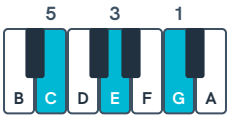
Primary Chord Patterns

I, IV and V7 in their closest shapes — smooth changes in 4/4 and 3/4

Three chords, almost no movement. Played in these close shapes — I = C-E-G, IV = C-F-A, V7 = B-F-G — every change moves each finger **one step or not at all**. That is called **voice leading** (for four singers: Handout 385), and it is why accompanists never look like they are jumping. The colors mark the function: **I cyan, IV indigo, V7 magenta**. Learn the shapes, then run the patterns below in both meters.

I — C-E-G

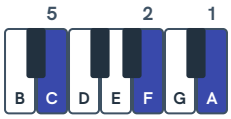
home · fingers 5-3-1



The home shape. Everything starts and ends here.

IV — C-F-A

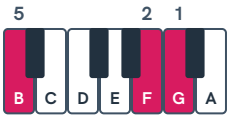
away (subdominant) · 5-2-1



From I: the **bottom C stays**, the top two fingers each slide **up one step** (a pedal 6/4, Handout 383).

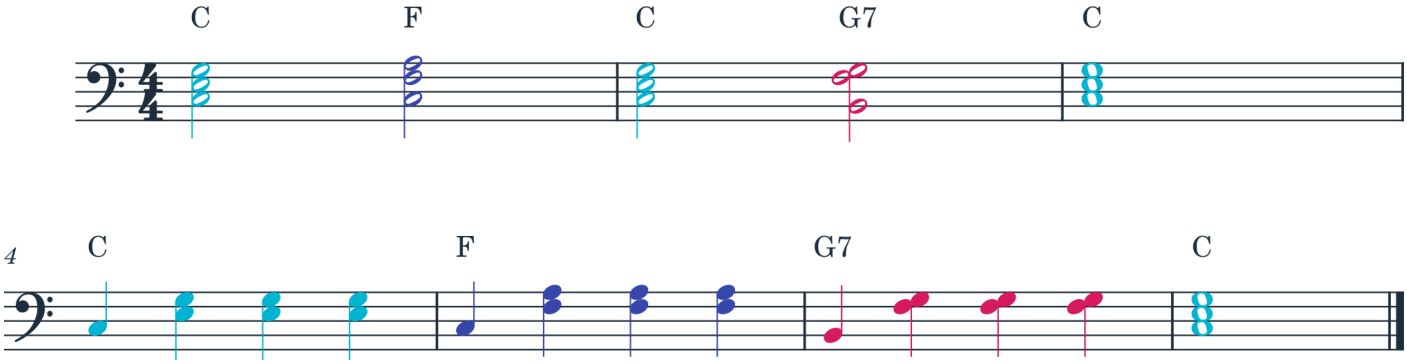
V7 — B-F-G

away (dominant) · 5-2-1
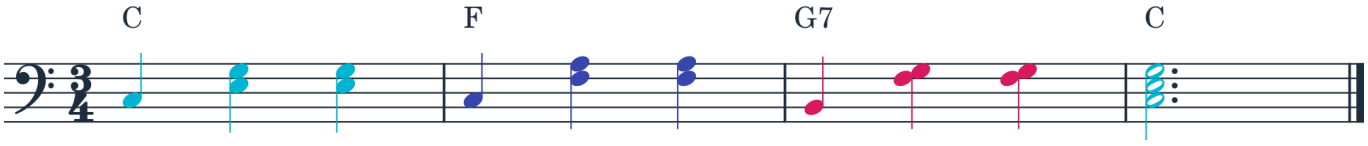


From I: the **top G stays**, the bottom slips to B, the middle rises to F. It leans hard toward home.

IN 4/4 — BLOCK CHANGES, THEN THE OOM-CHORD VAMP



IN 3/4 — THE WALTZ: OOM-PAH-PAH



Try it Drill the changes silently first: rest your hand on I, then **morph** to IV and back, then to V7 and back, without playing — feel which fingers move and which anchor. Then play the vamps while a friend (or your right hand) improvises a C-position melody on top. These three shapes accompany **thousands** of songs — you now hold the master key. Practice: Exercise 87.

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