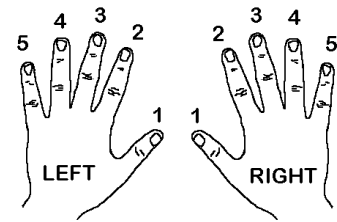


MU 1310 (Feurzeig) Keyboard: Major Pentachords & Triads

Keyboard fingering is indicated with numbers like this:



Note: on some other instruments the thumb is indicated with a “0” or “+” and the numbers 1-4 are used for the remaining fingers, beginning with the index finger.

Five-finger **major pentachord** hand position

C major pentachord:

1 2 3 4 5 4 3 2 1

do re mi fa so fa mi re do

5 4 3 2 1 2 3 4 5

This same pattern (i.e. with the RH thumb and the LH pinky on “do”) works well for many other major pentachords besides C. Transpose the major pentachord to begin on G, D, A, E, B, and G $\flat$ as well, using the same fingering pattern. Listen to make sure it sounds right: you should have all whole steps except for the half step between *mi* and *fa*. Practice the hands separately, then together.

The “Ode to Joy” theme uses only the first five notes of the major scale. Place your hand on the keyboard in the C major pentachord position and you can play almost the entire tune without shifting your hand.

3 3 4 5 5 4 3 2 1 1 2 3 4 5 1 2 1 3

m m f s s f m r d d r m m r r r d d d m

r r m d r m f m d r m f m r d r s m

3 3 2 1 1 2 3 4 5 5 1 5 1

Below is another tune using only the notes of the major pentachord.

1 3 4 5

5 3 2 1

1 3 5 3 4

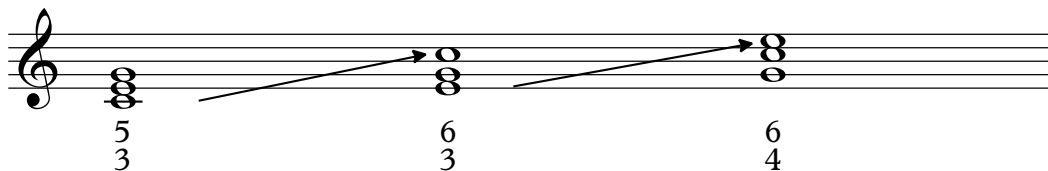
3

3

d m f s d m f s d m f s m d m r

m m r d d m s s s f m f s m d r d

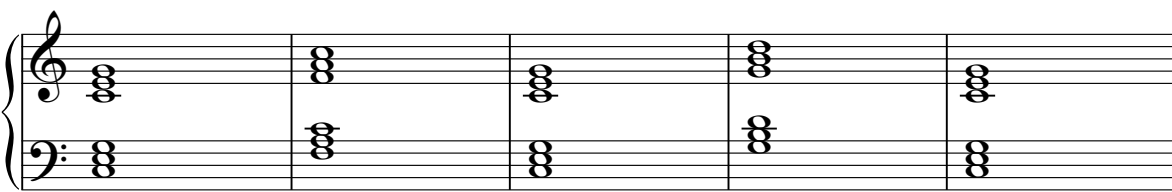
Play a C major triad in root position. Invert it by taking the lowest note up an octave, leaving the others where they are. It is now in **first inversion**.



Play the triads of the C major scale in root position. Listen as you play. Arpeggiate each triad and sing the notes using solfege (do-mi-sol-mi-do, re-fa-la-fa-re, etc.). Then play the triad as a chord again and listen to its quality.

In reference to a key, triads can be labeled with **roman numerals** corresponding to the scale degree of the root. Unlike the letters that indicate the chord root in popular (lead-sheet) chord symbols, roman numerals **change case** according to the **triad quality**.

Play the I, IV, and V chords in C major. Practice both LH and RH, separately.



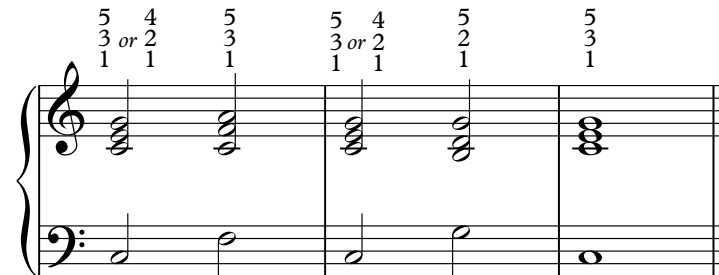
C major: I IV I V I

Chords are built on **skips** (thirds), and in harmonic progression chord roots often **jump** from one chord to the next, as in most chord changes in the blues progression, for example: I to IV, IV to I, I to V, V to I. Yet skips and leaps are hard to sing and to play, as you may have noticed just now when you played the I-IV-I-V-I progression. That's why melodies favor close motion: mostly steps, with some skips.

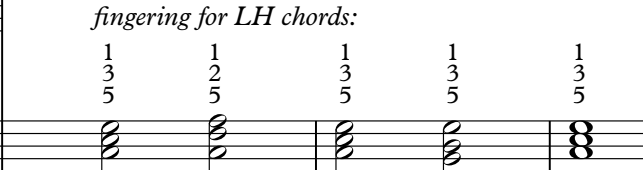
Chords are often **voiced** (arranged) so that motion from one note to the next is smooth (close) rather than jumpy, at least in the upper parts. (Bass lines tend to be jumpier.) The way notes move from chord to chord is called **voice leading**, and when this motion is mostly stepwise, we say the music uses **close**, or **smooth**, or **conjunct** voice leading.

Here is the same progression with conjunct voice leading.

fingering for RH chords:



fingering for LH chords:



I IV I V I I IV⁶₄ I V⁶₃ I

Many tunes can be harmonized effectively using only the three primary triads (I, IV, V) of the key.

The Saints

Chord symbols above staff: C, C, C, G/B

Chord symbols below staff: C major: I, V_3^6

Chord symbols above staff: C, F/C, C, G/B, C

Chord symbols below staff: I, IV_4^6 , I, V_3^6 , I

Ode to Joy

Chord symbols below staff: D major: I, V_3^6 , I, V_3^6 , I, V, I, V_3^6 , I

Experiment!

Try harmonizing other tunes using only the primary triads I, IV, and V. Or, when you get to a place where no primary triad sounds right, try another chord. Don't wait for me or your overall theory knowledge to give you "permission" to fool around.

Practice, Practice, Practice

The only way to absorb music theory knowledge meaningfully is to practice. Play all the material on these pages. Practice it in other keys as well.