

Happy Birthday - chords I IV and V

To build *chords* in a key, take the scale first. In C major, this would be:

C D E F G A B C

We can number each degree of the scale. This makes things easier as it allows us to easily see a chord's *function* within a key. Using the number system, we can easily play a piece in any key we like!

Each note in the scale has a chord associated with it. To get the chord, we stack two thirds on top of our note to make what we call a *triad*.

For example, in **C major**:

- To find **chord I**, we play our *root* note of C (note I of the scale), as well as E (the third above) and G (the fifth above)
- To find **chord IV**, we take our root note of F (note IV of the scale), A (the third above) and C (the fifth above)

Degree	I	ii	iii	IV	V	vi	vii	(VIII)
Fifth	G	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Third	E	F	G	A	B	C	D	E
Root	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C
Chord	C major	D minor	E minor	F major	G major	A minor	B diminished	C major

We'll sometimes add a seventh to a chord, to create more 'tension' in a chord. For example, in **C major**:

- To find **chord V7**, we take our root note of G (note V of the scale), B (the third above), D (the fifth above) and F (the seventh above).

Glossary

Term	Meaning
<i>Chord</i>	A group of three (<i>a triad</i>) or more notes played at the same time
<i>Root</i>	The note which the chord is built upon, giving the chord its name
<i>Function</i>	A label which lets us know how a chord relates to its key centre and its relationship with the other chords in that key

Let's see how this works in practice

Using the system above, choose a key, and find the I, IV and V7 chords in that key. Here are a few examples:

Key	Chord I	Chord IV	Chord V7
C major	C	F	G7
G major	G	C	D7
D major	D	G	A7

With these chords you'll be able to play a whole host of songs, 'Happy Birthday' being just one of them. Practise this and dazzle your friends and family!

I **V7**

Happy Birthday to you

I

Happy Birthday to you

IV

Happy Birthday dear

I **V7 I**

Happy Birthday to you!

