

Chords of the Major Scale

If we build a chord on each note of the major scale, we get the Major Scale chord family. Some of the chords will be major and some minor since we are only using notes from the scale. For example, in the key of C, there cannot be any sharps or flats; so the 2 chord (D) is minor since D Major is spelled D, F#, A.

C Major Scale

C, D, E, F, G, A, B

<u>Chord Family</u>	<u>Chord Function</u>
I 1. C , E, G = C	I - Tonic
ii 2. D , F, A = Dm	V/vii - Dominant
iii 3. E , G, B = Em	ii/IV - Sub Dominant
IV 4. F , A, C = F	iii/vi - Mediant
V 5. G , B, D = G	
vi 6. A , C, E = Am	
vii 7. B , D, F = B°	

Disclaimer

Instead of getting hung up on terms like "**Tonic**" and "**Sub-Dominant**," is important to focus more on the way these chords sound in relation to one another and work on recognizing the differences in their sound. The terms help to group and categorize chords according to how they function, but the most important thing is HEARING how they function. Use the "Intro to Chord Progressions" sheet to get acquainted with the way these chord relationships sound.

A **Chord Progression** is a series of any number of chords played one after another.

- The **Tonic (I)** chord is the basis for most chord progressions and could be considered the main theme or goal. Chord Progressions are based on ways to approach and/or expand the Tonic chord.

-The **Dominant (V)** chord has the strongest resolution in sound when played back and forth with the Tonic, hence its frequent use at the end of chord progressions before the final Tonic chord. Play around with the Tonic and Dominant chords and your ears will be able to hear this strong sounding resolution.

From there, we can expand the Chord Progression and introduce new chords

-The **Sub Dominants (ii/IV)** have a nice and distinct sound when played back and forth with the Tonic chord, but also often have a specific function in many styles of music in which they approach the Dominant chord, hence the name "Sub Dominant".

-The **Mediants (iii/vi)** also have a nice and distinct sound when played back and forth with the Tonic, and also often have a specific function in which they approach the Sub Dominant chord. On the "Intro to Chord Progressions" sheet, you will see examples illustrating these chord functions from the most basic, to more involved Chord Progressions. Play around and experiment with the different chords.