

Lesson 3 – 9th Chord Substitutions

In This Lesson: By the end of this lesson you will be able to play 9th chord substitutions instead of 7th chords.

At this point you have most of the 7th chord shapes you'll need for a while.

What makes things sound exceptionally cool, however, is to substitute other colorful chords in place of the 7th chord.

“How can I do that?” You might ask, and that's a great question. After all, if the paper says to play a 7th chord, isn't that what they mean for you to play?

Well ... yes and no. They mean for you to play something from the 7th chord family actually.

This is where blues and jazz leave the traditional classical, pop, rock, and country worlds far behind ...

The plain and simple truth is that the chords shown the page are suggested, but you can substitute with any chord of the same family (at least as long as you like the sound of it.)

So, what are the chords in the dominant 7th family?

7th chords (duh) – not major 7th or minor 7th. Remember, those are different families altogether.

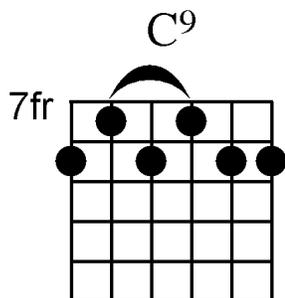
9th chords (a little more interesting sound, and common)

11th chords (unusual except for the V chord)

13th chords (great for slow blues or a little melody)

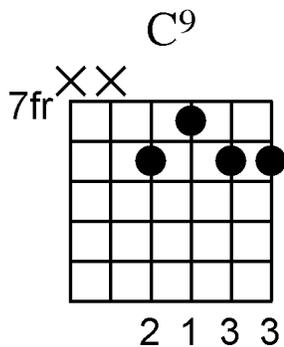
Anything altered that has a 7th in it like 7#9, 7b9, 7#9#5 (huh?) you get the idea. Well, probably you don't yet, but you will. Altered chords are down the road.

Let's look at a C9 chord with the root note (the C) on the 6th string.



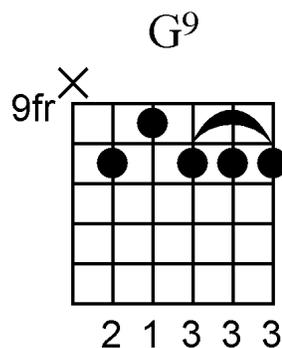
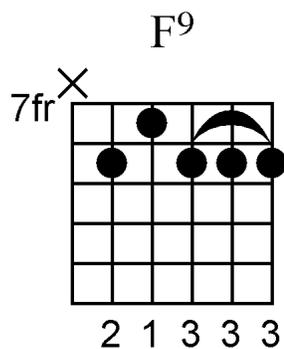
Now before you go getting crazy trying to play this – you can't. You don't have enough fingers. At least, not enough to easily play it.

So, we're going to get rid of the bottom 2 strings of the chord (the low E and A) and turn it into something IMMENSELY more useful.



Now - that's easy to play, and totally useful. It's also easy to find because instead of the root note on the 6th string, it's on the 1st, and the notes on the 6th and 1st strings are the same.

Now let's add our IV and V chords. You should know what they are before I show them to you if you finished lesson 2



All right now, let's put them altogether into a cool quick change blues.

Notice on this one that I didn't even play over the quick change. I did that simply to show you the use of space in your rhythm playing. Don't feel like you have to play all the time. It's one of the biggest mistakes many guitar players make.

Three staves of musical notation in 4/4 time. The first staff shows a C⁹ chord above the first measure, an F⁹ chord above the second measure, and a C⁹ chord above the third measure. The second staff shows an F⁹ chord above the first measure and a C⁹ chord above the third measure. The third staff shows a G⁹ chord above the first measure, an F⁹ chord above the second measure, a C⁹ chord above the third measure, a G⁹ chord above the fourth measure, and a C⁹ chord above the fifth measure. The notation includes rhythmic patterns of eighth notes and rests, with some notes marked with 'u' and 'v'.

EXAMPLE 3-1

As with everything else, be able to play this before you move on. Make sure you can still play it over the “rhythm only” track. That gets more important as we move further on.