

Music theory notes (for the guitar)

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1 Minor scales

Natural, Harmonic, and Melodic (raised 6th and 7th when ascending only).

2 Modes

Mnemonic: I Don't Punch Like Muhammad A-Li

- Ionian: C
- Dorian: D
- Phrygian: E
- Lydian: F
- Mixolydian: G
- Aeolian: A
- Locrian: B

3 Scale degrees/Intervals

- Major intervals: 2nd, 3rd, 6th, 7th
- Perfect intervals: 1st, 4th, 5th, 8th

3.1 Perfect, Augmented, Diminished Intervals

- 2,3,6,7 Major Intervals: add one semitone to top note gives an augmented interval
- 2,3,6,7 Major Intervals: lower one semitone gives a minor interval
- 2,3,6,7 Major Intervals: lower one tone (two semitones) gives a diminished interval

3.2 Example: C major



- Scale degree 1 is known as the tonic.
- Scale degree 4 is known as the subdominant.
- Scale degree 5 is the dominant.

4 Chords

4.1 Major third

4 semitones apart (C-E)

4.2 Perfect fifths

7 semitones apart (C-G)

4.3 Triads

4.3.1 Inversions

- Root position - if a chord has the root note as the lowest pitch, e.g. C E G (1-3-5).
- First inversion - if a chord has the third as the lowest sounding note, e.g. E G C (3-5-1).
- Second inversion - if a chord has the fifth as the lowest sounding note, e.g. G C E (5-1-3).

4.3.2 Some examples of triads

C Major (CEG GBD) Major triad because it has a perfect fifth C-G, i.e., 7 semitones, and a Major third, four semitones (C-E).



A Minor A-E is seven semitones but A-C has 3 semitones (=minor third), hence Minor triad.



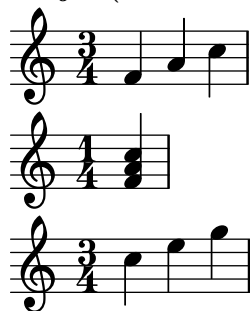
D Minor triad (D-A 7 semitones, D-F 3 semitones)



E Minor triad (E-B 7 semitones, E-G 3 semitones)



F Major (FAC CEG) Major triad



G Major (GBD DF#A) Major triad





B Diminished fifth (6 semitones) + Minor third = Diminished triad



4.3.3 C major triads

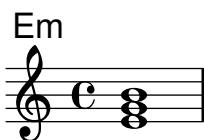
I : Tonic C maj



ii : Dmin



iii : Emin



IV : Subdominant Fmaj



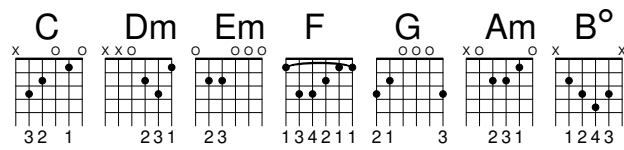
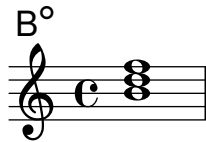
V : Dominant: Gmaj



vi : Amin



vii : Bdim



Any diatonic melody can be harmonized with I-IV-V because every single scale degree occurs in this pool of notes.

4.3.4 A minor triads

i : Tonic Amin

ii : Bmin

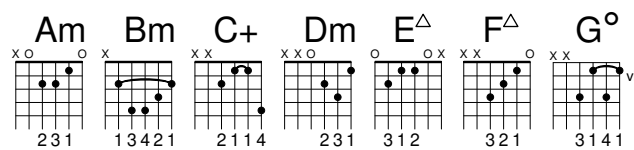
III : Caug

iv : Subdominant Dmin

V : Dominant: Emaj

VI : Fmaj

vii : Gdim



4.4 Seventh Chords

These are triads with a seventh degree added.

4.4.1 C major seventh chords

I : Tonic C maj7

ii : Dmin7

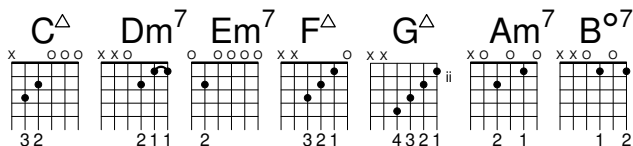
iii Emin7

IV Subdominant Fmaj7

V Dominant seventh: G7

vi Amin7

vii B half-dim



4.4.2 A minor seventh chords

i : Tonic Aminmaj7

ii : Bhalf-diminished

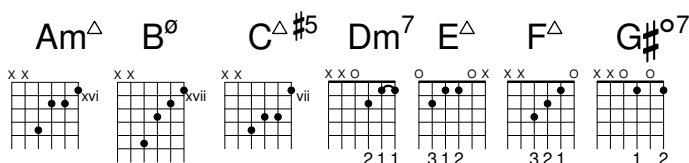
III Caug-maj7

iv Subdominant Dmin7

V Dominant: E7

VI Fmaj7

vii G#dim7



5 Cadences

The tonic note of every scale has two closely related triads: the one a fifth above the tonic is the dominant triad, and the one a fifth below is the subdominant. So every tonic tone is the center of a trio of strongly related chords, for example, F...C...G

Dominant chord to Tonic

A cadence is a melodic or harmonic progression that creates a sense of finality or a pause in the music.

Perfect cadence: A G7 followed by a C. Numerically speaking, this is chord V7 followed by chord I.

Imperfect cadence: C followed by G7. Numerically speaking this is chord I followed by chord V7, i.e. the reverse of the example above.

6 Common progressions