



The Major & Minor CHORD GUIDE

Two formulas. All 24 chords. Yours forever.

Most beginners spend months trying to memorize chords one at a time — and then forget them the moment they sit down to play a real song.

Here's the truth: you don't need to memorize 24 individual chords. You just need two formulas. Once you know them, every major and minor chord on the piano is yours — forever.

MAJOR CHORD FORMULA

4 + 3

4 half steps, then 3 half steps

MINOR CHORD FORMULA

3 + 4

3 half steps, then 4 half steps

How to Use This Guide

Part 1 — The 4 Major Chord Groups: learn all 12 major chords by visual shape

Part 2 — The Minor Trick: turn any major chord into a minor chord in one move

Part 3 — Major → Minor transformations by group, so you see the pattern clearly

Part 4 — Full 24-chord reference table to print and keep on your piano

Tip: Learn one group at a time. Don't move on until that group feels comfortable.

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Part 1 — The 4 Major Chord Groups

A half step is the very next key on the piano — black or white, it doesn't matter. Just the closest one. Apply the formula 4 + 3 from any starting note and you have a major chord. These four groups show you what that looks like visually on the keys.

GROUP 1 The All-White Chords

Every note is a white key.

Visual shape: All white keys — no black notes at all

Chords: C major, F major, G major

Memory cue: Cloud (C), Fog (F), Glacier (G) — all white, all weather.

C major = C - E - G

F major = F - A - C

G major = G - B - D

These three chords are behind more songs than any others. Learn them first.

GROUP 2 The White-Black-White Chords

A black key sits in the middle — like a triangle.

Visual shape: White key - Black key - White key

Chords: D major, E major, A major

Memory cue: The black note in the middle makes a little triangle shape. D, E, A — think DEA.

D major = D - F# - A

E major = E - G# - B

A major = A - C# - E

These three are extremely common in pop, rock, and country.

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GROUP 3 The Black-White-Black Chords

The mirror image of Group 2.

Visual shape: Black key – White key – Black key

Chords: Db major, Eb major, Ab major

Memory cue: Group 3 is just Group 2 with a flat. If you know D, E, A – you basically already know these.

Db major = Db – F – Ab

Eb major = Eb – G – Bb

Ab major = Ab – C – Eb

Notice the pattern: they're the flatted versions of Group 2. Same shape, one step down.

GROUP 4 The Wild Cards

No clean visual pattern – just three chords to memorize.

Visual shape: Varies – no consistent visual pattern

Chords: F# major, Bb major, B major

F# major = F# – A# – C#

Bb major = Bb – D – F

B major = B – D# – F#

There are only three of them. Spend extra time here – play them slowly until they stick.

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Part 2 – The Minor Trick

Here's the part that makes everything click. You already know all 12 major chords. To get the minor version of any chord, you just do one thing:

Lower the middle note by one half step.

That's it. One note moves down one key. Everything else stays exactly the same.

Major sounds bright and happy. Minor sounds darker and more emotional. One note is the whole difference.

Example: C major = C, E, G. Lower the E by one half step → Eb. C minor = C, Eb, G.

Part 3 – What Happens to Each Group

Once you see how the visual shape changes group by group, these chords become permanent. Your brain will lock them in as patterns, not individual facts.

GROUP 1 All-White Major → White-Black-White Minor

Major	Notes	→	Minor	Notes	Shape change
C major	C, E, G	→	C minor	C, Eb, G	Gains a black key
F major	F, A, C	→	F minor	F, Ab, C	Gains a black key
G major	G, B, D	→	G minor	G, Bb, D	Gains a black key

GROUP 2 White-Black-White Major → All-White Minor

Major	Notes	→	Minor	Notes	Shape change
D major	D, F#, A	→	D minor	D, F, A	Loses the black key
E major	E, G#, B	→	E minor	E, G, B	Loses the black key
A major	A, C#, E	→	A minor	A, C, E	Loses the black key

GROUP 3 Black-White-Black Major → Mostly Stays the Same

Major	Notes	→	Minor	Notes	Shape change
Db major	Db, F, Ab	→	Db minor	Db, Eb, Ab	Middle shifts down
Eb major	Eb, G, Bb	→	Eb minor	Eb, Gb, Bb	All black keys!
Ab major	Ab, C, Eb	→	Ab minor	Ab, B, Eb	Middle shifts down

GROUP 4 Wild Cards – Each One Changes Differently					
Major	Notes	→	Minor	Notes	Shape change
F# major	F#, A#, C#	→	F# minor	F#, A, C#	B-W-B shape
Bb major	Bb, D, F	→	Bb minor	Bb, Db, F	B-B-W shape
B major	B, D#, F#	→	B minor	B, D, F#	W-B-W shape

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Part 4 — All 24 Chords at a Glance

Print this. Put it on your piano. Every chord you'll ever need is here.

Major	Notes	Shape	Minor	Notes	Shape
C	C, E, G	All white	Cm	C, Eb, G	W-B-W
F	F, A, C	All white	Fm	F, Ab, C	W-B-W
G	G, B, D	All white	Gm	G, Bb, D	W-B-W
D	D, F#, A	W-B-W	Dm	D, F, A	All white
E	E, G#, B	W-B-W	Em	E, G, B	All white
A	A, C#, E	W-B-W	Am	A, C, E	All white
Db	Db, F, Ab	B-W-B	Dbm	Db, E, Ab	B-W-B
Eb	Eb, G, Bb	B-W-B	Ebm	Eb, Gb, Bb	All black
Ab	Ab, C, Eb	B-W-B	Abm	Ab, B, Eb	B-W-B
F#	F#, A#, C#	Wild card	F#m	F#, A, C#	B-W-B
Bb	Bb, D, F	Wild card	Bbm	Bb, Db, F	B-B-W
B	B, D#, F#	Wild card	Bm	B, D, F#	W-B-W

How to Practice These

Sit down at your piano. Open this guide. Work through one group at a time — don't jump around.

🌟 Your daily practice plan:

Day 1-2: Group 1 major chords (C, F, G) — then turn each one into a minor chord.

Day 3-4: Group 2 major chords (D, E, A) — then the minor versions. Notice the swap.

Day 5-6: Group 3 (Db, Eb, Ab) — compare the shapes to Group 2.

Day 7: Group 4 wild cards (F#, Bb, B) — major and minor. Slow and deliberate.

10 minutes a day. By the end of the week you'll have all 24.

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A quick note before you go:

You're not behind. You're not too old.

The reason piano hasn't felt joyful in the past isn't you. It's that nobody handed you the right tools. These five patterns are some of those tools.

Every PIANOLY student started right where you are now.

Ready to See the Full Roadmap?

These five patterns are just one piece of the puzzle. If you want to see exactly how we take students from zero (no experience, no music background) to playing the songs they've always loved, I put together a [free training](#) that walks you through the whole path.

You'll see the exact method, the order we teach everything, and why it works so much faster than traditional lessons.

Felix watched it in retirement and decided to join. He now plays every Sunday and Wednesday for his church prayer group and performs with the worship team once a month.

Marc had tried traditional lessons for years and gotten nowhere. After going through the training and joining the program, he surprised his wife by playing their wedding song.

Results vary depending on time invested and starting experience. But what these stories show is that with the right system, progress happens faster than most people expect.

[→ Click here to access the free training and see the full roadmap. ←](#)



Learn the songs you've always loved. Finally.

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