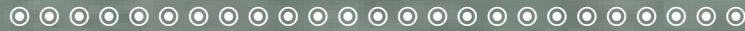


# Tutorial 3K: Dominant Alterations



Welcome! In this tutorial you'll learn how to:

1. Find and use dominant alterations
2. Play whole-tone scales that use alterations
3. Use minor ii-V-I's with dominant alterations
4. Use diminished chords and scales

Enjoy the learning, and see you at sundown ...

Other Tutorials

- 3A: More Melodic Color
- 3B: Melodic Connections
- 3E: Melodic Patterns
- 3F: More About Patterns
- 3H: Rhythmic Development
- 3L: Learning Standard Tunes

- 
- ▶ Dominant alterations are part of a larger scheme of adding color and tension to dominant chords, ii-V-I's, and diminished chords and scales. You can use what you learn here with many tunes and chord progressions.

## Part 1 – Using Altered Dominants

### A) How do altered dominants help affect my solos?

\*Altered dominants help you energize dominant chords for variety. Dominant chords have built-in energy. Jazz music often increases that energy by altering (changing the pitch of) one or more tones in the dominant chord.

### B) What are altered dominants?

\*A dominant alteration occurs when you flat (-) or sharp (+) the 5th or 9th of the dominant chord. The altered notes are indicated after the chord name. For example, C7+9 means the chord is C7, and its 9th degree is sharped (D#).

\*Note: In chord progressions you may see alterations with “#” or “b” signs. This tutorial uses “+” for sharp (such as C7+5) and “-” for flat (such as C7-5).

\*Here are the altered dominant chords in C, with the arpeggios spelled out:

Chord	Arpeggio
C7+5	C E G# Bb (1 3 #5 b7)
C7+5-9	C E G# Bb Db (1 3 #5 b7 b9)
C7+5+9	C E G# Bb D# (1 3 #5 b7 b9)
C7-5	C E Gb Bb (1 3 b5 b7)
C7-5-9	C E Gb Bb Db (1 3 #5 b7 b9)
C7-5+9	C E Gb Bb D# (1 3 #5 b7 b9)
C7+9	C E G Bb D# (1 3 b5 b7 #9)
C7-9	C E G Bb Db (1 3 b5 b7 b9)

Notice that a dominant chord may have an altered 5 and 9 (such as a C7+5+9), but not two of the same kind of alteration (not C7-5+5, for example).

- **TRY IT – Basic:** Around the circle of 4ths, name the -9 and +9 alterations for each dominant chord. **Medium:** Name the -5 and +5 alterations. **Challenge:** Name all the alterations.

### C) How do I practice dominant alterations?

\*You can use flexible arpeggios to hum dominant alterations around the circle of 4ths.

## (Part 1 – Using Altered Dominants)

- **TRY IT** – Hum and finger the dominant 7 flat 5 arpeggios (1 3 -5 b7) around the circle of 4ths. Then hum the dominant 7 sharp 5 arpeggios (1 3 +5 b7). Then hum the dominant 7 flat 9 arpeggios (1 3 5 b7 -9), then the dominant 7 sharp 9 arpeggios (1 3 5 b7 +9).

### D) How do I add dominant alterations in progressions?

\*Besides playing the alterations printed in a dominant chord, you can add alterations that are not specified.

\*For example, when you see an altered dominant with one alteration (such as C7+5), you can play any of the other three alterations (such as the -5, the b9, or the +9). This gives you quite a bit of flexibility in how you improvise over dominant chords.

\*But *don't subtract* alterations. If an alteration is indicated (such as a +9), don't emphasize the unaltered note (natural 9).

\*The example below has a +5, +9, and -9 in G7-5 (1 alteration in the chord, 2 others played).

Dm7b5                      G7b9                      Cm7

+9 -9                      +5

\*If a dominant chord has no alterations (such as C7), you can add any alteration (-5, 5, +9, or -9) to it.

- **TRY IT** – Around the circle of 4ths, choose a +5 or b5 chord, then add all other alterations. Then do the same with b9 or +9 chords.

### D) What other alterations can I use?

The C7-13 chord is like a C7+5, and the C7+11 is like a C7-5, but with the alterations up an octave. For solo melodies, treat C7-13 like C7+5 and C7+11 like C7-5.

Below are some scales you can play against common altered dominant chords (in C).

Chord	Scales
C7+5	Blues (omit 5), whole-tone
C7-5	Blues, Whole-tone, Lydian dominant
C7+9, C7-9	Blues, diminished-1, diminished-whole-tone

### 3

- ▶ **TRY IT** – Over an altered chord, play one of the flexible scales mentioned in this section.

## Part 2 – Using Whole-Tone Scales

### A) What are whole-tone scales?

\*The whole-tone scale contains all whole steps; it has only six different notes (in C, it's C D E F # G# Bb C).

\*Because it has a -5 and a +5, the whole tone scale is ideal for playing against -5 or +5 chords.

\*The D whole-tone scale is just like the C whole-tone scale, up a step. The E, F#, G# (Ab), and Bb whole-tone scales all have the same six pitches as the C whole-tone scale.

\*The other unique whole-tone scale starts on Db; it's related to the whole-tone scales in Eb, F, G, A, and B. You can focus on just two flexible whole-tone scales: C and Db.

1 2 3 #4 #5 b7 8



C Whole-Tone scale

1 2 3 #4 #5 b7 8



Db Whole-Tone scale

### B) How do I practice whole-tone scales?

\*You can practice flexible whole-tone scales around the circle of 4ths.

- ▶ **TRY IT** – Basic: Spell the pitches for the C whole-tone scale, then for the Db whole-tone scale. Medium: Hum and finger 8th-notes for both whole-tone scales.

## Part 3 – Minor ii-V-i Progressions

### A) What are the chords in minor keys?

\*The chords built on each scale tone of C Minor are shown below, with Roman numerals. Chords in minor progressions often have alterations.

Chord	Rom. Num.	Spelling
1) Cm#7	i7	C Eb G B
2) Dm7-5	ii7-5	D F Ab C
3) EbMa7	bIII7	Eb G Bb D
4) Fm7	iv7	F Ab C b
5) G7-9	V7-9	G B D F Ab
6) AbMa7	bVI 7	Ab C Eb G
7) Bdim7	vii7°	B D F A b

\*These roots (C, D, Eb, F, G, Ab, and B) fit the C harmonic minor scale (1 2 b3 4 5 b6 7 8).

\*The III and VII are flatted (bIII, bVI) to fit the tones of C Harmonic Minor.

### B) How do minor ii-V-i's and harmonic minor fit together?

\*The ii chord in C Minor is a Dm7-5; it's also called "half-diminished." The V chord in C Minor is G7-9. In C Minor, the minor ii-V-i progression is Dm7b5 (D, F, Ab, C) to G7-9 (G B D F Ab) to Cm (C Eb G). All these chord tones fit in the harmonic minor scale.

\*Below is a melody written over a minor ii-V-i progression. Because all the notes fit the harmonic minor scale, you could play a C harmonic minor scale over all three chords of a minor ii-V-i progression:



Dm7b5

G7-9

Cmi



\*For variety, you can also use the natural 6 on the minor "i" chord (such as Ab for the Dm7-5 and the G7-9 chords, then A natural for the C Minor chord). This sounds like a Dorian or melodic minor ascending scale.

- **TRY IT – Basic:** Around the circle of 4ths, write the ii-V-i progression for each minor key. **Medium:** Name the b5 degree for each chord around the circle of 4ths. **Challenge:** Play a flexible harmonic minor scale for each minor ii-V-i in the circle of 4ths. Practice Pages

## 5

### (Part 3 – Minor ii-V-I Progressions)



#### B) What is the minor blues?

\*The minor blues is a popular jazz chord progression. It uses a minor ii-V-i progression over the last four bars, as in the example below.

| Cm7 | Fm7 | Cm7 | Cm7 |

i iv i i

| Fm7 | Fm7 | Cm7 | Cm7 |

iv iv I i

| Dm7-5 | G7-9 | Cm7 | Cm7 ||

ii V i i

\*For variety, minor blues progressions sometimes add ii-V's or ii-V-i's.

In the example below, the iv chord is still on the fifth bar (where it normally occurs in the blues), but this time the iv can also be thought of as a ii chord: the ii-V-I of Eb Major.

| Cm7 | Dm7-5 G7-9 | Cm7 | Gm7-5 C7-9 |

i ii V i (ii-----V of Fm7)

| Fm7 | Bb7 | EbMa7 | Ab7 |

iv (ii---V--- I of Eb) VI

| Dm7-5 | G7-9 | Cm7 | G7-9 ||

ii V i V

- **TRY IT – Basic:** Write the basic minor blues progressions in all 12 keys. **Medium:** Write a minor blues variation in two keys of your choice. **Challenge:** Write minor blues variations in 4 other keys.

#### C) How do I use substitute chords in minor?

\*Dominant chords can also resolve to any of these substitutes for the minor “I” chord:

- Up a half step from the V, going to the bVI of minor (such as G7 to AbMa7)
- Down a major third from the V, going to the bIII of minor (such as G7 to EbMa)

\*These alternate resolutions add variety to chord progressions. They are an effective way to stretch a progression out so it can resolve to the “i” chord at a later point.

## 6

- ▶ **TRY IT – Basic:** Write ii-V-bVI progressions in all keys around the circle of 4ths. **Medium:** Write ii-V-bIII progressions in all keys around the circle of 4ths.

## Part 4 – Diminished Chords & Scales

### A) What are diminished chords?

\*A diminished chord contains all minor-third intervals. The C diminished triad is written as C° (C Eb Gb); the C diminished 7 chord is written as C°7 (C Eb Gb A).

\*In jazz, the diminished chord usually resolves up a half-step from its root, so C° would resolve to a C# chord. However, the diminished chord can also resolve up a half-step from *any* of its chord tones, so C°7 (C Eb Gb A) could resolve to C#, E, G, or Bb.

- ▶ **TRY IT – Basic:** Going around the circle of 4ths, spell all the diminished 7 chords. **Medium:** Hum all diminished 7 chords. **Challenge:** Name three different ways to resolve each diminished 7 chord.

### B) What is the diminished-1 scale?

\*The diminished-1 scale is useful for dominant or diminished chords. The diminished-1 scale alternates between half-steps and whole-steps for the entire scale.

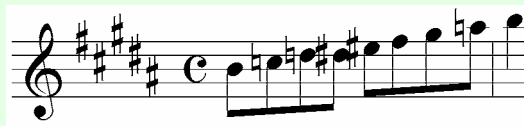
\*The C diminished-1 scale is C Db Eb E F # G A Bb C. Notice that there are 8 different pitches in this scale instead of the usual 7. The scale contains the -9 (Db), +9 (Eb), and -5 (F#) alterations. For example:

1 b9 #9 3#4 5 6 b7 8



C Diminished-1 scale

1 b9 #9 3#4 5 6 b7 8



B Diminished-1 scale

- ▶ **TRY IT – Basic:** Spell the pitches for the C diminished-1 scale, then for all diminished-1 scales. **Medium:** Hum & finger 8th-notes for all diminished-1 scales around circle of 4ths, quarter-note = 120. **Challenge**

# 7

## C) What is the diminished whole-tone scale?

\*The diminished-whole-tone scale contains all four alterations: -9 (Db), +9 (Eb), -5 (F#), and +5 (G#). The first half of this scale is diminished (half-step, whole-step), and the last half is whole-tone.

\*The diminished whole-tone scale is a strong choice for dominant alterations.

1 b9 #9 3 #4 #5 b7 8



C Diminished-WT scale

1 b9 #9 3 #4 #5 b7 8

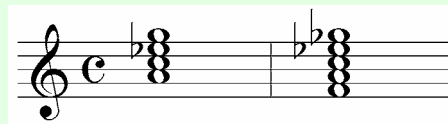


A Diminished-WT scale

- ▶ **TRY IT – Basic:** Spell the pitches for the C diminished-whole-tone scale, then for the other 11. **Medium:** Hum and finger eighth-notes for all diminished-whole-tone scales around the circle of 4ths, at quarter-note = 100. **Challenge**

## C) Can I substitute dominant for diminished chords?

\*Yes, you can substitute a dominant chord for it, with a new root that's a major third below the diminished 7 chord root. For example, when you see A<sup>o</sup>7 (A C Eb Gb), think down a major third to F. The resulting F7-9 chord (F A C Eb Gb) works well; it can also be altered with the +9, or +5, or b5.



\*Add a new root a major third below; it makes the new dominant chord sound like a fuller version of the diminished chord.

- ▶ **TRY IT –** Name a dominant chord that could be substituted for each diminished 7 chord, around the circle of 4ths.

---

That's all for Tutorial 3K!

Next is the Quiz –to get started, go to the next page.



## QUIZ - 3K: Dominant Alterations

Click on the letter for the best answer for each question. You'll hear a C Maj6 arpeggio if you're right. If you miss 2 or less, you pass the Tutorial!

Or, click **Back**  to review the Tutorial before taking the Quiz.

1) Which is not a dominant alteration?

A) +9 B) b5 C) b9 D) +3

2) Which note is in a B diminished-whole-tone scale?

A) C# B) E C) G D) G#

3) Which note is in a C diminished-1 scale?

A) G B) F C) B D) all of these are

4) How many notes are different between a Bb diminished 7 chord and an E diminished chord?

A) 0 B) 1 C) 2 D) 4

5) What dominant chord could you substitute for a D diminished chord?

A) B7 B) Bb7 C) A7 D) none of these

6) A minor ii-V-I in Em would include which chord?

A) F#m7 B) A7 C) F#m7b5 D) A7b9

7) How many notes are different between a G whole-tone scale and an Ab whole-tone scale?

A) 0 B) 1 C) 2 D) they are all different

8) You should not

A) add alterations to an unaltered dominant B) use different alterations than the ones indicated by the chord C) use the unaltered notes when alterations are indicated D) these are all OK to do



Sunset, California Coast  
© 2003 Visual Jazz Publications