

# Tutorial 1B: Chords and Scales



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

1. Read and understand chord symbols
2. Build major chords and Lydian scales
3. Build dominant chords and scales
4. Build minor chords and scales

Enjoy the learning, and watch out for llamas!

Other Level 1 Tutorials

- 1A: Virtual Practice
- 1C: Melodic Color
- 1D: Rhythmic Variety
- 1E: Flexible Scale Levels
- 1F: Using Expression
- 1G: Develop Motifs/Phrases
- 1J: Chords, Keys, Progressions

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► Learning the basic chords and scales will help you master chord progressions. Using the SHAPE and flexible-scale approaches will help you enjoy and benefit from your scale and chord practice even more than you thought was possible.

## Part 1 – Reading and Understanding Chord Symbols

### A) What are chord symbols?



\*They are musical shorthand (such as CMaj7) to guide you through chord progressions for solos.

\*They contain three parts:

- a pitch-letter (such as C) to indicate the key;
- the chord type: major (Ma) or minor (m),
- the number that indicates the top note of the chord (6, 7, 9, 11, or 13)

\*Dominant chords use numbers but omit chord type letters (such as C9, not Cdom9)

### B) What are some examples of chord symbols?

Major: CMaj7, EbMaj7, AMaj9, BbMaj6

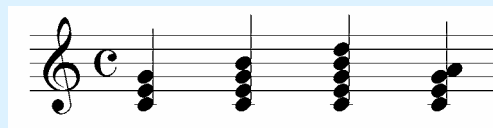
Dominant: C9, Db13, F#7, Ab7

Minor: C#m7, Bm9, Gm11, Ebm6

## Part 2 – Building Major Chords and Lydian Scales

### A) What are the major chord types?

\*The most common are Major, Major 7, Major 9, Major 6:



C Major C Major 7 C Major 9 C Major 6  
(1 3 5) (1 3 5 7) (1 3 5 7 9) (1 3 5 6)

- **TRY IT - Basic:** Spell pitches for the C Major 7 arpeggio from bottom to top, then for the other Major 7 arpeggios in the circle of 4ths. **Medium:** Spell major 9 arpeggios the same way.

### B) How do I practice flexible major chords (arpeggios)?

\*Below, the notes fit the chord but are in random order.



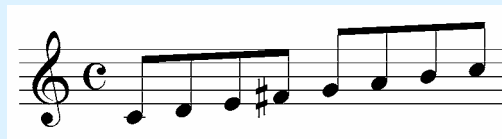
## 2

### (Part 2 – Major and Lydian)

#### C) What is a Lydian Scale? MORE

\*It's just like a major scale, except with a sharp 4th.

\*The Lydian scale is a good alternative for soloing on a major chord; the sharp 4th adds melodic "color."



C Lydian Scale



Ab Lydian Scale

- ▶ **TRY IT - Basic:** Spell the pitches for the C Lydian scale, then for the other Lydian scales around the circle of 4ths. **Medium:** Spell the pitches for all 12 Lydian scales, from *top to bottom*, in 2 minutes or less.

#### D) What about flexible Lydian scales?

\*Here's an example with a few skips in the melody:

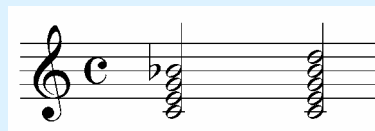


Flexible Lydian scale with skips

- ▶ **TRY IT - Basic:** Hum and finger 8th-notes for all 12 flexible Lydian scales, around the circle of 4ths, quarter-note = 120. **Medium Challenge**

### Part 3 – Dominant Chords and Scales

#### A) How are dominant chords spelled?



C7 (1, 3, 5, b7) C9 (1, 3, 5, b7, 9)

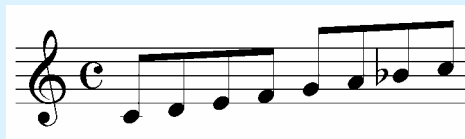
- ▶ **TRY IT - Basic:** Spell the pitches for the C dominant arpeggios, then for the other dominant arpeggios, around the circle of 4ths.

### 3

## (Part 3 - Dominant Chords & Scales)

### B) What is a Mixolydian (Dominant) Scale?

\* It's just like major except it has a flatted 7.



C Mixolydian scale      b7

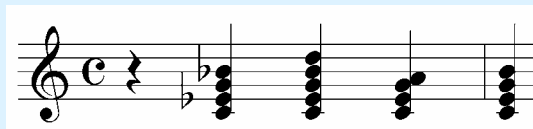


A Mixolydian scale      b7

- ▶ **TRY IT - Basic:** Spell the pitches for the C Mixolydian scale, then for the other Mixolydian scales around the circle of 4ths. **Medium:** Spell the pitches for all 12 Mixolydian scales, from *top to bottom*, in 2 minutes or less.
- ▶ **TRY IT - Basic:** Hum and finger 8th-notes for all 12 flexible Mixolydian scales, around the circle of 4ths, quarter-note = 120. **Medium Challenge**

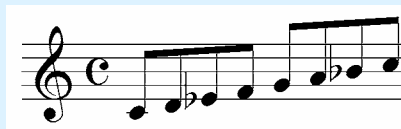
## Part 4 - Minor Chords and Scales

### A) How are minor chords spelled?



Cm7      Cm9      Cm6      CmN7  
(1 b3 5 b7) (1 b3 5 b7 9) (1 b3 5 6) (1 b3 5 7)

- ▶ **TRY IT -** Spell pitches for the C Major 7 arpeggio from bottom to top, then for the other Major 7 arpeggios in the circle of 4ths. Then spell major 9 arpeggios the same way.
- B) How do I practice flexible minor chords (arpeggios)?  
\*Use the strategy described in Part 2b, using a b3 and b7.
- C) What is a Dorian (Minor) Scale?  
\* It's just like major except it has a flatted 7 and 3.



C Dorian scale

## 4

### (Part 4 – Minor Chords & Scales)



E Dorian scale

- ▶ **TRY IT** – Basic: Spell the pitches for the C Dorian scale, then for the other Dorian scales around the circle of 4ths. Medium: Spell the pitches for all 12 Dorian scales, from *top to bottom*, in 2 minutes or less.
- ▶ **TRY IT** – Basic: Hum and finger 8th-notes for all 12 flexible Dorian scales, around the circle of 4ths, quarter-note = 120. Medium Challenge


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That's all for Tutorial 1B!

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

## QUIZ - 1B: Building Chords and Scales

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) What are the notes in a BbMaj7 chord?

A) Bb Db F Ab B) Bb D F C) Bb D F Ab D) Bb D F A

2) What note does not belong in a C7 chord?

A) E B) B C) G D) Bb

3) What's the 4th degree of an Eb Lydian scale?

A) Bb B) Ab C) A D) B

4) What note doesn't belong in a Dm7 chord?

A) F# B) F C) C D) A

4) Which of these chords is dominant?

A) F#m7 B) EMaj7 C) Db9 D) Am9

5) Which scale has a #4 degree?

A) Major B) Dorian C) Mixolydian D) Lydian

6) If you changed a C Mixolydian scale to a C Dorian scale, what note would be different?

A) Bb B) Eb C) D D) A

7) What scale best fits a Bm7 chord?

A) B Mixolydian B) Bb Major C) B Lydian D) B Dorian

8) Which scale does not have a flat 7?

A) Major B) Mixolydian C) Dorian D) they all do



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