

Guidelines For Good Voice-Leading

1. Guitar chord voice leading is done (for starters) on one string set at a time. Good string sets to start with are 5432 and 6432. Eventually, other string sets need to be utilized.
2. Start with individual chord types (dominants, then major 7ths etc.). My suggestion is to move on to actual song-like progressions *only* after becoming comfortable with individual chord types. I would also recommend practicing chord inversions in order to facilitate good chordal technique.
3. Let the melody lead the chords. The melody can be oblique (staying on one common tone) or should be lead to the next available melody note, either ascending or descending by no more than an interval of a 4th (stay as stepwise as possible). Be able to easily sing the melody. On the fingerboard, that would be left or right. Try example 1 on string set 5432 with drop 2 dominant 7th chords.

Example 1:

The example shows a sequence of 14 dominant 7th chords across four systems. Each system includes a guitar chord diagram with fingerings and a corresponding TAB line. The chords and their string sets are:

- System 1: C7 (5432), F7 (6432), B \flat 7 (5432), E \flat 7 (6432), A \flat 7 (5432)
- System 2: D \flat 7 (5432), F \sharp 7 (6432), B7 (5432), E7 (6432)
- System 3: A7 (5432), D7 (6432), G7 (4532), C7 (5432)

The musical notation shows the chords in a key signature of one flat (B \flat 7, E \flat 7, A \flat 7, D \flat 7) and one sharp (F \sharp 7, B7, E7, A7, D7, G7, C7). The TAB lines show the string numbers for each chord.



String sets can be alternated with each other to further increase root motion. This is best done with string sets with plurality, such as 6432 and 5432. Example 2 demonstrates one solution.

Example 2:

The diagram illustrates a sequence of 15 chords, each with a fretboard diagram and a corresponding musical staff. The chords are: C7, F7, Bb7, Eb7, Ab7, Db7, F#7, B7, E7, A7, D7, G7, and C7. Each fretboard diagram shows the string set (e.g., 1 Fr., 2 Fr., 3 Fr.) and the fingerings for the notes. The musical staff shows the chord voicing in 4/4 time, and the TAB line below it provides the fret numbers for each string.

The following example on page 43 is part of a progression of a familiar standard jazz tune. I have attempted to show an example of voice leading. This example makes use of some altered chords on string sets 5432 and 6432 and should steer you in a good direction for your own voice leading experiments. Feel free to try different comping rhythms. For further information, check out Mel Bay's *Rhythm Guitar Chord System* (<http://www.melbay.com/product.asp?productid=93214>) and *Complete Book of Harmony, Theory & Voicing for Guitar* by Bret Willmott (<http://www.melbay.com/product.asp?productid=95112>) Enjoy!!!

Example 3:

	<i>F</i> _{M7}	<i>B</i> _b M7	<i>E</i> _b 9	<i>A</i> _b M _A J7
T	4	3	3	4
A				
B	3	4	4	4

	<i>D</i> _b M _A J7	<i>D</i> M9	<i>G</i> 13	<i>C</i> M _A J9	<i>C</i> ⁶ 9
T	6	5	5	3	3
A					
B	4	5	5	3	3

	<i>C</i> M7	<i>F</i> M7	<i>B</i> _b 13	<i>E</i> _b M _A J9
T	4	6	6	6
A				
B	3	6	6	6

	<i>A</i> _b M _A J7	<i>A</i> M7	<i>D</i> 13(_b 9)	<i>G</i> M _A J9	<i>G</i> M _A J13
T	4	5	7	7	5
A					
B	3	5	5	5	3

