Play Your Favorite Songs On Piano Without Sheet Music

Complete 10-Day Course





The streamlined Learning System Used by Pros Worldwide - by Tim Gross





Printable "Number System" Charts of Major/Minor Chords & Scales, Fingering, and Basic Intervals

This PDF eBook Course has printable charts of key points, and it contains links to 10 free supplemental training videos that explain more in-depth at PianoGenius.com.

Select "Landscape Mode" to get best results printing it out.

Many people have said they've learned more from the first 15 minutes of those free videos than they did taking regular piano lessons for 6 months, something I am very happy to hear.

Here's the point of the number system I'm teaching you: The way most people are taught piano is to learn specific things here and there but without ever "connecting the dots" that makes it all make sense. Understanding this number system means when you learn one thing, you've actually learned a hundred things, which means you get the maximum benefit out of the time you put into it.

I'll focus on the things that will help you become a better piano player the quickest. Thanks for giving me your time and attention, and I promise not to waste it.

There are **10 piano training videos** associated with this eBook, with links to watch specific videos as needed. Combined, they'll help you grasp these basic yet critical concepts.



Who This Is For And Who It's Not For

Not For You:

- If your big goal in life is to be able to read sheet music, this training is not for you.
- If you want to perform classical sheet music note for note, this training is not for you.
- If you want to endlessly practice piano scales, this training is not for you.
- If you want to be a glorified "player piano" this training is not for you.

For You:

- If you want to learn to play popular songs quickly, this is for you.
- If you like the freedom of playing songs slightly differently every time, this is for you.
- If you want to gain useful skills that you can apply to hundreds of songs, this training is for you.
- If you want to be able to play complete songs from the simplest of chord charts/lead sheets and make it sound professional, this is for you.

I'm not going to treat you like an idiot, and I'm not going to set rules and requirements of what you should play or how long you should practice something.

Copyright and Disclaimers

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No claims are made about how quickly you will progress by following these steps. There are inherent risks involved playing the piano, like spraining your finger or spending less time watching TV because you find you enjoy it more. We may earn a commission from recommending and linking to some 3rd party products.

Introduction

Hi, my name is Tim Gross, and I've supported myself playing music/keyboards for over 30 years, mostly playing popular music / rock & roll. I've played classical music at recitals, I've played in bar bands across California, I've played at weddings... I've played with 20-piece jazz bands and at intimate piano bars.

I've worked with a lot of world-class musicians who like my playing; I've performed with Robin Zander (Cheap Trick), Tommy Tutone, Terri Nunn (Berlin), Greg Kihn, Chuck Negron (3 Dog Night), and I currently tour and record with Grammy-winning recording artist Rick Springfield (who sang "Jessie's Girl" as well as 16 other top-40 hits.)

I'm not telling you this to brag, but it's important to understand that I'm doing what I'm teaching you here, playing music professionally without reading sheet music or notes.

Whether you want to play for yourself, for your friends, or to play professionally, this is the most effective way to get started.

I love what I do now, but it wasn't always this way...









Every week I toiled to learn just 4 more measures. It was tedious, boring, I didn't like the music, and I felt like a trained monkey!

Panic Attack / Trained Monkey

I was 13 years old wearing an ill-fitting suit jacket and an awkward tie, sweating profusely. I was supposed to play my song next at the classical piano recital but the older kid before me was dying onstage. He'd gotten stuck and started the song over, then got stuck again at the same spot... He finally gave up... he awkwardly bowed to sympathetic applause and skulked off stage.

My mom nudged me: "You're up." I took a deep breath, and I barely remember playing the piece I'd spent months working on but I got through it, not really *understanding* what I was playing at all.

Soon after, I quit – And realized I couldn't really apply ANYTHING I'd learned from 8 years of lessons to playing the music I wanted to play.

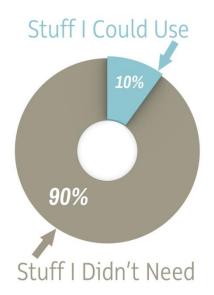
I felt like an idiot. It turns out that trained monkeys can't do ANYTHING they haven't been trained to do – and that was me.

Luckily for me, a couple friends tried to start a rock band a couple years later and they asked me to "join" (or at least to jam with them in their garage...)

It turns out that **keyboard players are hard to find**... Finally some **GOOD NEWS!** ① Onward and upward...



Unlearning Most Of What I'd Spent 7 Years Learning



The vast majority of what you need to know to play "classical" piano is unnecessary for what I do. The Beatles aren't Beethoven.

My buddies in my high school garage band didn't read sheet music, and over the years I discovered that the vast majority of rock/pop musicians don't read sheet music either...

So unless your goal is to play classical music note-for-note, WHY IS SO MUCH EFFORT AND FRUSTRATION put into learning it??

The Better Way: "The Number System" + Using Your Ear

Guitar players and bass players are taught completely differently than piano players. They're shown functional, practical ways to play from simple chord charts, while piano players are pretty much tortured for the fun of it. (At least that's how it can feel sometimes, ha!)

On the bright side, because most people eventually give up on traditional piano lessons, that makes it more impressive to be able to play the piano!

This is what I want to show you... The "Fast Track" to playing modern piano. No fluff, just the stuff.



la bla triplets bla B# bla bla and divide the denominator bla...

bla bla l

(Is that a confusing piano lesson or a football play, LOL! ©

Why Am I Teaching Piano?

In 2012 a relative told me they were trying to learn how to play the piano by looking at YouTube videos.

I went to YouTube and did a search for "Beginning Piano Lessons" and looked at the most popular videos.

THEY WERE HORRIBLE... HORRIBLE.

Even though I already knew what they were trying to teach, they were confusing ME with the way they were trying to explain things.

So on a whim I recorded a video - and it became the most popular piano video on YouTube (watched many, many millions of times.)

Crazy! It was then I realized that I had knowledge and experience that people needed. So I started training people in the way that *I* would explain piano to a friend or family member.

Fast-forwarding multiple years later, I have many thousands of successful students from dozens and dozens of countries, and hundreds and hundreds of piano training videos. This is just the beginning...

Since then others have started imitating how I teach (*sincerest form of flattery!* ©) but make no mistake, **this is the premiere**, **ground-breaking original training that started changing how people learn piano worldwide.** It makes me proud to see, and I'm glad you're here..



Avoiding "Intelligent Fools"



quickest results, and ignore unnecessary things you can get bogged down on.

My entire goal is to simplify everything, explain what gives you the

News Flash: I don't consider myself a piano genius. © I'll never know everything about playing the piano or music in general, but I'd never want to!

This quote below summarizes my approach. By ignoring the 90% of what you don't really need to know you can get good at what you do need faster and more efficiently:

Guitar and bass players are taught functional, practical ways to play from simple chord charts.

Why shouldn't piano be taught the same way?

"Any Intelligent Fool Can Make Things Bigger And More Complex. It Takes A Touch Of Genius To Move In The Opposite Direction"

Traditional piano lessons quickly become overwhelming.

(On the bright side, that makes it more impressive to be able to play the piano though!)



Pianos, Electronic Pianos, Synthesizers, Controllers

(To see my currently recommended keyboards to purchase, click here)

I don't know if you have a piano/keyboard you like already, but in case you don't there are 4 subcategories of keyboards you should know about. (Just skip the next 2 pages if you don't need info on keyboard choices.)

I say "piano" when referring to musical keyboards, but there are many options when deciding what to play, so whether you already have a keyboard you're ready to play or not, let's look at the different options and the pros/cons of each.

1) Acoustic Piano (meaning it doesn't plug in) Whether it's a concert grand piano or a weathered upright piano that looks like it should be in a cowboy bar, they're all acoustic pianos.

Pros: They're the default "piano", my mom bought an old upright when I was a kid and re-stained the wood.

Cons: They have to be tuned on a regular basis, and even then they're usually at least a little out of tune and don't sound perfect. Also, as my dad can tell you, they're loud and you can't turn down the volume when there's sports on TV. ©

2) **Electronic Piano** They may look and sound exactly like an acoustic, but they have a volume pedal and headphones.

Pros: They're always in tune, and usually there are multiple piano sounds (as well as other sounds) to choose from. They also have headphone jacks.

Cons: Nice ones can get expensive, while cheaper ones may not have great speakers that sound as good or feel as good as a real acoustic piano.

Pianos, Electronic Pianos, Synthesizers, Controllers

3) Electronic Portable Keyboard:

Pros: Lightweight, can be moved around easier, built-in headphones, may have lots of sounds to choose from. Higher-end portable keyboards can do amazing things. May have extra jacks to run to bigger external speakers

Cons: If they have built-in speakers they tend to be very small (like a car radio) and don't sound that great. If not, you need a separate speaker/amp to hear them if you don't use headphones.

4) Midi Controller Keyboards:

Controller keyboards don't have their own sounds included, they just "control" sounds running from software off of your computer through "MIDI" probably through a USB cable. That's what I use for my Piano Genius video training, by the way.

Pros: Can be quite inexpensive, and connected to good sounds through software, they can sound great.

Cons: More trouble to set up, especially the first time. Need an external computer/laptop and software to run.

Bottom Line With All Those Choices: It's always best to actually be able to play a keyboard before purchasing, but sometimes that's not possible. If you'd like to see my personal recommendations, just click the link below.

To see my currently recommended keyboards to purchase, click here



Getting Started: Fingering

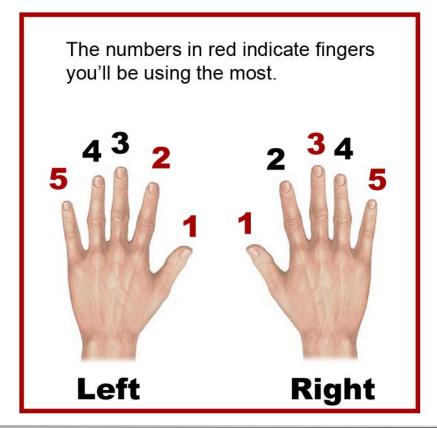
Counting Your Fingers From Thumb => Pinkie

Check out the chart below to make sure you count your fingers the same way I do. ☺ Thumbs are #1 (ask Fonzie), and we count out from there.

Playing piano, your right hand will do more of the work than your left hand. Your left hand will use 1-5 fingers the most (thumb, pinkie), with 2 used a lot as well.

(We'll need to talk about what fingers play what notes...

This way of counting fingers for piano playing is universal by the way, so it'll help to get used to it.)



Click here to watch Video #1 which explains this in more detail.



88 Keys, Yikes, It's Overwhelming!!!!!



The good news is, there are really only a handful of notes, and they repeat 6 times up and down the keyboard.

The keyboard is "organized" around the two groups of two black notes and three black notes.

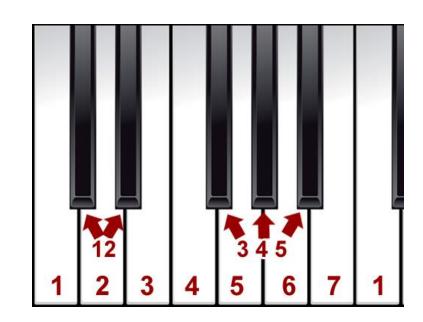
There are only **7 unique white notes** before it starts repeating again. Only 7.

Including the 5 black notes that's only 12 unique notes in all.

There's no difference between white and black notes, the black notes are raised, so they're kind of like "Braille"... You can tell where you're at By feel without looking.

But don't worry, it's fine to look! ☺

7 white notes + 5 black notes = 12 notes total





Note Names and "Middle C"

The 7 note names are the first 7 letters of the alphabet: A, B, C, D, E, F, G, then repeating A...

You can find an "A" by imagining a line at the middle of the three black notes and starting to count from there.

The **"C"** note is important, because there is a "middle C" note on an 88-key keyboard designated with a red triangle at the top of the key. It's used to orient yourself to the keyboard.

Black notes are either "sharps" or "flats" of their neighboring notes. The black note between C and D could be considered a C-sharp (written C#) above the C or a D-flat (written Db) below the D.

The black notes sharps/flats may seem confusing at first, but it's not the *most critical* thing for you to know starting at square one, so don't sweat it for now. ©





Half Steps (Distance between Notes)

The distance between two notes is made up of half steps and whole steps. (Also called "half tones" and "whole tones" depending on what part of the world you live in.

A half-step is the shortest distance and describes ANY two neighboring notes.

There's no difference between black/white notes. ANY two adjacent/neighboring notes are a half-step apart.

Half steps are either white=>white, white=>black, or black=white.

The red arrows show some of the half-steps as examples:





Whole Steps (Distance between Notes)

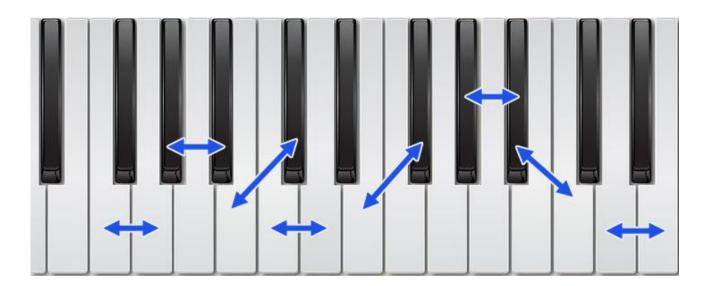
You probably already guessed this, but a **whole step is the same as** (*drumroll please*...) **two half steps.**

A whole step is any two notes with one note between them.

There's no difference between black/white notes. ANY two notes with one note between them is a whole step (or "whole tone") apart.

Whole steps can be either white=>white, black=>black, white=>black, or black=>white.

The blue arrows show some of the whole steps:





Major Scales (Simple Formula)

"Scales" are nothing more than a combination of whole steps and half steps. Music is based on either Major scales or minor scales.

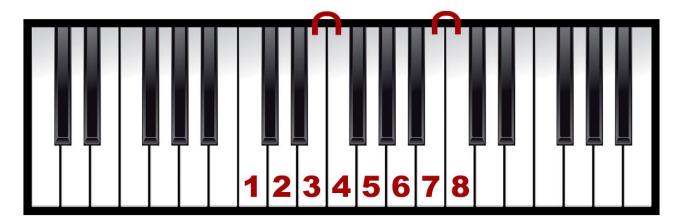
A Major scale sounds happy, think of a marching band at a sporting event. A minor scale sounds more sad and pensive

Way too much time is spent in traditional piano lessons memorizing and practicing these scales, but not with me! © Instead I'm just going to give you a simple formula so you can instantly play ANY Major scale starting on any note.

The Major scale formula is: Whole step, whole step, 1/2 step, whole, whole, whole, ½

In the key of C Major (shown below) that formula happens to be all white keys:

To recap: Half step between 3-4, half-step between 7-8 to play any Major scale.





Major Scales Continued (Simple Formula)

To recap: Half step between 3-4, half-step between 7-8 to play any Major scale.

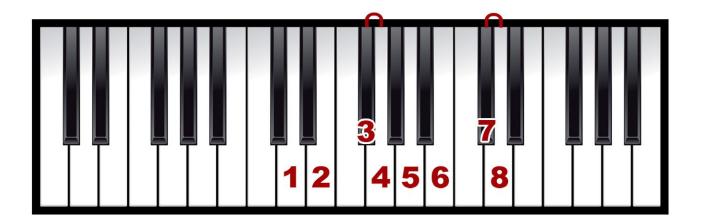
In this next Major scale example we'll start on the D note. (I didn't write in the note names because they *don't matter* here, just start with ANY random note and play a perfect Major scale by following the simple formula.

Again, white notes and black notes are the same.

The Major scale formula is: Whole step, whole step, 1/2 step, whole, whole, ½

Experiment yourself by starting on any key and apply the 3-4 and 7-8 half step formula.

In the key of D Major (shown below) that formula happens to have two black notes:





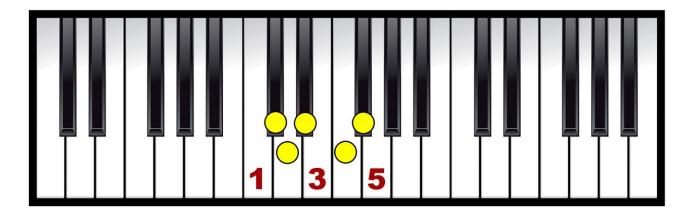
Major Chords (Simple Formula)

Songs are made up of chords played sequentially (one after the other.)

Basic Chords: A basic chord is usually a triad, "tri" meaning it has 3 notes in it played together.

A Major chord uses the 1-3-5 notes of a Major scale. Based on the Major scale intervals, there are always 3 "spaces" between the 1st and 3rd note, and 2 "spaces" between the 3-5 note of the chord.

In the key of C, that looks like this:



Whatever the first note of your Major triad is, leave 3 half notes in between, then play the next note. Then leave two more half-steps in between and play the next note.

The 1-3-5 numbers of the above chord indicate the 1-3-5 notes of the Major scale.

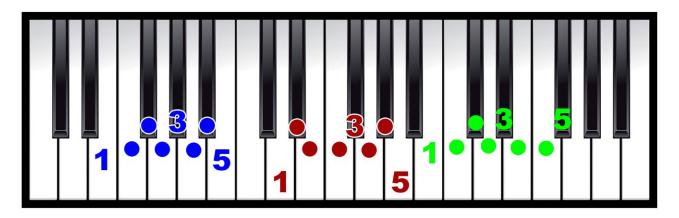


Major Chords (Simple Formula)

Here are three more examples of Major chord triads. The simple formula tells you to **leave 3 half steps** between the 1-3 notes, and 2 half steps between the 3-5 notes for any Major triad.

I don't have the note names written because again, you don't need to even know them here because the formula does all the work.

FYI, the blue chord is E-Major, the red is D-Major, and the green is B-Major, which happens to be the only Major triad that starts on a white key that has two black keys.



Whatever the first note of your Major triad is, leave 3 half notes in between, then play the next note. Then leave two more half-steps in between and play the next note.

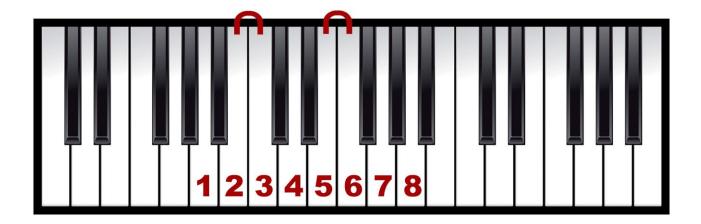
The 1-3-5 numbers of the above chord indicate the 1-3-5 notes of the Major scale.



Minor Scales (Simple Formula) 2-3 5-6

Reminder: Minor scales sound sad/pensive instead of happy

A **minor scale** also only has two half-steps in it: They're from 2-3 and 5-6. In the key of A-minor (Am) that happens to be all white notes. Knowing this formula you can play any minor scale starting from any key.



Note: Instead of writing "A-minor scale" or "A-minor chord" I'll be writing Am scale and Am chord. "m" signifies minor... Without the "m" it's automatically Major.

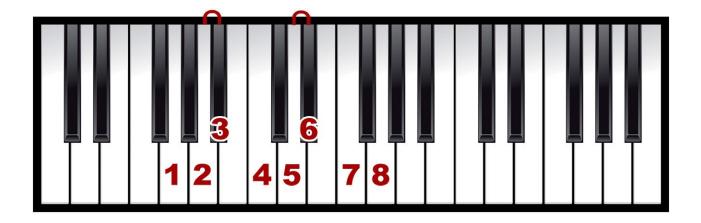
So D = D Major, Dm = D minor. E = E Major, Em = E minor, etc



Minor Scales Continued (Simple Formula) 2-3 5-6

Reminder: Minor scales sound sad/pensive instead of happy

In the Gm scale (short for G-minor) there happens to be two black notes... Again, it's all based on the fact that a minor scale is all whole notes except for half steps between 2-3 and 5-6



Understanding this, you can now quickly work out what any minor scale is. A traditional piano teacher will make you practice these scales over and over, but that misses the bigger point: That knowing how to quickly figure out what notes are in a scale allows you to figure out what related chords to play as well.

Minor triad chords are made up of the 1-3-5 notes of the minor scale. Lets look at some examples.

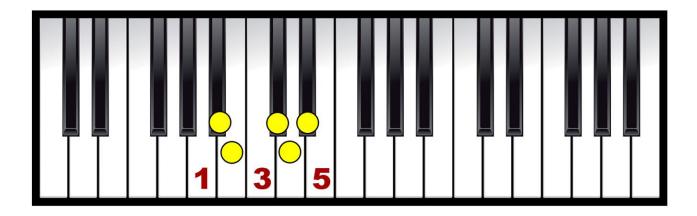


Minor Chords (Simple Formula) 2-3 5-6

A Minor Chord is like a Major Chord but with the 3rd (middle note) down a half step

A minor chord uses the 1-3-5 notes of a minor scale. Based on the minor scale intervals, there are always 2 "spaces" between the 1st & 3rd note, and 3 "spaces" between the 3-5 note of the chord.

For an Am (A-minor) chord, that looks like this:



Minor chords sound sad, while Major chords sound happy. Experiment listening for the difference if you can't tell automatically.

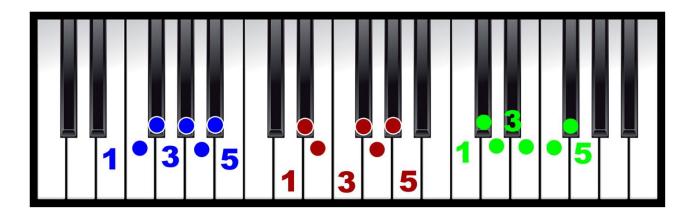


Minor Chords Continued (Simple Formula) 2-3 5-6

A Minor Chord is like a Major Chord but with the 3rd (middle note) down a half step

Lets look at some other minor chord examples, I've color-coded them to make it easier to see.

Here is Em (blue), Dm (red), and Cm (green)



The Cm green chord has a black note in it.

Remember that a **C-MAJOR chord is all white notes**, and that a **minor chord is the same as a Major chord except that the middle 3 note is moved down a half-step**, which in this case changes it from a white note to a black note.



Sharps & Flats: A Practical Discussion

The same black note can be considered either a "sharp" (#) or a "flat" (b) depending on how it's used. (G# moves UP to the black note to the right of G, Ab moves DOWN to the same black note.)

Example: If you were playing an F-Major chord F-A-C and wanted to make it minor, you'd "flat" the A to make it F-Ab-C. If you were playing an E-minor chord E-G-B and you wanted to make it Major,

you'd "sharp" the G to make it G#.

It can get confusing fast. For instance, in classical music, depending on the key of the song, a "C" note may be written as a B#! (Yikes, confusing!)

For our purposes it doesn't matter much what you call black notes, as long as you know what you're playing.

Another example: Bb-Major and A#-Major are

the same chords, but personally if I see A#-Major written in a chart I'll cross it out and write Bb-Major (which is Bb-D-F) just because I'm more comfortable seeing it written that way. (Shrug)

The bottom line is don't worry about it too much, and if you see something written in a way that throws you off (like me with an A#-Major chord), just rewrite it so it makes the most sense to YOU.

<u>Click here</u> to watch Video #3 which gives more examples.

В

Flats Move Dow

E

Sharps Move Up



Left Hand (Start Simple and Add Octave / 5 Notes Later)

Your left hand's main job is often just playing the bass "1" note of whatever chord you're playing. If you're playing a C-Major chord with your right hand, your left hand will play a lower C note.

If you can reach it, you can also play the same note an octave higher (1 - 8 notes) either simultaneously or alternating between them.

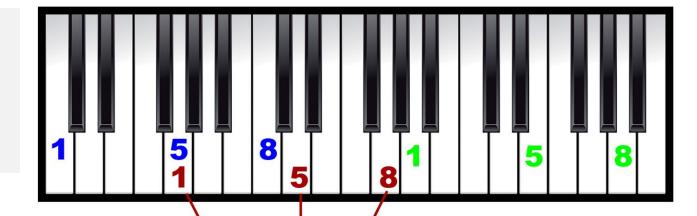
It can also sound nice to add the "5" note, playing each note separately: 1-5 8

The color codes show sample 1-5-8 notes for different keys.

Blue = C chord

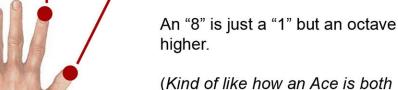
Red = G chord

Green = A chord



Left

Just play the one (1) note for now if you're not able to add the 8 and/or 5 notes yet, that can come later.



(Kind of like how an Ace is both a "1" and "11" in Blackjack, ha ha)

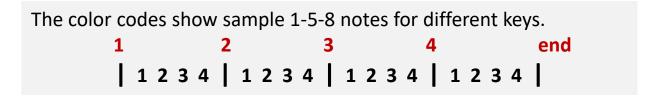
<u>Click here</u> to watch Videos 4 & 5 which explains this in more detail.



Basic Timing (Bars/Measures made up of four quarter notes)

All music and songs are broken down into "measures" (also called "bars"), and normally there are four "quarter notes" in each bar. (That's why you hear drummers count "1, 2, 3, 4" as they count the band in to start a song.)

Measure/Bars are separated by vertical lines. Below show four bars, counting four quarter-notes in each bar:



The simplest and easiest playing style is to play quarter-note chords with your right hand (play the chords four times per measure) while playing the "root" note of the chord with your left hand only on the "1" count of each measure (which would be "whole notes" or on the "1" and "3" of each measure (which would be "half notes".)



The (3) is in parentheses to indicate that it's optional to play the root note on the "3" count.

<u>Click here</u> to watch Videos #6 which explains basic timing in more detail.



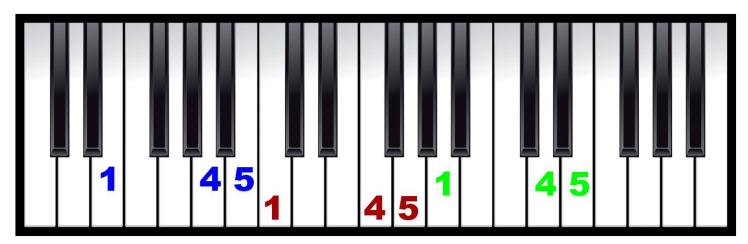
Song Chord Progressions

In addition to using numbers to figure out chords, we'll also be using numbers to indicate what the chord progressions in songs are. A chord progression just means what order the chords are in that make up a song.

The most common chord progression is 1-4-5

(Also printed as I – IV – V for you roman numeral lovers, but we won't be using that.)

In the key of C (red), 1-4-5 means you're playing the chords C-F-G. In the key of E (blue) it's E-A-B chords. In the key of A (green) it's A-D-E chords



Examples of songs that use nothing but the 1-4-5 chords of a scale include: Twist & Shout, Johnny B. Goode, Rock Around The Clock, Old Time Rock & Roll, Margaritaville, Keep Your Hands To Yourself, Free Fallin', most blues songs, as well as hundreds of others.



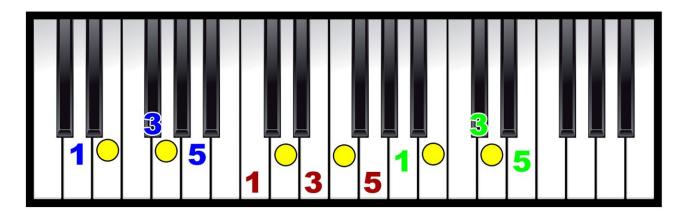
<u>Click here</u> to watch Video #7 which explains this in more detail.

Playing The 2 & 4 As Alternate Notes

To "dress up" your chords, especially if you're playing the same chord for awhile, instead of playing the 3rd note you can alternate it with the 2 and/or 4 sometimes.

Below are some Major chords with the 2 & 4 alternate notes shown as yellow circles.

Blue is D-Major, Red is C-Major, Green is A-Major



Tip: No matter whether you're playing a Major or minor chord, the **2 note is a whole step up from the 1**, and the **4 note is a whole step down from the 5**.

Fun Fact: 1-2-5 and 1-4-5 chords are called "suspended" chords, and they are written as "sus2" or "sus4". (So for a C chord they'd be written "Csus2" or "Csus4")



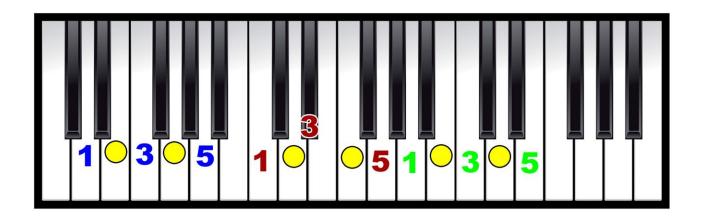
<u>Click here</u> to watch Video #8 which explains this in more detail.

Playing The 2 & 4 As Alternate Notes for Minor Chords

"Dressing up" minor chords by alternating with sus2 or sus4 chords is exactly the same. The only difference between a Major and minor triad is the 3 note, so everything else is exactly the same.

Below are some minor chords with the 2 & 4 alternate notes shown as yellow circles.

Blue is minor, Red is minor, Green is minor



Reminder: No matter whether you're playing a Major or minor chord, the 2 note is a whole step up from the 1, and the 4 note is a whole step down from the 5.

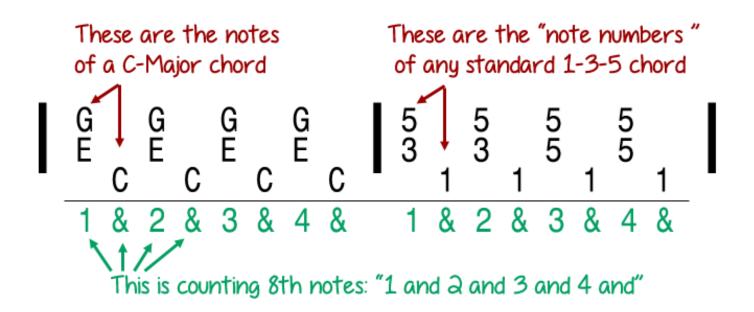
Fun Fact: "Suspended" chords like sus2 and sus4 aren't considered Major OR minor, because there is no Major or minor 3 note in them.



"Rocking" Between Your Thumb And 3-5 Fingers

Another easy way to "dress up" your chords and your playing is instead of playing all 3 notes of a triad chord together, "rock" between playing the top two notes and the thumb.

The green numbers are the COUNT of these two measures, the black letters/numbers show you when to play the notes (they are lined up with the 1/8-note counts)



Don't Worry If This Looks Confusing: Just watch Video #9 and you'll totally get the concept.

Here's A Secret: A lot of times piano things are harder to look at and understand than they are to actually play. ©

<u>Click here</u> to watch Video #9 which explains this in more detail.

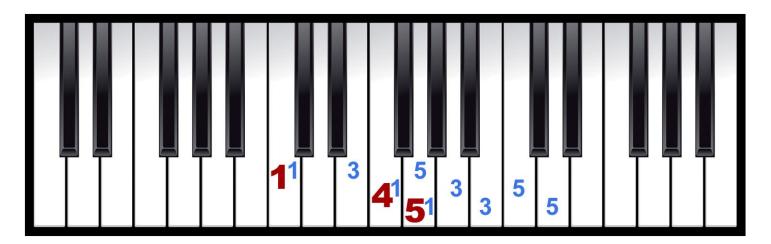


Song Chord Progressions Versus Chords

Important Point: When talking about a 1-4-5 chord progression (in the key of C: C-F-G) the *chords* start on the 1-4-5 notes of the scale, while **each of those individual chords is made up of the 1-3-5 notes of that chord.**

When playing the "1" chord C in the key of C, the 1-3-5 notes are based on the starting C note. When playing the "4" chord F, F is the 4th note of the C scale, but F is also considered the "1" note of its own F chord.

Similarly when playing the "5" chord G, G is the 5th note of the C scale, but G is considered the "1" of its own G chord.



The **red numbers** above indicate the **chords of the song**... The **blue numbers** represent the **notes in each of those 3 chords**.



Using The Sustain Pedal

When you press a sustain pedal the keyboard notes keep ringing even after you take your fingers off the keys. On a traditional piano it's the far left of the three pedals. For electronic keyboards it's usually a stand-alone pedal that looks like the one below, or it can be just a square pedal, but the work the same.

Your playing will sound "choppy" and amateurish if you don't use the sustain pedal correctly. How often you release the pedal depends on how quickly you're changing notes/chords.

A good "default" Is to release the sustain pedal twice per bar/measure, once right before you play the "1" count of a new measure, and again as you're playing the "3" count.



It may feel awkward at first but it soon becomes second nature, and your ear will tell you when to hold/release it based on how it sounds.

You should **use your right foot** to control the sustain pedal even if you prefer using your left foot at first, you'll get used to it over time.



<u>Click here</u> to watch Video #10 which shows a live demonstration of using the sustain pedal.

The Quickest Path To Your Piano Goals

They Say: "There's no such thing as shortcuts to playing the piano quicker, it takes many MANY years and thousands of hours of practice, and anybody that says differently is lying!!!!"

Some people get very upset when I start talking about "shortcuts" to playing the piano. But unless your goal is to be a competitive classical concert pianist, there's a lot you don't need to know, and don't let anyone tell you differently.

I've thrown a lot at you in a short amount of time in this eBook Course and related videos, and it's OK if you don't completely understand everything yet.

Congratulations - You've Taken Your First Step

Great job going through this eBook Course and the videos, you've learned so much in such a short amount of time! The first video has been watched over 10,000,000 times, well over 100,000 people have gone through this eBook and the related videos, and thousands and thousands of happy students have successfully taken the full training and are now playing piano better than they ever thought possible.

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Train Your Ear Play What You Hear

Combined, this drastically shortcuts the time it takes for you to play piano better

3) Train Your Ear to tell when something sounds right or wrong so you know what comes next

> 4) Instead of learning complicated sheet music, play entire songs with the simplest of chord charts

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