

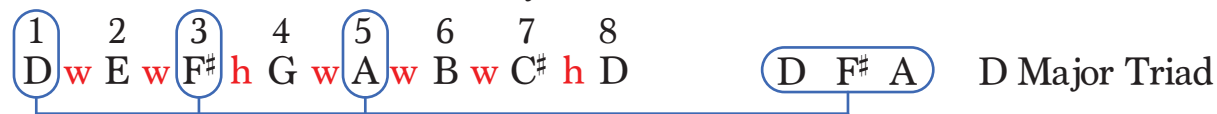
Sus chords are built by replacing the 3rd of a chord with either the 2nd or 4th note of the scale. The term “sus” is short for “suspended.” Since the 3rd of the chord determines whether it is major or minor, the word “suspended” implies that there is a little “suspense” about whether the sus chord is based on a major or minor triad.

In a traditional setting, the sus chord would resolve to a major or minor chord to reveal the hidden third and relieve the suspense, but in modern music sus chords aren’t always expected to resolve.

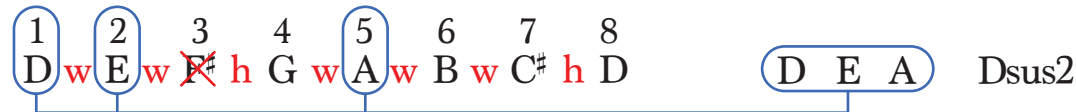
In this lesson you’ll learn how to make sus2 and sus4 chords. There are other uses for the term “sus” in music, but these two are by far the most common kinds of sus chords.

How to make sus chords:

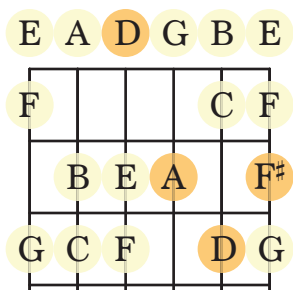
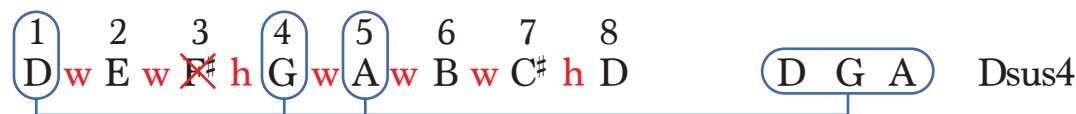
Start with a triad. I chose a D Major Triad



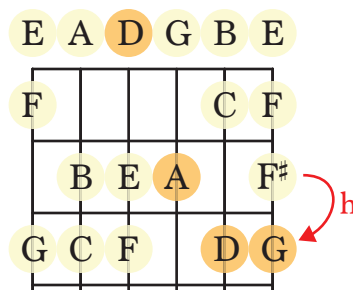
To build a sus2 chord, replace the 3rd of the chord with the 2nd note of the scale.



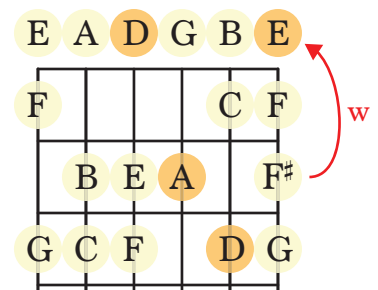
To build a sus4 chord, replace the 3rd of the chord with the 4th note of the scale.



D Major Triad



Dsus4



Dsus2

As you can see above, the Dsus4 is built by replacing the 3rd of the triad (F#) with the 4th note of the scale, G. In other words, the Dsus4 is made from the root, 4th, and 5th notes of the scale: D, G, A.

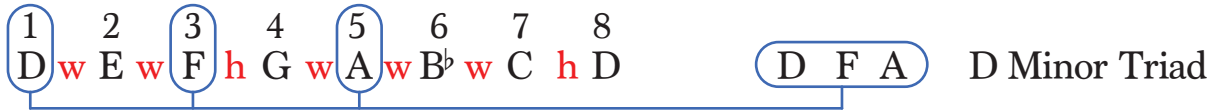
The Dsus2 is made by replacing the third of the chord with the 2nd note of the scale: E. In other words, the Dsus2 chord is made from the root, 2nd, and 5th notes of the D Major Scale: D, E, A.

You might have noticed that the chord is not written “D Major sus2.” Because the 3rd of the chord is missing, the chord is not major or minor, even if it’s based on a major or minor chord.

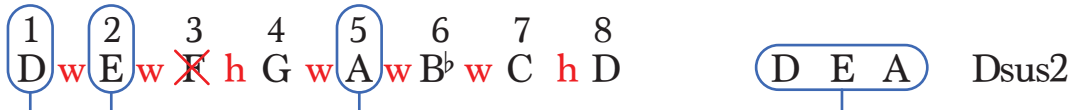
Lets build a set of sus chords from a D Minor Scale. The sus chords made in the major key or the minor key will result in the exact same sus chords, but lets just make sure.

Making sus chords from a minor scale:

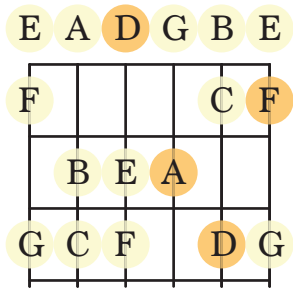
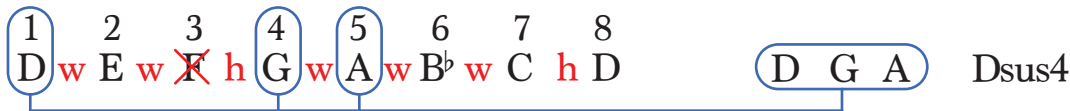
Start with a D minor triad



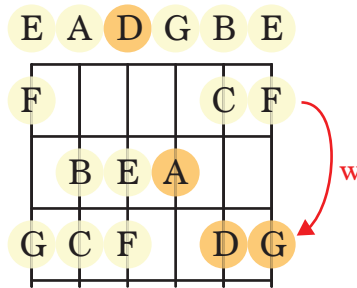
To build a sus2 chord, replace the 3rd of the chord with the 2nd note of the scale.



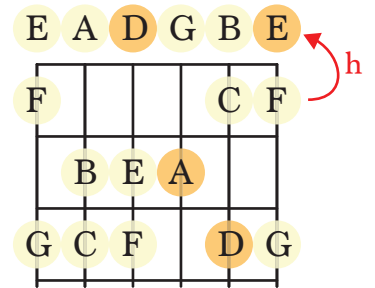
To build a sus4 chord, replace the 3rd of the chord with the 4th note of the scale.



D Major Triad



Dsus4



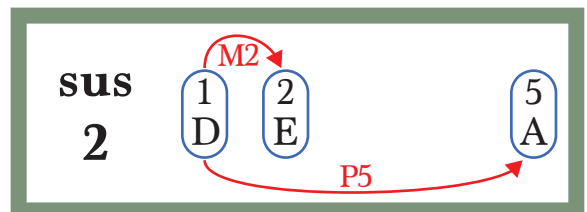
Dsus2

What is the point?

We've established that sus chords are neither major or minor, and that they can be made from either major or minor chords. One more way to look at them could be like this:

Sus2 chord recipe:

- 1 root note
- 1 tone a whole step (Major second) up from the root note
- 1 tone a perfect fifth (P5) up from the root note



Sus4 chord recipe:

- 1 root note
- 1 tone a perfect fourth (P4) up from the root note
- 1 tone a perfect fifth (P5) up from the root note

