



Video Reference: Chapter 3 - "Chord Phrasings and Progressions"

Chord Phrasings and Progressions

Chord Voicing - The notes that make up a chord are referred to as voicings. For now, the two basic voicings we are interested in are the root or bass note (generally the lowest note on the chord) and the lead or soprano voicing (the highest note of the chord.)

These two voicings are important when playing chords because they should be moving in various cycles (Chromatic, Circle of 4ths, Circle of 5ths, etc.)

Example chord progression: Am7 - D7(b9) - GMaj7

Am7 D7(b9) GMaj7

1 1 1

E A E G C E Eb A C F# G B D G B F#

The A note in the Am7 Form I chord is the root or bass voicing. The E note in an Am7 Form I chord is the lead or soprano voicing. As this chord progresses to the D7(b9) Form II, the A moves upward in a cycle of 4ths to D, the root in a D7(b9). The E moves chromatically lower to Eb, which is the flat 9th of the D7(b9) chord or the lead voicing. As the D7(b9) progresses to the Gmaj7 chord, which is Form I, the D in the D7(b9) chord moves in an upward cycle of 4ths to G, the root or bass note of the Gmaj7 chord. The Eb in the D7(b9) chord moves chromatically lower to a D, which is the lead or soprano note of the Gmaj7 chord.

That's pretty stinking confusing isn't it? Let me explain.

Important:

Chromatic Cycle - The circle of fifths, or fourths, may be mapped from the chromatic scale by multiplication, and vice versa. To map between the circle of fifths and the chromatic scale (in integer notation) multiply by 7 (M7), and for the circle of fourths multiply by 5 (P5).

Here is a demonstration of this procedure. Start off with an ordered 12-tuple (tone row) of integers.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
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representing the notes of the chromatic scale:

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
P	S	P	S	P	P	S	P	S	P	S	P
C	C#/Db	D	D#/Eb	E	F	F#/Gb	G	G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb	B

Look familiar? The "P" stands for Primary. The "S" stands for Secondary.

Now multiply the entire 12-tuple by 7 (Basically the first row x 7, which shows in the second row):

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
0	7	14	21	28	35	42	49	56	63	70	77
C	C#/Db	D	D#/Eb	E	F	F#/Gb	G	G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb	B

and then subtract 12 from each number as many times as necessary until the number becomes smaller than 12:

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
0	7	2	9	4	11	6	1	8	3	10	5
C	C#/Db	D	D#/Eb	E	F	F#/Gb	G	G#/Ab	A	A#/Bb	B

which is equivalent to:

C	G	D	A	E	B	F#/Gb	C#/Db	G#/Ab	D#/Eb	A#/Bb	F
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which is the Circle of Fifths!

Note that this is enharmonically equivalent to (just flats and sharps switched around):

C	G	D	A	E	B	Gb/F#	Db/C#	Ab/G#	Eb/D#	Bb/A#	F
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Circle of 5ths ("circle progression") - undoubtedly the most common and the strongest of all harmonic progressions" and consists of "adjacent roots in ascending fourth or descending fifth relationship," with movement by ascending fourth being equivalent to movement by descending fifth due to inversion.

Circle of 4ths - Typically "Circle of Fifths" is used in the analysis of classical music, whereas "Circle of Fourths" is used in the analysis of Jazz music, but this distinction is not exclusive. (So in other words, don't even think about the Circle of Fourths. Just use the Circle of Fifths.)

A chord progression (also chord sequence and harmonic progression or sequence) is series of chords played in order. Chord progressions are central to most modern music and the principal study of harmony. A chord change is a movement from one chord to another and may be thought of

as either the most basic chord progression or as a portion of longer chord progressions which involve more than two chords.

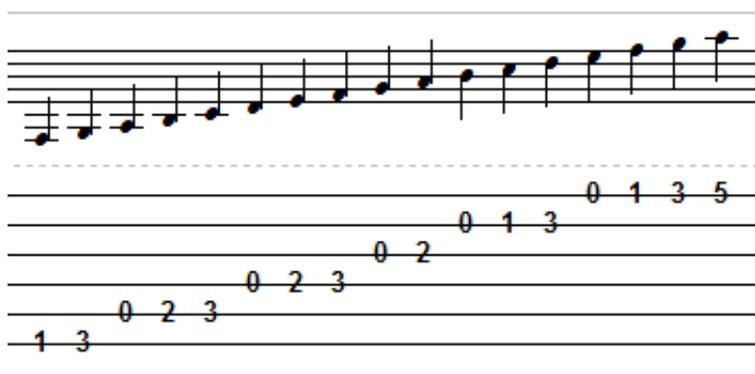
Generally, successive chords in a chord progression share some notes, which provides harmonic and linear (voice leading) continuity to a passage. In the common-practice period, chord progressions are usually associated with a scale and the notes of each chord are usually taken from that scale.

The most common chord progressions, in the common practice period and in popular music, are based on the first, fourth, and fifth scale degrees (tonic, subdominant and dominant). The chord based on the second scale degree is used in the most common chord progression in Jazz harmony, ii-V-I turnaround.

Exercise:

Key of C (C Major Scale)

This is a 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 scale with the root note C (obviously) using just the 1st pattern. It will suffice here.



This is a Major 7-th I-ii-iii-IV-V-vi-vii chord progression below.

(Remember that "ii and iii" means 'minor'. "I, IV, V" means 'Major'.)

The notes used are: C D E F G A B (these letters are bolded below)

Scale	I	ii	iii	IV	V	vi	vii
C Major Scale	Cmaj7	Dm7	Em7	Fmaj7	G7	Am7	Bm7b5

Cmaj7 Dm7 Em7 Fmaj7 G7 Am7 Bm7^b5

	5	7	8	3	0	10
8	6	8	10	3	1	10
10	5	7	9	4	0	10
10	7	9	10	3	2	9
	5	7	8		0	
8						

Play It!

Now, we need to round out this measure, because it's all in quarter notes and we've only got 7 chords so far.

So here's what we have. We have tablature below where in the first bar you are playing the ORIGINAL (Cmaj7, Dm7, Em7, Fmaj7, G7, Am7, Bm7b5) chord progression from further above, but we need to add one more chord to round out this measure.

Notice in the first bar that I've added the Fmaj7 after the Bm7b5 to 'round out' the measure. This was on purpose. I've changed this to end on a IV chord. Weird huh?! Doesn't sound too cool does it?

Cmaj7 Dm7 Em7 Fmaj7 G7 Am7 Bm7^b5 Fmaj7

Gtr I

	5	7	8	3	0	10	8
8	6	8	10	3	1	10	10
10	5	7	9	4	0	10	9
10	7	9	10	3	2	9	10
	5	7	8		0		8
8							

Try interchanging that last IV chord with...what? Do you know? It would sound MUCH nicer with the bolded chords changed to:

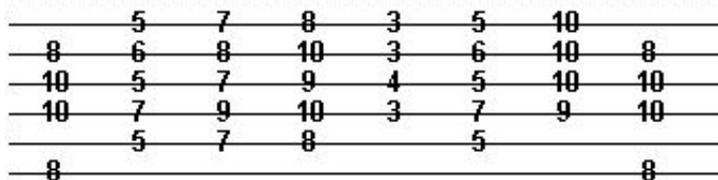
Cmaj7, Dm7, Em7, Fmaj7, G7, **Dm7** (from Am7), Bm7b5, **Cmaj7** (from Fmaj7) wouldn't it?

You could go back to the V after the vii, but why not go back to the I? I'm also not a big fan of the Am7 at the vi. Are you? Why not make it a Dm7 at the ii? It rounds the song out instead of hinting at moving to a different phrasing. Like this:

Cmaj7 Dm7 Em7 Fmaj7 G7 Dm7 Bm7b5 Cmaj7



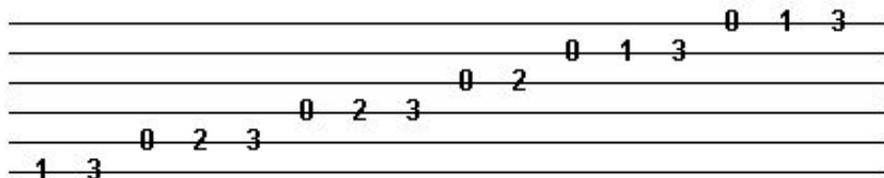
Gtr I



C Major Scale



Gtr II



About The Video Provided

Part I of the video provided on the DVD shows the original progression ending on the IV. Part II shows the final product of the change with the Am7 (vi) to Dm7 (ii) and the change from Fmaj7 (IV) to the Cmaj7 (I).

Are you starting to get the picture? Really you are experimenting with placement options. This is just one example of MANY that we will be working with.

Much of this information is very confusing, but over time you will see how everything relates to each other. That's the whole point of this Level of Strumming School. By the end of this course, you will not only mastered what chord goes with what, but also how to accompany and really add to your guitar playing