

Voicings 1: Learning Page

Chords are always "voiced."

Root Position and **Inversions** are the foundation.

In this LP the Root and Inversion positions will be displayed.

JimO

1. Here is a C major Triad. Triads are 3-part chords built with major or minor thirds.* Short-hand musician language for these is One-Three-Five, or 1-3-5.

C.Major(Triad)

Root
1

Third
3

Fifth
5

2. A chord of 3 tones yields 3 structures. We refer to them as Root, 1st and 2nd inversions. They are built in 3rds and invert by "raising" the lower tone an octave.

5

Root.Position

1st.Inversion

2nd.Inversion

Root.Position

3. Try them out. Play, see and listen to each inversion. First, hands separate.

9

1 3 5

3 5 1

5 1 3

1 3 5

4. Here is a "broken chord" shape of the inversions.

13

1 3 5 3

3 5 1 5

5 1 3 1

1 3 5 3

5. Here is another broken chord version. This one has a classical feeling.

17

1 5 3 5

3 1 5 1

5 3 1 3

1 5 3 5

2

6. Here are the additional TRIADS for the key of C major.

21 These are in Root position followed by their inversions. Again, play them and listen.

Musical notation for the Dm triad (IIIm.chord) in C major. It shows the root position and its first and second inversions in both treble and bass clefs. The notes are D, F, and A.

Position	Treble Clef	Bass Clef
Root	D, F, A	D, F, A
1st	F, A, D	A, D, F
2nd	A, D, F	F, A, D

25

Musical notation for the Em triad (IIIIm.chord) in C major. It shows the root position and its first and second inversions in both treble and bass clefs. The notes are E, G, and B.

Position	Treble Clef	Bass Clef
Root	E, G, B	E, G, B
1st	G, B, E	B, E, G
2nd	B, E, G	E, G, B

29

Musical notation for the Fmajor triad (IV.major) in C major. It shows the root position and its first and second inversions in both treble and bass clefs. The notes are F, A, and C.

Position	Treble Clef	Bass Clef
Root	F, A, C	F, A, C
1st	A, C, F	C, F, A
2nd	C, F, A	F, A, C

33

Musical notation for the Gmajor triad (V.major) in C major. It shows the root position and its first and second inversions in both treble and bass clefs. The notes are G, B, and D.

Position	Treble Clef	Bass Clef
Root	G, B, D	G, B, D
1st	B, D, G	D, G, B
2nd	D, G, B	G, B, D

37

Musical notation for the Am triad (VIIIm.chord) in C major. It shows the root position and its first and second inversions in both treble and bass clefs. The notes are A, C, and E.

Position	Treble Clef	Bass Clef
Root	A, C, E	A, C, E
1st	C, E, A	E, A, C
2nd	E, A, C	A, C, E

41

Bdim
VIIIdim.chord

Root

1st

2nd

6. Triads in C major. Summary Staff.

45 C Dm Em F G Am Bm7b5 C

Inversion Exercises

49 7. Ascending scale with broken chords. Root Position.

C Dm Em F G Am Bdim C

53 8. Ascending scale in 1st Inversion.

C Dm Em F G Am Bdim C

57 9. Ascending scale in 2nd Inversion.

C Dm Em F G Am Bdim C

61 10. 3 position triad "Climb".

C Dm Em

64

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

F G Am

67

3 3 3 3

Bdim C

NOTE: Getting a little fancy now.
We're just getting started.

11. Shift to 3/4 time and try this.

71

3 3 3 3

C Dm Em F G Am Bdim C Bdim C

12. Now try both hands in unison.

75

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

C Dm Em F G Am Bdim C Bdim C

JimO's Diatonic Circle-of-Fifths

5

79 C F Bm7b5 Em Am Dm G C

NOTE: The "Circle-of-Fifths" exercise shows how triads fit together from the standpoint of smooth "Voice-Leading." The basic principle of Voice-Leading is to do your best to keep "Common tones in the same voice." In this exercise the common tones are easy to see starting from the middle C on the treble clef. In this approach the Inversions follow the voice-leading.