

Major and Minor Chords Root position

The simplest chords are made up of three notes – from the bottom of a chord, each note is a third away from the next. We call these parts of the chord the root, third and fifth. The C major chord uses the notes C E G. C is the root of the chord. E is the third of the chord and G is the fifth of the chord. In major chords, the third is a major third from the root. The C minor chord uses the notes C E \flat and G. In minor chords the third is a minor third from the root.

On the violin we can't play chords with the third in its regular position (sometimes called "closed" position because the notes are as close to each other as they can be). Instead, we put the third up an octave. So we play the chord with root on the bottom, then fifth, then third (now actually a "tenth").

Here are the major chords on the violin in root position. That means the name (or letter) of the chord is the lowest note. Notice that except for the G and the D chords, all of the chords in this position are played with the fingers placed with the lower finger (1,2 or 3) covering two strings and the next finger (high 2, high 3, high 4) on the third string.

For pizzicato chords, hold the violin like a guitar. If you're sitting, hold the violin in your lap. If you are standing cradle the body of the violin with your right elbow draped over the chin-piece. Your left hand holds the neck of the instrument while you are placing your fingers into chords.

Play pizzicato guitar style: Strum with your index finger or thumb downwards from the lowest note to the highest note of the chord.

Major Chords

Major Chords in root position:

- C: 4/3 3/3
- D \flat : 4/3 3/ \flat
- D: 1/0 1/0
- E \flat : 2/1 1/ \flat
- E: 2/1 1/1
- F: 3/2 2/2
- F \sharp : 3/2 2/ \sharp
- G: 1/0 0/0
- A \flat : 2/1 1/ \flat
- A: 2/1 1/1
- B \flat : 3/2 2/ \flat
- B: 3/2 2/2
- C: 4/3 3/3

Minor Chords

Here are the minor chords on the violin in root position. Notice that except for the G and D minor chords, all of the chords in this position are played with the fingers placed 1 1 close 2, 2 2 close 3 or 3 3 close 4.

Minor Chords in root position:

- C m : 4/ \flat 3/3
- C $\sharp m$: 4/ \sharp 3/ \sharp
- D m : 1/0 0/0
- D $\sharp m$: 2/1 1/ \sharp
- E m : 2/1 1/1
- F m : 3/2 2/ \flat
- F $\sharp m$: 3/2 2/ \sharp
- G m : 1/0 0/ \flat
- G $\sharp m$: 2/1 1/ \sharp
- A m : 2/1 1/1
- B $\flat m$: 3/2 2/ \flat
- B m : 3/2 2/2
- C m : 4/3 3/3