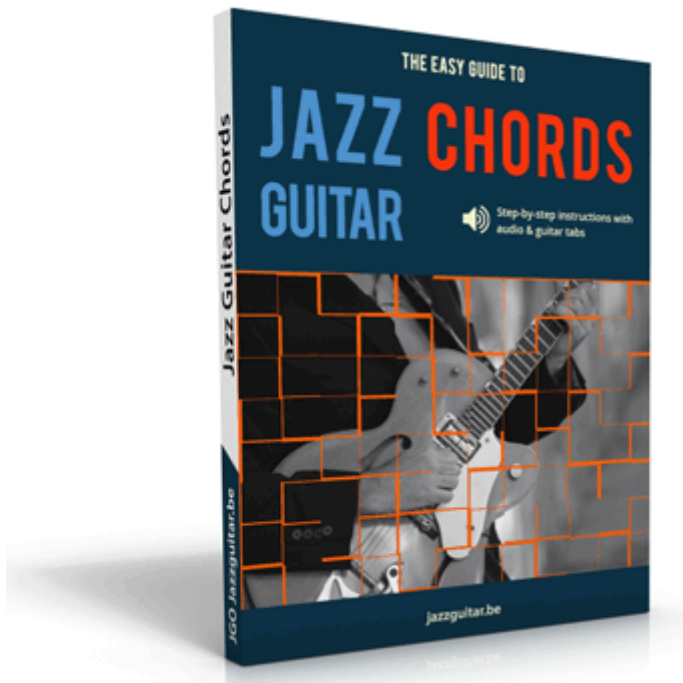


10 JAZZ GUITAR CHORD PROGRESSIONS



The Easy Guide To

Jazz Guitar Chords

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Chord progressions are a succession of chords played one after another and during a specified duration. On this page you'll find the **10 most popular chord progressions** in jazz, a list of songs that use similar chord progressions and the jazz guitarists who recorded these songs.

In this lesson you will learn how to **recognize these progressions** from a Roman Numeral standpoint, allowing you to quickly transpose them to other keys, as well as two different ways to comp through each progression on the guitar.

It's important that you learn to recognize these classic chord progressions and that you **practice improvising** over them, so grab your axe, turn up your amp and let's dig in to these 10 Must Know Jazz Guitar Chord Progressions!

Jazz Guitar Chord Progression 1 - ii V I Major

iim7	V7	I maj7	%
Dm7	G7	Cmaj7	%

The 2 5 1 progression is without any doubt the **most popular chord progression** in jazz. I'm not going to give you a list with songs that use this progression, since a jazz standard without a II V I is almost unthinkable. Some jazz standard chord progressions are nothing more than a series of II Vs.

It can be found in countless tunes, in all 12 keys, and with many different permutations, both rhythmically and harmonically. For this reason, it is the **best place to start** when working on solidifying and expanding your jazz guitar progressions repertoire.

Btw, the % symbol means you have to repeat the chord of the previous bar.

Here are two examples of how to play this progression in the **key of C**:

[Click here to play this example](#)

The image shows a musical score for the ii V I Major progression in the key of C. The score is written in 4/4 time and consists of four measures. The first measure is Dm7, the second is G7, the third is Cmaj7, and the fourth is Cb. Below the staff are guitar fretboard diagrams for each chord, showing the fingerings for the strings.

Chord	String 1	String 2	String 3	String 4	String 5	String 6
Dm7	10	10	10	10	10	10
G7	8	8	10	10	9	9
Cmaj7	8	8	9	9	9	9
Cb	8	8	9	9	7	7

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Jazz Guitar Chord Progressions 2 - Rhythm Changes

I maj7	vi m7	ii m7	V7	iii m7	VI7	iim7	V7
Cmaj7	Am7	Dm7	G7	Em7	A7	Dm7	G7

This chord progression is the first A of a **Rhythm Changes**. 'Rhythm changes' are a kind of chord progression that use the same chord changes as '*I've Got Rhythm*', a song written by Gershwin in 1930. People started using this progression to jam on and so many different melodies came into being that use the same chord changes.

A list of standards that use this progression:

Song Title	Played By
Moose the Mooche	Pat Metheny
Shaw Nuff	Barney Kessel
Cheek to Cheek	George Van Eps

Mean to Me [Barney Kessel](#)
Isn't It Romantic [Tal Farlow](#)
Long Ago and Far Away [Earl Klugh](#)

Built around the I-vi-ii-V progression, with a slight variation between the first and second two-bar phrases, this chord progression can be **deceptively simple**, which is why a lot of guitarists don't dig deep when exploring this progression. But, for those that do lift the hood and explore these changes with a bit more detail, you can learn new and creative ways of outlining these oft-used chords, taking your Rhythm Changes comping to new levels of creativity at the same time.

Here are two examples of how to comp through these changes to help get you started:

[Click here to play this example](#)

The image shows a musical notation example for a guitar comping exercise in 4/4 time. The progression consists of eight measures, each containing a single chord. The chords are: Cmaj7, Am7, Dm7, G7, Em7, A7, Dm7, and G7. The notation includes a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (F major/C minor). Below the staff is a guitar fretboard diagram with strings labeled T (Top), A, B, and E (Bottom). The fret numbers for each measure are: Measure 1 (Cmaj7): 5, 4, 3; Measure 2 (Am7): 5, 5, 5; Measure 3 (Dm7): 6, 5, 5; Measure 4 (G7): 3, 4, 3; Measure 5 (Em7): 8, 7, 7; Measure 6 (A7): 5, 6, 5; Measure 7 (Dm7): 6, 5, 5; Measure 8 (G7): 3, 4, 3.

[Click here to play this example](#)

Jazz Guitar Chord Progressions 3 - Descending ii V I

I maj7	%	(ii m7	V7)
Cmaj7	%	Cm7	F7

I maj7	%	(ii m7	V7)
Bbmaj7	%	Bbm7	Eb7

I maj7
Abmaj7

This is also a very common jazz chord progression. Used in tunes such as "How High the Moon" and "Tune Up," descending major ii V I's are a commonly used harmonic device that can prove to be kind of **tricky** when first learning to navigate these chords.

There are **2 modulations** in this progression:

- The chords start in the key of C major.
- They modulate to Bb major in the 3rd bar.
- They modulate again in the 7th bar, this time to Ab major.

Song Title	Played By
How High the Moon	Joe Pass
Tune Up	Wes Montgomery
Cherokee	Tal Farlow
Joy Spring	Joe Pass
One Note Samba	Charlie Byrd
Solar	Pat Metheny

When faced with descending harmonic patterns such as this, many of us simply repeat the same chords down two frets for each new key. While this can work, more advanced players will find ways to **ascend up the neck** as the chord progression descends, providing a nice harmonic contrast during these chords.

Here are two examples of how you could practice comping through these changes:

[Click here to play this example](#)

Cmaj7 **Cm7** **F7**

Bbmaj7 **Bbm7** **Eb7** **Abmaj7**

[Click here to play this example](#)

Cmaj7 **Cm7** **F7**

Bbmaj7 **Bbm7** **Eb7** **Abmaj7**

Jazz Guitar Chord Progressions 4 - Dim7 Passing Chords

Imaj7	#I°7	iim7	#II°7	iiim7	VI7
Cmaj7	C#°7	Dm7	D#°7	Em7	A7

Heard in tunes such as "Cherokee," the use of **Dim7 passing tones** to connect the Imaj7 and iim7 chords, as well as the iim7 and iiim7 chords, in any chord progression are a commonly used and important harmonic device that can spice up the playing of any jazz guitarist.

Dim7 chords not only add **harmonic tension** to this progression, but the **chromatic bass line** helps to build tension, which is then resolved to the iim7 and iiim7 chords in the following downbeats.

Song Title	Played By
Cherokee	Tal Farlow
Have You Met Miss Jones	Kenny Burrell
Joy Spring	Joe Pass
But Beautiful	Lenny Breau
Ain't Misbehavin'	Django Reinhardt

To get you started, here are two ways that you could work on comping these important chords in your practice routine:

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Chord progression: Cmaj7, C#o7, Dm7, D#o7, Em7, A7

Chord	T	A	B
Cmaj7	5	4	3
C#o7	5	3	4
Dm7	6	7	5
D#o7	7	5	6
Em7	8	9	7
A7	8	6	7

[Click here to play this example](#)

Chord progression: Cmaj7, C#o7, Dm7, D#o7, Em7, A9

Chord	T	A	B
Cmaj7	12	12	10
C#o7	12	11	11
Dm7	13	13	12
D#o7	14	13	13
Em7	12	12	12
A9	12	12	11

Jazz Guitar Chord Progressions 5 - Take the A Train

I maj7	%	II7	%
C maj7	%	D7	%

iim7	V7	I maj7	%
Dm7	G7	C maj7	%

These chords, which feature the cool-sounding and **fun to play II7 chord**, are mostly associated with the classic Ellington track "Take the A Train."

The movement from **I maj7 to II7 to iim7** is one that you will see in many different jazz guitar tunes, including the classic Bossa Nova track "Girl From Ipanema," and is therefore worth working on from both a comping and blowing standpoint.

Song Title

Played By

Take the 'A' Train

[George Benson](#)

The Girl from Ipanema

[Charlie Byrd](#)

Desafinado

[Charlie Byrd](#)

Mood Indigo

[Kenny Burrell](#)

Here are two ways that you can work on these chords in the woodshed to help get them under your fingers and in your ears:

[Click here to play this example](#)

Cmaj7 **D⁹**

Tablature for Cmaj7 and D⁹ chords:

7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10

Dm⁹ **G¹³** **Cmaj7** **C⁶**

Tablature for Dm⁹, G¹³, Cmaj7, and C⁶ chords:

7	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10

[Click here to play this example](#)

Cmaj7 **D⁷**

Tablature for Cmaj7 and D⁷ chords:

9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10

Dm⁷ **G⁷** **Cmaj7**

Tablature for Dm⁷, G⁷, and Cmaj7 chords:

10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9
10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8

Jazz Guitar Chord Progressions 6 - I to IV

I maj7	(iim7	V7)	IV maj7
C maj7	G m7	C 7	F maj7

For anyone that has played the **blues**, you know that the movement from a I chord to a IV chord is a commonly heard sound in the jazz-guitar idiom. While you may be most familiar with this progression from a jazz-blues standpoint, you can also apply this progression to a major key situation such as the one seen in the examples below.

Song Title

Satin Doll

Cherokee

Joy Spring

Have You Met Miss Jones

There Will Never Be Another You

Played By

[Tal Farlow](#)

[Tal Farlow](#)

[Joe Pass](#)

[Kenny Burrell](#)

[George Benson](#)

Working on these two examples, in various keys, will help get this important sound into your ears and under your fingers, allowing you to confidently bring these changes to your jam sessions and gigs in no time:

[Click here to play this example](#)

Musical notation for a guitar exercise in 4/4 time. The piece features four measures of chords: Cmaj7, Gm7, C7, and Fmaj7. The notation includes a treble clef and a guitar TAB below. The TAB shows the following fret numbers for the strings (from top to bottom):

Measure	String 1	String 2	String 3	String 4	String 5	String 6
1	7	5	5	5	5	5
2	7	5	5	5	5	5
3	6	6	5	5	5	5
4	6	6	5	5	5	5
5	5	5	5	5	5	5
6	5	5	5	5	5	5

[Click here to play this example](#)

Musical notation for a guitar exercise in 4/4 time. The piece features five measures of chords: Cmaj7, Gm9, C13, Fmaj9, and F9. The notation includes a treble clef and a guitar TAB below. The TAB shows the following fret numbers for the strings (from top to bottom):

Measure	String 1	String 2	String 3	String 4	String 5	String 6
1	8	8	8	8	8	8
2	8	8	8	8	8	8
3	10	10	8	10	8	10
4	10	8	8	10	8	8
5	8	8	8	8	8	8
6	8	7	8	8	7	8

Jazz Guitar Chord Progressions 7 - IV to iv

I maj7	I7	IV maj7	iv m7
C maj7	C7	F maj7	F m7

ii m7	VI7	ii m7	V7	I maj7
E m7	A7	D m7	G7	C maj7

Used by countless jazz composers, compers and improvisers, as well as many pop musicians such as the **Beatles** to name buy one band, the IV to iv harmonic movement is one that every jazz guitarist needs to have under their fingers from both a comping and soloing standpoint.

The key to learning to play and hear this progression, is the movement from the **IV maj7 to the iv m7** chord.

Song Title

Moose the Mooche

Shaw Nuff

All of Me

All the Things You Are

There Will Never Be Another You

Played By

[Pat Metheny](#)

[Barney Kessel](#)

[George Benson](#)

[Pat Metheny](#)

[George Benson](#)

Here are a few ways that you could comp through this progression to help get you started:

[Click here to play this example](#)

Chord progression: Cmaj7, C7, Fmaj7, Fm7. The notation shows the chord voicings on a treble clef staff in 4/4 time, with corresponding guitar TAB on a six-string staff below. The TAB uses numbers 1-5 to indicate fret positions.

Chord progression: Em7, A7, Dm9, G13, C9, Cmaj7. The notation shows the chord voicings on a treble clef staff in 4/4 time, with corresponding guitar TAB on a six-string staff below. The TAB uses numbers 1-5 to indicate fret positions.

[Click here to play this example](#)

Chord progression: Cmaj7, C7, Fmaj7, Fm7. The notation shows the chord voicings on a treble clef staff in 4/4 time, with corresponding guitar TAB on a six-string staff below. The TAB uses numbers 10, 11, 9, and 10 to indicate fret positions.

Chord progression: Em7, A7, Dm7, G7, Cmaj7. The notation shows the chord voicings on a treble clef staff in 4/4 time, with corresponding guitar TAB on a six-string staff below. The TAB uses numbers 9, 10, 7, 6, 7, and 7 to indicate fret positions.

Chord Progressions 8 - Rhythm Changes Bridge (Bb major)

III7	VI7	II7	V7
D7	G7	C7	F7

As we saw earlier, Rhythm Changes is a tune that is full of classic sounding, and must-know, chord progressions. Based off of the cycle of 5ths, the bridge to Rhythm Changes features **four 7th chords moving up by a 4th** with each new chord in the progression. Though there are only four chords, these changes can be tricky to master, and therefore are worth exploring.

To help you get started, here are a couple ways that you could practice playing the bridge to Rhythm Changes:

[Click here to play this example](#)

The image displays two musical examples for practicing the Rhythm Changes bridge in Bb major. Each example consists of a treble clef staff with a 4/4 time signature and a guitar fretboard diagram below it.

The first example shows the progression: D7, G7, C7, F7. The D7 chord is played in the 4th fret, G7 in the 3rd fret, C7 in the 1st fret, and F7 in the 1st fret. The guitar fingerings are: D7 (5-5-5-5), G7 (5-5-5-5), C7 (4-4-4-4), and F7 (4-4-4-4).

The second example shows the progression: C7, F7, C7, F7. The C7 chord is played in the 1st fret, F7 in the 1st fret, C7 in the 1st fret, and F7 in the 1st fret. The guitar fingerings are: C7 (3-3-3-3), F7 (3-3-3-3), C7 (2-2-2-2), and F7 (2-2-2-2).

[Click here to play this example](#)

D7 **G7**

2 3 8 10 13 10 7 3
2 4 7 10 12 9 5 3
0 4 7 10 12 9 5 3

C7 **F7**

3 6 8 12 13 11 8 5
3 6 8 12 13 11 8 5
2 6 8 10 13 10 8 5

Jazz Guitar Chord Progressions 9 - ii V I Minor

ii $m7b5$	V 7	i $m7$	%
D $m7b5$	G 7	C $m7$	%

Just like it's major-key cousin, the **minor ii V I progression** is found in countless tunes from many different composers and improvisers.

Featuring the ever-tricky **7alt chord**, this progression can be a bit tougher to master than the major-key version we say earlier, which is why it's important to continue to develop your minor ii V I vocabulary even for more experienced players.

Here are a couple of examples to help you get started with comping through this important group of 3 chords:

[Click here to play this example](#)

The image shows a musical example of a minor ii V I progression in D minor, consisting of three measures. The first measure is for the ii chord (Dm7b5), the second for the V7 chord (G7alt), and the third for the I chord (Cm7). The notation includes a treble clef, a 4/4 time signature, and a guitar TAB below. The TAB shows the following fret numbers: Measure 1: 6, 6; Measure 2: 4, 4; Measure 3: 4, 4. The strings are labeled T (Treble), A (A), and B (Bass).

[Click here to play this example](#)

Musical notation for a jazz guitar chord progression in 4/4 time. The progression consists of four measures: 1. Cm7(b9) with a bass line of Bb, G, F, Eb; 2. G7ALT. with a bass line of Bb, G, F, Eb; 3. Cm7 with a bass line of Bb, G, F, Eb; 4. Cm7 with a bass line of Bb, G, F, Eb. The notation includes a treble clef, a 4/4 time signature, and a guitar-specific bass line with fret numbers 13, 13, 11, 11, 11, 11, 12, 12.

Jazz Guitar Chord Progressions 10 - Stray Cat Strut

im7	im7/b7	bVI7	V7
Cm7	Cm7/Bb	Ab7	G7

Heard in the classic tune "Stray Cat Strut," this **minor-key turnaround** is one that every jazz guitarist should have under their fingers. With a distinctive bass line, simple yet effective harmonic movement, and a swinging feel, these four chords can add spice to any plain minor-turnaround from a soloing or comping perspective.

To get you started, here are two ways that you could comp through this important minor-key turnaround:

[Click here to play this example](#)

Musical notation for a minor-key turnaround in 4/4 time. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The notation consists of a treble clef staff and a guitar TAB staff. The chords and their corresponding TAB are:

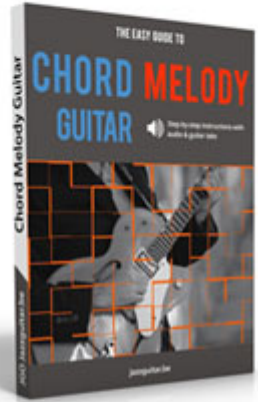
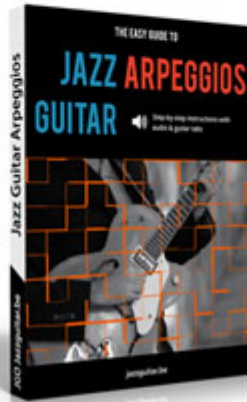
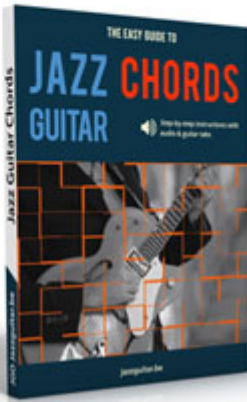
- Cm⁷**: Treble clef shows a C minor 7 chord (B-flat, C, D-flat, E-flat). TAB: 4 4 3 3
- Cm⁷/Bb**: Treble clef shows a C minor 7 chord with a B-flat bass note (B-flat, C, D-flat, E-flat). TAB: 4 4 3 3
- Ab⁷(#11)**: Treble clef shows an A-flat 7 chord with a sharp 11 (A-flat, B-flat, C, D, E-flat, F, G). TAB: 3 4 4 4
- G⁷ALT.**: Treble clef shows a G 7 chord with an altered 9 (G, A, B, C, D, E-flat, F). TAB: 4 4 3 3

[Click here to play this example](#)

Musical notation for a minor-key turnaround in 4/4 time. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The notation consists of a treble clef staff and a guitar TAB staff. The chords and their corresponding TAB are:

- Cm**: Treble clef shows a C minor chord (B-flat, C, D-flat). TAB: 10 10 10 10
- Cm⁷/Bb**: Treble clef shows a C minor 7 chord with a B-flat bass note (B-flat, C, D-flat, E-flat). TAB: 10 10 10 10
- Ab⁷**: Treble clef shows an A-flat 7 chord (A-flat, B-flat, C, D, E-flat, F). TAB: 7 7 6 6
- G⁷**: Treble clef shows a G 7 chord (G, A, B, C, D, E, F). TAB: 5 5 7 7

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