

Altered Chords for the guitar

Stu asks what to play when he sees the symbol: **G^{ALT}**.

I'll try to explain. The first part of the explanation is **what to play**. I might get to why in another sheet.

- **ALT** is short for *altered* meaning that a lot of notes are altered in the scale.
- An altered chord is almost always a substitute for **V⁷** preceding a **I** chord.
- The **I** might be **I^Δ**, **IM⁷**, **I⁷ #11**, etc. A **V⁷** preceding almost any kind of **I** chord can be substituted with the altered scale.

The Altered scale has **ROOT, ^b9, #9, THIRD, ^b5, #5, ^b7**. Yep, it's that complicated.

G altered

ROOT ^b9 #9 3 ^b5 #5 7 ROOT

10 11 8 9 11 8 10 8

These notes are G, A^b, A[#], B, D^b, D[#], F, G. It's altered because it's really a G^Δ scale with

all the notes but G flattened. Or it's an F^{#Δ} scale, with the root sharpened!

An altered chord might contain almost any of these notes. Here are some rootless

voicings for **G** ALT:

G7^{#5#9}	G7^{#5b9}	G7^{#5#9}	G7^{#5#9}
T A B	T A B	T A B	T A B
6 4 4 3	4 4 4 3	6 6 8 9	11 11 10 9

And here are some rooted voicings for **D** ALT:

D7^{#9}	D7^{b9}	D7^{b9#5}	D7^{#5}
T A B	T A B	T A B	T A B
6 5 4 5	4 5 4 5	6 4 5 4 5	3 3 4 3

Note that last one has the root on the top!

Here's some in context:

A[∅] **D7^{b9#5}** **G-^Δ9**

The first system shows three chords in a Bb key signature. The first chord is A[∅] (A major triad), the second is D7^{b9#5} (D dominant 7th with a flat 9 and sharp 5), and the third is G-^Δ9 (G major triad with a natural 9). Fingerings are provided for each chord on both the treble and bass staves.

Chord	Treble Staff Fingering	Bass Staff Fingering
A [∅]	5, 4, 5	5, 5, 4
D7 ^{b9#5}	6, 4, 5	6, 4, 4
G- ^Δ 9	5, 3, 3	5, 3, 4

D[∅] **G7^{#9#5}** **C^{b/9}**

The second system shows three chords in a Bb key signature. The first chord is D[∅] (D major triad), the second is G7^{#9#5} (G dominant 7th with a sharp 9 and sharp 5), and the third is C^{b/9} (C major triad with a flat 9). Fingerings are provided for each chord on both the treble and bass staves.

Chord	Treble Staff Fingering	Bass Staff Fingering
D [∅]	4, 3, 5	3, 5, 3
G7 ^{#9#5}	6, 4, 4	6, 4, 3
C ^{b/9}	3, 3, 2	3, 2, 2