

Chapter 1 – 7th Chords

In this Chapter: By the end of this chapter you will be able to play 2 different 7th chord shapes using 2 different swing blues rhythms.

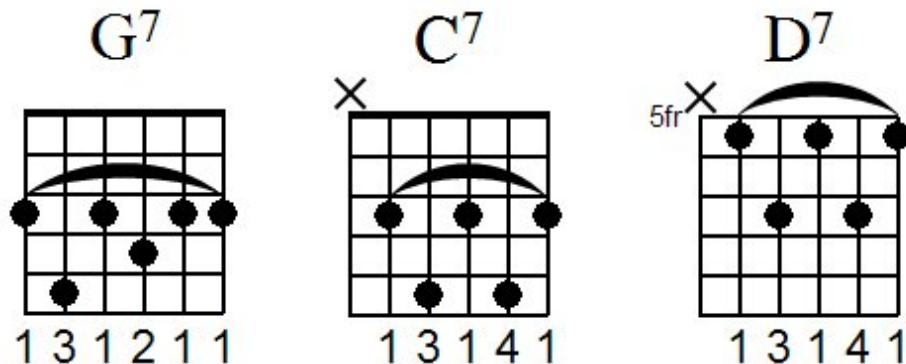
Most blues revolves around a type of chord called a 7th chord.

When we have a chord like G7, the chord name tells us two things. First, the chord starts on G. Second, the *quality* of the chord is dominant 7th.

All chords have a quality. Chord qualities are things like major, minor, diminished, major 7th, minor 7th, dominant 7th, 9th, augmented, and many others. G7 and C7 are not the same chord, but they have the same chord quality.

Also keep in mind that G7 is a shorthand notation for G dominant 7, and is different from a G major 7 or a G minor 7.

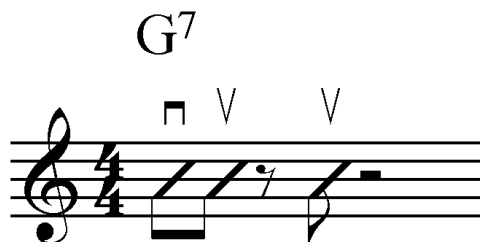
Let's look at the 2 chord shapes we'll be using for this first example:



Keep in mind that for all of these chord shapes, the lowest note (in pitch) is the *root note*. That means that for G7, the lowest note is G. For C7, the lowest note is C, and for D7, the lowest note is D.

Let's put these three chords together into a simple blues shuffle pattern.

Rhythmically, we're going to do this strum pattern:



Notice that the strum pattern is down – up – rest – up.

Whenever you see two eighth notes together as in the first beat, they are always played with a down strum, then up strum.

To execute the rest and get the best sound, lay the heel and palm of your right hand across the strings. I also tend to do a down strum, but I don't really hit the strings with my pick. That way I'm ready for the following up strum which almost always happens after a rest.

The swing feel is also really important in the blues. You know what they say, it ain't got a thing if it ain't ...

Without getting too technical, to make the swing feel, simply make your up strokes closer to the following downstrokes. It should feel like each "&" of the beat is falling into the next downbeat.

It comes from the sound the old steam engines used to make, or so the legend goes. So keep that in mind. You're going for the "chug --- a chug ---- a chug" that the old locomotives made.

Now, here's the whole tune...

Musical notation for Example 1-1, a blues progression in 4/4 time. The first staff shows a G7 chord with a square symbol and two 'v' symbols above it, followed by a melodic line. The second staff shows a C7 chord and a G7 chord. The third staff shows a D7, C7, and G7 chord progression. The notation includes rests, slurs, and repeat signs.



EXAMPLE 1-1

Make sure that you can play this example right along with the audio track before you try to move on.