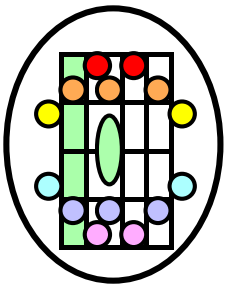
Chord Fingering Exercises

PC-15

With Patterns Explained

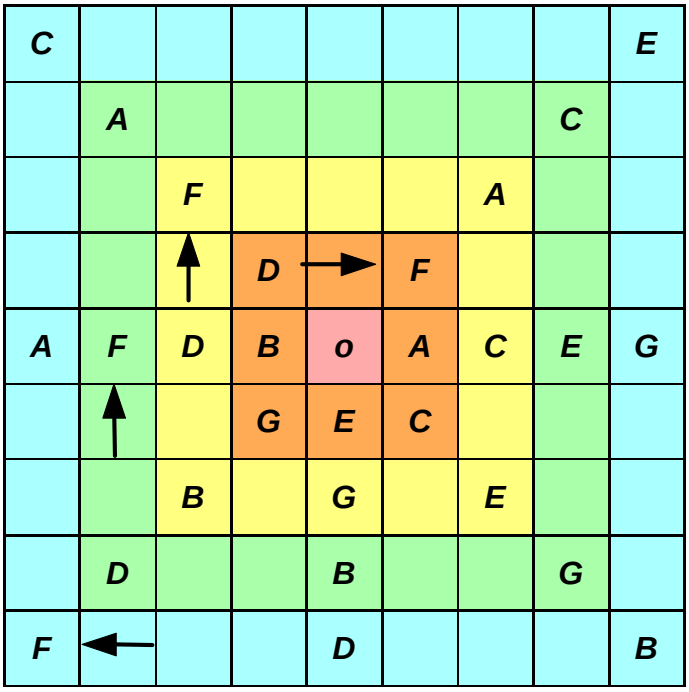
Contents	Pg

From the Music Innovator's Workshop

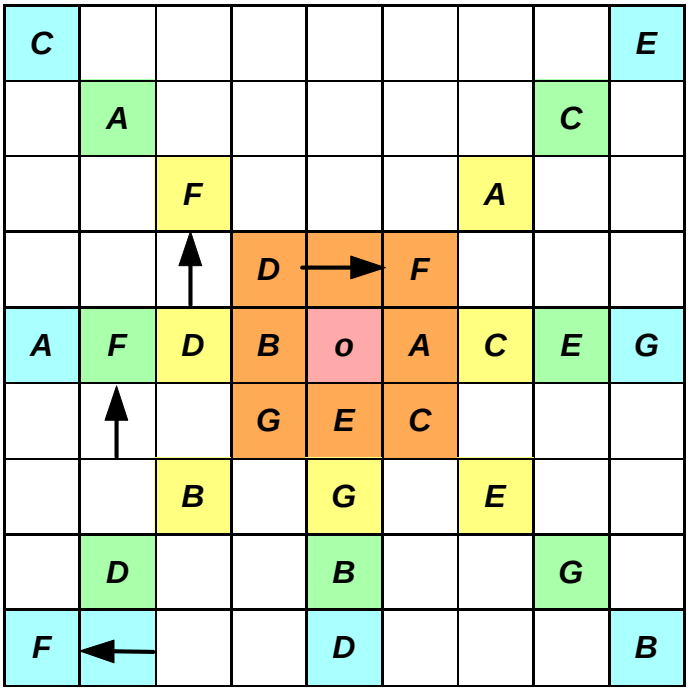


FACE GBD

(FACE, Girls, Boys and Dads)



How many triads can you find?



Inroduction

About This Unit. ***Learning to play, with left hand chords and from chord symbols, is one of the biggest steps that you can take when learning to play a keyboard. It opens up a very large area of keyboard playing that is closed to those who don't know how to play from chord symbols.***

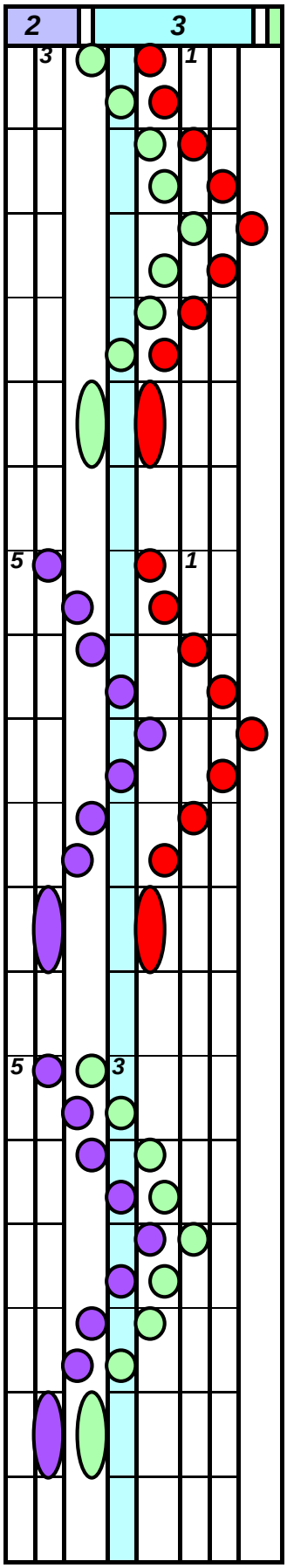
This unit is designed to help you get started by focusing on CHORD PATTERNS. Chords can get very complicated, but learning these patterns will help you make sense out of what you are learning, and the exercises will help you learn to play the chords with some ease. This unit will start you off with the simplest types of chords -- the TRIADS. The following information about chords will help you understand how chords work and how they are named. The included EXERCISES WILL HELP YOU FORM FINGERING HABIT PATTERNS that you will need for playing chords with some ease.

About Triads and Chords. ***A single chord can be made up of many different sounds and can become very complicated. When a chord has only 3 different sounds, it can be called a TRIAD (tri meaning three). A triad is just a 3-note chord. Triads are building blocks for the larger chords that contain more notes. This unit focuses on triad chords.***

Triad chords are made up of 3 notes in a very simple pattern. The 3 notes are taken from the musical alphabet in ALPHABETICAL ORDER, with the alphabet repeating itself every time it reaches G, like this: ABCEDFGABCDEFGABC and so on. Nearly all chords are created by starting with any letter that you want, then by taking EVERY SECOND letter until you have three letters. Examples: ACE, BDF, CEG. Each of these groups of letters makes a triad chord. The first part of the chord's name is the first letter of the little group of 3 letters. This note is called the chord's ROOT. After you have identified these 3 notes, you can play them anywhere on the keyboard, IN ANY ORDER, and the chord will still be identified by the letter of its root. Of the three examples above, the first (ACE) is an A chord, the second (BDF) is a B chord, the third is a C chord.

There is a second part of a chord's name in addition to the letter naming the chord's root. This second part describes WHAT KIND of a chord you have. This part deals with a chord's QUALITY, that is, how it sounds. There are 4 basic kinds of triad chords, described as: MAJOR, MINOR, AUGMENTED and DIMINISHED. You will learn about these later. Right now, you need to get a good grasp of how you make a triad, how you name its root, and of course, how to play it.

To play a triad that you have spelled out as described above, is a simple thing. You just play all three of the notes at the same time, playing them in any order, anywhere on the keyboard. If you play the root lower than the other two notes, you are playing the chord in ROOT POSITION. If you play either of the other two notes lower than the root, we say that the chord is an INVERSION. It is an inverted chord. The triads on the next page are all in root position. You will find inverted triads on later pages. The exercises on these pages will help you learn to play these triads with appropriate hand and finger positions.



Root Position Triads on White Keys

Exercises

The exercises at the LEFT will prepare you for playing the triads at the right. The triads are all named for their root (lowest) note.

Orientation

The triads at the RIGHT are all in ROOT position. The root of each triad is the LOWEST note, played by Finger 5.

LH Fingering

The hand is in the 5-finger position. All triads on this page have the same fingering:
LH: 5, 3, and 1.

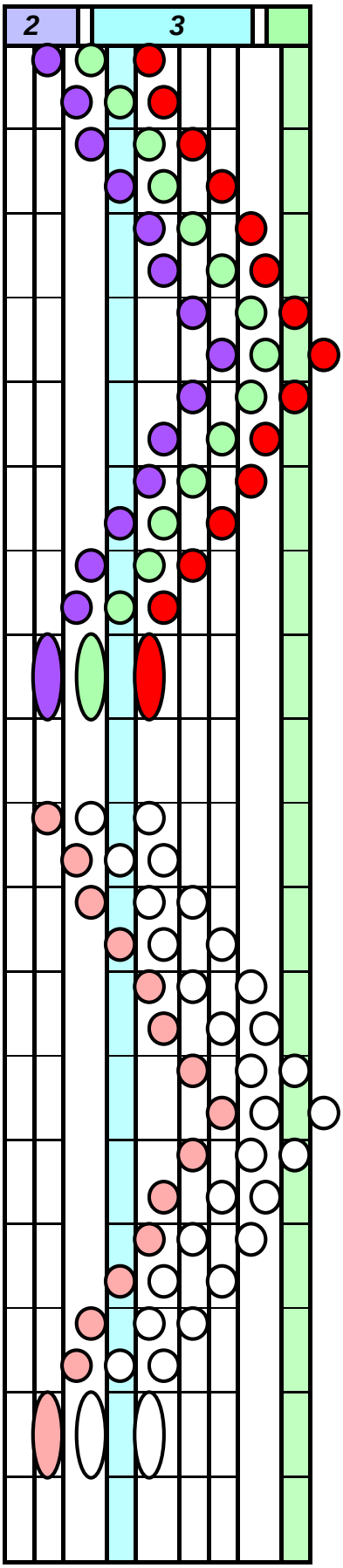
Colors

Fingering colors are shown for all exercises except the last, which shows the pink coloring for chord roots.

Root	Chord Symbol
A	Am
B	B dim
C	C
D	Dm
E	Em
F	F
G	G
A	Am
G	G
F	F
E	Em
D	Dm
C	C
B	B dim
A	Am

Fingering Colors

5 4 3 2 1



Playing the Triad Chords. ***When playing chords one after the other, as on the right side of the previous (facing) page, you will need to use exactly the same finger positions for each chord. The only way to play these chords in rapid succesion, is to avoid reorienting your fingers as you jump from one location on the keyboard to another. Holding your finger positions as you move your hand is a challenge for most students. One of the main objectives of this unit is to help you learn to do this.***

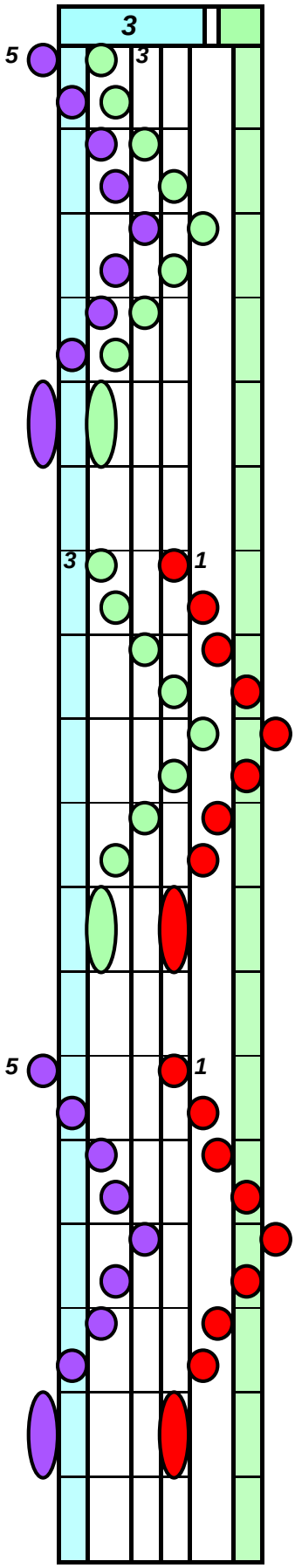
The exercises have been designed to help you learn to do this in easy steps. In the exercises, you only need to hold your positions for two fingers at a time. The three exercises gives you a chance to practice separately the finger combinations needed for playing the triad with three fingers at a time. Practice the exercises until you are able to play the triads without having to reposition your fingers when moving from one chord to another.

About the Chord Symbols. ***The chord symbols shown at the left of the triads on the previous page indicate the type of chord that you are playing as you play triads on successive white keys. The chord type changes as you move from chord to chord because of the way that the keyboard is constructed. This is caused by the differences in the intervals between the keys that you are playing as you move from one position to the next. You will learn how to read and understand these chord symbols in another unit of instruction.***

About the Spacing of the Keys in the Triads. ***In the introduction you were told that the NOTES for the triads are determined by skipping every SECOND letter of the musical alphabet. Notice that this pattern carries through to the keyboard where you skip EVERY SECOND WHITE KEY to play the triads. (However, this neat matching only holds true on the keyboard when we are avoiding the use of sharps and flats.)***

About the FACE GBD ... Sequence. ***Nearly all chords are spelled using this sequence of letters. You would be well advised to learn this sequence so well that you could instantly respond with the next 2 letters when presented with any of these letters as the first letter in a chord symbol. When you see F, you respond with ac, and so on throughout the sequence. Here are all of the combinations: Ace, Bdf, Ceg, Dfa, Egb, Fac, Gbd. Memorize the sequence. You'll be glad you did!***

First Inversion



Orientation

The triads are all in FIRST INVERSION position. The ROOT of the triad is the highest note, played by the thumb, (Finger 1).

Exercises

The exercises at the left will prepare you for playing the triads at the right. The triads are all named for their HIGHEST note.

Fingering

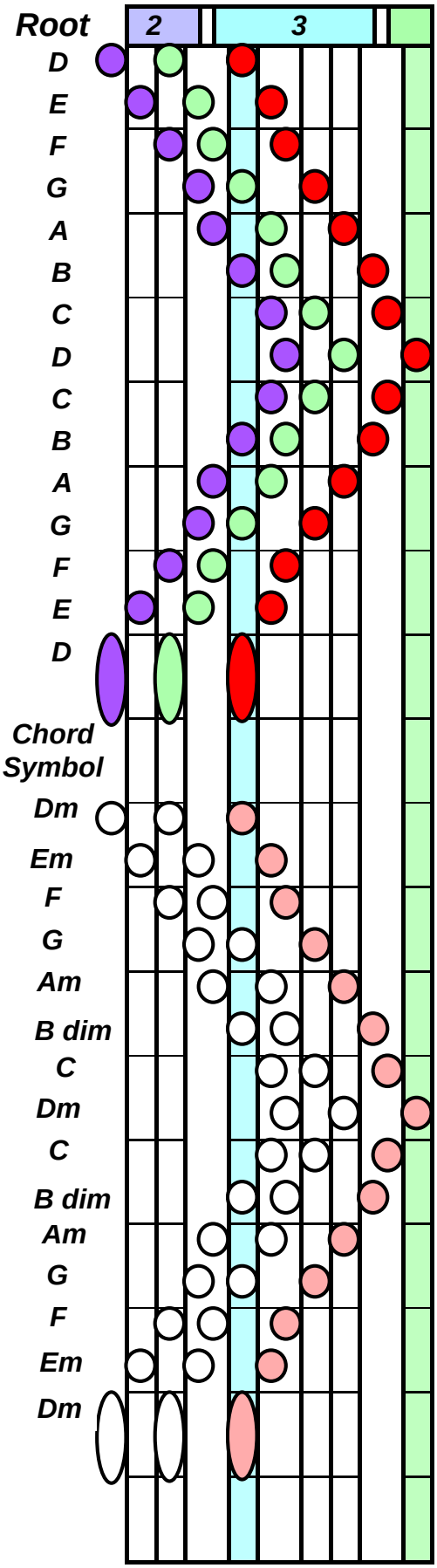
All of these triads have the same fingering, LH: 5, 3, and 1. Fingers 5 4 3 and 2 maintain a 5-finger position but the thumb skips one key to the right.

Colors

Fingering colors are shown for all exercises except the last, which shows the pink coloring for chord roots.

REPEAT

Repeat the exercises until they become easy to play!



About Inverted Chords . ***As you have learned, we identify and design chords by using every second letter of the alphabet (facegbd). You have also learned that once the notes of a chord have been identified, CEG, for example, they can be played anywhere on the keyboard and IN ANY ORDER. The first triads that you studied in this unit remained in the original order with the root as the lowest note.***

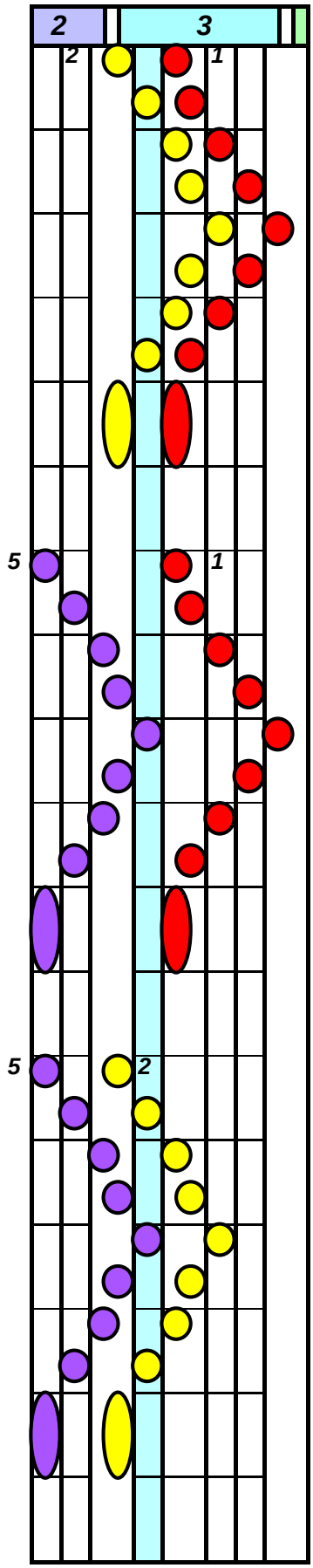
First Inversion Triads. ***The notes on the facing page, titled First Inversion, are shown in a different order. The first inversion of a triad moves the root from the lowest position in the triad to the highest position. It "inverts" the triad, just as the word indicates. Be aware that inverted chords are NOT unusual. They are a common and normal part of piano music. The inverted C major triad now has the sequence of notes, EGC.***

The normal left hand playing position for first inversion triads has the THUMB playing the root of the chord. When learning to play chords in the blue octave group, first inversion triads are played with roots Ab, A, Bb, and B.

Second Inversion Triads. ***The next page shows chords in the second inversion. For the second inversion, the lowest note of the first inversion chord is moved to the highest position in the triad. This results in the root moving to the middle of the triad. (This could also be described as moving the root of the root position triad up to the middle of the triad.) The second inversion C major triad now has the sequence of notes, GCE.***

The normal left hand playing position for the second inversion triads has the index finger (finger 2) pointing at (touching) the key that is the root of the chord. This is sometimes described as the "pointer position" because the finger normally used for pointing is aimed at the root of the chord. When learning to play chords in the blue octave group, second inversion triads are played with roots F, F#, and G.

Second Inversion



Orientation

The triads are all in SECOND INVERSION position. The root of the triad is the MIDDLE note, played by Finger 2.

Exercises

The exercises at the left will prepare you for playing the triads at the right. The triads are all named for their MIDDLE note.

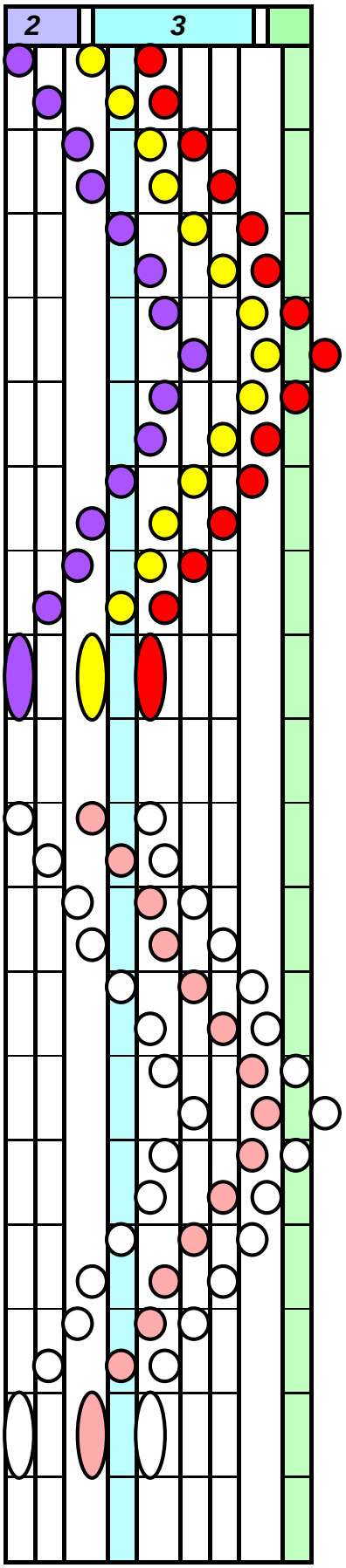
Fingering

All of these triads have the same fingering, LH: 5, 2, and 1. Fingers 5 4 3 and 2 are in LH 5-finger position but the thumb is stretched one key to the right.

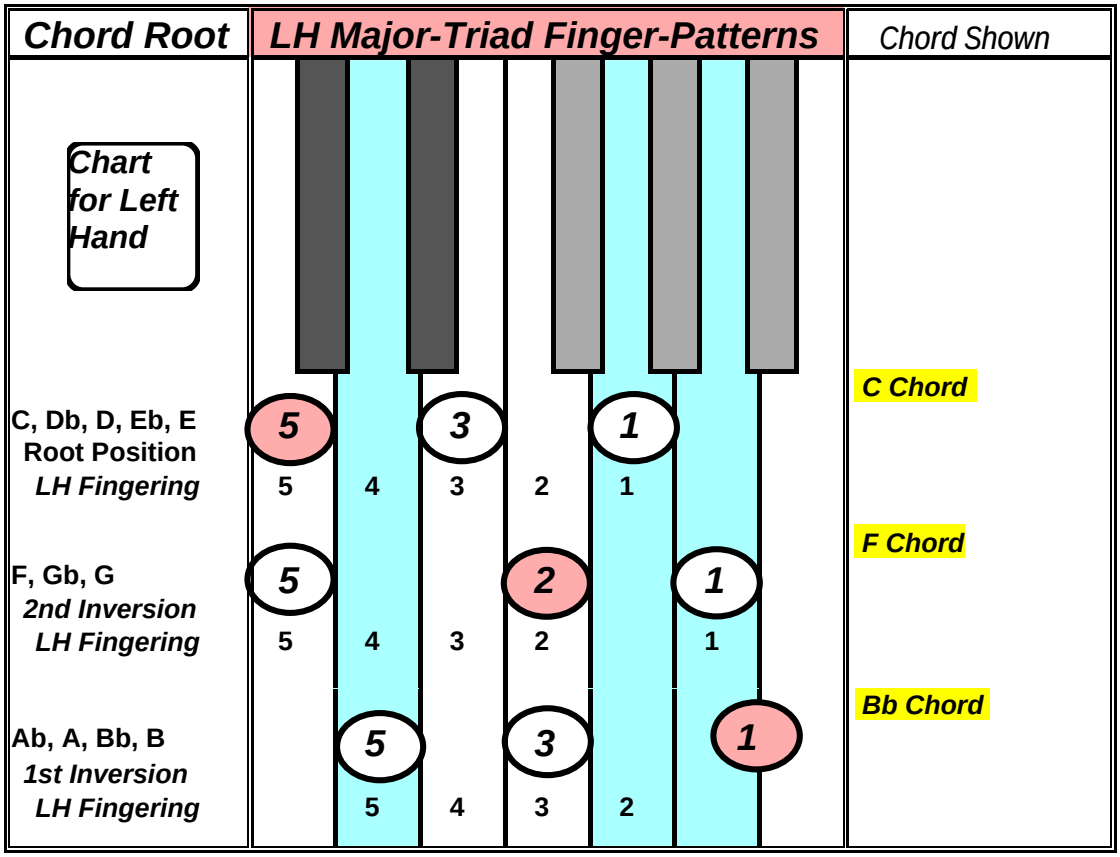
Colors

Fingering colors are shown for all exercises except the last, which shows the pink coloring for chord roots.

Root	Chord Symbol
C	C
D	Dm
E	Em
F	F
G	G
A	Am
B	B dim
C	C
B	B dim
A	Am
G	G
F	F
E	Em
D	Dm
C	C



The chart below shows the 3 basic finger positions that you used to play the previous exercises. It is interesting to see that so few positions can be used in so many different ways - simplifying how we learn to play so many different pieces with such a simple arrangement.



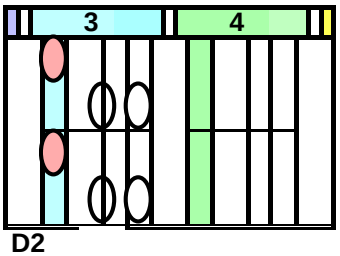
These are the most commonly used fingering patterns for the major triads in root position and in 1st and 2nd inversions played in the blue octave.

The chart shows the LEFT HAND root position and inversion patterns that help you keep all of your triads in the blue octave group, where they usually sound the best and are the easiest to play (helping you keep your left hand in a relatively stable location much of the time).

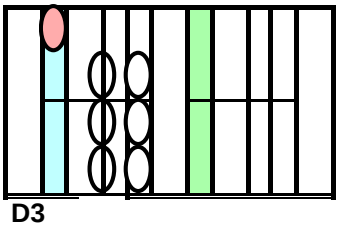
Easy Practice Patterns for Triads – Duple Pulse – D Chord

The next few pages provide you with exercises that will help you learn to break the chords that you are learning into interesting and essential rhythm patterns.

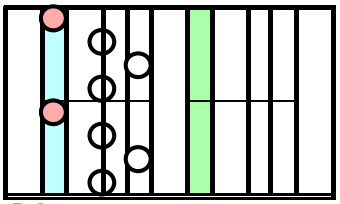
D1 LH



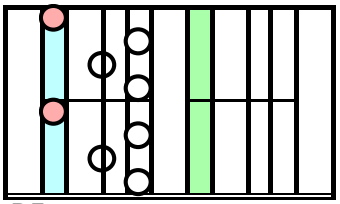
D2



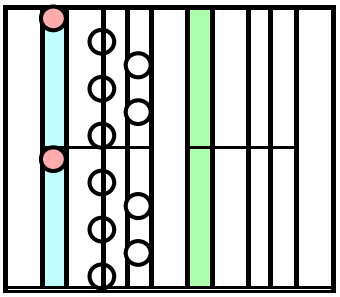
D3



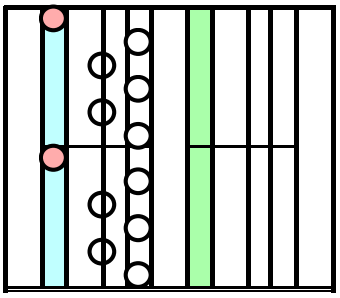
D4



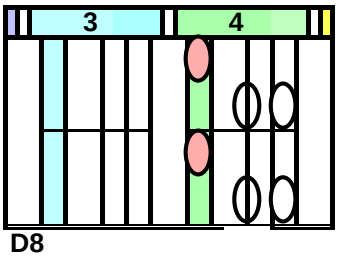
D5



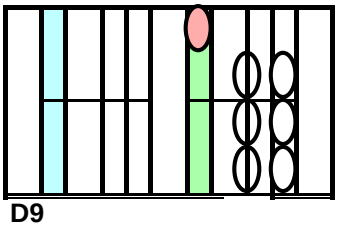
D6



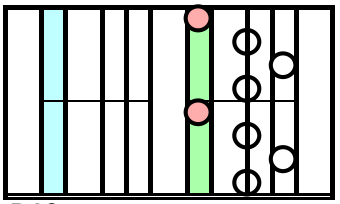
D7 RH



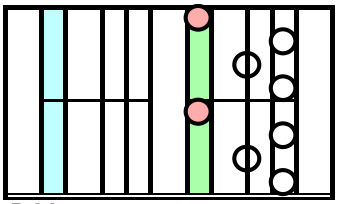
D8



D9



D10



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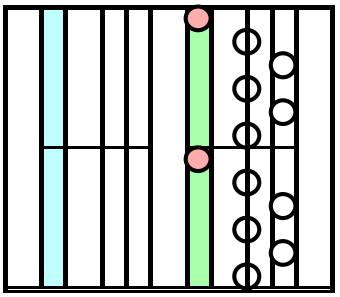
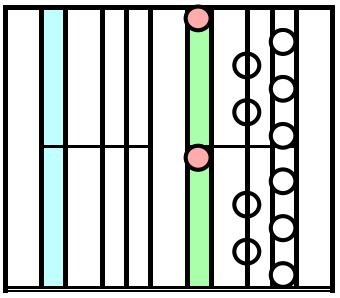
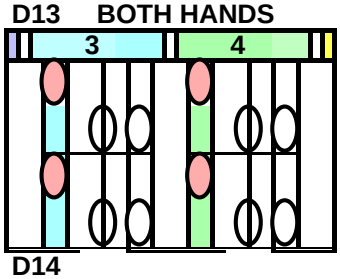


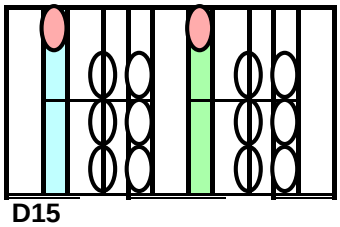
D12



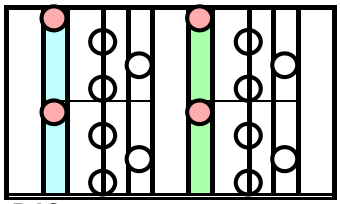
D13 BOTH HANDS



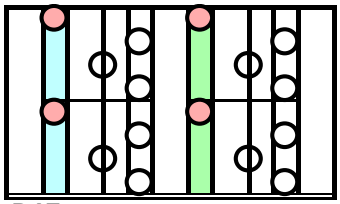
D14



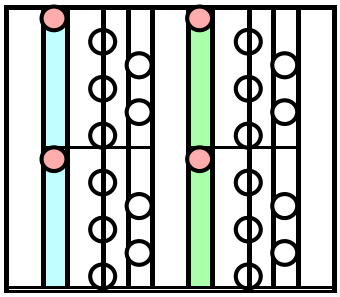
D15



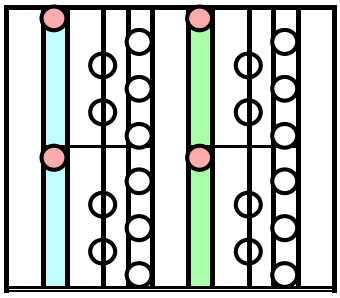
D16



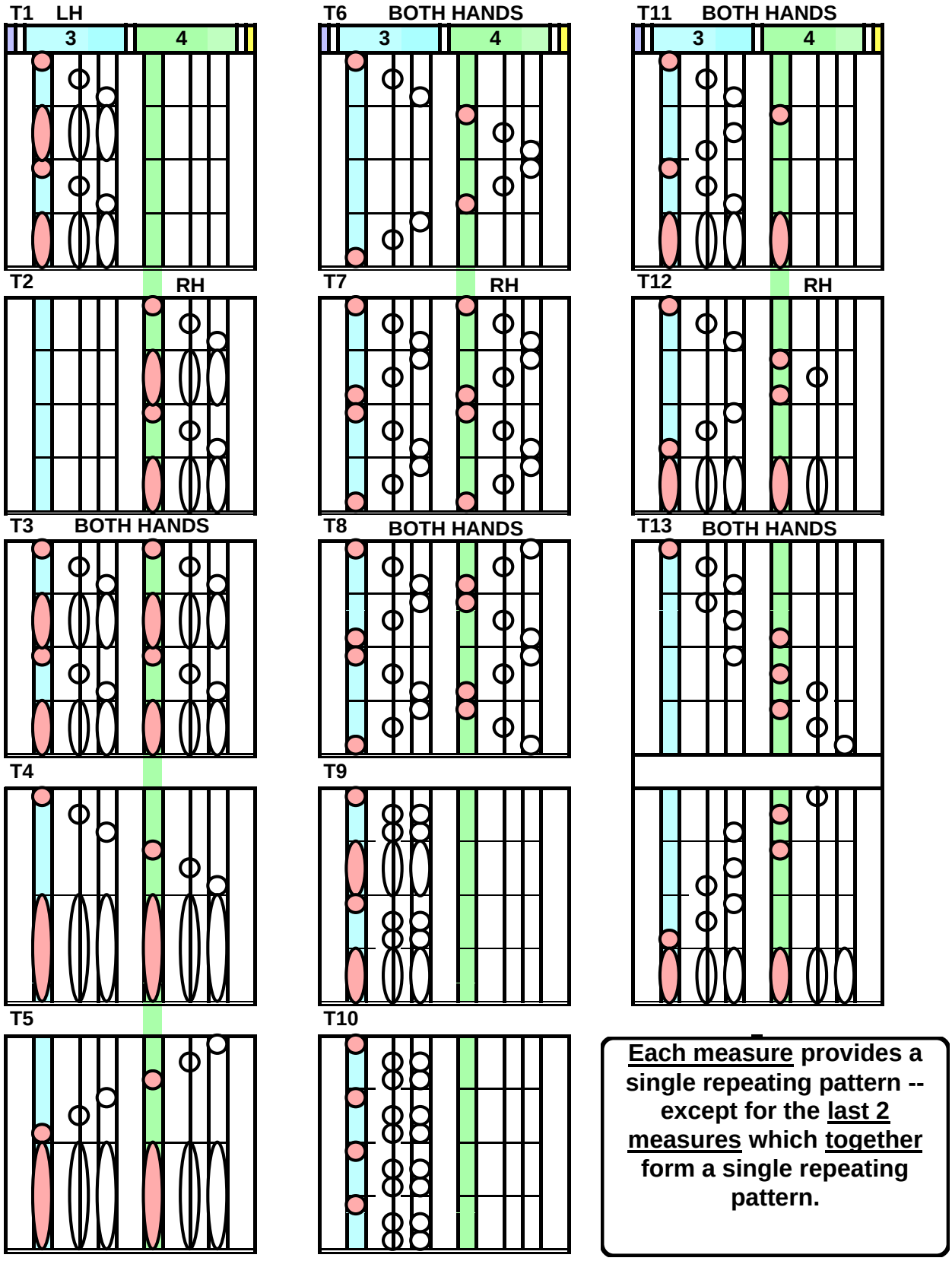
D17



D18

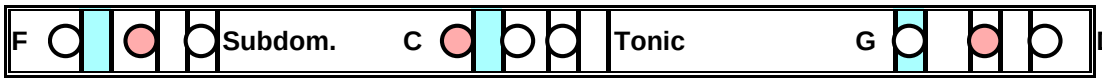


Easy Practice Patterns for Triads – Triple Pulse – D Chord

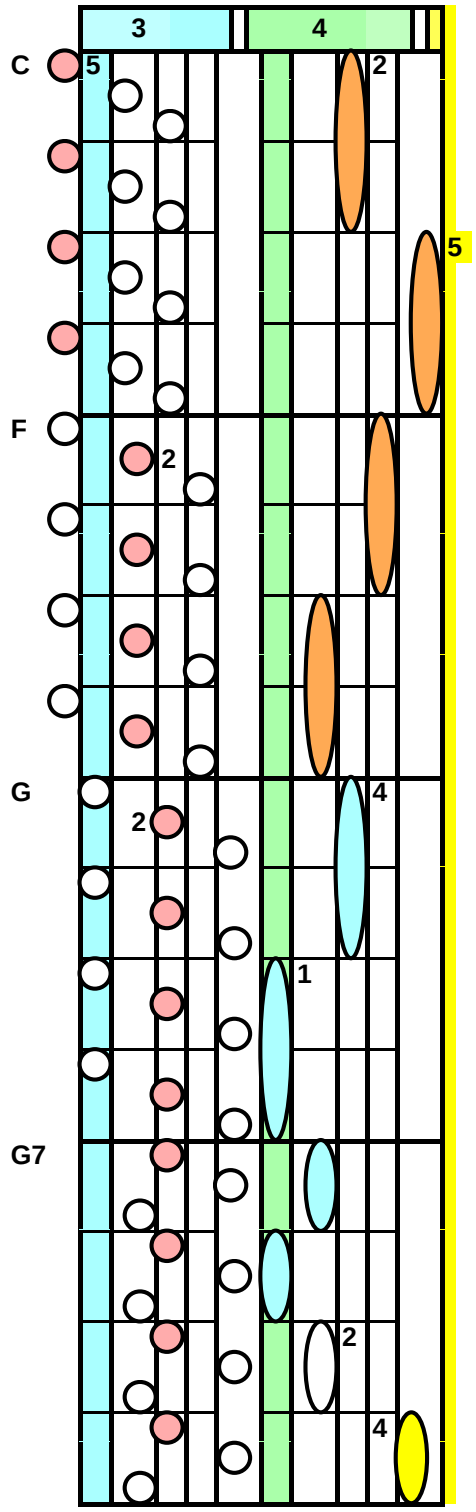


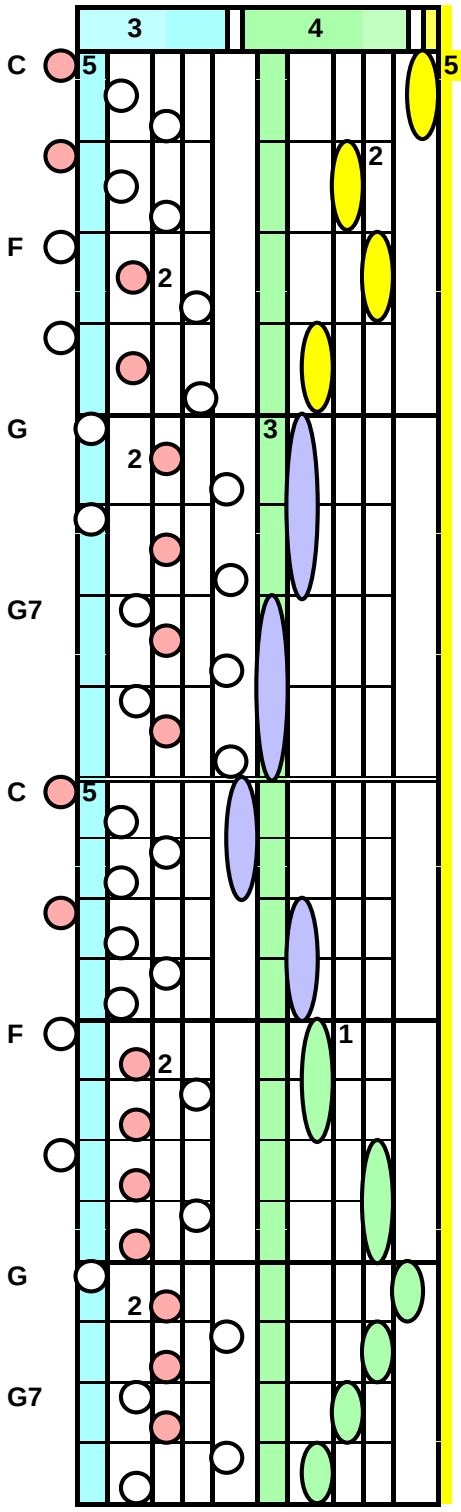
Each measure provides a single repeating pattern -- except for the last 2 measures which together form a single repeating pattern.

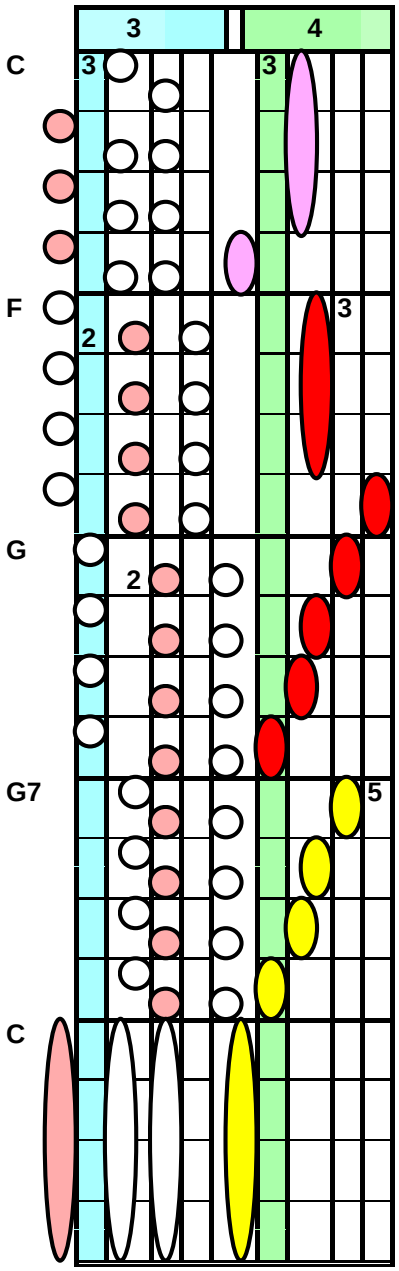
Chord Practice Patterns – Key of C Major



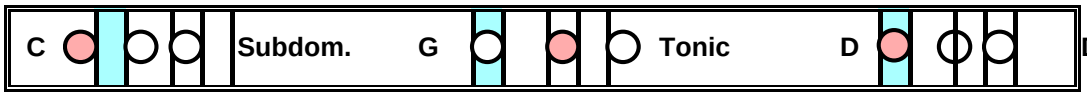
Moderately #/b: 0 Beats: 4



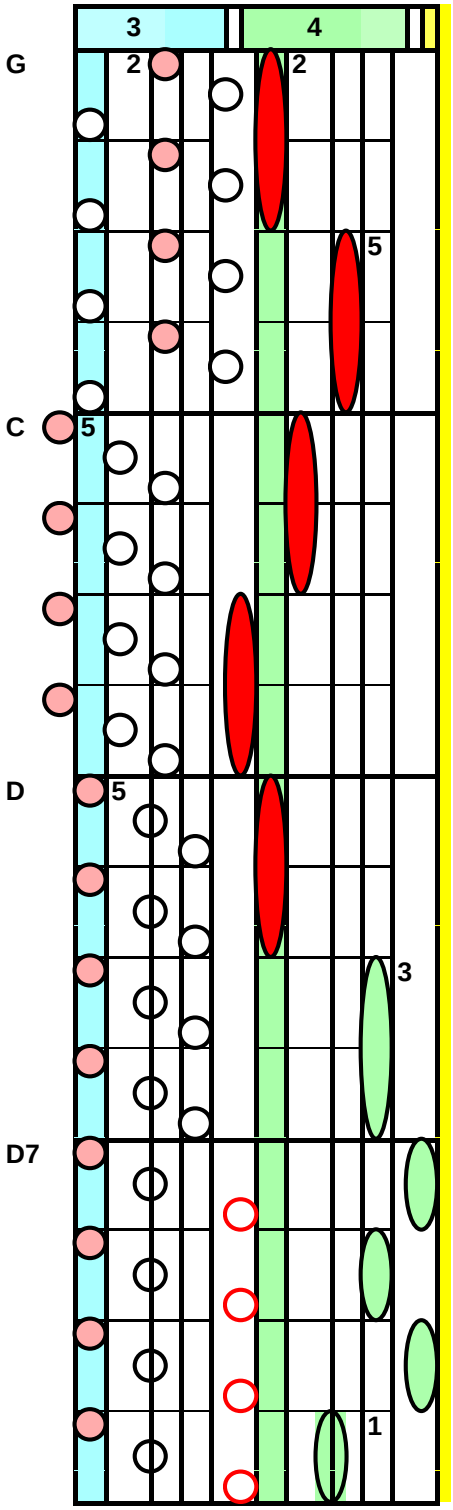


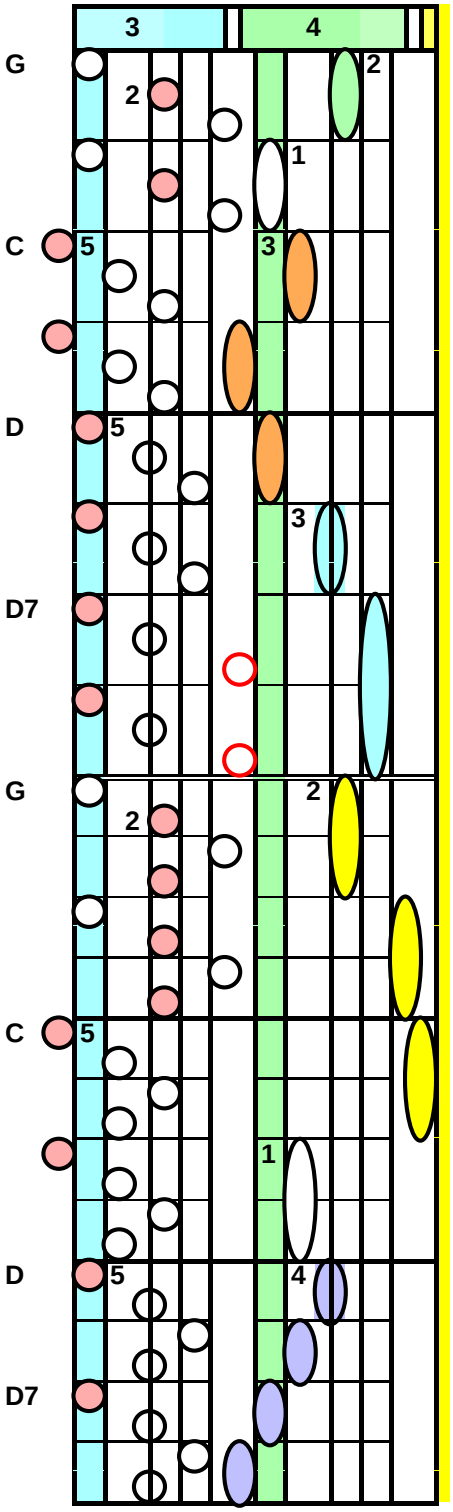


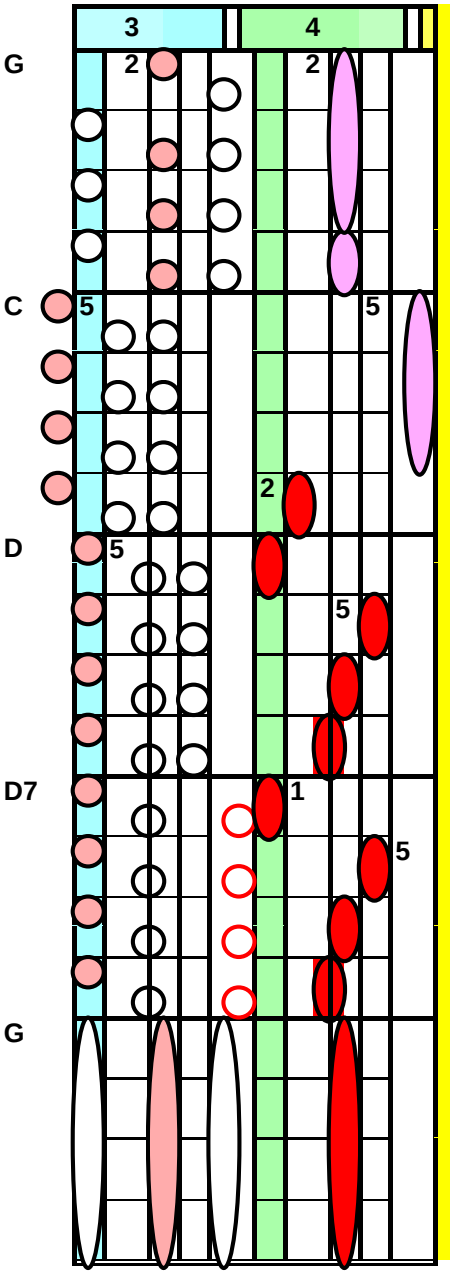
Chord Practice Patterns – Key of G Major



Moderately #: 1 Beats: 4



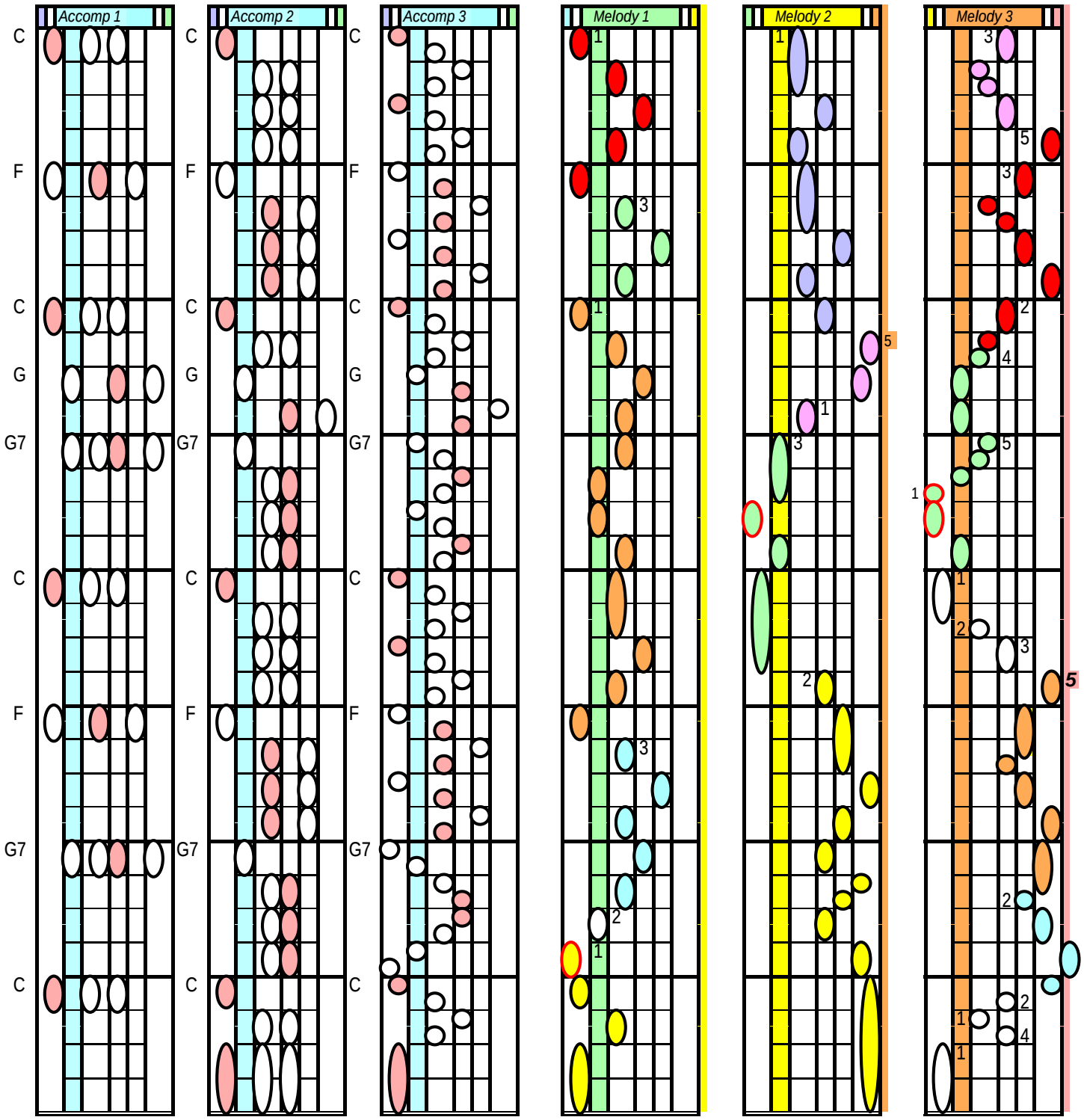




The notes with red borders are for the left hand.

Modeled Chord Patterns With Melodic Variations – Key of C Major

Just for fun -- Any of the 3 accompaniment patterns can be played with any of the 3 melodies at the same time, making 9 combinations. Can you do it?



About the 4 Kinds of Triad Chords

The 4 Triad Patterns in Root Position

Symbols	Kinds	Triads			SkipKey Patterns on the Keyboard
C dim	Diminished	C	Eb	Gb	C Skip 2 Skip 2
Cm	Minor	C	Eb	G	C Skip 2 Skip 3
C	Major	C	E	G	C Skip 3 Skip 2
C aug	Augmented	C	E	G#	C Skip 3 Skip 3

Here are important facts about triad chords. Refer to the chart above as you study them.

>> The chart is about chord PATTERNS, not specific note names. Look for patterns.

>> Though the chart shows the C triad, the patterns hold true for ALL note letter names; for triads with ANY root.

>> The triad chords on the chart show ALL of the 4 triad patterns. The patterns locate which keys make up the triad. The located keys can be played in any order and anywhere on the keyboard.

>> The triad KINDS are DEFINED, not by the letter names of the keys but by HOW FAR the other keys are from the ROOT. Skipping over the right number of keys from the root is how you find the keys that you need to play. WHEN SKIPPING, you count white keys AND black keys.

>> Knowing how far the CHORD SYMBOL is telling you to skip from the root is how you KNOW which keys to play. Then, when you know which keys to play, you can play them in any octave groups you choose. Learning to READ chord symbols is similar to learning to read language. Eventually, with enough REPETITION you will be able to look at a chord symbol and WITHOUT analyzing it, simply play the chord wherever you want it on the keyboard. This will happen first with the chords that you use the most.

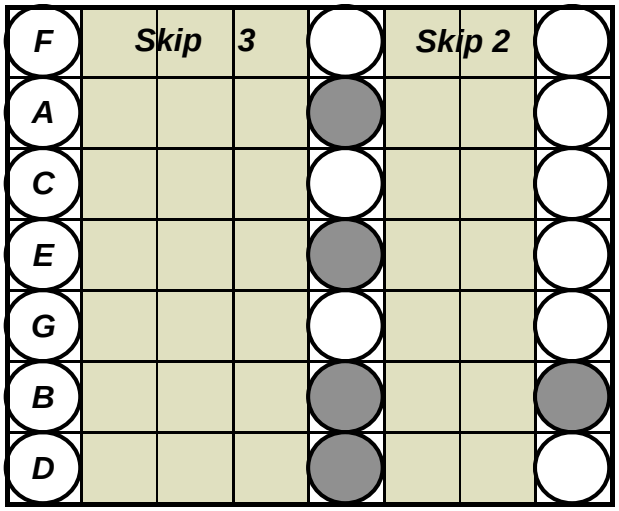
>> The KIND most commonly used is Major (Skip 3, Skip 2). A kind less common but that gets a lot of use is Minor (Skip 2, Skip 3). A kind less often used is Diminished (Skip 2, Skip 2). The kind rarely used is Augmented (Skip 3, Skip 3).

Major Triads in Root Position

Symbols Triad Notes SkipKey Patterns on the Keyboard

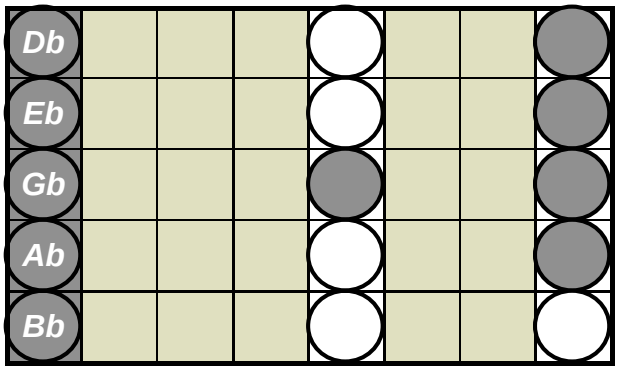
Major Triads With Roots on White Keys - From Root, UpSkip 3, Then 2

F	F	A	C
A	A	C#	E
C	C	E	G
E	E	G#	B
G	G	B	D
B	B	D#	F#
D	D	F#	A

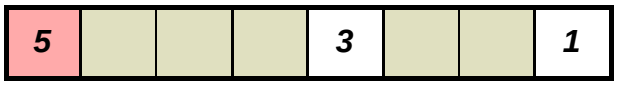


Major Triads With Roots on Black Keys - From Root, UpSkip 3, Then 2

Key				
1	Db	Db	F	Ab
2	Eb	Eb	G	Bb
3	Gb	Gb	Bb	Db
4	Ab	Ab	C	Eb
5	Bb	Bb	D	F



Typical LH Fingering



Generic Code Standing for All of These Triads:

Major Triad

X.3.2

"X" is the Root of the triad.

Number - Keys skipped

This code can represent how you play each of these triads. Simply substitute the letter name of the desired triad for the X in the code and play the keys following those that are skipped over (after 3 keys and after 2).

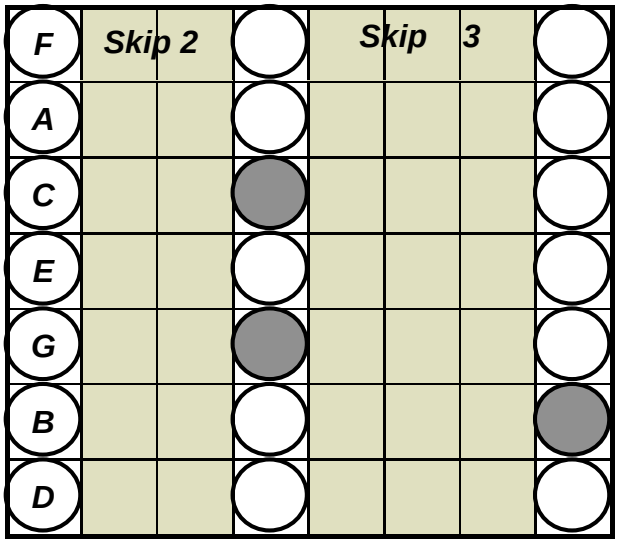
See the last page for all of the skip-key codes.

Minor Triads in Root Position

Symbols Triad Notes SkipKey Patterns on the Keyboard

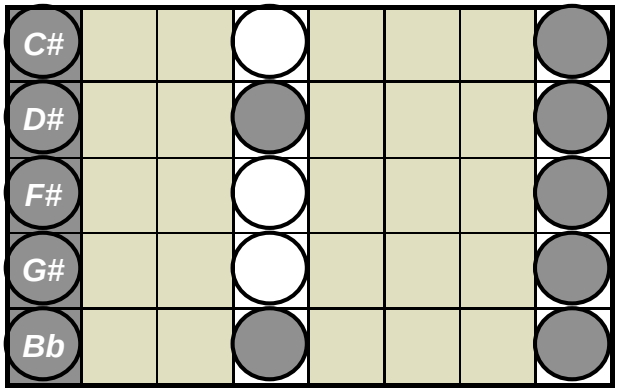
Minor Triads With Roots on White Keys - UpSkip 2, Then 3

Symbols	Triad Notes		
Fm	F	Ab	C
Am	A	C	E
Cm	C	Eb	G
Em	E	G	B
Gm	G	Bb	D
Bm	B	D	F#
Dm	D	F	A

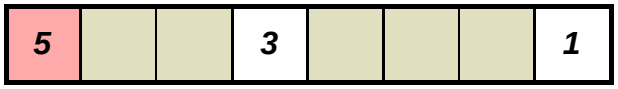


Minor Triads With Roots on Black Keys - UpSkip 2, Then 3

Key	Symbols	Triad Notes		
1	C#m	C#	E	G#
2	D#m	D#	F#	A#
3	F#m	F#	A	C#
4	G#m	G#	B	D#
5	Bbm	Bb	Db	F



Typical LH Fingering



Minor Triad

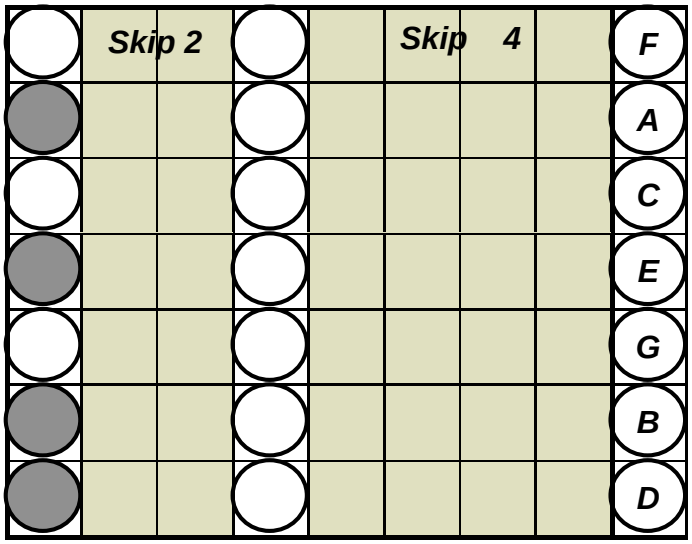
Generic Code Standing for All of These Triads: X.2.3

Major Triads in First Inversion

Symbols **Triad Notes** **SkipKey Patterns on the Keyboard**

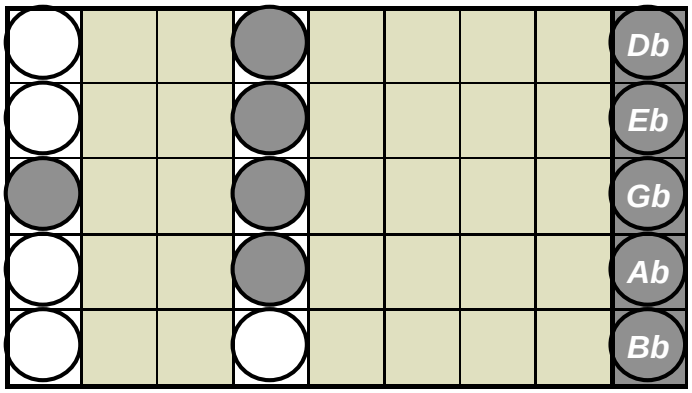
Major Triads With Roots on White Keys - DnSkip 4, Then 2

F	A	C	F
A	C#	E	A
C	E	G	C
E	G#	B	E
G	B	D	G
B	D#	F#	B
D	F#	A	D

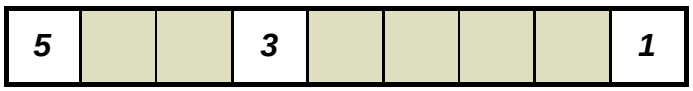


Key

1	Db	F	Ab	Db
2	Eb	G	Bb	Eb
3	Gb	Bb	Db	Gb
4	Ab	C	Eb	Ab
5	Bb	D	F	Bb



Typical LH Fingering



Major Triad - First Inversion

Generic Code Standing for All of These Triads 2.4.X

Seven Major Triads in Root Position With Inversions

Root Position - Root on the Left

F	Skip	3	A	Skip 2	C
A			C#		E
C			E		G
E			G#		B
G			B		D
B			D#		F#
D			F#		A

Code for all major triads in root positio

X.3.2

1st Inversion - Root on the Right

A	Skip 2	C		Skip 4	F
C#		E			A
E		G			C
G#		B			E
B		D			G
D#		F#			B
F#		A			D

Code - first inversio

2.4.X

2nd Inversion - Root in the Middle

Code - second inversion.

4.X.3

C		Skip	4		F	Skip	3	A
E					A			C#
G					C			E
B					E			G#
D					G			B
F#					B			D#
A					D			F#

Typical LH Major Triad Fingering

Root Position

5			3			1

1st Inversion

5			3				1

2nd Inversion

5					2				1

Generic Skip Key (GSK) Codes for Commonly Used Chords

Type of Triad	Standard Chord Symbol	Skip Key Code	Expanded Code
Major	C	X.3.2	X+++O++O
Minor	Cm	X.2.3	X++O+++O
Dominant 7th	C7	X.3.2.2	X+++O++O++O
Dominant 7th	C7	1.X.3	O+X+++O
Minor 7th	Cm7	X.2.3.2	X++O+++O++O
Diminished	C dim	X.2.2	X++O++O
Diminished 7th	C dim7	X.2.2.2	X++O++O++O
Major 7th	C maj7	X.3.2.3	X+++O++O+++O
Major 6th	C6	X.3.2.1	X+++O++O+O
Augmented	C+	X.3.3	X+++O+++O

Key for Skip Key Code

X - Chord Root - any keyboard key.

Number - Number of Keys you skip over from root - left or right, as indicated in code.

Period - Just a visual separator.

Letters A to G - keyboard keys.