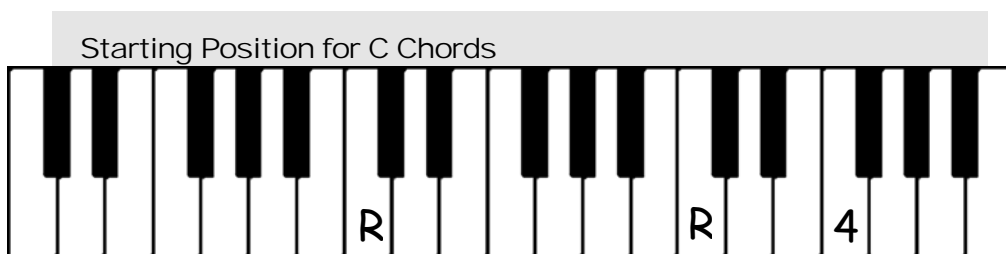


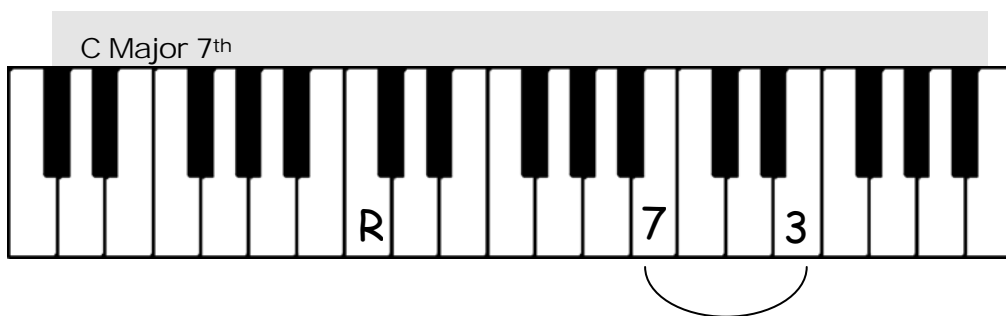
Chapter 3: Major 7th Chords and How to Find Them

OK, Now let's get into using the system!

Demonstration: Finding CM7 and Cm7 from the Starting Position for all C Chords



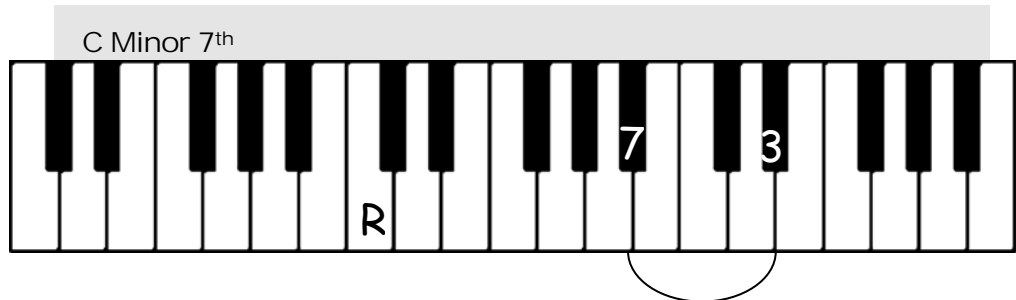
From the Starting Position (R, R and 4th), you will move the top two notes down a **half-step each** to find a Major 7th Chord.



Down a half-step from Starting Position

MAJOR 7TH CHORDS AND HOW TO FIND THEM

From the Starting Position (R, R and 4th), you will move the top two notes down a **whole-step each** to find a Minor 7th Chord.



Down a whole-step from
Starting Position

Note: a whole step is the same as two half-steps.

NOTE: People sometimes are confused that you move the top two notes a half-step for a Major 7th and a whole step for a Minor 7th. They wonder, why do you move “more” for minor than major?

*The starting position is higher in pitch, and therefore more to the right on the keyboard than **any** of the final chords. That’s why you move further to the left for a Minor 7th chord than a Major 7th chord, because the Root and 4th (in the starting position) are the highest position in the chord, you will be moving down (to the left) to find the 7th and 3rd of each chord.*

When you talk about “high” and “low” on the keyboard, “high” is more to the right, “low” is more to the left.

Nate's Three Finger Piano Method: Finding the Starting Position

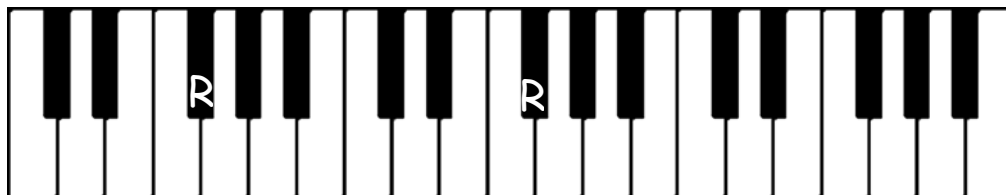
Step 1

Find the Root of the Chord in Octaves. If it's a C Major 7th Chord, you would find two Cs:



Play the left Root in the left hand and the right Root in the right hand.

If the chord were F# Minor 7th Chord, you would find two F#s:

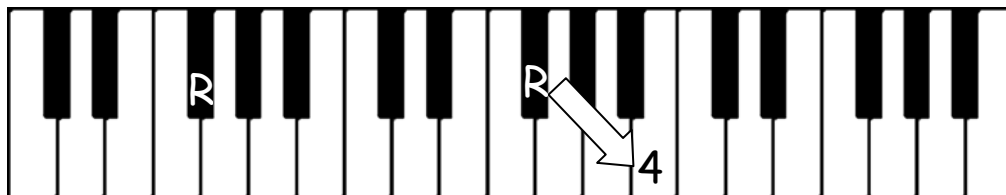


Step 2

Now find the root in your right hand and find the note a 4th above (to the right). If you're finding a C Major 7th Chord, the 4th above the Root (C) would be F.



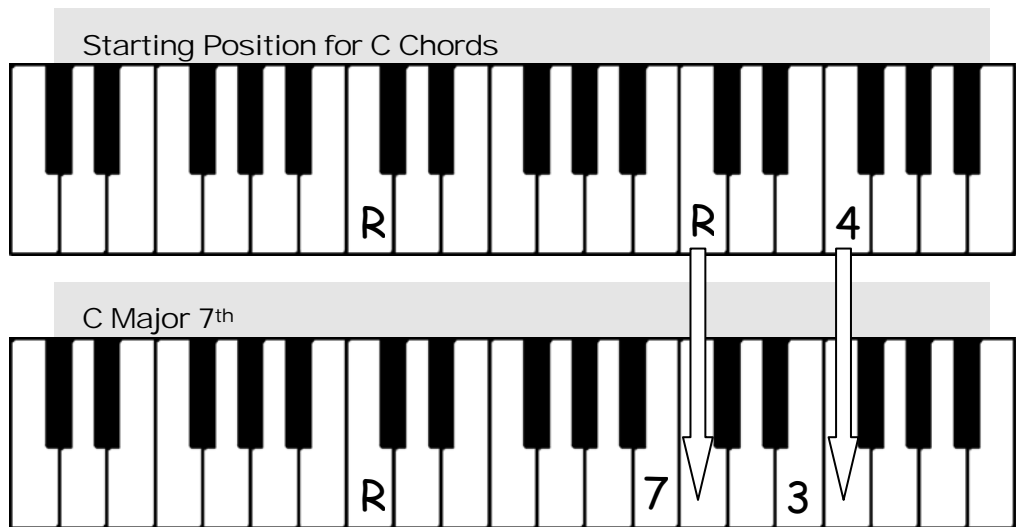
If you're finding a F# Minor 7th Chord, the 4th above Root (F#) would be B.



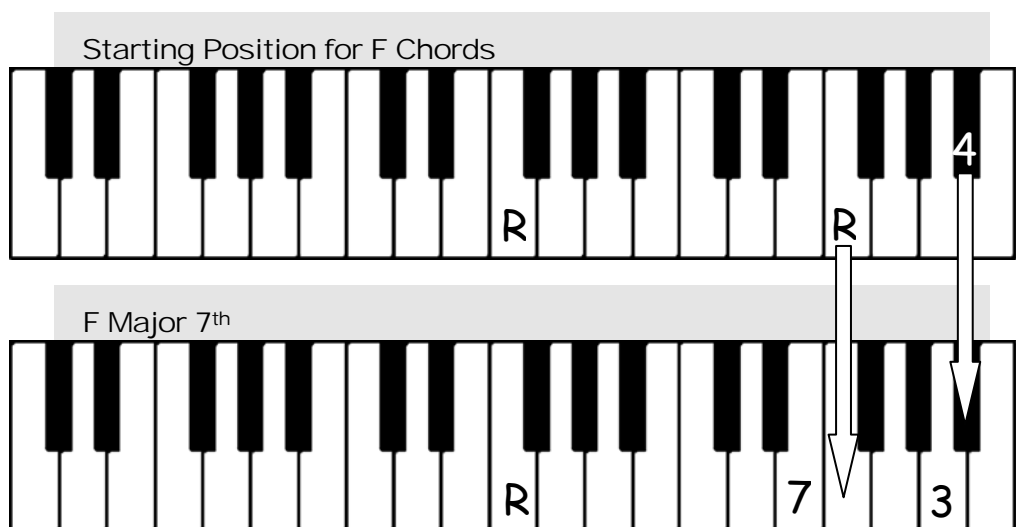
Finding the Quality from the Starting Position

What you have so far is what we'll call the starting position. The starting position is the Root of the chord in octaves with the fourth above the higher root (the one in your right hand). The Third step is to move the top two notes to left. You will do it one of six different ways. The first way is when you want to find a Major 7th Chord.

Step 3 for Major Seventh Chords, Move the top two notes (the higher Root and 4th) down a half-step (one key to the left). For C Major 7th (CM7):



For F Major 7th (FM7):



MAJOR 7TH CHORDS AND HOW TO FIND THEM

OK, while you don't have to read music to understand this book, it will help if you have a sense of it.

Here are steps one through 3 for both CM7 and FM7. If you read music, this will be a review of the last few pages. If you don't read music, use this opportunity to try to start understanding music some.

Top two notes are written on the top staff, and are played in the right hand

The bottom note (the Root) will be played in the left hand, and are written here in the bottom staff. Most of the time, I won't write out the bass for you, since the bass note is given in the chord name.

C in octaves	Starting Position for all C chords	CM7	F in octaves	Starting Position for all F chords	FM7
R	4 R	3 7	R	4 R	3 7
R	R	R	R	R	R

Here is the same thing, but with the notes written out for those of you who don't read music well yet.

C in octaves	Starting Position for all C chords	CM7	F in octaves	Starting Position for all F chords	FM7
C	F C	E B	F	Bb F	A E
C	C	C	F	F	F

Practicing moving from CM7 to FM7

These two chords are quite common, and I want you to familiarize yourself with them right away, because I will be using various C and F chords to demonstrate much of the theory in this book. Yes, there are many other chords, but it will be easier to understand the concepts if we just concentrate on these two roots for now.

CM7 FM7 CM7 FM7
(with top note down octave)

3 3 3 7
7 7 7 3

In the first measure above, you'll see the two chords you learned on the previous page written out in notation. The numbers underneath indicate what chord degree the notes represent. In other words, in the first chord, CM7, the 3 represents that the top note of that chord is the 3rd. The 7 represents that the middle note of that chord is the 7th.

Where is the bottom note? Well, to save space in the book, I've written only the treble clef. The bottom note will always be written in the chord name. So for the first chord, the bottom note (played in the left hand) is C! For the next chord, it's F! That's easy isn't it. This is also good practice, because fake books don't give you the bass either!

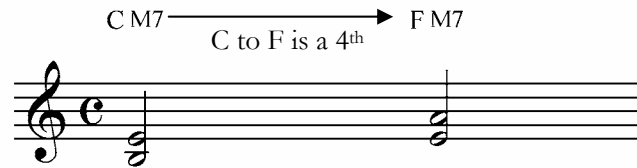
CM7 FM7 CM7 FM7
(with top note down octave)

E A E E
B E B A

Common tone

Here, I've given you the same selection, but with the note names written underneath (very handy if you don't read music). Notice that in the second measure the 3rd of the CM7 chord (E) becomes the 7th of the FM7 (E, as well, of course). This is a phenomenon that will become very clear to you as we go through the book. That's because these two chords are related by the **circle of fifths**. I know, it sounds

mysterious and powerful doesn't it? Like Stonehenge or the Knights of the Round Table. But the circle of fifths is quite easy. All it means is that the **roots** of the two chords are **related by a 4th**.



Chords that are related by the circle of fifths are used all the time in every style of music from Bach to Rap. Because they are used so often, it is good to learn patterns of chords moving around the circle of fifths with smooth voice leading.

Smooth Voice leading means that the notes in one chord move to the notes in the next chord in the smoothest way possible. As you can see below, in the second measure, the B moves down a whole-step to the A, which is much smoother than what happens in the first measure, where the B jumps up almost a whole octave to the A.

Poor voice Leading	Smooth voice Leading
<p>C M7 F M7</p> <p>E Both notes jump a 4th; not smooth A</p> <p>B E</p>	<p>C M7 F M7 (with top note down octave)</p> <p>E Top note stays the same, bottom note moves down a whole step: much smoother! E</p> <p>B A</p>

Voices are the notes in a chord. If the top note of each chord above is a voice, it would stay on the same note in the second measure (which is quite smooth) and it would jump up a 4th in the first measure (not very smooth). The middle voice drops down a whole step in the second measure (a smaller, smoother interval), and it jumps up a 4th (the same as the top note) in the first measure (not very smooth).

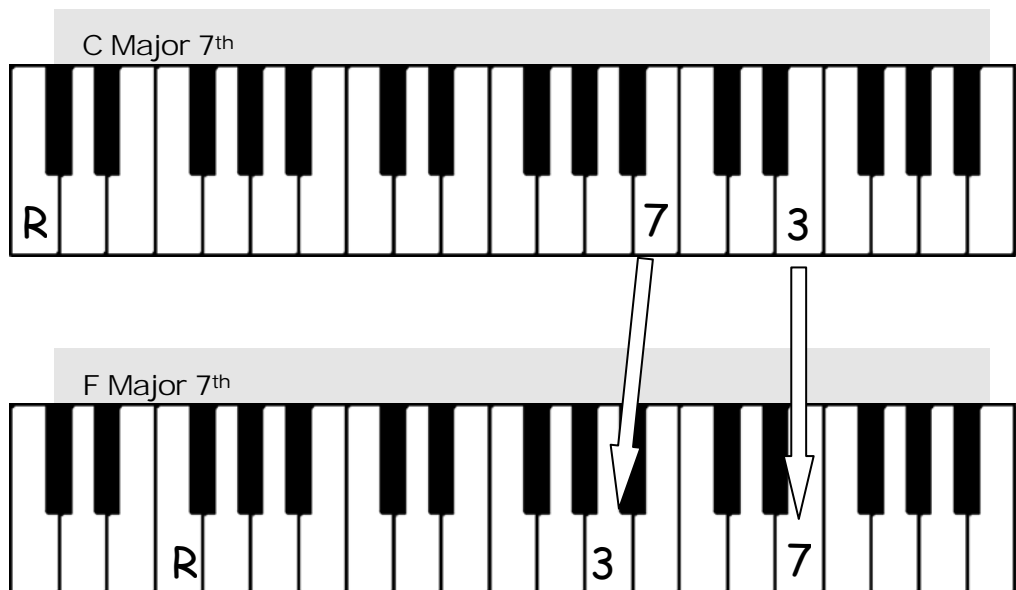
As you can see, playing chords with smooth voice leading is a very desirable skill to learn, and we will discuss it in the second half of this book – but first, you'll have to learn how to find the notes in chords before you learn how to move smoothly between

them. In this book, we will learn two ways to play chords – in the first one, we'll put the 3rd on top and the 7th in the middle.

As soon as you start to grow confident playing them in this first voicing, we will learn the second voicing, in which the order of the notes are reversed: the 7th will be on top and the 3rd in the middle. This is the voicing of FM7 you see in the second measure up above. By switching the order of the 7th and 3rd of the *second* chord when you switch between two chords related by the circle of fifths – you will create very smooth, pleasing chord changes.

Since these patterns are used so often, it is usually preferable to memorize these “changes” or groups of two chords, and how to move between them smoothly, rather than learning the chords individually. So, for those who *can* start memorizing these patterns right away before learning all the chords, I would recommend it. When you read, if you can look at two chords and know what to do instead of one, it will allow you to read *faster* as well as smoother.

Moving from CM7 to FM7 with Smooth Voice Leading

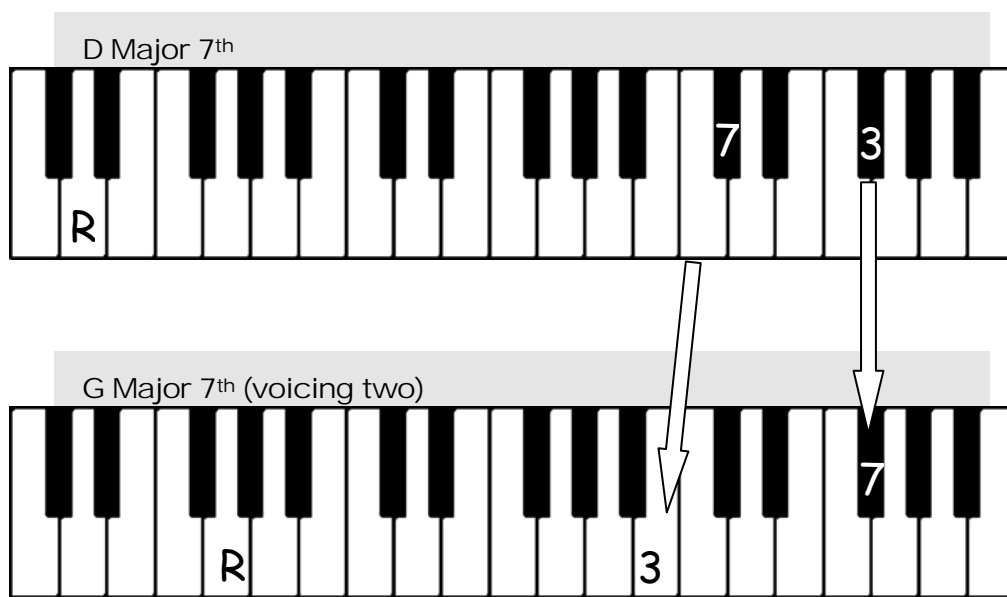


Things to remember when moving around the circle of fifths between two chords:

- The root will go up a fourth
- the top note stays the same
- the middle note drops either a whole step or a half-step (depending on the qualities of the chord – If moving from a Major 7th to a Major 7th, as demonstrated above, the middle note will go down a whole step).

Moving from DM7 to GM7 with Smooth Voice Leading

OK, so let's look at this same smooth voice leading pattern with two other common chords. This is the exact same pattern as with CM7 to FM7, but *everything* has been taken up a whole step.



As an exercise, try to transpose this pattern up another whole step (EM7 to AM7) without finding it later in the book.

Practice Finding Major 7th Chords

Use Nate's Three Finger Piano Method.

C in octaves
Starting Position for all C chords
C M7
F in octaves
Starting Position for all F chords
F M7

5 Bb in octaves
Starting Position for all Bb chords
B^bM7
Eb in octaves
Starting Position for all Eb chords
E^bM7

9 Ab in octaves
Starting Position for all Ab chords
A^bM7
Db in octaves
Starting Position for all Db chords
D^bM7

NATE'S THREE FINGER PIANO METHOD

F# in octaves Starting Position for all F# chords F#M7 B in octaves Starting Position for all B chords BM7

F# F# F# B B B

E in octaves Starting Position for all E chords EM7 A in octaves Starting Position for all A chords AM7

5

E E E A A A

D in octaves Starting Position for all D chords DM7 G in octaves Starting Position for all G chords GM7

9

D D D G G G

Note: every 2nd chord is a voicing 2 chord, written as "v2" in parentheses. To find the second chord in each measure, just

Moving from Major 7th Chord to Major 7th Chord

a) take the middle note of the 1st chord in each measure down a whole step (for example, B to A in the first measure) and

b) change the Root of the 1st chord to the Root of the second (for example, C to F in the first measure). (Remember, I haven't written the Root of each chord out in notation, because it's in the name of the chord!

Chord progressions and voice leading annotations:

- Measure 1: CM7 (E, B, G) → FM7(v2) (E, A, C). Annotations: E → E (SAME NOTE), B → A (DOWN WHOLE STEP).
- Measure 2: B^bM7 (B^b, F, A^b) → E^bM7(v2) (E^b, B^b, G^b). Annotations: B^b → B^b (SAME NOTE), F → F (SAME NOTE), A^b → G^b (DOWN WHOLE STEP).
- Measure 3: A^bM7 (A^b, E^b, G^b) → D^bM7(v2) (D^b, A^b, C^b). Annotations: A^b → A^b (SAME NOTE), E^b → E^b (SAME NOTE), G^b → C^b (DOWN WHOLE STEP).
- Measure 4: F[#]M7 (F[#], C[#], E[#]) → B M7(v2) (B, F[#], D[#]). Annotations: F[#] → B (DOWN WHOLE STEP), C[#] → F[#] (DOWN WHOLE STEP), E[#] → D[#] (DOWN WHOLE STEP).
- Measure 5: E M7 (E, B, D[#]) → A M7(v2) (A, F[#], C[#]). Annotations: E → A (DOWN WHOLE STEP), B → F[#] (DOWN WHOLE STEP), D[#] → C[#] (DOWN WHOLE STEP).
- Measure 6: D M7 (D, A, C[#]) → G M7(v2) (G, D, B). Annotations: D → G (DOWN WHOLE STEP), A → D (DOWN WHOLE STEP), C[#] → B (DOWN WHOLE STEP).
- Measure 7: F M7 (F, C, E) → B^bM7(v2) (B^b, F, A^b). Annotations: F → B^b (DOWN WHOLE STEP), C → F (DOWN WHOLE STEP), E → A^b (DOWN WHOLE STEP).
- Measure 8: E^bM7 (E^b, B^b, G^b) → A^bM7(v2) (A^b, E^b, G^b). Annotations: E^b → A^b (DOWN WHOLE STEP), B^b → E^b (DOWN WHOLE STEP), G^b → G^b (SAME NOTE).
- Measure 9: D^bM7 (D^b, A^b, C^b) → G^bM7(v2) (G^b, D^b, F^b). Annotations: D^b → G^b (DOWN WHOLE STEP), A^b → D^b (DOWN WHOLE STEP), C^b → F^b (DOWN WHOLE STEP).
- Measure 10: B M7 (B, F[#], D[#]) → E M7(v2) (E, B, G[#]). Annotations: B → E (DOWN WHOLE STEP), F[#] → B (DOWN WHOLE STEP), D[#] → G[#] (DOWN WHOLE STEP).
- Measure 11: A M7 (A, F[#], C[#]) → D M7(v2) (D, A, C[#]). Annotations: A → D (DOWN WHOLE STEP), F[#] → A (DOWN WHOLE STEP), C[#] → C[#] (SAME NOTE).
- Measure 12: G M7 (G, D, B) → C M7(v2) (C, G, E). Annotations: G → C (DOWN WHOLE STEP), D → G (DOWN WHOLE STEP), B → E (DOWN WHOLE STEP).