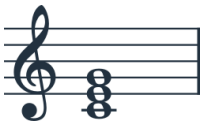The augmented triad

Stack **two major thirds** and you get the fourth and last kind of triad. Where the diminished triad squeezes, this one **stretches**: C–E–G♯, written **C+** or **Caug**. It sounds dreamy, unfinished — like a question that hangs in the air.

FOUR QUALITIES, ONE NOTE AT A TIME

C major
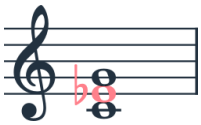
C – E – G



big + small third. Bright and settled.

C minor
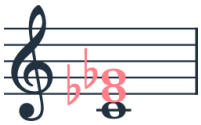
C – E♭ – G



small + big. The 3rd dropped a half step.

C diminished
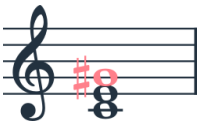
C – E♭ – G♭



small + small. The 5th dropped too (Handout 209).

C augmented

C – E – G♯

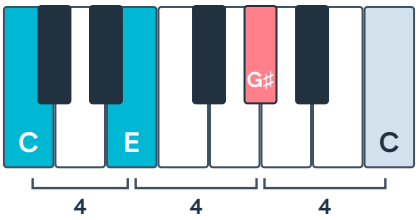


big + big. Back to major, then the 5th goes *up* a half step.
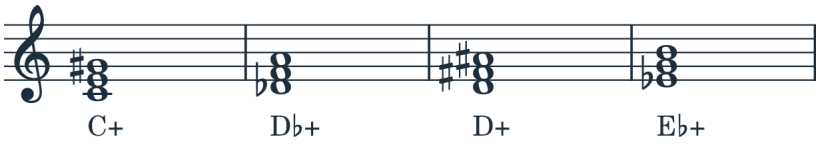
Coral marks the note that moved away from C major. Minor and diminished lower notes; augmented is the only one that *raises* one.

PERFECTLY EVEN — SO ONLY FOUR EXIST

C up to E is **4 half steps**. E up to G♯ is 4 more. And G♯ up to the next C? **4 again.** The augmented triad cuts the octave into three equal slices, so no note sounds like the "bottom" — which is why it floats.

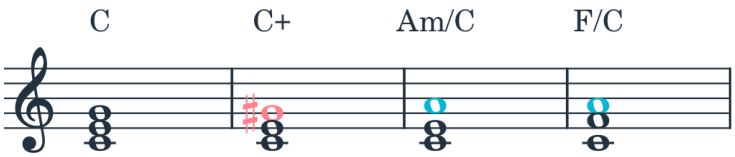


Slide the shape up a major third and you land on the **same three keys**: E–G♯–B♯ and A♭–C–E are C+ wearing other names. Four shapes cover all twelve keys:



Spell it in thirds: the letters climb C, E, G, so the top note is **G♯**. A♭ is the same key, but C–E–A♭ skips the G and puts a *sixth* on the page — it would look like some other chord turned upside down.

WHERE YOU MEET IT: THE RISING LINE



the top note climbs **G → G♯ → A**, one half step at a time, while C and E stay put

Hold C and E and nudge only the top note: **5 – ♯5 – 6**. The augmented chord is the stepping stone that turns **I** into **vi** (Am) or **IV** (F) — you hear it in ballads, show tunes and film music whenever a chord seems to rise by itself.

Try it Play **C–E–G**, then raise only the G to **G♯** and listen to the chord start to float. Keep your hand in that shape and slide it up so your thumb lands on **E**, then on **A♭**: the same three keys every time. Finally play the rising line **C – C+ – Am – F** slowly, moving one finger only.

LISTEN
Scan to hear every example
tissimo.co/worksheets/augmented-triad

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