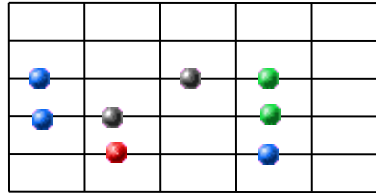
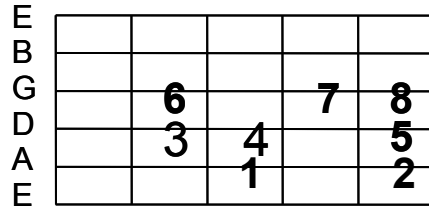


# How are guitar chords built? What makes a chord minor or major?

If you're not sure about this then read on ... Some background theory makes a tremendous help when learning how to play guitar chords.

It all starts with the major scale. C major scale

|   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| C | D | E | F | G | A | B | C |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |

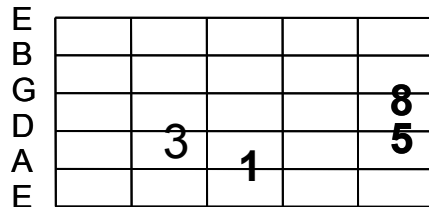


Triads (a chord that is built with 3 notes) and seventh chords (chords that are built with 4 or more notes) are based on thirds.

Let's start by stacking a 3<sup>rd</sup> and a 5<sup>th</sup> on the first note of the C major scale:

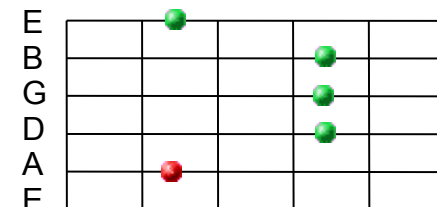
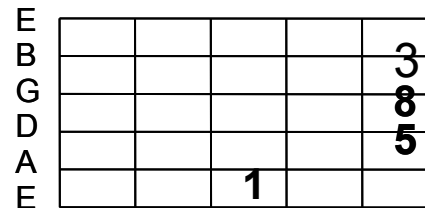
|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| C | E | G |
| 1 | 3 | 5 |

So basically what this means is that to make a major chord or triad you need to use the 1<sup>st</sup>, the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> notes of the scale.



If you have a look at the diagram on the left you will see that the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup> notes of the scale are on the same string. When playing guitar you need to hear all the notes of the chord ring at once. To solve this most guitar chords are arranged with the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup> at the bottom of the chord and the 3<sup>rd</sup> higher up. So the chord "voicing" is 1 5 (8) 3

## C major Chord





# Minor Chords

**Minor Chords have a really sad sound.**

The sad sound comes from the minor or flattened 3rd

Ok, so we know how to make a major chord, how do you make a minor chord? Well a minor chord is just a major chord with the third taken down 1 step. This is called flattening the third. The symbol for a flat is like a small b.

A major chord is spelt 1 3 5.

e.g. C major : C E G

A minor chord is spelt 1 b3 5.

C minor C Eb G

