

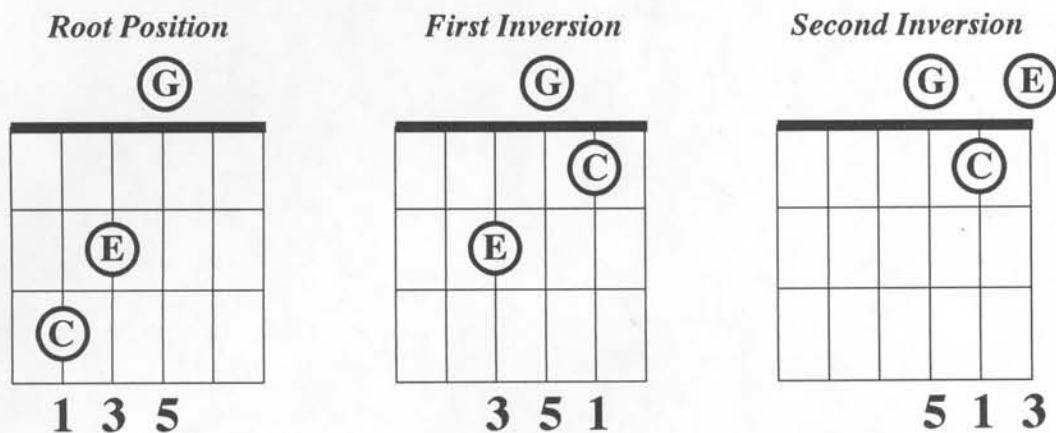
For a chord to be considered a true **triad**, there must be **at least one** of each of the 3 chord tones present; that is, one **Root**, one **3rd** and one **5th**.

This is the minimum requirement for triadhood. Triadity? Triadness. Beyond this one rule, you can have any combination of **Roots**, **3rds** and **5ths** that you can find across the 6 strings of the guitar, just so long as you can physically *reach* the notes in order to play them.

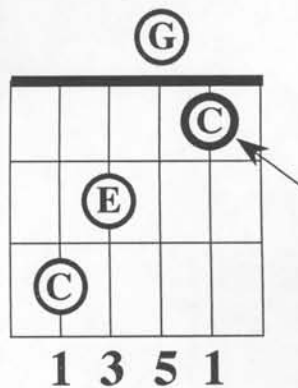
With this in mind, take a glance at the first three C chord voicings below.

These are 3 *distinct* chord voicings, each one meeting the minimum requirement of triadism. In classical terminology, there is another expression to describe each of these 3 separate chord voicings: These are different **inversions** of the C chord. Now, don't get *voicings* and *inversions* mixed up; I'll explain the difference in a minute.

The chord voicing below and to the left has the **Root** note C as the lowest-sounding note, and it is called the **Root Position**. The voicing in the middle has the **3rd** (the E note) as the lowest-sounding note, and it is called the **First Inversion**. And the voicing on the right has the **5th** (G note) as the lowest-sounding note, and it is called the **Second Inversion**. Play just the 3-note chords:

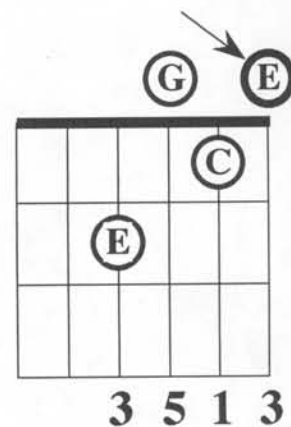


Now look at 2 more chord voicings.



To the left, we've added another C note to the Root Inversion above (1-3-5-1). *Technically, it is a different chord voicing, but it is still a Root Position of the C Major Triad because of the C note in the bass.*

To the right, we've added another E note to that First Inversion above (3-5-1-3). Again, it's a distinct chord voicing, but it is *still* a First Inversion of the C Major Triad *because of the E note in the bass.*



So regardless of how the chord is "voiced," the lowest-sounding note is always the one that determines what inversion the chord is in. The **Root Position** has the **Root** in the bass, the **First Inversion** has the **3rd** in the bass and the **Second Inversion** has the **5th** in the bass.