

Modern Worship Piano Lessons

With Eric Michael Roberts



**The Best Method for
Chords and Songs**



DVD INCLUDED



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Modern Worship Piano Lessons

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Published in the United States by WorshiptheKing.com

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About the Author

Eric Michael Roberts is a professional guitarist, songwriter, worship leader, author and seminar speaker on guitar and modern worship. His Modern Worship Guitar DVD series and study-at-home program has helped students around the world learn to play guitar and lead worship with a new level of excellence. Eric's ability to teach the complex methods of playing modern music in a understandable way make Eric a strong leader in the modern worship training movement. Eric is married to singer/songwriter, Emily Jayne Roberts.

A note from Eric...

There was a time in my life when everything seemed hopeless. I dare not forget that I was terribly lost and heading down the completely wrong path. In fact, my first studio recording was titled "Lost" and the first track on the tape was called *Past the Point of No Return*. But on November 3, 1994, at the age of 17, my best friend led me to accept Jesus as my personal savior. Shortly after that, I quit my rock band and began leading worship for the youth services at the church down the street from my house. I was mentored by a worship team member, and grew as a guitar player and a worship leader. Now, after serving several local churches as the full time worship leader, I am using my talents to teach, train and encourage other worship leaders and Christian musicians. Music is a lifetime love for me, and I hope that it will become that for you as you use the songs in this book.

To God be the glory,

Eric Roberts

Psalm 40:3

I waited patiently for the Lord; He turned to me and heard my cry. He lifted me out of the slimy pit, out of the mud and mire; he set my feet on a rock and gave me a firm place to stand. He put a new song in my mouth, a hymn of praise to our God. Many will see and fear and put their trust in the Lord.

The Songbook

The songbook makes it easy for you to apply the simple chords to top worship songs! Purchase your songbook at **www.8chords100songs.com**

After many years of searching for the best chord charts and weekly preparing for worship services with modern worship bands, I decided to compile the best songbook for worship bands and leaders. Many times chord sheets I find include unnecessary chords that get in the way of the guitarists ability to successfully play the song and lead worship. I have simplified these songs specifically the guitar and piano. The songs are in no way compromised! They sound awesome with these chord arrangements and these are the same chord sheets that I use with my band when leading worship every Sunday. The simple and accurate chord charts make this compilation a must have for any aspiring worship musician! Even seasoned worship leaders and guitar players will find this compilation to be a great tool in selecting and learning new worship music.

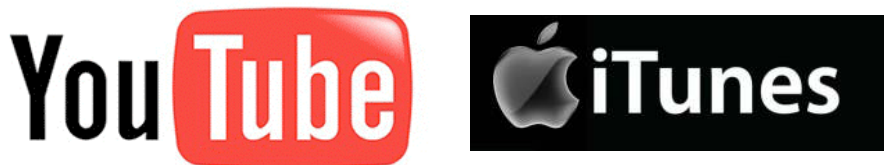
Log on and play along!

Log on to our web site or YouTube channel to play along with Eric on many of the great songs in the 8chords100songs songbook!

www.8chords100songs.com/playalong

www.youtube.com/8chords100songs

Purchase the WorshiptheKing.com songs on iTunes



Getting Started with Piano

Most people approach the piano by starting to learn notes on the staff. If you desire to play songs on the piano quickly and play modern popular music, you will need to learn to play by chords. Your ear will begin to develop along the way and you will be able to play melody as well.

Once you learn a few piano chords and open your mind to playing songs without traditional notation, a whole new world will be opened to you! When you see your worship leader on stage singing and playing the piano, he is most likely reading a simple chord chart and playing chord style piano. It is a great skill to be able to read music, but it is not necessary to play great songs on the piano.

How to get started:

First, learn your chords in root position and get familiar with switching chords using the pedal. Then, learn techniques to embellish your songs. Once you are comfortable in root position, you will begin to use inversions. Inversions make it easier to switch between chords. Once you know a few chords, you can start playing songs!


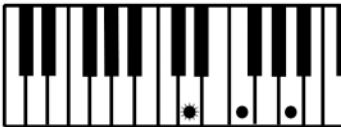





A new day for you!

Believe in yourself and begin to think about the music coming from your heart, not the page. When you do this, you will begin to rely on your ear and your instinct as a musician. I have taught many piano players this method and, even for a trained pianist, it can be a struggle in the beginning. You have to begin to THINK differently about how you approach the piano and songs.

It doesn't matter if you are just beginning or if you have been taking piano lessons since you were 6 years old. Playing piano by chord and ear is a whole new world. But remember, all of the pop performers and worship leaders who play from a chord chart have achieved mastery of this method. Now, it's your turn!

Piano Chords





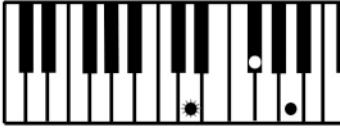


Key of C Major

I	C Major: C E G 
ii	D Minor: D F A 
iii	E Minor: E G B 
IV	F Major: F A C 
V	G Major: G B D 
vi	A Minor: A C E 
V/VII	G/B 

Use instead of the
vii diminished chord

Piano Chords

Key of G Major

I	G Major: G B D 
ii	A Minor: A C E 
iii	B Minor: B D F# 
IV	C Major: C E G 
V	D Major: D F# A 
vi	E Minor: E G B 
V/VII	D/F# 

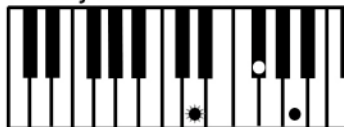
Use instead of the
vii diminished chord

Piano Chords

Key of D Major

I

D Major: D F# A



ii

E Minor: E G B



iii

F# Minor: F# A C#



IV

G Major: G B D



V

A Major: A C# E



vi

B Minor: B D F#



V/VII

A/C#



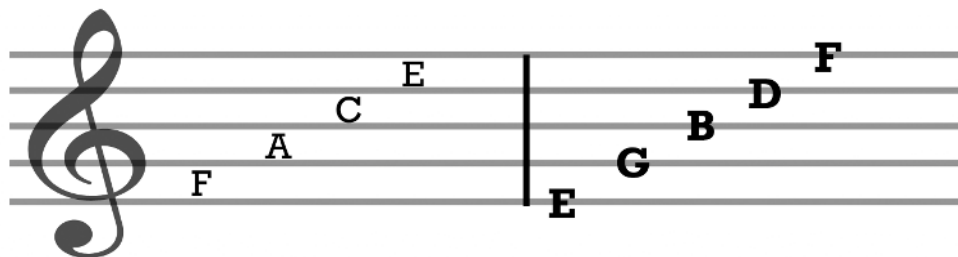
Use instead of the
vii diminished chord

Notes on the staff

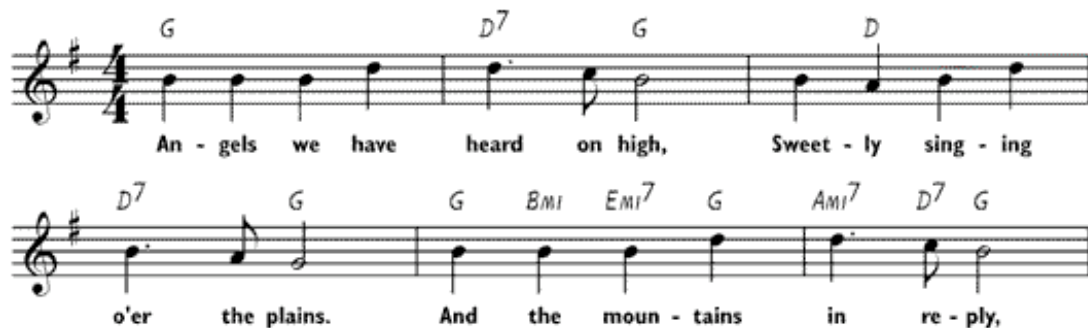
This is for your reference to the treble clef notes on the staff. You DO NOT have to read music to be able to play the charts in this book, but it does help if you become familiar with how the language of music is written. Many people learn this early in school and remember the sayings that the teacher made for them to remember the notes, but never use it or understand how it really works.

The **spaces** are: F A C E

The **lines** on the treble clef (starting at the bottom) are: E G B D F



If you played in a school band program or became decent at reading treble clef notes, you can use it to your advantage once you learn my chord method. For example, if you see a standard lead sheet with notes and chords written on the staff, you can “fake” through it by playing the melody with the right hand and the chords with the left hand. This is how “Fake Books” are written and used.



G D7 G D

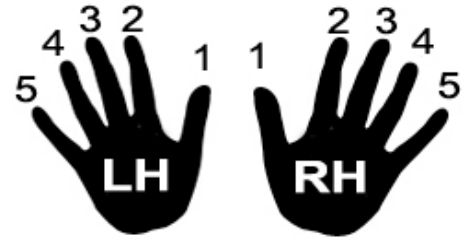
An - gels we have heard on high, Sweet - ly sing - ing

D7 G G Bm EMI7 G AMI7 D7 G

o'er the plains. And the moun - tains in re - ply,

Finger Exercises

Finger Exercise #1



This exercise will help you build dexterity and control over each individual finger. This exercise should not be played fast. It is meant to build finger control and should be played slowly.

Place all five right hand fingers on the keys starting with your thumb on middle C.

Without moving any of your fingers off of the keys, play the C note with your thumb 8 times. Next, play the D note with your pointer 8 times. Remember, DO NOT let your other fingers lose contact with the keys. They are just lightly sitting on the key tops. Continue until you have played each of the notes 8x with each finger. Next, add your left hand separately until you are comfortable. Then, play both hands together starting with your THUMBS and play the exercise mirror style.

Finger Exercise #2



Put both hands in C position. Run up and down the five finger scales playing these notes **C D E F G F E D C**

Use varying speeds and rhythms but play the exercise in both hands together. This will help your hands become familiar with playing together. Mix up the 5-finger pattern in any way you can think including different rhythm patterns and note patterns. But be sure to play the same exact thing in both hands.

Practice Tip: Start slow and build up speed and accuracy.

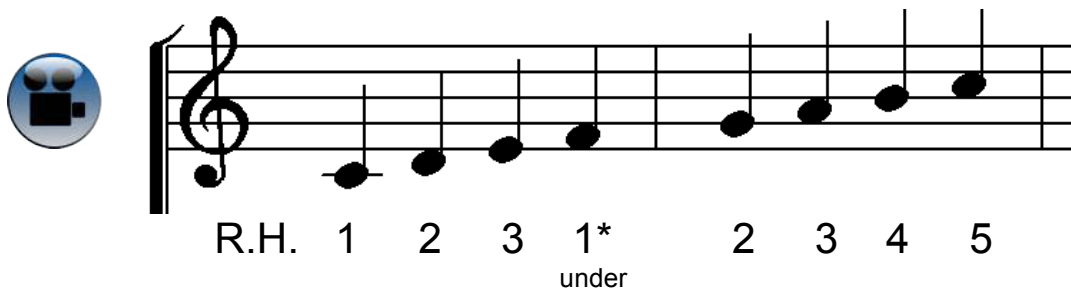
Accuracy and Speed only come from practicing SLOW. If you get anxious and speed up too quickly, you are more likely to play sloppy. If you want to build good technique, practice everything SLOW and build speed over time. It is very important to build accuracy into your speed drills or you will grow to be a sloppy player overall. That is bad!

Playing the Major Scale

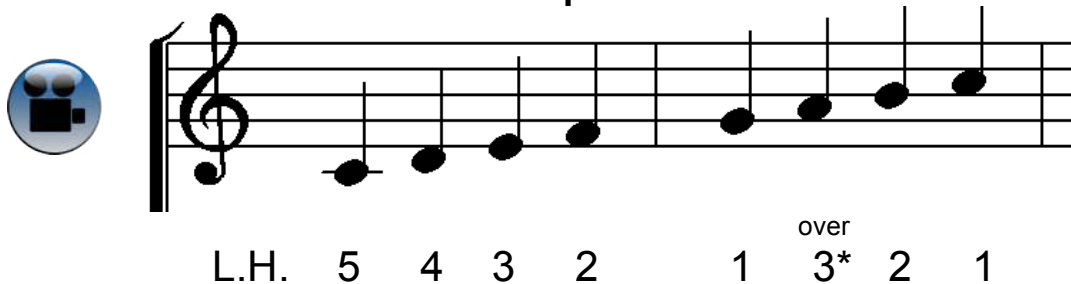
The major scale..... Do, Re, Mi, Fa, Sol, La, Ti, Do

You may remember how it sounds from grade school. This is the major scale written on the staff.

Scale Example #1 Right Hand



Scale Example #2 Left Hand



First, play both hands separately. Once you can play the scale slow, smooth and perfect every time you can put both hands together.

With the right hand, you will pass your thumb under your third finger when you see the * marking. On the way back down, you will jump your third finger over your thumb. It is the exact opposite on the left hand fingering.

Major Scale Finger Guide

The arrows above and below remind you to put your fingers under or over.

Right Hand Going Up

1 2 3  1 2 3 4 5

Right Hand Going Down

5 4 3 2 1  3 2 1

Left Hand Going Up

5 4 3 2 1  3 2 1

Left Hand Going Down

1 2 3  1 2 3 4 5

Technique Tip:

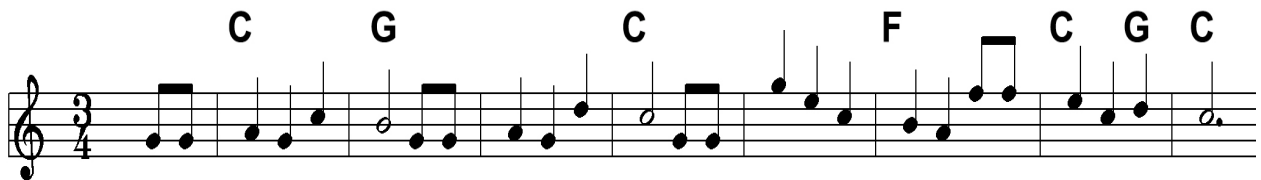
Keep your fingers close to the keys. Don't allow them to flop all over the place or lift high off the keys. This will help you build control.

Playing Melody by Ear

What if there are notes? I have a hard time reading Notes....

You can really “fake it” great with the lead sheet method. Read the top line melody with your right hand and play the chords to support the melody in the left hand. That is how many lead sheets are written. Many people can read a single melody line without much trouble but have a hard time reading two hands at once. When you learn this method, you can follow the lead sheet or melody line of a song while supporting the harmony with your left hand chords or bass notes. If you don’t read music at all, you can play the melody by ear. This takes practice but can be achieved with very little effort.

Melody for Happy Birthday



Play the melody first, you will learn how to add the chords soon!

What if you only have a chord chart? No melody written? You can still play the song easily with the chords.

Melody Practice #1



When the Saints Go Marching In

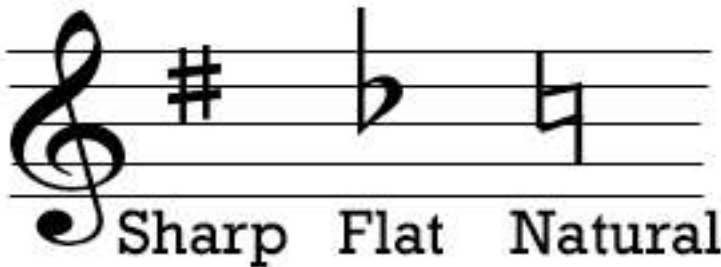
Start on the middle C note and play the melody for When the Saints Go Marching In using only C D E F G notes. At first this may seem hard. Use your ear and be patient. Developing this skill is very important. This creates a foundation for you to become a great ear player.

The Musical Alphabet

A B C D E F G A B C D E F G A B C D E F G A ...

The alphabet starts on A and ends on G. When it starts over, this is called an **Octave**. An octave is the same note played 12 half steps higher or lower. The piano will give you the clearest form of how notes are laid out.

There are three different types of notes.



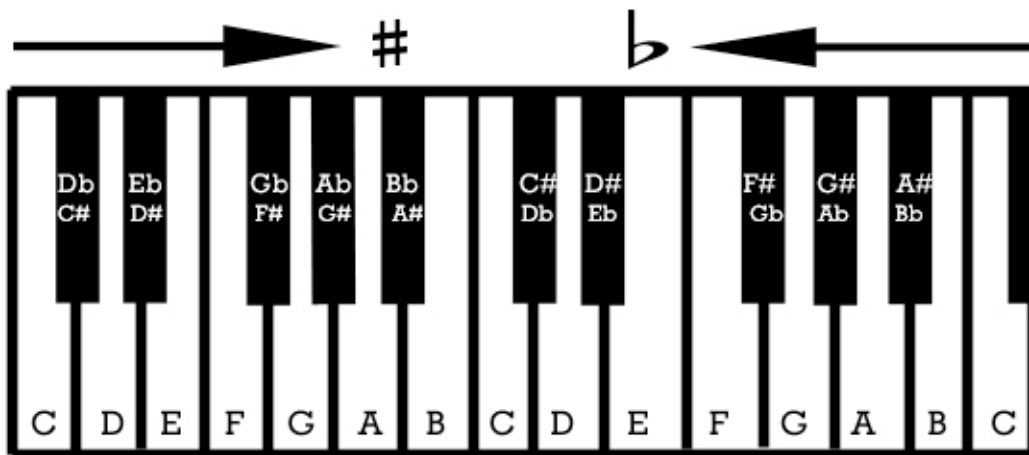
- Sharp = half step higher
b - Flat = half step lower
A natural sign takes it back to normal.

On the piano:

The white keys are the notes in the musical alphabet.

The **black keys** are sharps (#) and flats (b).

For Example: If you move a half step up from the C note, you will have C#.
If you move a half step down from the D note, you will have Db.



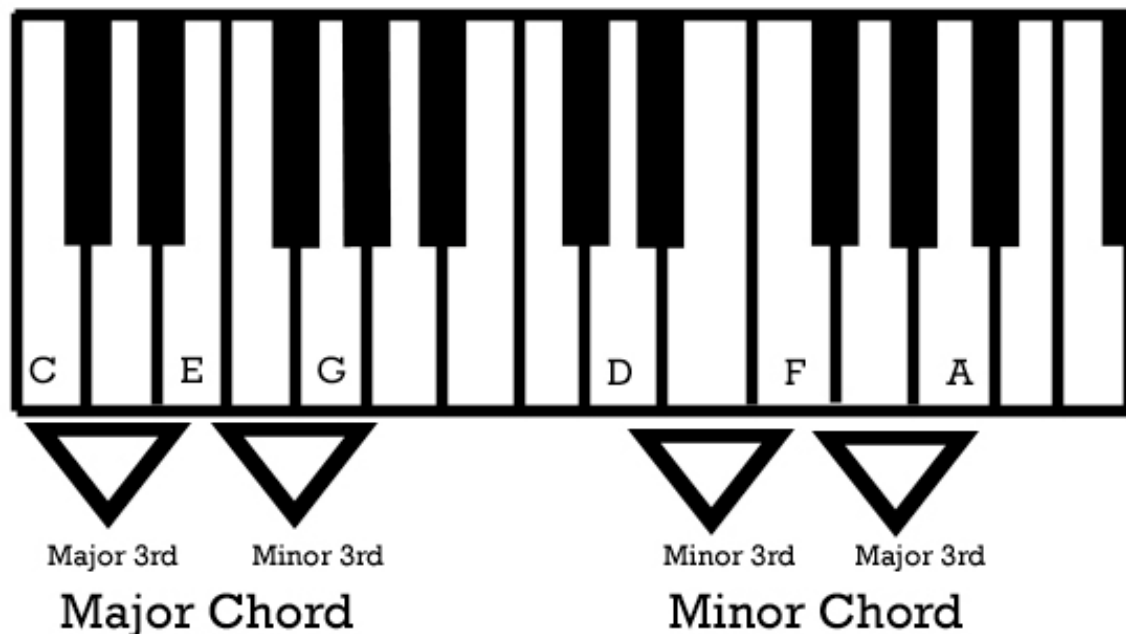
Helpful Hint:
There are no sharps or flats between E-F and B-C.

Look at the piano to understand.

Notice that C# and Db are the SAME note. This is called **enharmonic spelling**.

Whole Step = Two half steps Example: From C to D

Introduction to Chords



Triad = a three note chord.

Every chord starts as a basic triad. Even more complex chords started as a triad. This is the most basic form of chord building. When you see a C7#, it started with a simple C triad - just three notes! Then, the chord tones are altered.

In this book we will focus on the triads that are built over a simple major scale. There are two kinds: **Major and Minor**.

The diagram above shows the details of the two chord qualities.

Major chord sounds happy. Minor chord sounds dark or sad. Keep in mind this is a broad generalization.

You will be building triads and learning about their qualities in the following pages.

Understanding Intervals:

Interval = the distance between two notes.

Major 3rd = 4 half steps

Minor 3rd = 3 half steps

Building Triads

Triads are three note chords that make up the base for all the chords you will play. It is important that you understand triads and the basic function they play in music. Once you understand the basic triads, it will be easy for you to simplify a complex chord to its basic form.

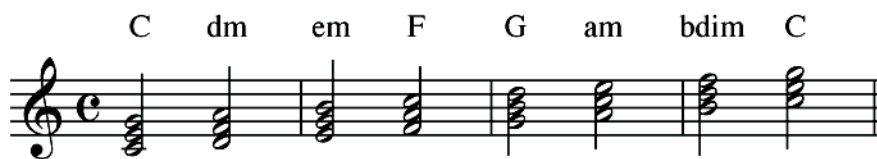
To build a simple triad:

1. Pick a starting note
2. Add two notes above it (i.e., every other note)

Example: **C D E F G**

Now you have the C Chord: C E G

This is an example of the triads in the key of C. You can see that the root note is the name of the chord and the notes are stacked on top creating a triad (chord).



To be able to strip a complex chord to its basic form, you need to understand the major scale harmony. Each chord placed over a note in the major scale has a certain quality: major, minor, or diminished.

Chord Families “Keys”

When you add chords above each note of the major scale, you get the 7 chords in that particular key. Adding triads about each of the major scale tones is called *harmonizing the major scale*.

The following three things always happen when harmonizing major scale:

1. The first chord is a major key and tells the name of the key.
2. I, IV, and V are major chords; ii, iii and vi are minor chords as indicated by the lowercase letters.
3. The vii* chord is a diminished chord and is not used much in popular music especially by guitar players. Many times, guitar and piano players will substitute it for a 5/7 chord.

It is easy to see how these rules come to life when you look at these 3 chord families. Roman numerals are commonly used in the study of music theory.

This is the KEY of C major (no sharps or flats)

C	dm	em	F	G	am	bdim
I	ii	iii	IV	V	vi	vii*

This is the KEY of G Major (1 sharp)

G	am	b	C	D	em	f# ^{dim}
I	ii	iii	IV	V	vi	vii*

This is the KEY of D Major (2 sharps)

D	em	f#m	G	A	bm	c# ^{dim}
I	ii	iii	IV	V	vi	vii*

Playing Chords in the Key of C

Now let's begin playing these chords on the piano. When you first start on the piano, you will need to know a few things.

Block Chords:

- The root of each chord is the bottom note. C E G = C chord
- We play all block chords in our right hand with fingers 1 3 5
- Use fingers 5 3 1 on your left hand.
- Do not play chords without your thumb as most beginners do.

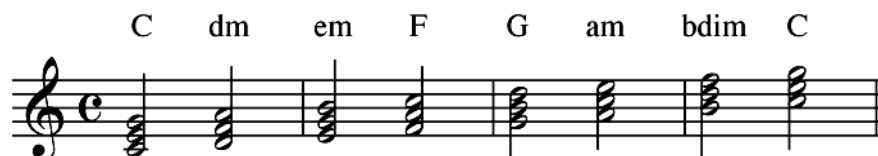
Move your R.H. up the keyboard making a block chord on each white note. You will be forming each chord in the key of C.

Chord Example #1



C chord	C E G
Dm chord	D F A
Em chord	E G B
F chord	F A C
G chord	G B D
Am chord	A C E
B diminished chord	B D F

Example of the chords written in notation:



Basic Chording Technique

There are many techniques to use when playing by chord. The most basic technique is mirror chords. Play the same chord shapes in the right and left hand. This is called the ***Mirror Chord Technique***

Practice moving between these simple chords.

Mirror Chord Practice #1



C	F	G	F
////	////	////	////

Mirror Chord Practice #2



C	Dm	Em	F
////	////	////	////

Using the “Sustain” Pedal

Using the pedal will do a several very important things:

1. The pedal will **smooth out your playing** and give the piano a full ringing sound.
2. It will **take the choppy feeling out** of your playing because you will be holding each chord until the split second that you play the next chord.
3. It will **make it easier to get to the next chord** because the pedal holds the tone while you move your hands to the next chord position.

Here is the main rule and exercise for learning how to use the pedal correctly. **When the chord goes down, the pedal goes up.**

The pedal goes up for just a split second and then the pedal is back down again.

The other pedals on the piano?

The sustain pedal is on the far right. The other pedals will do different things depending on you piano. Some pedals shift the action to make the piano sound softer, lower a practice felt in front of the hammers, push the hammers closer to the strings to make a softer sound and lifting certain dampers. Do not worry about these pedals at this time.

Pedal Practice

Use two simple chords to practice.

Start with the pedal down and play the C chord. Let it ring out for 4 beats. On the first beat of the next measure, play the Dm chord and, at the same time, lift the pedal for a split second. This will let the C chord off and hold the notes for the Dm chord. You need to let off the pedal and play down on the chord at the same exact time. This takes some practice and patience. Once you have practiced slowly for a while, it will become very natural.

Pedal Practice Exercise #1



When you see the line, the pedal is down. Simply lift your foot off for a short second when you see the ^ symbol. Play a simple C chord with both hands. Count out loud and work the pedal.

Counting	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4	1 2 3 4
	C	C	C	C

pedal down		up	up	up

Pedal Practice Exercise #2



Pedal:	up	DOWN	up	DOWN	up	DOWN	up	DOWN
Count:	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Chords:	C		Dm		C		Dm	

Pedal Practice Exercise #3



Pedal:	up	DOWN	up	DOWN	up	DOWN	up	DOWN
Count:	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
Chords:	C		Dm		Em		F	

Progression Practice

Progression Practice Example 1



C Dm Em F

/ / / / / / / / / / / / / / / /

----- ^ ----- ^ ----- ^ -----

Progression Practice Example 2



C F G F

/ / / / / / / / / / / / / / / /

Progression Practice Example 3



C F Am G

/ / / / / / / / / / / / / / / /

Progression Practice Example 4



Split bar example

C Dm F G F

/ / / / / / / / / / / / / / / /

Techniques for playing with chords

You don't have to know how to read music like a pro to play the piano like a pro. In fact, some of the greatest pop and rock players of our day do not know how to read music. Some of the greatest piano players and musicians couldn't read music! That didn't stop them and it should not stop you. It is a good thing to learn to read music, but don't wait to play great music until you can read music. Let me show you some insider tricks for playing piano and sounding great without reading traditional music.

Right hand fingers:

When playing chords in root position, you will use fingers 1, 3, and 5 on your left hand and 1, 3, and 5 in your right hand.

2 More Chording Techniques:



When playing piano with lead sheets, to sing or write songs, or to play with a band from chord or lead sheets, you can start by using these 3 simple techniques

1. Chords and Bass:

Play the block chord in the right hand and the bass notes in the left hand.

2. Chord and Melody:

Play the chords in the left hand and the melody of the song with the right hand.

These are the basic techniques that you should learn to get started. Once you are comfortable with these methods, you can add octave bass notes or chord arpeggios in the left hand. It is important to memorize your chords and get familiar with moving your hands in progressions before adding more complicated techniques.

When the Saints Go Marching In

Exercise 1:

Play the melody with the right hand. Start on C and use the notes C D E F G

Exercise 2:

Play the chord progression with both hands. Hum or sing the words while playing.

Exercise 3:

Play the melody with the right hand while playing the block chords with the left hand.

Exercise 4:

Play the chords in the right hand, the bass notes in the left and sing!



	////		////
	C		C
Oh, when the saints go marching in			
	////		////
	C		G
Oh, when the saints go marching in			
	////		////
	C		F
Lord, how I want to be in that number			
	//	//	////
	C	G	C
When the saints go marching in			

Joy to the World

Exercise 1:

Play the melody with the right hand. Start on high C and use all the notes in the C major scale.

Exercise 2:

Play the chord progression with both hands. Hum or sing the words while playing.

Exercise 3:

Play the melody with the right hand while playing the block chords with the left hand.



//// ////
C C
Joy to the world, the Lord is come!

 // // ////
 F G C
Let Earth receive her King;

 //// ////
 C C
Let every heart prepare Him room,

 //// ////
 C G
And Heaven and nature sing, And Heaven and nature sing,

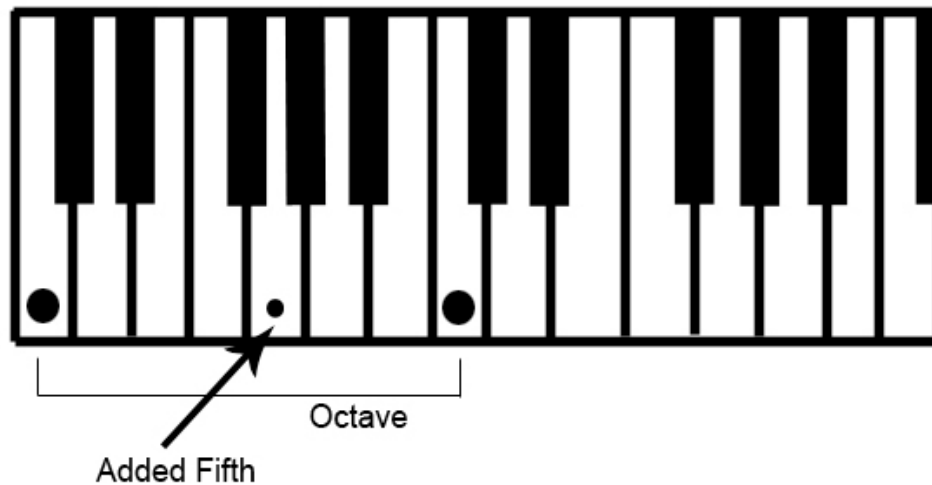
 //// / / //
 C C G C
And Heaven, and Heaven, and nature sing.

The “Octave Lock” Technique



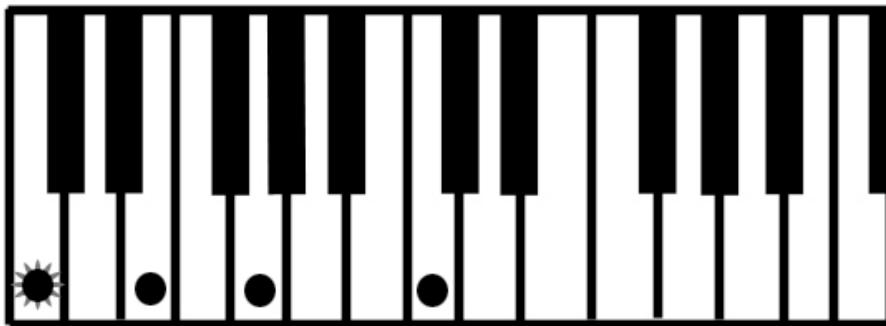
The octave lock can be used in the left or right hand. Pull your pointer finger in and spread out to make an octave with your thumb and pinkie. When you lock your first finger in, it stabilizes your octave shape and gives you a clean octave every time.

When playing chords with the octave lock in the left hand, you can add the 5th of the chord and this fills out the sound.



Chords can also be expanded to include the octave. Simply play the chord and add the octave to the top.

Full Octave C Chord



Amazing Grace

Exercise 1:

Play the melody with the right hand. Start on G below middle C and use all notes in the G – G octave.

Exercise 2:

Play the chord progression with both hands. Hum or sing the words while playing.

Exercise 3:

Play the melody with the right hand while playing the block chords with the left hand.

Amazing Grace is in $\frac{3}{4}$ meter.

This means that each measure only gets 3 beats.

/// /// /// ///

C C F C

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound



/// /// ///

C C G

That saved a wretch like me.

/// /// /// ///

C C F C

I once was lost, but now am found,

/// /// ///

C G C

Was blind but now I see.

On the next page, I show you traditional notation for Amazing Grace with simple chords.

Amazing Grace with Music Notation

Amazing Grace

Piano

The image shows the piano accompaniment for the hymn 'Amazing Grace' in 3/4 time. It consists of three systems of music. Each system has a treble and bass staff joined by a brace. The melody is in the treble staff, and the bass staff provides harmonic support with chords. Chord symbols (C, F, G) are placed above the treble staff. The lyrics are written below the treble staff.

Chord symbols: C, F, C, G, C, F, C

Lyrics:
A ma - zing grace how sweet the sound that saved a -
wretch like me I once was lost but now I'm found. was
blind but now I See.

Bonus!

Introduction to inversions

Slash chords (inversions) are notated with two letters and a slash. The first chord is the main chord form. The second letter following the slash is the bass note. This note is to be played by the bass player in a band or with the left hand on the piano. As an advancing pianist, you can play some of these chords by playing the bass note in the left hand and the full chord in the right. Slash chords add new and vibrant color to your songs and the sound of the instrument.

In the beginning, I advise you to play all chords in “root” position.

That means that the lowest note of the chord is the root and it has not been inverted.

There are some inversions (slash chords) in the songbook. You do not have to play them as inversions. If you see the chord C/E, you will play the C chord only unless you are comfortable playing the inversion. When you are ready to use an inversion, you will visualize the chord being stacked in a different order. The same notes will be played!

When you see a slash chords like C/E, it means that you play the C chord in 1st inversion as show below. The fingering is different when you invert a chord.

	Root	1st Inversion	2nd Inversion
	C E G	E G C	G C E
R.H. Fingers	1 3 5	1 2 5	1 3 5

You can see that they are the same notes and they are stacked in a different order. Play each one to hear the subtle differences in the sound.

Another way to execute a slash chord when you encounter one is to play the ROOT position with the RIGHT hand and play the BASS NOTE notated in the slash with the LEFT hand. Any time you see a slash chord, you should at least play the slash note in the left hand.

Bonus!

Introduction to Suspended Chords

Suspended chords are used in all music. It happens when you alter a chord by moving one of its notes up to the next scale tone. This creates a sense of tension and is then usually resolved by moving the note back to its normal position.

In modern piano worship music, suspended chords have been used to give the piano a more open and pleasing sound. For example, adding a “d” note to the C chord gives it a beautiful suspended sound.

There are three main types of suspensions:

2-1

4-3

6-5

The first number is the suspension and the second is the resolution. When you play a 4-3 suspension, you are raising the 3rd tone to a 4th and then resolving back down to a 3. An example is below:

Triad:	C	E	G	Suspension 4:	C	F	G
	1	3	5		1	4	5

This would be written as Csus4. You have raised the E note up to an F. Try doing a few more on your own.

Here are a few more suspensions

Regular D chord =	D	F#	A	Dsus4 =	D	F#	A
Regular G chord =	G	B	D	Gsus4 =	G	C	D
Regular C chords =	C	E	G	Csus2 =	C	D	G

You can do this to any chord in root position. Try some other suspensions.

Music Theory Glossary

The terms below were used throughout the music theory lessons.

Enharmonic spelling – the same note spelled differently

Example: C# = Db

Flat – take the note one half step lower

Half Step – distance between two notes Example: C – C#

Harmonization – add one or more notes to an existing note

Harmony – two notes sounding at once

Interval – the distance between two notes

Keys – a family of chords grouped with a scale

Key Signatures – the number of sharps or flats in any given key

Major – a happy sound

Minor – a sad, dark sound

Natural – cancels out the sharp/flat symbols and take the note back to normal

Octave – the distance between the C and C note makes an octave (12 half steps)

Scale – a group of notes in a particular order

Sharp – take the note one half step higher

Transposition – take a song to a different key

Triad/Chord – three notes grouped together to make a chord

Whole Step – two half steps make a whole step