Click Here

Download Printable Checkoff Sheet (PDF): Basic Major and Minor Chords*Checkpoints can be divided into daily, weekly or monthly lessons. Choose a speed that works for you.Checkpoint 1 - Learn how to play major chords.All Major ChordsMajor Chords (White, White, White) 1 VideoJam 1 VideoMajor Chords (White, Black, White) 1 VideoJam 1 VideoCheckpoint 2 - More Major ChordsMajor Chords (Black, White, Black) 1 VideoJam 1 VideoMajor Chords (Others) 1 VideoJam 1 VideoCheckpoint 3 - Learn how to play minor chords.*Notice that minor chords are almost like major chords...all you have to do is lower the middle note a half step.All Minor ChordsMinor Chords (White, Black, White) 1 VideoJam 1 VideoMinor Chords (White, White, White) 1 VideoJam 1 VideoCheckpoint 4 - More Minor ChordsMinor Chords (Black, White, Black) 1 VideoJam 1 VideoMinor Chords (Others) 1 VideoJam 1 Video Major and minor chords are the backbone of western music. Understanding basic major and minor triads will set you on your way to playing hundreds of your favorite songs. In this article, Ill discuss everything a beginner needs to know about major and minor chords (well stick to basic triads three-note chords). A major chord is a triad built from the root, a major third, and a perfect fifth. A minor chord is a triad built from the root, a minor third, and a perfect fifth. Well get into how we build chords from any note shortly, but first, I want to show that major and minor chords are almost identical in form despite the difference in sound and sentiment. As you can see, the root and fifth remain the same in both chords. Only the third is different; the difference between a major and minor third is just one half step. The thirds major or minor quality is the chords defining element. Its important to know that major and minor chords are present in both major and minor key signatures. The thing that truly distinguishes a major key from a minor, and vice versa, is its tonal center. The tonal center dictates the overwhelming feel of a key because the tonic (first chord) is major or minor, and thats where it wants to resolve. Lets look at the C major and minor scales as an example. Ive highlighted the minor chords in C major and the major chords in C minor. Ive also highlighted the tonic in each. No matter how often you play the minor chords in the key of C major, it will always want to resolve to the tonic (major sound). Likewise, no matter how much you play the major chords in C minor, it will always want to resolve to the tonic (minor sound). Understanding the concept of a tonal center, a harmonic home, helps us decide whether to write music in a major or minor key. We covered the basic form of major and minor chords; now its time to look at building them from any note. To build any C chord, we start on the C note, D chords start on D, E chords start on E, and so on. Lets take two chords as examples: one major and one minor. We can use C major and F minor. There are a few ways to think about the structure of major and minor triads. The easiest way is to think of the root and perfect fifth first (as you can see above), then add the major or minor third (counting steps from the root). A major third up from any note is four semitones or half steps (or two whole tones), and a minor third up is three semitones. A semitone is the distance from any note to the note on its immediate left or right. A whole tone goes one note further, equalling two semitones. Another way to think of it is that: Major triads feature a major third followed by a minor third (for example, C to E is a major third interval, and E to G is a minor third). Minor triads feature a minor third followed by a major third (for example, F to A flat is a minor third interval and A flat to C is a major third). The easy way to describe the difference between major and minor chords is to say that major chords sound light and happy, while minor chords sound dark and sad. Thats true in the most fundamental sense, but there are many shades between light and dark, many emotions between happy and sad. Here are some words we could use to describe the major and minor sounds: Major Happy Bright Joyous Triumphant Safe Warm Settled AssuredMinor Sad Dull Pensive Reflective Cold Unsure Tense Ominous Songs take us on an emotional journey and use major and minor chords to do so. Whether you want a particular emotion to be the overwhelming mood of a song or just a temporary departure dictates where your tonal center should be. In other words, whether you write in a major or minor key. As I mentioned, choosing to write in a major or minor key typically signals the definitive emotional intent of the music. Resolving to the tonal center will always provide the strongest resolution. However, like any good story, music can have ups and downs. We can use the minor chords to add tension or provide partial/temporary resolution when were in a major key. For example, in C major, we can substitute the tonic (C chord) for minor chords that are part of the tonic family (Em and Am, in this case). Although they sound different, both of those minor chords contain two notes from the C major triad. This closeness allows us to use them as tools to take the emotion close to home, but not all the way. Context is everything; minor chords in a major key dont sound so definitively dark because the desire to resolve to the tonic (home) is always there. Similarly, we can use the major chords from minor keys to change the emotion, adding a little light or hope without completely departing from the minor feel. You can see more of this in use in my most popular chord progressions article. Ear training is an essential part of music education that is often underappreciated. Ear training doesnt have to be complicated; you dont need to pressure yourself to get everything right. Anytime you learn something new, take some time to get used to how it sounds; dont just learn how to play it. Try forming major and minor chords from different notes, and take some time to listen intently to the difference between them. Learning to identify chord qualities at an early stage will take you a very long way. Understanding major and minor chords is your gateway into playing and creating music. Its also a fundamental lesson in the importance of emotion in music. I shall list somebasic piano chords(easy piano chords) here. I shall list them according to the key they correspond to. You will learn how to form them.Some chords on the piano are more common or easier to play than others. For instance it is much easier to play in the key of C (with no sharps and flats) than in the key of F sharp.I remember starting with simple chords like C, F and G when I startedlearning to play the piano. I suggest that you do the same. Then you can move to G, C and D or F Bb and C. You can add in the minor chords as listed below.To learn more about these chord and others, check out the Piano Chords: How To Form Basic Chords On Piano And Keyboard course here.You can play many songs by simply using I IV V VI chords like C, F, G and Am. Many people learn to play by ear or develop their ears using this method. I can testify of this.Watch this lesson:Major and minor chordsare the most basic chords that one can play on piano. To form a major chord you use the root, third and fifth of the major scale. To form a minor chord you use the root, flat third and fifth of the major scale.Here are someeasy piano chordsaccording to key. Learning to play these basic chords will give you a strong foundation to build upon.Key: CBasic piano chords in the key of C: C F G AmNotes of the C chord: C E GNotes of the F chord: F A CNotes of the G chord: G B DNotes of the Am chord: A C EBrowse all piano chords in our complete interactive library. Every chord you need - from basic major and minor to advanced jazz voicings - with clear diagrams, fingerings, and audio playback.ii7 - V7 - Imaj7Dm7 - G7 - Cmaj7I - V - vi - IVC - G - Am - FI7 - I7 - I7 - I7 - IV7 - IV7 - I7 - I7 - V7 - IV7 - I7 - V7C7 - C7 - C7 - C7 - F7 - F7 - C7 - C7 - G7 - F7 - C7 - G7Imaj7 - vi7 - ii7 - V7Cmaj7 - Am7 - Dm7 - G7vi - IV - I - VAm - F - C - GThis page contains all piano chords in a comprehensive, searchable chart. Whether you're looking for basic triads or complex extended chords, you'll find every piano chord here with multiple voicings and positions. Our complete piano chord library is the ultimate reference for students, teachers, and professional musicians.How to Read Piano Chord DiagramsWhite keys represent natural notes (C, D, E, F, G, A, B)Black keys represent sharps and flatsHighlighted keys show which notes to playNumbers indicate suggested fingeringEssential Piano Chords for BeginnersStart with basic major and minor chords: C, G, D, A, E, Am, Dm, and Em. These fundamental chords will allow you to play thousands of songs. As you progress, explore 7th chords for jazz and blues, extended chords (9th, 11th, 13th) for sophisticated voicings, and suspended chords for added tension and color.Essential Piano Chord TypesMajor & Minor Chords: The foundation of most music - C, D, E, F, G, A, B in both major and minor7th Chords: Add color and sophistication with maj7, min7, dom7, and half-diminished9th Chords: Jazz and contemporary voicings for advanced harmoniesLooking for more advanced chords? Use our chord finder to explore extended, altered, and specialty chords.Piano Chord ProgressionsPractice common progressions like I-V-vi-IV (C-G-Am-F), the 12-bar blues, and ii-V-I jazz progressions. Our comprehensive chord library includes every chord variation you need to play any style of music, from pop and rock to jazz and classical. Chords are the backbone of songs, but they can be confusing. Whats the difference between major and minor chords? How do you know which one to use? This lesson will show you how to form a major and minor chord on ANY key on the piano, and how to train your ear so that you can hear the difference and be able to identify the chords. In order to learn the difference between major and minor chords, well need to look at how they are built. The easiest way I find to build chords is to start with the outer shell the root and the 5th. The root is the note that the chord is built from. For example, a C chord is built from a C note. A B chord is built from a B note. The 5th is the note that is 5 scale tones up from the root note. To find the 5th, count up 7 half steps. You can do this on any key. Understanding how chords work will give you a BIG leg up in learning how to play the piano. Knowing just a handful of chords will unlock hundreds, if not thousands of pop songs. To get started today, check out our free Chord Hacks course, or read How to Play Piano Chords.CHECK IT OUT Now you have the outer shell its time to add the middle note. This is the note that will determine whether the chord is major or minor. The outer shell will always be the same. To make a major chord you add a major third. This means adding the third note of the major scale. You can find that by counting up 4 half steps from the root note. In C major, it looks like this: To make a minor chord you add a minor third. You can do this by counting up 3 half steps from the root note. So now the C major chord has become a C minor chord, and it looks like this: Try playing both of those. Hear the difference? For a more complete lesson on the chord formula, click here. Now you know how to build a chord, try playing major AND minor chords all over the piano. Pick a note, play a major chord and then play a minor chord immediately after. Its VERY obvious that they are different and it will help you get used to the sound. This is important to do because it can often be difficult to hear the differences when the chords are used in a song or progression. By playing both major and minor versions youll get better at hearing the differences and identifying chords. Lets face it playing major and minor chords around the piano is going to get real boring real quick. So, instead of playing the chords together try playing them as broken chords. That just means playing the individual notes one at a time. Youll find its much more musical and creative. You might even come up with some fantastic improvisation! Knowing the basics of major and minor chords will give you a fantastic foundation to build from, and opens the door to exploring more complex and complicated chords. Have fun! Chords are the backbone of songs, but they can be confusing. Whats the difference between major and minor chords? How do you know which one to use? This lesson will show you how to form a major and minor chord on ANY key on the piano, and how to train your ear so that you can hear the difference and be able to identify the chords. In order to learn the difference between major and minor chords, well need to look at how they are built. The easiest way I find to build chords is to start with the outer shell the root and the 5th. The root is the note that the chord is built from. For example, a C chord is built from a C note. A B chord is built from a B note. The 5th is the note that is 5 scale tones up from the root note. To find the 5th, count up 7 half steps. You can do this on any key. Understanding how chords work will give you a BIG leg up in learning how to play the piano. Knowing just a handful of chords will unlock hundreds, if not thousands of pop songs. To get started today, check out our free Chord Hacks course, or read How to Play Piano Chords.CHECK IT OUT Now you have the outer shell its time to add the middle note. This is the note that will determine whether the chord is major or minor. The outer shell will always be the same. To make a major chord you add a major third. This means adding the third note of the major scale. You can find that by counting up 4 half steps from the root note. In C major, it looks like this: To make a minor chord you add a minor third. You can do this by counting up 3 half steps from the root note. So now the C major chord has become a C minor chord, and it looks like this: Try playing both of those. Hear the difference? For a more complete lesson on the chord formula, click here. Now you know how to build a chord, try playing major AND minor chords all over the piano. Pick a note, play a major chord and then play a minor chord immediately after. Its VERY obvious that they are different and it will help you get used to the sound. This is important to do because it can often be difficult to hear the differences when the chords are used in a song or progression. By playing both major and minor versions youll get better at hearing the differences and identifying chords. Lets face it playing major and minor chords around the piano is going to get real boring real quick. So, instead of playing the chords together try playing them as broken chords. That just means playing the individual notes one at a time. Youll find its much more musical and creative. You might even come up with some fantastic improvisation! Knowing the basics of major and minor chords will give you a fantastic foundation to build from, and opens the door to exploring more complex and complicated chords. Have fun! Chords are the backbone of songs, but they can be confusing. Whats the difference between major and minor chords? How do you know which one to use? This lesson will show you how to form a major and minor chord on ANY key on the piano, and how to train your ear so that you can hear the difference and be able to identify the chords. In order to learn the difference between major and minor chords, well need to look at how they are built. The easiest way I find to build chords is to start with the outer shell the root and the 5th. The root is the note that the chord is built from. For example, a C chord is built from a C note. A B chord is built from a B note. The 5th is the note that is 5 scale tones up from the root note. To find the 5th, count up 7 half steps. You can do this on any key. Understanding how chords work will give you a BIG leg up in learning how to play the piano. Knowing just a handful of chords will unlock hundreds, if not thousands of pop songs. To get started today, check out our free Chord Hacks course, or read How to Play Piano Chords.CHECK IT OUT Now you have the outer shell its time to add the middle note. This is the note that will determine whether the chord is major or minor. The outer shell will always be the same. To make a major chord you add a major third. This means adding the third note of the major scale. You can find that by counting up 4 half steps from the root note. In C major, it looks like this: To make a minor chord you add a minor third. You can do this by counting up 3 half steps from the root note. So now the C major chord has become a C minor chord, and it looks like this: Try playing both of those. Hear the difference? For a more complete lesson on the chord formula, click here. Now you know how to build a chord, try playing major AND minor chords all over the piano. Pick a note, play a major chord and then play a minor chord immediately after. Its VERY obvious that they are different and it will help you get used to the sound. This is important to do because it can often be difficult to hear the differences when the chords are used in a song or progression. By playing both major and minor versions youll get better at hearing the differences and identifying chords. Lets face it playing major and minor chords around the piano is going to get real boring real quick. So, instead of playing the chords together try playing them as broken chords. That just means playing the individual notes one at a time. Youll find its much more musical and creative. You might even come up with some fantastic improvisation! Knowing the basics of major and minor chords will give you a fantastic foundation to build from, and opens the door to exploring more complex and complicated chords. Have fun! Chords are the backbone of songs, but they can be confusing. Whats the difference between major and minor chords? How do you know which one to use? This lesson will show you how to form a major and minor chord on ANY key on the piano, and how to train your ear so that you can hear the difference and be able to identify the chords. In order to learn the difference between major and minor chords, well need to look at how they are built. The easiest way I find to build chords is to start with the outer shell the root and the 5th. The root is the note that the chord is built from. For example, a C chord is built from a C note. A B chord is built from a B note. The 5th is the note that is 5 scale tones up from the root note. To find the 5th, count up 7 half steps. You can do this on any key. Understanding how chords work will give you a BIG leg up in learning how to play the piano. Knowing just a handful of chords will unlock hundreds, if not thousands of pop songs. To get started today, check out our free Chord Hacks course, or read How to Play Piano Chords.CHECK IT OUT Now you have the outer shell its time to add the middle note. This is the note that will determine whether the chord is major or minor. The outer shell will always be the same. To make a major chord you add a major third. This means adding the third note of the major scale. You can find that by counting up 4 half steps from the root note. In C major, it looks like this: To make a minor chord you add a minor third. You can do this by counting up 3 half steps from the root note. So now the C major chord has become a C minor chord, and it looks like this: Try playing both of those. Hear the difference? For a more complete lesson on the chord formula, click here. Now you know how to build a chord, try playing major AND minor chords all over the piano. Pick a note, play a major chord and then play a minor chord immediately after. Its VERY obvious that they are different and it will help you get used to the sound. This is important to do because it can often be difficult to hear the differences when the chords are used in a song or progression. By playing both major and minor versions youll get better at hearing the differences and identifying chords. Lets face it playing major and minor chords around the piano is going to get real boring real quick. So, instead of playing the chords together try playing them as broken chords. That just means playing the individual notes one at a time. Youll find its much more musical and creative. You might even come up with some fantastic improvisation! Knowing the basics of major and minor chords will give you a fantastic foundation to build from, and opens the door to exploring more complex and complicated chords. Have fun! There are many chords that you can play on the piano, and mastering them all may discourage new students. The good news is, after learning just a few of the most basic chords, youll be on your way to playing numerous famous piano songs and enjoying your journey on the piano. For all you beginners, the notes are the individual white and black keys you see on the piano or a keyboard. Chords are groups of three or more notes that you play at the same time. When you play chords in a series, you create chord progressions. Chords on the piano typically accompany a melody of some kind. In most cases, your left hand will play the chords, while your right hand will play the melody. It will be essential to learn to play these chords with either hand, but you can begin learning by first using your left hand to grasp these basic chords. Songs use several chord progressions, and many of them use basic major and minor chords. Once youve grasped a few of the basic chords, you can begin playing easy songs on piano, and even writing your own songs. There are two groups of basic chords: major chords and minor chords. As a note, you can practice any of the chords mentioned below on our online piano keyboard, too! Root NoteMajor 3rdPerfect 5th All major chords contain three notes from a major scale. When you play the root note, the third note, and the fifth note of a major scale, you create a major chord. The root note for any chord is the letter that gives the chord its letter name. The major third of the chord is two whole steps above the root. Finally, the fifth is the note one whole step and half-step above the major third. If you know the name of the chord you want to play and know the other notes in the scale, you can find the root, major third, and fifth to figure out how to play that chord on the piano. Lets say we want to play a C major chord. Our Top Method for Learning Piano Online Today!Revolutionary program for learning piano and keyboard fast.Over 250,000 Students Worldwide200+ Video Lessons9 interactive Ebooks Learn more about the program here In the C major scale, the notes are C, D, E, F, G, A, and the last note is B. We can look at this scale and see that the root or first note of the scale is C, the third note is E, and the fifth note is G. Root: C (Pinky)Major 3rd: E (Middle)Perfect 5th: G (Thumb) Now, you can find those notes on the piano and play them together. Find a C note on the piano and keep the pinky of your left hand on it. Then, look two whole steps higher to find E and put your middle finger there. Finally, look one whole step and a half-step above E to find G. Use your thumb. Play the chord with your pinky, middle, and thumb to play a C major chord. With time, you will memorize how to position your hands for different chords to develop muscle memory, but you can follow this method if youre learning how to play a new major chord. Root NoteMinor 3rdPerfect 5th Minor chords work similarly to major chords because all minor chords use the same three notes, but these notes come from a minor scale. The root note is the first note of the scale, where the chord gets its name. The chords minor third is one whole step and one half-step above the root. Then, if you go two whole steps above the minor third, youll find the fifth of the chord. If you know the minor chords name and know the notes of the minor scale for that chord, you can find out how to play it on the piano. Lets use the example of A minor. The A minor scale is A, B, C, D, E, F, and G. So, we take the root (or first note), the third note, and the fifth note of this scale to make the minor chord. Root Note: A (Pinky)Minor 3rd: C (Middle)Perfect 5th: E (Thumb) On the piano, find an A note and keep your pinky over it. Look one whole step and a half-step higher than A to find C where your middle finger goes. Then, look two whole steps higher than E to find E, where you will put your thumb. Play all three notes with those fingers to create an A minor chord. The 13 basic piano chords you will learn are in smaller groups according to their key signatures. These keys are C major, D major, and E major. After learning these 13 piano chords for beginners, you will see how you can use just a small group of chords to play many kinds of songs. C major has the first five basic piano chords. The key of C major is one of the easiest keys to begin learning the piano. There are no sharps or flats in this key, so all the basic major and minor chords in this key contain only the white keys on the piano. The most important chords to learn in every major key are the I, IV, V, and VI, or the first, fourth, fifth, and sixth chords. That is because these chords are most commonly used in chord progressions. In C majors case, those chords are C major, F major, G major, and A minor. Root: CMajor 3rd: EPerfect 5th: G Root: FMajor 3rd: APerfect 5th: C Root: GMajor 3rd: BPerfect 5th: D Root: AMinor 3rd: CPerfect 5th: E Root: DMinor 3rd: FPerfect 5th A After you learn how to play each of these chords individually, you can begin to practice moving from one chord to another so you can start playing basic piano chord progressions. For C majors key, you can begin alternating between the positions for C major and then F major to begin. Play C major, then play F major and then go back to C major. Soon your hand will learn how to get your fingers in place quickly with each chord. You then can move on to practicing three-chord and four-chord progressions that are typical in songs. Mastering these will help you grasp and apply beginner piano chords. C major, G major, A minor, F majorC major, F major, A minor, G majorA minor, C major, F major, G majorC major, D minor, F major, G major Many songs will use these chord progressions or small variations of them. When you have these down, you will recognize these common chord patterns in the music you learn. D major has five more basic piano chords for you to learn on the piano. The key of D major has two sharps, F#, and C#. This means you need the black keys one-half-step about the notes F and C to play the chords in this key. The G major chord you learned in the C major key is also in the D major key. So, you can use the G major chord in chord progressions that are in D major. While not all chords are transferable between keys, some specific chords are. Like other major keys, the most important chords to learn are the I, IV, V, and VI chords for learning songs. For D major, these chords are D major, G major, A major, and B minor. Root: D Major 3rd: F# Perfect 5th: A Root: A Major 3rd: C# Perfect 5th: E Root: B Minor 3rd: D Perfect 5th: F# Root: E Minor 3rd: G Perfect 5th: B Root: F# Minor 3rd: A Perfect 5th: C# Just like you did with the C major key, you can begin practicing chord progressions after you grasp each chord individually. The more challenging chords in this key will be the chords that contain the new black keys. Pay particular attention to D, A, B minor, and F# minor when you practice. To begin learning chord progressions, start again by switching between two chords in the key. You can start with the D major chord and practice alternating to A major and back again. D major, A major, B minor, G majorB minor, A major, D major, G majorE minor, A major, D major, G majorF# minor, A major, F# minor, D major You can begin to create your combinations for chord progressions as you practice and master these sequences. There are three piano chords for beginners in the Key of E major. E major contains two more sharps than D major. The sharps in this key are F#, C#, G#, and D#. You will need the black keys one half-step above G and D to play chords in this Key. The A major chord from the D major key is also in the key of E major as the IV chord. Along with A major, the most important chords to learn are E major, B major, and C# minor. Root: E Major 3rd: G# Perfect 5th: B Root: B Major 3rd: D# Perfect 5th: F# Root: C# Minor 3rd: E Perfect 5th: G# Many of the E major chords contain several black keys, which can take some getting used to. Both the D and E keys will help you become comfortable using the black notes with the pianos white notes. E major, B major, C# minor, A majorE major, C# minor, B major, A majorC# minor, A major, B major, E majorA major, E major, C# minor, B major Both D and E major keys will help you get comfortable using the white and black keys on the piano together. After mastering the chords in E, you can now play 13 beginner piano chords. Between the C major and D major keys is the key of G major. Between D major and E major keys is the A major key. Both of the keys G and A use chords that you already know but have unique chord progressions. G major has one sharp, F#. To play in this key, most of the notes are the same as C major except for F. G major utilizes chords from both C major and D major in it so you can practice different chord progressions. In G major, the four chords to master playing together are G major, C major, D major, and E minor. G major, D major, E minor, C majorE minor, C major, A minor, G majorG major, C major, D major, C majorG major, E minor, B minor, D major Since you already know these chords, you can easily practice using these chords in common progressions. A major has three sharps. These are F#, C#, and G#. Inside A major are also chords that you already know. The most important chords in this key are A major, D major, E major, and F# minor. A major, E major, F# minor, D majorF# minor, A major, D major, E majorA major, F# minor, D major, E majorA major, D major, F# minor, E major With just 13 chords, you have begun to unlock the piano. From here, you can begin to learn songs in the C, G, D, A, E major keys or begin writing your songs in these keys. Our Top Method for Learning Piano Online Today!Revolutionary program for learning piano and keyboard fast.Over 250,000 Students Worldwide200+ Video Lessons9 interactive Ebooks Learn more about the program here Read next: Best easy Disney piano songs Best piano lessons and apps today Best ways to learn Piano today Best free piano lesson to tryAs the Head Editor and Writer at Music Grotto, Liam helps write and edit content produced from professional music/media journalists and other contributing writers. He works closely with journalists and other staff to format and publish music content for the Music Grotto website. Liam is also the founding member of Music Grotto and is passionate in disseminating editorial content to its readers.Liams lifelong love for music makes his role at Music Grotto such a rewarding one. He loves researching, writing and editing music content for Music Grotto.Home Piano Tutorials Basic Piano Chords for Beginners: Major and Minor Chords