Compendium of

KEYBOARD CHORDS

and memorizing them in groups

THE EASY WAY TO LEARN DIFFICULT CHORDS
A methodical scheme covering all the chords you are ever likely to need!

Most keyboards provide the same harmonic backing whichever inversion of a major or minor chord is played. The general aim is to play the chord as close as is comfortably possible to the top end of the accompaniment section, so that jumps are kept to a minimum. On many keyboards the melody section (default setting) starts on the G below middle C. On a Casio it is a semitone lower. The chords pictured here tend to avoid that F♯ so that the player is not inconvenienced when needing to play different makes of keyboard.

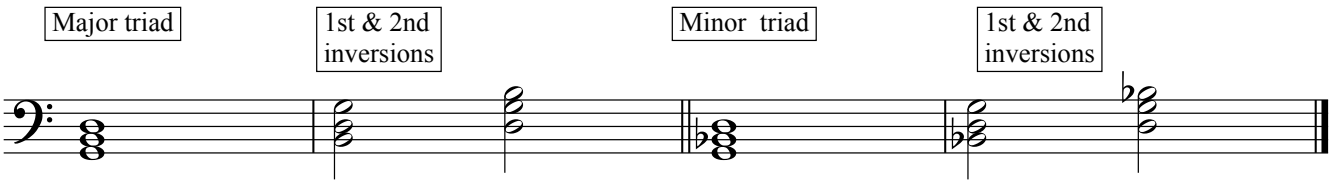
These are not the only possible positionings, but it is a good idea to learn a set scheme of fingering so that the finding of chords becomes automatic and effortless.

Suggested fingerings for major and minor chords: root position 531, 1st inversion 531, 2nd inversion 521. Suggested fingering for 7ths: root position, 1st inversion and 2nd inversion 5321; 3rd inversion 5421.

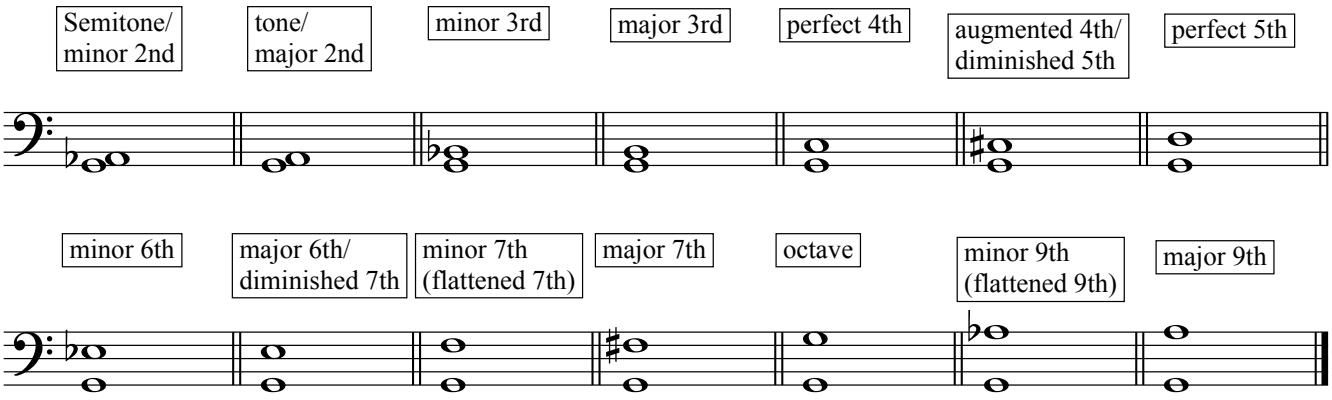
NB Dominant 11th chords are not possible unless two hands are used in the accompaniment section; if this is done C11 will register as C/Bb, as it is effectively the triad of Bb on top of the triad of C. For most purposes it is better to use a dominant 7th or 9th chord.

For Gb read F♯ ; for D♯ read Eb

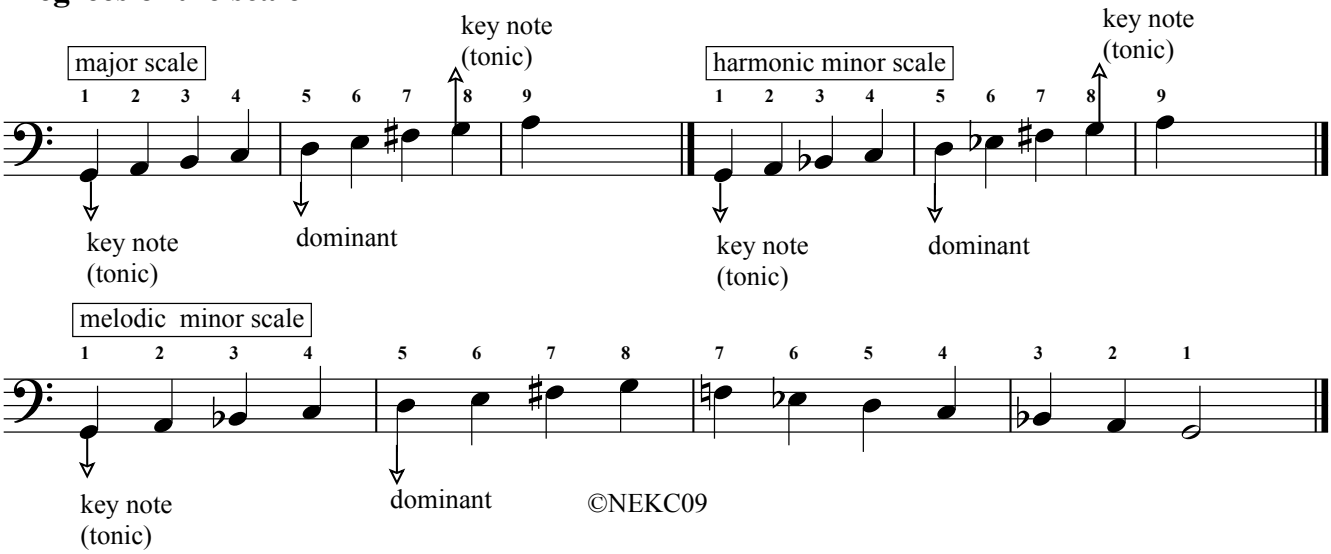
Triads



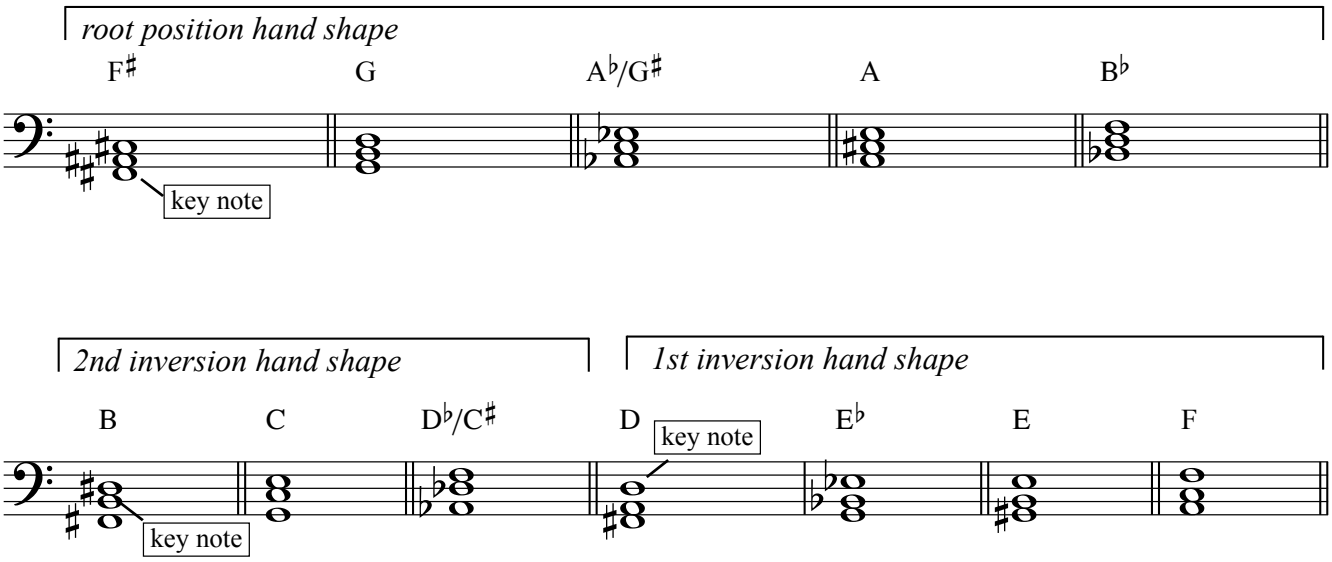
Intervals



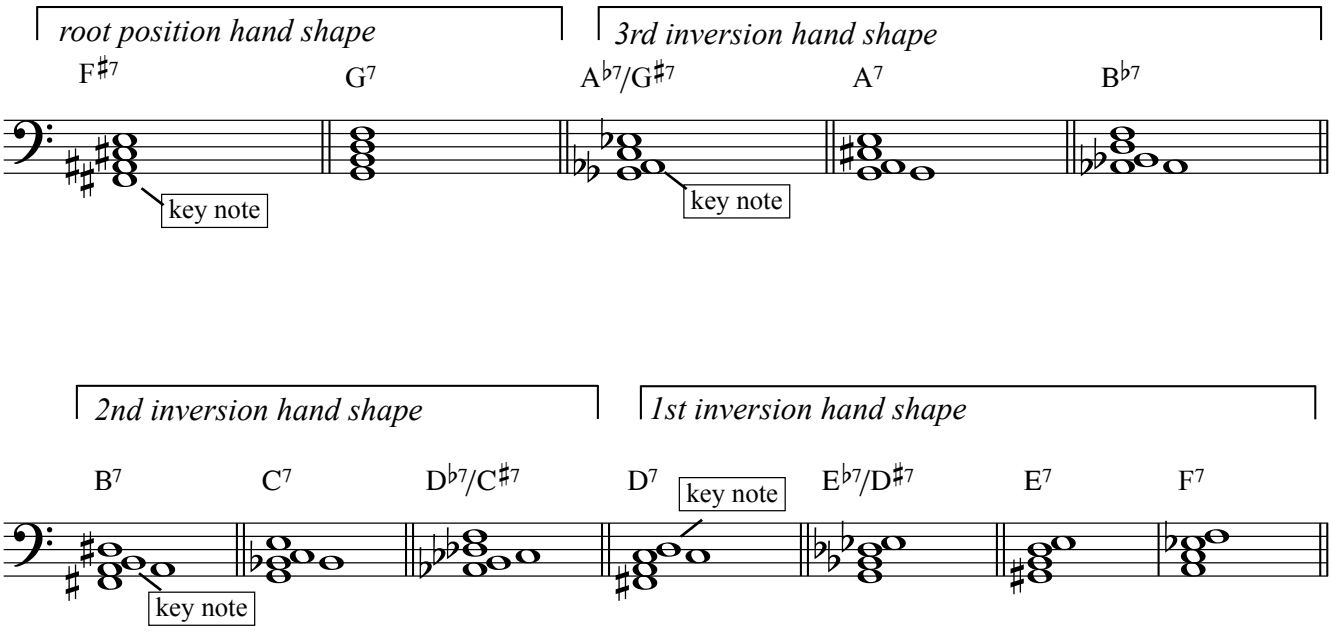
Degrees of the scale



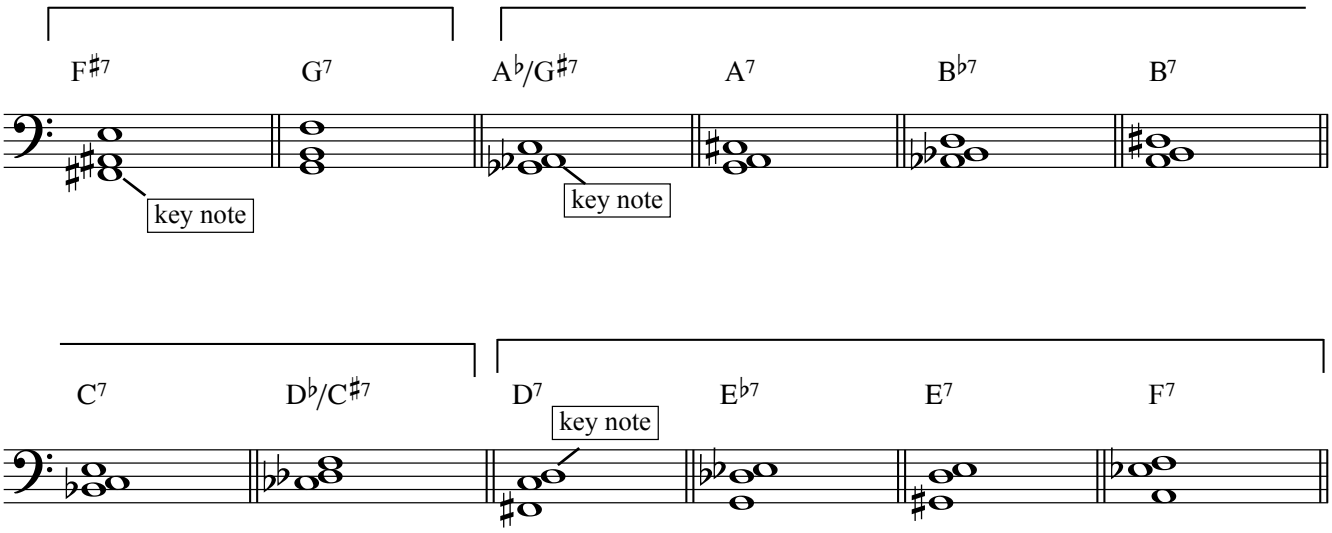
1.
MAJOR CHORDS:
the key note with the 3rd and 5th note of the major scale.
Alternative chord symbols: CM, C ma, C maj



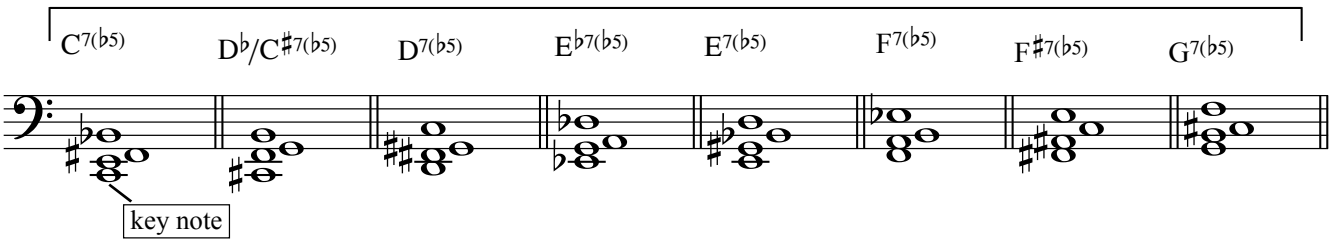
2.
Dominant 7th chords:
as major, adding a tone below the key note (the flattened 7th).
Sometimes these are referred to as Major minor 7ths.



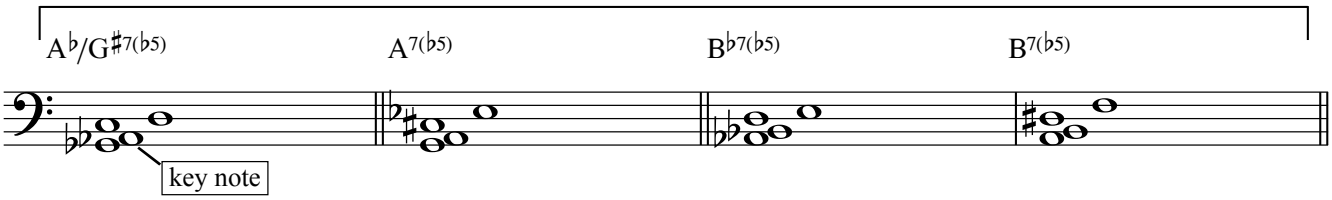
Dominant 7th chords: shortened form
The 5th of the chord in dominant 7ths can be omitted without altering the sound.
Knowing this form as well as the full chord is helpful when it comes learning more complicated 7ths and 9ths.



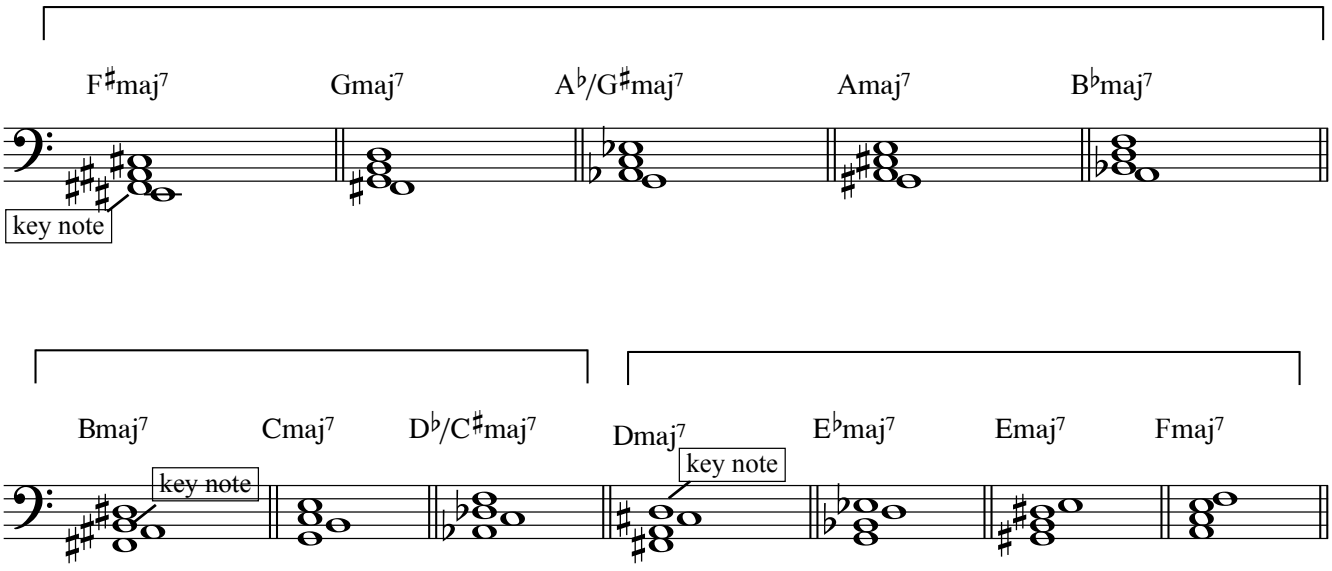
3.
7th chords with a flattened 5th
There are two helpful ways of thinking of these:
1) as the 1st, 3rd and 7th of the dominant 7th adding a tone above the 3rd (the flattened 5th)
2) as the full dominant 7th, lowering the 5th.
Play as many as you can in root position as otherwise some keyboards will infer a different bass note.
Alternative chord symbol: C7-5



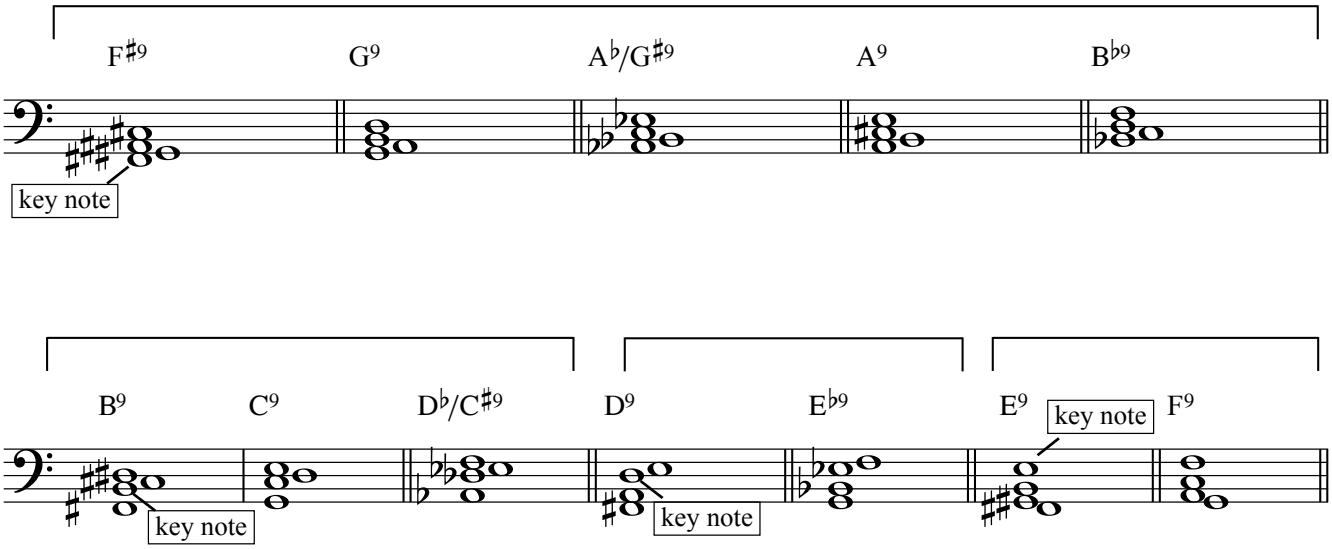
NB On some keyboards a different bass note of the chord will sound when they are not played in root position.



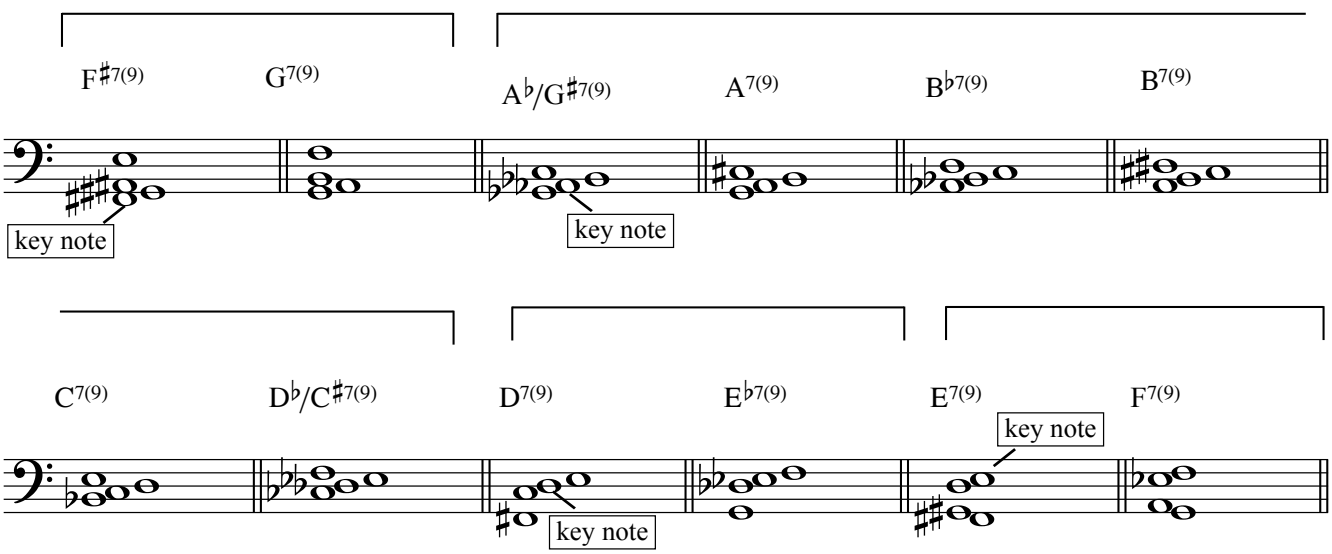
4.
Major 7th chords:
as major, adding a semitone below the key note (the 7th degree of the scale).
Alternative chord symbols: CMaj7, CMA7, CM7, Cj7, C △



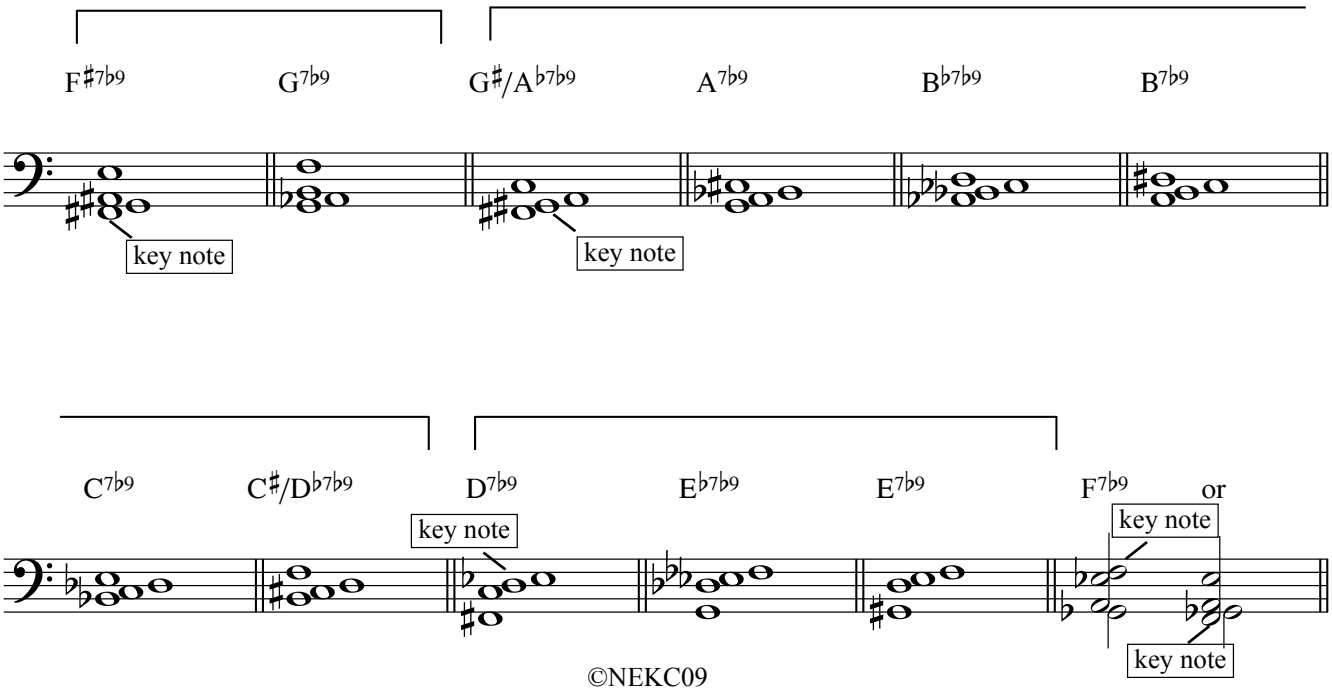
5.
Added 9th chords:
as major, adding a tone above the key note (the 9th/2nd degree of the scale).
Alternative chord symbol: C add9



6.
Dominant 9th chords:
as dominant 7th shortened form, adding a tone above the tonic (the 2nd degree of the scale.)
The fifth is not needed in order to sound the chord; as there are so many notes to play it is best to omit it.
Alternative chord symbol: C9

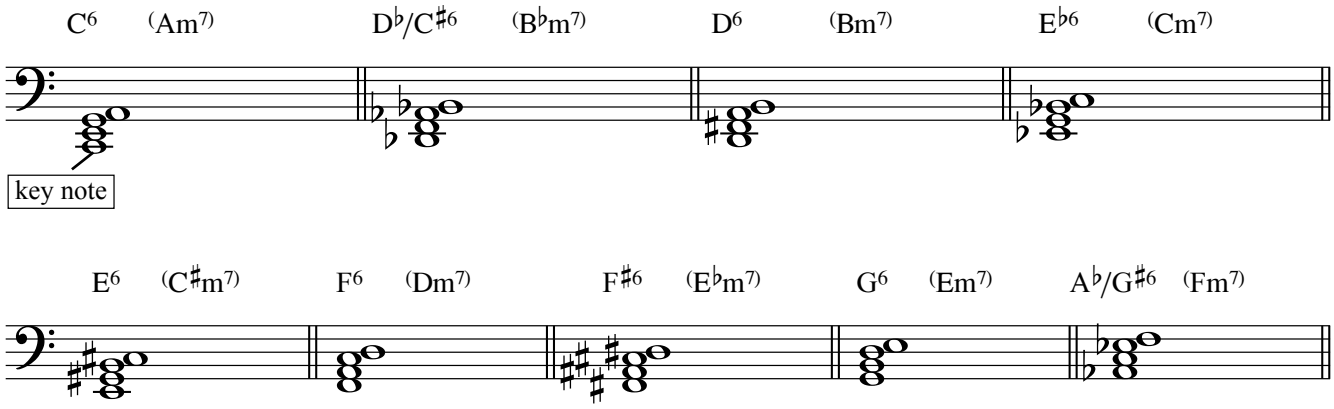


7.
Dominant minor 9th chords:
as with dominant 7th shortened form, adding a semitone above the tonic (the flattened 9th/2nd).
The fifth is not needed in order to sound the chord; as there are so many notes to play it is best to omit it.
Alternative chord symbol: C-9
NB Not all keyboards will register these chords.



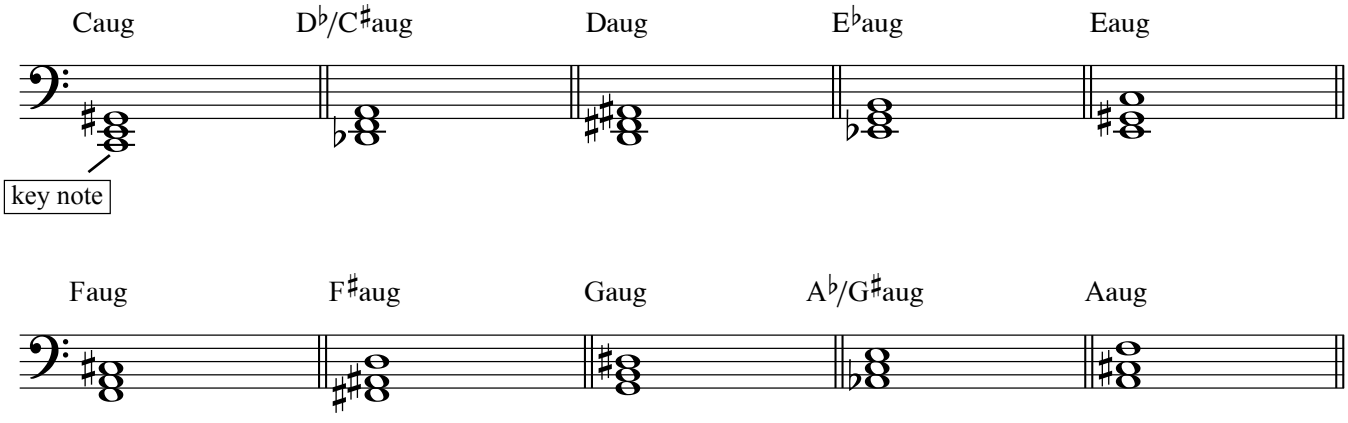
8.
Major 6th chords:
as major, adding a tone above the 5th (the sixth degree of the scale). On most instruments only the following root position chords will be 'read' correctly by the keyboard.
Any inversions will sound as minor 7ths.
However there are some keyboards which don't have any major 6ths in their repertoire, interpreting all of them as minor 7ths. These are shown in brackets.

for A6 use F♯m7
for B♭6 use Gm7
for B6 use G♯m7



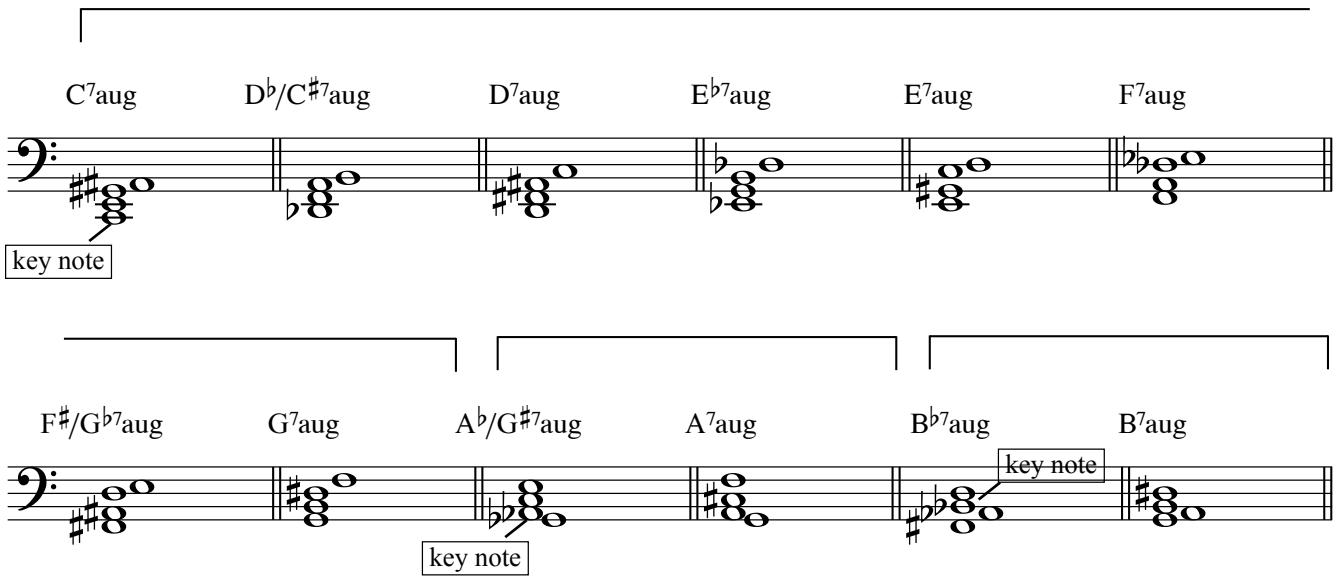
9.
Augmented chords:
as major, raising the 5th note of the scale by a semitone (augmented), creating two major 3rds.
Alternative chord symbol: C+.
The chords are easier to remember in root position,
and most keyboards make the key note the base of the harmony.

for B♭ aug use F♯ aug
for B aug use G aug

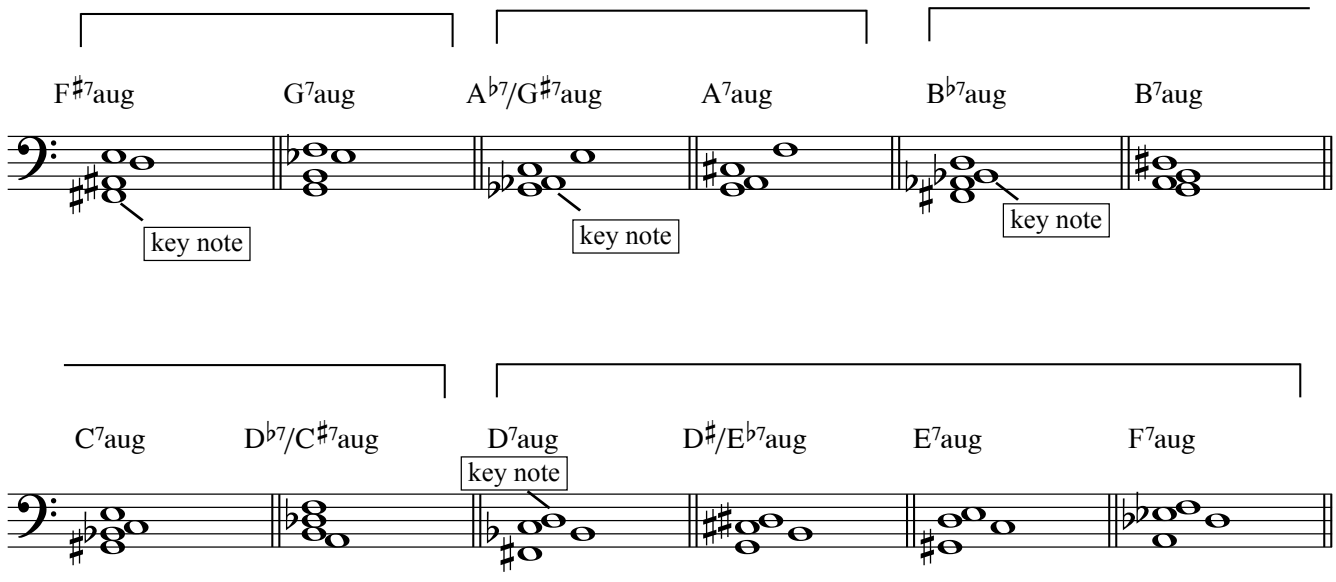


10.
Augmented 7th chords.
There are two ways to achieve these:
(1) as augmented, adding a tone above the raised 5th, (2) as dominant 7th with a raised 5th.
Alternative chord symbols: C7+5, C7#5
NB Not all keyboards will register these chords.

a) as augmented, adding a tone above the raised 5th (the flattened 7th)

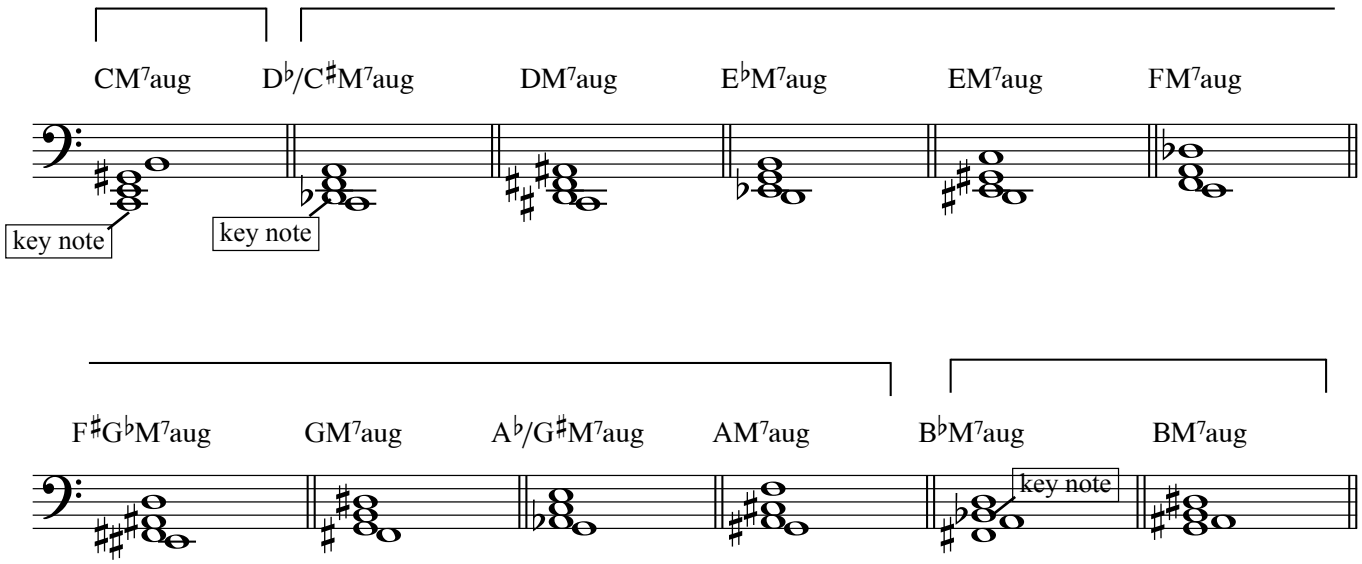


b) as dominant 7th, raising the 5th by a semitone.

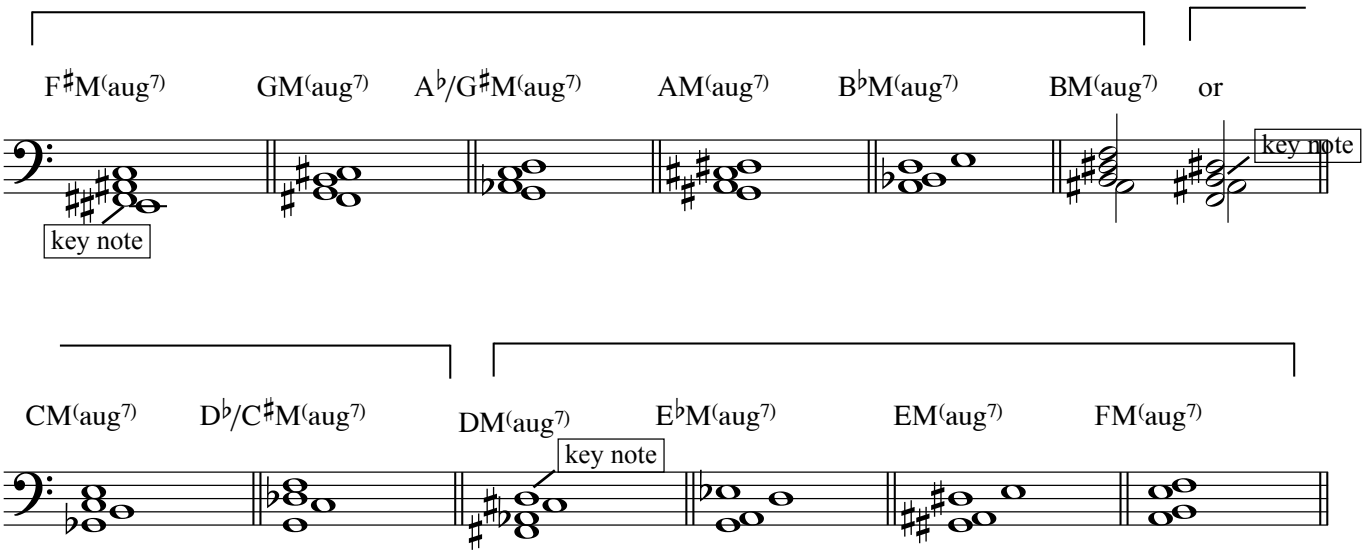


11.
Augmented major 7th chords.
There are two ways to achieve these:
(1) as augmented, adding a semitone below the key note,
(2) as major 7ths, lowering the 5th by a semitone.
Alternative chord symbols: C (Maj7), CMaj7, CMaj7 5, CMaj7#5, C△j7
NB Not all keyboards will register these chords.

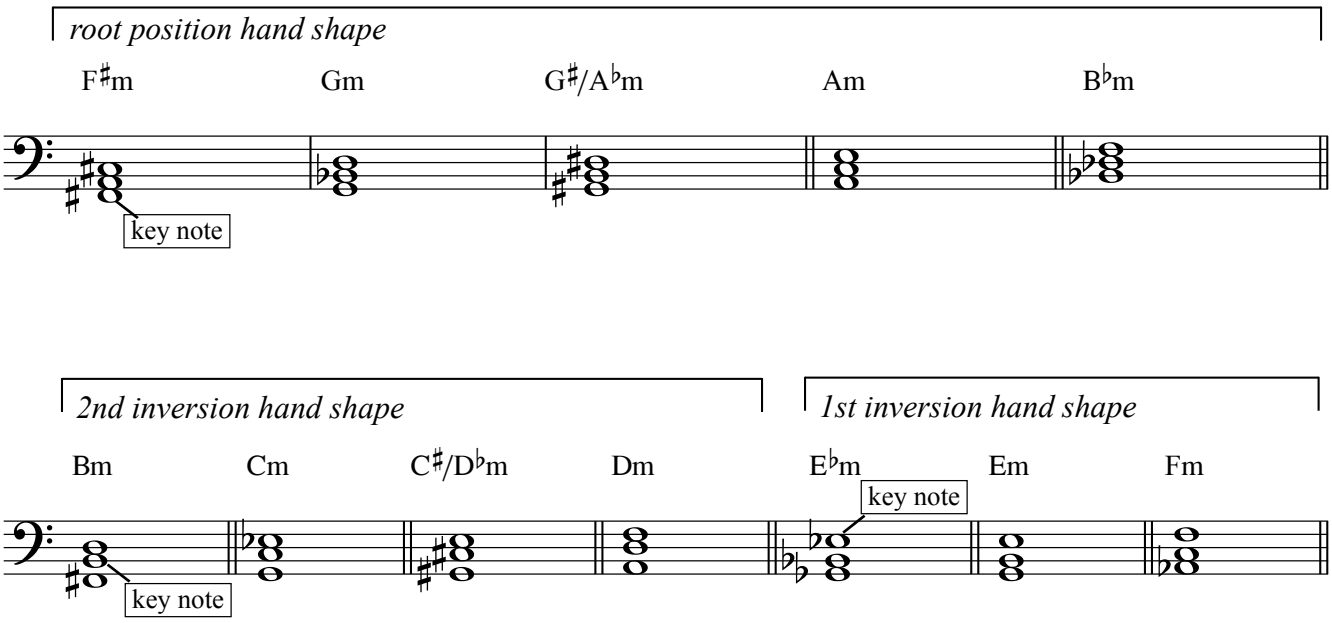
1) as augmented, adding a semitone below the key note (the 7th degree of the scale).



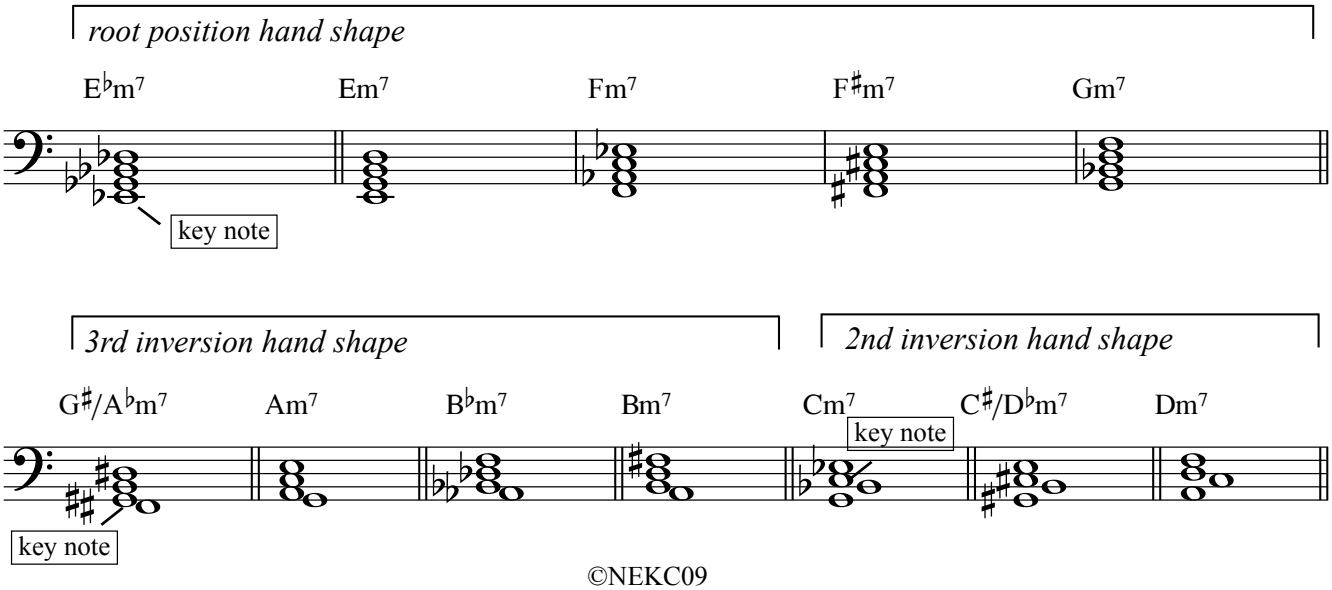
2) as major 7th, lowering the 5th by a semitone.



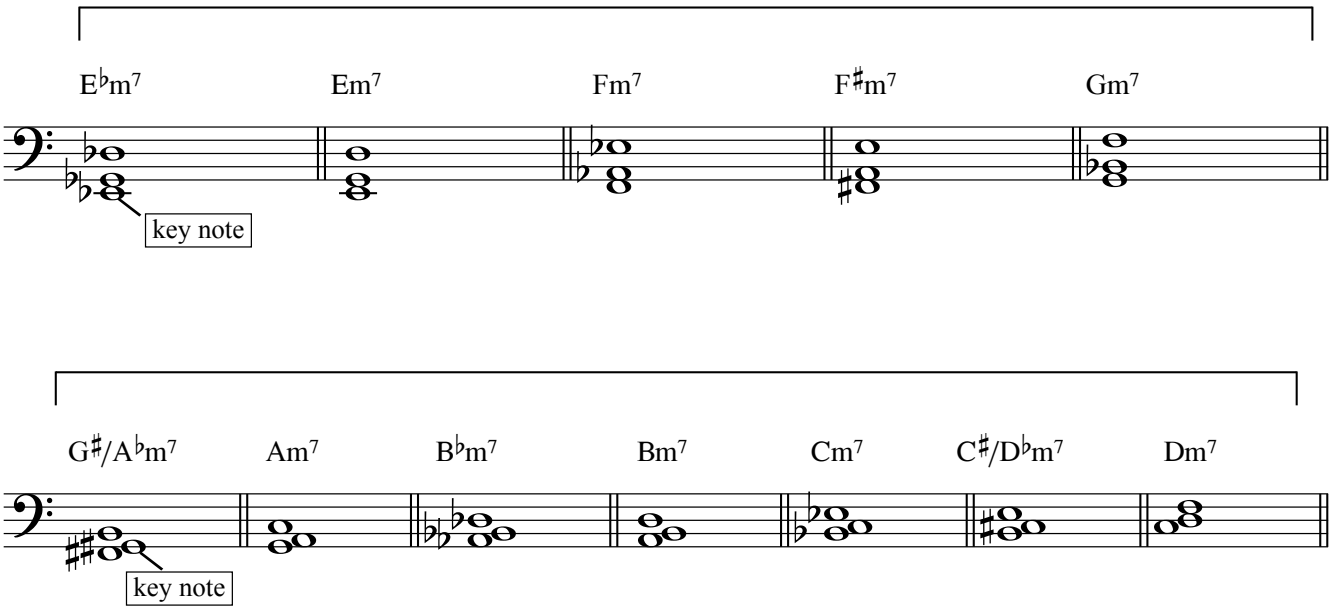
12.
MINOR CHORDS:
the key note, 3rd and 5th of the minor scale; (the 3rd is a semitone lower than in the major).
Alternative chord symbols: C -, C mi, C min



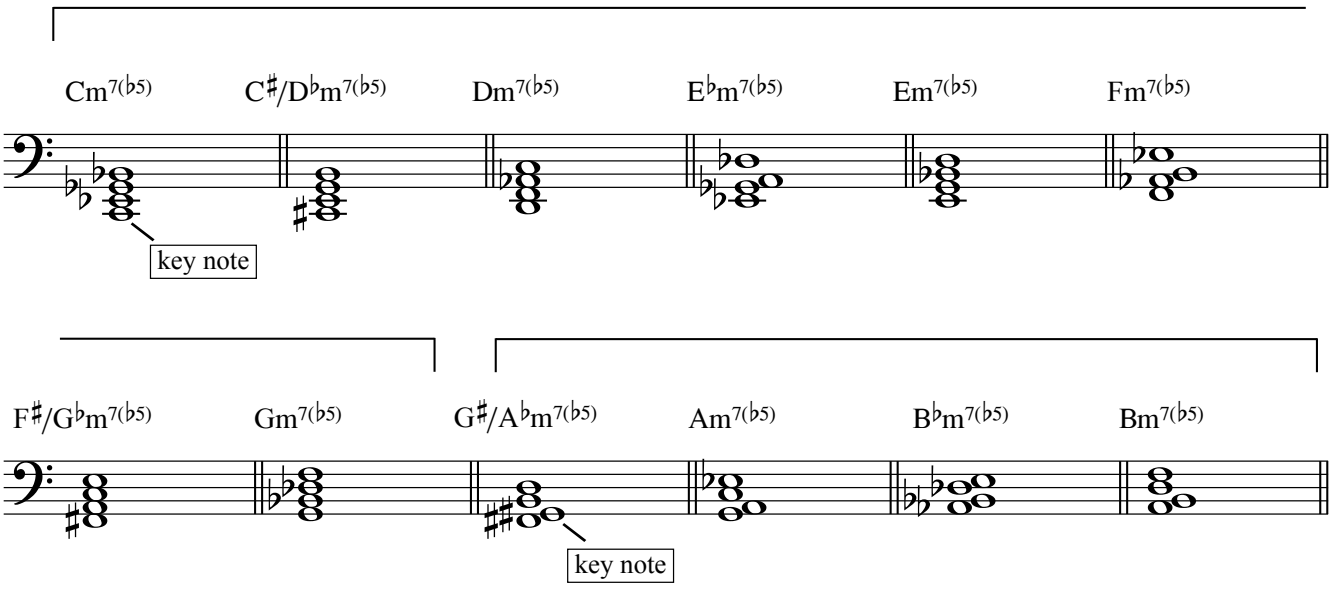
13.
Minor 7th chords:
as minor, adding a tone below the key note (the flattened 7th).
Alternative chord symbol: C-7
Avoid 1st inversion positions, which will sound like major 6ths instead.



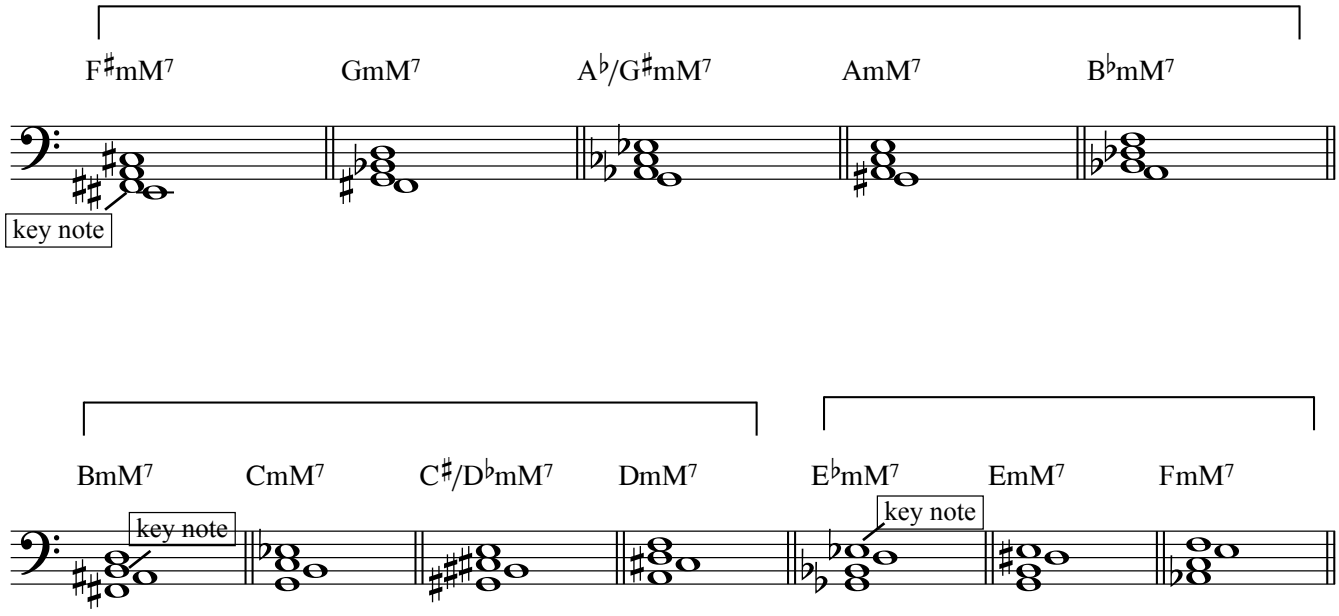
Minor 7th chords: shortened form
The 5th of the chord in dominant 7ths can be omitted without altering the sound.
Knowing this form as well as the full chord is helpful when it comes learning more complicated 7ths and 9ths.



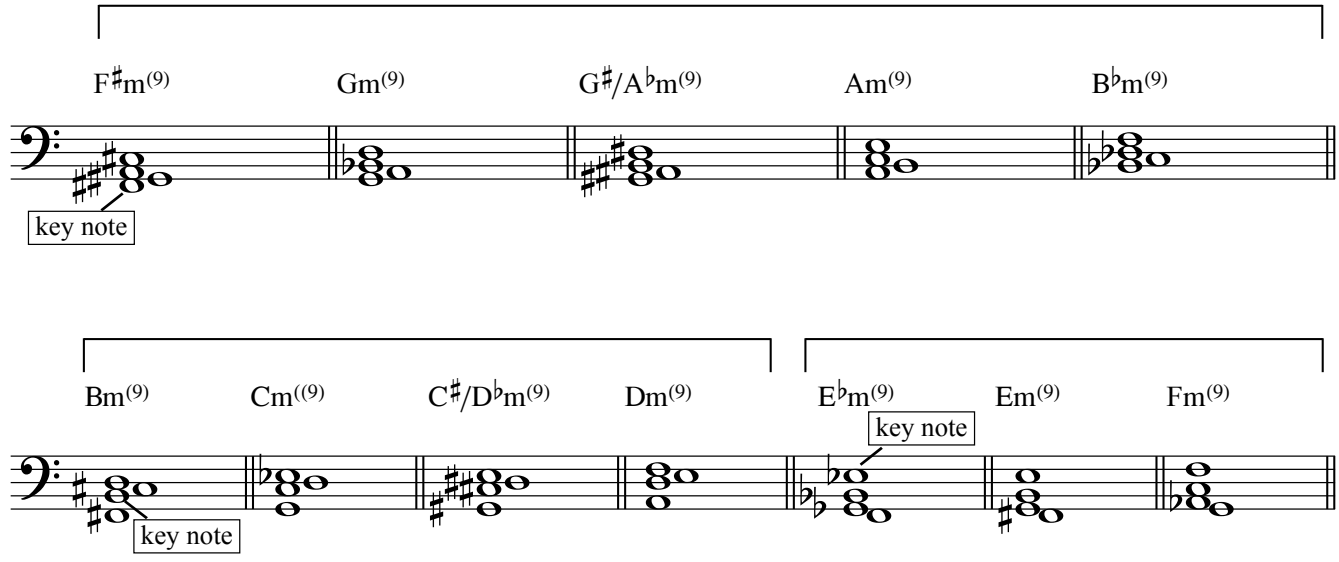
14.
Minor 7th chords with a flattened 5th.
There are two helpful ways of thinking of these:
1) a major 3rd above a diminished triad
2) as full minor 7th with the 5th lowered.
Alternative chord symbol: Cm7-5.
Avoid 1st inversion positions, which will sound like minor 6ths instead.



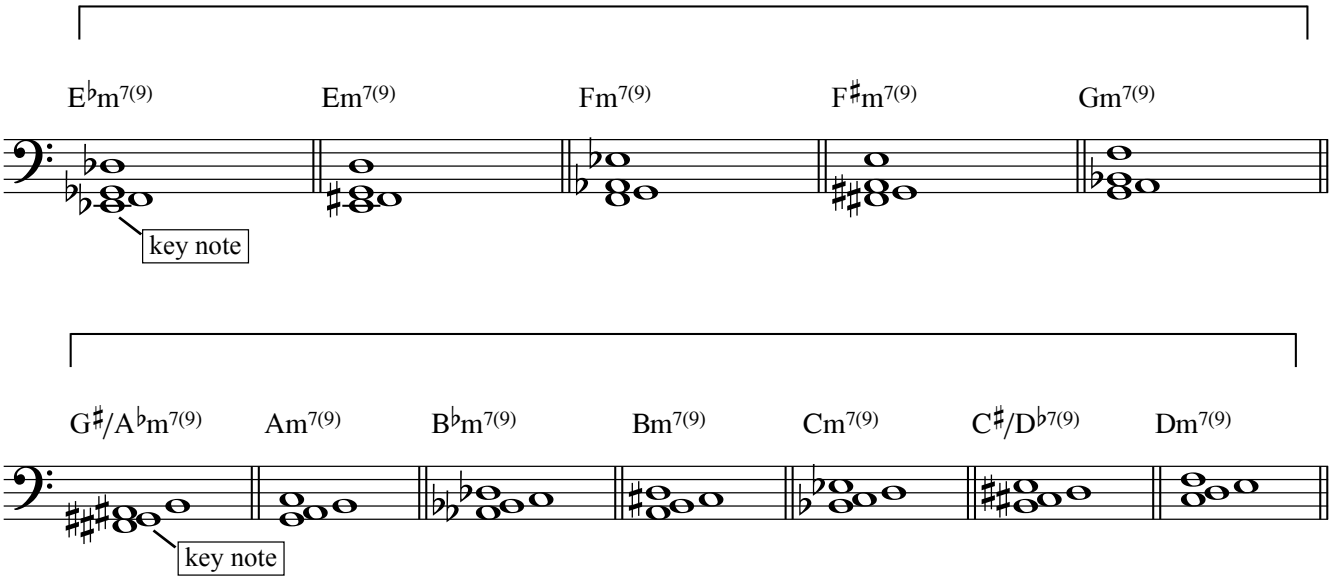
15.
Minor major 7th chords:
as minor, adding the semitone below the key note (the 7th degree of the scale).
Alternative chord symbols: Cm(Maj7), C-(j7)



16.
Minor chords with added 9th:
as minor, adding a tone above the key note (the 9th/2nd degree of the scale).
Alternative chord symbol: Cm add9.

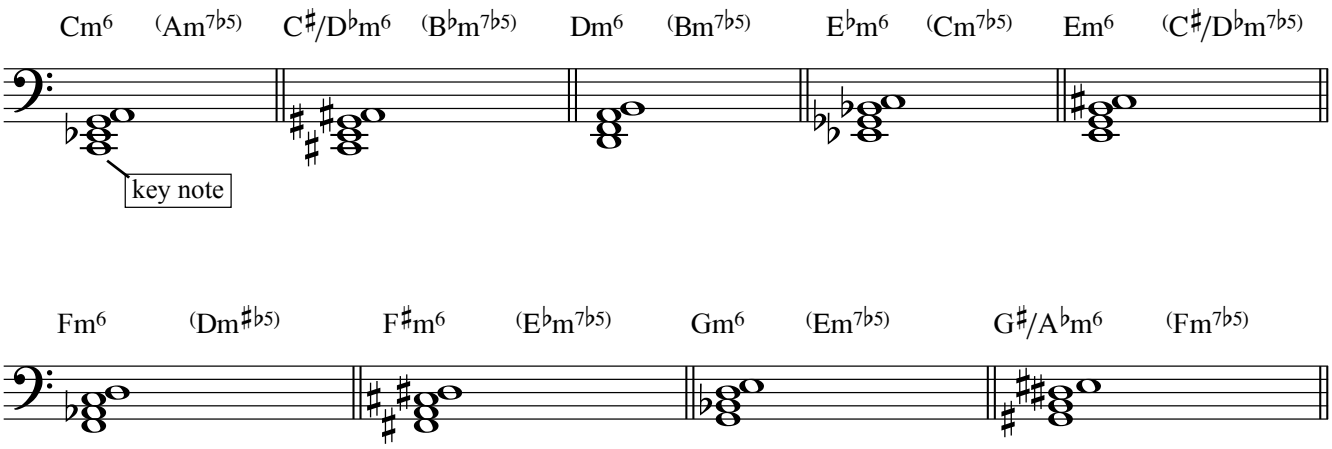


17.
Minor 7th chords with added 9th:
as minor 7th shortened form, adding a tone above the key note (the 9th/2nd degree of the scale).
The 5th is not needed in order to sound the chord; as there are so many notes to play it is best to omit it.
NB Not all keyboards will register these chords.

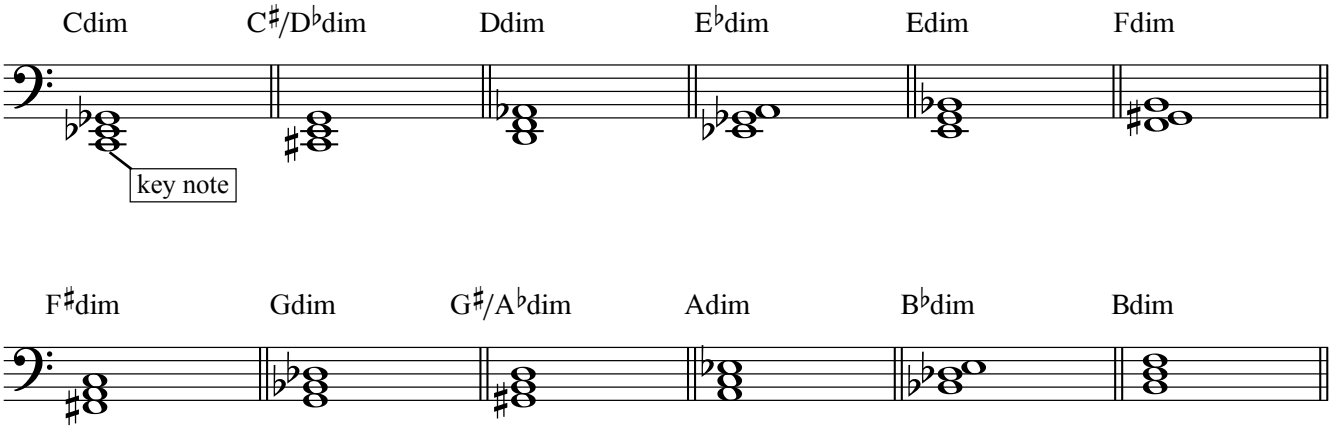


18.
Minor 6th chords:
as minor, adding a tone above the 5th (the sixth degree of the scale).
Alternative chord symbol: C-6
On most instruments only the following root position chords will be 'read' correctly by the keyboard.
Any inversions will sound as minor 7ths with a flattened 5th. (m7♭5 or m7-5)
Some keyboards don't have any minor 6ths in their repertoire, interpreting all of them as minor 7ths with a flattened 5th. These are shown in brackets.

for Am6 use F♯ m ♭5
for B♭m6 use Gm7 ♭5
for Bm6 use Ab/G♯7 ♭5

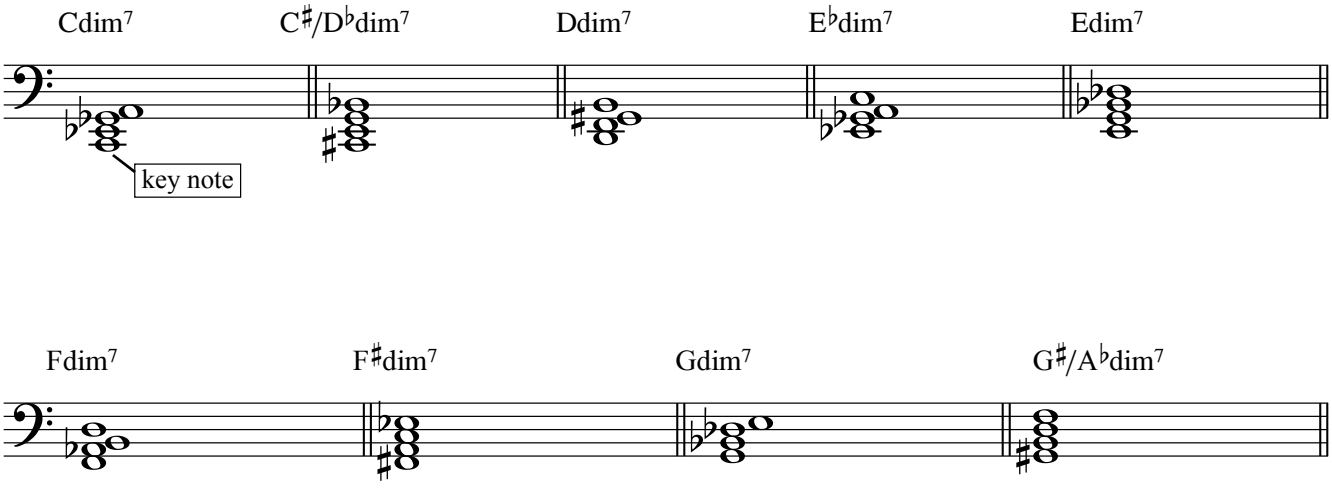


19.
Diminished chords:
as minor, lowering the fifth by a semitone.
Alternative chord symbols: Cm(b5) , Cm7b5, C ⌀
Alternative name: diminished half seventh.
They are easier to remember in root position, and most keyboards make the key note the base of the harmony.



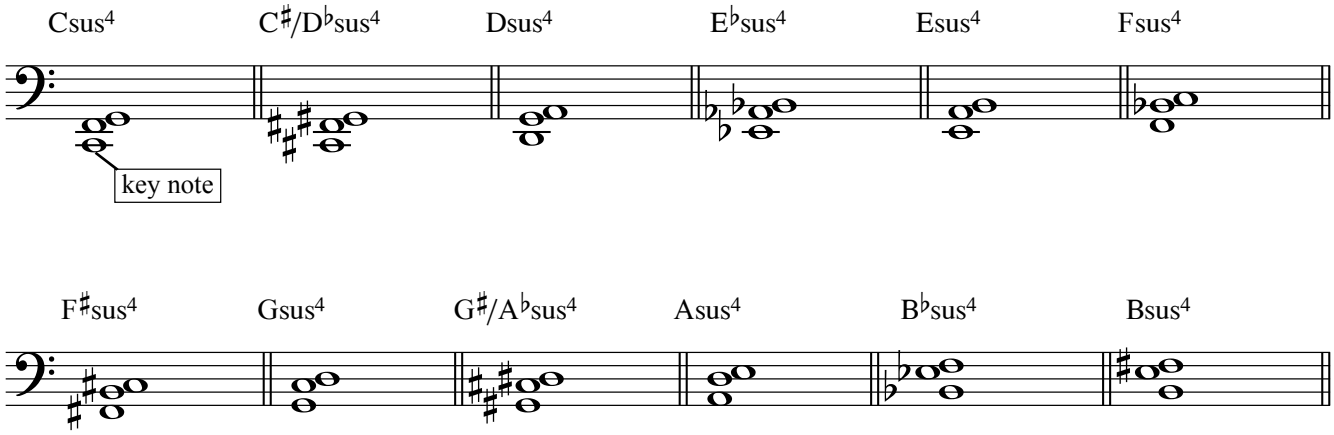
20.
Diminished 7th chords:
as diminished, adding another minor 3rd above.
Use in root position where possible in order to sound the correct bass note.
Alternative chord symbol: C°

for A use F♯ dim7
for B♭ use G dim7
for B use G♯ dim7



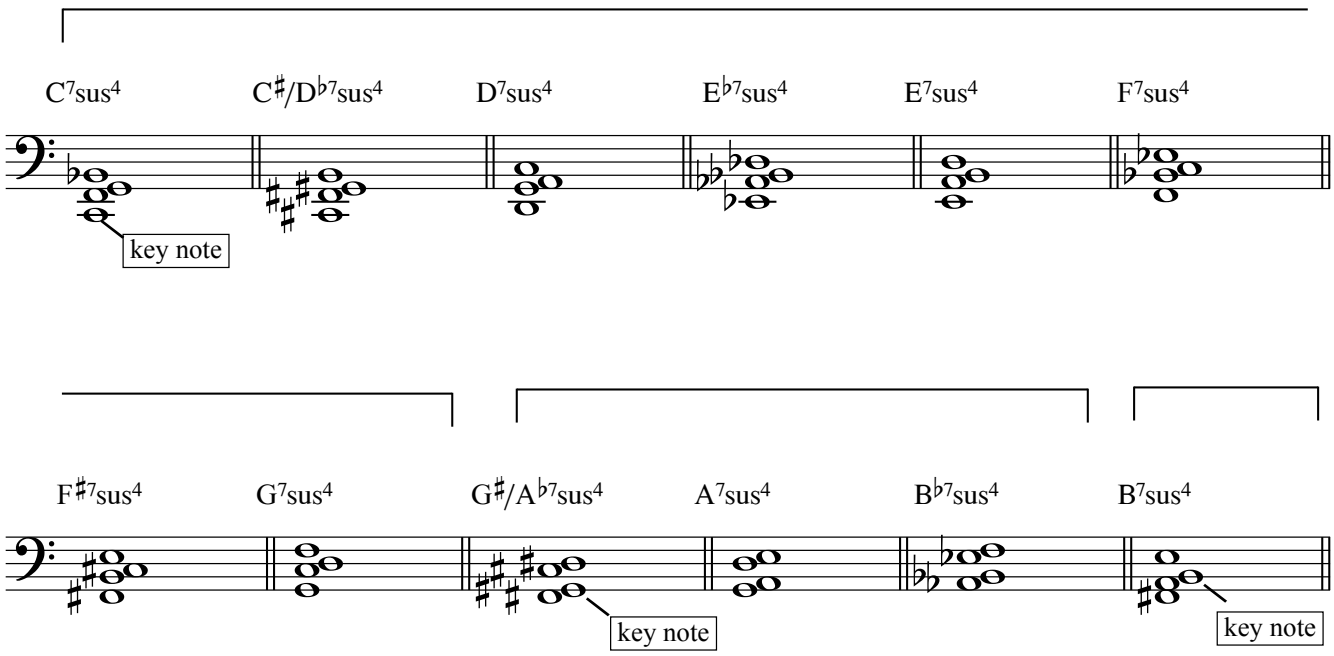
SUSPENDED CHORDS:
These are neither major nor minor, as the defining 3rd of the scale is raised to the 4th.

21.
Suspended 4th chords:
only the 1st, 4th and 5th of the scale are needed.
Play all you can in root position as inversions tend to register as 7ths with a suspended 4th.
Alternative chord symbols: Csus, C4

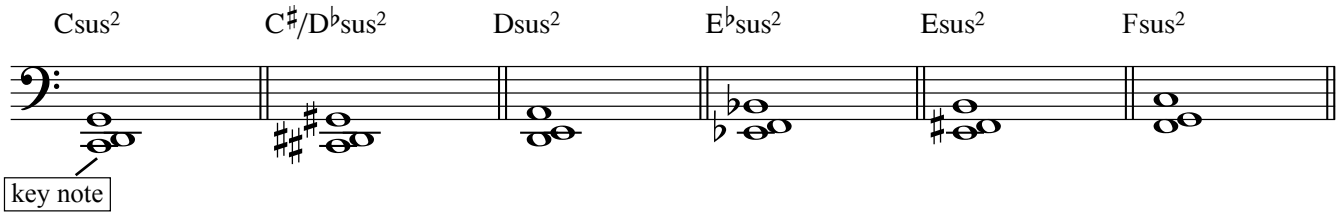


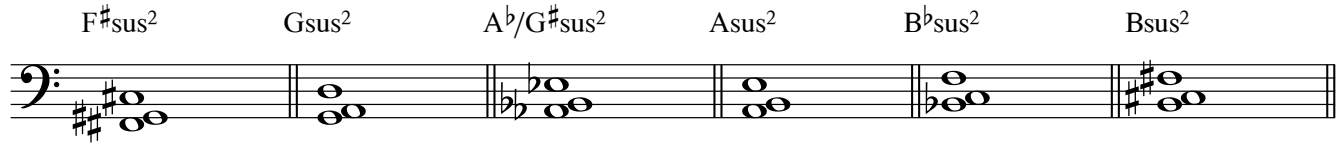
(The inversion of Bsus4
will register as F♯7sus4)

22.
7th chords with a suspended 4th:
as a dominant 7th, raising the 3rd by a semitone.
Alternative chord symbol: C7sus



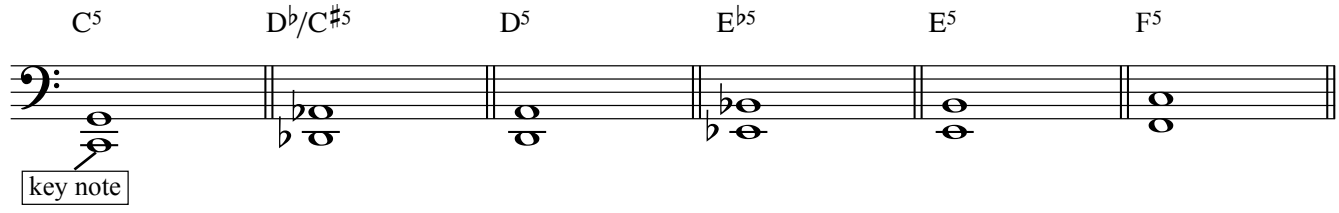
23.
Suspended 2nd chords:
only the 1st, 2nd and 5th of the scale are needed.
Play all you can in root position as inversions will register as suspended 4ths.
Alternative chord symbol: C2
NB Not all keyboards will register these chords.

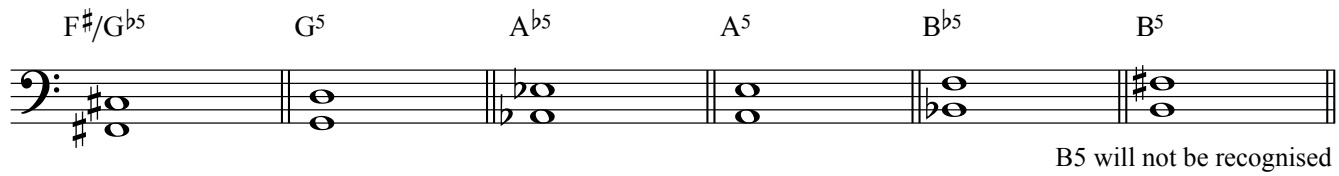




(The inversion of Bsus2
will register as F♯sus4)

24.
The bare 5th.
Some keyboards will register the bare 5th of dominant and tonic played together,
which can be useful when the RH part is chromatic.





B5 will not be recognised
when inverted.