

Chord Reading 20.

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In some peculiar manner, one could justify just about any combination of simultaneously struck notes as being a chord of some kind or other. However, the conventional system in harmony is to combine a Root, 3rd and 5th. The chords can be flipped in the normal manner by moving the lowest note up an octave producing the next chord inversion. In most cases, this forms chords which are conveniently playable on the guitar using standard tuning. As the chords get higher in pitch, the fingering gets more and more crowded making things physically difficult. It is perfectly fine to alter the image of the chord by substituting what seems to be a triad but in effect only has two different notes. See the examples below. On top of that, this can be done in any pitch range but applies even more in the "finger crowded" situations.

G

Root pos. 1st inv. 2nd inv. Root pos. 1st inv. 2nd inv. Root pos. 1st inv. **Root Position ? (perfectly fine)**

All of the "G" chords above are playable with the exception of the second last 1st Inversion chord unless you have fingertip the size of pencil erasers. A deeply cut-away guitar makes even this chord at least somewhat playable. The more comfortable solution is depicted in the last chord which contains two roots and the third.

D

1st inv. 2nd inv. Root pos. 1st inv. 2nd inv. Root pos. 1st inv. 2nd inv. **1st inversion ? (not very good)**

All of the above inversions of the "D" chord are playable including the second last 2nd inversion chord. If it is too crowded, the solution may be the last chord in the staff but it does contain two "thirds" and that tends to be a bit of a musical "no-no" because the third is the colour note of the chord. I would use this chord very sparingly.

C

2nd inv. Root pos. 1st inv. 2nd inv. Root pos. 1st inv. 2nd inv. Root pos. **2nd inversion? (perfectly fine)**

All of the above "C" chords are also totally playable except the second last one where the pencil eraser finger tips would be needed. The solution would be to eliminate the third of the chord. This does produce a rather colourless chord because it has no "major or minor" identity.

hard to play Is it "Cm" or is it "Eb?" Cm Cm 5th Root 3rd Root 5th 3rd 5th ?

Above are depictions of a "C" chord in all of its "un-standard" permutations in all pitch ranges. While not the absolute last resorts, I would tend to use the low pitched inversions sparingly. Minor chord versions of these voicings are sometimes possible. Diminished and Augmented chords usually need all three components.

G5 Regular power chord! **G5** Great big fat power chord!

5th Root Root 5th Root

And then there is the famous "power chord" which seems to have become named as shown above. Some guitar players only know how to play this formation and surprisingly, sometimes produce exceptionally good music. It is totally possible to use this chordal sound in any pitch range although it seems to make the best sense in low pitch and especially so if you have the distortion cranked. The power chord has no major or minor identity.