

Chord Formulas

Basic Chords: Triads and 7ths

Those marked with an asterisk (*) are essential

Chord Type	Name	Formula	Example
Triads	major	1 - 3 - 5	C
	minor	1 - b3 - 5	Cm
	augmented	1 - 3 - #5	Caug
	diminished	1 - b3 - b5	Cdim
	suspended 4	1 - 4 - 5	Csus4
	suspended 2	1 - 2 - 5	Csus2
Sevenths	major 7	1 - 3 - 5 - 7	Cmaj7
	dominant 7	1 - 3 - 5 - b7	C7
	minor 7	1 - b3 - 5 - b7	Cm7
	minor (major 7)	1 - b3 - 5 - 7	Cm(maj7)
	half diminished 7	1 - b3 - b5 - b7	Cm7b5
	diminished 7	1 - b3 - b5 - bb7	Cdim7

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Adding Extensions to Triads

Recall the extensions:

- 2 = 9
- 4 = 11
- 6 = 13

Chord Type	Name	Formula	Example
Extensions to triads	add9	maj or min triad - 9	Cadd9, Cmadd9
	add11	maj or min triad - 11	Cadd11, Cmadd11
	6	maj or min triad - 6	C6, Cm6
	6/9	maj or min triad - 6 - 9	C6/9, Cm6/9

NOTE: 'add' is not used with 6th chords

Adding Extensions to 7th Chords

Chord Type	Name	Formula	Example
Major 7th Family (all have 3 & 7)	major 7	1 - 3 - 5 - 7	Cmaj7
	major 9	1 - 3 - 5 - 7 - 9	Cmaj9
	major 11	1 - 3 - 5 - 7 - 9 - 11	Cmaj11 (rare)
	major 13	1 - 3 - 5 - 7 - 9 - 11 - 13	Cmaj13
Dominant 7th Family (all have 3 & b7)	dominant 7	1 - 3 - 5 - b7	C7
	dominant 9	1 - 3 - 5 - b7 - 9	C9
	dominant 11	1 - 3 - 5 - b7 - 9 - 11	C11
	dominant 13	1 - 3 - 5 - b7 - 9 - 11 - 13	C13
Minor 7th Family (all have b3 & b7)	minor 7	1 - b3 - 5 - b7	Cm7
	minor 9	1 - b3 - 5 - b7 - 9	Cm9
	minor 11	1 - b3 - 5 - b7 - 9 - 11	Cm11
	minor 13	1 - b3 - 5 - b7 - 9 - 11 - 13	Cm13

NOTE: Often leave out 5 and lower extensions

You can suspend 7th chords too, eg. C7sus4

Altered Notes

- You can alter any notes other than the 3 and 7, as these determine the family. All possible alterations are covered by b5, #5, b9, and #9, although you may see #11 instead of b5.
- The alteration is noted at the end of the chord name, e.g. Cmaj7#5, C7b9, Cadd#11, Cmaj7#11

Slash Chords

- These have a different root listed after the slash, eg C/B is C with a B root.

Quartals

- These are built by stacking 4ths, eg. 1-4-7-3, 1-#4-7-3, 1-4-b7-3, or 1-4-b7-b3.