# Chords

## How to Make Chords in Your DAW
Reference Guide

Written by Will Darling

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# Creating Chords | Reference Guide for DAW Users

**This guide will show you how to make chords in your DAW, and what they'll look like in your piano roll editor.**

There are loads of different types of chord, but below are the 13 you're most likely to use, and how to make them in ANY key. To hear how they sound, you can download the accompanying audio **here**.

If you want to really save time, you're probably most likely to use numbers 1, 2, 5, 8 and 9, so skip to them. We'll use "C" as the root note in all of them for ease, but you can work out the equivalent chord in any key by counting the intervals between the notes (to see what keys there are and which notes are in them, check out **this page** on my blog).

## Quick Reference:
## The 13 most useful chords (5 most common in red):

**C Major:** C + E + G

**C Minor:** C + E♭ + G

**C Augmented:** C + E + G#

**C Diminished:** C + E♭ + G♭

**C Suspended Fourth:** C + F + G

**C Major Sixth:** C + E + G + A

**C Minor Sixth:** C + E♭ + G + A

**C Major Seventh:** C + E + G + B

**C Minor Seventh:** C + E♭ + G + B♭

**C Dominant Seventh:** C + E + G + B♭

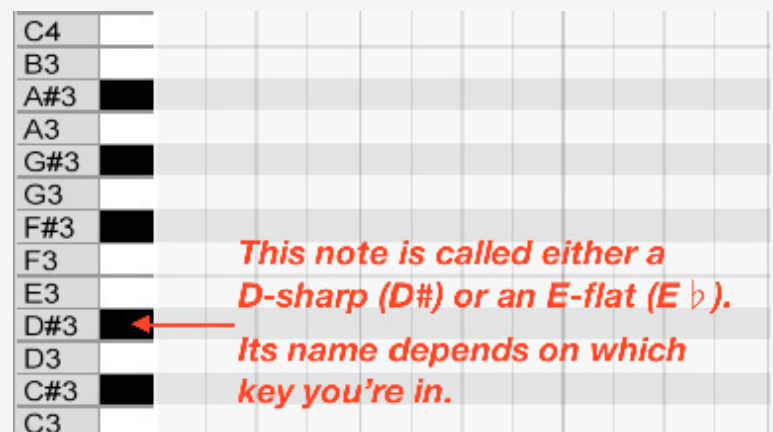**C Major Ninth:** C + E + G + B + D

**C Minor Ninth:** C · E♭ + G + B♭ + D

**C Dominant Ninth:** C + E + G + B♭ + D

**Bonus: C Major 1st Inversion:** E + G + C

### How to read the diagrams:
A sharp ("#") means to play one half-step ABOVE the written note, and a flat ("♭"), one half-step BELOW (e.g. if you see a C# written, it means play the black note directly above C, and if you see an E♭ written it means play the black note directly below E).

**N.B.** Your DAW will only display the black notes with a "#" symbol, and never with a "♭" symbol, because a) your DAW doesn't know which key you're writing in and b) the "#" symbol is native to software, whereas "♭" is not.

*This note is called either a D-sharp (D#) or an E-flat (E♭).*

*Its name depends on which key you're in.*

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## 1. C Major

**Sounds:** Happy and simple
**Notes:** C + E + G
**Half-step intervals:** Root/4/3

The most common type of chord is called a "triad". A triad is made up of a root, a third, and a fifth ("root", "third" and "fifth" refer to the note position within the scale), therefore, a C Major chord will use C, E and G, and look something like this in your piano-roll editor:

To make a major triad in ANY key, simply count 4 half-steps up from the root note for your "third", and 3 half-steps up from your third for your "fifth".



## 2. C Minor

**Sounds:** Sad
**Notes:** C + E♭ + G
**Half-step intervals:** Root/3/4

The second most common (and simple) chord, is a minor. Very similar to the major chord, except the third is dropped one half-step, which gives it a "sad" quality.

To make a minor triad in any key, simply count 3 half-steps up from the root for your third, and 4 half-steps up from your third for your fifth.

OK, now we've got the most basic two chord-types covered, here are the other 11 most common types:
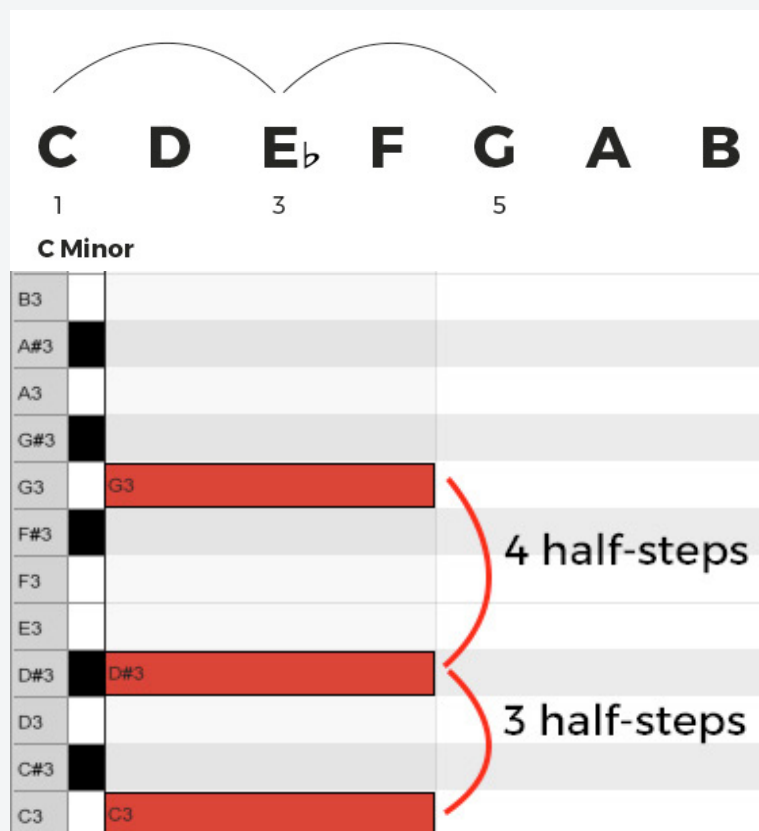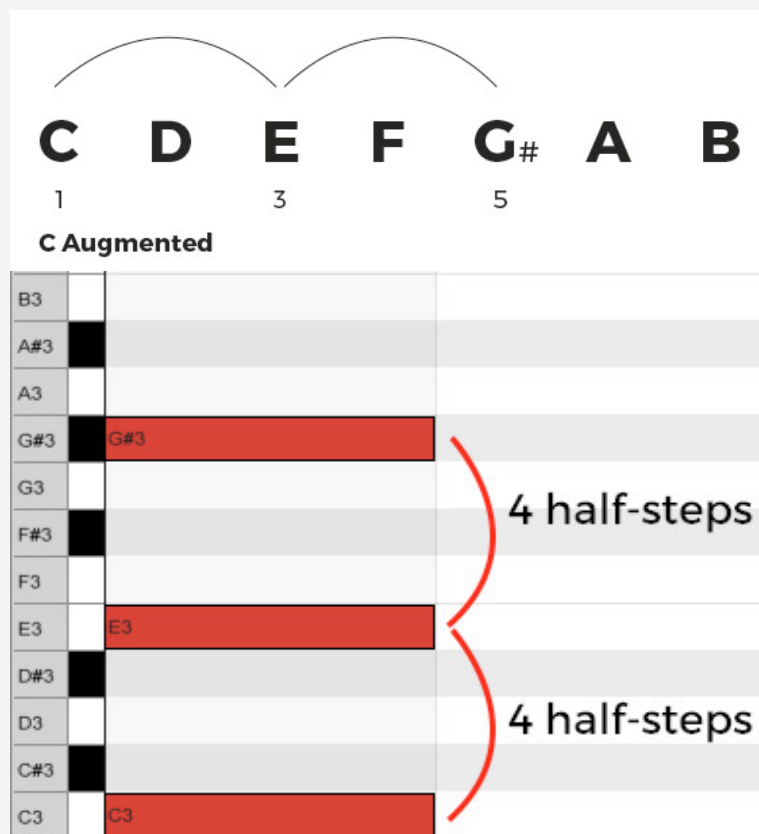
## 3. C Augmented

**Sounds:** Suspenseful
**Notes:** C + E + G#
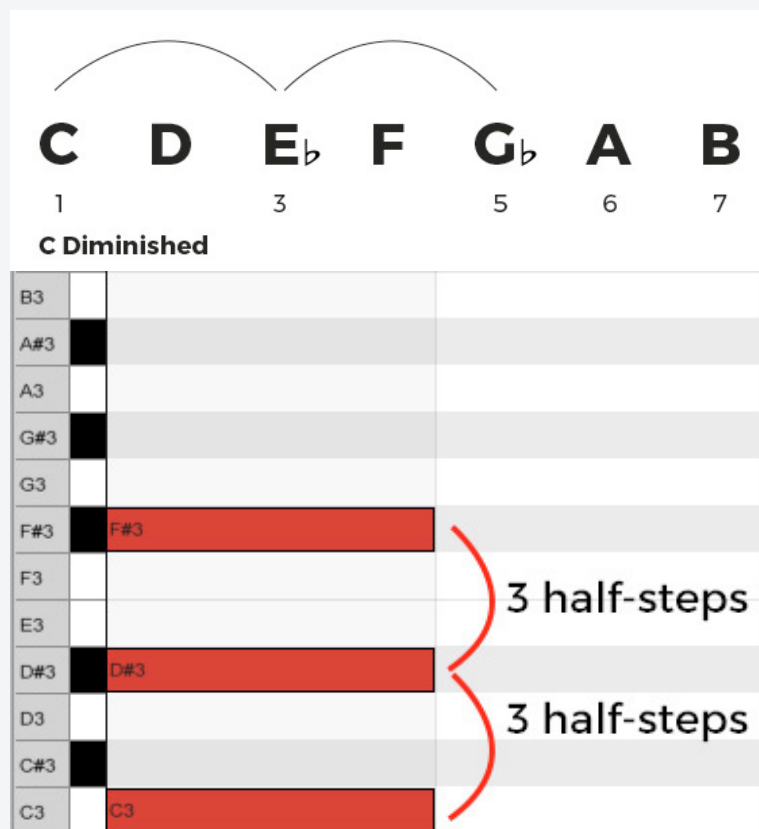**Half-step intervals:** Root/4/4



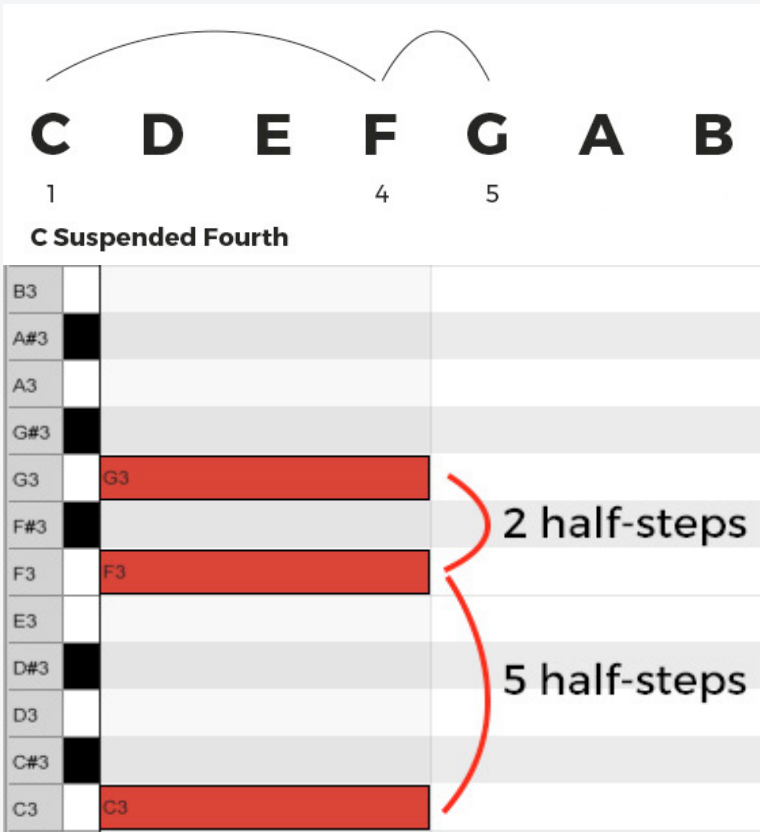C Augmented

## 4. C Diminished

**Sounds:** Scary
**Notes:** C + E♭ + G♭
**Half-step intervals:** Root/3/3



C Diminished

## 5. C Suspended Fourth

**Sounds:** Proud
**Notes:** C + F + G
**Half-step intervals:** Root/5/2

## 6. C Major Sixth

**Sounds:** Triumphant
**Notes:** C + E + G + A
**Half-step intervals:** Root/4/3/2



C Major Sixth

## 7. C Minor Sixth

**Sounds:** Sorrowful
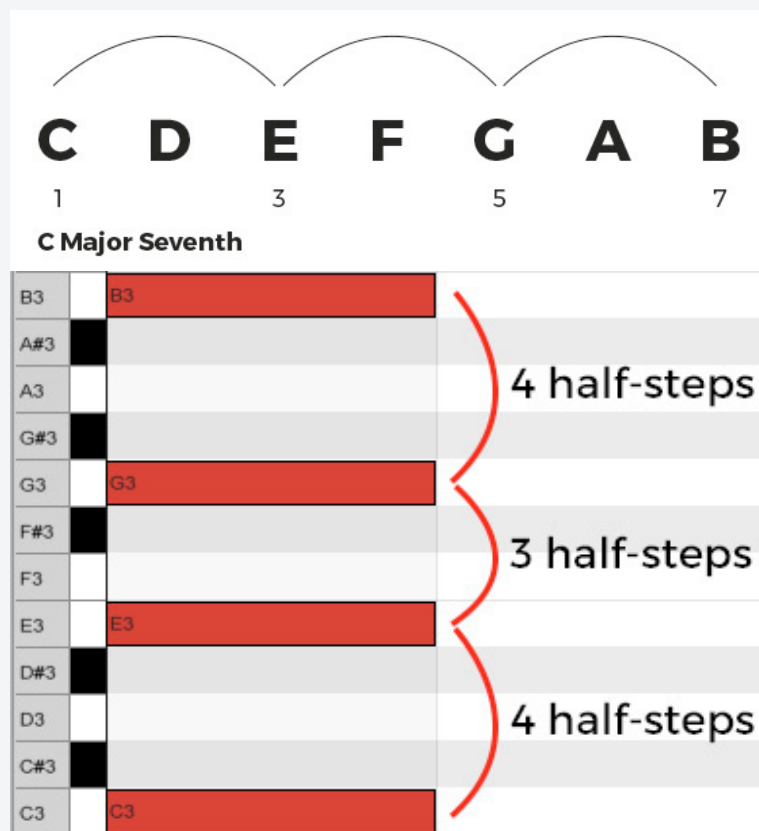**Notes:** C + E♭ + G + A
**Half-step intervals:** Root/3/4/2



C Minor Sixth
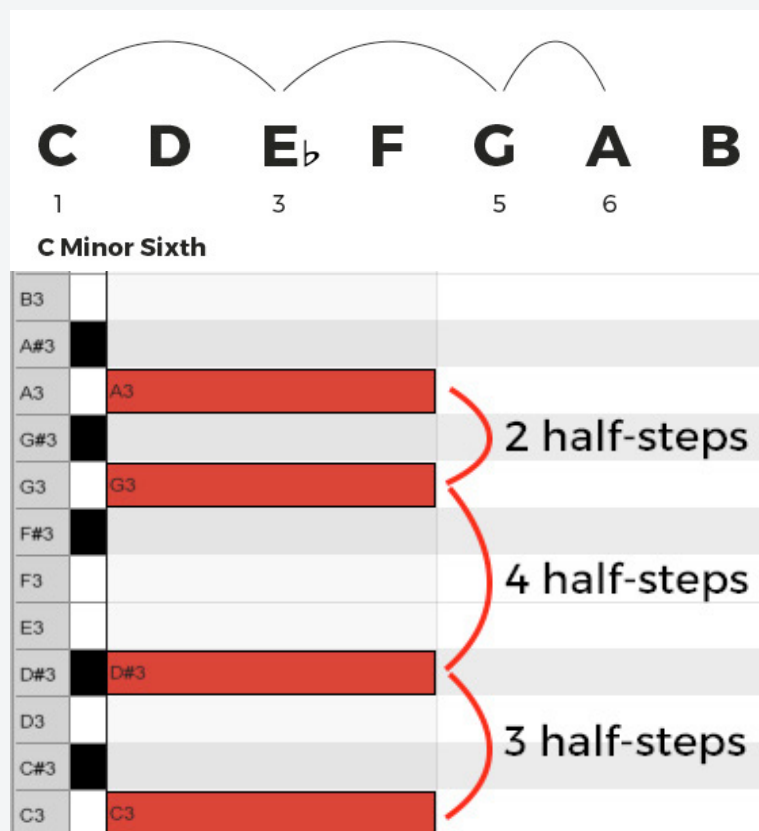
## 8. C Major Seventh

**Sounds:** Nostalgic
**Notes:** C + E + G + B
**Half-step intervals:** Root/4/3/4
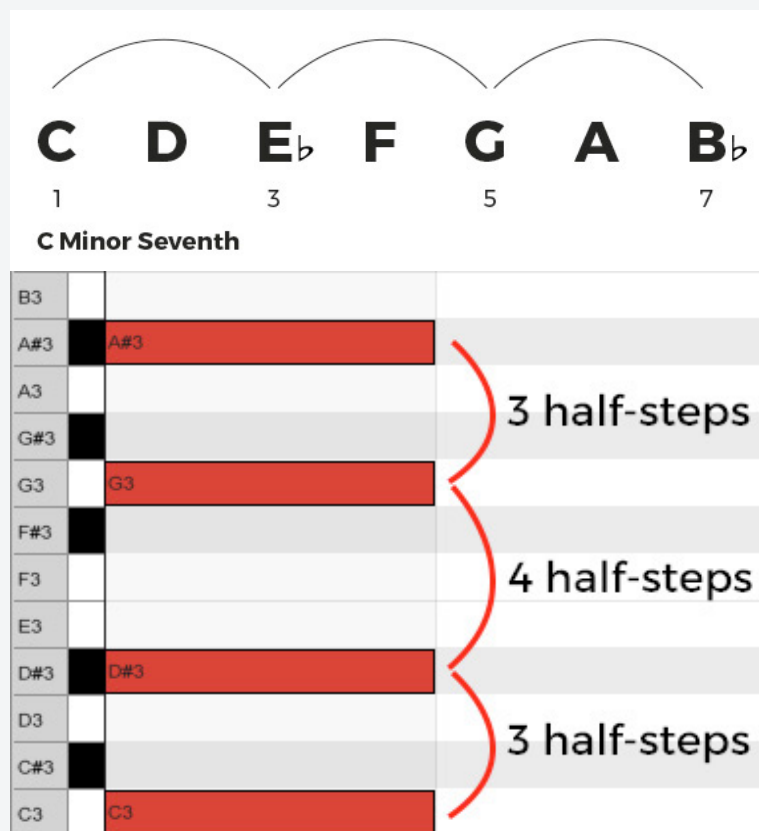


## 9. C Minor Seventh

**Sounds:** Melancholic
**Notes:** C + E♭ + G + B♭
**Half-step intervals:** Root/3/4/3

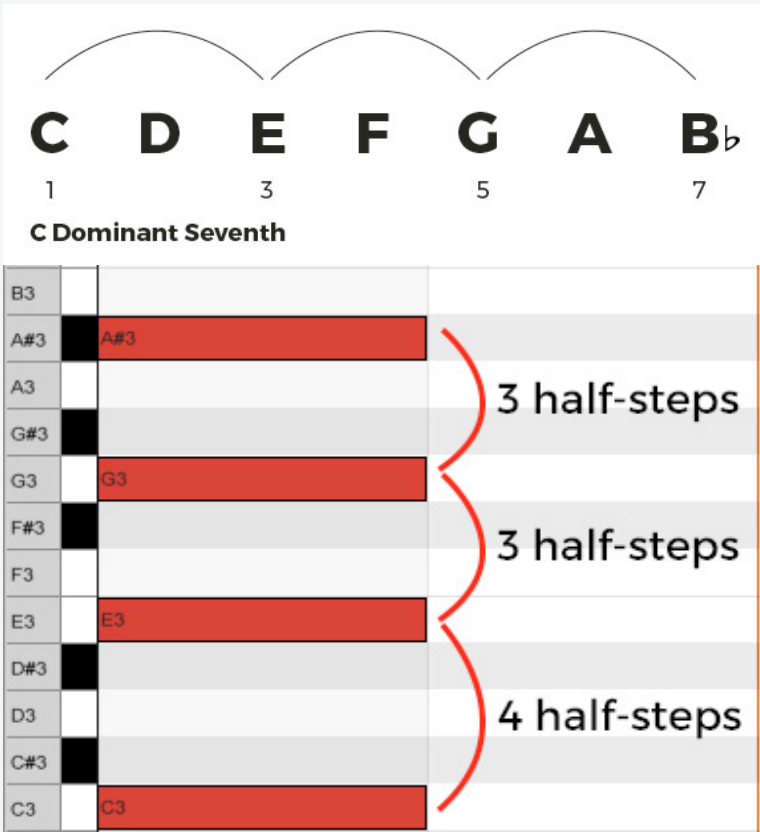## **10.** C Dominant Seventh

**Sounds:** Expectant
**Notes:** C + E + G + B♭
**Half-step intervals:** Root/4/3/3

## 11. C Major Ninth

**Sounds:** Nostalgic
**Notes:** C + E + G + B + D
**Half-step intervals:** Root/4/3/4/3



## 12. C Minor Ninth

**Sounds:** Melancholic
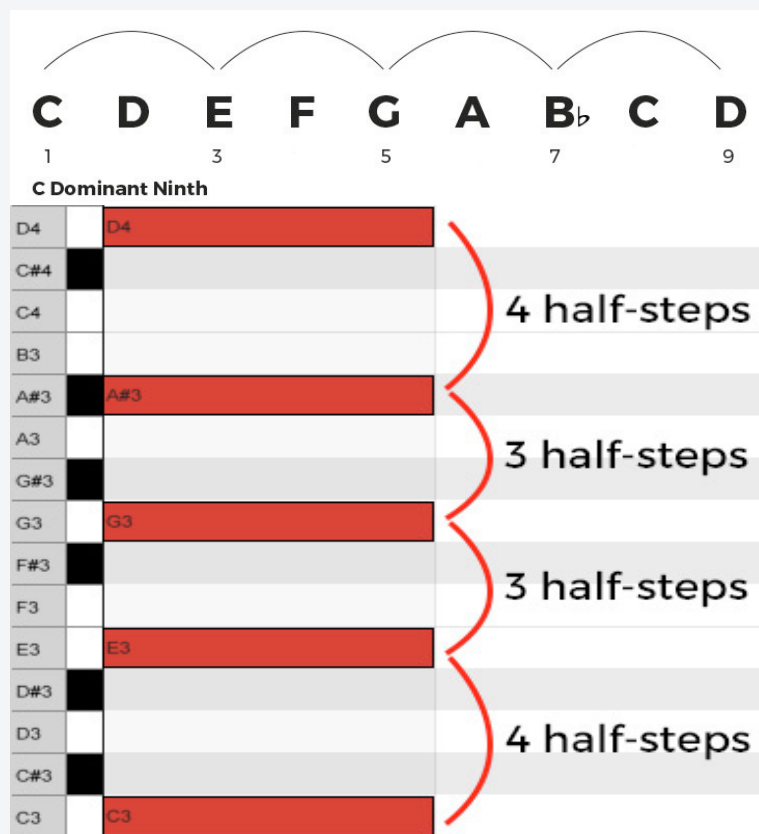**Notes:** C + E♭ + G + B♭ + D
**Half-step intervals:** Root/3/4/3/4

## 13. C Dominant Ninth

**Sounds:** Expectant
**Notes:** C + E + G + B♭ + D
**Half-step intervals:** Root/4/3/3/4



C Dominant Ninth

## Bonus: C Major, 1st Inversion:

**Notes:** E + G + C
**Half-step intervals:** 4/3/5

Great! So you now know all the chord types you will pretty much ever use! If you want to shake things up a bit, you can use difference "inversions" of each chord. This basically means you swap their order, e.g. a C Major 1st inversion will have E as the root note instead of C, so it would look like this:



C Major 1st Inversion
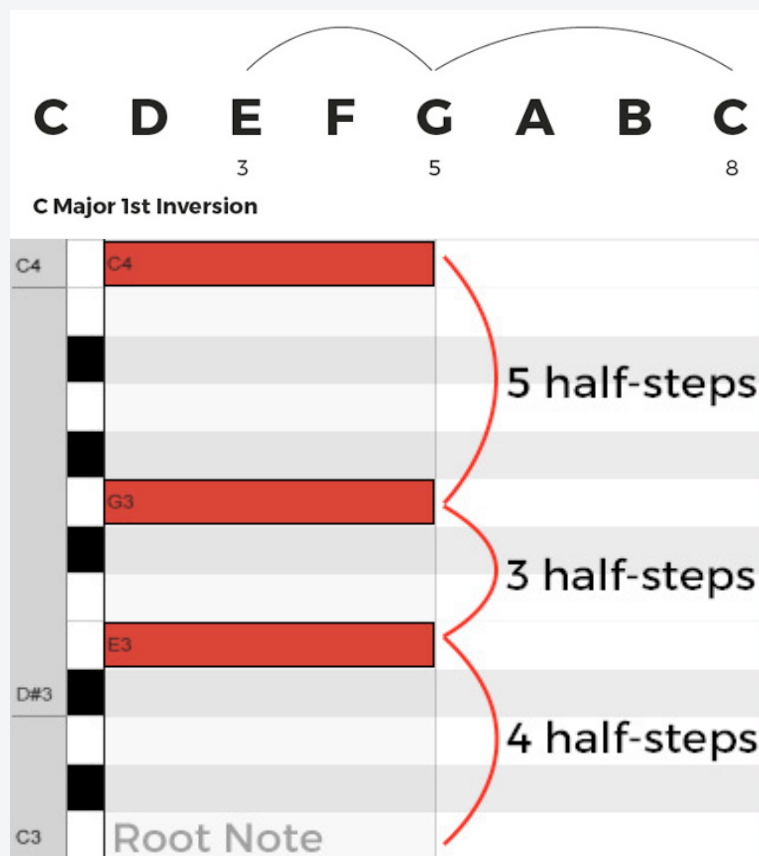
So there you have it! Experiment with different inversions and creating different chords in different keys, and have a go at putting them together. We'll cover how to sequence them together effectively in another ebook.

I hope you've enjoyed this guide. Feel free to share it with anyone you think might find it useful.

If anything is unclear, or if you have feedback and suggestions, please email **support@edmtips.com**.

Thanks, and happy producing!

*Will Darling*
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