

Ryan Foglesong
BASS MASTERCLASS

I. Introduction

II. Technique

A. Posture and Position

1. Body:

- a. Strive to play the bass with your whole body as relaxed as possible. It's an extension of you.
- b. Practice the same way that you play. Keep the bass in the same relation to your body and hands.

2. Left Hand:

- a. Utilize all 4 fingers. This will cut down on the amount of shifting you do, as well as the amount of ugly fret and string noise.
- b. Keep fingers and thumb arched, just as you would if you didn't have a bass in your hand.
- c. Keep fingers hovering above and close to the string, ready to play.
- d. Finger independence is important; equal strength.
- e. Don't squeeze the neck, apply only as much pressure as you need.

3. Right hand:

- a. Index and Middle Finger are the primary 'pistons' for finger-style playing.
- b. The 'Floating Thumb' technique allows for a natural 'muting' and efficient shifting from one string to another.
- c. When using a pick for a different color, try to match the same attack as finger-style so the difference in volume isn't too wide.

4. Exercises:

- a. View them as stretches and warm-ups, rather than etudes and musically satisfying pieces.

- b. Building finger-independence and strength. Bass strings are heavier than guitar strings, so it might take a while. Don't give up!

III. Neck Anatomy

A. Construction of Instrument

1. The bass, like all stringed instruments, is position-based. The piano is based on intervallic formulas (combination of white and black keys, counting whole steps and half steps).
 - a. Freedom! But can promote lack of actual note-learning and music theory application (growth and progression)
 - b. Tablature (TAB) can be helpful, but it's limited in what it can teach us about how bass lines are constructed.
2. Tuned in 4ths (Open E, A, D, & G strings). Locate the same notes at the octave, the 12th fret.
3. A great place to start? Memorize notes on the fret markers
4. Knowledge of where Unisons and Octaves of a particular note are
 - a. Unison: 5 frets away on adjacent string.
 - b. Octave: 2 frets up, 2 strings away.
5. Practice Exercises
 - a. Set metronome and work in "Neck Sections" (low, mid, and high)

B. Construction of Key

1. 7 different notes organized as a series of whole steps and half steps
 - a. W, W, H, W, W, W, H
 - b. Alphabetical
2. Single String Scales: Great for beginners! Horizontal, linear learning.
 - a. Don't worry about which finger to use, yet 😊.
3. Multiple String Scales: Next step. Vertical, intervallic relationship learning.

- a. Start with 2 notes down low, then play all possible locations.
- b. Next, play inversions (changing the octave of one of the notes) (4th & 5th, 3rd & 6th, etc.)

4. Practice Exercises

- a. On each string, ascend from lowest note available in the key to the 12th fret, saying and playing the note; then descend down the neck doing the same.

IV. Roles

A. Establish the chord. The bass, when it's the lowest instrument, defines what chord is sounding.

1. A word about navigating a chart: In a church context, we're mostly dealing with "Pop Notation" (C, G2, Dsus4, Em7, etc.) We'll be unpacking the ingredients of what we know based on Chord Letters, Number Extensions, and using logic to deduce any key information that we don't have readily available based on what we know of the key.

2. The Triad

- a. Root or 1 defines chord
- b. 5th supports
- c. 3rd defines quality (Major or Minor)
- d. 1st position (starting with index finger)
- e. 2nd position (starting with middle finger)
- f. 4th position (starting with pinky finger)

B. Enhance the chord or chord movement.

1. Interpreting the chord given to you on chart.

- a. Recognize the distinctions between G2, Gsus4, Gmaj7, G13. Have a guitarist or pianist play these sounds.
- b. Extensions dictated by additional or substituted color notes availability to the key (7ths, 13ths, 11ths, 9ths, etc.)

2. Chord movement: using passing notes to guide a listener's ear from one harmony to another. We'll explore this later.

C. Lock with Drummer

1. Helpful to know the anatomy of the drum kit. (Snare, Kick, Toms, Hi-Hat)
 - a. What are the functions of each part?
 - b. How are each used in a given measure within a groove pattern?
2. Finding the groove appropriate to each song
 - a. Music is what happens between notes. Silence can be awkward or golden.
 - b. Rules of Thumb: Bass note sounds when the kick plays. Leave the snare hit clear.
 - c. Experiment with long and short notes played with the kick. Create a pattern. Give a section of the song its own identity.
3. Different Time Signatures
 - a. 4/4 time (discover all variations)
 - b. 6/8 time
 - c. 3/4 time

V. Filling and Passing Through

- A. Filling doesn't mean busy. Pick combination of notes appropriate to what came before and what's coming after.
- B. Pentatonic Scale (Penta = 5 different notes). We're adding 2 additional notes to our Triad (Root or 1, 3rd, 5th)
 1. For major: R, 2nd, 3rd, 5th, 6th, (8va)
 2. For minor: R, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 7th, (8va)
 3. Major Pent. Works for any Major chord in the key (I, IV, V, *bVII)
 4. Minor Pent. Works for any Minor chord in the key (ii, iii, vi, *v)

5. 3 Main Positions to Play in (Corresponding to which finger you begin with). Each has its advantages and disadvantages.
 - a. 1st position (starting with index finger)
 - b. 2nd position (starting with middle finger)
 - c. 4th position (starting with little finger)

c. Modes (7 different notes)

1. In diatonic music, modes are born out of the 7 (I through vii) notes of a key center
 - a. G to G in G Major = Ionian Mode (I Chord)
G, A, B, C, D, E, F#, G
 - b. A to A in G Major = Dorian Mode (ii Chord)
A, B, C, D, E, F#, G, A
 - c. C to C in G Major = Lydian Mode (IV Chord)
C, D, E, F#, G, A, B, C
2. In jazz and music with modal mixture, certain modes are played over chords for a desired effect (tension, suspension, ambiguity)
3. Three 'Approaches' for Understanding/Application
 - a. By Intervals: Adding "modal" notes to either Major or Minor Pent. Scales. [See Mode Chart in Bass Packet]
 - b. By Pattern: Because each mode is made up of unique notes, there will be a unique pattern in 1st, 2nd, or 4th position.
 - c. By Key: Get to know the 7 notes of each key. [See Key Chart in Bass Packet]

1) Memorize the Circle of 5ths.

(a) Sharps (#)

Fat Cats Go Down Alleys Eating Bananas

(b) Flats (b)

BEAD GFC (The exact reverse of the above acronym)

VI. Inversions

- A. The bass substitutes the 3rd, the 5th, or 7th (not as frequent) for the root note to create harmonic tension or suspension.
 - 1. For a G chord, (G/B has the 3rd in the bass), (G/D has the 5th in the bass), (G/F# has the 7th in the bass)

VII. Bass Chords

A. (2) Types to Consider:

- 1. Open Chords: Large span of intervals between sounding notes
 - a. R, 10th (a 3rd one octave above)
 - b. R, 11th (a 4th one octave above)
 - c. R, 9th (a 2nd one octave above)
 - d. Listen to intro/turn in “All I Have is Christ” from album, The Gathering
- 2. Closed Chords: Small span of intervals between sounding notes
 - a. Triads/tri – chords or diads/double-stops
 - b. Can be rootless as long as another instrument is sounding the root
 - c. Listen to intro/turn in “O My Soul, Arise” from album, From Age to Age
 - d. Recognize that low end is sacrificed for this effect

VIII. Pedals

A. Pre Amp/DI

- i. SansAmp works as a pre amp, equalizer and DI box. For gigs where I can't use an amp, I don't sacrifice tone with this helpful pedal

B. Volume Pedal

- i. Control Dynamics/Swell

C. Tuner

- i. Boss TU-3

IX. Resources

Norm Stockton

www.artofgroove.com

lessons and resources

Scott's Bass Lessons

<http://scottsbasslessons.com>

lessons and resources

Marlowe DK

www.playbassnow.com

lessons and resources

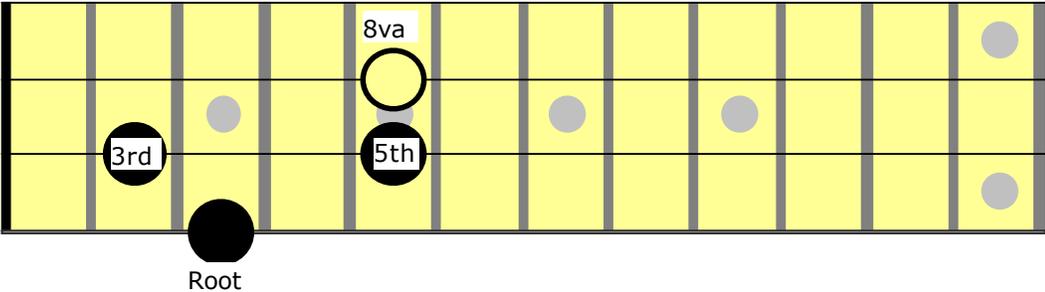
Todd Johnson

www.toddjohnsonmusic.com

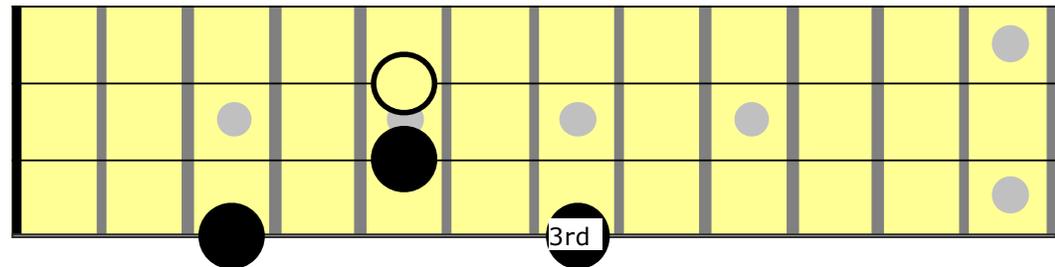
*Looks for their respective YouTube channels as well for free lessons.

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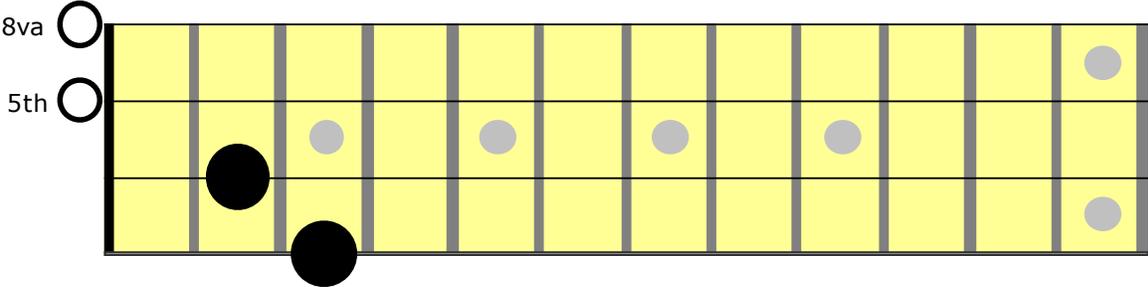
G Major Triad / 2nd Position



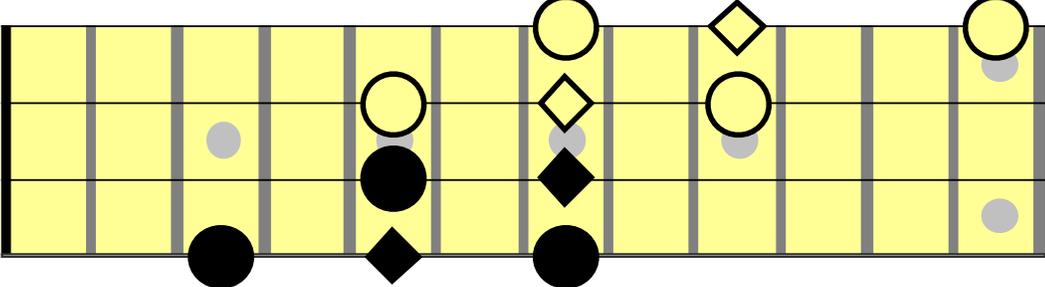
G Major Triad / 1st Position



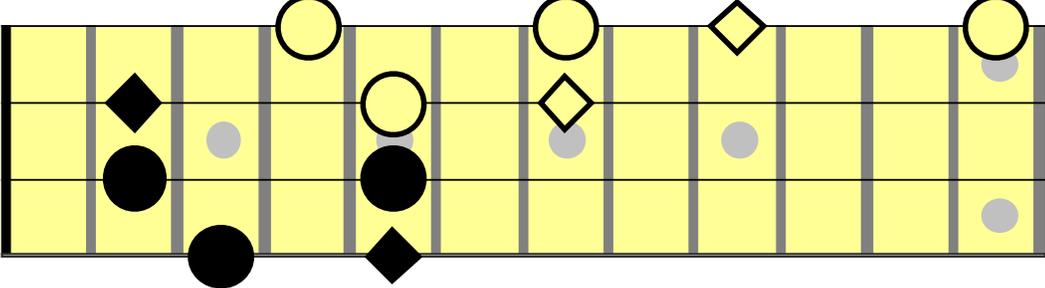
G Major Triad / 4th Position



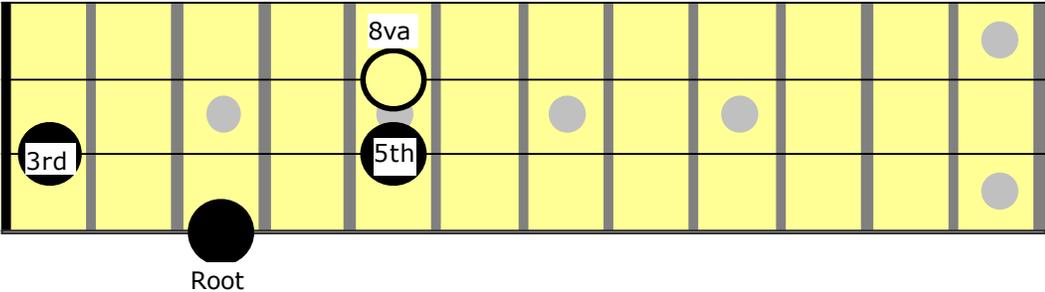
G Major Pentatonic Scale / 1st Position (2 Octaves)



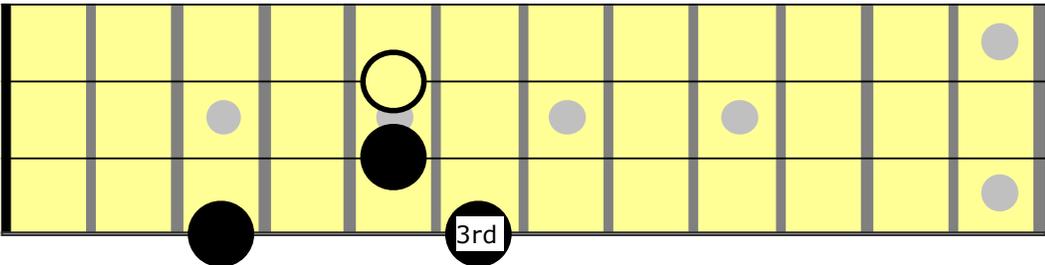
G Major Pentatonic Scale / 2nd Position (2 Octaves)



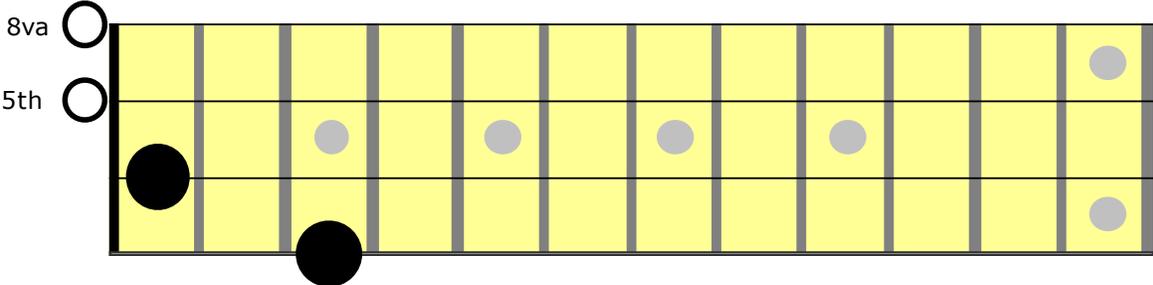
G Minor Triad / 2nd Position



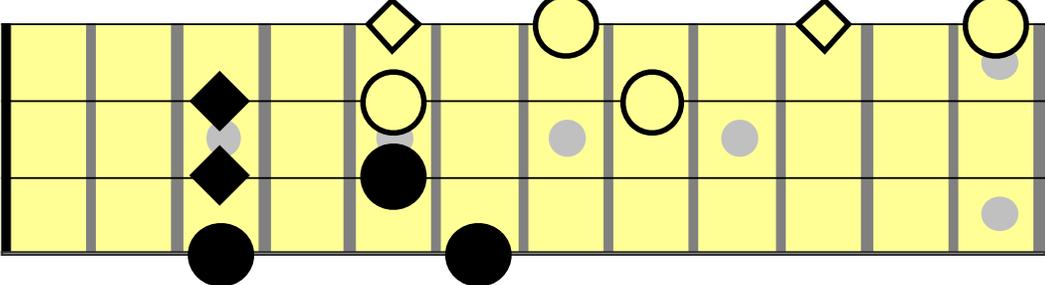
G Minor Triad / 1st Position



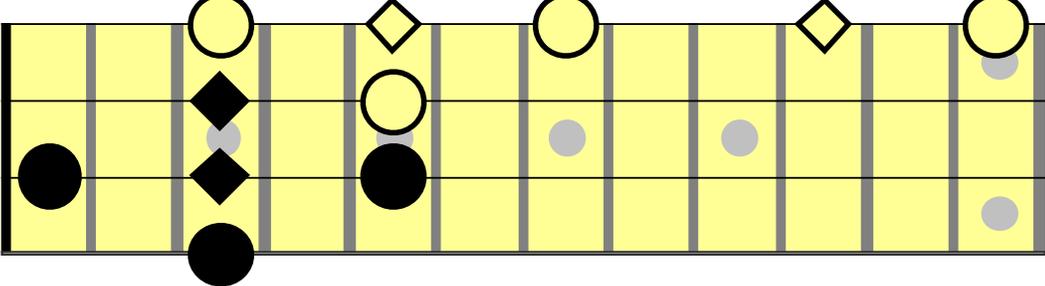
G Minor Triad / 4th Position



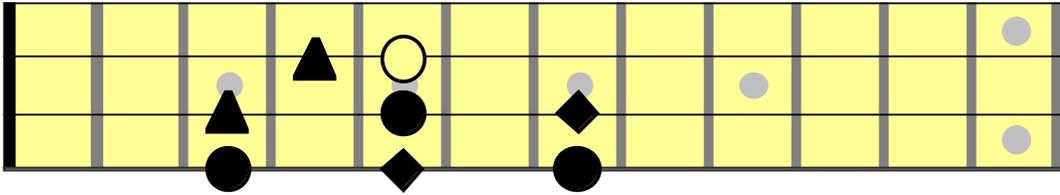
G Minor Pentatonic Scale / 1st Position (2 Octaves)



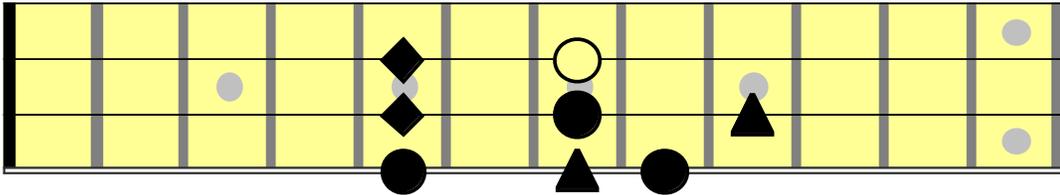
G Minor Pentatonic Scale / 2nd Position (2 Octaves)



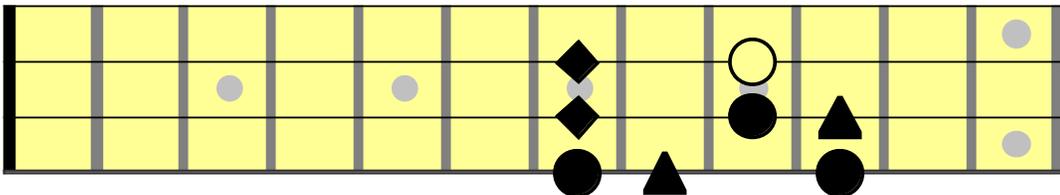
G Major (I Chord) "Ionian" or "Standard Major Scale" // Pent. + P4, maj7



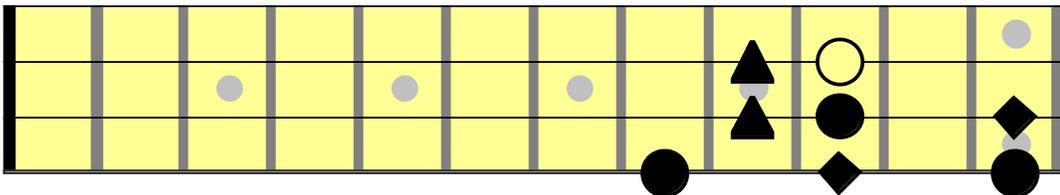
A Minor (ii Chord) "Dorian" // Pent. + M2, M6



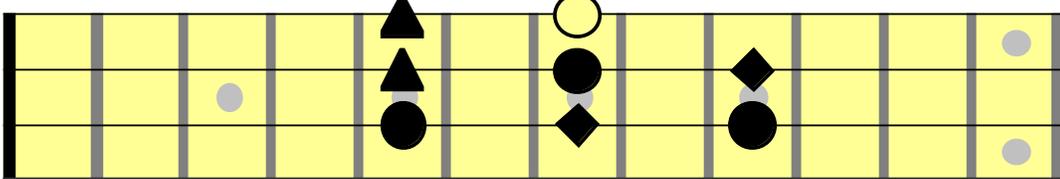
B Minor (iii Chord) "Phrygian" // Pent. + m2, m6



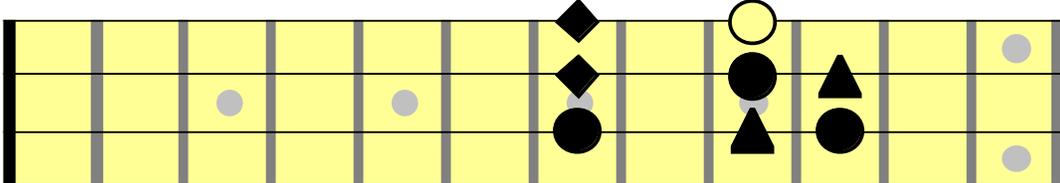
C Major (IV Chord) "Lydian" // Pent. + #4 (#11), maj7



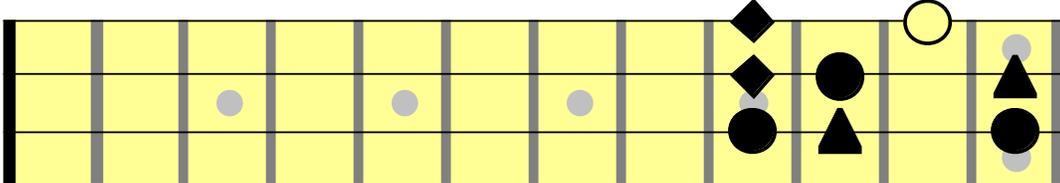
D Major (V Chord) "Mixolydian" or "Blues Scale" // Pent. + P4, b7



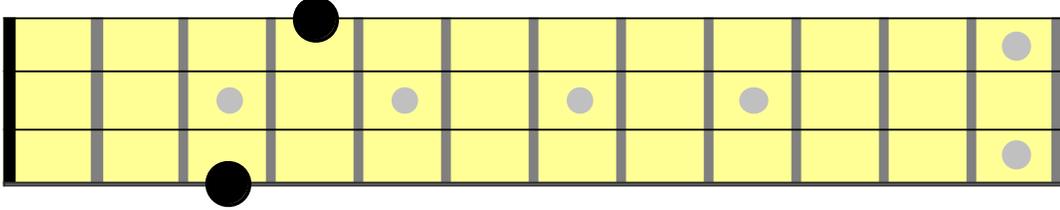
E Minor (vi Chord) "Aeolian" or "Standard Minor Scale" // Pent. + M2, m6



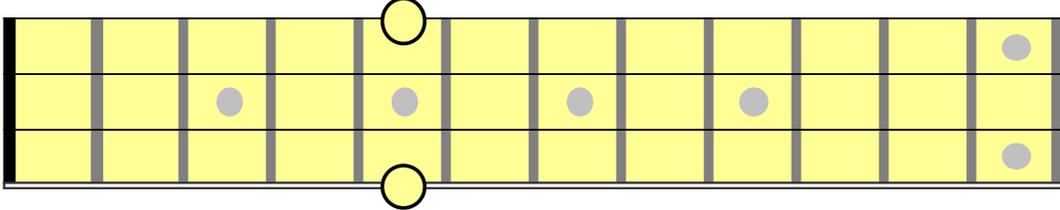
F# Half-Diminished (vii Chord) "Locrian" // m2, b5, m6



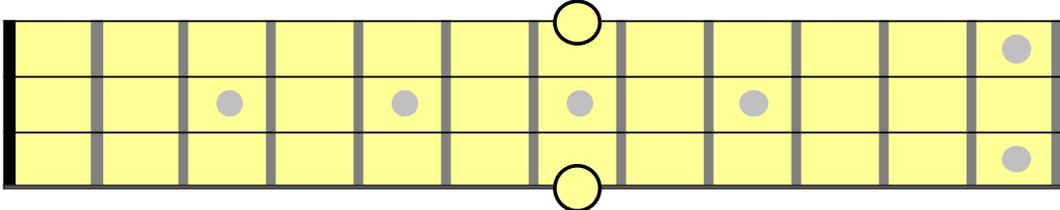
G Major 10th Chord (R & 3rd one octave above)



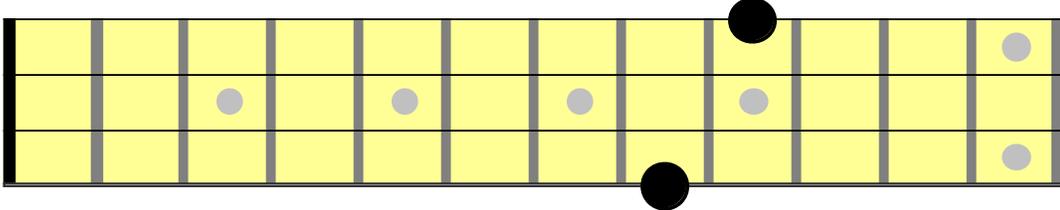
A Minor 10th Chord



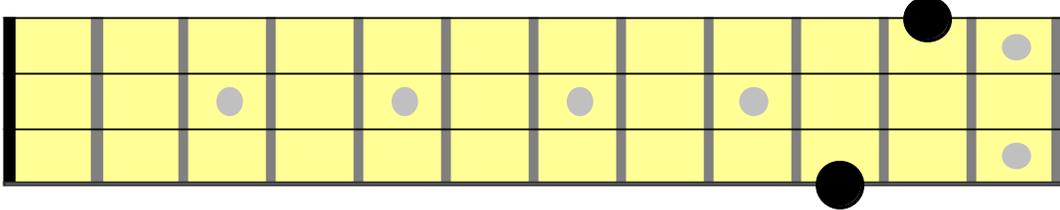
B Minor 10th Chord



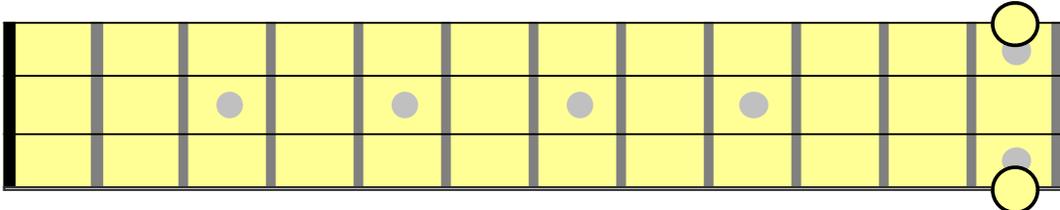
C Major 10th Chord



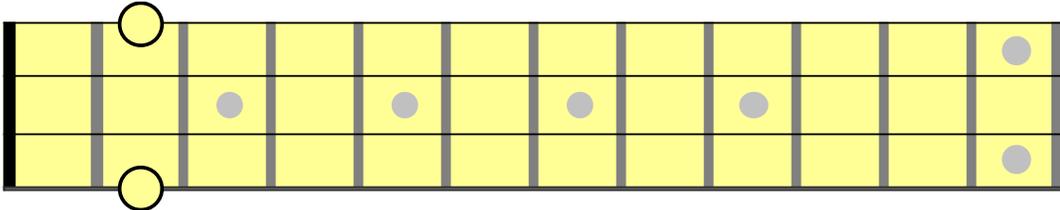
D Major 10th Chord



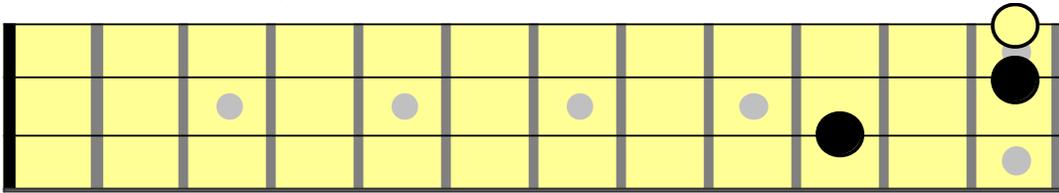
E Minor 10th Chord



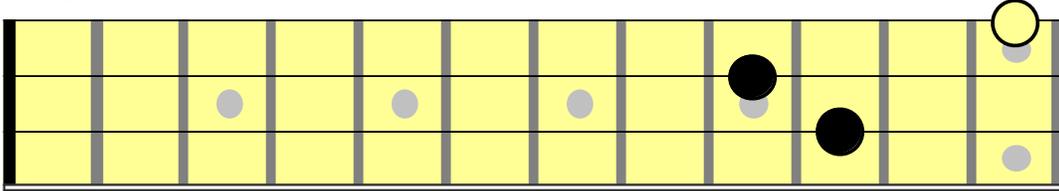
F# Diminished 10th Chord



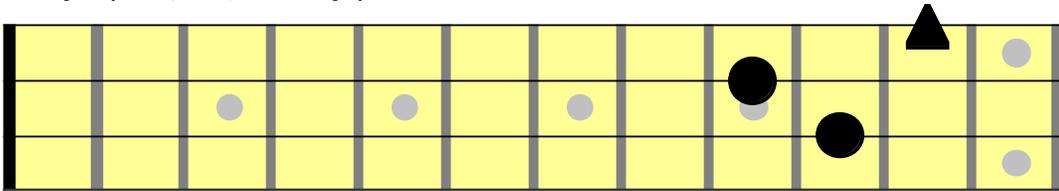
G Power Chord (No 3rd) works over G Major or G Minor



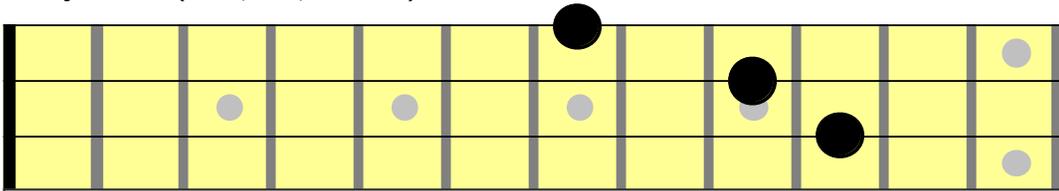
G Major (Root, 3rd, and 8va)



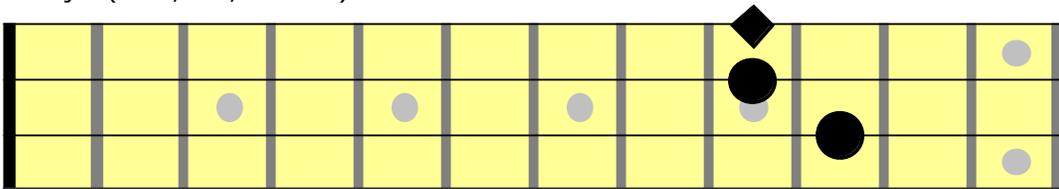
G Major (Root, 3rd, and maj7)



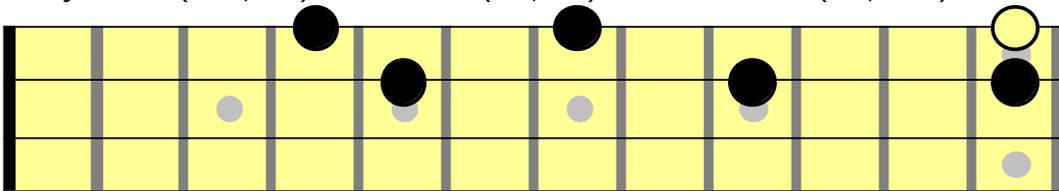
G Major Triad (Root, 3rd, and 5th)



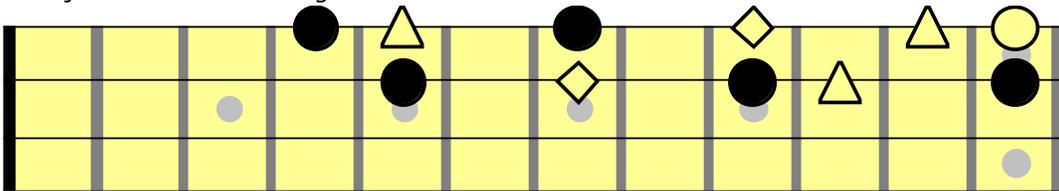
G Major (Root, 3rd, and 6th)



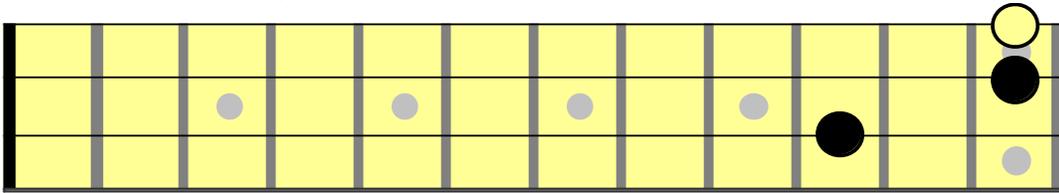
G Major Diads (Root, 3rd) (3rd, 5th) (5th, Root)



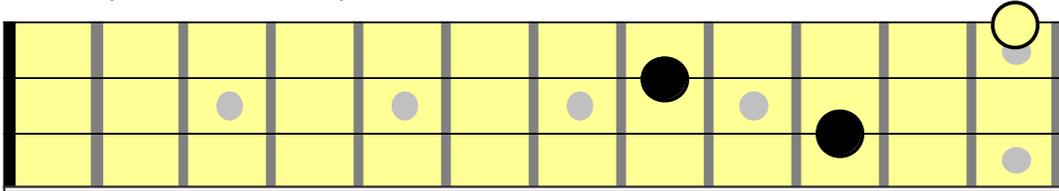
G Major Diads with Passing Chords



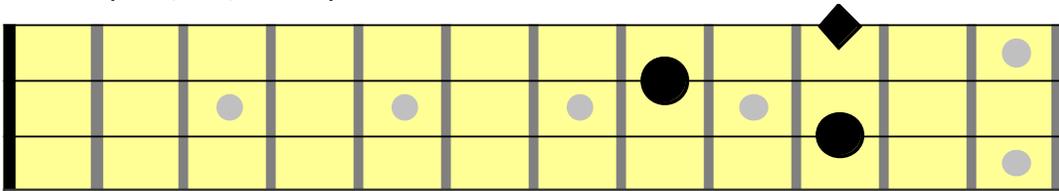
G Power Chord (No 3rd) works over G Major or G Minor



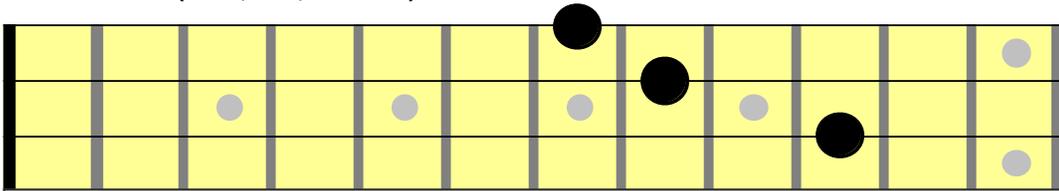
G Minor (Root, 3rd, and 8va)



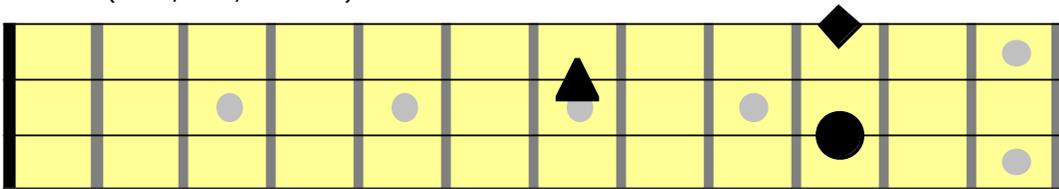
G Minor (Root, 3rd, and b7)



G Minor Triad (Root, 3rd, and 5th)



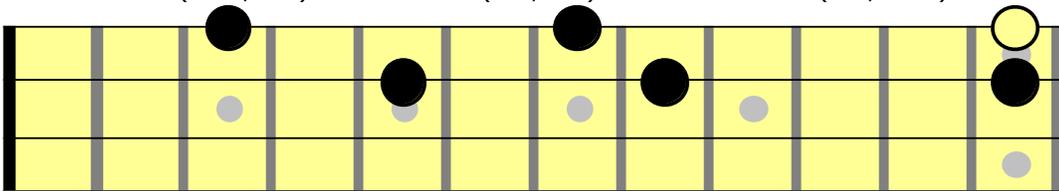
G Minor (Root, 2nd, and 7th)



G Minor Diads (Root, 3rd)

(3rd, 5th)

(5th, Root)



G Minor Diads with Passing Chords

