

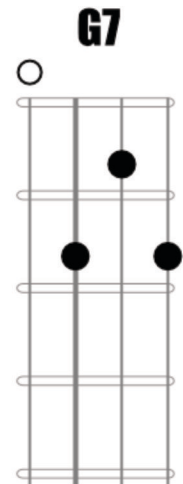
UkuleleLessons

by Curt Sheller

Dominant Seventh Chords?

When is a Dominant Seventh Chord NOT a Dominant Seventh?

Dominant - In music, the dominant typically refers to the chord created on the fifth scale degree of the major scale. For example, for the C major scale (C D E F G A B C'), the fifth scale degree of the scale or dominant is a G note. The chord that is built on this fifth scale degree as a triad is a G major or as a 4-part chord, a G7. In music theory the dominant chord is symbolized with a Roman numeral V. This chord is most often a seventh chord.



Players will often refer to all seventh chords as dominant or dominant seventh chords. In the key of C major when referring to the G or G7 this is correct. But - dominant, in this context refers to the chord's harmonic function within its corresponding scale and harmony. So, unless you can determine that the seventh chord is actually functioning as a V chord, the dominant in the current tonality, the chord is just a seventh chord and doesn't need the additional Dominant designation. Applying the dominant designation to other seventh chords NOT functioning as a true dominant is incorrect.

To determine the function of a chord you need to do a harmonic analysis which is beyond the scope of this article. However, here are the traditional function names of the scale degrees of a diatonic major scale.

First note:	Tonic
Second note:	Supertonic
Third note:	Mediant
Fourth note:	Subdominant
Fifth note:	Dominant
Sixth note:	Submediant
Seventh note:	Leading/Subtonic

Dominant is a function of a chord - NOT part of its name.

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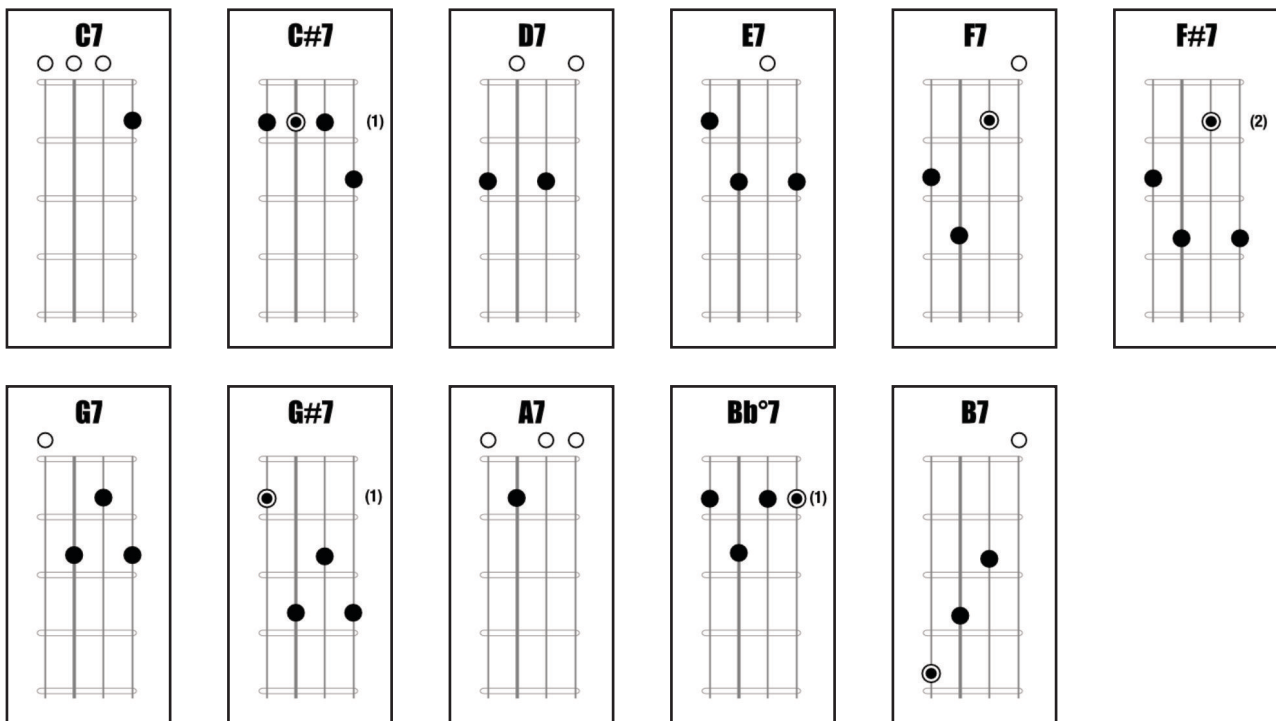
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Basic Seventh Chords

Open Position Seventh Chords in Common Keys

Seventh chords can show up in any key. Shown here in the common keys presented on this chart.

Note: Seventh chords without an available open position form are shown in their movable form.



Enharmonic Equivalents

For chords, an *enharmonic equivalent* is when the same chord shape or notes can have an alternate chord name depending on the context the chord is used.

Sharps to Flat Equivalents: **A#7** = Bb7, **B#7** = C7, **C#7** = Db7, **D#7** = Eb7, **E#7** = F7, **F#7** = Gb7, **G#7** = Ab7

Flat to Sharp Equivalents: **Ab7** = G#7, **Bb7** = A#7, **Cb7** = B7, **Db7** = C#7, **Eb7** = D#7, **Fb7** = E7, **Gb7** = F#7

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