

Here are some thoughts from Nathan Graybeal's YouTube post 9 Steps to Mastering Any Jazz Standard.

Learn the Melody

Serves as the melodic basis of your solo.

Embellish the melody.

- Change the rhythm
- Add repeated notes and accents
- Add extra notes and pitches
- Improvise over long notes or rests

Learn arpeggios of every chord

Learn basic 4 note arpeggios for every chord

Cmaj7 1 3 5 7
C7 1 3 5 b7
C-7 1 b3 5 b7
Cø7 1 b3 b5 b7
C7dim 1 b3 b5 b7
C6 1 3 5 6
C-6 1 b3 5 6
C7sus 1 4 5 b7
C7(#5) 1 3 #5 b7
C lyd 1 3 #4 7

Try a different permutation

Rearrange the order of the chord tones.

Cmaj7 5 3 1 7
Cmaj7 7 1 5 3
Cmaj7 1 7 3 5
Cmaj7 3 1 7 5
C6 3 1 5 6
C6 3 5 1 6
C7sus 1 5 4 b7
C7sus b7 5 1 4

Add 9th to the arpeggios

Create a constraint stream of 8th notes

Cmaj7
 1 3 5 7 9 7 5 3
C7
 1 3 5 b7 9 b7 5 3
C7(b9)
 1 3 5 b7 b9 b7 5 3
C-7
 1 b3 5 b7 9
Cø7
 1 b3 b5 b7 9
C7dim
 1 b3 b5 bb7 b9
C6
 1 3 5 6 9 6 5 3
C7(#9)
 1 3 #5 b7 #9 b7 #5 3
Clyd
 1 3 #4 7 9

Four Rules to remember

Half dim chord

- b9 is an avoid tone
 - b9 is a color tone
 - Just play the root at the top
- So, in a minor ii-v-i, we'd have

Dø7
 1 b3 b5 b7 8 b7 b5 b3
G7(b9)
 1 3 5 b7 b9 b7 5 3
C-7
 1 b3 5 b7 9 b7 5 b3

Diminished chord

The diminished chord comes from the diminished scale (whole/half dim).

C7dim
 1 b3 b5 bb7 8 9 b9 10

In this case, just go up to the root again.

C7dim
 1 b3 b5 bb7 8 b9 b5 b3

Minor 7 chords that are functioning as iii-7 chords

- In this case, you should also go up to the root, not the 9th

Chords that only last 2 beats

- In this case, only arpeggiate up 4 notes since that's all we have time for.