

01 FOUR BASIC TRIADS

Gold = root C / Blue = other chord tones

TRIADS

01

Major

C

FORMULA 1 · 3 · 5



The starting point: root, major third, perfect fifth.

TRIADS

02

Minor

Cm

FORMULA 1 · $\flat$ 3 · 5



Lower the third of C major by one semitone.

TRIADS

03

Diminished

Cdim

FORMULA 1 · $\flat$ 3 · $\flat$ 5



Lower the fifth of C minor by one semitone.

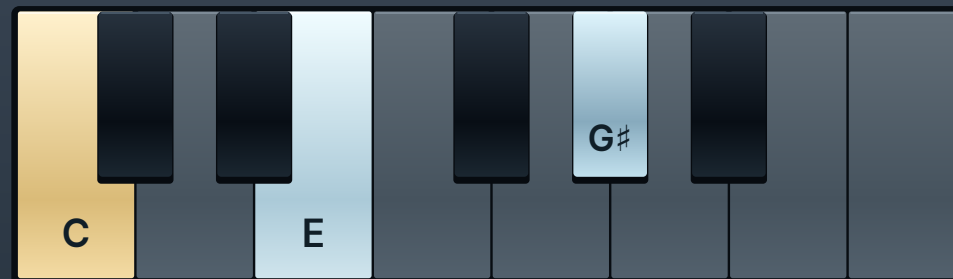
TRIADS

04

Augmented

Caug

FORMULA 1 · 3 · $\sharp$ 5



Raise the fifth of C major by one semitone.

1 = root. Formulas use major-scale intervals: $\flat$ = down one semitone; $\sharp$ = up one semitone.

02 SUSPENDED & SEVENTH CHORDS

Gold = root C / Blue = other chord tones

SUSPENDED

05

Suspended 2nd

Csus2

FORMULA 1 · 2 · 5



Replace the third with the second. No third remains.

SUSPENDED

06

Suspended 4th

Csus4

FORMULA 1 · 4 · 5



Replace the third with the fourth. No third remains.

SEVENTHS

07

Major 7th

Cmaj7

FORMULA 1 · 3 · 5 · 7



C major + B. The seventh is one semitone below C.

SEVENTHS

08

Dominant 7th

C7

FORMULA 1 · 3 · 5 · b7



C major + Bb. Try moving this chord to F major.

1 = root. Formulas use major-scale intervals: b = down one semitone; # = up one semitone.

03 MINOR & DIMINISHED SEVENTHS

Gold = root C / Blue = other chord tones

SEVENTHS

09

Minor 7th

Cm7

FORMULA

1 · $\flat 3$ · 5 · $\flat 7$



C minor + B $\flat$. Compare its third with C7.

SEVENTHS

10

Minor-major 7th

Cm(maj7)

FORMULA

1 · $\flat 3$ · 5 · 7



C minor + B. Compare its seventh with Cm7.

SEVENTHS

11

Half-diminished 7th

Cm7($\flat 5$)

FORMULA

1 · $\flat 3$ · $\flat 5$ · $\flat 7$



A diminished triad + a minor seventh.

SEVENTHS

12

Diminished 7th

Cdim7

FORMULA

1 · $\flat 3$ · $\flat 5$ · $\flat\flat 7$



B $\flat\flat$ uses the A key. Three semitones between notes.

$\flat\flat 7$ = diminished seventh. B $\flat\flat$ sounds like A on the piano, but its spelling keeps the seventh visible.

01 CHOOSE CHORDS THAT SHARE A KEY

The seven triads of C major

I	ii	iii	IV	V	vi	vii°
C	Dm	Em	F	G	Am	Bdim

Start with C - Am - F - G. Play each chord for four steady beats.

02 CHANGE THE BASS NOTE

Same notes. Three positions.

Root position	C E G
1st inversion	E G C
2nd inversion	G C E

Read each group from low to high.

03 KEEP COMMON NOTES IN PLACE

Connect C to F with less motion.

C chord		F/C chord
C4 E4 G4	→	C4 F4 A4

Keep C. Move E up to F, and G up to A.

F/C means an F chord with C as its lowest note.

TRY IT NOW

Play this connected version of C - Am - F - G.

C	C4 E4 G4	Am/C	C4 E4 A4	F/C	C4 F4 A4	G/B	B3 D4 G4
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C4 = middle C. Notes are listed low to high; the bass may differ from the root.

Use any root

Keep the formula: D major = D F# A; D minor = D F A. Choose a comfortable register.

SCAN TO LISTEN

