

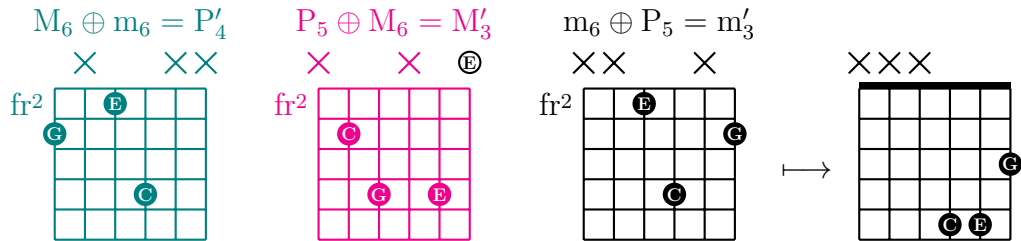
Pitch Equivalent Fingerings of the C Major Open Triads

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Remarks

The following is a 5×4 table of some commonly used voicings of the C major open triads¹ on a 21 fret guitar. Let $X(i, j)$ be the chord in row i and column j , so that the top left and bottom right chords of the table will be denoted $X(1, 1)$ and $X(5, 4)$ respectively. Notice that:

1. Chords on a given row fall in roughly the same range of frets.
2. Each row contains a root, first inversion and second inversion triad of the open C major. The fourth chord is an upward pitch translation by one octave of the first chord. Thus, for example, $X(3, 4)$ is one octave higher than $X(3, 1)$ and of the same inversion.
3. **Chord pitch** is constant on fingerings of the same color (located on the diagonals). Since there are eight diagonals in the table, there are exactly seven pitches. It is natural to refer to fingerings of the same color as being *pitch equivalent*. Clearly all fingerings in a given pitch class will have the same inversion.
4. The highest notes in each of the first three chords of a given row, together, form an inversion of one of the three C major closed triads located on the first three strings. For example, here are the first three open chords in row two, followed by the corresponding C major closed inversion on the first three strings:



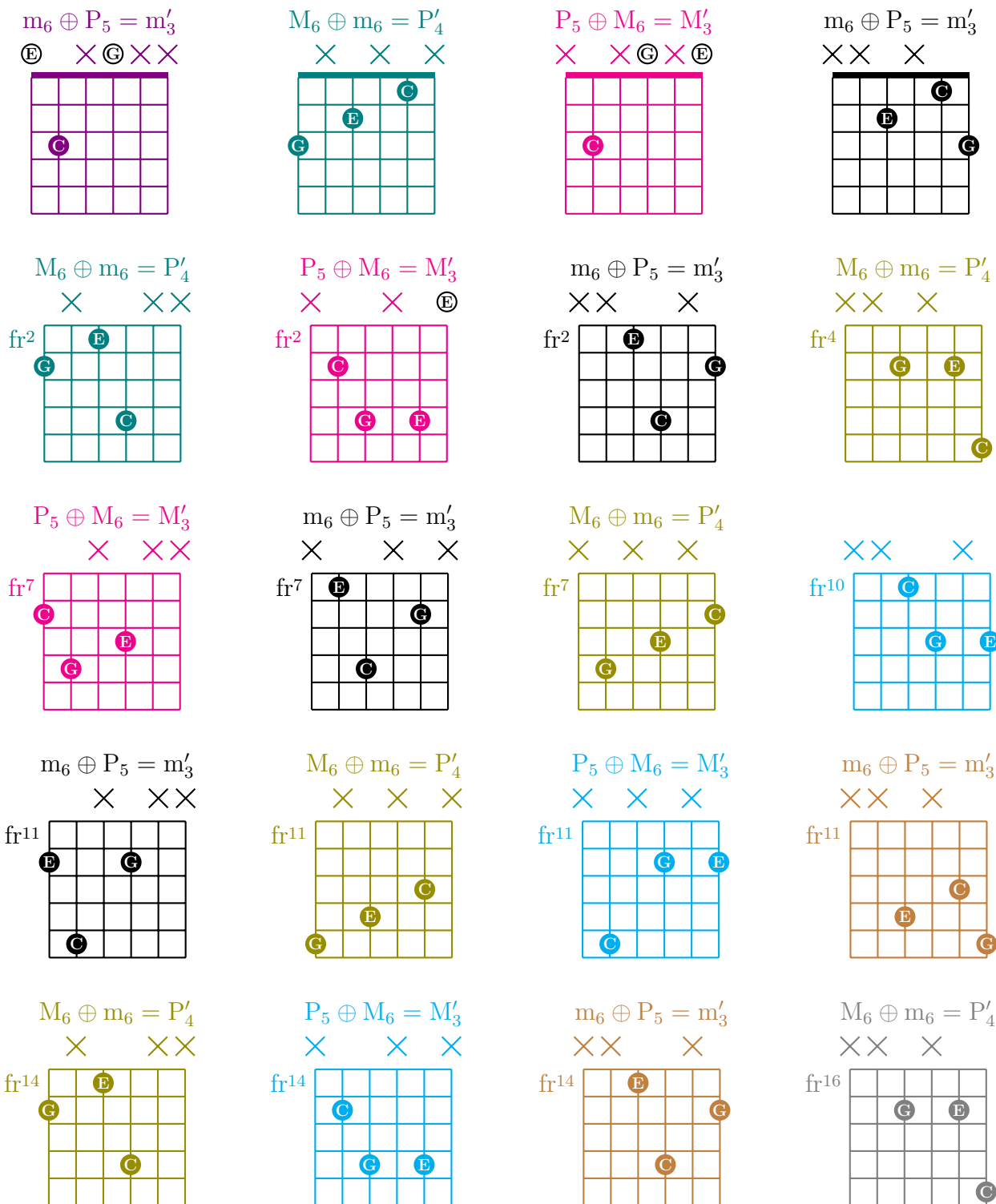
Different rows of the table generate different C major closed triads in this manner. Conversely, each C major closed triad on the first three strings generates a unique triple of open C major triads whose highest notes comprise the open triad. Thus there is a one-to-one correspondence between C major closed triads on the first three strings and triples of C major open triads. Knowledge of this correspondence greatly facilitates memorization of the open triads.

5. Since there are only three odd permutations of three notes, the chords in row $i + 3$ will be an octave higher than in row i and of the same inversion.
6. The fingerings of major triads in other keys can now be obtained by a pitch translation of the entire table.

¹Please refer to the article [Guitar Chord Sequences Totally Ordered by Pitch](#) for terminology.

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Some Suggestions for Practice

The chords can be practised

1. One row at a time (so as to remain within a given fret range). Before and after each row, the closed chord determined by the highest notes of the three open chords can also be played.
2. One column at a time.
3. All chords of a given color.
4. In order of pitch increasing and pitch decreasing. This can be done by playing along all paths of length 7 connecting $X(5, 4)$ to $X(1, 1)$. Notice that these paths contain every color exactly once.
5. Interleaved with musically related chords.