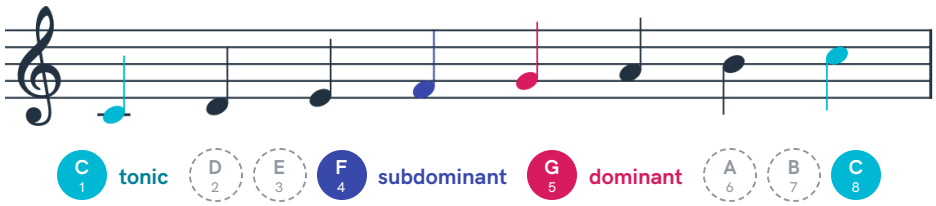
The primary chords: I, IV & V

Two chords took you far — a third finishes the toolkit. The chords built on degrees **1, 4 and 5** are the **primary chords**, and together they can harmonize almost anything.

MEET THE SUBDOMINANT — IV

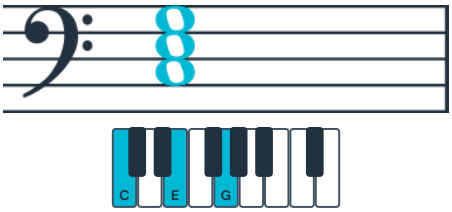


You know two of the scale's anchors: the **tonic** (1, home) and the **dominant** (5, away). Meet the third: degree 4, the **subdominant**. It sits away from home too — but **gently**: warm and supportive, without the dominant's urgent lean.

THE THREE-CHORD FAMILY

I — tonic chord

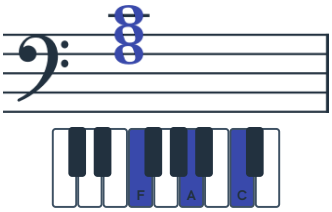
C · E · G — home



settled — where songs start and end

IV — subdominant chord

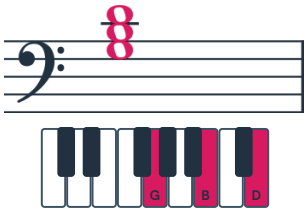
F · A · C — gentle away



a warm step outdoors — no hurry to return

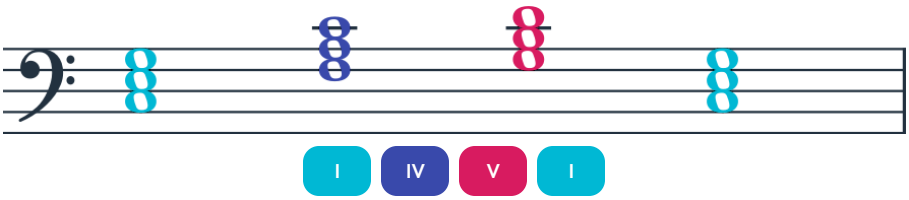
V — dominant chord

G · B · D — tense away



leaning hard toward home (add F for G7!)

HOW SONGS USE THEM



Home → gentle away → tense away → home. That little journey — **I–IV–V–I** — powers folk songs, hymns, blues and plenty of pop hits. **Three chords are enough to harmonize thousands of songs.** The other four chords of the key: Handout 357.

Try it Loop C chord → F chord → G chord → C chord with your left hand, slowly. Feel how IV **relaxes** where V **leans**. Then play just IV → I: that soft landing is the "A-men" sung at the end of many hymns.

LISTEN
Scan to hear every example
tissimo.co/worksheets/primary-chords-i-iv-v

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