

10THS ON BASS: A CHORD GUIDE

What Is a Major 10th?

A **major 10th** chord is created by taking a root note and adding its **major third**, but raised an octave. You can think of it as the number 3 in the scale, but counted up into the next octave, making it the 10th scale degree.

It produces a bright, open, harmonically clear sound that works beautifully on bass.

What Is a Minor 10th?

A **minor 10th** is the root paired with the **minor third** an octave higher. The shape is nearly identical to the major version, but the upper note is lowered by one semitone.

This creates a darker, moodier colour that feels soulful and expressive without adding low end clutter.

Why and Where to Use 10ths

10ths allow you to outline harmony while keeping the low frequencies clean and powerful. Because the third is placed high above the root, the interval avoids mud and leaves room for kick drum and bass fundamentals in a mix or live setting. You can use 10ths to:

- Add chordal colour inside grooves.
- Harmonise simple bass melodies.
- Outline progressions without playing full chords.
- Create movement between roots while maintaining clarity.

How to Count Through a Scale to Find a 10th

To find a 10th, simply count the scale degrees starting from the root:

1 (root), 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 (octave), 9, **10**

The **10th is the same note as the 3rd**, just shifted into the next octave.

So in practical terms:

- Major 10th = Root + Major 3rd (up an octave)
- Minor 10th = Root + Minor 3rd (up an octave)

Once you know the location of the 3rd in any scale, you automatically know the 10th.

Using 10ths

10ths are one of the cleanest ways to imply full chords on bass. Rather than playing dense chord voicings that interfere with low-end clarity, the 10th gives you the essential chord colour with just two notes. The root provides stability, while the upper third defines whether the harmony is major or minor. This creates a rich, expressive chordal texture without sacrificing punch or definition.

Diatonic Chords:

We can play every chord of a key if we know the chord qualities of each degree. Here are the chords of Major and Minor Keys:

Major Key:

Major - Minor - Minor - Major - Major - Minor - Minor

Minor Key:

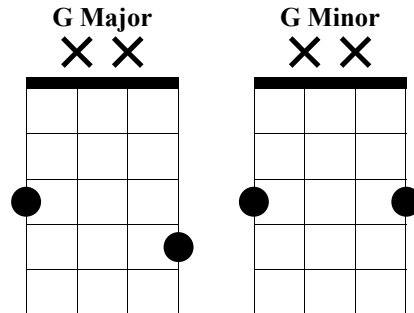
Minor - Minor - Major - Minor - Minor - Major - Major

Please take your time with the workbook below:

10ths on Bass: A Chord Guide

There are 2 fundamental shapes we will be focussing on in this guide.
The Major 10th shape & the Minor 10th shape. Please make yourself comfortable with these shapes before moving on to chord progressions and articulations.

Here are the shapes for the Major and Minor 10th chords using the key of G as an example:



Standard tuning
♩ = 120

G Major **G Minor**

el.bs.

Diatonic Chords In G Major

el.bs.

Diatonic Chords In G Minor

el.bs.

Diatonic Chords In E Major

el.bs.

Diatonic Chords In E Minor

el.bs.

Diatonic Chords In F Major

11 12

2 3 5 7 9 10 12 14

1 3 5 6 8 10 12 13

Diatonic Chords In F Minor

13 14

1 3 5 6 8 10 12 13

1 3 4 6 8 9 11 13

Diatonic Chords In A Major

15 16

6 7 9 11 13 14 16 18

5 7 9 10 12 14 16 17

Diatonic Chords In A Minor

17 18

5 7 9 10 12 14 16 17

5 7 8 10 12 13 15 17

Diatonic Chords In C Major - Jump To 6 Chord Below

19 20

9 10 12 14 16 5 7 9

8 10 12 13 15 5 7 8

Diatonic Chords In C Minor - Jump To 6 Chord Below

21 22

8 10 12 13 15 5 7 8

8 10 11 13 15 4 6 8

Diatonic Chords In B Major - Jump To 6 Chord Below

23 24

8 9 11 13 15 4 6 8

7 9 11 12 14 4 6 7

Diatonic Chords In B Minor - Jump To 6 Chord Below

25 26

7 9 11 12 14 4 6 7

7 9 10 12 14 3 5 7

Chord Progressions in E - 1-5-6-4

27

1 8 9 6

0 7 9 5

Chord Progressions in E - 1-5-6-4 - Variation

28

13 8 9 6

12 7 9 5

Chord Progressions in E - 2-5-1-4

29

2 8 13 6

2 7 12 5

Chord Progressions in E - 2-5-1-4 Variation

30

14 8 13 6

14 7 12 5

Chord Progressions in E - 2-5-1-4 Variation 2

31

2 8 1 6

2 7 0 5

Chord Progressions in E - 6-2-5-1

32

9 14 8 13

9 14 7 12

Chord Progressions in E - 2-5-1-4-7-3-6-6 - Jazz Progression

33

14 8 13 6 11 5 9 10

14 7 12 5 11 4 9 9

G Major - Hammer Ons From 9th to 10th of Major Chords In Key

Measures 35-38: Hammer-ons (H) on the bass staff. Fret numbers on the treble staff: 2-4, 7-9, 9-11, 2-4. Fret numbers on the bass staff: 3, 8, 10, 3.

G Major - Pull Offs From 10th to 9th of Major Chords In Key

Measures 39-42: Pull-offs (P) on the bass staff. Fret numbers on the treble staff: 4-2, 9-7, 11-9, 4-2. Fret numbers on the bass staff: 3, 8, 10, 3.

G Major - Hammer Ons From 9th to 10th of Minor Chords In Key

Measures 43-46: Hammer-ons (H) on the bass staff. Fret numbers on the treble staff: 4-5, 5-7, 11-12, 12-14. Fret numbers on the bass staff: 5, 7, 12, 14.

G Major - Pull Offs From 10th to 9th of Minor Chords In Key

Measures 47-50: Pull-offs (P) on the bass staff. Fret numbers on the treble staff: 5-4, 7-5, 12-11, 14-12. Fret numbers on the bass staff: 5, 7, 12, 14.

G Major - All Chords Using Hammer Ons From 9th to 10th

Measures 51-54: Hammer-ons (H) on the bass staff. Fret numbers on the treble staff: 2-4, 4-5, 5-7, 7-9. Fret numbers on the bass staff: 3, 5, 7, 8.

Measures 55-58: Hammer-ons (H) on the bass staff. Fret numbers on the treble staff: 9-11, 11-12, 12-14, 14-16. Fret numbers on the bass staff: 10, 12, 14, 15.

G Major - All Chords Using Pull Offs From 10th to 9th

Sheet music for G Major, showing all chords using pull offs from the 10th to the 9th fret. The music is written in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#).

The first system contains measures 59 through 62. The second system contains measures 63 through 66. Each measure shows a bass line with a pull-off (P) and a corresponding guitar fretboard diagram below it.

Measure 59: Bass line shows a pull-off from the 4th fret to the 2nd fret. Fretboard diagram shows the 4th and 2nd frets.

Measure 60: Bass line shows a pull-off from the 5th fret to the 4th fret. Fretboard diagram shows the 5th and 4th frets.

Measure 61: Bass line shows a pull-off from the 7th fret to the 5th fret. Fretboard diagram shows the 7th and 5th frets.

Measure 62: Bass line shows a pull-off from the 9th fret to the 7th fret. Fretboard diagram shows the 9th and 7th frets.

Measure 63: Bass line shows a pull-off from the 11th fret to the 9th fret. Fretboard diagram shows the 11th and 9th frets.

Measure 64: Bass line shows a pull-off from the 12th fret to the 11th fret. Fretboard diagram shows the 12th and 11th frets.

Measure 65: Bass line shows a pull-off from the 14th fret to the 12th fret. Fretboard diagram shows the 14th and 12th frets.

Measure 66: Bass line shows a pull-off from the 16th fret to the 14th fret. Fretboard diagram shows the 16th and 14th frets.