



Chords & Arpeggios

1. Chords Broken and Blocked
2. Arpeggios



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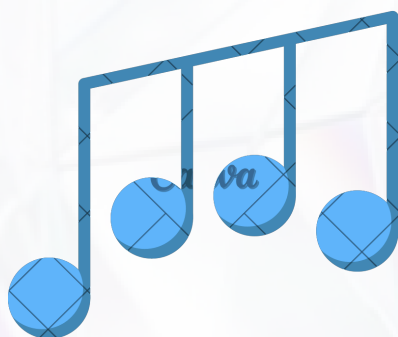
Chords & Arpeggios



As you become more confident with your scales, we'll gradually introduce additional technical skills. While the order is generally the same for every student, the timing will depend on your individual progress and readiness. We'll begin with chromatic and Major and minor scales around the Circle of Fifths. Next, you'll learn solid (blocked) and broken triads in root position, followed by inversions. Then we'll move on to arpeggios, with inversions, solid and broken four-note chords, and later scales in thirds, sixths, and tenths. Finally, we'll explore octaves and double notes.

Not every student will learn every technical element in this sequence. The later stages are intended for students preparing for advanced examinations, competitions, or professional-level study, and they usually require practicing two or more hours each day.

The most important goal is not to rush ahead, but to build a secure, healthy technique step by step. Each new technical skill you master will strengthen your overall musicianship and make playing your repertoire easier, more expressive, and more enjoyable.



Broken Chords



Broken chords and arpeggios, just like scales, are played and practiced using traditional fingering. Once you've become comfortable playing one-octave major and minor scales hands separately around the Circle of Fifths, you'll be ready to learn 3-note triads.

To play broken chords with a beautiful, flowing sound, you'll use a combination of vertical and horizontal wrist movements while keeping your hand and arm relaxed between each chord. I call this movement "drop and roll"—dropping into each chord and gently rolling your wrist as you move to the next one. We'll begin with root position triad and gradually play them over two or more octaves, depending on your age, ability, and technical development.

Watch Video: *V1- Broken Chords*

Broken Chords



Broken Triads and Inversions



Once you've mastered broken triads in root position, you'll be ready to learn inversions. As you play, focus on the same "drop and roll" motion you've already learned. Allow your wrist to rise gently as your fifth finger finishes each group of notes, then drop naturally onto the first note of the next inversion, to help you connect each inversion with ease and produce an even, beautiful tone.

Watch Video: *V2a- Broken Triads and Inversions-Hands Separately*

Watch Video: *V2b - Broken Triads and Inversions-Hands Together*

Broken Triads and Inversions



4 Note Broken Triad



You'll learn broken four-note chords later, beginning by playing them in root position over several octaves, after which inversions can be added. Remember to relax between each chord. Only once this relaxation is mastered will you be ready to connect all the chords and inversions smoothly without pauses.

Here are some helpful exercises for broken four note chords.

Watch Video: *V3- 4 Note Broken Triad*

4 Note Broken Triad



Exercises



And here's some more:

Watch Video: *V4 - Exercises for 4 Note Broken Triad*

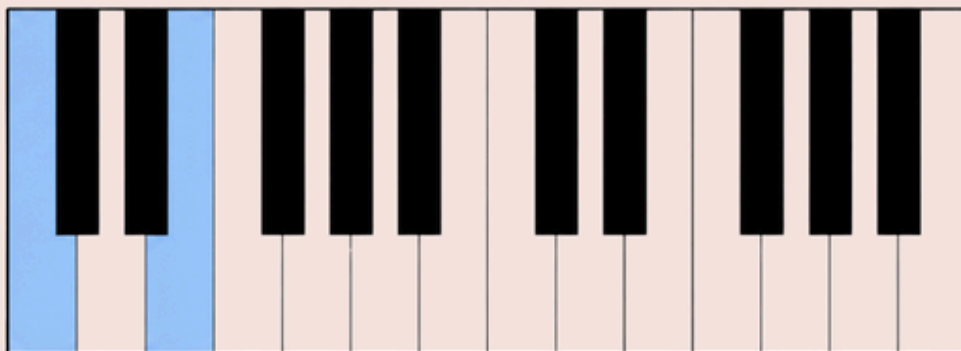
Exercises





Starting from white and black keys

m3 = finger#4
M3 = finger #3



When playing broken and blocked four-note chords, use your 4th finger when the distance between the side fingers (for example, fingers 3–5 or 4–5) is a minor third. If the distance is a major third, it is usually more comfortable to use your 3rd finger, especially when the chord begins on a black key.

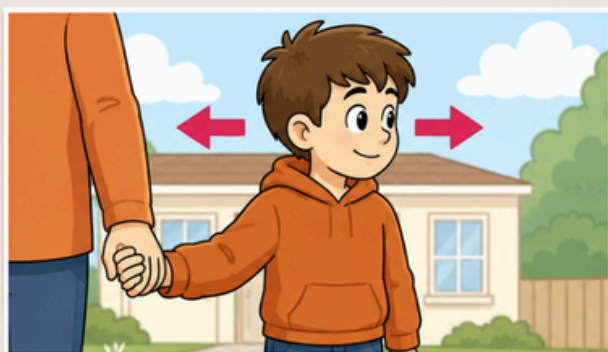
The fingering will stay the same whether you start on a white key or a black key.



Broken 4 note chords Fingering



N. Blauberg



Remembering four-note broken chord fingering while playing hands together can be challenging because the thumb crossings happen at different times in each hand.

Blauberg suggests a clever way to remember the fingerings by using the idea of crossing the street. In most countries, you first look to the left, then to the right. Use this same pattern to remember your 4th finger:

- First, for Root position: look to the left hand and prepare to play with 4th finger of your left hand.
- Second, for the First inversion: both hands use the same fingering, playing with the 4th finger.
- Thirdly, for the Second inversion: look to the right hand and prepare to play with 4th finger of our right hand.

The pattern is:

Left hand → Both hands → Right hand

Left → Both → Right.

Watch Video: *V5 - Broken 4-note Chords Fingering*

Blocked Chords



Blocked Chords



Broken chords and blocked chords are usually studied together. When playing blocked chords, focus on keeping your hand and wrist in the correct position, with your thumb closer to the edge of the white keys, and the 5th finger is much farther up towards the black keys, just as you practiced with broken triads.

We'll begin with root position triads, playing one chord per octave over three or four octaves at a slow speed. Take time for each chord and allow a moment of relaxation in between, making sure you release any tension after playing. Pay attention to all your fingers—not only the ones playing the chord. The fingers that are not involved should remain relaxed and at rest. Keep your shoulders down and your arm free and relaxed with a gentle "monkey swing" motion.

Watch Video: *V6 - Blocked Chords*



Blocked Triads with Inversions



Once you are comfortable playing blocked chords in root position with a relaxed movement, you can begin working on blocked chords with inversions.

When playing chords, imagine that the movement comes from your whole body—not only your fingers. Feel the support from your core and lower back, allowing your arm and hand to transfer that energy into the keys.

Avoid stiffness in your fingers and remember to release any unnecessary tension. Keep your chest relaxed, shoulders down, and allow your hand to feel heavy and connected to the piano.

Imagine that your hand has weight behind it—like you are playing with a relaxed, grounded feeling rather than a light touch. Then release and relax after each chord.

Watch Video: *V7 - Blocked Triads with Inversion*

Arpeggios



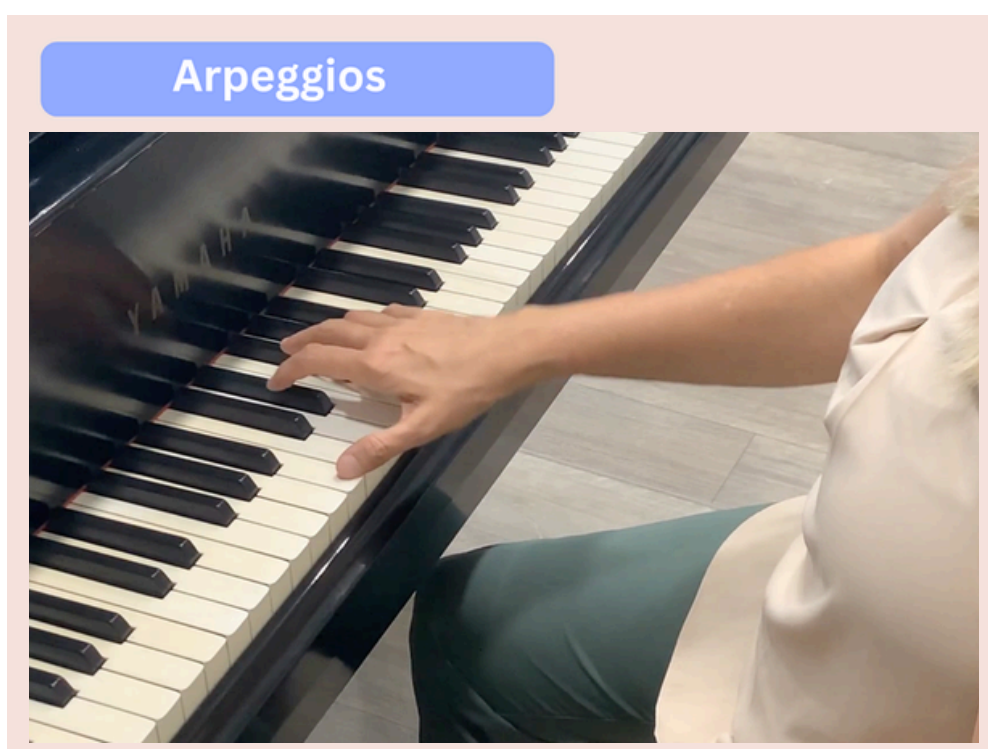
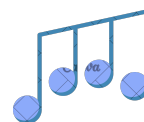
Arpeggios should sound like a smooth, connected melodic line without unnecessary movements, accents, or pushes, especially during thumb crossings.

Thumb crossings in arpeggios are more challenging than in scales because the thumb often reaches keys a third or fourth away. This requires even more flexibility and plasticity. dexterity.

We'll begin with smaller three-note positions, usually over two octaves, before learning the full pattern. Focus on a natural opening and closing of the hand: when you relax, the hand closes, and the thumb prepares for the next note.

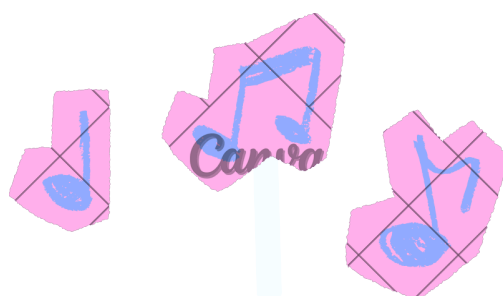
Gradually, we'll reduce the pauses, develop smoother pivots, and connected legato sound as your hand gains flexibility and strength. Remember to stay relaxed, allowing the hand to naturally open and close without keeping the hand stretched. Avoid unnecessary movements, especially moving the elbows in and out.

Watch Video: *V8 - Arpeggios*





Arpeggios with Inversions



Illusion of Legato



For students with smaller hands, arpeggios can be challenging because of the stretching involved. To avoid tension, make sure your hand returns to a relaxed, closed position after each stretch.

A slight horizontal wrist movement in the direction of the melodic line, similar to a violinist's bow, can help with smooth thumb crossings.

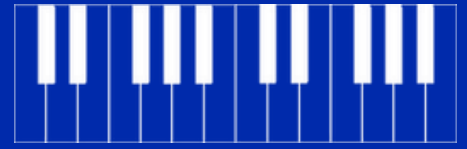
If your hand is small but flexible, a slight separation between notes is acceptable. When the thumb cannot fully connect every note, a faster tempo can create the natural illusion of a continuous legato line.

Watch Video: [V9 - Illusion of Legato in Arpeggios](#)

Illusion of Legato



Thumb Crossing



Avoid moving the entire arm when crossing the thumb. This creates unnecessary movements and can quickly lead to tension and fatigue.

Thumb Crossing



WRONG

Exercises for Arpeggios



Here are some helpful exercises for arpeggios.

Watch Video: *V10 - Exercises for Arpeggios -Part 1*



And another one:

Watch Video: *V11 - Exercises for Arpeggios -Part 2*

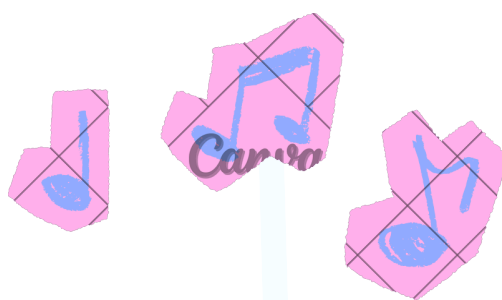


Exercises for Arpeggios



A couple more:

Watch Video: *V12 - Exercises for Arpeggios -Part 3*



Arpeggio Fingering Formulas



All black keys - same
fingering as for
white keys arpeggios



Exception

B flat major LH

Starting on black keys
with white keys in
between - the thumb
goes on the 1st white key



Although arpeggio fingering is simple and very similar to four-note broken chords, it is easy to make mistakes. The most common mistake is replacing the fourth finger with the third finger, so it is important to memorize the correct location of the fourth finger.

When an arpeggio starts on a white key, or when it contains only black keys, use the same fingering as in four-note broken chords.

When an arpeggio starts on a black key but includes white keys, place the thumb on the first white key. The exception is B-flat major in the left hand.

