
6 *The Major Scale*

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THE MAJOR SCALE

The major scale is used to measure and describe harmonic relationships.

Producing the major scale requires a series of whole steps (two frets) and half steps (one fret).

In the following examples: "W" = whole step

"H" = half step

The sequence goes like this:

W, W, H, W, W, W, H

(whole step, whole step, half step, whole step, whole step, whole step, half step)

The sequence applied to the chromatic scale:



Produces the major scale:

C D E F G A B C

Each note is assigned a Roman numeral:

I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I
C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C

The familiar singable symbols are also assigned to each note:

I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I
C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C
do	re	mi	fa	sol	la	ti	do

Because the Roman numerals, singable symbols, and whole step/half step sequences always remain the same, it is easy to transpose from one key to another.

The following examples illustrate all 12 possible major scales and their practical spellings:

Key of "C" Major

I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I							
	W		W	H		W		W		H				
C		D		E		F		G		A		B		C

No sharps or flats.

Key of "F" Major

I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I							
	W		W	H		W		W		H				
F		G		A		B ^b		C		D		E		F

One flat.

Key of "B^b" Major

I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I
W	W	H	W	W	W	H	
B ^b	C	D	E ^b	F	G	A	B ^b

*Two flats.***Key of "E^b" Major**

I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I
W	W	H	W	W	W	H	
E ^b	F	G	A ^b	B ^b	C	D	E ^b

*Three flats.***Key of "A^b" Major**

I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I
W	W	H	W	W	W	H	
A ^b	B ^b	C	D ^b	E ^b	F	G	A ^b

*Four flats.***Key of "D^b" Major***

I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I
W	W	H	W	W	W	H	
D ^b	E ^b	F	G ^b	A ^b	B ^b	C	D ^b

Five flats.

Key of "G^b" Major*

I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I
W	W	H	W	W	W	H	
G ^b	A ^b	B ^b	C ^b	D ^b	E ^b	F	G ^b

Six flats.

Key of "C^b" Major*

I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I
W	W	H	W	W	W	H	
C ^b	D ^b	E ^b	F ^b	G ^b	A ^b	B ^b	C ^b

Seven flats.

Key of "G" Major

I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I
W	W	H	W	W	W	H	
G	A	B	C	D	E	F [#]	G

One sharp.

Key of "D" Major

I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I
W	W	H	W	W	W	H	
D	E	F [#]	G	A	B	C [#]	D

Two sharps.

Key of "A" Major

I		II		III		IV		V		VI		VII		I
	W		W		H		W		W		W		H	
A		B		C [#]		D		E		F [#]		G [#]		A

*Three sharps.***Key of "E" Major**

I		II		III		IV		V		VI		VII		I
	W		W		H		W		W		W		H	
E		F [#]		G [#]		A		B		C [#]		D [#]		E

*Four sharps.***Key of "B" Major**

I		II		III		IV		V		VI		VII		I
	W		W		H		W		W		W		H	
B		C [#]		D [#]		E		F [#]		G [#]		A [#]		B

*Five sharps.***Key of "F[#]" Major***

I		II		III		IV		V		VI		VII		I
	W		W		H		W		W		W		H	
F [#]		G [#]		A [#]		B		C [#]		D [#]		E [#]		F [#]

Six sharps.

Key of "C#" Major*

I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I
	W	W	H	W	W	W	H
C#	D#	E#	F#	G#	A#	B#	C#

Seven sharps.

* (C^b & B), (F[#] & G^b), and (C[#] & D^b) are all enharmonic equivalents.

CHORDS AND CHORD PROGRESSIONS



Start by harmonizing the the major scale:

Key of “C” Major

I = “C” Ma. 7 (“C”, “C” sus., “C6”, “C” Ma. 9, “C 69”, etc.)

II = “D” mi. 7 (“D” mi. 6, “D” mi. 9, “D” mi. 11, etc.)

III = “E” mi. 7

IV = “F” Ma. 7

V = “G7” (“G7” sus. 4, “G9”, “G13”, etc.)

VI = “A” mi. 7

VII = “B” mi. 7 (♭5)

- The use of 7th chords (four-part harmony), clearly illustrates how a chord fits into its “parent” scale.

- The substitution possibilities within the Roman numerals are:

III and VI are substitutes for I

II and IV are substitutes for each other — II, V, I in jazz and I, IV, V in rock

VII can substitute for V

The following are examples of chord progressions built from the major scale:



1. I Ma. 7 & IV Ma. 7

C Ma. 7 F Ma. 7

2. IV Ma. 7 & V 7

F Ma. 7 G 7

3. II mi. 7 & V 7

D mi. 7 G 7

4. I Ma. 7 & II mi. 7

C Ma. 7 D mi. 7

5. II mi. 7, V 7, I Ma. 7

D mi. 7 G 7 C Ma. 7 ♯

6. I Ma. 7, IV Ma. 7, V 7

C Ma. 7 F Ma. 7 G 7

7. I Ma. 7 & VI mi. 7

C Ma. 7 A mi. 7

8. IV Ma. 7 & II mi. 7

F Ma. 7 D mi. 7

9. III mi. 7 & I Ma. 7

E mi. 7 C Ma. 7

10. I Ma. 7, VI mi. 7, II mi 7, V 7

C Ma. 7 A mi. 7 D mi. 7 G 7

11. I Ma. 7, V/3, VI mi. 7, V 7
"Descending"

C Ma. 7 G/B A mi. 7 G 7

12. Ascending straight up the line starting from the IV Ma. 7

F Ma. 7 G 7 A mi. 7 B mi.7(♭5) C Ma.7 D mi. 7 E mi. 7

13. Moving primarily by 4ths

C Ma. 7 F Ma. 7 E mi. 7 A mi. 7

D mi. 7 G sus. G 7 F Ma. 7 B mi. 7 (♭5)

14. Moving primarily by 5ths

C Ma. 7 ♯ G7 D mi. 7

D mi. 7 A mi. 7 E mi. 7 F Ma. 7

15. Using inversions to embellish a bass line

G7 G7/F C/E F Ma. 7/A G/B F/C A mi./E D mi. 7

LEARNING NEW CHORDS



Learn “Root on E” and “Root on A” chords first, followed by “Root on D.”

ABOUT INVERSIONS

In four-part harmony — 7th chords — any part of the chord can be put on the bottom of the “pile.”

Using “G7” as an example:

First inversion = “G” 7/3 or “G” 7/“B”

Second inversion = “G” 7/5 or “G” 7/“D”

Third inversion = “G” 7/♭7 or “G” 7/“F”

The primary reason to invert a chord is to achieve a desirable bass line (refer to chord progression example number 15, on page 56).

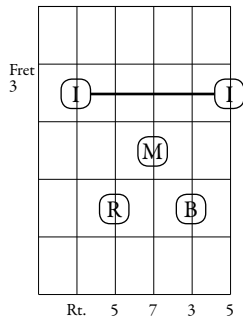
Examples

See the following five pages for examples of some of the chords that can be built using the major scale.

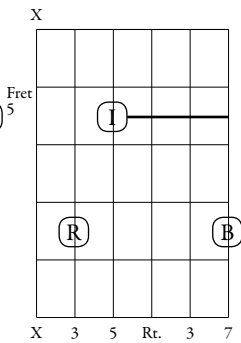
Major 7th and 6th Chords



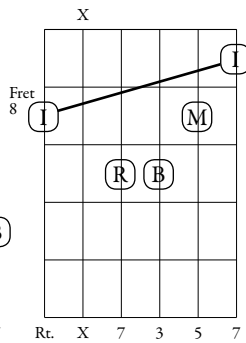
C Ma. 7



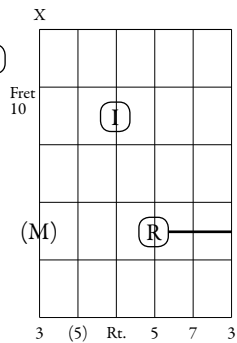
C Ma. 7/3



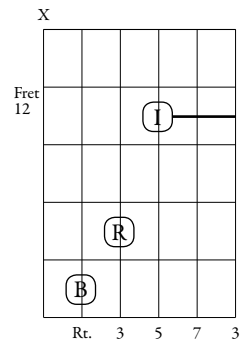
C Ma. 7



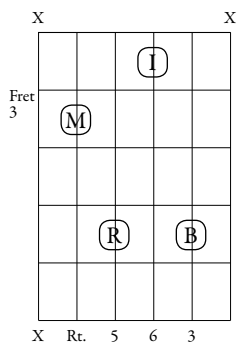
C Ma. 7



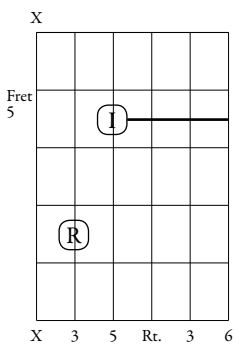
C Ma. 7



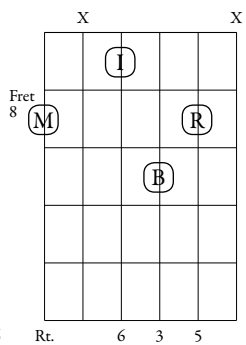
C 6



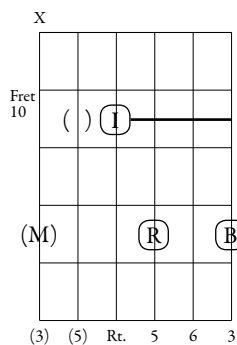
C 6/3



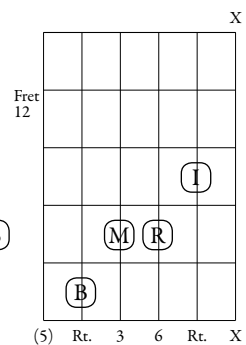
C 6



C 6



C 6



Major 9th and 6⁹ Chords



	C Ma. 9	C Ma. 9/3	C Ma. 9	C Ma. 9	C Ma. 9
	(5) Rt. 3 7 9	3 5 9 3 7	Rt. X 7 9 5 X	(3) (5) Rt. 5 7 9	Rt. 9 5 7 3

	C 6 ⁹	C 6 ⁹ /3	C 6 ⁹	C 6 ⁹	C Ma. 13*
	(5) Rt. 3 6 9 5	3 5 9 3 6	Rt. (3) 6 9 5 Rt.	(5) Rt. 3 6 9	(3) Rt. 9 6 7 3

* When a Major 7th is added to a 6⁹ chord, a Major 13 chord is the result.

Minor 7th and Minor 9th Chords



A mi. 7		A mi. 7/ \flat_3 *		A mi. 7		A mi. 7		A mi. 7	
() O O O				X		X			
Fret 2		Fret 3		Fret 5		Fret 7		Fret 12	
	(5) Rt. 5 \flat_7 \flat_3 5		(\flat_7) \flat_3 \flat_7 \flat_3 5 Rt.		Rt. X \flat_7 \flat_3 5 Rt.		(5) Rt. 5 \flat_7 \flat_3		(5) Rt. \flat_3 \flat_7 \flat_3 (5)

* Yes, C 6 and A minor 7 look and are the same.

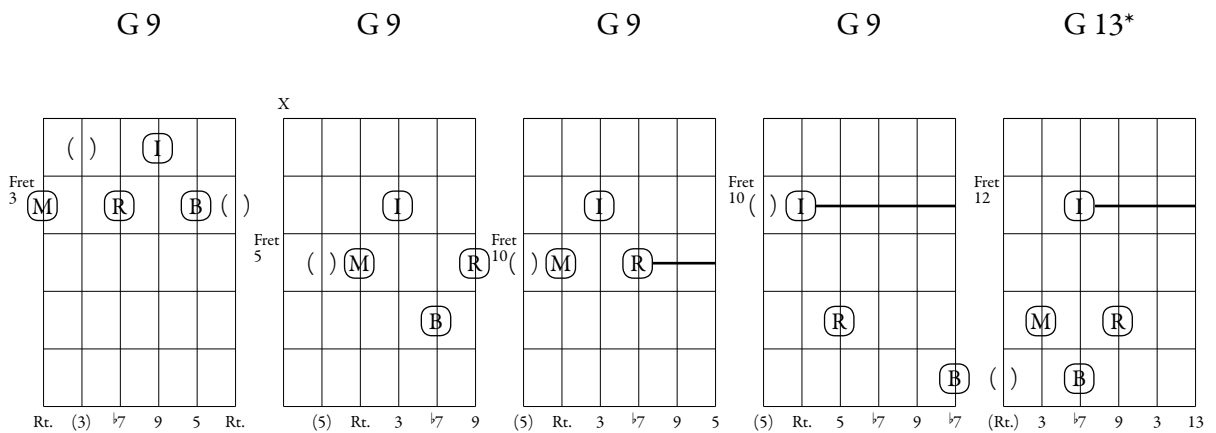
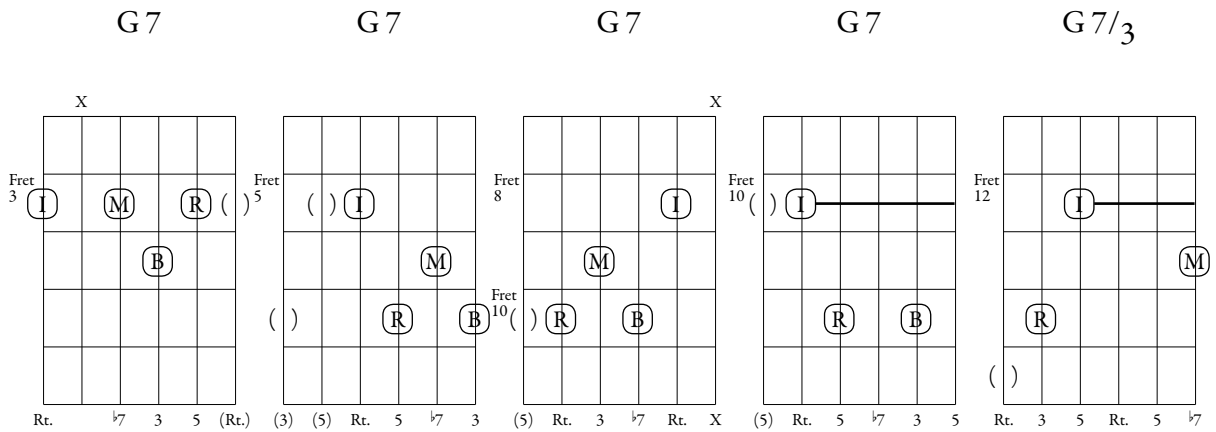
A mi. 9		A mi. 9/ \flat_3 **		A mi. 9		A mi. 9		A mi. 9	
() O O O O				X					
Fret 2		Fret 3		Fret 5		Fret 7		Fret 12	
	(5) Rt. 5 \flat_7 9 5		(\flat_7) \flat_3 \flat_7 9 5 \flat_7		Rt. X \flat_7 \flat_3 5 9		(5) Rt. \flat_3 \flat_7 9		(5) Rt. \flat_3 \flat_7 9 (5)

** C Major 7 and A minor 9 are the same.

Minor 9th chords can not be used as a III minor 7!

Example: In the key of C Major, E minor = III minor 7.

7th and 9th Chords



* When a 6th is added to a 9th chord, a 13th chord is the result.

Minor 7th $\flat 5$



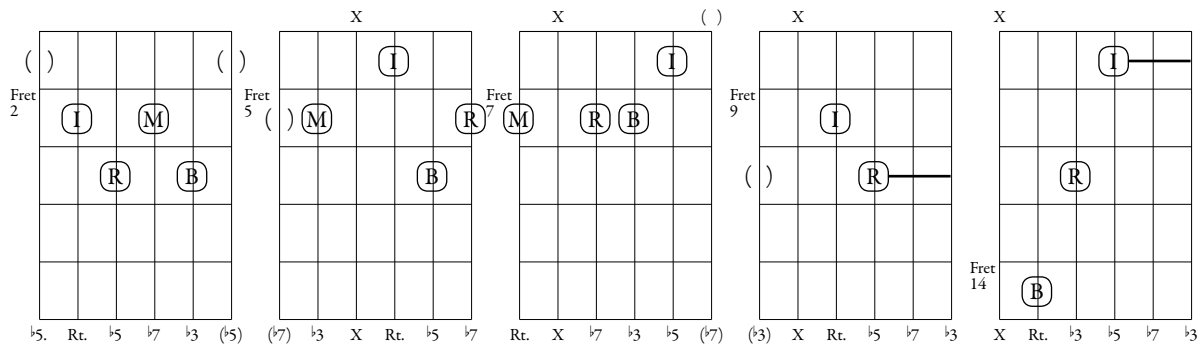
B mi. 7 ($\flat 5$)

B mi. 7 ($\flat 5$)/ $\flat 3$ *

B mi. 7 ($\flat 5$)

B mi. 7 ($\flat 5$)

B mi. 7 ($\flat 5$)



* B minor 7 ($\flat 5$) and D minor 6 are the same.