Diminished 7th Arpeggios

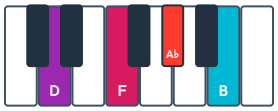
only three chords exist — and each one leads to four keys

Four notes, every gap a minor 3rd (3 half steps, Handout 210). Four gaps of 3 make 12 — exactly one octave — so the chord repeats itself every 3 half steps. Move it up three keys and you are playing the same four keys again, just starting somewhere else. That is why there are only **three** diminished 7ths in all of music.

root · 3rd · 5th · 7th

ONLY THREE — EVERY KEY ON THE PIANO BELONGS TO ONE OF THEM

CHORD 1



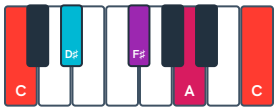
B°7 = D°7 = E♯°7 = G♯°7
leads to C · E♭ · F♯ · A

CHORD 2



C♯°7 = E°7 = G°7 = A♯°7
leads to D · F · A♭ · B

CHORD 3

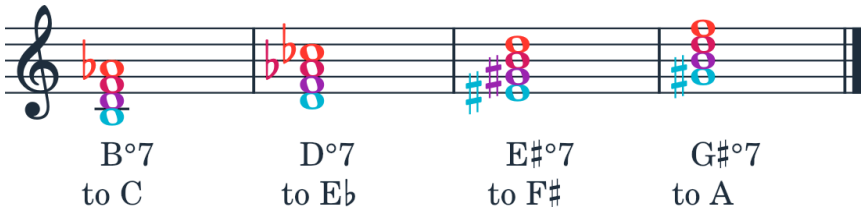


D♯°7 = F♯°7 = A°7 = B♯°7
leads to E · G · B♭ · C♯

SAME FOUR KEYS, FOUR NAMES — SPELL IT IN THIRDS

Any of the four notes can be the root. Name the root, then **skip a letter three times** — B-D-F-A, D-F-A-C, E-G-B-D — and let the accidentals follow (Handout 210). Each spelling is the **vii°7** of the key a half step above its root: its root is that key's leading tone (raised 7th of the harmonic minor; major keys borrow it).

Chord 1
four roots, four keys



Chord 2 C♯-E-G-B♭ → **D** · E-G-B♭-D♭ → **F** · G-B♭-D♭-F♭ → **A♭** · A♯-C♯-E-G → **B**

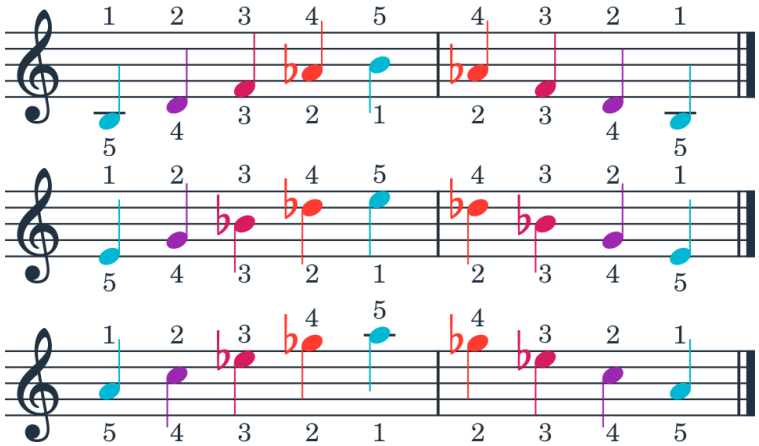
Chord 3 D♯-F♯-A-C → **E** · F♯-A-C-E♭ → **G** · A-C-E♭-G♭ → **B♭** · B♯-D♯-F♯-A → **C♯**

THE ARPEGGIO — ONE OCTAVE UP AND BACK

B°7 chord 1
B · D · F · A♭

E°7 chord 2
E · G · B♭ · D♭

A°7 chord 3
A · C · E♭ · G♭



Try it R.H. **1-2-3-4-5** above, L.H. **5-4-3-2-1** below: the minor 3rds are all the same size, so the hand stays evenly spread and the thumb sits on a white key. Play the B°7 arpeggio, then step the B up to C — you have arrived in C. Then **slide the whole shape up a half step**: you are playing chord 3; another half step, chord 2; one more and chord 1 is back, three keys higher.

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