

# CHORD FLOW RULE.

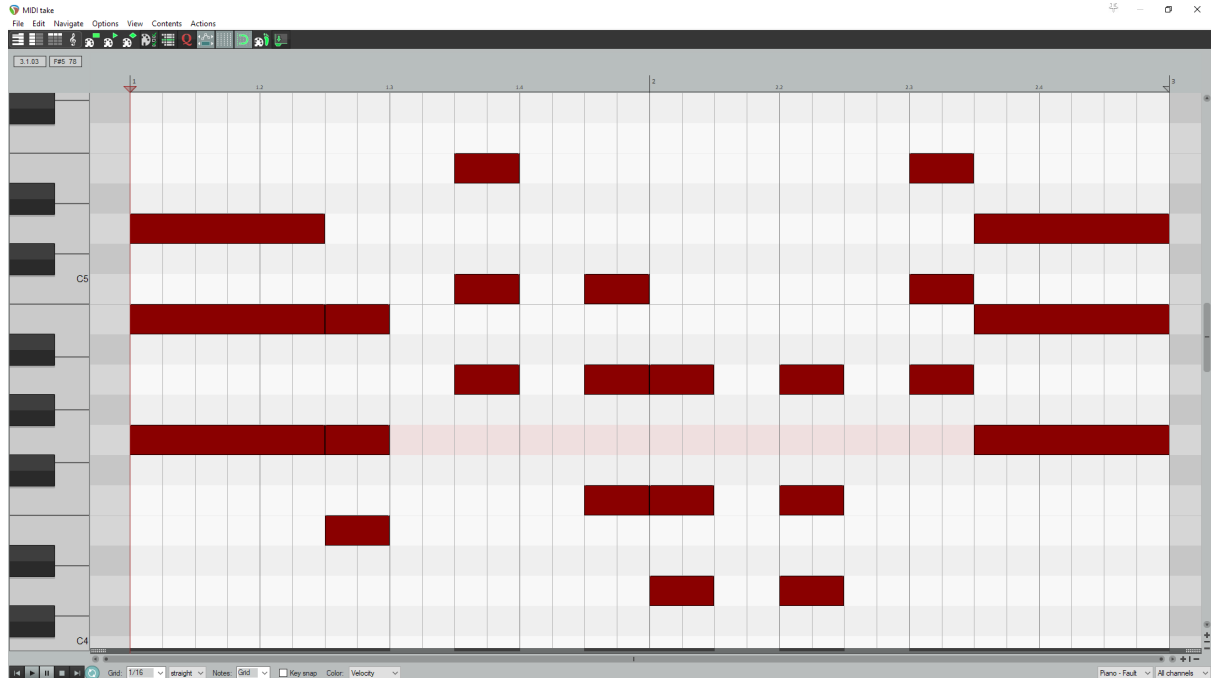


Hello revolutionary music makers, we are Kate and Ray Harmony (AKA Revolution Harmony), and welcome to Hack Music Theory, the fast, easy and fun way to make music! If you're new to theory, or if you just want a refresher, then read our [free book](#). It'll give you a super solid music theory foundation in just 30 minutes. Enjoy! Now, in this PDF you'll learn a common fault that many songwriters and producers make when writing chord progressions. More importantly though, you'll learn our hack for quickly and easily fixing this fault!

But first... 🥤

# INTRO

Can you spot the fault in this chord progression?



*Chord progression containing a common fault*

If you couldn't spot the fault, don't worry, that's what you're about to learn. You'll also learn our rule for identifying and fixing this fault in the progressions you've already written, and avoiding it in all the progressions you'll write in the future.

# FAULT

Firstly, to clarify. A fault is not a mistake! Music is an art, so if you're making music from your heart, then there cannot be any *mistakes*. But, when songwriters and producers don't understand theory, which is the grammar of music, they're not able to fully express themselves. Just like if someone was trying to write a poem in a language they didn't speak. The resulting work will undoubtedly have *weaknesses*. And a fault is defined as a weakness. So, what's the *fault* in this chord progression?

Well, the chords are jumping all over the place (up and down!), and that makes the progression sound like a beginner made it. To be clear, there's nothing wrong with the actual chords in this progression. But, the chord changes sound really abrupt and disjointed, i.e. the progression doesn't flow at all. And of course, if for some reason you want your chord changes to sound abrupt, then leave them as they are.

By the way, our example is in the key of G Mixolydian, which is all the white notes from G to G, and the tempo is 105 BPM. If you're not familiar with the happy-but-serious Mixolydian mode, you can use the Mode Hack in our [Songwriting & Producing PDF](#).

## FIX

Okay, so how do we fix this progression and make the chords flow smoothly into each other, instead of abruptly jumping up and down when they change?

In a word: Inversions. An inversion is just the fancy word for when you rearrange the notes in a chord. You see, if you have three notes in a chord, you can play that chord in three different ways.

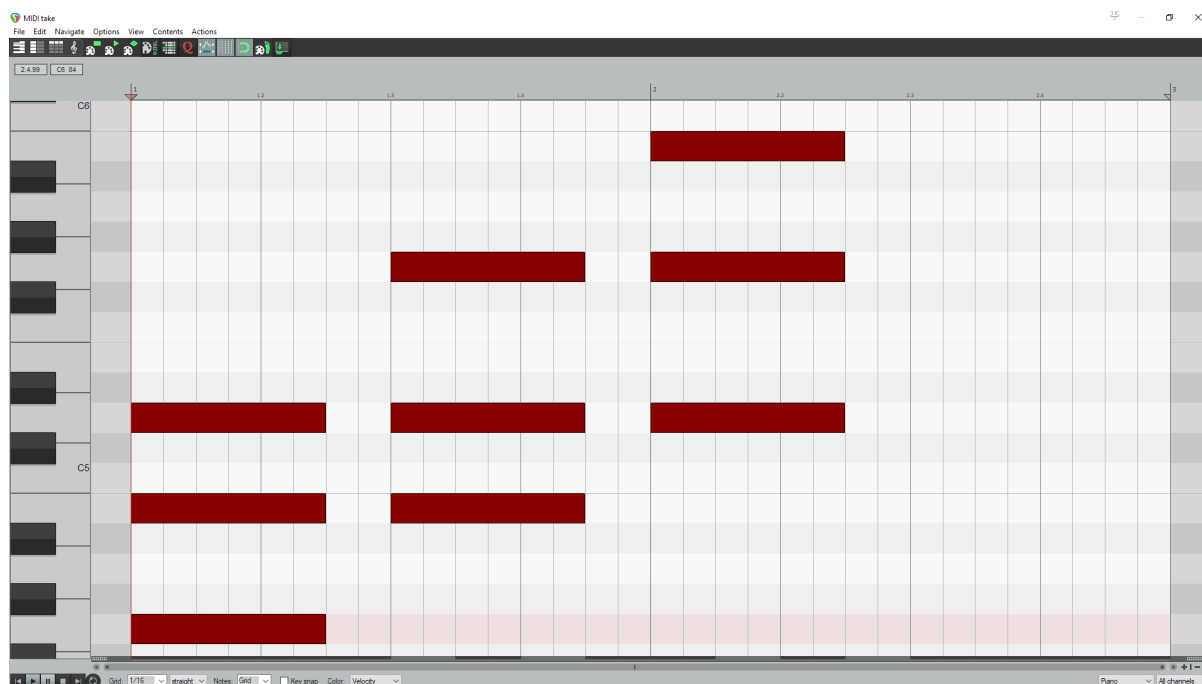
For example, let's take our root chord Gmaj. You can play the notes in the original order of G B D. Or, you can rearrange the notes and play B D G, or D G B. Same notes. Same chord. Just inverted.

Root position: 1 3 5 (G B D)

1st inversion: 3 5 1 (B D G)

2nd inversion: 5 1 3 (D G B)

The different inversions have different names, but those aren't important, what is important is learning how to rearrange the notes in a way that makes your chords flow smoothly into each other. This hack will instantly make your chord progressions sound super creative and professional! So, how do you do that?



*Gmaj played in three different ways, by rearranging the notes (G B D)*

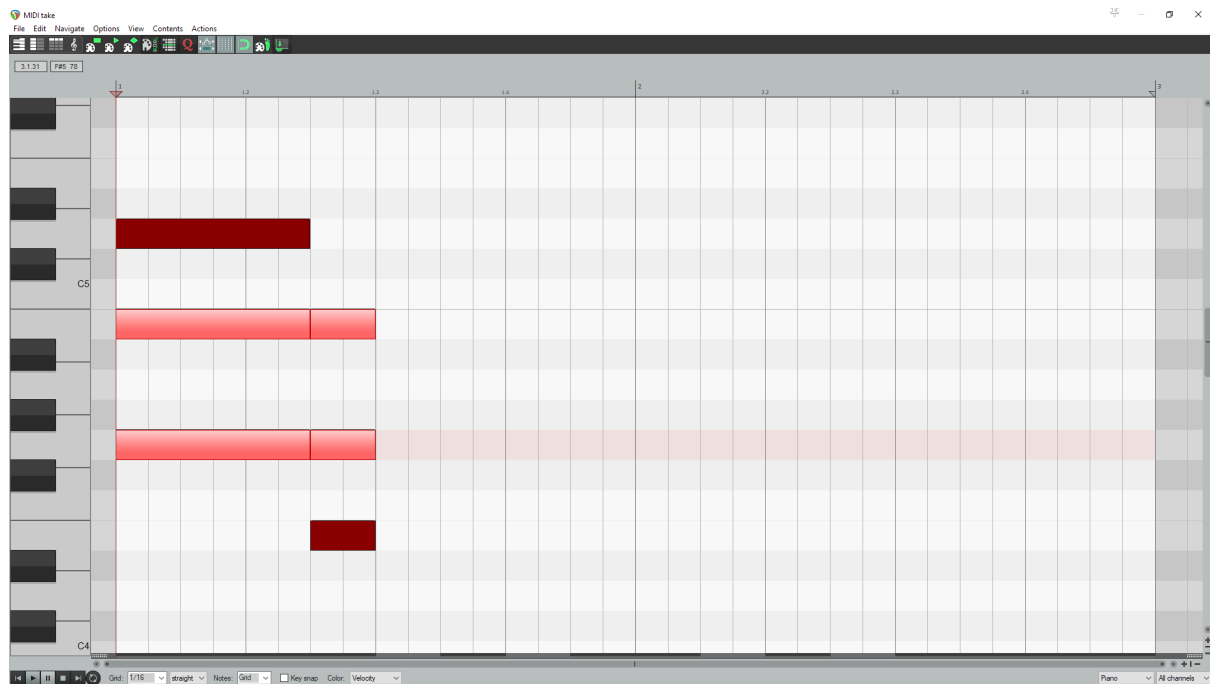
## LINK

Well, it's all about emphasising the similarities between chords. In other words, we need to emphasise the notes that are the same from one chord to the next. These notes are called common notes, and they act as powerful links that connect chords.

Let's take the first two chords in our progression as an example. Our first chord is Gmaj, which consists of the notes G B D, and our next chord is Em, which consists of the notes E G B.

Now, when we compare these two chords, we find that they actually have two common notes. So, these two chords are literally  $\frac{2}{3}$  identical, yet when we change from Gmaj to Em, it sounds abrupt and disjointed.

The reason for this is because we're not making the most of their similarities. If we bring attention to their common notes, it will sound like the Gmaj chord is effortlessly melting into the Em chord, making that chord change flow beautifully.



*The first two chords in our progression: Gmaj to Em (common notes highlighted)*

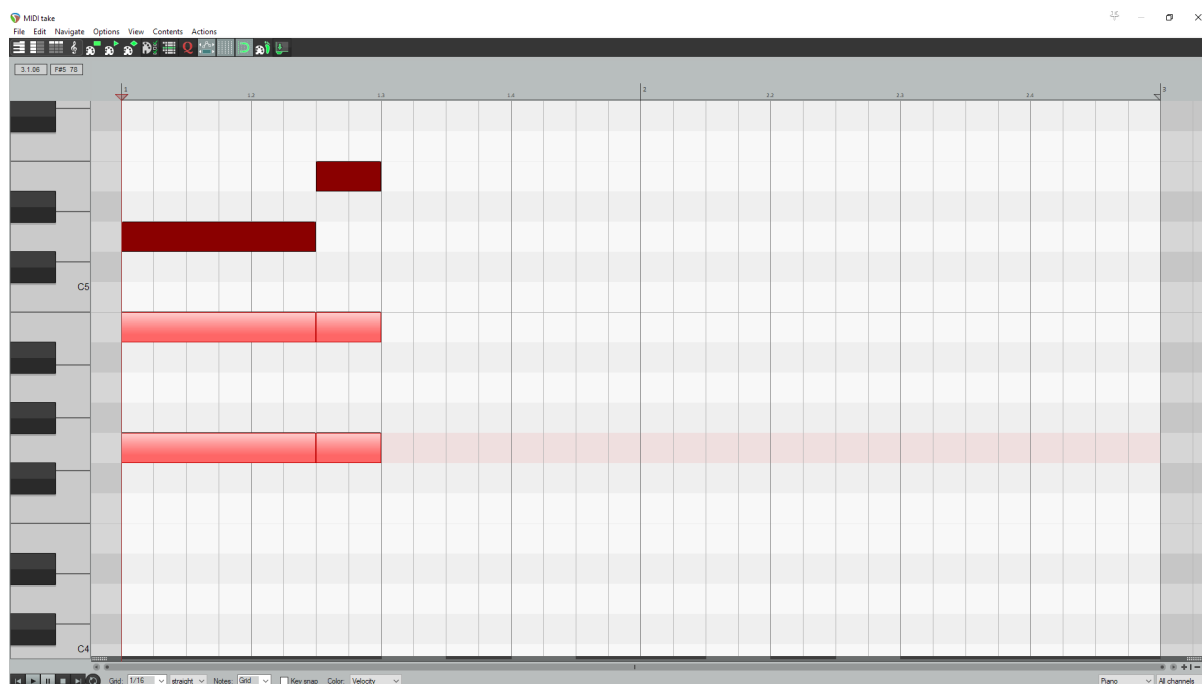
## FLOW

So, how do you bring attention to common notes in a chord change to make it flow smoothly? Easy, you simply rearrange the notes in one chord to make their common notes line up. In other words, the common note should be in the same place within the chords. That's what creates the powerful link that connects chords!

In our example, G and B are common notes, but we can see that G is at the bottom of the Gmaj chord, and it's in the middle of the Em chord. So, we need to rearrange the notes of one chord to get G in the same place within those chords.

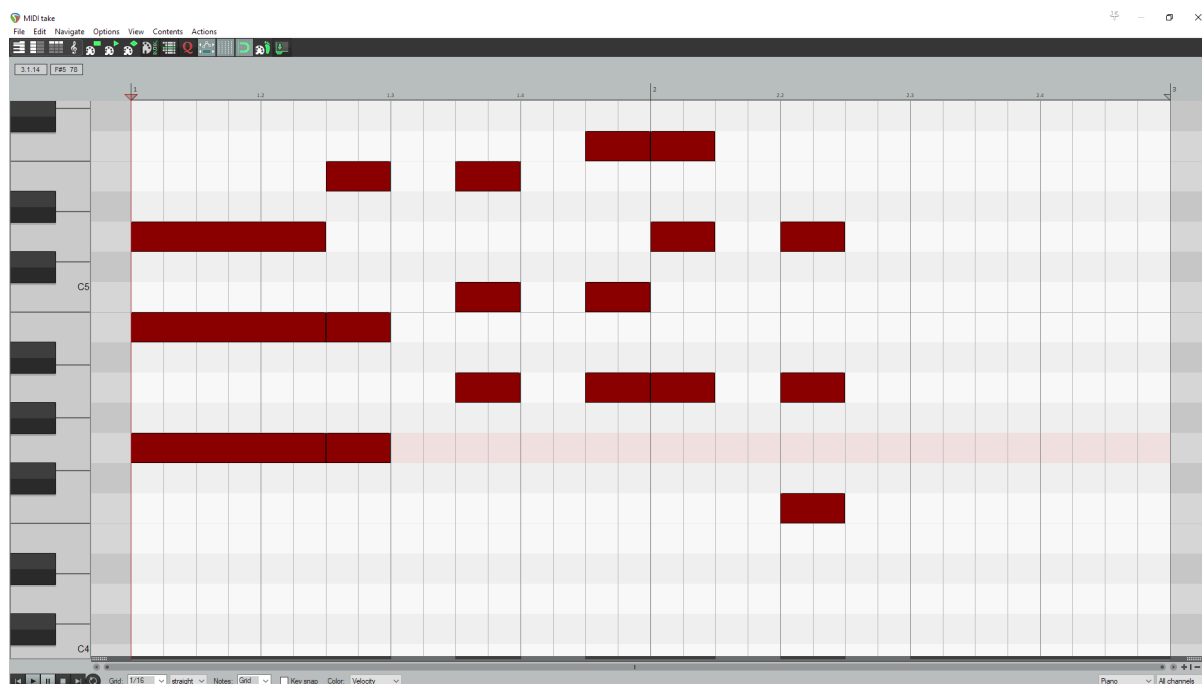
In the Em chord, if we move the E up an octave, then the G is now also at the bottom of that chord, like it is in the Gmaj chord. And that also lines up our other common note as well, because B is now in the middle of both chords.

So, thanks to an inversion of the Em chord, this previously abrupt chord change now sounds super smooth and professional!



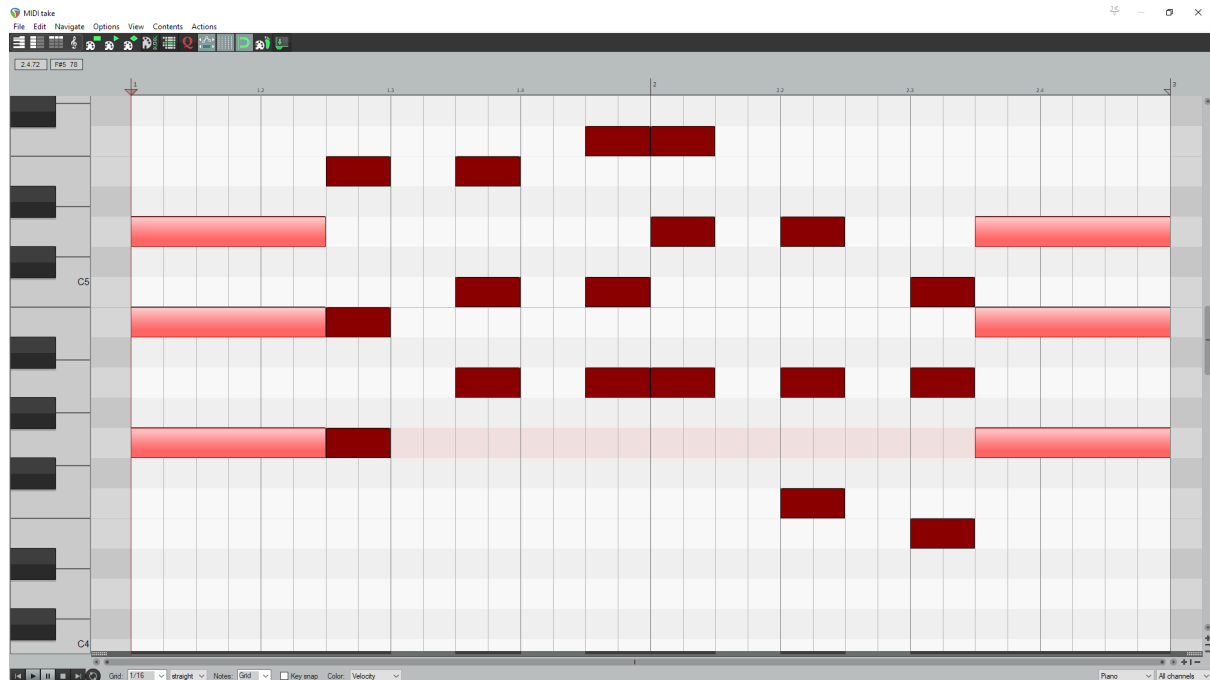
*Gmaj to Em chord change is now smooth and professional, thanks to an inversion!*

Now that you know how to rearrange the notes in your chords to get their common notes in the same place (i.e. bottom, middle, or top), go through the rest of your progression and do the same for each chord change. Just a heads-up though, there are a couple of issues you'll run into when doing this. Maybe not in your current chord progression, but these issues will definitely turn up regularly.



*The chords in our progression flowing smoothly into each other, thanks to inversions!*

The first issue is that the last chord in your progression needs to flow back around into your first chord. That chord change often requires a hack to make it flow smoothly. That wasn't a problem in this example, because our progression actually ends and begins on the same chord, Gmaj. But, usually the last chord and first chord will be different, so you'll need a hack to make that change flow smoothly.

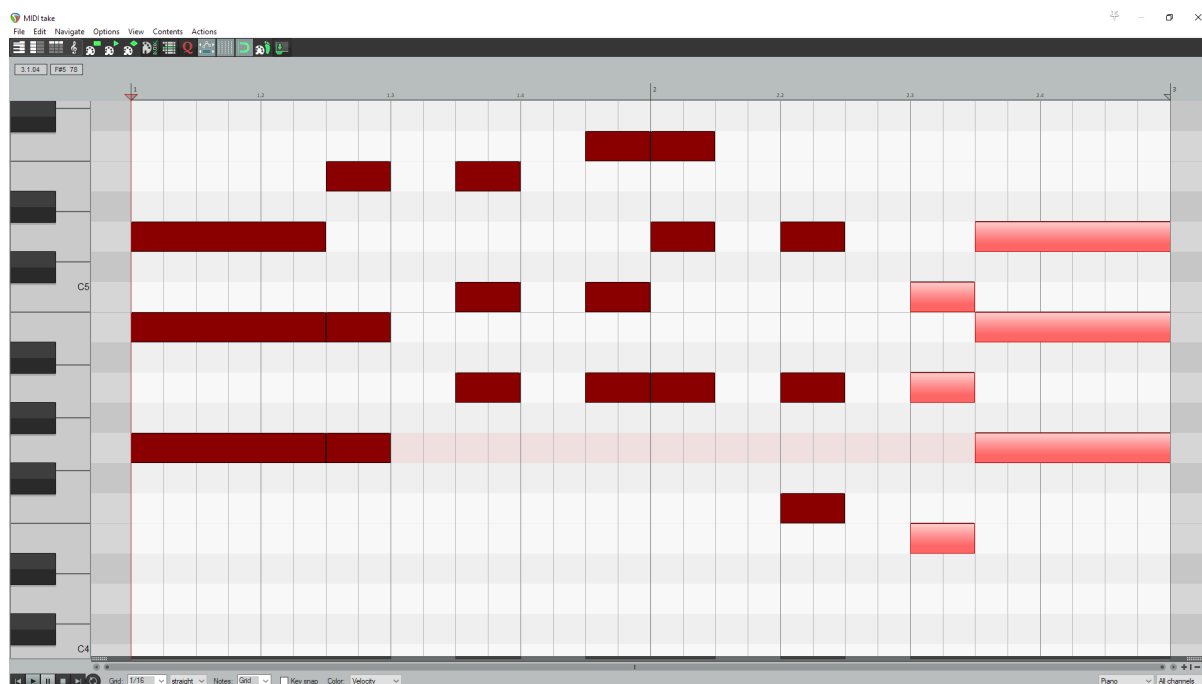


*Always remember to check that your last chord flows smoothly back around into your first chord*

Then the second issue you'll come across is trying to make a chord change flow smoothly when the two chords do not have a common note.

For example, at the end of our progression we have Am (A C E) changing to Gmaj (G B D). Those two chords do not have any common notes. So, what do you do in these situations? You make a common note! Of course that requires another hack.

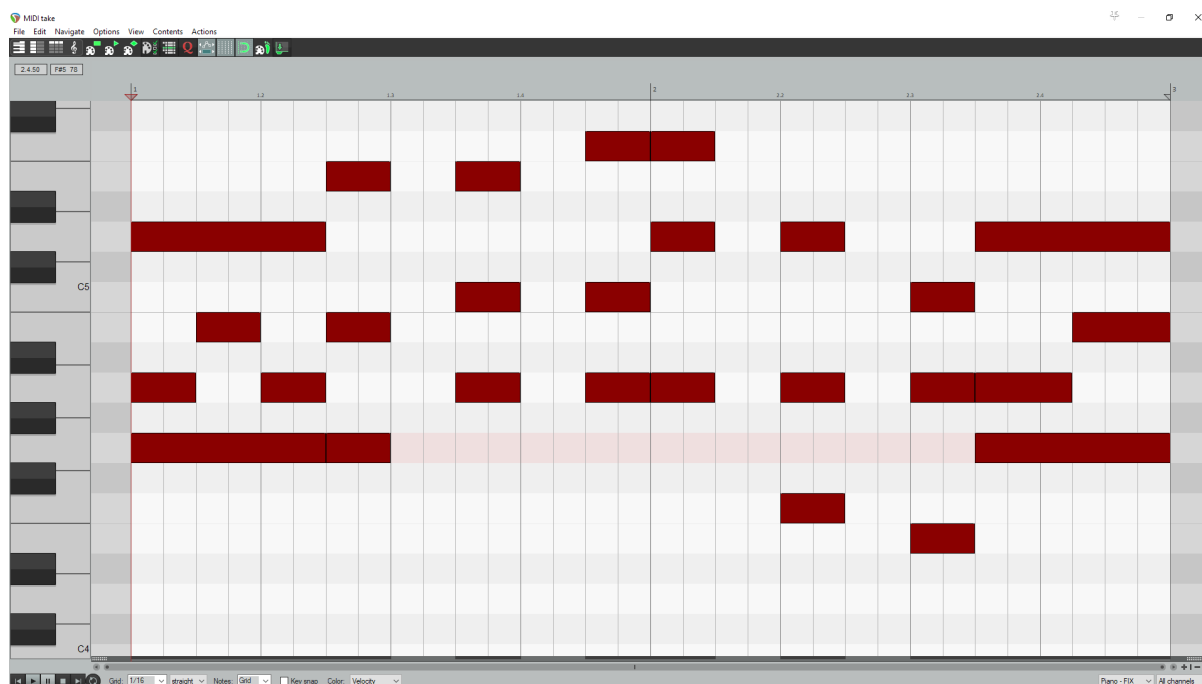
And we don't have time in this lesson to cover these two hacks as well, but if you wanna learn them, they're in our [Songwriting & Producing Course](#). And the course also includes our Songwriting & Producing PDF that we mentioned earlier, so you'll get that too, along with permanent access to all the videos in the course.



*The last two chords in our progression (Am, Gmaj) don't share a common note!*

## RULE

So to conclude. Our *Chord Flow Rule* is that your chords should flow smoothly into each other, by ensuring that when you change chords there is at least one common note linking them, and that common note is in the same place within both chords.



*Progression fixed by making all chords flow into each other using inversions*



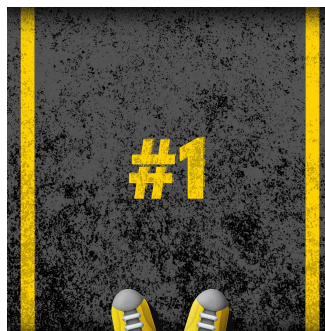


Thanks for being here in the Hack Music Theory community, you are truly valued! Hope you enjoyed this PDF, and please remember to download our [Free Book](#).

## WHAT'S NEXT?

▶▶ Now that you've got one section underway, how do you write the other sections? Then, how do you transition between them, especially when they're in different keys? And then, how do you structure and arrange your song? These are issues that many songwriters and producers struggle with, and that's exactly why we made our online course [Apprenticeship #1](#).

▶▶ The course contains 17 hours of video that teach every step of the writing process, from blank screen to finished song. Whatever genre you're into, you'll literally learn everything you need to know to write great songs *and* finish them. So, if you wanna overcome your musical obstacles once and for all, then sign up now!



*"Apprenticeship #1 had me turning loops into songs, even before finishing it!"*

*-David Sage (Orlando FL, USA)*

*"Totally life-changing in understanding how pros create great music."*

*-David G (Brighton, UK)*

*"I've watched Apprenticeship #1 four times now. I was planning on starting #2 a while back, but keep finding more knowledge in #1 with every viewing!"*

*-Glynne Owen (Tokyo, Japan)*

**WANT MORE? [PDFs](#) • [COURSES](#)**