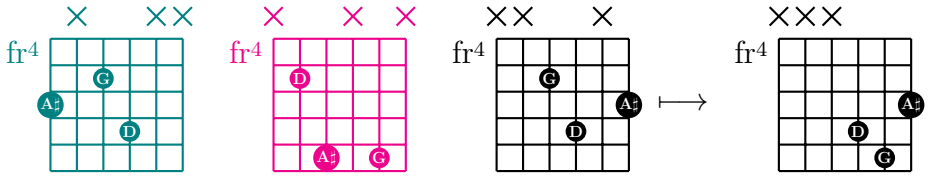
Pitch Equivalent Fingerings of the G Minor Open Triads

 Version: – May 2025.

Remarks

The following is a 5×4 table of some commonly used voicings of the G minor open triads[1] 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 G minor. 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 seven diagonals in the table, there are exactly seven distinct chord pitches. It is natural to refer to fingerings of the same color as being *pitch equivalent* or belonging to the same *pitch class.* Clearly all fingerings in a given pitch class will be of 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 G minor open triads located on the first three strings. For example, here are the first three open chords in row two, followed by the corresponding A minor open inversion on the first three strings:



Different rows of the table generate different A minor open triads in this manner. Conversely, each G minor open triad on the first three strings generates a unique triple of open A minor triads whose highest notes comprise that open triad. Thus there is a one-to-one correspondence between A minor open triads on the first three strings and triples of A minor 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 any minor triad can now be obtained by a pitch translation of the entire table.

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

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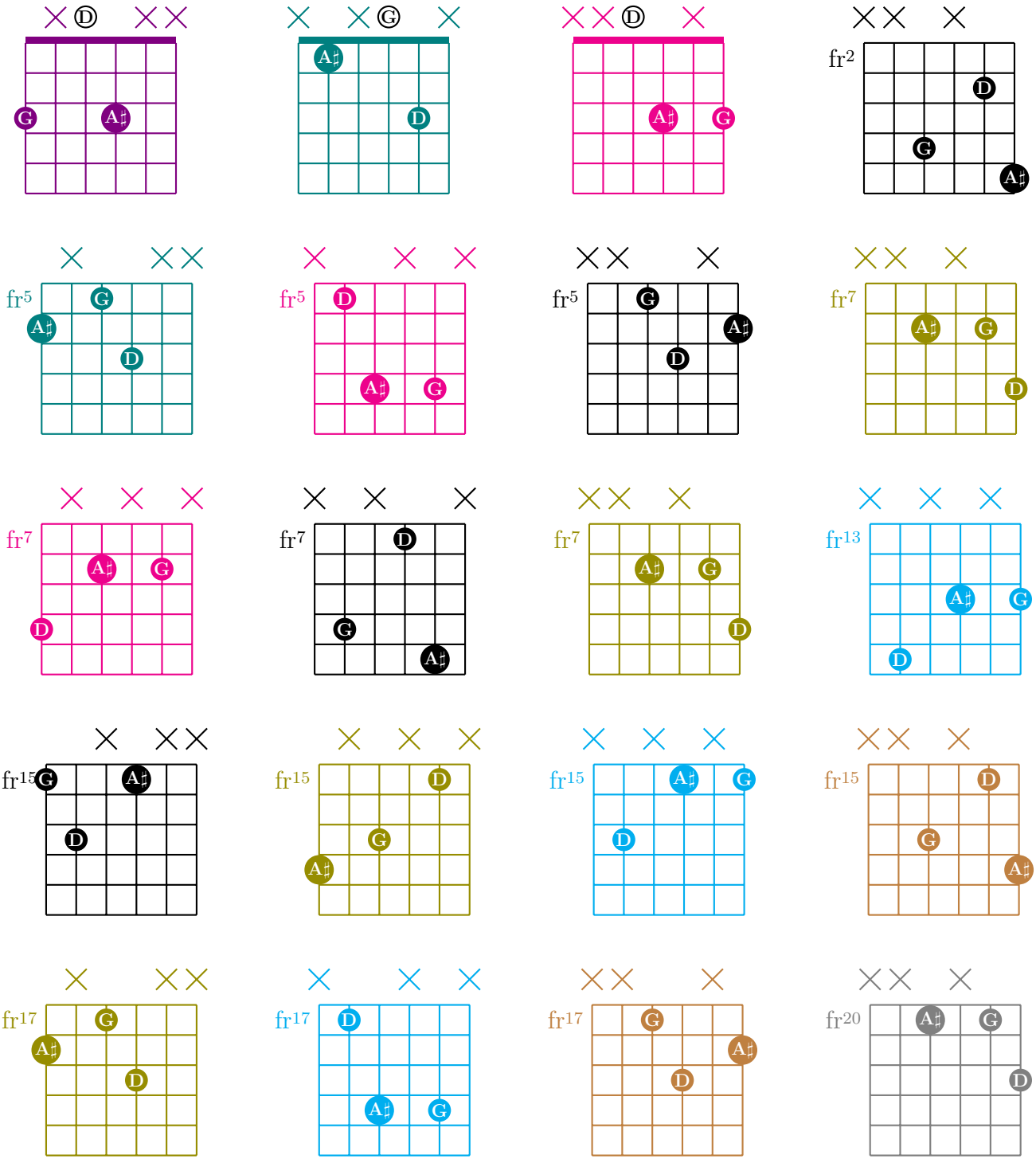

Some Suggestions for Practice

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 $X(1,1)$ containing every color exactly once.
5. Interleaved with musically related chords..