



Welcome to Guitar Foundations!

For a guitarist, there are several skills that make up the foundation of their playing. Skills like knowing your basic chords or the notes on each string.

But there are also certain other skills that make up the foundation for a good guitarist. One of the most important is knowing how to play intervals on guitar.

Before we get into the specifics, here is what everything on the diagrams mean...

- Numbers on TAB Staff: Show what fret you should be pressing down.
- Fingering Diagrams for Each Chord
 - “X” at end of Chord Diagram = Mute String
 - Open Circle at end of Chord Diagram = Open String
 - Open Diamond = Root of a Chord which can be Moved

The numbers that are circled are the fingering notations.

Intervals and Thirds

The term “interval” is used to describe the distance between two notes in a major scale.

For example, in a C major scale, the distance between the C and the E would be called an interval of a 3rd.

Thirds are one of the most helpful intervals that you need to be able to play as a guitarist. You use thirds to harmonize a melody or to create memorable solo or comping parts.

Playing Thirds on Guitar: Form 1


On guitar, thirds are played together on adjacent strings - so it is helpful to think of them by string sets.

So, on a 6-string guitar you end up with 5 different adjacent string sets - 6-5, 5-4, 4-3, 3-2, 2-1. But since the guitar is mostly tuned in 4ths except for the 3rd between the 2nd and 3rd string you only have to end up learning 2 different forms.

So, if we are in G and we wanted to play thirds up the neck in that key it would be like this...

Form 1: Thirds in G (Root on 6th String)

G



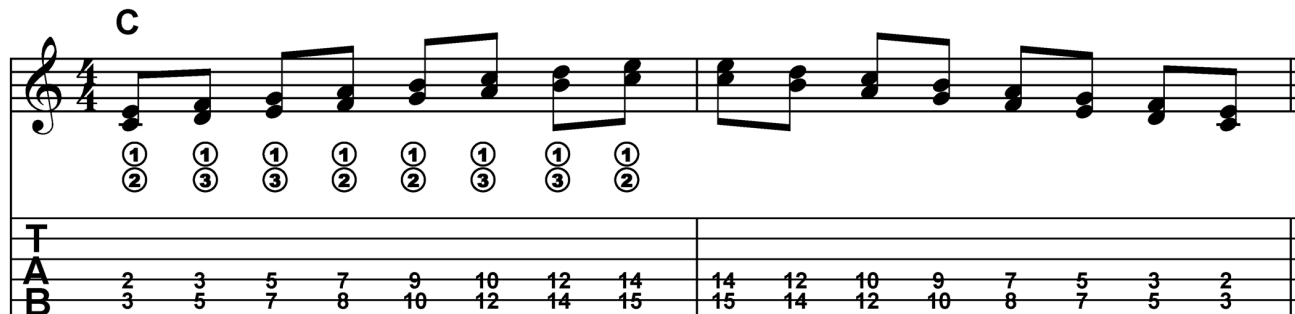
(Practice these triads in G with the Triads in G practice track.

<https://youtu.be/Ai1iwTAK-JA>

Let's move to a root on the 5th string and do 3rds in C. Remember, it's the same fingering as the thirds in G you just played – just on the 5th string with a root on C.

Form 1: Thirds in C (Root on 5th String)

C



Keep going! It's the same fingering when we move the root to the 4th string.

Practice playing these in the key of E starting with a root on the 4th string E.

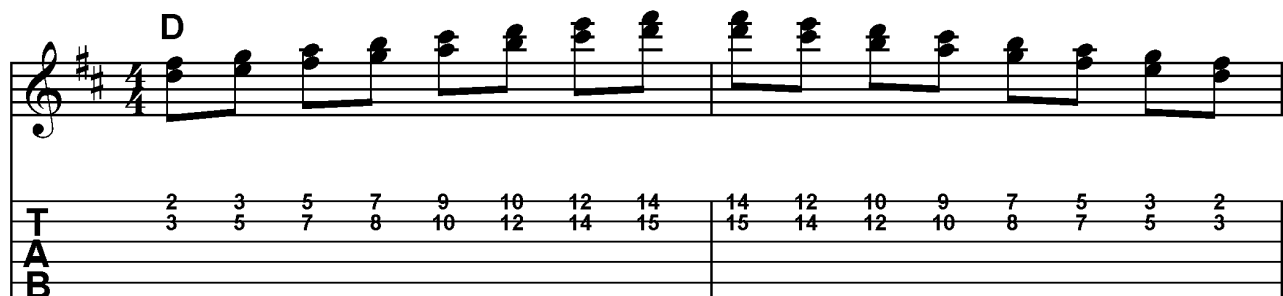
Form 1: Thirds in E (Root on 4th String)

E



Finally, move down to the 2nd string and use the same finger pattern to play thirds in the key of D with a root on the 2nd string.

Form 1: Thirds in D (Root on 2nd String)



So, to conclude, if the root is on the 6th, 5th, 4th or 2nd strings then you use Form 1 to play 3rds.

But what if the root is on the 3rd string?

Because of how the guitar is tuned, you need to use a different form with a slightly different fingering.

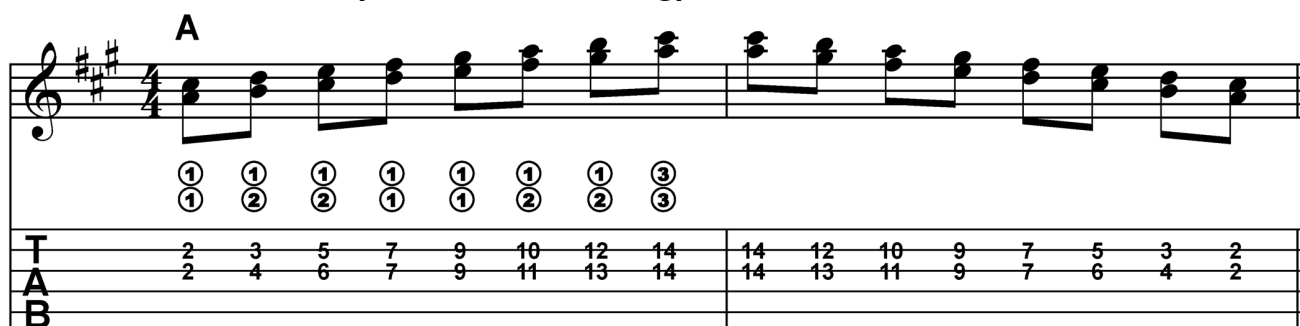
Playing 3rds on Guitar: Form 2

For roots on the 3rd the fingering changes a bit.

A barre can be used to play the thirds that occur on the same fret. Use a 1st finger barre or in some cases a 3rd finger barre.

For the other combination, use fingers 1 and 2, or 2 and 3.

Form 1: Thirds in A (Root on 3rd String)



(Practice these triads in A with the Triads in A practice track.

https://youtu.be/cJueXwSL_HI