

Chord Shapes 2: Basic Progressions (G)

(Foundational knowledge. Apply to all 12 keys)

JimO

1. Start with an **G** major scale.

2. Build Major and Minor 3rds on each note of the scale to create 3-Part **Tertial Chords**.

These are the **Diatonic major, minor and diminished triads/chords** for the key.

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3. First we'll assign **Sheet music chord symbols** to these chords.

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G Am Bm C D Em F#dim G

4. Next, let's pull out the 3 Major chords from this scaler grid. They are the 1, 4 and 5 chords.

We will also add a V7 chord to these major chords. This is widely used in folk and children's music.

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G C D D7

5. Each chord in a Triad has three "shapes". They are called **INVERSIONS**. Here's the first one. When these chords are accompanying a song they receive these chord symbols.

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RootPosition 1stInversion 2ndInversion RootPosition

G G/B G/D G

Detailed description: This block shows the G major triad in three positions. The first measure is Root Position (G-B-D). The second measure is 1st Inversion (B-D-G). The third measure is 2nd Inversion (D-G-B). The fourth measure is Root Position (G-B-D). The notes are G4, B4, and D5 in the treble clef, and G3, B2, and D3 in the bass clef.

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6. Here is the IV chord, or F with inversions.

Detailed description: This block shows the F major triad in three positions. The first measure is Root Position (F-A-C). The second measure is 1st Inversion (A-C-F). The third measure is 2nd Inversion (C-F-A). The notes are F4, A4, and C5 in the treble clef, and F3, A2, and C3 in the bass clef.

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7. Now the V chord, or G.

Detailed description: This block shows the G major triad in three positions. The first measure is Root Position (G-B-D). The second measure is 1st Inversion (B-D-G). The third measure is 2nd Inversion (D-G-B). The notes are G4, B4, and D5 in the treble clef, and G3, B2, and D3 in the bass clef.

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8. And the V7 chord. This 7th chord is the first important 7th chord we use in early harmonizing. We will see below how it's shapes can provide more energy to progressions.

Detailed description: This block shows the G7 chord in three positions. The first measure is Root Position (G-B-D-F). The second measure is 1st Inversion (B-D-F-G). The third measure is 2nd Inversion (D-F-G-B). The notes are G4, B4, D5, and F5 in the treble clef, and G3, B2, D3, and F3 in the bass clef.

9. Now, actually playing these shapes in the positions above does not render very good music "flow". So pianists will select from inversion positions to assemble Progressions that VOICE-LEAD. In this process you work from a starting position and try to keep the voices close to each other.

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Here is **FIRST POSITION**.

G C/G D/F# G

Detailed description: This block shows a chord progression in G major. The first measure is G (Root Position). The second measure is C/G (1st Inversion of C major). The third measure is D/F# (1st Inversion of D major). The fourth measure is G (Root Position). The notes are G4, B4, D5 in the treble clef, and G3, B2, D3 in the bass clef.

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10. Here is a progression starting from 1st inversion. Call it **SECOND POSITION**.

G/B C D/A G/B

Detailed description: This block shows a chord progression in G major. The first measure is G/B (1st Inversion of G major). The second measure is C (Root Position of C major). The third measure is D/A (1st Inversion of D major). The fourth measure is G/B (1st Inversion of G major). The notes are G4, B4, D5 in the treble clef, and G3, B2, D3 in the bass clef.

43 11. Here is **THIRD POSITION**.

Musical notation for exercise 11, showing four measures of chords in third position. The chords are G/D, C/E, D, and G/D. The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#).

12. The V7, or Dominant 7th is used in a wide variety of full and **PARTIAL** shapes.

These shapes are often found in the Left-Hand voicings in folk and Beginner piano books.

48

Musical notation for exercise 12, showing four measures of partial voicings for D7/F#, G, D7/C, and G/B. The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#).

(The voicings in measures 48 and 50 are called **PARTIAL VOICINGS** or **CHORD SHELLS**. We use this term to describe L.H. voicings that omit one or more chord tones.)

52

Musical notation for exercise 12, showing four measures of partial voicings for D7, G/D, D7/C, and G/B. The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#).

13. These chord progressions usually move from the V to the I chord in a given key.

When the 7th is present, the chord symbol will be a V7. This is a very strong progression.

56

Musical notation for exercise 13, showing two measures of a V7 to I progression: D7/A moving to G. The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#).

14. Diatonic Progressions: Exercise 1. Starting with the I chord in the key of C, Play chords with this melody. Pick from the above progressions or try your own.

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Musical notation for exercise 14, showing a melody line with lyrics: "The more we get to - ge - ther to - ge - ther to -". The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature.

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Musical notation for exercise 14, showing a melody line with lyrics: "ge - ther The more we get to - ge - ther the hap - pi - er we'll". The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature.

66 (Sorry: Raffi won't let us write out the whole song. lol)

(NOTE: The task here is to find chord/inversion shapes that "fit" the melody. Your hands may "bump" into melody notes as you play the chords. This is how harmonizing is done. First, you listen and look at the melody, then find chords that sound good with it.)

The following pages contain basic melodies for practice. These melodies will harmonize adequately with the chords and inversions we have looked at thus far.

Again, the process:

--Listen to the melody first. Play and listen.

--Find the key. Look at LAST NOTE of melody if you find this difficult. Simple songs almost always end on the note of the key.

--Now try a set of chords in the Left-Hand to ACCOMPANY the melody. Good luck!!