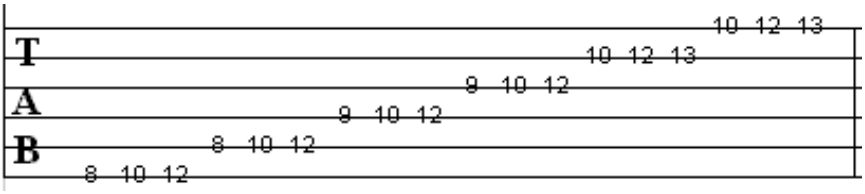
Most people might not realize it, but scales have their own "built in" chord systems. By using the notes from a diatoinc scale we can make up 7 different chords. These chords made from the scale will work perfectly with the scale.

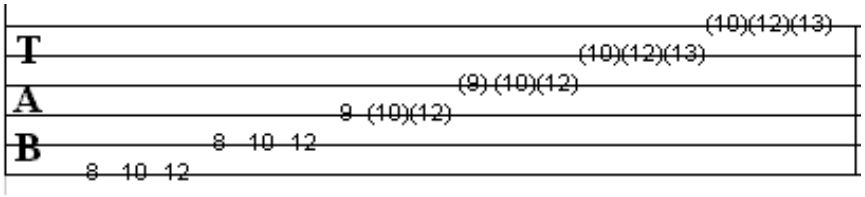
There's simple formula to extract chords from a scale and I'm going to show it to you. You don't have to be an expert to do it. It's really easy. What's most important is that you begin to understand some of the musical mechanics behind chord progressions.

First, we'll have to pick a key signature. We'll use the key of C major as our example. The C major scale has 7 notes: C, D, E, F, G, A, and B. We can also call them by number, 1-7.

In the image below I have tabbed out the C major scale.



It only has 7 different notes, but I've extended the scale. That means we're just repeating the same notes at higher octave (the notes in parenthisis).



Now if we have our key signature of C and the notes that we can play with the C major scale, how do we know what chords we can use? That's what we're here to find out.

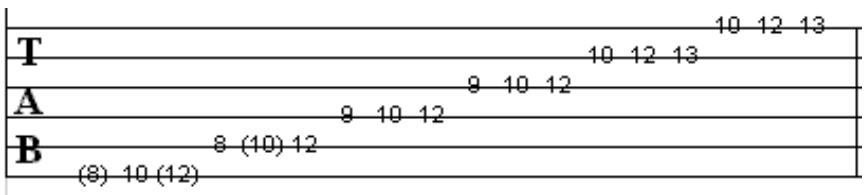
Building Chords

We can build a triad (a three note chord) off of each scale step for a total of 7 chords.

The formula is really simple. First , we'll start with the first note of the scale step and take out every other note until you have three notes to form a triad.

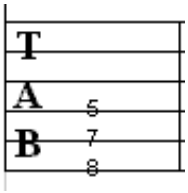
The 1st Triad

In the tab below I've put a parenthisis around the notes that would create our first triad:



We end up with the notes C, E, and G

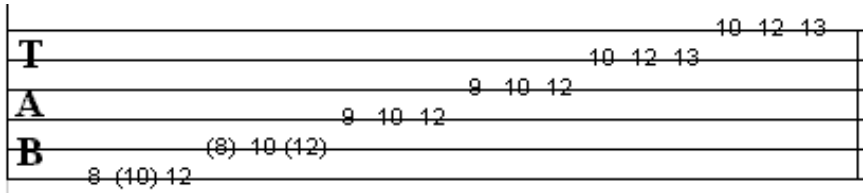
To get a playable version of this triad we must move a couple of notes to adjacent strings. This is nothing technical, it's just a quirk of the guitar. We can only play one note at a time on any string. In this case we'll move the E and G notes to adjacent strings, so we can play the triad as such:



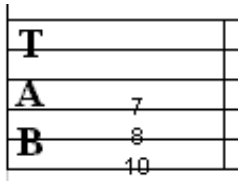
That's our first triad in the key of C! It might not look like much of a chord in it's triad form, but once we form all 7 of our triads you'll be able to better understand what's going on.

The 2nd Triad

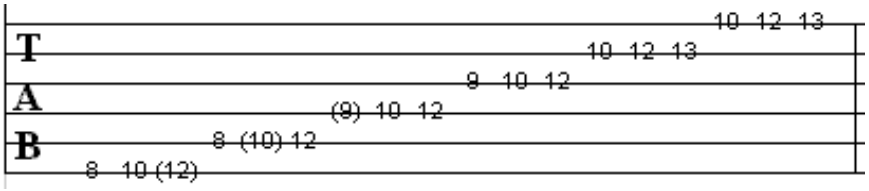
For our 2nd triad we'll repeat the steps we followed in forming our first triad, but we'll start on the **2nd** note. We take 2nd note of the scale, and then every other note until we have three notes:

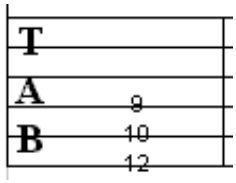


We end up with the notes D, F, and A. These are the notes in our 2nd triad. After a quick arrangement of notes we can play it as such:

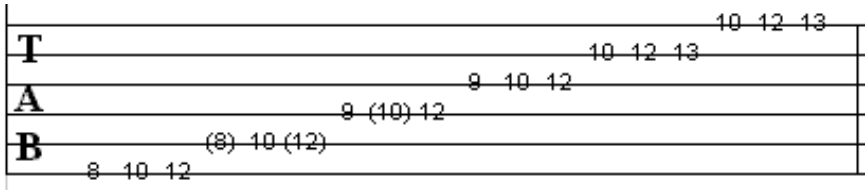


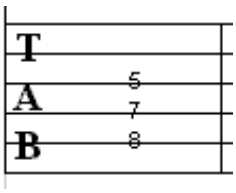
The 3rd Triad



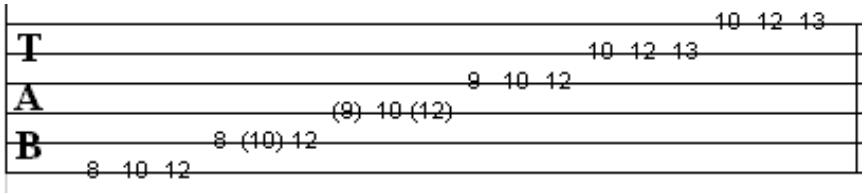


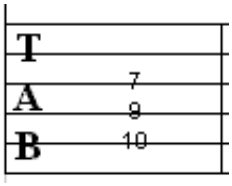
The 4th Triad



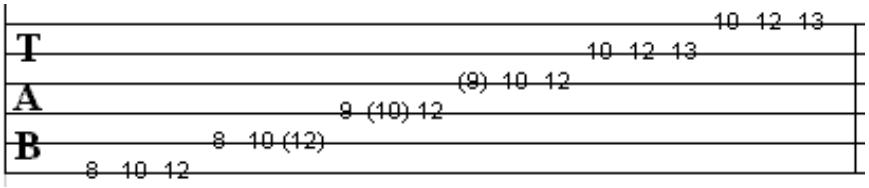


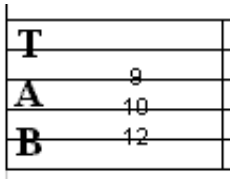
The 5th Triad



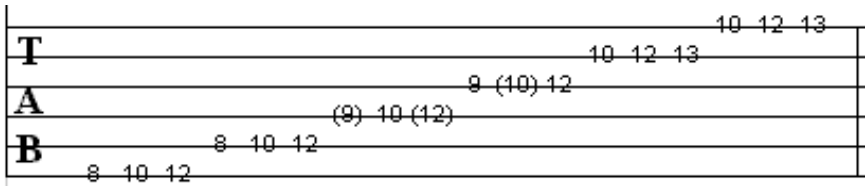


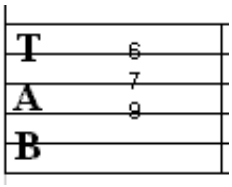
The 6th Triad



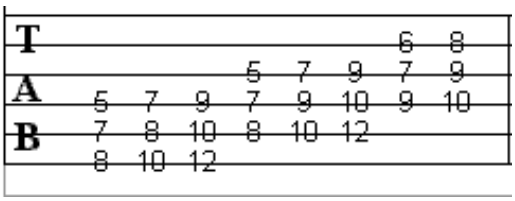


The 7th Triad





After we build all 7 triads, we know 7 chords that we can use in the key signature with no problems. Below are the 7 triads that we built (the 8th triad is the 1st triad repeating).



The names of the chords that these triads form are named:

1.) C Major

2.) D minor

3.) E minor

4.) F Major

5.) G Major

6.) A minor

7.) B dim

I	ii	iii	IV	V	vi	vii
Major	Minor	Minor	**Major**	**Major**	Minor	Dim.
A	B	C#	**D**	**E**	F#	G#
B	C#	D#	**E**	**F#**	G#	A#
C	D	E	**F**	**G**	A	B
D	E	F#	**G**	**A**	B	C#
E	F#	G#	**A**	**B**	C#	D#
F	G	A	**Bb**	**C**	D	E
G	A	B	**C**	**D**	E	F#