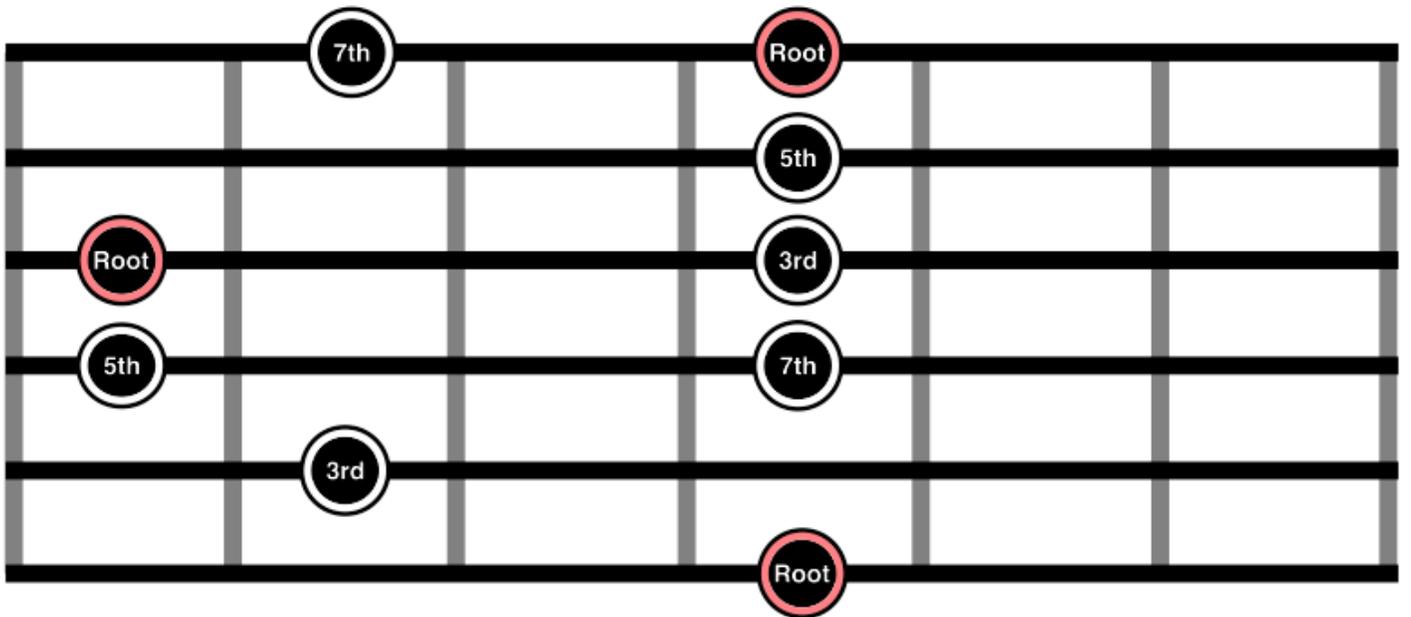
Moveable Am7

Root



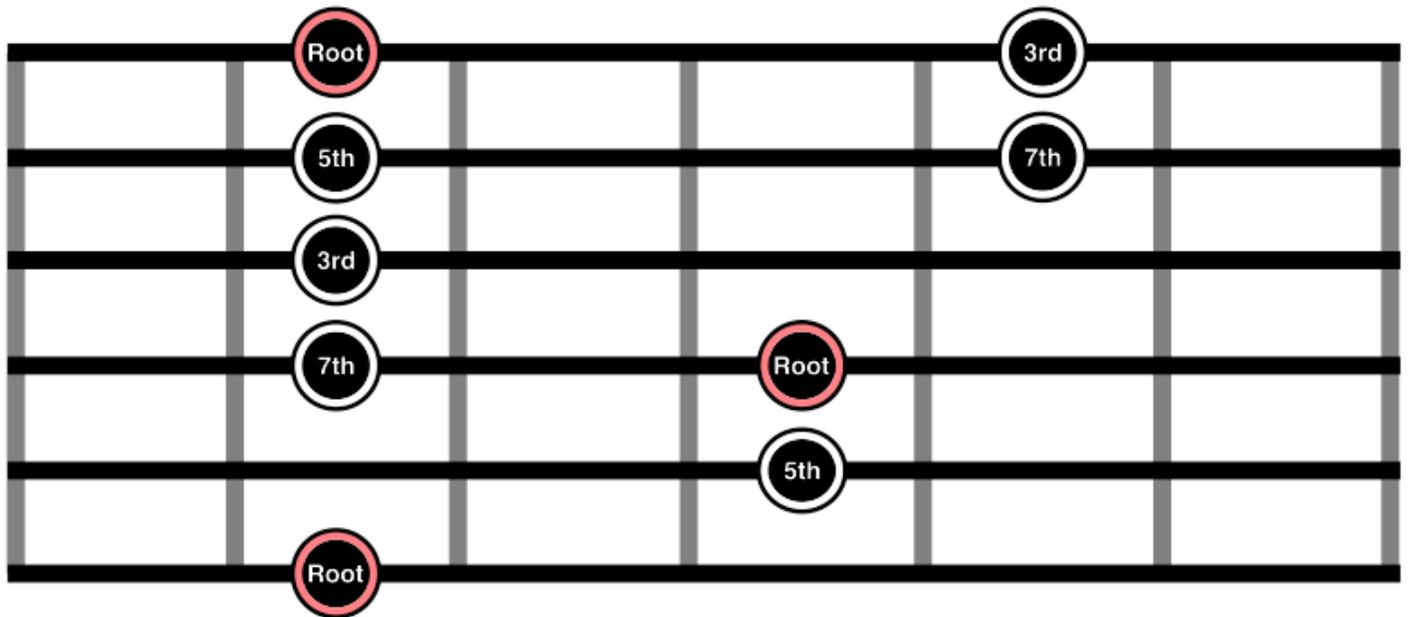
Moveable Gm7

Root



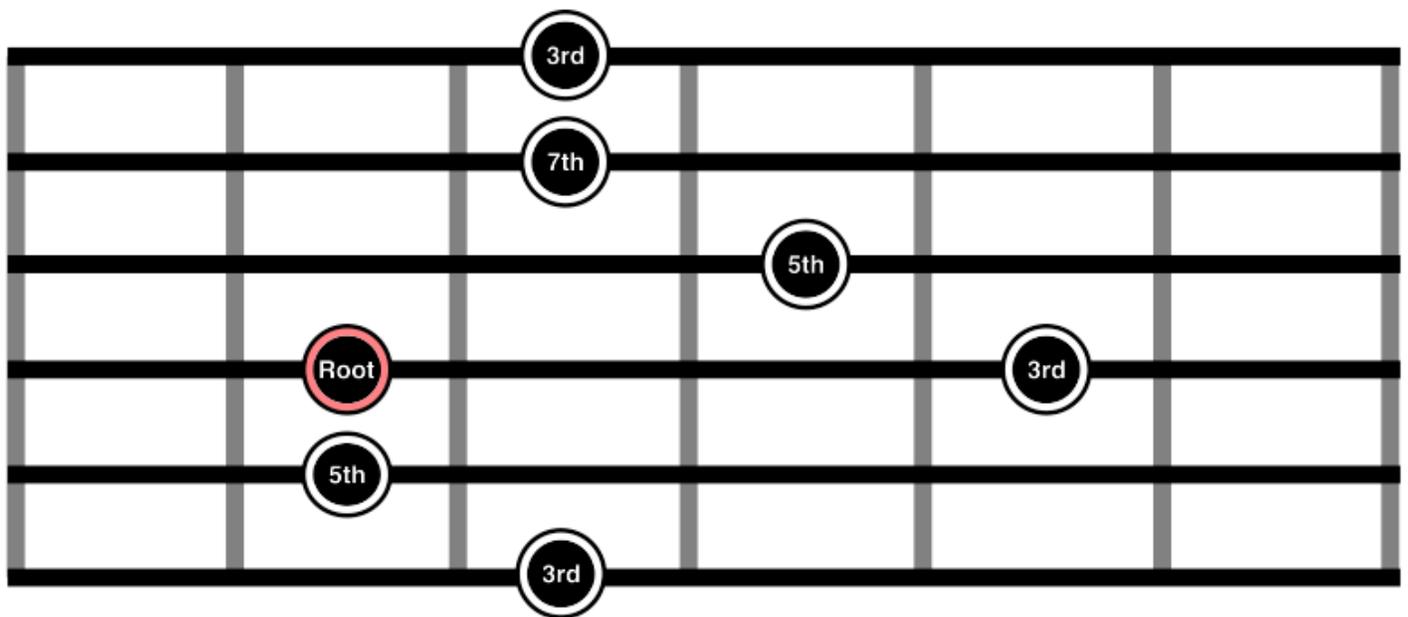
Moveable Em7

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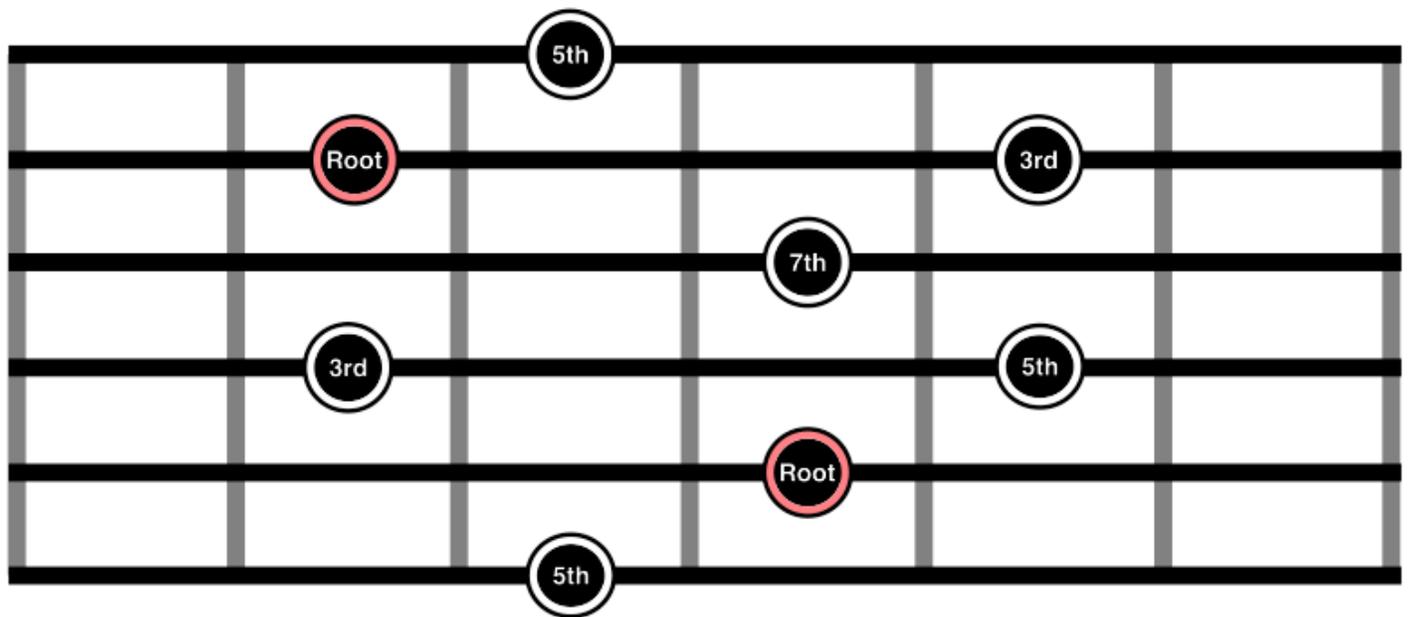
Moveable Dm7

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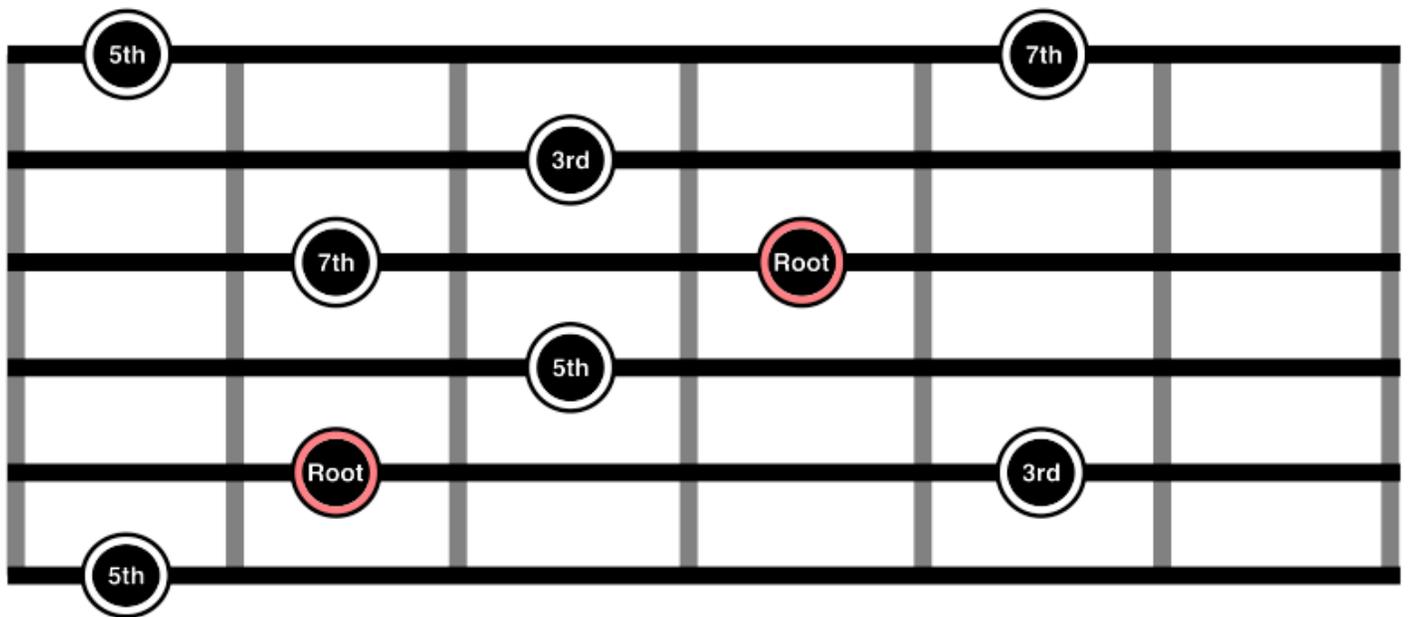
Moveable Cm7b5

Root



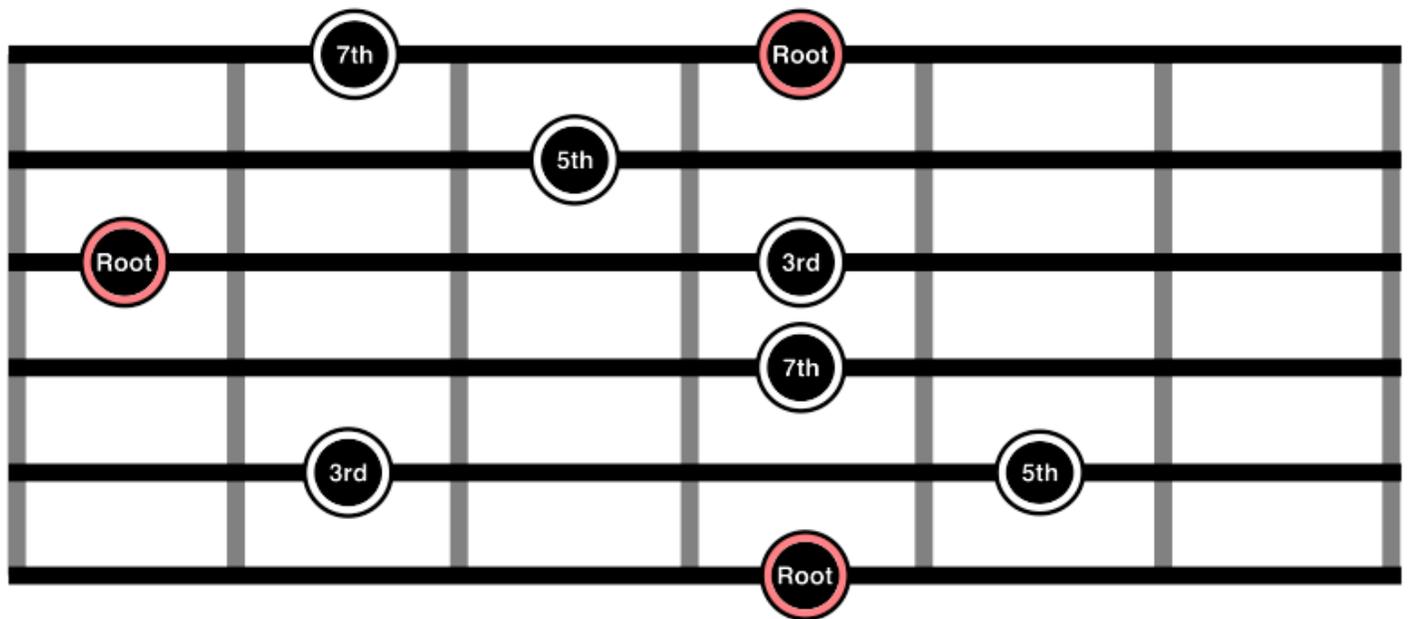
Moveable Am7b5

Root



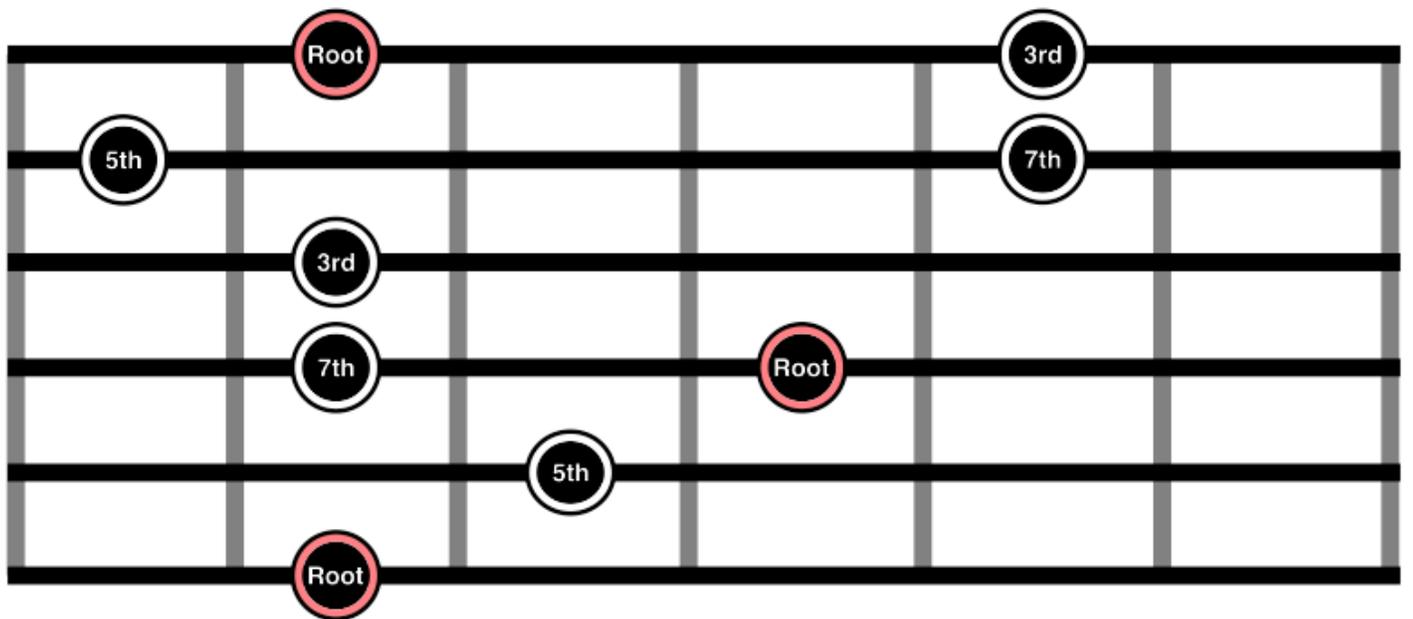
Moveable Gm7b5

Root



Moveable Em7b5

Root



Moveable Dm7b5

Root

