

# Harmonic Improvement

Ted Greene — 1977, April 4, July 10, and May 6.

[These lesson pages are Ted's updates or revisions to his lesson with the same title dated 1976, June 2, 4, 6 with 1975 Feb. 20. Some things have been changed, rearranged, or re-named, and there are new examples. Missing are pages (parts) 2, 4, 5. It is quite possible that Ted decided that those pages didn't require a revision. For the most thorough understanding of these concepts as Ted taught them, it would be best to study both the 1976 and the 1977 versions. —Editor's note.]

## PART I

1) Any of the three basic chord types (major, minor, and dominant 7th) may be *replaced* with any chord in its own family...(consult the "Chord Construction Page")

Examples:

- 1) Instead of playing a C major chord you might play a C major 7th (C7) or a C major 6th (C6) or a C added 9th (Cadd9 or C/9) or....
- 2) Instead of playing a Cm you might try a Cm7 or Cm7/11 or a Cm6 or....
- 3) Instead of playing a C7 you could use a C9 or C7/6 or a C7#9 or a C13+11 or....

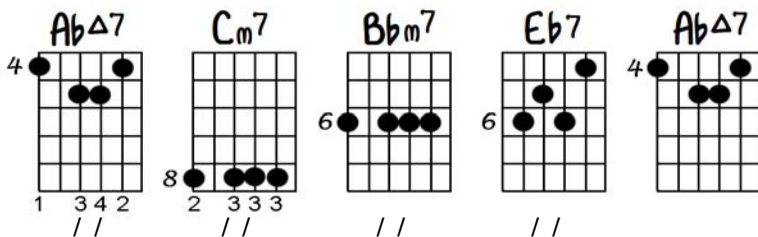
In all these cases, what you are really doing is *enriching* the basic chord, not replacing it with something that is different. Therefore, this concept will be referred to as **Chord Enrichment**.

You will be learning to apply this concept gradually if you carefully analyze the material on chord progressions, songs, etc., that will follow.

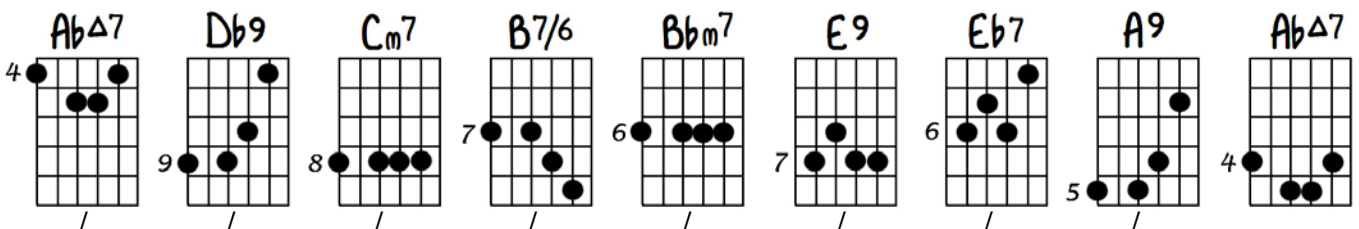
(This concept applies in a limited way to the °7 and its family too.)

2) Any chord may be *preceded* by a *Dominant 7th type* chord whose root is a *1/2 step above*. This process will be referred to as **1/2 Step Dominant**. Example:

Given:



Substitute:



Here is another example: Suppose you were given the following chord progression on a chord chart: F#m7 – B7 – E – C#m7 – F#m7 – B7 – E. Using just *chord enrichment*, you might play:

// // // // // //

Diagram showing ten guitar chord diagrams for the progression: F#m7, F#m7, B7/6, EΔ9, E6, C#m7, C#m7, F#m7, B7/6, E6. Each diagram includes a slash below it and a fret number (9, 7, 4, 5) indicating the starting fret.

Now using the *1/2 Step Dominant* principle too:

Diagram showing two rows of guitar chord diagrams for the progression: F#m7, C7, B7/6, F9, EΔ9, D9, C#m7, G7/6 (top row); F#m7, C9, B7/6, B7b9, E/9 (bottom row). Each diagram includes a slash below it and a fret number (9, 8, 7, 8, 7, 5, 4, 3, 2, 3, 2, 7, 7).

Another example:

Diagram showing two rows of guitar chord diagrams for the progression: F#m9, F#m7, B7/6, F7, EΔ9, E6, C#m7, C#m7 (top row); F#m7, F#m7, B7/6, F7, E6/9 (bottom row). Each diagram includes a slash below it and a fret number (9, 9, 7, 8, 7, 7, 4, 4, 2, 4, 2, 1, 1).

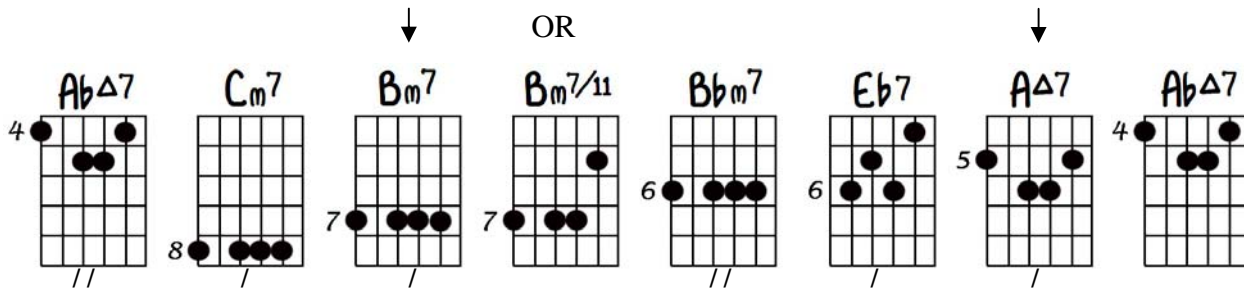
**2a)** This is very similar to the 1/2 Step Dominant Principle: Any chord may be preceded by a *similar* type chord whose root is a 1/2 step above (or more rarely, below). By similar type, it is meant: a member of the same family, and usually sub-family too.

This concept will be referred to as *1/2 Step Embellishment*.

Examples: (using the same give progression as above).

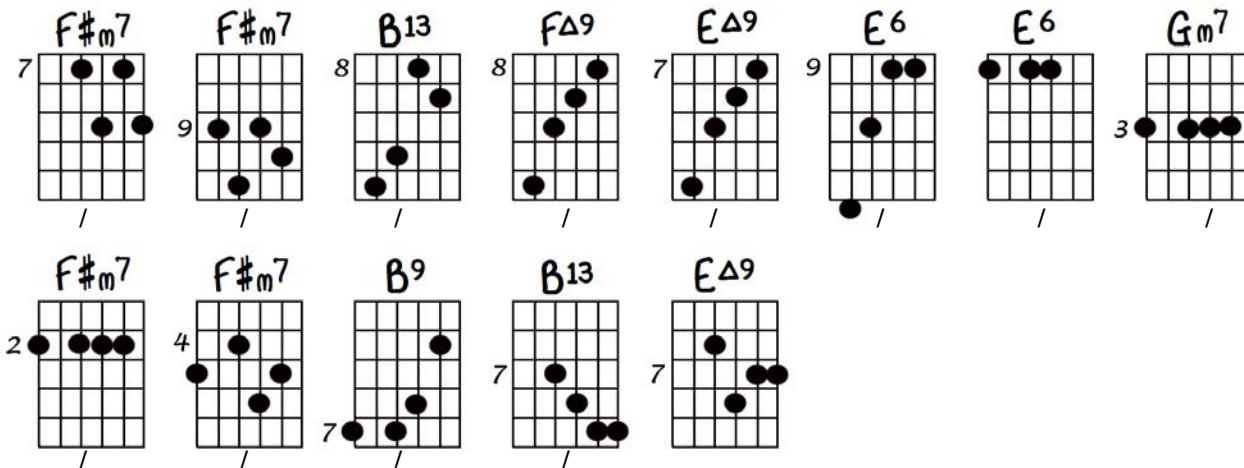
[Abmaj7 – Cm7 – Bbm7 – Eb7 – Abmaj7]

// // // //



[F#m7 – B7 – E – C#m7 – F#m7 – B7 – E]

// // // // // //



Where are the 1/2 step chords in the above example? (Draw an arrow to indicate them.)

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## PART II

[For Part II, see Ted's lesson "Harmonic Improvement" 1976-06-2]  
That page covers concepts #3 and #4.

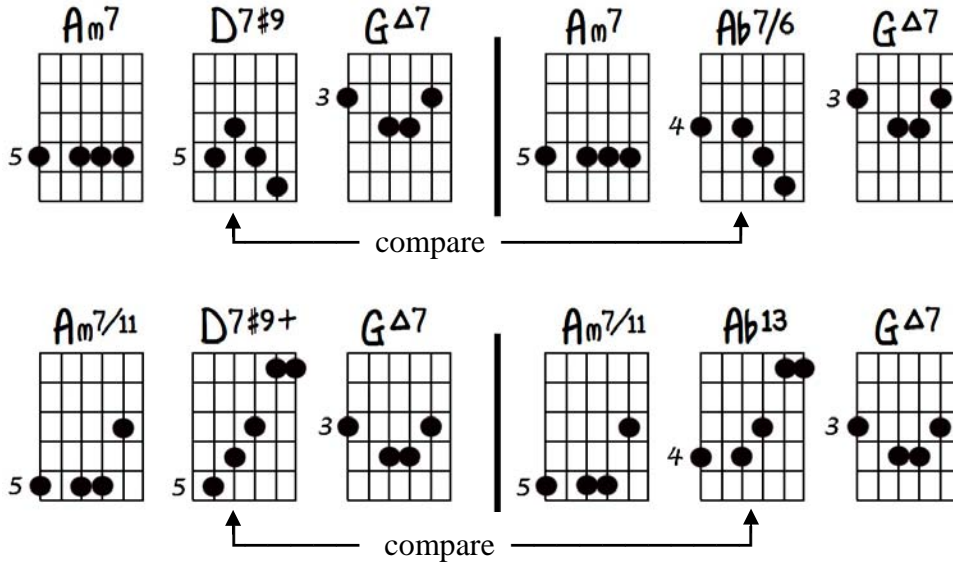
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### PART III

1977, July 10

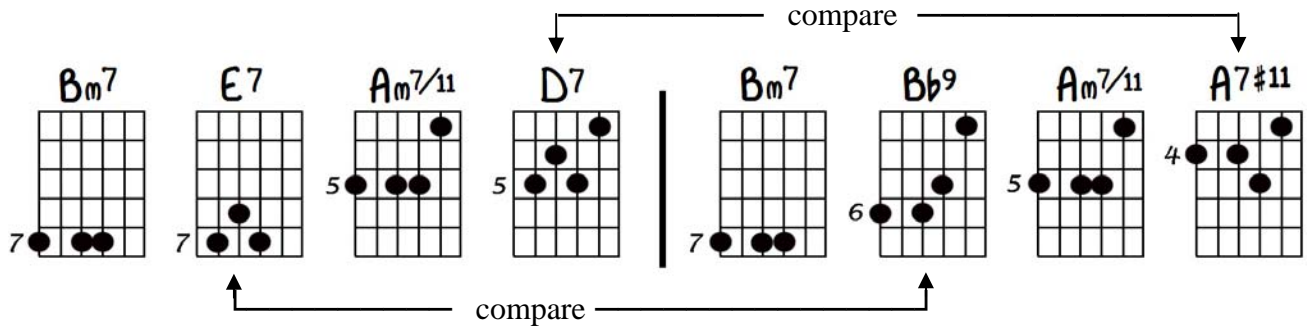
5) Dominant 7th chords whose roots are a b5th or #4th interval apart have many notes in common and may be substituted for one another. Examples:

Given Am7 D7 G you might play:



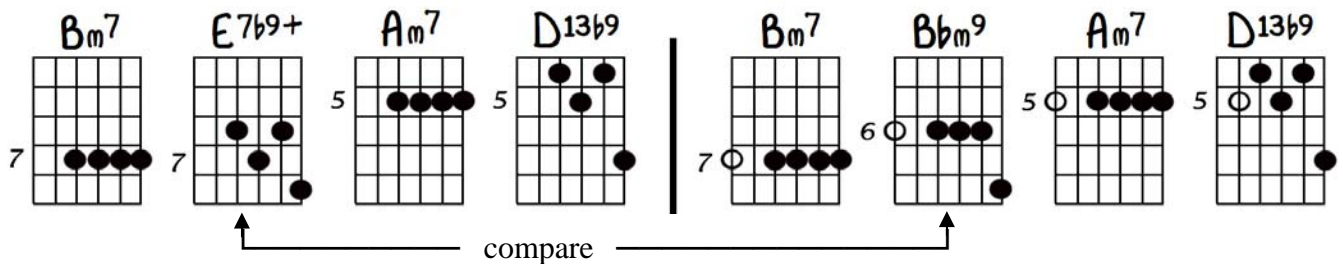
This concept will be referred to as **b5th Substitution**. Here are some more examples:

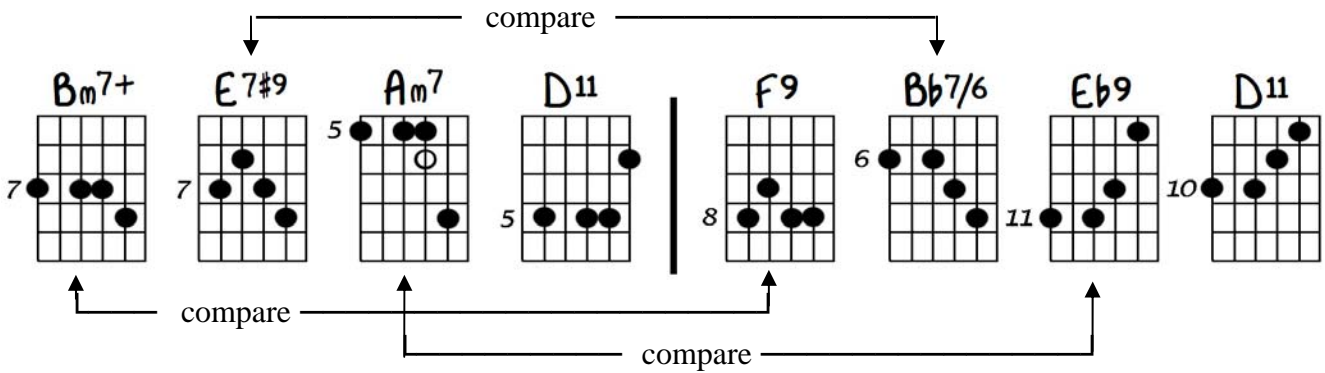
Given: Bm7 E7 Am7 D7



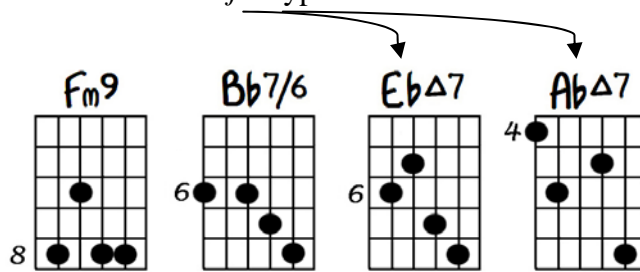
5a) There are further elaborations of this concept that are used by various players; one of these is that *minor 7* type chords may be substituted (or substituted for) in this b5th relationship.

Examples (using the same give progression: Bm7 E7 Am7 D7 as a basis):



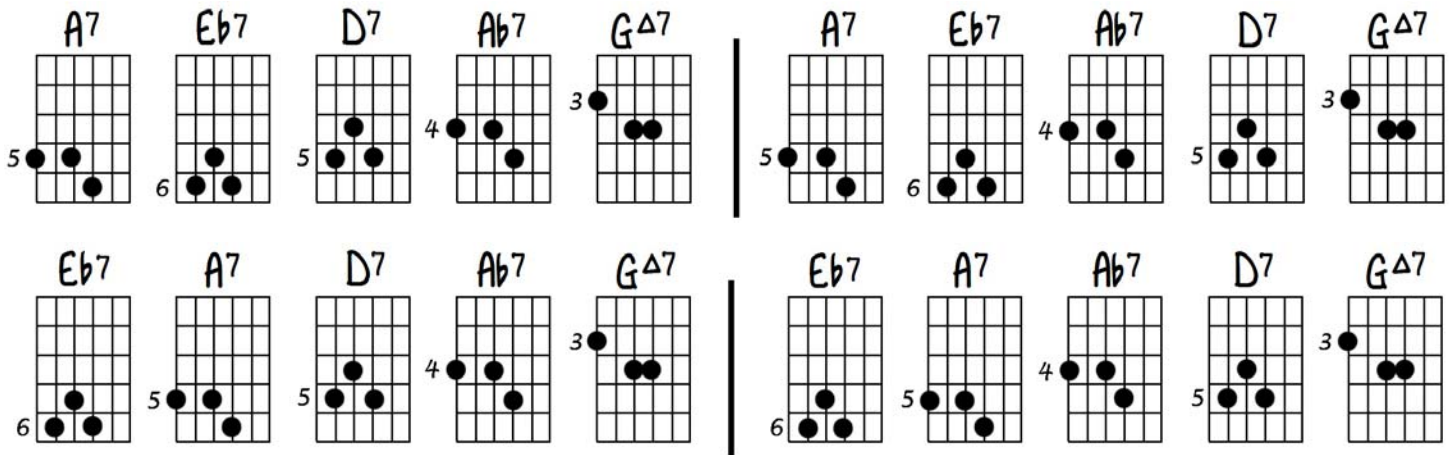


5b) Compare this example too and notice that *Major* types may be involved in this b5th Substitution too.



5c) The b5th Substitute chord may be combined with the original chord:

Given:  $A7$   $D7$   $G$   
 // //



Notice the similarities of the above results and the results of applying the 1/2 Step Dominant principle to the progression  $A7$   $D7$   $G$ . The "overlap" of the b5th and 1/2 step concepts is one of the many phenomena of music.

**5d) Back-Cycling** can be effectively combined with the b5th Substitution (or 1/2 Step Embellishment) concepts.

Given: A7 D7 G  
 / / / / / / / / / /

The image displays two rows of guitar chord diagrams. The first row contains nine chords: Em7, A7, Bbm7, Eb7, Am7, D7, Ebm7, Ab7, and GΔ7. The second row contains nine chords: Em7/11, A13, Bbm9, Eb9, Am9, Eb9, D13, Ab7, and GΔ9. Each diagram shows a 6-string guitar fretboard with dots representing notes and numbers (1-4) indicating fingerings. Some diagrams have a slash below them, indicating a barre.

Explain the two different reasons for the two Eb9 chords here.

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### PARTS IV and V

[See Ted's lesson "Harmonic Improvement" 1976-06-2]  
 These pages cover concepts #6 through #10.

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## PART VI

1977, May 6

**11)** Any minor 7 type chord may be preceded with a dominant 7th type chord whose root is the same or a b5th (#4th) higher. Examples:

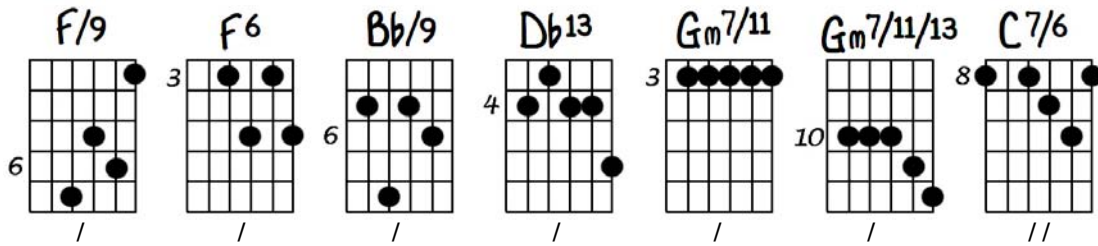
Given: F Bb Gm7 C7, you might play  
 // // // //

Analyze each example carefully to see the reason for each chord.

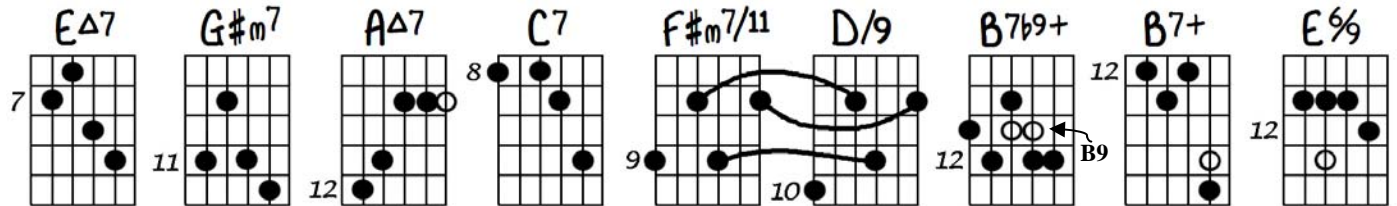
The diagram shows 36 guitar chord diagrams arranged in four rows of nine. Each diagram is a fretboard with notes indicated by black dots. Some diagrams have additional markings like numbers (8, 6, 3, 10, 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 9) or slashes (//, /). Handwritten annotations include:

- An arrow pointing to the **FΔ9** diagram in the first row with the text "resolution chord".
- An arrow pointing to the **Am7** diagram in the fourth row with the text "why?".
- An arrow pointing to the **C7sus** diagram in the fourth row with the text "why?".
- An arrow pointing to the **Ab** diagram in the fourth row with the text "to be explained later".

Chord names shown in the diagrams include: F, BbΔ9, G7/6, Gm7/11, C7, C7/6, FΔ9, FΔ7, F6, BbΔ9, G9, Gm7, Gm9, C11, F/9, F, Bb6, G9, Gm11, Gm7, C7, C7/6, F, Am7, Bb/9, G9, C7sus, Gm7, Ab, C7, and F.



Key of E:

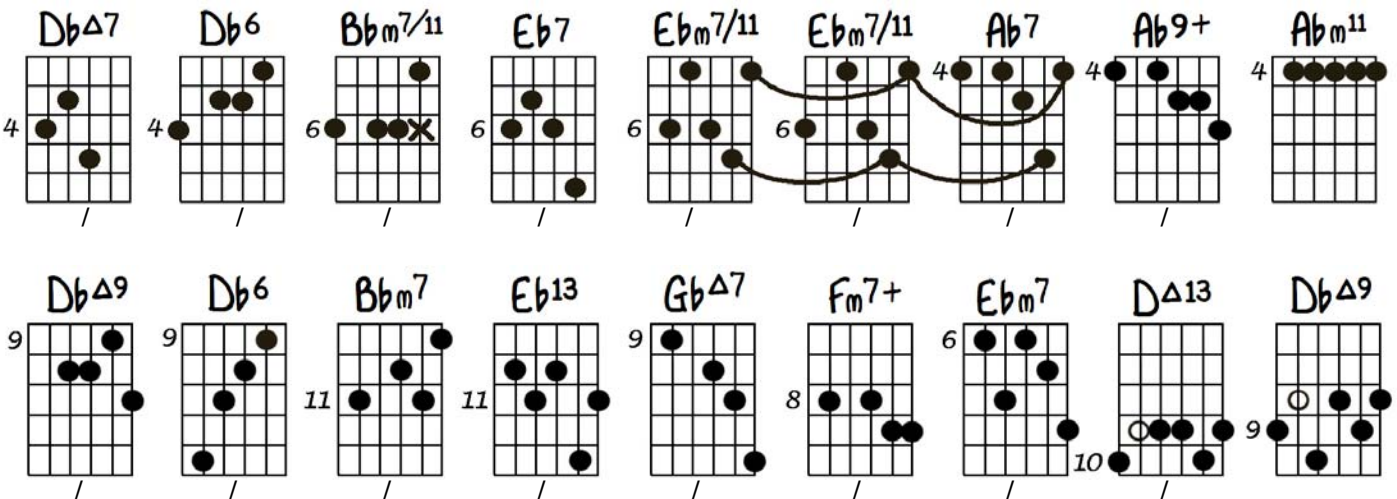


to be explained later.

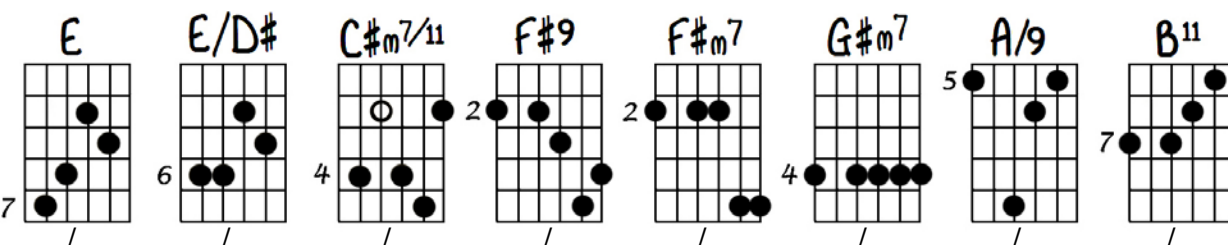
**11a)** The new dominant 7th chord that is added in may be combined with its companion minor 7 or may be generally back-cycled to. Examples:

Given: Db Ebm7 Ab  
 //// // //

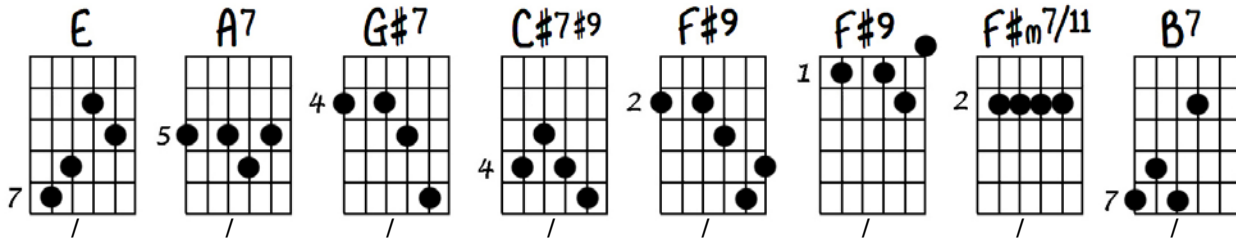
Key of Db



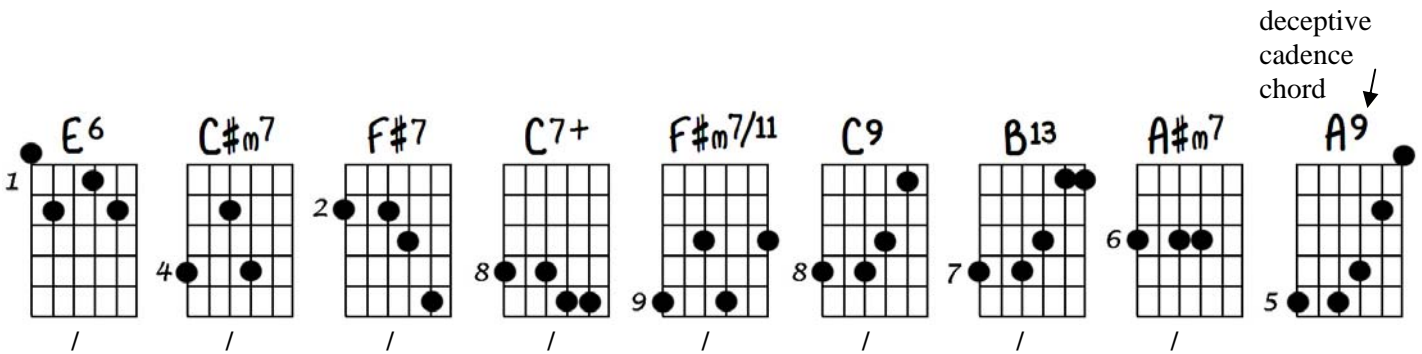
Key of E



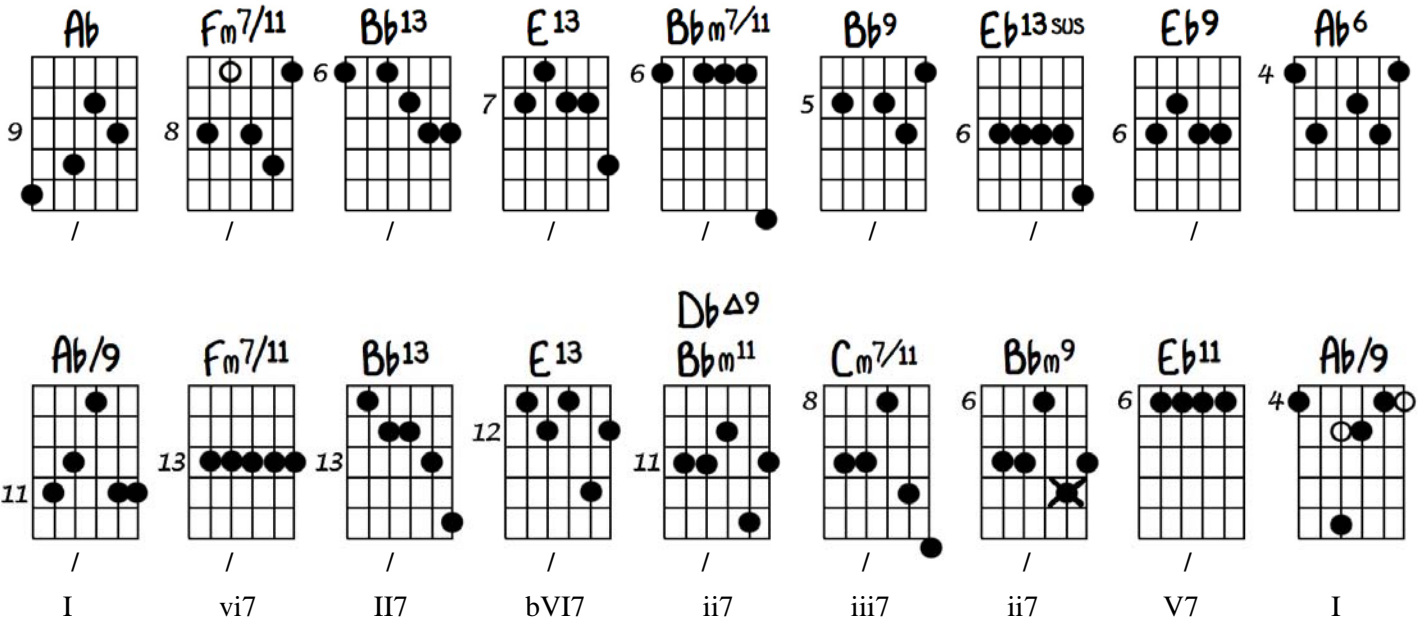




11b) The added dominants on the same root and the b5th may be combined:



Key of Ab



① Any of the three basic chord types (MAJOR, MINOR, & DOMINANT 7th) may be replaced with any chord in its own family ..... (consult the CHORD CONSTRUCTION PAGE)

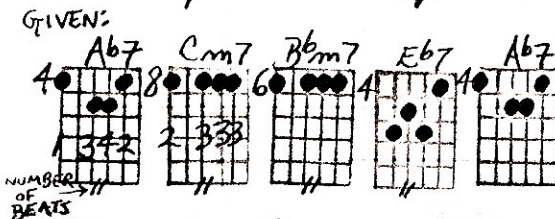
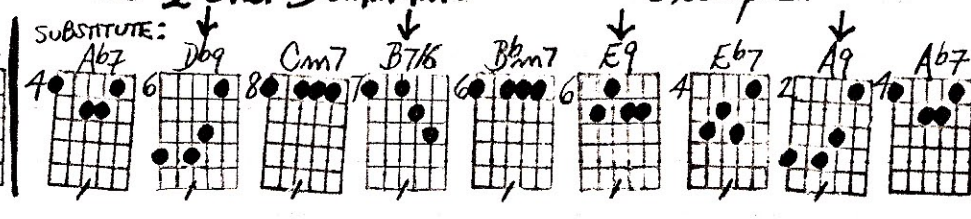
Examples: ① Instead of playing a C major chord you might play a C major 7th (C7) or a C major 6th (C6) or a C added 9th (Cadd9 or C/9) or.....

② Instead of playing a Cm you might try a Cm7 or Cm7/11 or a Cm6 or.....

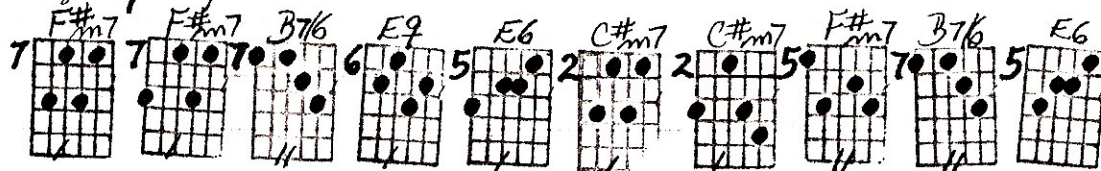
③ Instead of playing a C7 you could use a C9 or C7/6 or a C7#9 or a C13+11 or.....

In all these cases, what you are really doing is enriching the basic chord, not replacing it with something that is that different. Therefore, this concept will be referred to as **CHORD ENRICHMENT**. You will be learning to apply this concept gradually if you carefully analyze the material on chord progressions, songs, etc. that will follow. (This concept applies in a limited way to the 9 and its family too).

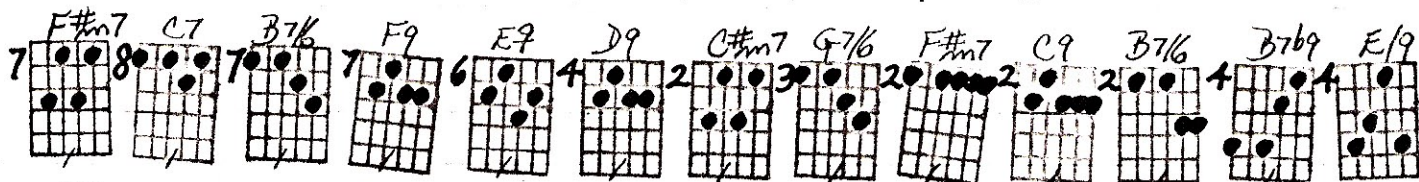
② Any chord may be preceded by a DOMINANT 7th type chord whose root is a  $\frac{1}{2}$  STEP ABOVE. This concept will be referred to as the  $\frac{1}{2}$  STEP DOMINANT. Example:

GIVEN:  SUBSTITUTE: 

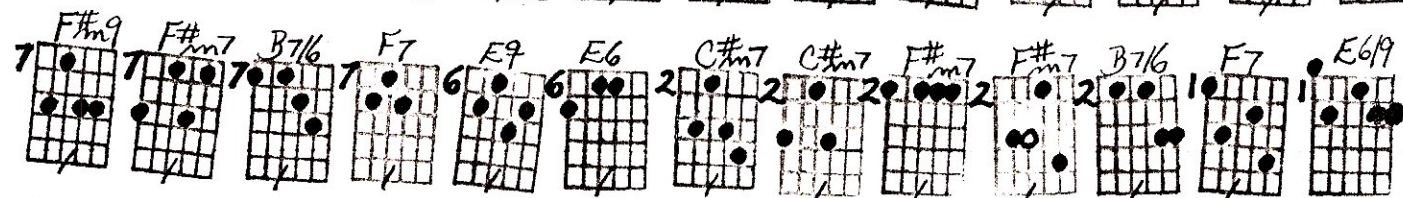
Here is another example: Suppose you were given the following chord progression on a chord chart: F#m7 B7 E C#m7 F#m7 B7 E Using just chord enrichment, you might play:



Now using the  $\frac{1}{2}$  STEP DOMINANT PRINCIPLE too:

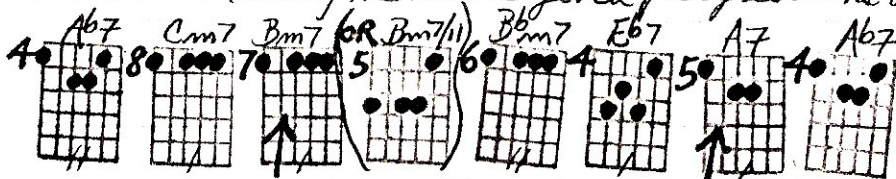
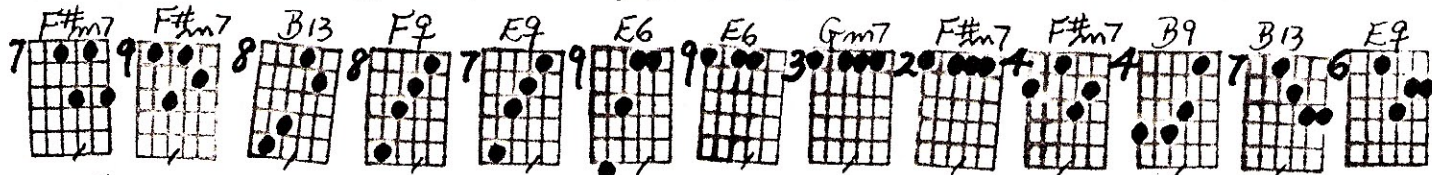


Another example:



②a This is very similar to the  $\frac{1}{2}$  STEP DOM. PRINCIPLE: Any chord may be preceded by a similar type chord whose root is a  $\frac{1}{2}$  step above (or more rarely, below). By similar type, it is meant a member of the same family, and usually sub-family too.

EXAMPLES: (using the same given progressions as above). This concept will be referred to as  $\frac{1}{2}$  STEP EMBELLISHMENT.

Where are the  $\frac{1}{2}$  step chords in the above example (draw an arrow to indicate them)?

5) Dominant 7th chords whose roots are a  $b5^{th}$  or  $\#4^{th}$  interval apart have many notes in common and may be substituted for one another.

EXAMPLES:

GIVEN  $\rightarrow$  Am7 D7 G you might play:

This concept will be referred to as  $b5^{th}$  SUBSTITUTION.

Here are some more examples: GIVEN  $\rightarrow$  Bm7 E7 Am7 D7

5a) There are further elaborations of this concept that are used by various players; one of these is that m7 type chords may be substituted

(or substituted for) in this  $b5^{th}$  relationship ... EXAMPLES (using the same given progression: Bm7 E7 Am7 D7 as a basis):

COMPARE THIS EXAMPLE TOO and notice

5c) The  $b5^{th}$  SUBSTITUTE chord may be combined with the original chord: 5b) that MAJOR TYPES may be involved in this  $b5^{th}$  SUBSTITUTION too.

Notice the similarities of the above results and the results of applying the  $\frac{1}{2}$  step DOMINANT principle to the progression A7 D7 G. The "overlap" of the  $b5^{th}$  and  $\frac{1}{2}$  step concepts is one of the many phenomena of music.

5d) BACK-CYCLING can be effectively combined with the  $b5^{th}$  SUBST. (or  $\frac{1}{2}$  STEP EMBELL.)

Explain the 2 different reasons for the 2 Eb9 chords here.

11) Any m7 type chord may be preceded with a dominant 7th type chord whose root is the same or a b5th (#4th) higher. EXAMPLES:

GIVEN: F Bb Gm7 C7, you might play

Analyze each example carefully to see the reason for each chord

11a) The new dom. 7th chord that is added in may be combined with its companion m7 or may be generally back-cycled to. EXAMPLES: Given → Db Ebm7 Ab7

11b) The added dominants on the same root and the b5th may be combined:

THE LOGIC OF THIS EXAMPLE CAN BE SEEN IN A VARIETY OF WAYS