

Theory Sheet 7 davejonesguitar.co.uk

Triads can be built on every degree of a major or natural minor scale, this is called harmonising the scale. Each degree of the scale becomes the root note and the triad is then built by taking two more alternate notes from the scale, these then become the 3rd and 5th of that triad respectively. This gives you all the chords in that key. Each chord is given a roman numeral to identify its position in the key.

C major scale:- C D E F G A B

	Root	3rd	5th
Chord I	C	E	G
Chord II	D	F	A
Chord III	E	G	B
Chord IV	F	A	C
Chord V	G	B	D
Chord VI	A	C	E
Chord VII	B	D	F

The type of triad created depends on the interval between the root, 3rd, and 5th.

If the interval between the root and the 3rd is 4 semitones [major 3rd] and the interval between the 3rd and the 5th is 3 semitones [minor 3rd] then the resulting chord will be a major chord.

If the interval between the root and the 3rd is 3 semitones [minor 3rd] and the interval between the 3rd and the 5th is 4 semitones [major 3rd] then the resulting chord will be a minor chord.

This method can be used for the 1st six chords, however, chord 7 is a different type of chord. This has a minor 3rd interval between both root and 3rd and 3rd and 5th. This chord is a diminished chord. The spelling of this chord is:- 1, b3, b5.

The chords in C major are:-

C major, D minor, E minor, F major, G major, A minor, B diminished

The chords in a major key always run in this order.

The natural minor scale can be harmonised in exactly the same way, and the same method applies.

The chords in A natural minor are:-

A minor, B diminished, C major, D minor, E minor, F major, G major