

## What are Sus or Suspended Chords?

Hello friends,

And welcome back to Swiftlessons for another mini-music theory tutorial. In today's session I'll be explaining "sus" or suspended chords – how they are built from the major scale, and how they can be used to embellish basic chord progressions. Let's get started!

### Section #1: What is a Sus Chord?

Chords are created by harmonizing specific combinations of notes found within the major scale. Suspended chords are a variation to the basic **1.3.5** major harmony, in which the 3<sup>rd</sup> is substituted with either the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> scale degrees. Let's apply this concept to the key of A major:

### Section #2: Reviewing the Open Position A Major Scale

To fully understand the connection between the major scale and the suspended chord shapes, let's memorize the A major scale in the open position.

#### A Major Scale Applied to Musical Alphabet:

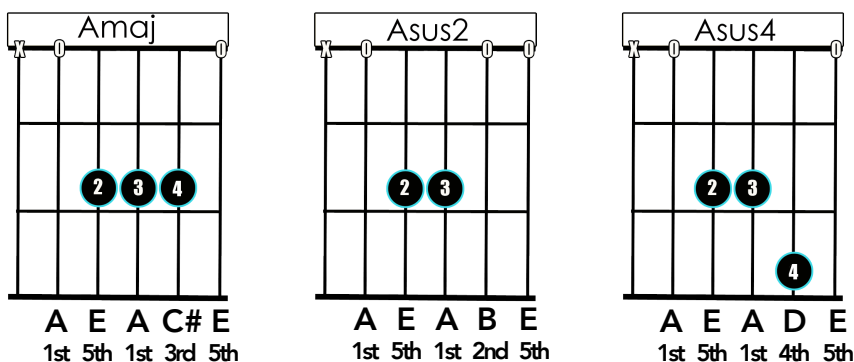
1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
**A** B $\flat$  **B** C **C#** D E $\flat$  **E** F **F#** G **G#**



### Section #3: Building the Suspended Chords

A basic chord like Amaj consists of the notes A (1st), C# (3rd), and E (5th), we can easily "suspend" this chord by replacing the note C# with either B (2nd) or D (4th).

#### Open Position Amaj, Asus2, and Asus4 Chords:





### Section #4: Suspended Chords in D Major

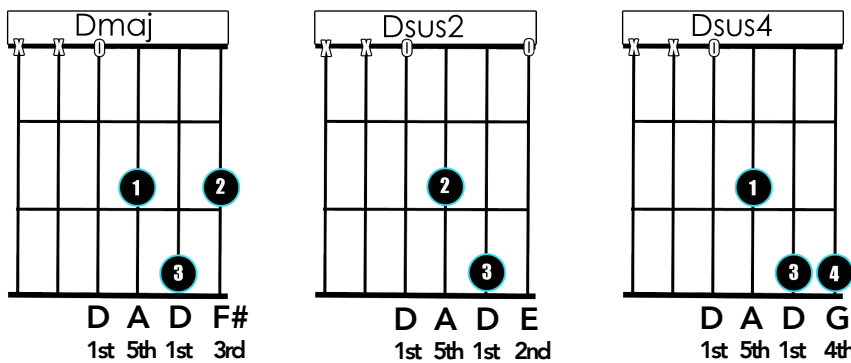
Now that we understand how suspended chords are created using the 1.2.5 or 1.4.5 harmonies from the major scale, let's apply it to the key of D major:

#### Major Scale Applied to Musical Alphabet:

5	6	7	1	2	3	4					
A	B $\flat$	B	C	C $\sharp$	D	E $\flat$	E	F	F $\sharp$	G	G $\sharp$

A basic chord like Dmaj consists of the notes D (1st), F $\sharp$  (3rd), and A (5th), we can easily "suspend" this chord by replacing the note F $\sharp$  with either E (2nd) or G (4th).

#### Open Position Dmaj, Dsus2, and Dsus4 Chords:



### Section #5: A Suspended Chord Exercise

Now that we understand the theory, and finger positions for our suspended chords in the keys A and D major, let's apply them to a basic chord progression and strumming pattern that you might encounter in a typical pop song:

Amaj 1 & 2 Asus2 & 3 & 4 & | Asus4 1 & 2 Amaj & 3 & 4 & |

$\uparrow$     $\uparrow$   $\downarrow$   $\uparrow$                                    $\uparrow$     $\uparrow$   $\downarrow$   $\uparrow$

Dmaj 1 & 2 Dsus2 & 3 & 4 & | Dsus4 1 & 2 Dmaj & 3 & 4 & |

$\uparrow$     $\uparrow$   $\downarrow$   $\uparrow$                                    $\uparrow$     $\uparrow$   $\downarrow$   $\uparrow$