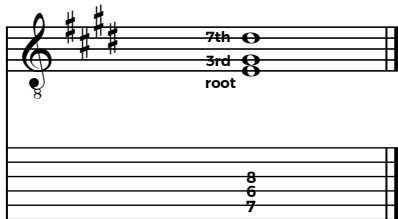
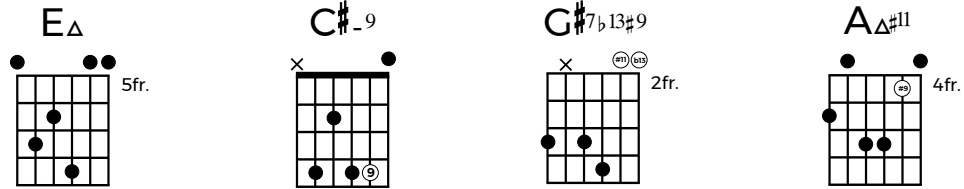


'Where Is My Mind'

Combining shell voicings and open strings

I Δ - Vi - III \flat 7 - IV

a) Basic shell voicings in E: 'Where Is My Mind'



Shell voicings are a type of chord shape that includes all the *chord tone 'categories'* which define the sound of a given harmony. The following two formulas show how they are constructed:

- a) root - (b) 3rd - (b) 7th
- b) root - (b) 7th - (b) 3rd

These voicings are a staple of guitar playing since the beginning of jazz guitar. Players like Django Reinhardt or Eddie Lang already used them to play rhythm guitar. There

are more benefits to this reduced way of playing chords. Obviously less notes mean that they're easier on our hands - additionally, the constant structure and limited number of different chord 'grips' allows the shapes to be 'moveable' across the neck which goes a long way for **rhythm playing** and easy **transposition**.

Once you understand, memorize and apply the structure of the few basic shell voicings you're able to play even more complex harmonic progressions and know where you are at 'harmonically' in a given context (e.g. I - IV - V, secondary dominants). On top of that shell voicings are the basis of most common jazz voicings - just add color notes like in the sample below to create more complex harmonies. The black dots in the chord diagrams depict chord tones / the shell voicing, the white dots show tensions (e.g. 9, b13).

b) E-major scale, tonic (I) and minor parallel (Vi)

The tonic and minor parallel chord share common tones therefore their harmonic function is interchangeable, they are both tonic chords. E.g. the C#-9 can be used as an incomplete voicing for E Δ , with an added 6 (C#). The voicing would be complete with a C# on the high e-string.

c) A-major scale, subdominant (IV)

When switching from tonic (I) to subdominant chord (IV) be sure to stress the 'characteristic notes' if you play without any accompaniment and would like to outline a tune's harmonic structure. In the context of E major these notes are A (root), c# (3rd), and d# (#11).

d) A minor major scale / C# altered scale, III7 / iV6

Both the III7 chord and the occasional minor iv chord substitution are based off the same scale: A melodic minor. As compared to the E major scale there are only two notes which create the difference, C natural and D natural. Here, emphasizing these notes helps to outline the harmonic progression.