



Table of Contents

Decoding Piano- by Fretboard Toolbox



Major Key	Number of sharps (#'s) or flats (b's) in key	Relative Minor Key	Page #
<i>Toolbox Instructions</i>	<i>Chord Jig Explained</i>		2
	<i>Grand Staff Jig Explained</i>		3
	<i>Keyboard Layout Explained</i>		4
C Major	0 sharps/0 flats	A minor	5
G Major	1 sharp	E minor	6
D Major	2 sharps	B minor	7
A Major	3 sharps	F# minor	8
E Major	4 sharps	C# minor	9
B Major	5 sharps	G# minor	10
F#/Gb Major	6 sharps/6 flats	D#/Eb minor	11
C#/Db Major	7 sharps/5 flats	A#/Bb minor	12
Ab Major	4 flats	F minor	13
Eb Major	3 flats	C minor	14
Bb Major	2 flats	G minor	15
F Major	1 flat	D minor	16
<i>Chord Toolbox</i>	<i>Chord Toolbox Explained</i>		17
	<i>Chord Toolbox</i>		18



Chord Jig Explained

(Chord Jig shown is from the G Major/E minor page)



How are different chords built? A chord is simply a group of notes played at the same time. The Chord Jig box that says “Chord Type” shows you which columns to use to make various chords within a key, and these columns show you which notes you’ll need to build a desired chord. This box shows you that Major chords are made from notes in the 1, 3, and 5 columns of the Chord Jig. These have “happier” sounds. For example, G Major chords are made of the notes G, B, and D, **which can be played in any order, and each note can be repeated in a chord multiple times.** As long as you are only playing those three notes, then you’re playing a G Major chord! Minor chords are just like Major chords, except they are made of notes from the 1, b3 (read “flat-3”), and 5 columns, and they tend to have “sadder” sounds. To play an A minor chord, you’ll use the notes A, C, and E, etc. To play a D7 chord, a.k.a. Ddom7, notice that you’ll need the notes from the 1, 3, 5, and b7 (read “flat-7”) columns. So, if you can simply play different piano keys so that you’re only playing the notes D, F#, A, and C, then you’re playing a D7 chord. It’s pretty easy once you get the hang of it. For more information on building chords, see the Chord Toolbox on pp. 17-18.

Why do certain chords always sound good together? By going down column “1” of any key’s Chord Jig, you can play the Major scale for that key. The Major scale for G Major, for example, is made of the notes G, A, B, C, D, E, and F#. **Each note of the Major scale can be turned into its own chord, and the chords sound good together because those notes sound good together!** Songs can be played in Major keys (happy sounding overall) or minor keys (sad sounding overall). The bold Roman numerals in the Chord Jig give you the chord numbers for each Major key, and the italicized Roman numerals give you the chord numbers for its relative minor key. Start out with the bold Roman numerals of the Major key, since Major keys tend to be more common than minor keys in popularly played music. This way, if someone says, “Let’s play this song in G Major- it’s a I-IV-V progression”, then you’ll know to play the chords G Major, C Major, and then D Major. **When you start thinking in Roman numerals, transposing is a breeze! Just figure out the chord progression (e.g. I-vi-IV-V) and then see what those chords are in whichever key you want to play in!** The Roman numeral chord progressions below show some ways that chords can go together in the keys of G Major and E minor, and form the basis of many songs! **These chord progressions (Roman numerals) can be used in any key!** Practicing these will train your ear to recognize the sounds of going from one chord to another. Chords that are found within a given key are shown in normal type, and chords outside of a key (chords that “break the rules”) are shown in **bold**. Read the “Beyond Basics” answer on p. 4 for an example of playing a chord outside of a key, or read more about chord building on p. 17. **Some of the coolest sounds in music come from breaking the rules!**

Some G Major Chord Progressions

- I-V-I-----G-D-G
- I-IV-V-----G-C-D
- I-V-IV-----G-D-C
- I-vi-IV-V-----G-Em-C-D
- I-vi-ii-V-----G-Em-Am-D
- I-ii-IV-V-----G-Am-C-D
- V-IV-I-----D-C-G

More G Major Chord Progressions

- I-iii-ii-IV-----G-Bm-Am-C
- ii-V-I-----Am-D-G
- I-III-IV-iv-----G-B-C-Cm
- I-bVII-IV-----G-F-C
- I-bIII-IV-----G-Bb-C
- I-III7-VI7-II7-V7-----G-B7-E7-A7-D7

Some E Minor Chord Progressions

- i-V-i-----Em-B-Em
- i-iv-V-----Em-Am-B
- i-VII-i-----Em-D-Em
- i-VII-VI-V-----Em-D-C-B
- i-iv-VI-V-----Em-Am-C-B
- i-v-i-----Em-Bm-Em
- i-VII-v-----Em-D-Bm

Chord Names and Roman Numerals: Major / relative minor	Use notes from these columns to build any chords I- vii° from the key of G Major, and any chords i- VII from the key of E minor.										
	1	(2)	b3	3	(4)	b5	5	(6) bb7	b7	7	
G MAJOR (G) I / III	G			B			D		F	F#	
A minor (Am) ii / iv	A		C				E		G		
B minor (Bm) iii / V	B		D				F#		A		
C MAJOR (C) IV / VI	C			E			G		Bb	B	
D MAJOR (D) V / VII	D			F#			A		C	C#	
E minor (Em) vi / i	E		G				B		D		
F# diminished (F#dim) vii° / ii°	F#		A			C		Eb	E		

Chord Jig

Chord Type	Use notes from columns
Major-----	1,3,5
7, dom7-----	1,3,5,b7
Major7, Maj7-----	1,3,5,7
minor-----	1,b3,5
min7, m7-----	1,b3,5,b7
dim-----	1,b3,b5
½ dim, °, m7b5---	1,b3,b5,b7
dim7, °7-----	1,b3,b5,bb7



Keyboard Layout Explained

(Keyboard Layout shown in from the G Major/E minor page)



The Basics-

How is the Keyboard Layout used? One of the best parts about the Decoding Piano book is that, for each key, the Keyboard Layout shows you where each note from the key you've chosen is located on the keyboard. So, for example, to play a G Major scale, you just turn to the G Major/E minor page (p. 6) and then look on the Keyboard Layout to see where to find the notes from that scale. To play the entire G Major scale, you would just start with one of the "G" notes and then play each note to the right in ascending order- G, A, B, C, D, E, F#, and then back to "G". Note the tension that the seventh note ("F#" in this case) gives to this Major scale progression!

What can I learn about chords from the Keyboard Layout? One of the coolest things to discover is that, for each key, you can turn each note of the Major scale into its own chord. Since the notes of the Major scale all sound good to our ears when played together, **turning each of those notes into its own chord means that those chords will all sound good together!** (Follow along on the G Major/E minor page for this answer). In the key of G Major, you can take the G Major scale and then turn the "G" note into a G Major chord (the "I" chord in G Major) by looking at your Chord Jig and seeing that G Major chords are built from the notes G, B, and D; so by playing those notes together (in any order), you'll be playing a G Major chord! Look at your Keyboard Layout to find all sorts of ways that you can play the notes G, B, and D together. **You can repeat as many of those notes as you'd like, and you'll find that each grouping of the chord notes has its own unique sound!** Once you have some G Major chords down, use your Chord Jig to see that an A minor chord (the "ii" chord in G Major) is built from the notes A, C, and E. Find different places you can play those notes, and then listen to the sound of going from a G Major chord to an A minor chord and then back to the G Major chord. (This little progression is: I-ii-I, in Roman numerals). This already starts sounding like a song! Practice turning the "B" notes into B minor (iii) chords, the "C" notes into C Major (IV) chords, etc. Once you can play all of the chords of the G Major scale, pay extra special attention to how cool the sound that going from the V chord (D Major) back to the I chord (G Major) has. This "V" back to "I" chord progression is UNBELIEVABLY common in popular music, so once you recognize the sound, you'll start hearing it in tons of songs. When you see how these chords work together in the key of G Major, and know their Roman numerals, you can get the same sounds in any key! Try some I-IV-V progressions in any key to see this idea in action. See p.2 for chord progression ideas that can be used in any key!

Beyond Basics-

Why are some of the notes italicized and in grayscale on the Keyboard Layout? The Keyboard Layout has all of the notes from each Major and relative minor key underlined. On each key's page, notes outside of that key are shown *italicized* and in grayscale, since you'll frequently need those notes to play the necessary melody notes and chords in **lots** of songs. (These notes outside of a given key contain sharp (#), flat (b), or natural (♮) symbols in sheet music). Lots of 7 chords, and other fancier chords, contain these notes not found in that song's key. For example, if you're playing in the key of G Major, and you want to play an C7 chord, you need to know where at least one "Bb" note is found to add it to your C chord- just use the Keyboard Layout if you're not sure where to find that note. Also, lots of songs contain **chords** that are not directly part of the Major or minor key you're playing in. For example, a song in the key of G Major may contain a chord such as B Major, instead of B minor (which is the usual iii chord in G Major). In this case, since a B minor chord is made of the notes B, D, and F#, you will need to be able to find where you can change the "D" notes into "D#"s to change it into a B Major chord. If you're unsure, just use this Keyboard Layout to see where those "D#" notes are found. Listen to the sound this chord substitution gives (turning a minor iii chord into a Major III chord), and you can get that sound in any key! Try I-III-IV progressions in different keys to see for yourself. 😊

Keyboard Layout: Notes from the G Major & E minor scales of this key are underlined.

Accidentals (notes outside this key) are *italicized* and grayscale.

