

## Drop 3 Chords

Insert Head Video MP4

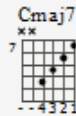
In some of my lessons and videos I incorporate a few Drop 3 chords. In this lesson we will cover and define drop three chord as well as learn some of the popular shapes and inversions. What are drop 3 chords? The name Drop 3 comes from the fact that in order to build these chord shapes, you take a closed position chord, 1-3-5-7, and “**drop**” the 3<sup>rd</sup> note from the top down an octave, forming the interval pattern 3-1-5-7. This however doesn’t mean the 3<sup>rd</sup> note is always on top and used as the bass note. Here is an example of converting the closed Cmaj7 chord to a drop 3 chord.

### Example 1



MP3 Ex1

## Closed Chord Cmaj7 to Drop 3



Standard tuning

♩ = 80

E-Gt

Cmaj7

mf

Cmaj7Drop3

Drop 3 chords most often use the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> string as the bass note, skip the next string, then play the other three notes on lower strings. They are primarily played on 2 different string sets;

- 6<sup>th</sup> (skip mute 5<sup>th</sup>) 4-3-2
- 5<sup>th</sup> (skip mute 4<sup>th</sup>) 3-2-1

By lower the 3<sup>rd</sup> note of any **closed-position chord** by an octave, you will then produce these four interval patterns for each inversion.

- **Root Position R-7-3-5**
- **1<sup>st</sup> Inversion 3-R-5-7**
- **2<sup>nd</sup> Inversion 5-3-7-R**
- **3<sup>rd</sup> Inversion 7-5-R-3**

Now that we know the definition of drop 3 chords, how can we use them? Drop 3 are used primarily in Jazz music but often heard in many other music genres. I primarily perform Country, Rock, and also Contemporary Christian music and I incorporate drop 3 chords while performing all of them. Here is a couple factors drop 3 chords will help you.

- With a strong sense of bass in each chord (the lowest notes are always on the 6<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> strings), **drop 3 chords** will give you that fat-bottom sound when covering the low end in a duo or trio setting with no bass guitarist.
- Because there is a string skip in every shape, drop 3 chords are ideal for solo guitar playing, as they keep the **bass notes** involved in your voicings, but separate them from the rest of the chord, allowing the melody line to stand out at the same time.

Though you may find drop three chords to be useful, they can be very tricky and challenging to learn and master. The hardest thing for me was learning how to mute the skip string. It took me hours of practice to make them sound smooth and keep the muted string from ringing.

## Example 2

The best way to start learning drop three chord is to start with a few and learn all the inversions. In this exercise we will learn G7 chord drop 3 on 6-4-3-2 string set and also its three inversions. Practice with metronome.



MP3 Ex2

# G7 Drop 3 Inversions



Standard tuning

♩ = 70

E-Gt

G7

	1	2	3	4
	Root	1st	2nd	3rd
T	3	6	8	12
A	4	7	10	12
B	3	5	9	12
B	3	7	10	13

	5	6	7
	2nd	1st	Root
T	8	6	3
A	10	7	4
B	9	5	3
B	10	7	3

### Example 3

I find that the drop 3 chords played from the 6<sup>th</sup> string easier to finger and play than the 5<sup>th</sup> string chords. Here are some drop 3 chords from the 5<sup>th</sup> string. You may find some of the fingerings more difficult than 6<sup>th</sup> string chords. Here we have C major 7, C dominant 7, C minor and C minor flat 5. I use the c minor flat 5 as nine chords. The C minor flat 5 also spells A flat nine chord (Ab9).



MP3 Ex3

## Drop 3 chords 5th String

Standard tuning

$\text{♩} = 120$

E-Gt

	1	2	3	4
8	8	8	8	8
mf				
Cmaj7	Cdom7	Cm	Cmb5	
3	3	3	2	
5	5	4	4	
4	3	3	3	
3	3	3	3	
T				
A				
B				

## Example 4

Here are some more drop 3 chords from the 6<sup>th</sup> string. I use these quite often.

MP3 ex 4



# Drop 3 Chords

## 6th String

Standard tuning

$\text{♩} = 120$

E-Gt

1	2	3	4
<i>mf</i> Gmaj7	G7	G#dim	G13
T A B	T A B	T A B	T A B
3 4 3 3	3 4 3 3	3 4 3 4	5 4 3 3

5	6	7
Gmin7	GmFlat5	Gm11
T A B	T A B	T A B
3 3 3 3	2 3 3 3	1 3 3 3

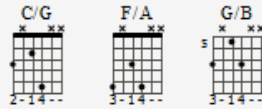
## Example 5

Sometimes less is more. Here are some three note drop three chords you may find very useful. This groove uses C, F, and G. They can add a twist to your rhythm chops.



Mp3 Ex 5

## 3 Note Drop 3 Chords



Standard tuning

$\text{♩} = 90$

E-Gt

*mf*

C/G F/A G/B F/A

1 2

T	5	5	7	5
A	2	3	5	3
B	3	5	7	5

## Exercise 1

In this exercise we will show use some popular drop 3 chord transitions combined with some drop 2 chords. These are the chords I used. Listen to it then practice it with the practice track. This is the Jazz Groove in the intro video.

### Jazz Chord Groove

Key G

G7

G7/B

A<sup>b</sup> dim7

Em7

Am7

Cmaj7

D9(no5)

D9(b9)(no5)

Standard tuning

♩ = 80

E-Gt

G7    A<sup>b</sup> dim7    Am7    D9(no5)    G7/B    A<sup>b</sup> dim7    Am7    D9(no5)

T	3	3	5	5	6	3	5	5
A	4	4	5	4	7	4	5	5
B	3	4	5	5	5	3	5	5
B	3	4	5	5	7	4	5	5

Em7    Cmaj7    Am7    D9(b9)(no5)

T	7	8	5	5	4
A	8	8	5	5	5
B	7	9	5	4	4
B	7	8	5	5	5

Insert Exercise 1 Practice Track

## Exercise 2

After you smooth out some of your drop 3 chords here is the solo I played in the head video with the practice track provided. Have fun and enjoy!

# JAZZ GROVE SOLO

KEY G

STANDARD TUNING

$\text{♩} = 80$

E-GT

mf

T  
A  
B

10 8 8 7 9 7 9 7 8 7 9 7 7 9 10 9 7 5 4 5 4 5 4

15 17 15 17 14 16 16 14 12 12 14 12 14 14 14 12 14 14 5 8 7 5 5 8 5 5 7 8 10 8 7 7 8 7 9 7

4 4 5 7 5 4 5 4 5 4 7 5 4 5 5 5 4 3 5 3 2 2 4 5 3



E-Gtr

mf

T	5	7-8	7-10	9-9	7-10	9	8	9	10-8-7	10
A	2	4-5	4-7	7-7						
B										

A	8	7-10
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