

First Steps in Keyboard

Part 1 - Learn to Play 72 Chords

These materials are part of the Chordmaps.com series of instructional ebooks, encouraging students to explore songwriting and creative musical expression on a variety of instruments.



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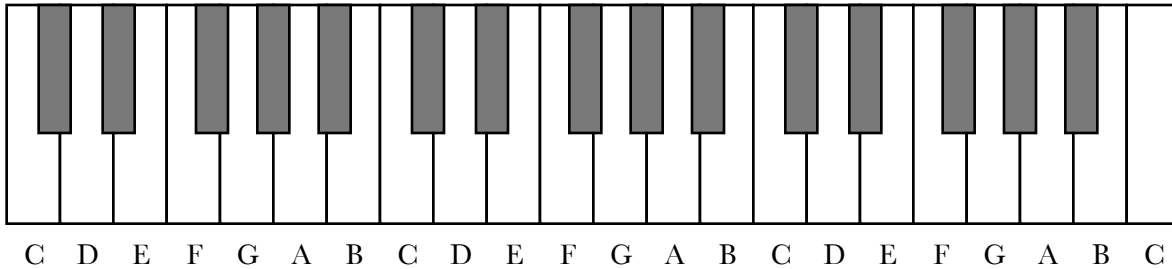
Concepts to Know First

Each page in this section presents a concept. If the concept is new to you, spend a little time studying it. If the concept is something you already understand, move on to the next page.

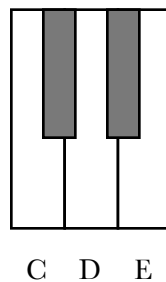
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Concept - Naming the White Notes

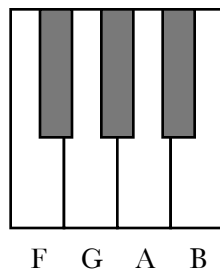
The white notes on the keyboard are named using the letters A, B, C, D, E, F, and G.



The notes C, D, and E are found by looking for a group of two black notes. C will be to the left, D will be in the middle, and E will be to the right.

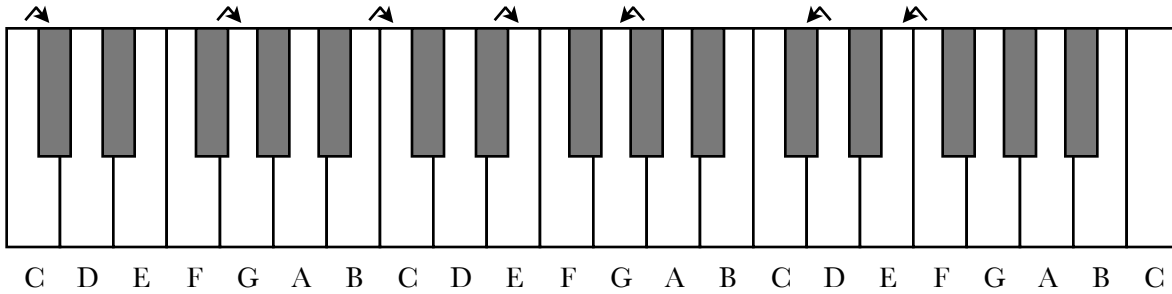


F, G, A, and B are found by looking for a group of three black notes. F will be to the far left, followed by G, A, and B in that order.



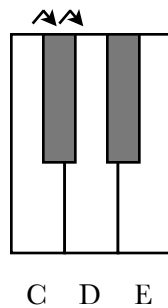
Concept - Half Steps and Whole Steps

A half step is the distance from one note to its nearest neighbor. These are all half steps.

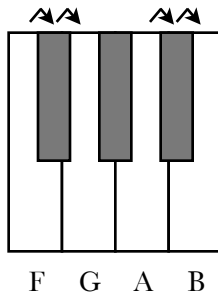


Notice that some half steps go from a black note to a white note (or a white note to a black note), while others go from a white note to another white note.

A whole step is a jump of two half steps. From C to D is a whole step.

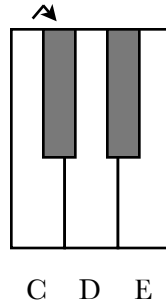


From F to G is a whole step. From A to B is also a whole step.

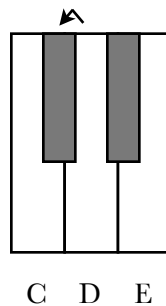


Concept - Sharps and Flats

The symbol # is pronounced “sharp.” It means move one half step to the right. The black note to the right of C can be called C# (C sharp).

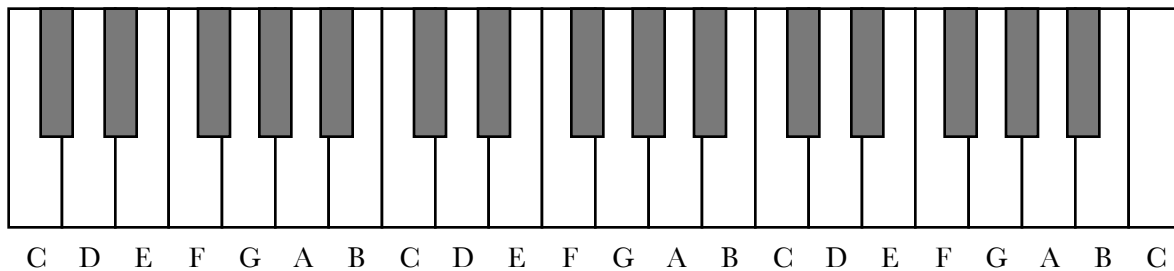


The symbol ♭ is pronounced “flat.” (It looks a little like the letter “b,” so in this book we will use b instead.) It means move one half step to the left. The black note to the left of D can be called Db (D flat).



Notice that black notes have two names. C# and Db are the same note. D# and Eb are the same note. The same is true for F# and Gb, G# and Ab, A# and Bb.

C#	D#	F#	G#	A#
or	or	or	or	or
Db	Eb	Gb	Ab	Bb

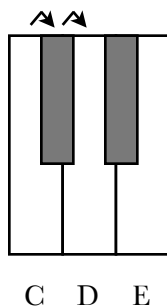


Sometimes white notes are called by their sharp or flat names. For example, F can in certain situations be written as E#, and E can sometimes be called Fb. (Similarly, C can in certain situations be written as B#, and B can sometimes be called Cb.)

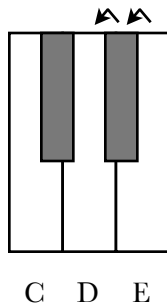
Concept - Double Sharps and Double Flats

Double sharps and double flats are not seen very often, but it's good to know about them.

The symbol \times is pronounced “double sharp.” It means move two half steps to the right. For example, the note D can in some situations be called C \times (C double sharp).



The symbol $\flat\flat$ is pronounced “double flat.” (It looks a little like “bb,” so in this book we will use bb instead.) It means move two half steps to the left. For example, the note D can in some situations be called Ebb (E double flat).

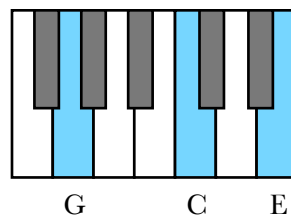


Seven Exercises

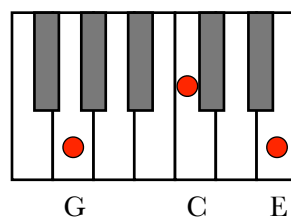
Learning to play the 72 chords requires your right hand to get familiar with several different hand positions. These seven exercises will help you learn the hand positions required.

Exercise 1 - Perfect Fifths Ascending	Page 9
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Exercise 7 - Middle Finger and Little Finger	Page 18

A NOTE ABOUT HAND POSITION: In the illustrations, the blue areas indicate which notes to play, but not necessarily where the fingers are supposed to land on the keys. In general, you will want to play with a very comfortable hand position. A chord that's pictured like this...



...will probably be played with the finger tips landing something like this.

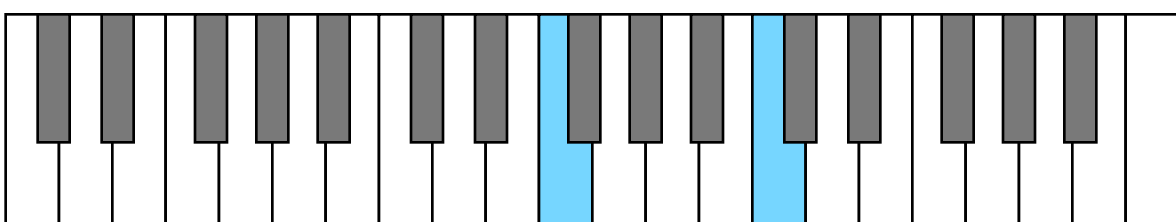
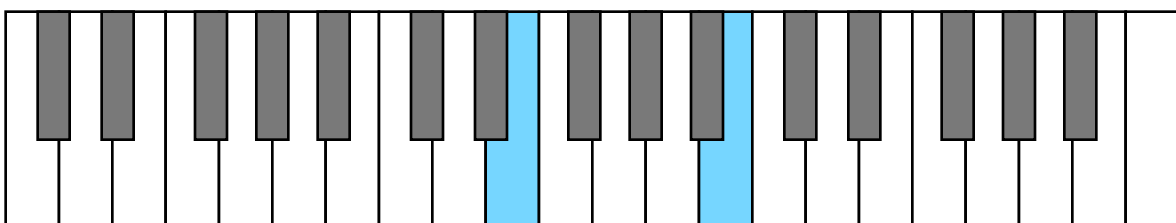
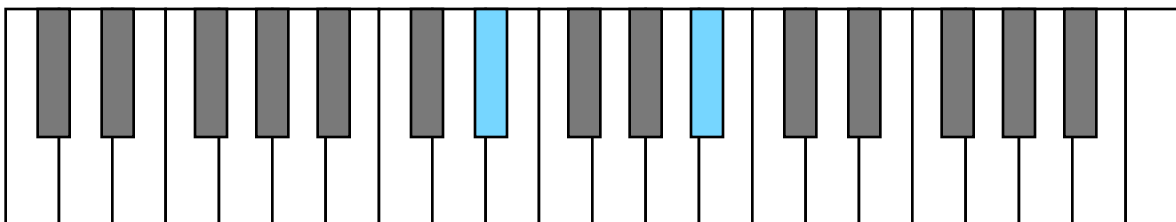
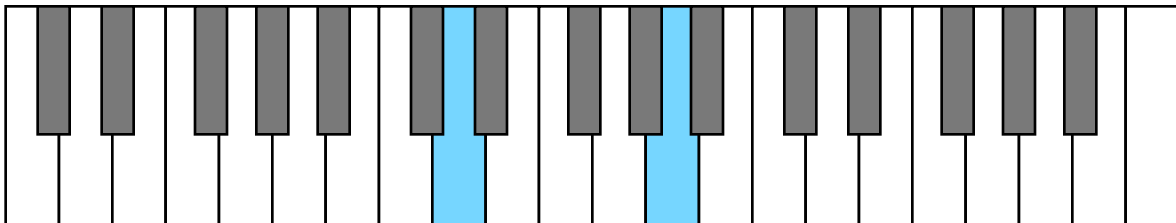
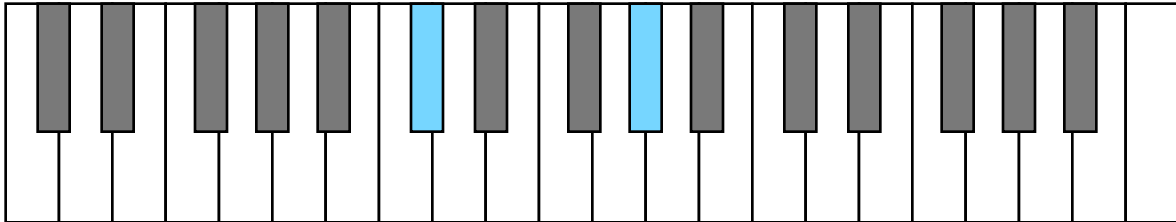
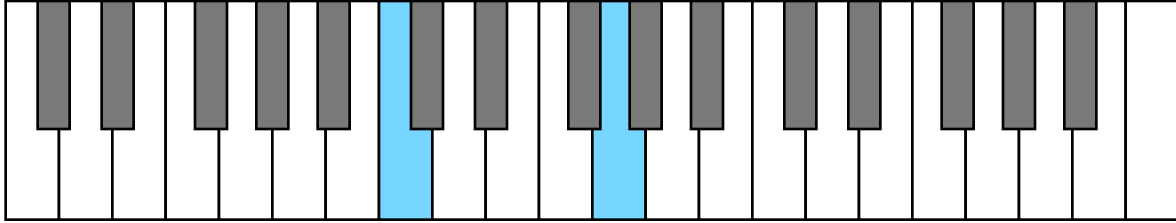


This principle (finding a relaxed and comfortable hand position) applies to all the chord shapes found in this book.

Exercise 1

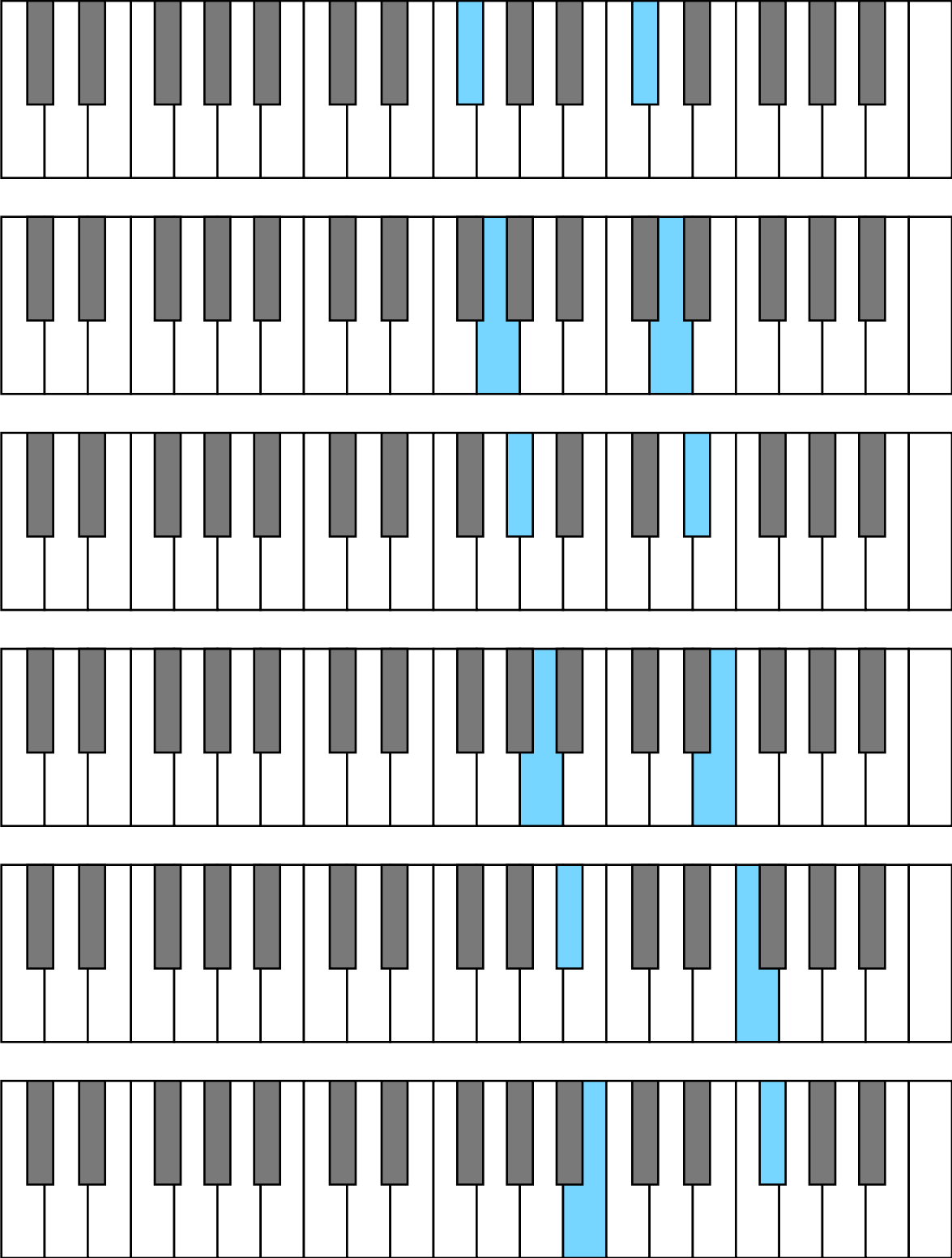
Perfect Fifths Ascending

Play each diagram on this page and the next with the right hand thumb and little finger.



Exercise 1

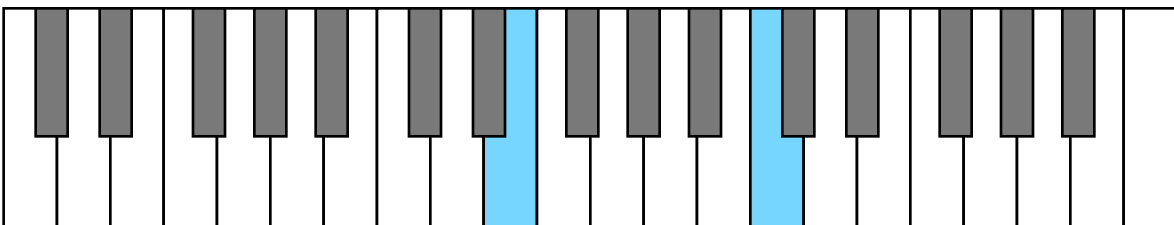
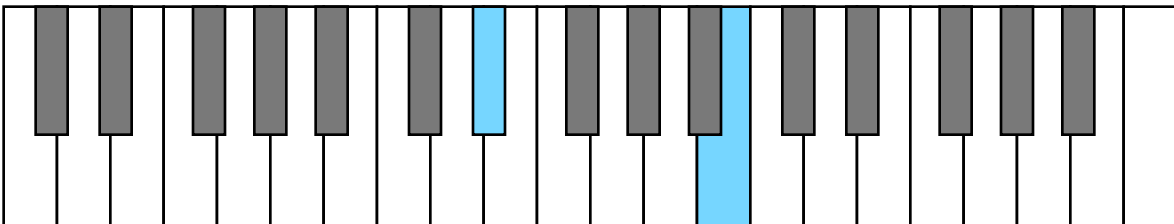
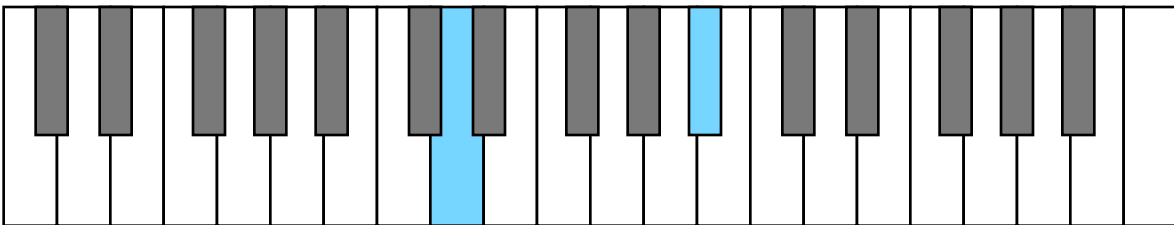
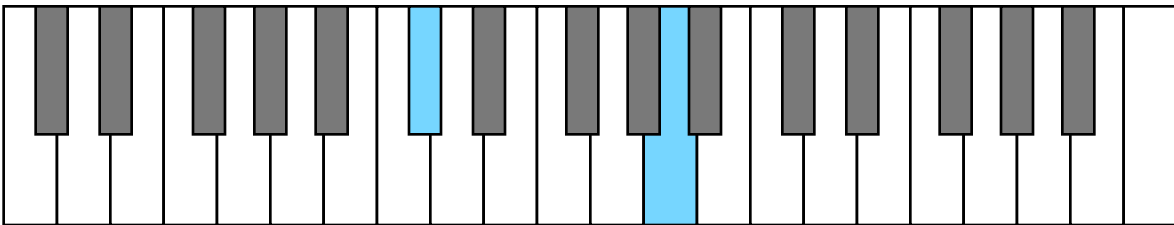
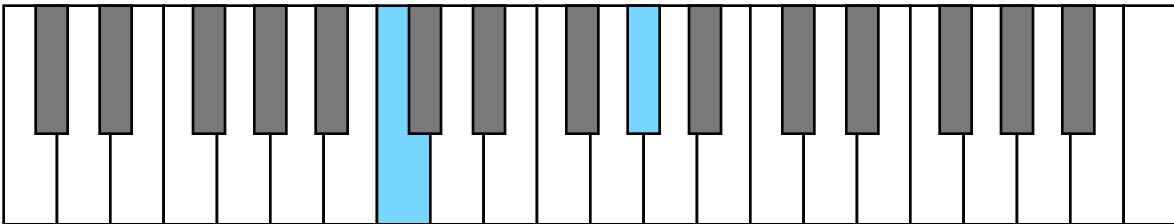
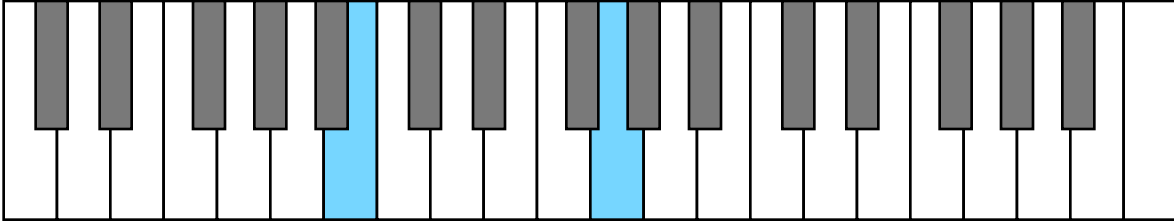
Perfect Fifths Ascending - Second Page



Exercise 2

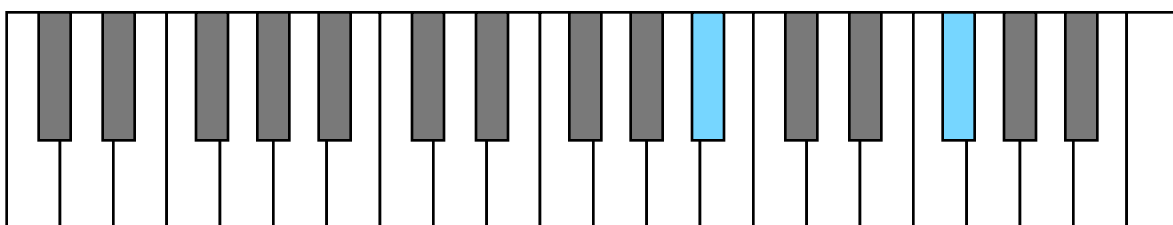
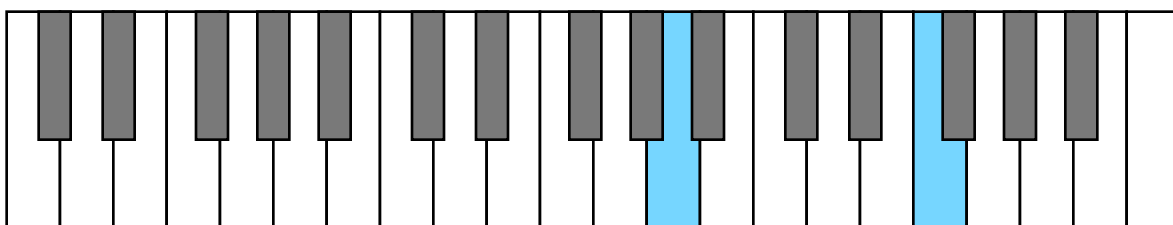
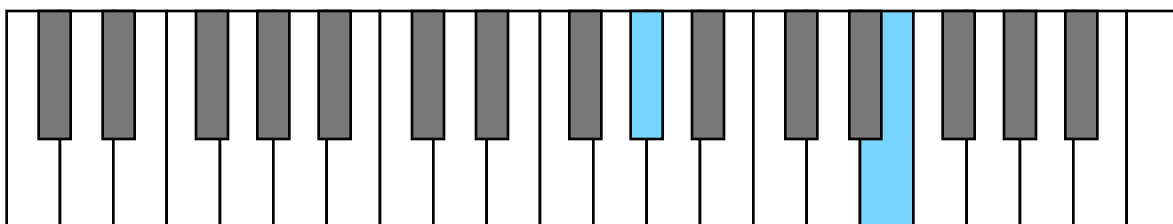
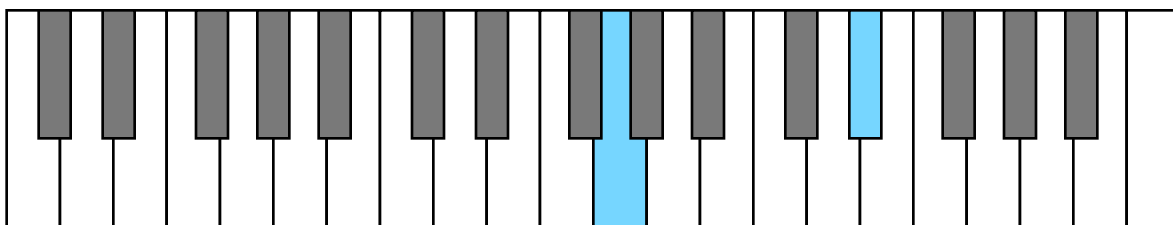
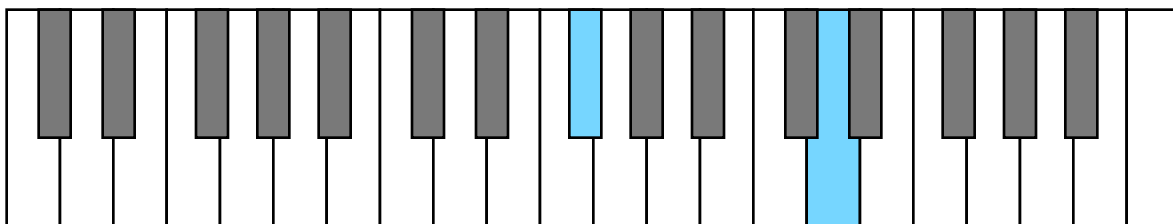
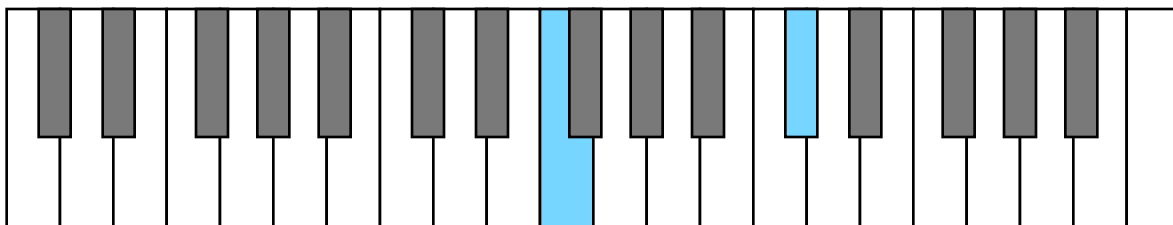
Minor Sixths Ascending

Play each diagram on this page and the next with the right hand thumb and little finger.



Exercise 2

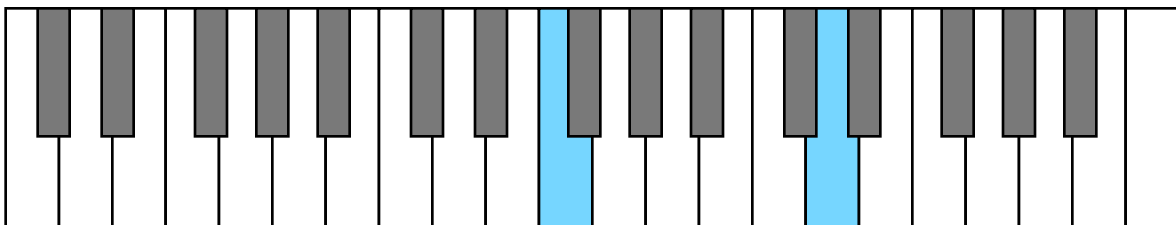
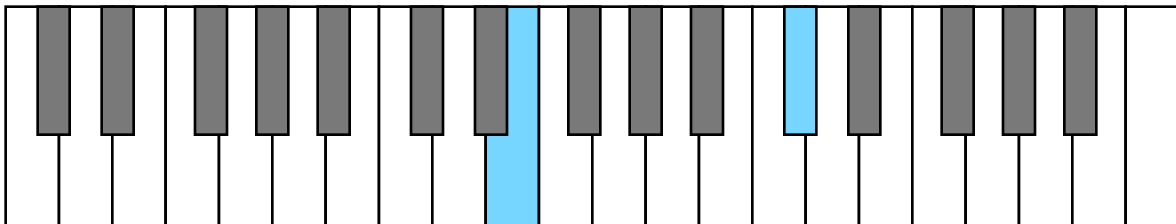
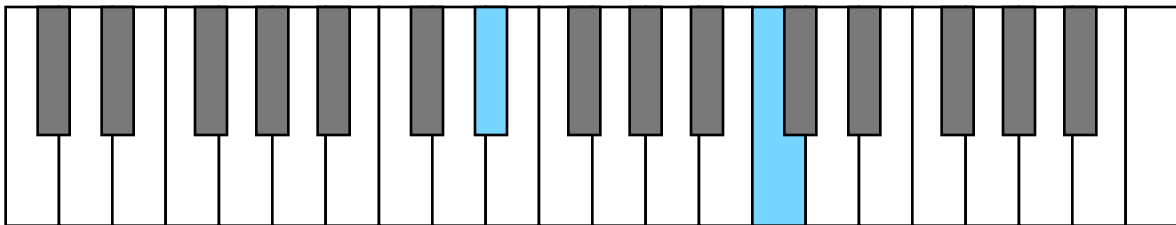
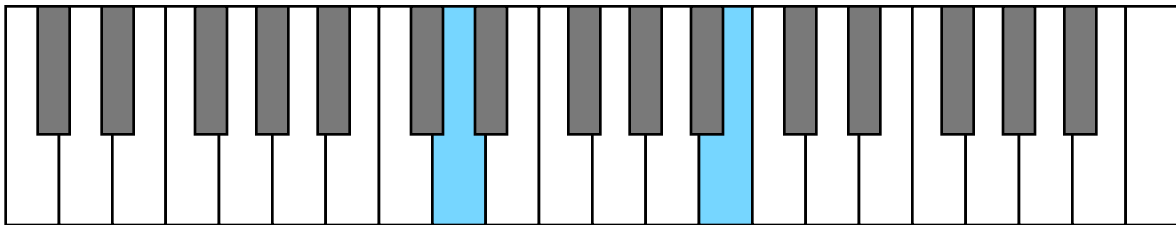
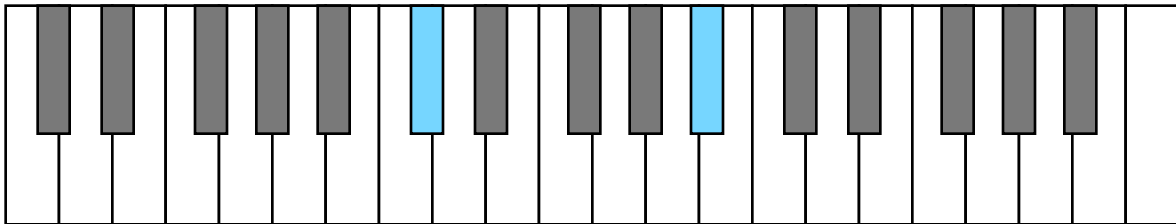
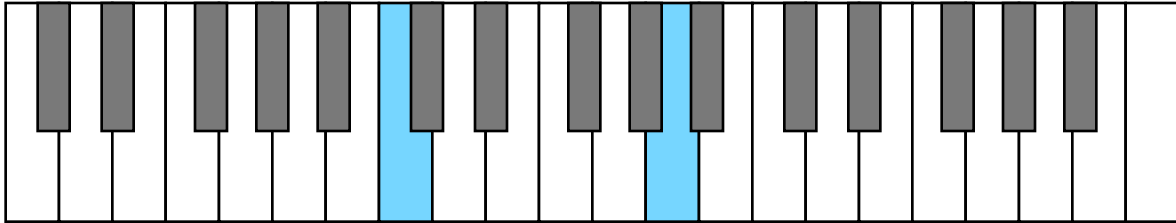
Minor Sixths Ascending - Second Page



Exercise 3

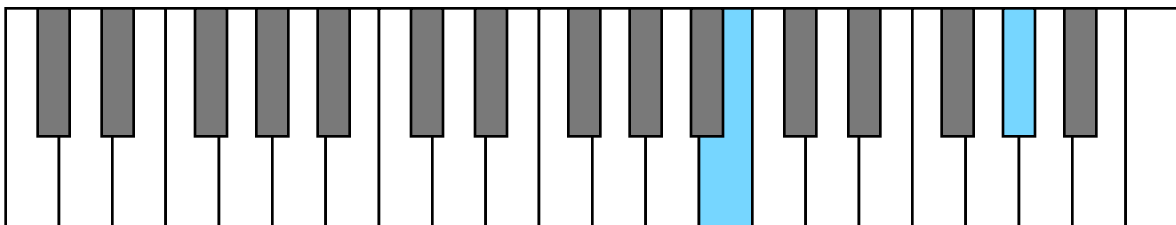
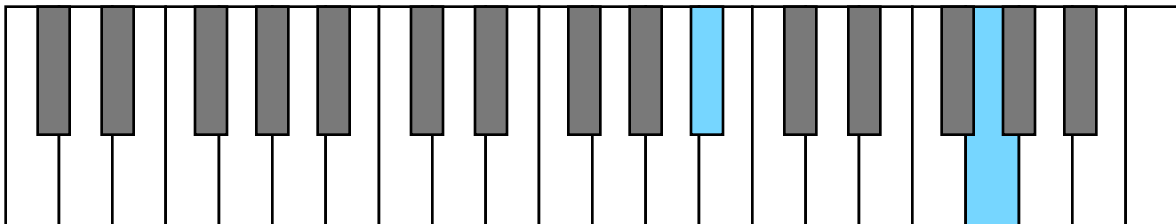
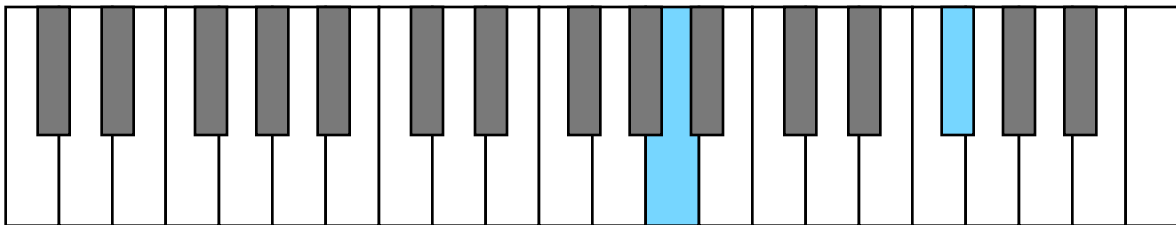
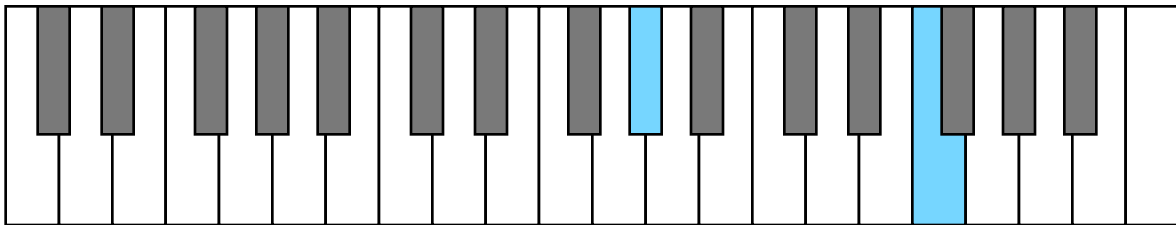
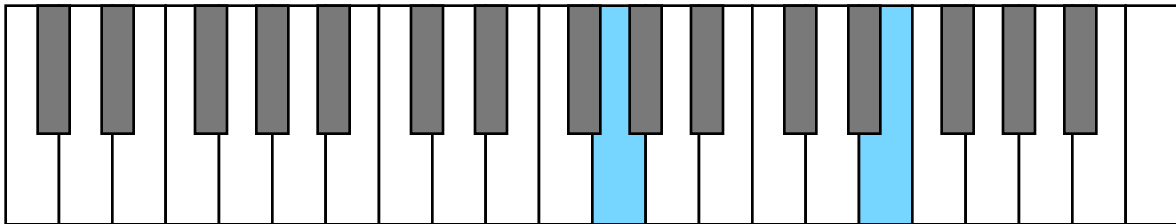
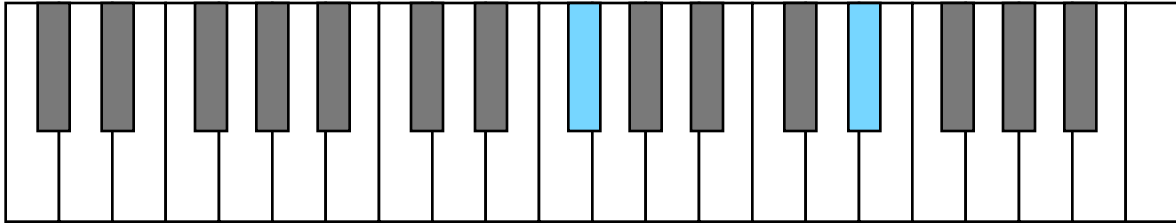
Major Sixths Ascending

Play each diagram on this page and the next with the right hand thumb and little finger.



Exercise 3

Major Sixths Ascending - Second Page

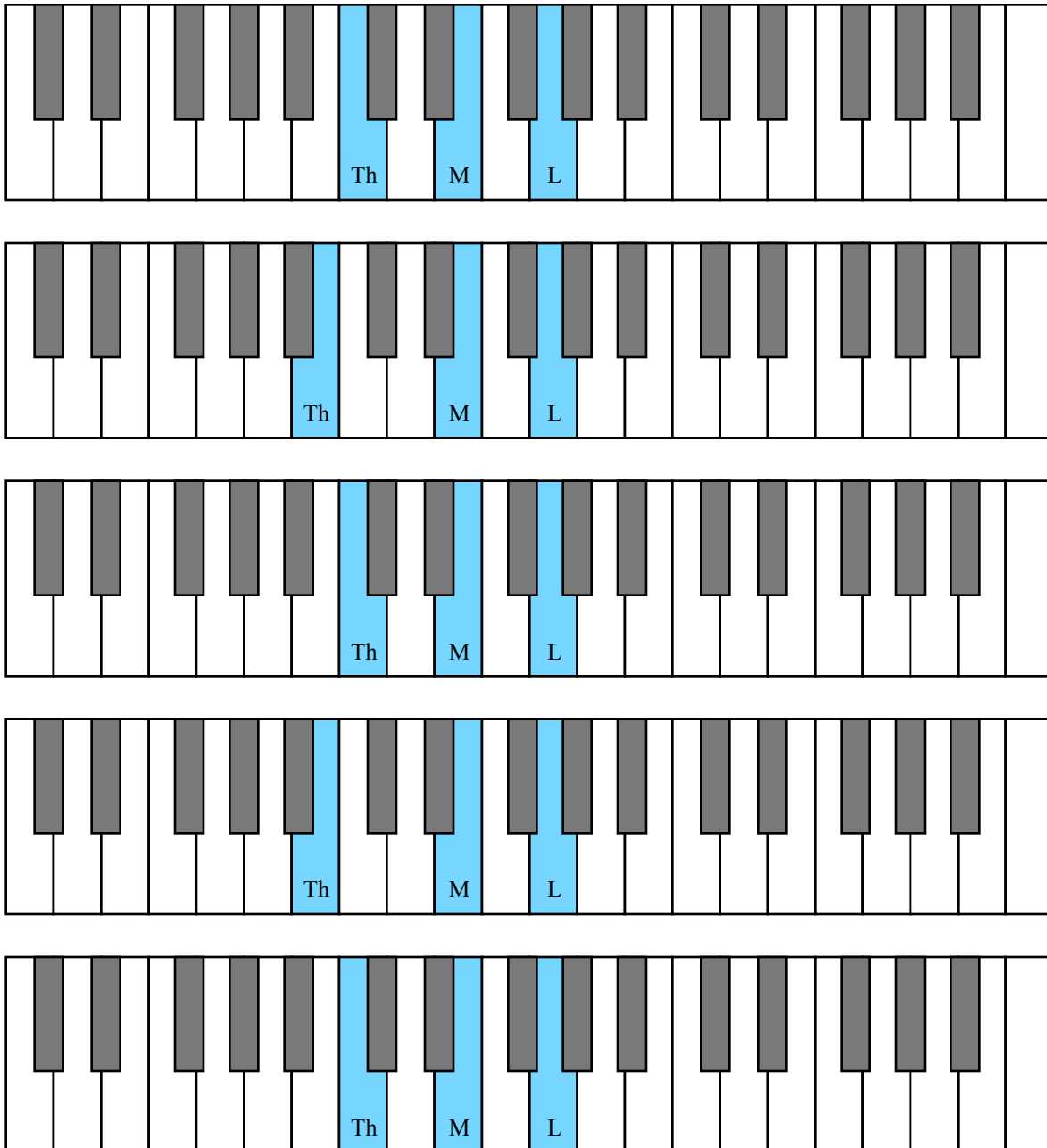


Exercise 4

Moving the Thumb

This exercise is played with the right hand, using the thumb, middle finger, and little finger. Notice that the middle and little fingers stay on E and G, while the rest of the hand stretches out to allow the thumb to move to B before returning to its original position.

Th = Thumb, M = Middle, L = Little

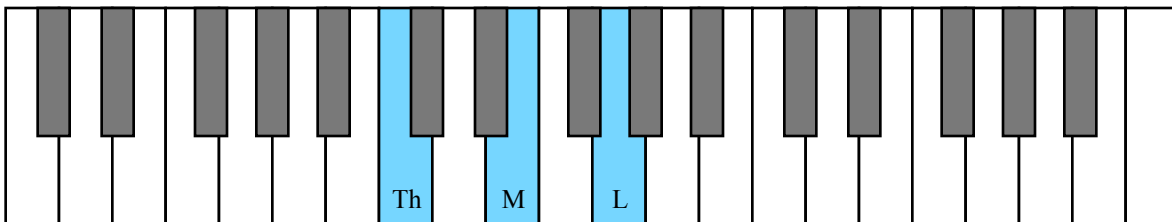
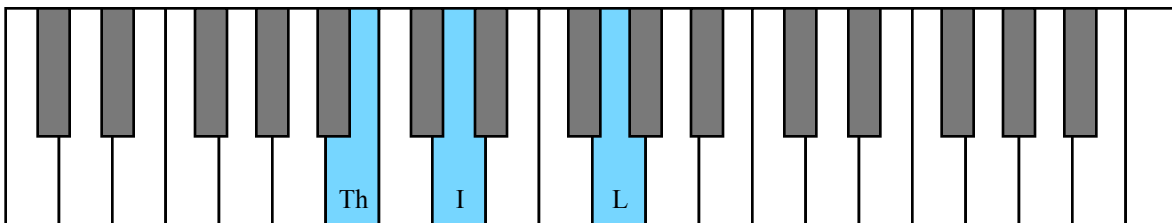
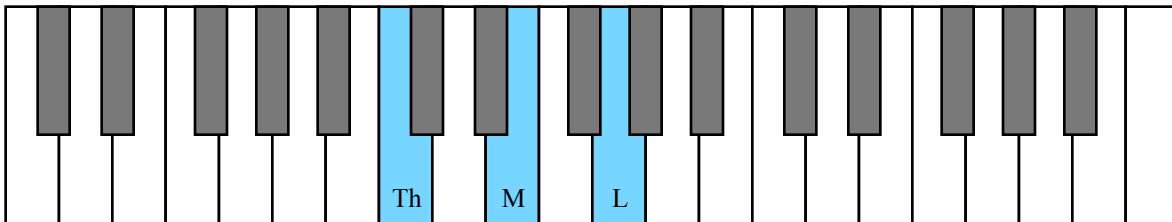
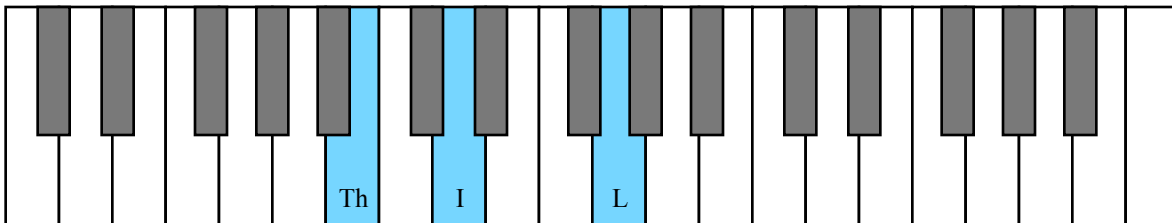
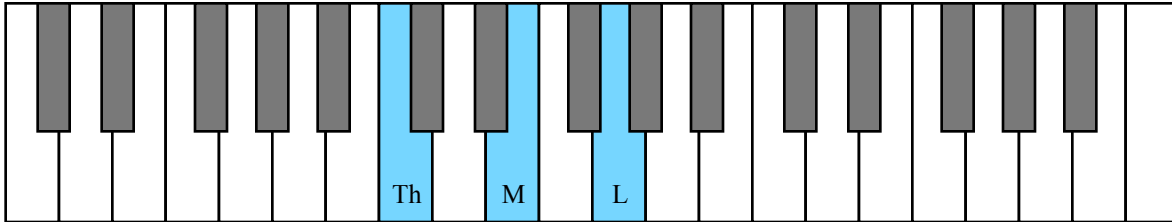


Exercise 5

Thumb and Index Finger

This exercise is played with the right hand. The first chord is played with the thumb, middle finger, and little finger. Notice that the little finger stays on G when the hand stretches to play the notes B and D. The recommended fingering for the second chord is thumb, index finger, and little finger.

Th = Thumb, I = Index, M = Middle, L = Little

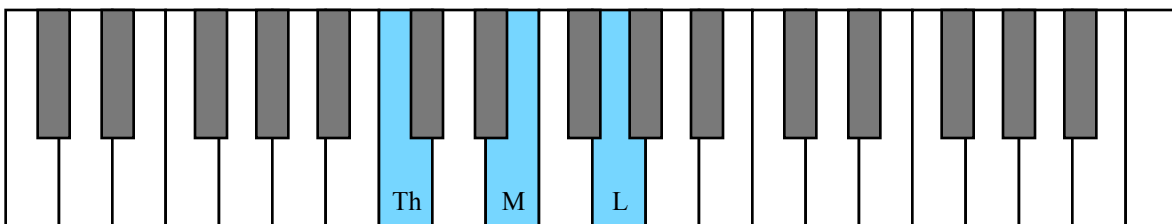
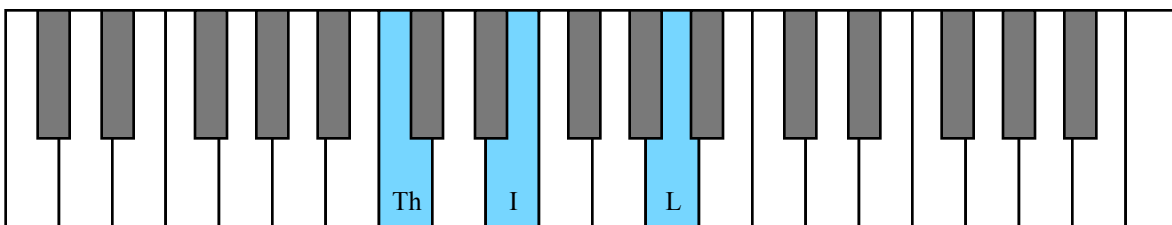
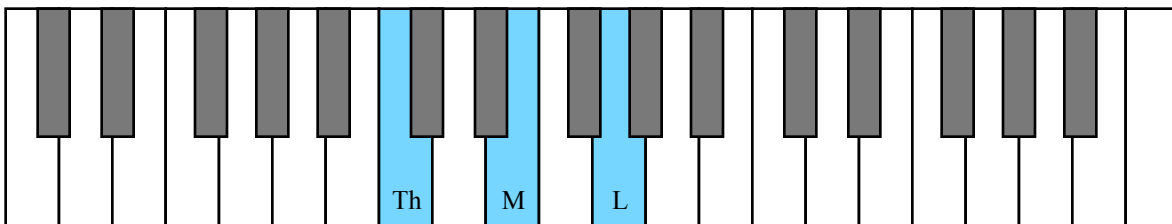
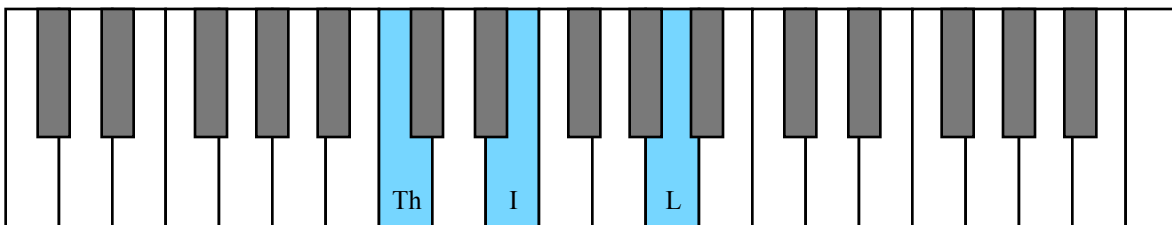
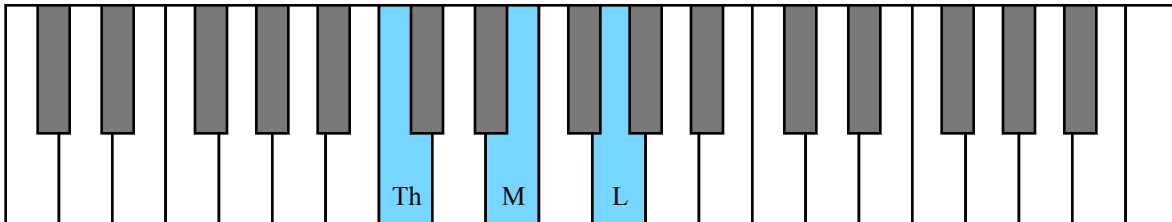


Exercise 6

Index Finger and Little Finger

This exercise is played with the right hand. The first chord is played with the thumb, middle finger, and little finger. Though you could play the second chord the same way, by extending the little finger out, the recommended fingering is thumb, index finger, and little finger.

Th = Thumb, I = Index, M = Middle, L = Little

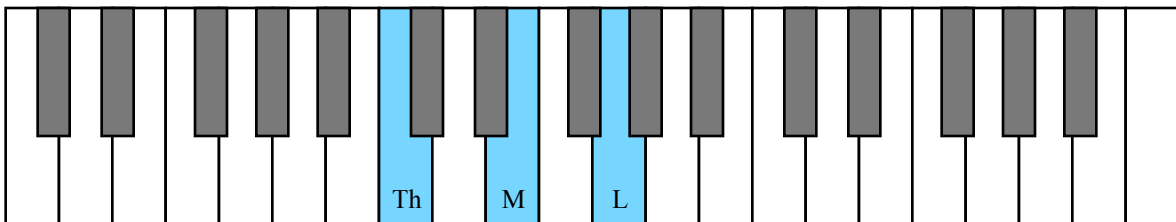
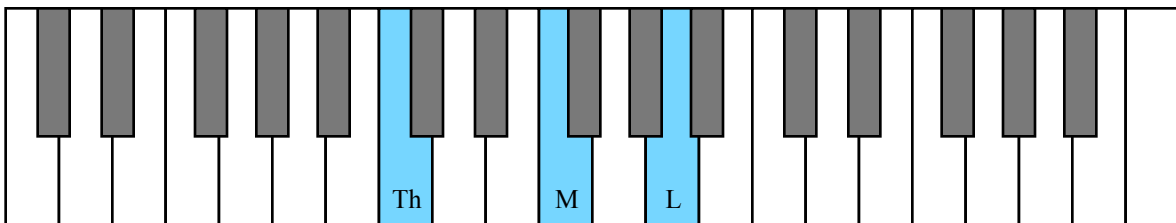
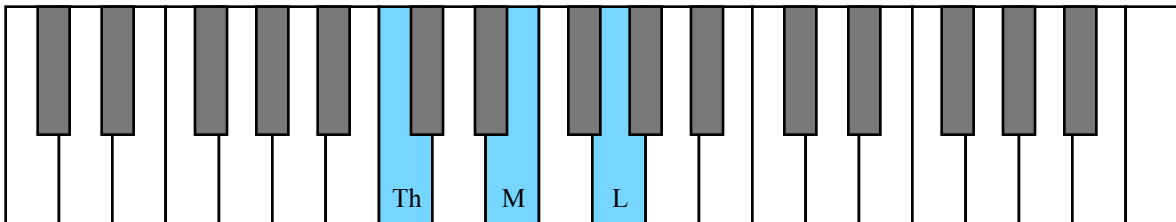
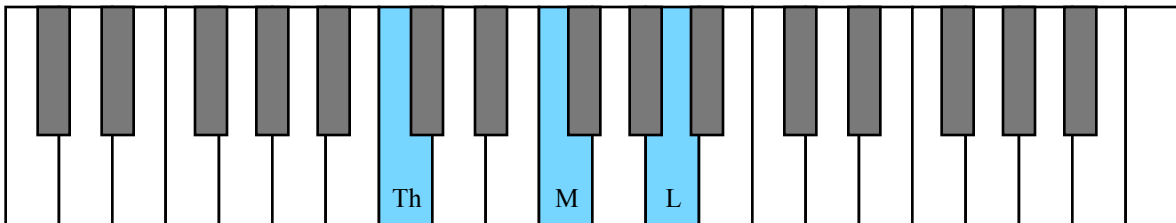
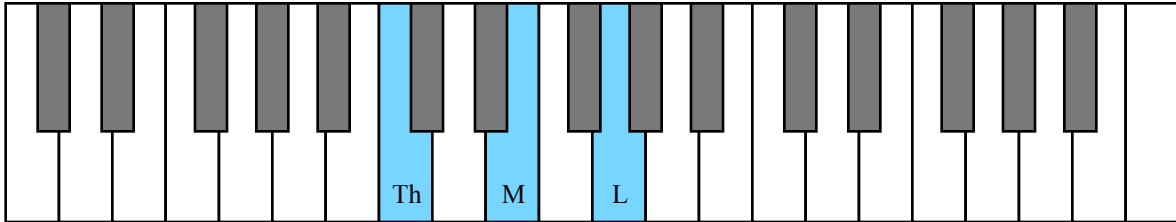


Exercise 7

Middle Finger and Little Finger

This exercise is played with the right hand, using the thumb, middle finger, and little finger. Notice that the thumb stays on C, while the rest of the hand stretches out and then returns to the position played at the beginning.

Th = Thumb, I = Index, M = Middle, L = Little



Learn to Play 72 Chords

The following 24 pages each have 3 chord diagrams similar to the ones below. Each diagram is intended to be played by the right hand. The left hand plays the one note listed in the left column, somewhere lower on the keyboard. Notice that the recommended fingering is always Thumb-Middle-Little except in the center diagram where using the Index finger gives a more comfortable hand position.

The Left Hand Plays...

The Right Hand Plays...

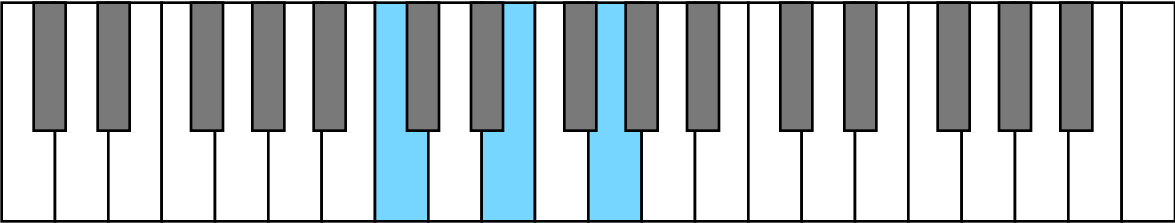
Chord Symbol

L.H.
C

Right Hand
C
The C Major Chord

The Name of the Chord

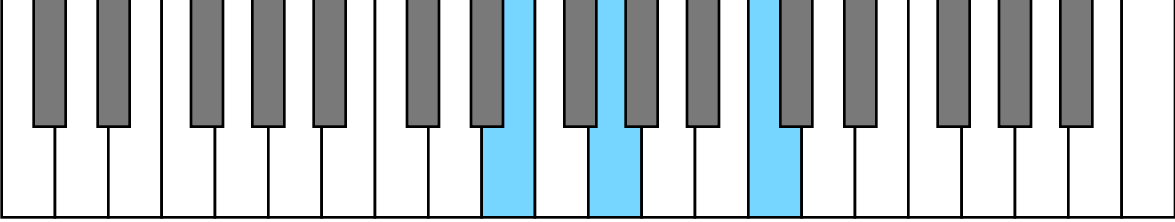
Root Position



C E G

Recommended Fingering:
Thumb - Middle - Little

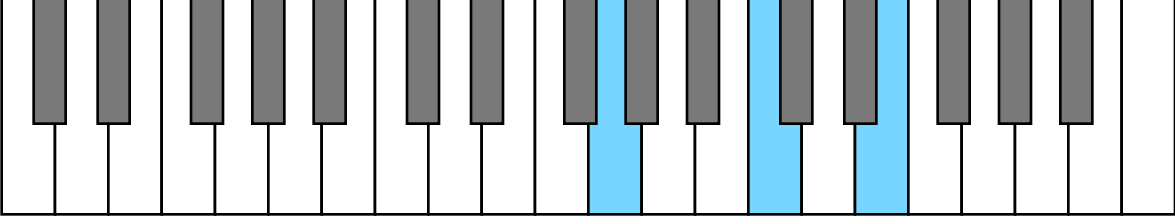
First Inversion



E G C

Recommended Fingering:
Thumb - Index - Little

Second Inversion

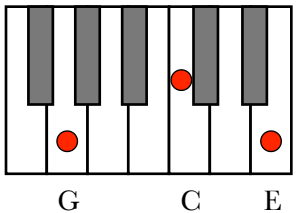


G C E

Recommended Fingering:
Thumb - Middle - Little

A Reminder

The blue areas in these diagrams indicate which notes to play, but not necessarily where your fingers are supposed to land. For example, the last chord above would probably be played like this. →



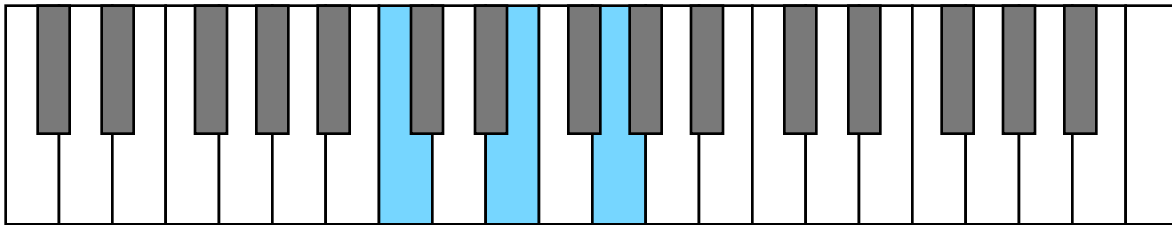
L.H. Right Hand

C

The C Major Chord

Root Position

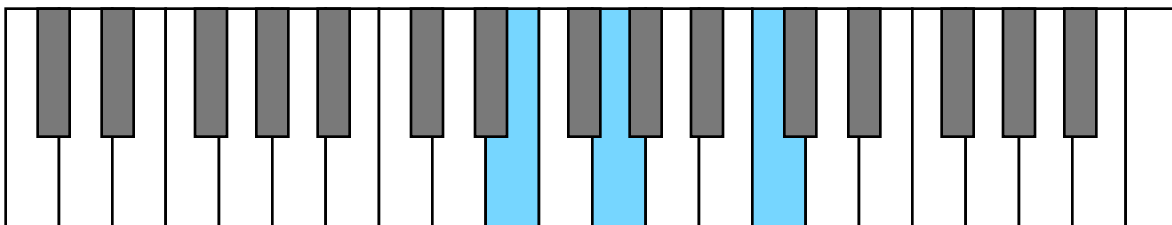
C



C E G

First Inversion

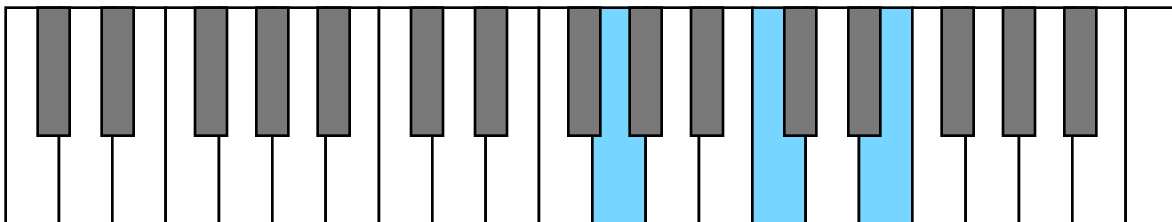
C



E G C

Second Inversion

C



G C E

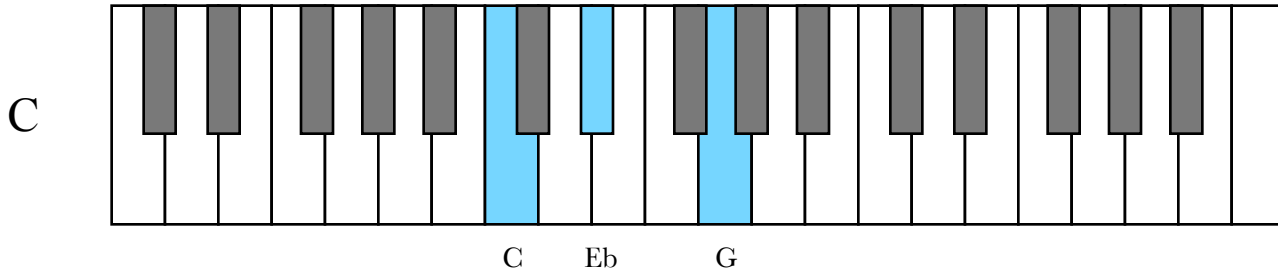
Explanation:

The C major chord is constructed using the notes C, E, and G. These are the 1st, 3rd, and 5th notes of the C major scale.

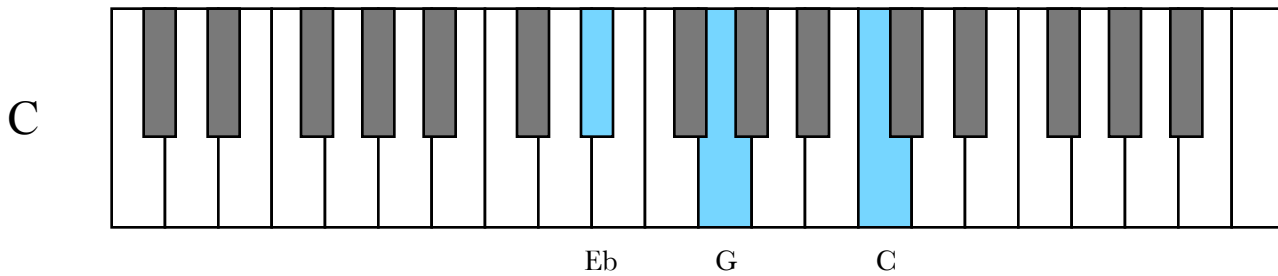
L.H. Right Hand **Cm**

The C Minor Chord

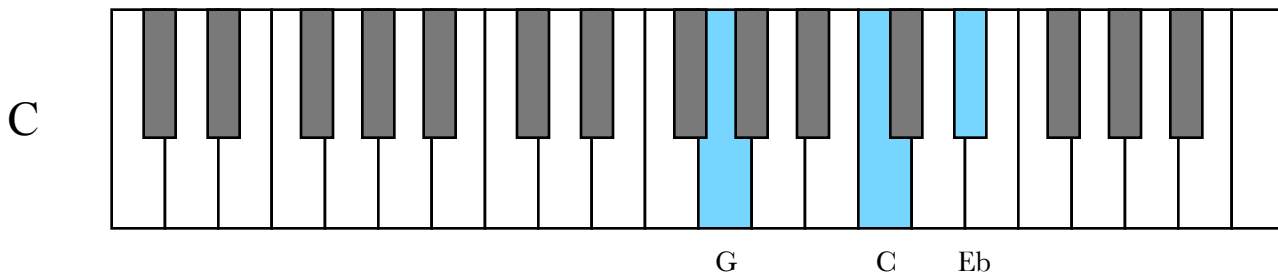
Root Position



First Inversion



Second Inversion



Explanation:

The C minor chord is constructed using the notes C, Eb, and G. These are the 1st, 3rd, and 5th notes of the C minor scale.

This is a sample copy of First Steps in Keyboard - Part 1.
Pages 22–45 are in the full version.

First Steps in Keyboard

Part 1 - Learn to Play 72 Chords

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