

Chapter 1 – ii V I Chords

To begin your jazz guitar journey, you learn four chord shapes that outline the ii V I progression.

The ii V I is the most important progression in jazz, and therefore it's the best place to start when learning jazz guitar.

In this chapter you learn these four important chord shapes as well as explore two essential jazz comping rhythms.

Start with the chords, then move on to the rhythms when ready, and as always, have fun with these exercises in the practice room!

ii V I Chord Shapes

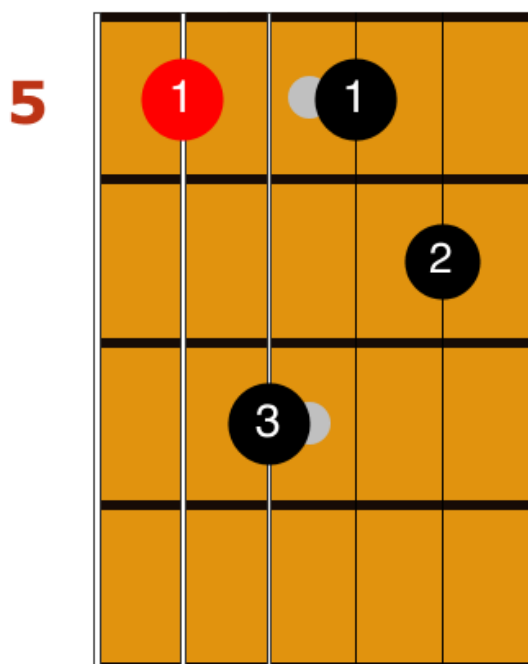
To begin, here are four chords that fit over the ii V I progression, with the Cmaj7 and Cmaj9 being two colors of the Cmaj7 sound.

Start by playing these chords on your own, memorize them, and then add in a metronome when ready.

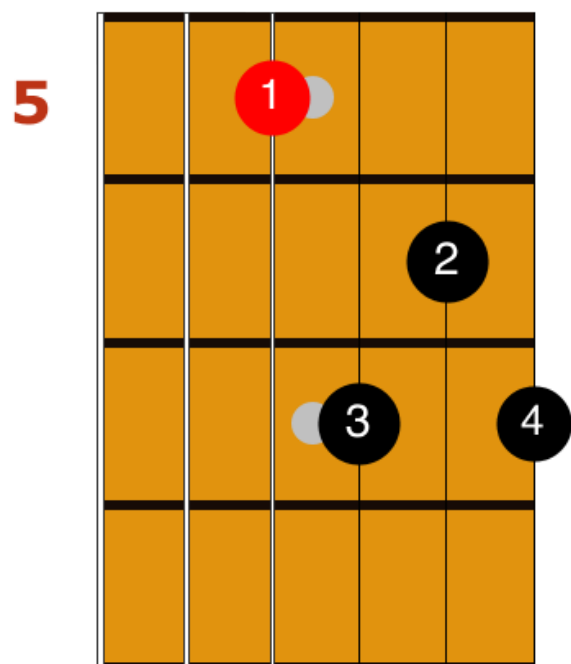
From there, get these chords onto the backing track when you can, play it as written, then start to play with the rhythms and picking from there.

After you can play these chords over the backing track with confidence, head down to the rhythmic exercises below.

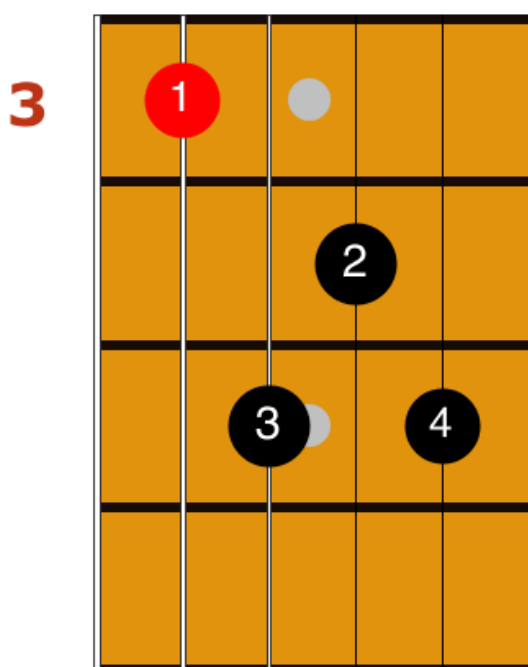
Dm7



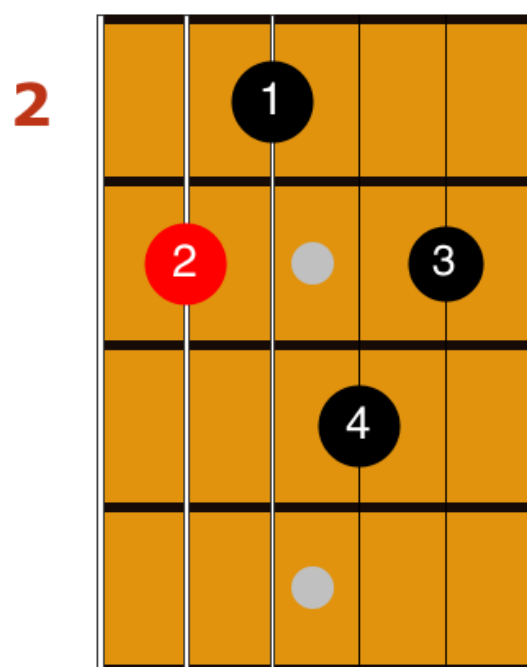
G7



Cmaj7



Cmaj9



ii V I Chord Rhythms

To expand your comping over the major ii V I, here are two essential jazz rhythms to explore in the woodshed.

The first rhythm is called the Freddie Green rhythm, as it was made famous by Count Basie guitarist Freddie Green.

The rhythm is all quarter notes, meaning you play one chord per beat.

To give it a more authentic Freddie sound, accent the 2nd and 4th chords/beats in each bar.

This imitates the hi-hat and helps you bring a higher level of swing to the rhythm.

Check this out, have fun with it, and head on down to the next rhythm when ready.

The image displays the Freddie Green rhythm in 4/4 time, consisting of four measures of quarter notes. The chords are Dm7, G7, Cmaj7, and Cmaj9. The notation includes a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. Below the staff, the beats are numbered 1 through 4 for each measure. The guitar (T) and bass (B) fingerings are provided for each beat.

Measure	Chord	Beat 1	Beat 2	Beat 3	Beat 4
1	Dm7	G (6), F (5), C (7), D (7)	G (6), F (5), C (7), D (7)	G (6), F (5), C (7), D (7)	G (6), F (5), C (7), D (7)
2	G7	B (7), F# (7), D (7), G (7)	B (7), F# (7), D (7), G (7)	B (7), F# (7), D (7), G (7)	B (7), F# (7), D (7), G (7)
3	Cmaj7	C (5), E (4), G (5), F# (4)	C (5), E (4), G (5), F# (4)	C (5), E (4), G (5), F# (4)	C (5), E (4), G (5), F# (4)
4	Cmaj9	C (3), E (3), G (3), F# (3), A (3)	C (3), E (3), G (3), F# (3), A (3)	C (3), E (3), G (3), F# (3), A (3)	C (3), E (3), G (3), F# (3), A (3)

Here you use what's called the Charleston rhythm, as it's based on the dance from the 1920s.

This rhythm places the first chord on beat 1 of each bar, then the second chord is on the & of 2, between beats 2 and 3 in each bar.

Count along, work with a slow metronome, and take this rhythm to the backing track when ready.

From there, mix the Freddie Green and Charleston rhythms together to expand on this idea in your comping.

Chord progression: Dm^7 G^7 $Cmaj^7$ $Cmaj^9$

Tablature (T, A, B strings):

Measure	1	2	3	4
T	6	6	7	7
A	5	5	6	6
B	7	7	7	7
B	5	5	5	5