GUITARTRAINING.ONLINE · MICRO COURSE

Guitar Triads

All four string sets

FREE SAMPLE · FIRST TWO CONTENT PAGES

The opening of the 15-page course: why triads matter, the four string sets, and how to read the diagrams, drawn the way the Triad Explorer shows them.

Grab your guitar. Major, minor, diminished and augmented shapes, play-along progressions and landing on triad notes stay in the full course.

Your Triad Explorer access code is included in the full Guitar Triads course.

1 Why triads matter

A triad is three notes: a root, a 3rd and a 5th. Played on three neighbouring strings, it is the smallest complete chord shape on the guitar, and once you can find triads on all four string sets the whole neck opens up. This course gives you every close-position shape for C, drawn the way the **Triad Explorer** draws them, then shows you how to use those shapes as landing targets in your solos.

Once triads are under your fingers on all four string sets, you get:

- **Voice leading:** move between any two chords with the smallest finger movement.
- **Clean voicings** for rhythm playing and comping that stay out of the bass player's way.
- **A map for soloing:** the three dots of a triad are the safest, strongest notes to land on over that chord.
- **Full-neck freedom** instead of being stuck in open or barre shapes.

What's inside

Every C triad on every set (major, minor, diminished, augmented), three play-along progressions, two sections on **landing on triad notes** in a 12-bar blues, a practice routine, a quick reference table, and an appendix explaining every control in the Triad Explorer.

HOW CHORDS WORK

New to how chords are built? Triads are where chords start: root, 3rd and 5th taken from the major scale. How Chords Work explains the numbers from scratch, from triads all the way to 13ths. **guitartraining.online/how-chords-work** (pay what you think it's worth, from $2)

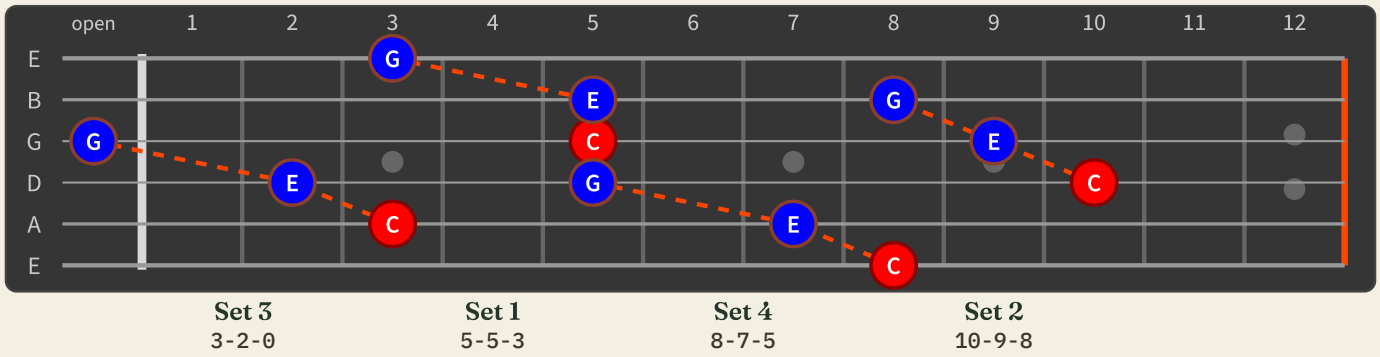
2 The four string sets

A close-position triad sits on three adjacent strings, with the three notes as close together as possible (all inside one octave). The four sets are numbered as in the Triad Explorer, starting from the thinnest string:

STRING SET	STRINGS (LOW TO HIGH)	CHARACTER	BEST USED FOR
Set 1	3, 2, 1 (G, B, high E)	Bright, cutting	Melodic soloing, upper register
Set 2	4, 3, 2 (D, G, B)	Balanced, clear	General purpose, voice leading
Set 3	5, 4, 3 (A, D, G)	Warm, full	Comping, mid-range harmony
Set 4	6, 5, 4 (low E, A, D)	Thick, powerful	Bass-register chords, low voicings

One chord, four sets

C MAJOR IN ROOT POSITION ON EACH STRING SET



Why Sets 3 and 4 always look the same

Low E to A, A to D and D to G are all tuned a 4th apart (5 frets). Set 4 (E, A, D) and Set 3 (A, D, G) are both built only from 4ths, so every triad shape on Set 4 is **exactly** the same shape on Set 3, five frets lower (or seven higher), just one string over.

Why Sets 1 and 2 are different

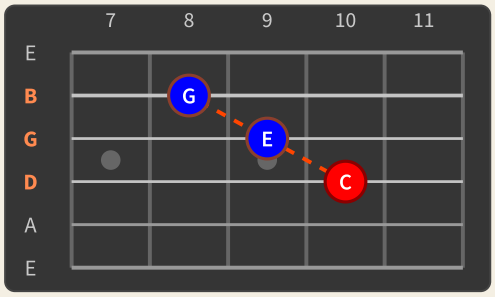
G to B is a major 3rd (4 frets), not a 4th. On Set 2 (D, G, B) that gap is between the top two strings; on Set 1 (G, B, E) it is between the bottom two. So any note on the B string moves up one fret compared with the Set 3 and 4 shapes, and Set 1 and Set 2 each have their own shapes.

3 How to read the diagrams

Every diagram is drawn the way the Triad Explorer draws its fretboard: you are looking at the neck as if it were lying flat in front of you, **high E on the top line**, low E on the bottom, string names on the left and fret numbers along the top. Frets 12 and above are drawn in orange, as in the Explorer. The three strings of the set are named in orange.

- **Red dot:** the root (1) of the chord.
- **Blue dot:** the 3rd and 5th (the Explorer's Chord 1 colour).
- **Orange dashed line:** joins the three notes of one shape, as in the Explorer.
- Under each shape: the frets from the lowest string of the set to the highest, then each note with its degree in brackets, low to high, written the way the Explorer writes it when Show Note Degrees is on: `C(1) E(3) G(5)`.

C major Set 2, root position



10-9-8
C(1) E(3) G(5)

> **Colours in the Explorer can be changed.** Colour Options (the palette button) sets the colour of every dot type. This PDF always draws the chord's root red. To get the same look in the Explorer, open Settings (the cog), tick **Show Note Degree Colours** and set **Degree 3 Colour** to blue; Degree 1 is already red and Degree 5 blue. (Root Note in Colour Options is the root of the *Key*, so it does not recolour the chord's shape.)
> **(see Using the Triad Explorer, p. 14)**

The **inversion** is named after the chord tone on the lowest string of the set:

Root position	1st inversion	2nd inversion
1 on the bottom: 1, 3, 5	3 on the bottom: 3, 5, 1	5 on the bottom: 5, 1, 3

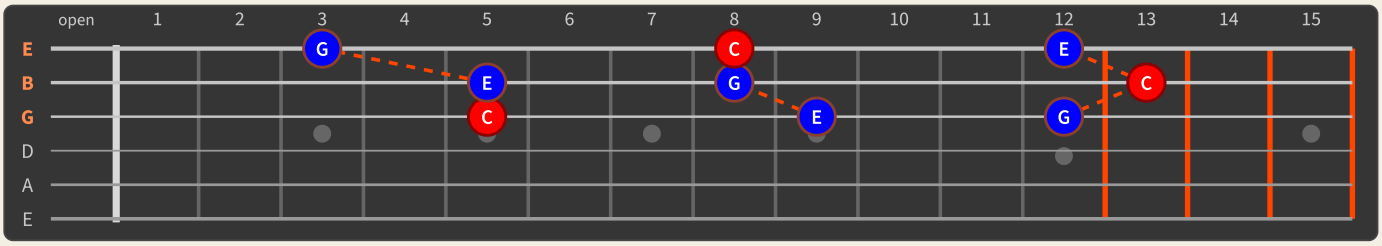
All shapes are movable. Shift every fret by the same amount to change the root: add 2 frets to turn a C shape into a D shape. Shapes that use an open string (fret 0) turn into fretted shapes when you move them up.

4 Major triads

Formula: 1, 3, 5. C major is C, E, G. Each set has three shapes, one per inversion, and they repeat 12 frets higher. Going up the neck on one set, the inversions always come round in the same order: root position, then 1st inversion, then 2nd inversion, then root position again.

C major, String Set 1

STRINGS 3, 2, 1 · G, B, HIGH E



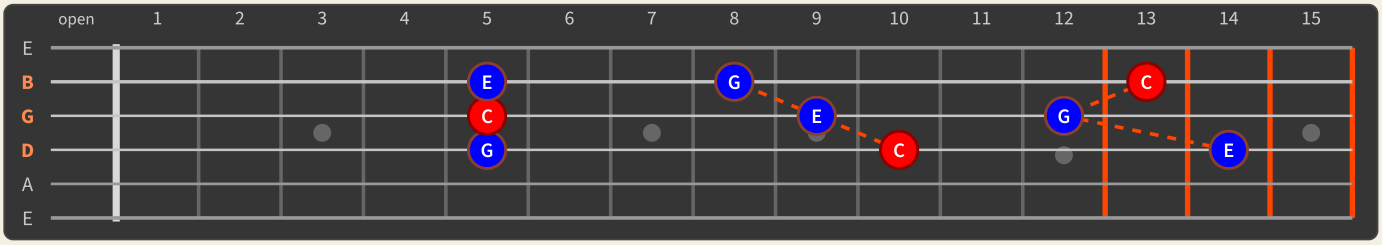
Root position
5-5-3
C(1) E(3) G(5)

1st inversion
9-8-8
E(3) G(5) C(1)

2nd inversion
12-13-12
G(5) C(1) E(3)

C major, String Set 2

STRINGS 4, 3, 2 · D, G, B



2nd inversion (Straight)
5-5-5
G(5) C(1) E(3)

Root position (Diagonal)
10-9-8
C(1) E(3) G(5)

1st inversion (Triangle)
14-12-13
E(3) G(5) C(1)

HOW CHORDS WORK

Why do 1, 3 and 5 make a major chord, and where do the 3rd and 5th come from? Section 2 of How Chords Work, “How 1, 3 and 5 make a major chord”. **guitartraining.online/how-chords-work** (pay what you think it's worth, from $2)

ENJOYED THE SAMPLE?

Get the full 15-page course and learn every triad shape.

You have seen why triads matter and how the four string sets work. The full course gives you every close-position C triad, play-along progressions, a section on landing your solos on triad notes, and a walkthrough of the Triad Explorer, which is included with the full course. Your Triad Explorer access code is included in the full Guitar Triads course.

4 **Major triads:** every close-position C major shape on all four string sets, including inversions.

5 **Minor, diminished and augmented:** the same four sets for the other three triad types, with the notes that change.

8 **Play-along progressions:** three progressions with exact Triad Explorer backing-track names and settings.

9 **Landing on triad notes:** use triad tones as solo landing targets over a 12-bar blues, including a full chorus.

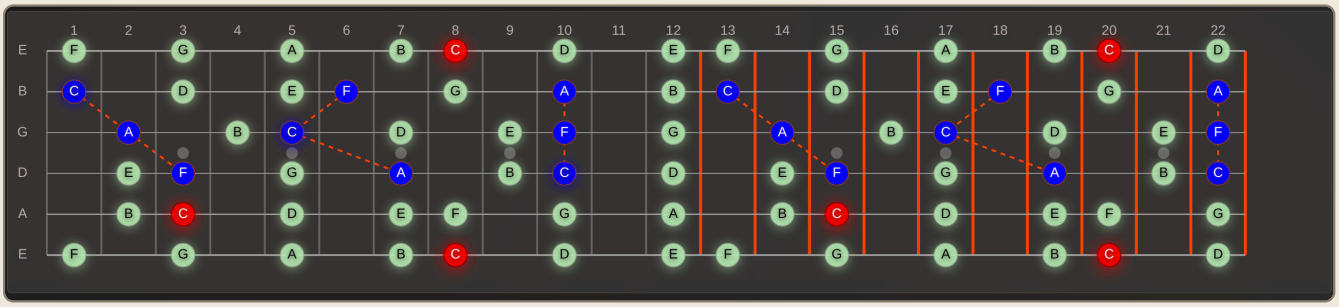
12 **Practice routines:** short daily routines, plus a quick reference of every C triad.

A **Using the Triad Explorer:** a glossary-style walkthrough of every control, colours and play-along tracks.

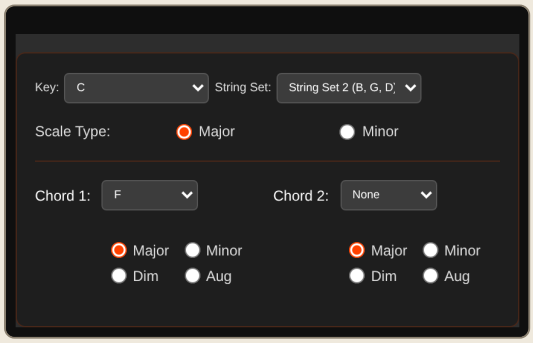
INCLUDED WITH THE FULL COURSE

The Triad Explorer

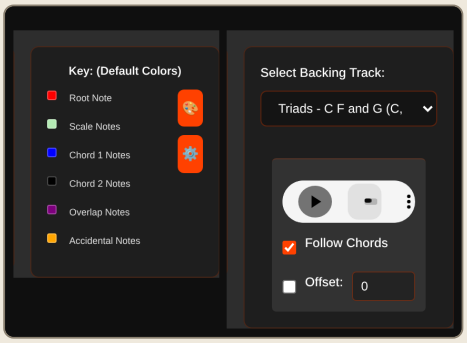
The Triad Explorer is an extensive, interactive tool designed to help you learn where each triad is on the neck. It is included with the full Guitar Triads course. Your Triad Explorer access code is included in the full Guitar Triads course. A locked preview is at **tools.guitartraining.online/triads/**.



C, F and G triad shapes on String Set 2, with each inversion joined by an orange dashed line. Change the String Set drop-down to see the same chords on the other sets.



Choose the key and any of the four string sets. Here String Set 2 is selected, with Chord 1 set to F major.



Select a backing track and tick Follow Chords so the shapes change with the music. The palette button opens Colour Options.

The full course walks you through using the Explorer alongside every lesson, with the exact track names and settings to choose, and includes your access code.

$8 USD, one-off payment

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Get the full course →

guitartraining.online/triads