



Have you ever wondered how some guitarists can create something magical over the most basic of chord changes? They have the ability to see past the normal chord written in the music and play beyond it to create memorable guitar parts.

This lesson uses a simple C7 chord as a foundation to create a wide variety of musical ideas. The concepts shown here can be applied to any chord.

Playing Other Forms or Parts of the Chord

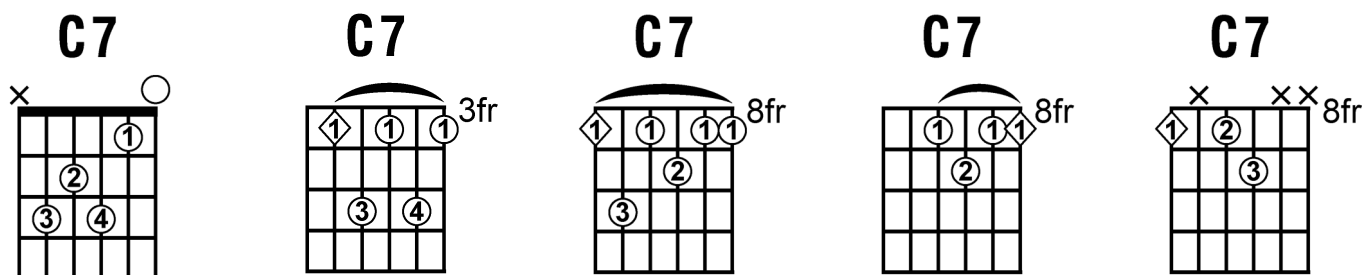
Most guitar players tend to play the standard open form of a chord.

In order to get some new ideas, experiment with other forms of the same chord or even parts of those forms.

You can even make something creative happen with just a few single notes from a chord form.

Avoid playing the “default” chord form when you see it in music. Force yourself to be creative and you will be amazed at the results.

Here are various chord forms that can be used over a C7th chord. (The diamonds in the chord forms below indicate a moveable root - i.e. a chord that can be moved to other places on the neck.)



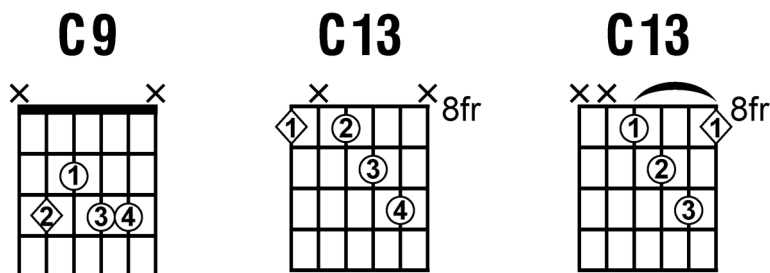
Break the Chord Apart

Another option is to take one or two notes from the chord and create a groove.

- 1) In our example over a C7th, try developing a muted string groove using only the C (root) and the b7 (Bb note).
- 2) Over a C7th, try playing just the 3rd (E note) and the b7th (Bb note) and create a groove from that.
- 3) Over a C7th, try a sliding 6ths riff.

Embellishing the Chord

Another creative option is to embellish the chord. If the chord is a C7, then experiment with playing a C9 or C13. Let your ear be the guide for what will work in any particular musical situation. Here are three other chords that will work over a C7th chord.



Chord Substitutions

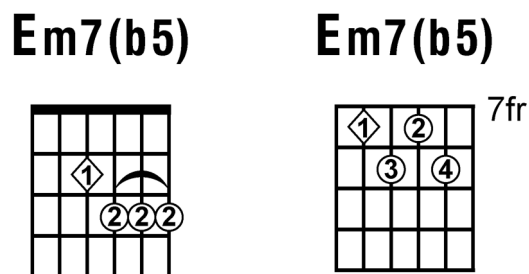
With a little bit of musical knowledge of a few chord substitutions you can multiply the creative possibilities for an average chord.

Let's look at one common chord substitution that works for a dominant seventh chord like a C7, F7, or A7.

Chord Substitution for Dominant 7th Chord
For any dominant seventh chord, you can play a minor7(b5) built from the third of the original seventh chord.

For example, when you see a C7th chord you can play an Em7(b5).

Here are a few minor7(b5) forms to experiment with over a C7th chord.



You can see that there are a lot of options available to play beyond the average or default chord. All it takes is a little thought and creativity.