

The Hendrix Chord

Jimi Hendrix has influenced nearly every famous guitarist in the world, not just with this chord but with his innovative chord style and musical arrangements. The Hendrix chord - written E7#9 and spoken E7 sharp 9 - as shown in Example 1 is so named because Jimi Hendrix made it popular by using it in many of his songs. A good example is Purple Haze from the album *Are You Experienced*.

Jazz guitarists had been using the chord long before Hendrix, but it had never been used much in the rock repertoire until Hendrix began using it and that is where guitarist's fascination for the chord began. For you theorists, it is a regular dominant 7th chord made up of the root, 3rd, 5th, and 7th, with the addition of the raised (or sharpened) 9th. However, in the following examples the 5th is left out.

Notice that in **Example 1** the 1st and 6th strings are not played as this is the moveable shape of the chord. Mute the 1st and 6th strings with the side of your fretting fingers and note the fingerings to the right of the chord. When moving it along the neck the note which is on the 5th string is the root note or naming note of the chord, i.e.; 3rd fret root - the chord is named C7#9.

In **Example 2** notice that the 1st and 6th strings are now played, you can only play these open strings when playing the E7#9.

Hendrix also used another fingering of the chord as shown in **Example 3**. Watch the fingering for this chord which is indicated to the right of it. The root note is now on the 4th string.

Example 4 is a typical example of the E7#9 chord being played in blues/rock/soul type of tune similar to what you would hear in the music of Stevie Ray Vaughan, The Blues Brothers and many others.

Ex 1. Ex 2. Ex 3. Ex 4.

E7#9 E7#9 E7#9 E7#9

T 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
A 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
B 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0

If you are jamming with your friends and wondering where you can use this chord immediately then look no further than the trusty old blues progression. **Example 5** shows the last four bars of a blues progression in A in which you can play your Hendrix chord on the last or 12th bar. Try it out; there is hardly a blues progression song where it doesn't sound great. Of course you don't want to overuse it or it will lose its effect, so let your ear be the guide.



By now you should have a good idea of what this chord sounds like and hopefully can recognise it on some of your favourite recordings.

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