

Larger Triads (chords)

The title seems to defy logic because it implies only a three note structure. The truth is that any note of the triad can be duplicated in another octave and the chord can still be referred to as a triad. (A note that is an octave higher in pitch is exactly twice as fast in its vibration frequency.)

Duplicating notes in other octaves adds some density to the chord but does not change the function of the chord to any great degree. When we play rhythm guitar, we are generally looking to produce a relatively "fat" sound to accompany the melody, so most of the rhythm guitar chords will be of the "larger variety." On the other hand, when we are simply playing a harmonized solo, we can often restrict the chords to smaller versions so the melody, played as the highest note in the chord, will not be buried.

The larger forms of the triad can be in any inversion and the inversion type is still decided by the lowest note. (bass note) Chords which span more than an octave are generally called "open voicing."

C C C C

Root pos. 3 note triad Root pos. 1st Inversion 2nd Inversion

-----larger triads-----

Am Am Am Am

The above staff shows four forms of the Am triad in Root Position. (root in the bass)

Any note of the chord can be duplicated but generally, it is best to duplicate the Root or the 5th. The 3rd of the chord is the colour note of the chord so a duplicated third can be a bit overpowering.

The Root Position "G" chord is used to demonstrate this issue in guitar chord fingerings.

G G G G G

If you are playing with a bassist, this three note chord will work quite well but it would be a bit thin as a solo style accompaniment chord fingering.

This "G" chord is the standard issue chord and it contains two "3rds." However it contains 3 roots and the lower 3rd is difficult to distinguish

This fingering of the G chord is quite popular but it is a bit flawed in the fact that the low third indeed is a bit hard to hear.

The full bar chord fingering may be the best form for a large triad form of any major chord on the guitar.

The famous "power chord" is not a triad at all but simply a combination of the Root and 5th. This chord does not depict major or minor quality because the colour note is missing.

The black note head distinguishes the 3rd in the above examples.

Guitar players generally dismiss all of this information as being unimportant.