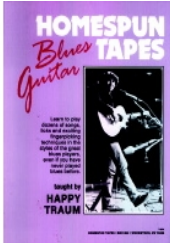




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Introduction  
Why Chord Progressions?



## Introduction

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major progressions with primary chords only</li> <li>Major progressions with secondary (minor) chords</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minor progressions</li> <li>Endings</li> <li>A Taste of Theory</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Minor to Major chord substitutions</li> <li>Modal progressions</li> </ul> |
|---|--|--|

## Major chord progressions with primary chords only

- |  |   |
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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Introduction: Why Chord Progressions?</li> <li>Primary Chords</li> <li>Out of the blue - variations of the 12 bar blues form</li> <li>8, 16 and 24 bar blues</li> <li>The harmonic stronghold - the V7-I relation.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The two-chord progression - I-V-I</li> <li>A softer ending - amen. The IV-I Plagal Cadence</li> <li>Two-chords only - just I-IV-I</li> <li>The Three Chord Trick- the I-IV-V progression.</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

## Major chord progressions with secondary chords (minor chords)

- Secondary chords (minor chords)
- The relative minor chord - the vi (submediant) chord
- The 50's cliché - I-vi-IV-V-I progression.**
  - Part 1: Open chords and barré chords
  - Part 2: Some theory and closed chord voicings
- The ii-V-I ending - an introduction of the ii (supertonic) chord
- A variation of the 50's cliché: I-vi-ii-V7-I**
  - Part 1: Open chords and barré chords
  - Part 2: Closed chord voicings**
- Bopping around in ii-V-I turns.
- Variations of I-vi-IV-V-I and I-vi-ii-V7-I.
- The iii (mediant) chord
- The I-ii progression
- Chord stream in three steps - I-ii-iii
- Chord stream in four steps - I-ii-iii-IV
- Reverse Chord stream**

## Minor chord progressions

- Minor harmony - a major challenge
- The primary chords of natural minor - i-iv-v**
- The primary chords of harmonic minor - i-iv-V**
- To complete the minor confusion: Melodic minor - i-IV-V**
- A minor relation.
- Minor blues
- Walk, don't run for a meeting with Mark Knopfler and friends - **The i-VIIb-VIb-V progression**
  - Variations of a phrygian progression and phrygian scale, which is the basis of Flamenco music - and has been adopted in popular music.
- Stopping at the Spanish border
  - This has nothing to do with France or Portugal, or the small countries on the Spanish border (Gibraltar and Andorra). But if you leave out the last chord from the "Spanish" progression, you will have another popular rock progression **i-VIIb-VIb (VIIb-I)**.
- Play along the Watchtower - the i-VIIb-VIb progression**
- La Folia - a Medieval Progression that is Still Alive



## New Lessons

- Open C Tuning
- Silent Night in Open C Tuning
  - Minor Blues
- Reading Music - Lesson 3
- Reading Music - Reading Chords
  - Blues Turnarounds
  - A Chord Exercise - jazzy 7th chords
  - Open Chords

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- The Minor Walk

### Endings

- The double message of a I-IV change.
- **The deceptive cadence**
- **John Lennon's exotic bird - the Aeolian cadence**
- I-IV-iv ending

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### A Taste of Theory

- A voicing and substitution primer
- Circling around - The Circle of fifthA Salty Dog in Alice's Restaurant

### Minor to major chord substitution

- The V of V chord (II7-chord)
- "The Buddy Holly Chord": The major submediant - the VIb-chord
- **Major mediant - III - preparing for a modulation to the relative minor**
- Minor to major substitution

### Modal progressions

- Dorian, but not grey: The i-VIIb progression
- More sophisticated Dorian: i-(b)III-IV-i
- **Another Dorian: i-(b)III-(b)VII-i**
- A mixolydian mix.
- A Green Onion After Midnight will Change the World - the I-IV-IIIb and I-IIIb-IV progression
- **Phrygian**
- **Lydian**
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Introduction  
Why Chord Progressions?



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## Why a series of lessons on chord progressions?

The primary chords



Some find it easy to identify chords when they listen to music, but there are many of us who find it hard. I have, unfortunately, been in the latter group. I have realized that it probably comes from relying too much on my eyes, and not enough on my ears when learning to play. From the very beginning, I have learned chord progressions (and other musical elements) from paper. It is the easy way, but as with every short cut: You do it at a price. You miss some of the fundamentals. So I finally decided to do something about it, and strengthen my ears. I should have started with this 25 years before ... For an approach to learning intervals and melodies, go to my [ear-training lesson](#).

You could do regular ear training, and you probably should do that (and I do): Training in identifying intervals, chords etc. But my idea is also that you have a lot of knowledge that can be activated. **The more you know, the more you are able to learn!** Listening for chord progressions is one attempt. I think you also should try to understand **why** and not just know **how**. There are a lot of cross-references to my series on **Theory** that will explain more in depth how chords are built and why they function as they do. I do also have an intent to write a series with the working title **Navigating your fretboard**, and you will find a few references to lessons written for this series. But so far only a few lessons are written, and it takes some time to write them. As music is my hobby and not my profession, I give no promises on when these lessons will be complete - if they will ever be.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- Do you get associations to songs when listening to chord progressions?
- If you are in my generation, or a bit older, you could also ask: Do you recognize the Beatles song "**A Hard Days Night**" just from it's opening chord?

If your answer is yes, then you do in some way identify the chords. You are able to hear, but you may have problems identifying the sounds. It is like being able to tell one person from another, but not being able to tell what the differences are.

I will describe common chord progressions in popular music, and give references to songs where you can hear these progressions. The basic idea is that **you should listen to at least some of the songs listed, and identify the chord progressions**. You also have to play them, and by that get to know the sounds. But the main point is to identify them by ear. Try to identify the progressions in different keys, and in different musical contexts. If you are able to hear that the chord changes are the same, even though the key and the kind of music is different, you are well on your way.

If you learn to know some chord progressions, you get some points of reference. My simple assumption is that **you are more likely to find the chords if you are looking for occurrences of progression A, B or C, than if you are just trying to find the chords**. You use your ears as well as your knowledge. If you can identify some elements, and then identify some elements that you do not know, you have a good starting point. If you find none of them, you still have got some valuable information. It is just an application of the old Socratic wisdom of knowing what you do not know.

When trying to figure out chord progressions, it might be an idea to start out by **finding the structure of the song**. How many lines? How many bars to the line? Are the lines similar (with slight variations), or are there some contrasting lines?. Write it down. Then you can identify where the chord changes are. And maybe you will hear that the music is changing from one chord to another, and then returning to the same chord - it is valuable information. You may need to spend some time on this. But if you have trouble identifying that there is a chord change, then you will definitely not be able to identify the chords.

Also remember that you learn by solving the problem, not by getting the solution. Don't cheat and look up the chords, at least not before you have made a serious effort to figure it out by ear. If you cheat, you will be cheating no one but yourself. If you have to give up, and look up the chords, then listen very carefully to the song, and be sure that you are able to identify by ear the chord changes that you know should be there.

**The basic idea in these lessons is that you listen to records, and listen for a progression that you know is there.** If you listen carefully to several songs (or fragments of songs) based on the same progression, you will eventually be able to identify the sound of the progression as such. You might play the progressions several times before you start listening, just to get to know the sound. It will also give some theoretical background to at least some of the progressions. I believe that giving names to progressions, and having some knowledge of how it works musically, makes it easier to remember and identify the progression.


A very positive side effect is that *it becomes easier to remember songs*. If you know that **Please Mister Postman** is based on a *50's cliché progression in A*, this is much easier to remember than the individual chords. And this is only one step along the way. You will eventually remember the sound of the songs with its harmonies, and you do not need more to remember the chords.

I will also ask you to send examples of applications of chord progression that should be listed, and new progressions. But music is only one of my hobbies, and not my profession. And I can only work on this website when inspiration hits and time permits.

## Why so much Beatles?

I use many examples from *The Beatles*, and you might ask whether I am a Beatles-fan more than anything else. Honestly, I do not see myself as a fan of anyone. But *The Beatles* is the most important group in the history of pop and rock music. They were influenced by all kind of music, and were always willing to experiment. Their music span from simple three chord songs like **Love Me Do** to rather sophisticated compositions. Another reason, that comes from the first, is that there is so much written about there music. These days we can get "note for note transcriptions" of almost any guitarist of some interest. But these transcriptions will not give you any musical understanding beyond "how did they play that"? The music of *The Beatles* has been analyzed over and over again, making it possible to get a better understanding of their music, and (what is more important here) to use their music as a basis for a better understanding of music generally. For an overview of the material I have been using - in additions to magazine articles - go to *Learning Music With The Beatles*.

There is one book that you should get if you want to learn more about chord progressions and other aspects of *The Beatles'* songwriting:

	<p><b>Dominic Pedler: The Songwriting Secrets of the Beatles</b></p> <p>This work examines the actual songwriting techniques of John, Paul, George and, occasionally, Ringo. Packed with examples of The Beatles' music, it explains the chord sequences, structures and harmonies that created one of the most influential sounds of the 20th century. The book is more accessible to people without formal training in music theory, compared to <i>Walter Everett's</i> books.</p> <p>0711981671</p> <p><b>Book of the Month October 2003</b></p>	<p><b>Order from:</b>  <a href="#">MusicRoom</a>  <a href="#">Amazon UK</a></p>
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The primary chords



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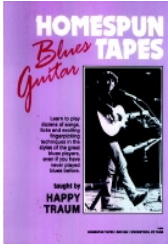
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## The primary chords



[Why a series of lessons on chord progressions?](#)

[Basic 12-bar blues](#)



This lesson is borrowed from the [Theory Series](#).

In a song based on a major scale, there are three major chords known as **primary chords**. The system of primary chords was formulated by the French composer **Jean Phillippe Rameu** in the 18th century, in his book **Treatise on Harmony** (of course it was originally written in French, but I do not know the French title).

The first is the triad built on the root or tonic note, and it is called the **root** or the **tonic** chord. The next is the chord built on the **fifth note**, called the **dominant chord**. To be honest, I do not know why it is called dominant. The third chord is built on the fourth note, and is called the **subdominant**. It is called so not because it is a subordinate chord, but because it is the note a fifth below the root or the tonic note. In the key of C, these chords are C, G and F.

We often refer to them with roman numbers, indicating the which note in the scale they are built on. A chord built on the first note (root or tonic) is **I**, the chord built on the fourth note is **IV** and the chord built on the fifth note is **V**. The advantage of this notation is that it can be applied to any key.

We will stay in the key of C for a while. You probably remember that the notes in the C-major scale is **C, D, E, F, G, A** and **B**. If you look at the notes in the three primary chords, you will find that **C-major** has the notes **C-E-G**, **F-major** has **F-A-C** and **G-major** has **G-B-D**. Every note of the scale is part of at least one of the primary chords.

C-major			C	E	G
F-major	F	A	C		
G-major	G	B	D		
C-major		C	E	G	
F-major			F	A	C
C-major	C	E	G		
G-major			G	B	D
F-major	F	A	C		
G-major	G	B	D		

You can harmonize every note in the major scale by using the three primary chords. I am not saying that it will always sound good or interesting. But it will not clash, and will never be totally wrong. Some composers have created masterpieces with only these three chords, and less talented guitar players use them for the "**three chords trick**", playing almost any song with only these three chords. For a more in depth discussion on how a pop-song can be harmonized with these three chords, go to [Ger Tillekens: The amazing grace of "Never Ever"](#) in [Soundscapes on-line journal on media culture](#).

### The Three-Chord Trick: I-IV-V progressions

• [Progressions: The Three-chord Trick: I-IV-V progression](#)

• [Theory: The primary chords](#)



[Why a series of lessons on chord progressions?](#)

[Basic 12-bar blues](#)



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## Basic 12-bar blues



The primary chords

8, 16 and 24 bar blues



This lesson focus on the **chord structure** of the blues. If you want to learn more about **playing** the blues, go to my **Blues Guitar Series**, where you will also find **more on the 12-bar blues progression**.

You will find the 12-bar blues progression as basis for rock, jazz, folk and pop, and of course in blues. It is also a progression that is easy to identify, making it a good start. But already at the outset, you should know that not all blues songs follow a standard 12-bar progression, and that there are many variations within the 12-bar blues framework.

The 12-bar blues consists of three lines, each with four bars, making a total of 12. It has what is known as a AAB structure, meaning that the theme from the first line is repeated with some alterations in the second line, and then a concluding theme is introduced in the third line. Identifying the structure is a good start when you figure out the chords.

### Blues progression 1

If you play a 12-bar blues in E, a popular blues-key on guitar, you might play ( A / means that the same chord is played on that beat):

E - / - / - /	E - / - / - /	E - / - / - /	E7 - / - / - /
A7 - / - / - /	A7 - / - / - /	E - / - / - /	E - / - / - /
B7 - / - / - /	A7 - / - / - /	E - / - / - /	E - / - / - /

If we give these chords generic musical identification, it will be spelled I, I7, IV, IV7 and V7. If you do not know this notation, go the the **explanation of notation**. A 12-bar blues in this form will be:

I - / - / - /	I - / - / - /	I - / - / - /	I7 - / - / - /
IV7 - / - / - /	IV7 - / - / - /	I - / - / - /	I - / - / - /
V7 - / - / - /	IV7 - / - / - /	I - / - / - /	I - / - / - /

Just to have a name for labeling the progression, i call this **Blues progression 1**

#### Backing Track - 12B1

These are MIDI backing tracks of **12-bar Blues progression 1**. For more information, go to lesson on **bluesprogression in the chord progression series**.

They are in 8 keys and three tempos (65, 90 and 120). Use them to get the sound of the cords, and as backing tracks. They are long 10-15 minutes, which makes them boring as listening track, but good for practise. **Download all files as a zip-file**.

65 very slow	C	D	Eb	E	F	G	A	Bb
90 Slow	C	D	Eb	E	F	G	A	Bb
120 Medium	C	D	Eb	E	F	G	A	Bb

**Click here for a list of songs with Blues progression 1.**

If you have listened to or played 12-bar blues songs, you might have noticed that some might be played almost, but not exactly as it has been written here.

You will frequently hear that a verse ends on the V7 chord, which is **B7** in the key of E. The last line will then be:

V7 - / - / - /	IV7 - / - / - /	I - / - / - /	I - V7 - / - /
----------------	-----------------	---------------	----------------

To indicate that the progression has a turnaround, I add a **T** to the label. The **Blues Progression 1 with turnaround** will then be **Blues progression 1T**

<b>Backing Track - 12B1T</b>															
These are MIDI backing tracks of <b>12-bar Blues progression 1 with Turnaround chord</b> . For more information, go to lesson on <a href="#">bluesprogression in the chord progression series</a> . <a href="#">Download all files as a zip-file</a>															
65 very slow								C	D	Eb	E	F	G	A	Bb
90 Slow								C	D	Eb	E	F	G	A	Bb
120 Medium								C	D	Eb	E	F	G	A	Bb

[Click here for a list of songs with a Blues progression 1T.](#)

Note that you usually will play the V7 chord at the second beat in the last bar. This creates a turnaround. Listen to how the V7 chord function in that context: It creates some tension, giving the verse a restless end where you cannot stop. The tension is released when you are returning to the I chord, or the tonic chord as it also is called. We will look more at this V7-I relationship later. But be sure that you can identify the tension created by the 7th chord and how it is released by returning to the I chord. The music is coming home when it arrives at the I chord.

You will never end a blues song at the V7 chord. In the last verse, you have to stay at the I chord. You might also hear a I7 chord played at the end.

You should also pay careful attention to how the I7 chord function at the end of the first line (bar 4). When going from a straight major to a 7th, it creates tension. This tension will be released if you go to an **A chord**. And you will then have changed key to A-major. But since you will often go to a **A7** chord, the tension is only partly released. But it might still be regarded as a change or modulation from E to A. If you are improvising over this chord change on a not to well adjusted auto-pilot, you can easily get lost. Without really noticing what you are doing, you might change from an E to an A scale as the basis for your playing. And this does not work very well when you are returning to **E** in bar 7. You have to know how to find your way back to your home-key. You may also notice that there is not the same kind of tension and release when you are going from **A7** to **E**, in bar 6 and 7. If you should release the **A7** tension, you should have ended on **D**. But then you would have changed key to D-major, and you would really have problem finding you way home.

Music will often modulate from one key to another, and with the new key you establish a «home away from home». You will usually have to come back to the home key. But sometimes you will move into a new home. One example is the inevitable modulation heard in country songs. I said that the change from **E7** to **A7** might be regarded as a modulation from E to A, I did not say that it is a modulation. What makes blues so fascinating and a good basis for improvising is that it does not have a very stable harmonic structure. The chord changes makes it easy to get in and out of keys and different scales, and thus opening up for unlimited variations.

## Blues progression 2

A common variation is a change to the IV7 chord in the second bar, and then a change back to I in the third bar. The first line will then be:

I - / - / - /	IV7 - / - / - /	I - / - / - /	I7 - / - / - /
---------------	-----------------	---------------	----------------

I label progressions with a IV in bar 2 as **Blues progression 2** and **2T** if it has a turnaround

<b>Backing Track - 12B2</b>															
These are MIDI backing tracks of <b>12-bar Blues progression 2</b> . For more information, go to lesson on <a href="#">bluesprogression in the chord progression series</a> . <a href="#">Download all files as a zip-file</a> .															
65 very slow								C	D	Eb	E	F	G	A	Bb
90 Slow								C	D	Eb	E	F	G	A	Bb
120 Medium								C	D	Eb	E	F	G	A	Bb

[Click here for a list of songs with Blues progression 2.](#)

<b>Backing Track - 12B2T</b>									
These are MIDI backing tracks of <b>12-bar Blues progression 2 with Turnaround chord</b> . For more information, go to lesson on <a href="#">bluesprogression in the chord progression series</a> . <a href="#">Download all files as a zip-file</a>									

<b>65 very slow</b>	C	D	Eb	E	F	G	A	Bb
<b>90 Slow</b>	C	D	Eb	E	F	G	A	Bb
<b>120 Medium</b>	C	D	Eb	E	F	G	A	Bb

[Click here for a list of songs with \*Blues progression 2T\*.](#)

### Other variations

You may also notice that some players hold the V7 chord for two bars in bar 9 and 10, and then going directly from V7 to I, without going via the IV chord. The last line will then be (without turnaround):

V7 - / - / - /	V7 - / - / - /	I - / - / - /	I - / - / - /
----------------	----------------	---------------	---------------

Chuck Berry often uses this form. Listen to *Chuck Berry's* classic «**Johnny B. Goode**» for an example. Chuck Berry usually do not use a turnaround.

[Click here for a list of songs with a 12 bar blues progression with a V-V-I-I ending.](#)

We will leave the blues for a while. But we will return with some new variations after looking at some other chord structures.

### Material for further exploration of the blues form.

There are of course many books that deals with blues. But these three books will take you through many ways of playing the basic 12-bar chord structure. They all come with CDs



**Bestseller!**

#### **Dave Rubin: 12 Bar Blues**

In the book, **Dave Rubin** explores the 12 bar blues form. The term '12-bar blues' has become synonymous with blues music and is the basis for an incredible body of jazz, rock 'n' roll, and other forms of popular music. This book/CD pack is solely devoted to providing guitarists with all the technical tools necessary for playing 12-bar blues with authority. The CD includes 24 full-band tracks. Covers: boogie, shuffle, swing, riff, and jazzy blues progressions; Chicago, minor, slow, bebop, and other blues styles; soloing, intros, turnarounds, accompanying keyboards and more. *This is one of my favorites!*

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**This book was selected as *Guitar Book of the Month - July 2002***

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Review:

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#### **Dave Rubin: The Art of the Shuffle.**

As the name says, the book focuses on the shuffle, and not the blues as such. It explores shuffle, boogie and swing rhythms for guitar. Includes tab and notation, and covers Delta, country, Chicago, Kansas City, Texas, New Orleans, West Coast, and bebop blues. As the name says, the book focuses on the shuffle, and not the blues as such. But as all examples are in a 12-bar blues format, it will take you through various blues progressions, as an added bonus to the exploration of the shuffle style. (HL695005)

[See more info...](#)

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#### **Jim Ferguson - All Blues for Jazz Guitar**

**Jazz-Blues.** By Jim Ferguson. Book/CD package. **Rhythm**/backup. Jim Ferguson has a jazz approach to the blues, which means jazz comping and more sophisticated chords. In this book you will learn many arrangements based on three-note 7th chords (which often could be labeled as **dim** chords) in a blues context. (There are many other chords as well). Unless jazz is your main interest, I will suggest that you start with **Dave Rubin's 12 Bar Blues**, before going on with Jim Ferguson's book. 92 pages.

Published by Guitar Master Class Pub. - Mel Bay **Fingerstyle Jazz**.

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No MB96842BCD

**This book was selected as *Book of the Month February 2003***

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### 12-bar blues

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The primary chords

8, 16 and 24 bar blues



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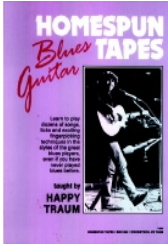
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## 8, 16 and 24 bar blues



Basic 12-bar blues

The harmonic stronghold:  
The V7-I progression



Not all blues-tunes follow the familiar 12-bar pattern. There are other forms you should know, and you should also know that some tunes don't fit into any of these schemes. You should get to know - in this sequence - the 8, 16 and 24 bar blues.

### The 8-bar blues

The 8-bar blues is another standard progression. The most well known song with this progression is probably **Big Bill Broonzy's Key To The Highway**. Other songs are *Crow Jane* and *Sliding Delta*.

The progression has two lines, with the following chord structure:

I	V7	IV	IV
I	V7	I	V7

In E this will be:

E	B7	A(7)	A(7)
E	B7	E	B7

In A, another favorite key for this progression, it will be:

A	E7	D(7)	D(7)
A	E7	A	E7

#### Backing Track B8

These are MIDI backing tracks of **8-bar Blues**. For more information, go to lesson on **bluesprogression in the chord progression series**.

They are in 8 keys and three tempos (65, 90 and 120). Use them to get the sound of the chords, and as backing tracks. They are long 10-15 minutes, which makes them boring as listening track, but good for practise. **Download all files as a zip-file.**

65 very slow	C	D	E <sup>b</sup>	E	F	G	A	B <sup>b</sup>
90 Slow	C	D	E <sup>b</sup>	E	F	G	A	B <sup>b</sup>
120 Medium	C	D	E <sup>b</sup>	E	F	G	A	B <sup>b</sup>

If you go to the **8-bar blues lesson** in my **Blues Guitar Series** you will find some typical arrangements of this progressions in the keys E and A.

Another 8-bar blues progression can be heard in **I Hurts Me Too**. There the progression is **E - E - A - A - E - B7 - E - E** or **I - I - IV - IV - I - V - I - I**.

### 16-bar blues

There are (at least) two variations of the 16-bar blues. You get the first one if you repeat the second line of a 12-bar blues:

I	I (IV)	I	I7
IV	IV	I	I7
IV	IV	I	I
V7	IV	I	I (V7)

You should be able to figure out what this will be in several keys. In my *Blues Guitar Series* you will find one arrangement of **See See Rider as a 16-bar blues in E**

Another variation of the the 16-bar blues is simply the 8-bar structure explained in this lesson, with all chords divided into two.

I	I	V7	V7	IV	IV	IV	IV
I	I	V7	V7	I	I	V7	V7

## 24-bar blues

We can divide the bars of a 12-bar blues in two, just as we did with the 8-bar blues. The result is a 24-bar form.

I	I	I (IV)	I (IV)	I	I	I	I (7)
IV	IV	IV	IV	I	I	I	I
V7	V7	IV	IV	I	I	I (V7)	I (V7)

Once again I leave it to you to figure out the chords in several keys.

### Other blues progressions (than the 12-bar Blues)

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Progressions: 8, 16 and 24 bar blues</li> <li>• Blues Guitar Lesson 13: 16-bar blues</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blues Guitar Lesson 24 - 8-bar blues</li> <li>• Blues Guitar Lesson 24 B- 8-bar blues in A</li> <li>• Blues Guitar 24 C- 8-bar blues in A – Come Back Baby</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Books and videos on Acoustic Blues Guitar</li> </ul> |
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[Basic 12-bar blues](#)

[The harmonic stronghold: The V7-I progression](#)



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## The harmonic stronghold: The V7-I progression



8, 16 and 24 bar blues

Two-chord progression:  
I-V-I



The strongest harmonic relation is between the **V7** chord and the **I** chord, or the dominant and the root/tonic, if you prefer these terms. It is the **V7-I** relation that defines the root as the tonal centre. Just play the chords **C-G7-C**, and listen to how the **G7** chord creates a tension that is resolved when you return to the **C** chord.

You will hear that many, many songs end with the **V7-I** chord sequence, and it creates a firm and solid ending. If a line end on the **V7** chord, you expect something to follow. It cannot be the last chord - at least in traditional harmony. If you play a 12 bar blues with a turnaround ending on the **V7** chord, you have to play another verse. The **V7** chord creates tension, and you have to resolve the tension. And the tension is not dissolved before you start the next verse with the **I** chord.

Many songs have a structure where the first part end on the **V7** chord, and you then expect some more to come. A song that almost any guitar player have played in the beginning of his or her career, is the ballad *Tom Dooley*. This song is usually played with only two chords, the **I** and the **V7**. The first part starts on **I** and ends on **V7**, and the second part starts on **V7** and ends on **I**.

xxxx

Many other songs have the same kind of ending, but have more chords before the ending.

There are not that many well known songs with only the chords **I** and **V7**, but the **V7-I** is a part of many other progression, so you will develop your knowledge and ability to identify the change in the following lessons.

Compare the V-I change with the **V7-I** change. The V-I progression will also give some of the effects that the **V7-I** progression gives. But the **V7-I** progression gives a stronger statement. The two most important notes in a **V7** chord is the 3 and the 7 (counted from the root of the chord, not the root of the key). If we look at a **G7** chord, the notes 1-3-5-7 are G, B, D and F. In the key of C, the B is the *leading note*, a note that leads up to the tonic. The F is called the *leaning note*, a note that leads down to the third note, the E in C major. When you change from **G7** to **C**, the B changes to **C** and the F to E, and then the tension in the chord is dissolved. If you play the **G** chord instead of a **G7**, you do not have the F, and then you cannot have the F to E movement.

The interval between the B and the F is a *diminished fifth*, which sounds the same as the *tritone* (or *augmented fourth*, as it might also be called). This is a dissonant interval, and the dissonance is dissolved when it change to a major third (C and E). A simple major chord, such as the **G**, does not have this interval. The two notes will be notes 4 and 7 of the major scale: The 7 of a **dominant 7** chord is the 4 of the tonic scale, and the 3 of the chord is the 7 of the scale. This might be very confusing, but if you review the lesson on harmonized scales, you will probably understand the relation between scale notes and chords built on these scale notes. Enough of that: The point is that the tritone interval between the 4 and the 7 of the scale, are the two most important notes in the **dominant 7** chord. As long as you keep these two notes, the chord will function as a **dominant 7**, and it will lead you back to the tonic.

By introducing new **V7-I** changes in a progression, you will establish a new key and the song will modulate. But we will come back to this in another lesson.

**For more on tritones and the diminished chord, go to:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Theory: Tritone interval</li><li>• Theory: The diminished triad</li><li>• Theory: The dominant 7th chord</li><li>• Chords: dim chords</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Chords: Dim7 chords</li><li>• Progressions: Chord - diminished</li><li>• Progressions: V7-I change</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Tritone Blues - Part 1 * Part 2 * Part 3 * Part 4</li><li>• Blues Gutiar: 12-bars, Two Chord Shapes and a Touch of Jazz - Part 1 * Part 2 * Part 3 * Part 4</li><li>• Blues Guitar: The Flat-five Substitution – Part 1 * Part 2 * Part 3 * Part 4 * Part 5 * Part 6 * Part 7</li><li>• The same in Theory: The Flat-five Substitution</li><li>• Song: The Beatles' song <b>Michelle</b></li></ul>
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[8, 16 and 24 bar blues](#)

[Two-chord progression:  
I-V-I](#)



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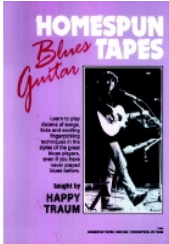
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# I-V Progression



The harmonic stronghold:  
The V7-I progression

IV-I – The Plagal Cadence.  
A softer ending – amen



You can hear various **I-V** and **V-I** changes in thousands, if not millions of tunes. But there are not that many tunes where you have these two chords only. It may be a bit boring with just two chords. But the **V** chord creates a bit more tension than the **IV** chord.

You will often hear some lines that end on the **V** chord. It is as if the music takes a little break, but have not got home yet. This is what is called a **half close**. If you end with the **V – I** change, you have a **full close**. Just listen, and you will understand the concept.

The tune that many learn as their first song when they are beginning to play guitar – **Tom Dooley** – illustrates the concept, as it usually is played with only two chords. The first line end with a **half close**, and the second line with a **full close**.



If you try this in **C**, the chords are **C (I)** and **G (V)**.

These are 8-bar examples with the **I-V-I** progression, all played at 120 beats pr minute, with a country feel. Each example is played 32 times, and are 8:40 long. The first row are progressions with simple **I-V-I**. In the examples in the second row, I have chosen the **V7** instead of the **V** chord, giving the **I-V7-I** progression.

I-V-I	C	D	Eb	E	F	G	A	Bb
I-V7-I	C	D	Eb	E	F	G	A	Bb

When I started on this little lesson, I was only thinking of **Tom Dooley** as an example of a song with only these two chords. But I was making the backing tracks, and where listening to them, other tunes started to pop up in my mind. Listen to these tracks, and you will probably start to think of other tunes.

Go here for a list of [songs with the I-V-I progression](#).



The harmonic stronghold:  
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A softer ending – amen



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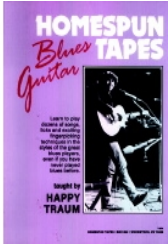
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## IV-I - The Plagal Cadence. A softer ending - amen



[I-V-I Progression](#)

[I-IV-I progression](#)



You may also hear the the IV-I ending, for instance **F-C** in the key of C-major. This ending is called a **plagal cadence** - don't ask me what it means. It is often used when one want a softer end compare to a perfect cadence (V-I), and is often used in hymns. That is why it also is called the "amen cadence".

In my ears, the plagal cadence sounds as if you are not going that high up before you jump down to the tonic. But beware: Depending on the chord voicing, you might go up, not down to the tonic. The V is still higher than the IV, but when you go up, this means that you have a larger harmonic movement when you go up from IV compared to V.

[Click here for a list of songs with the plagal IV-I cadence.](#)

You may also go down one step at a time, like you do in a typical blues ending: V-IV-I.

In blues you will often use a IV7. But you will more often have a basic IV triad. The IV7 is a non-diatonic chord, meaning that it includes notes that are not scale notes. An **F7** has the notes F, A, C and Eb, and you probably know that there is no Eb in a C-major scale. I diatonic seventh of IV should be a maj7. **F7** leads to **Bb**, not to **C**, and it might lead you out of key. (What makes blues so fascinating and a good basis for improvisation, is that it does not have a very clearly defined key.)

If you are playing in a minor key, you will normally use a minor iv chord.

### More on the application of the IV chord

- Progressions: The double message of the I-IV change
- Theory: Plagal Cadence: The IV-I ending
- Progressions: Intro - a start from the subdominant



[I-V-I Progression](#)

[I-IV-I progression](#)



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## The I-IV change



IV-I – The Plagal Cadence.  
A softer ending – amen

Another two-chord progression:  
I-V-I



There are probably millions of songs where you have the I-IV. The IV will often be the next chord after the opening tonic. You have probably played changes like **C-F**, **G-C**, **E-A**, etc. many times. It is good idea to memorize the sound of these changes, if you do not already have the sound in your head. One song that comes to my mind when I am writing this, is **The Beatles Misery**. The verse starts with a series of I-IV changes in the key of C ( **C** and **F** chords), before going on to other chords. Another example from the same **The Beatles** record is **There's A Place**. The song is in **the key of E**. The intro is based on **E** and **A** only, as is most of the verse.

Some songs have only these two chords. [Click here for a list of songs where you can hear the I-IV change.](#)

But songs with only these two chords tend to be boring, unless you have a very good melody. The IV-chord, or *subdominant* as it is called in music theory, does not create enough tension to make the music interesting. With no tension, there is nothing to dissolve, and there will be very little happening harmonically. It is like a start that is leading to nowhere.

You should be able to identify the I-IV change in a song, even though the song has many more chords. There are some *idiomatic* changes that you should know. (By idiomatic I mean changes typical for the style, or in this case typical for guitar playing.) These are all changes that are fairly easy to play, and that sounds well on a guitar.

### Backing Track 1-4

I-IV progression - 90 (note a few I7 and IV7 chords sneaked into the track) [Download all files as a zip-file](#)

C	D	E <sup>b</sup>	E	F	G	A	B <sup>b</sup>
---	---	----------------	---	---	---	---	----------------

C	F	C and F combined

Before we go to specific keys, I will point at the nice relation between the **I-chord** played as an **A-shape with partial barré fingering** and **IV-chord** played as a **Middle D-shape** just above. As an example, we can put it in **C-major**, with **C** as the **I-chord** and **F** as the **IV-chord**. The barré will then be at 5th fret. You hold the A-shape as a barré, and keep the barré while fretting over. Listen to **Dire Strait's Sultans of Swing** for just one example where you can hear these chords. One application of this is in the **Chord shuffle**. It is also part of **The harmonized shuffle**

Note that these are closed positions, meaning that you do not play open strings.

We might start with a simple **C - F** change, which does not require much finger movement, and sounds nice.

A variation that sounds nice in some ballads and maybe some other music as well, is the change from **C** to **Fmaj7**, where the **Fmaj7** is played as an F-chord with open 1st string. Listen to *Donovan's* old hit **Catch The Wind** for a nice example of this change. (He sometimes play **C - Fmaj7**, and sometimes play **C - F** -- I leave it to you to find out when he plays the two variations of the F-chord.)

I have made one **MIDI-file** to illustrate the point. It goes **C-Fmaj7-C-F**. Listen to the differences between the **Fmaj7** and the **F**.

Another variation, still in the key of **C**, is **C - Fadd9**. (**Fadd9** has a 9th, which is G, added. But it is not a 9th chord because it does not contain a 7th. More about 9th chords in the "9 to 5" lesson.) You should then play the **C** with a G on 1st string, 3rd fret, fingered with your pinky. When changing to **Fadd9**, you just keep the G on the first string. This chord change was often favored by *John Lennon*

In the key of G you have a similar change from **G** to **C**, still with the G on 1st string when you play the **C** chord. You should also try the **Gsus4** instead of the **C**, and listen to the difference.

The **G chord can be fingered in different ways**, and there is no "correct" fingering. What fingering to choose depends on where you are coming from and where you are going. When changing between **G** and **C**, as in the previous example, you should use the pinky on the 1st string, ring finger on 6th string and middle finger on 5th string. That leaves the 1st finger for the C on 2nd string.

The progression is closely related to the **I-ii progression**. The relationship is discussed in the **I-ii lesson**.

### More on the application of the IV chord

- Progressions: The double message of the I-IV change
- Theory: Plagal Cadence: The IV-I ending
- Progressions: Intro - a start from the subdominant



The Three-chord Trick:  
I-IV-V progression

Another two-chord progression:  
I-V-I





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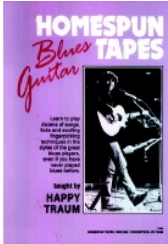
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## The Three-chord Trick: I-IV-V progression



The I-IV change

Secondary chords



By just knowing three chords, the I, IV and V7, you can play thousands of songs. Even songs with a more complex harmonic structure might be reduced to a three-chord progression with a result that is acceptable, given that they are based on a major scale and have no modulations. These three chords are known as the **Primary chords**. For some more explanation, go to my **Primary Chord lesson** in my **Theory series**

You have already met the three-chord structure in the 12-bar blues, and the 12 bar blues is one of the progressions based on these three chords. In case you should have forgotten, the chords in the most popular guitar keys are:

C: **C-F-G7**  
G: **G-C-D7**  
D: **D-G-A7**  
A: **A-D-E7**  
E: **E-A-B7**  
F: **F-Bb-C7**

Some typical three-chord song structures are:

### Basic & Folk progression

One typical example is the well known hymn **Amazing Grace**, written by *John Newton* in the year 1779. It has a typical **16-bar AABA structure**. I have put it in the key of C, where I=C, IV=F and V=G. Notice that the second line ends with a **Half Close**, and the last line with a **Full close**. For some more explanation on full and half close, go to the lesson on **Authentic Cadence** in my **Music Theory series**. The first and third line ends with a **Plagal Cadence**

C	C	F	C
C	C	G	G
C	C	F	C
C	G	C	C

I have chosen **Amazing Grace** partly because it is a well known tune, but also because you can find this very interesting article on the relation between Amazing Grace and pop songs **Ger Tillekens: The amazing grace of "Never Ever"** in **Soundscapes on-line journal on media culture**.

#### Basic Folk progression BFP

They are in 8 keys and three tempos (65, 90 and 120). Use them to get the sound of the cords, and as backing tracks. They are long 10-15 minutes, which makes them boring as listening track, but good for practise. **Download all files as a zip-file.**

65 very slow	C	D	E <sup>b</sup>	E	F	G	A	B <sup>b</sup>
90 Slow	C	D	E <sup>b</sup>	E	F	G	A	B <sup>b</sup>
120 Medium	C	D	E <sup>b</sup>	E	F	G	A	B <sup>b</sup>

There are hundreds of songs more or less based on this progression. Try some countryish ballads, for instance **Act Naturally** as recorded by **The Beatles**. It is in G. The verse follows more or less this structure. At the end of the bridge, there is an **A7-chord**, which is a **V of V chord** in this context.

### I-IV-V-I Rock progression

This is another classic. I often think of this as a progression where you climb to the top, and then jump down, for instance through the chords **E-A-B-E**. But the progression might have another character and direction. If you in the **key of C** and play the standard open fingering of the chords **C-F-G-C**, it sounds more like if you

going up, then down below, before you climb to the root. And it might give a feeling of jumping down to the IV-chord below, and then climbing up towards the tonic.

A few examples of songs with this progression, are **Twist and Shout** (originally Isly Brothers, but made far more famous by **the Beatles**), **Paul Simon Me and Julio Down in the Schoolyard** (verse) and **I am a Rock**, **Eddie Cochran Summertime Blues**.

Backing Track								
These are more MIDI backing tracks of the progression above. They are in 8 keys and three tempos, but only in one tempo (120) this time. But instead I have made one track where each chord last one bar (4x1), and one with two bars of each chord (4x).								
4x1	C	D	E <sup>b</sup>	E	F	G	A	B <sup>b</sup>
4x2	C	D	E <sup>b</sup>	E	F	G	A	B <sup>b</sup>

The progression can be reversed, giving the **I-V-IV-I** progression.

Backing Track								
<b>I-V-IV-I progression - 120</b>								
C	D	E <sup>b</sup>	E	F	G	A	B <sup>b</sup>	

### I-IV-V-IV

There are many songs following this pattern. A few examples are **Get Off Of My Clouds**, **La Bamba** and **Great Balls of Fire**

Backing Track								
<b>I-IV-V-IV progression - 120</b>								
C	D	E <sup>b</sup>	E	F	G	A	B <sup>b</sup>	

### I-V-IV-V

One example is **The Beatles' Baby's In Black**

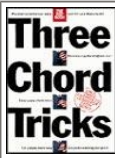
Backing Track								
<b>I-V-IV-V progression - 120</b>								
C	D	E <sup>b</sup>	E	F	G	A	B <sup>b</sup>	

### Another look at the Blues-ending - V-IV-I-(V)

### Three songbooks with just these chords

These three songbooks are collections of songs that you can play using only the three primary chords.

	<p><b>Three Chord Tricks: The Black Book</b>  <b>3 Chord Songs.</b> Here's the easiest guitar songbook ever. Only three chords to learn for each song! And with songs in different keys you'll soon extend your chord skills. Each of the classic songs in this book has simple chord changes clearly shown above the lyrics, making the songs simple to play. So, pick up your guitar and find out just how simple it can be to strum or pick these all-time favourites.  <b>ToC</b> <span style="float: right;">No AM959013</span></p>	<p><b>Order from:</b>  <b>MusicRoom</b></p>
	<p><b>Three Chord Tricks: The Blue Book</b>  <b>3 Chord Songs.</b> Here's the easiest guitar songbook ever. Only three chords to learn for each song! And with songs in different keys you'll soon extend your chord skills. Each of the classic songs in this book has simple chord changes clearly shown above the lyrics, making the songs simple to play. So, pick up your guitar and find out just how simple it can be to strum or pick these all-time favourites.  <b>ToC</b> <span style="float: right;">No AM951379</span></p>	<p><b>Order from:</b>  <b>MusicRoom</b></p>



### Three Chord Tricks: The Red Book

**3 Chord Songs.** Here's the easiest guitar songbook ever. Only three chords to learn for each song! And with songs in different keys you'll soon extend your chord skills. Each of the classic songs in this book has simple chord changes clearly shown above the lyrics, making the songs simple to play. So, pick up your guitar and find out just how simple it can be to strum or pick these all-time favourites.

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## The Three-Chord Trick: I-IV-V progressions

• [Progressions: The Three-chord Trick: I-IV-V progression](#)

• [Theory: The primary chords](#)



[The I-IV change](#)

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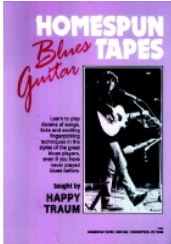
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## Secondary chords



The Three-chord Trick:  
I-IV-V progression

The vi-chord:  
Relative minor



This lesson is borrowed from the **Theory Series**.

When there are primary chords, it should come as no surprise that we also have *secondary chords*. These are the chords built on the 2nd note (supertonic), the 3rd note (mediant) and the 6th note (submediant). You will notice that the 7th note is still left out.

In C-major, these notes are D, E and A. If we build diatonic triads - triads constructed with notes from the scale - we go a third up from D, which is F, and another third up from F which will take us to A. This means that the chord on the 2nd note is D-F-A. The chord on the E will be E-G-B and the chord on A will be A-C-E. You should notice that the intervals from D to F, E to G and A to C are all *minor thirds*, which mean that these chords are all *minor chords*. For the major scale, we have now expanded our harmonic vocabulary from three to six chords, three primary chords which are all major, and three secondary chords which are all minor. Now every note of the scale can be harmonized with at least two chords:

C-major			C	E	G
F-major	A		C	E	
A-minor	F	A	C		
D-minor			D	F	A
G-major	G	B	D		
E-minor			E	G	B
C-major		C	E	G	
A-minor	A	C	E		
F-major			F	A	C
D-minor	D		F	A	
G-major			G	B	D
C-major	C	E	G		
E-minor		E	G	B	
A-minor			A	C	E
F-major	F		A	C	
D-minor	D	F	A		
G-major	G	B	D		
E-minor	E	G	B		

When we introduce more chords, it is time to remind ourselves that there is no point in using as many chords as possible. Sometimes new chords adds color and character, but sometimes "less is more", and extra chords will only sound clever and pretentious. Taste is also about not overdoing, a principle that applies to harmony as to most other aspects of life.



The Three-chord Trick:  
I-IV-V progression

The vi-chord:  
Relative minor



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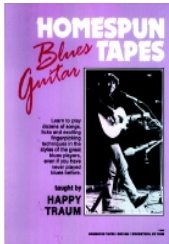
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## The vi-chord - relative minor



Secondary chords

The 50's cliché Part 1:  
I - vi - IV - V7 - I



The **vi-chord** is the first of the **secondary chords** that we will look at. You can hear it played as a **chord vamp** with just the **I** and **vi** chords, or as a **reverse vamp** with the chords **vi-I**. I will quote **Dominic Pedler's** description:

*"The happy-to-sad 'see-sawing' with the mellow VI<sub>m</sub> was a nifty antidote to upbeat rock 'n' roll with its primary (all major) triads. The dreamy ambiguity is best when reversing the run [as in the 'Soldier' verse (see below)], which cleverly question our sense of major versus minor key."*

It is said that **The Beatles** got this vamp for the song **Soldier Of Love** by **Arthur Alexander** (he also wrote **Anna (Go With Him)**, from the **Please Please Me** album.) It has **I-vi-I-vi** in the intro, and **vi-I-vi-I** in the verse. **The Beatles** made a cover version in **E (E-C#m)** that is included on the **Live At The BBC** album. Another classic **The Beatles** song with this progression in the same key, is **All I've Got To Do**.

You can find many examples with this chord if you listen to some early **Beatles** records, particularly the covers like **Anna (Go With Him)**. The verse is mainly built around a series of **I-vi** changes in the key **D-major**, meaning that the chords are **D** and **Bm**. Still on the same record, **Baby It's You** is another example. But you can also hear this vamp in many of **The Beatles'** originals. **From Me To You** is in **C**. The opening is **I-vi (C-Am)** changes only. Other examples in the same key are **It's Only Love** and **Anytime At All** (reverse). The verse of **Run For Your Life** is based on a vamp in **D**, **It Won't Be Long** is in **E** (reverse), and the coda of **Not A Second Time** is a vamp in **G**.

### Relative Minor Vamps RMV

These are MIDI backing tracks of relative minor vamps. They are in 8 keys tempo 80, both as I-vi vamps and reverse vi-I vamps. Use them to get the sound of the cords, and as backing tracks. They are about 10 minutes long.

Vamps	C-Am	D-Bm	Eb-Cm	E-C#m	F-Dm	G-Em	A-F#m	Bb-Gm
Reverse vamps	Am-C	Bm-D	Cm-Eb	C#m-E	Dm-F	Em-G	F#m-A	Gm-Bb

But you can hear the **vi-chord** in other musical contexts. From **The Beatles** first album, **Please, Please Me**, you can listen to **Misery**. This is a song in **C**, where the vi-chord is **Am**. You can hear the chord in the intro, the verses end on it, and it is very prominent in the bridge. (The first part of the bridge is a reverse vamp, but after the second **Am** it goes to **G7**, for a return to **C**).

The first song I learned to play was **Bob Dylan's Blowing In The Wind** in the key of **C-major**. When I am teaching beginners, I would not choose a song with four chords, and I would probably not choose they key of **C**. But that is how it was some 35 years ago. I learned the song with the following chords:

C	F	C	Am
C	F	G7	G7
C	F	C	Am
C	F	G7	G7
C	F	C	Am
C	F	G7	G7
F	G7	C	Am
F	G7	C	C

This is not Bob Dylan's original key or chords. I think he plays in **D-major**, and I don't think he use the relative minor chord. But I have not checked. What I learned was probably more like the **Peter, Paul and Mary** version of the song. (I do not have any record where **Peter, Paul and Mary** is singing this song, so I cannot check this either.) But this introduced me to the relative minor - the **vi-chord**, and different variations of the arrangement also illustrate that it can substitute the root / tonic chord, or be substituted by this chord.

Listen to this **MIDI-file** with this progression. The first time through, it is played without any **Am**-chord.

Where there is an **Am** in the diagram, a **C**-major is played. The second time through, it is played as written. (Then the whole thing repeats in total 6 times ...)

You can of course hear this chord in many other songs. It seems to be a favorite of **Bruce Springsteen**. He will often start with the minor chord, before establishing the chord in the major key. Listen to **The River** for one example, where he starts with **Em** and then goes to the **G** chord.

The introduction of the vi-chord can also be an introduction to **chord substitution**. A tune might be harmonized in many ways, and there is no "right" answer to which chords to use for a particular song. **Bob Dylan** used one set of chords with **Blowing In The Wind**. I use some other chords that will also work. If we stay in the key of **C**-major, the **I**-chord **C** has the notes **C-E-G**. The **IV**-chord is **F**, with the notes **F-A-C**. And then comes the **vi**-chord **Am**, with the notes **A-C-E**. The **Am** has *the notes C and E in common with the C-chord*, and it has *the notes A and C in common with the F-chord*. This means that the vi-chord often (but not always) may substitute the I-chord, and it may also substitute the IV-chord. The relation with the I-chord is stronger than the relation with the IV-chord, even though it has two notes in common with both. The reason is that the common notes between I and vi are the two most important notes in the I-chord: The root and the third. The root gives the chord a root, and the third defines it as a major chord. The vi does not contain the root of the IV-chord. It has the third, but without the root, the third does not have the same effect. This means that we will more often substitute vi for I than for IV.

If we had been in a minor key context, we would have to change the perspective. If we are in the key of **A**-minor, and want to substitute the i-chord **Am** with a major chord, then the **F** will have a stronger relation to **Am**. The **F**-chord has the root of the **Am** (A) and the third (C), while the **C**-chord has the third (C) and the fifth (E). As you see, there is no reciprocity or symmetry in the relations between the chords. But now we have deviated into music theory, and you should switch to my **theory series** if you want to go further along this road.

The vi-chord shows up in many progressions, and you will meet it again in the **next progression**.

Other songs where you can **hear the function of the vi-chord**.

### More on relative major/minor relation

- Progressions: The vi-chord - relative minor

- Progressions: A Minor relation

- Songlist: Shifting between parallel major and minor



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[The 50's cliche Part 1:  
I - vi - IV - V7 - I](#)



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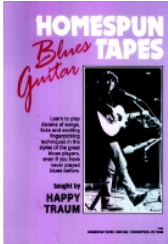
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## The 50's cliché Part 1: I - vi - IV - V7 - I



The vi-chord:  
Relative minor

The 50's cliché- Part 2:  
I - iv - IV - V7 - I



Endless of songs has been based on the I - vi - IV - V - I progression. If we use *The Beatles* as a starting point, it is said that the main influence as far as this progression is concerned, was *Please Mister Postman*, originally recorded by *The Marvelettes*. The Beatles made their cover version on the album *With The Beatles*. *The Beatles* recorded the song in **A-major**, with the chords **A-F#m-D-E**. Other *The Beatles* songs with this progression are **I've Just Seen A Face (verse)**(A), **Happiness Is A Warm Gun (chorus)** (C: **C-Am-F-G**), **This Boy (verse)** (D: **D-Bm-G-A**) and **Real Love (chorus)** (E: **E.C#m-A-B**).

### The "50's Cliche" I-vi-IV-V progression 50C

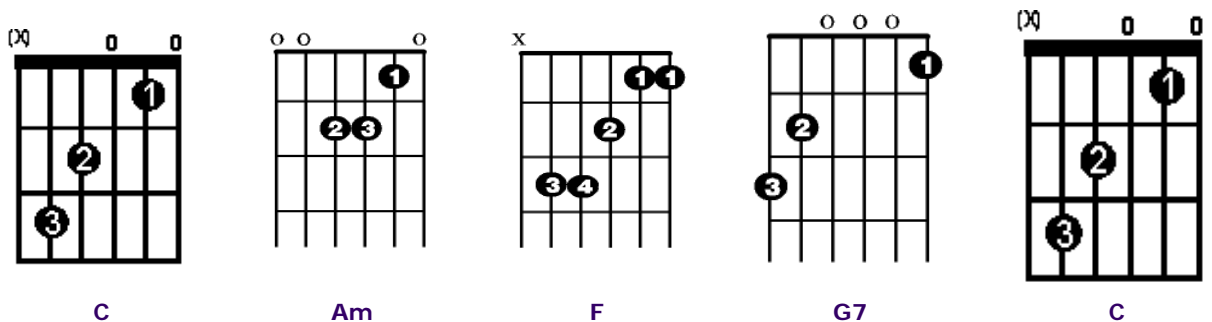
These are MIDI backing tracks of the progression above. They are in 8 keys and three tempos (65, 90 and 120). Use them to get the sound of the cords, and as backing tracks. They are long 10-15 minutes, which makes them boring as listening track, but good for practise.

65 very slow	C	D	E <sup>b</sup>	E	F	G	A	B <sup>b</sup>
90 Slow	C	D	E <sup>b</sup>	E	F	G	A	B <sup>b</sup>
120 Medium	C	D	E <sup>b</sup>	E	F	G	A	B <sup>b</sup>

Look at the [list of songs with the I-vi-IV-V progressions](#) for more examples.

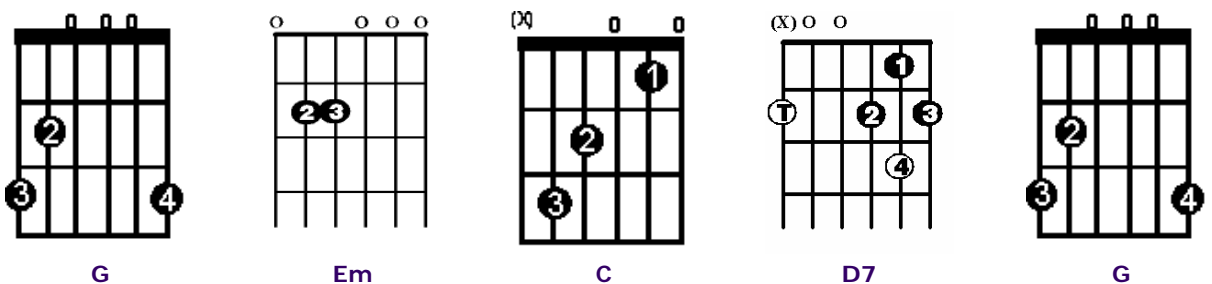
We start a closer look at the progression in the key of C. In C the chords are **C - Am - F - G7 - C**.

Before diving into some of the subtleties and theoretical aspects of the progression, let us start with some fingering sequences that should be second nature to all guitarists. If you play in the keys C or G, the progression work well with open string chords. First in the key of C:



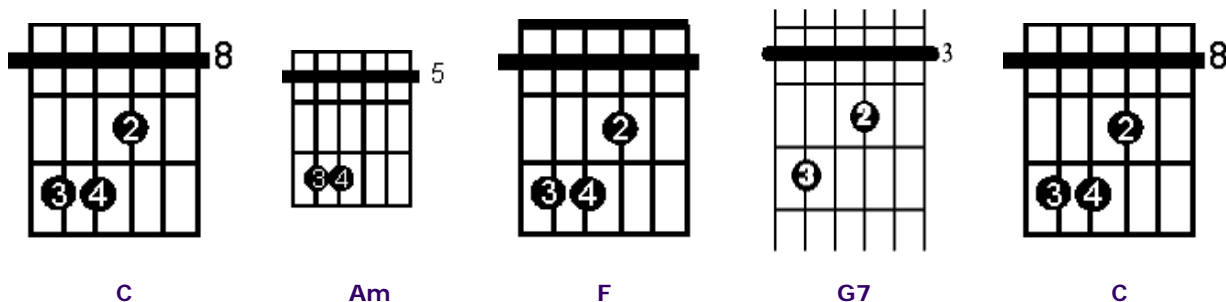
You might choose to play the **F** to **G7** as barré chords, but then you are already on your way to the moveable progressions that I will present a little later.

In the key of G, the chords are **G-Em-C-D7**:

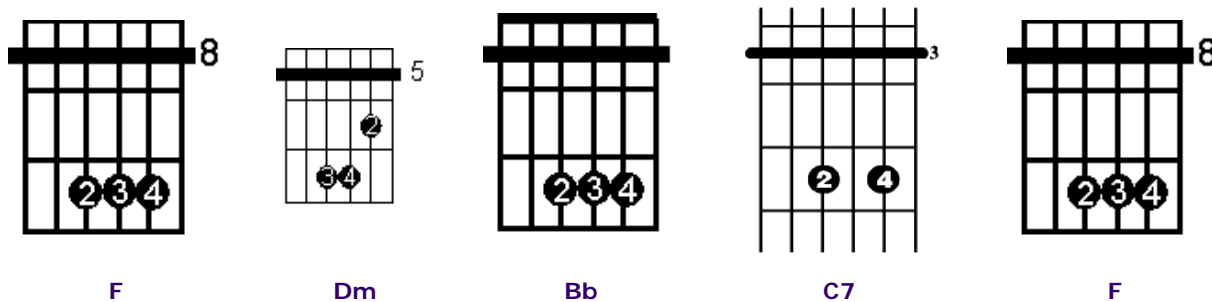


Note the fingering. You might finger the **G**, **Em** and **D7** in other ways. There is not right way to finger these chords. But you have to choose fingerings that give easy changes from one chord to the other. In this progression, I prefer to finger the chords as shown. In other progressions, where I am coming from and going to other chords, other fingerings might be better.

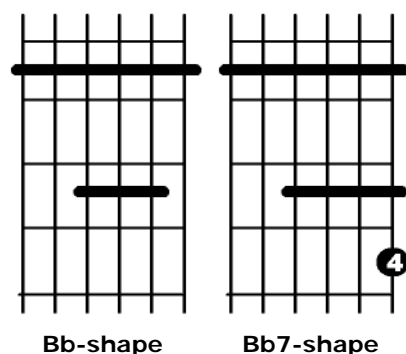
If you use barré-chords, you can move the progression to different positions, and by that to different keys. To get an understanding of the relations between the chords, we can start by playing horizontally, with the same basic chord voicings. I am not saying that this is the best way to play the chords, ut if you want to understand the chord relations, it is a good way to start. We can once again go to the key of C, and this time start with a **C** played as an "F-shape" barré chord based on 8th fret. Then the **Am** is a "Fm-shape" chord on the fifth fret. For the F you have several options. You can move down to an "F-shape", which is of course at the first fret. If you do this, the best way to proceed with **G**, is to move up to 3rd fret, keeping the "F-shape" altered to a 7 chord.



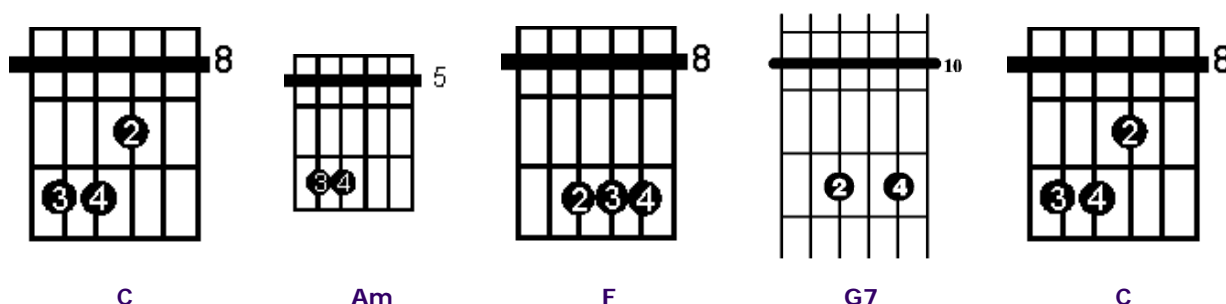
We can play the same progression starting with the "Bb-shape". We will once again start by playing it horizontally, this time in the key of F, with "Bb-shape" and "Bbm-shape" fingerings. In the key of F, the progression will have the chords **F**, **Dm**, **Bb** and **C7**. This will give you the following fingerings:



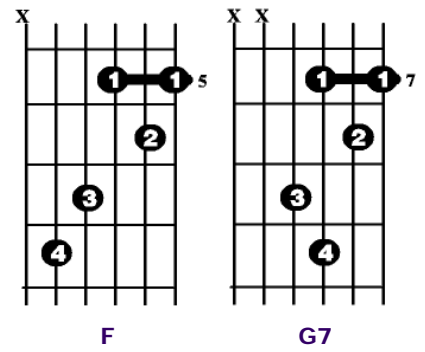
You will notice that the change from Bb-shape to Bbm-shape and back to Bb-shape requires a lot of finger movement. Another way to finger the Bb-shape, is to make a partial barré with the third finger on 2nd, 3rd and 4th string. This fingering need some practice. You have to be able to make a partial barré on the three strings, and still keep the first string open (fretted by the full barré with the first finger). But when you have the fingering down, the changes will be smoother. When you go from this "Double barré" fingering of Bb-shape to Bm-shape, you lift the third finger partially, keeping only the 4th string down. Then you add the 2nd and 4th fingers. You might then choose another voicing and fingering for the 7th chord. You can then fret the 1st string with your 4th finger, one fret above the partial barré. We can add that if you keep the partial barré over the top four strings, you will get a 6th chord.



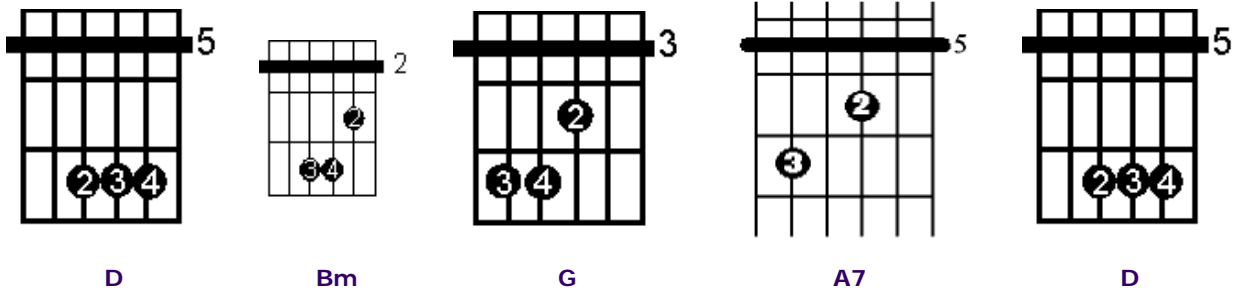
You can of course choose other chord voicings and fingerings, with less horizontal movement. In they key of C, once again starting with the **C** as an F-shape in 8th fret, and continuing with the **Am** as an Fm-shape on 5th fret, you can then play the **F** as a Bb-shape on 8th fret and the **G7** as a Bb7-shape on 10th fret.



Still another possibility is to finger the **F** is what could be called a "D-shape" or "C-shape" on fifth fret. It is a bit harder, but it sounds nice. You can then finger the **G7** by moving up to the 7th fret (but you have to omit the G on 5th string to get the 7th on 3rd string, unless you have six fingers on your left hand)



You should also get the next fingering, starting with an Bb-shape, programmed into you playing autopilot. We might choose the key of D:



These barré chord positions are moveable. If you learn these fingerings, you can play the progression in any key. And then it is time to move on to get some understanding of how these chords work, and to look at and listen to some more subtle variations of the same progression. We will do that in part two of the lesson.



**The vi-chord:**  
Relative minor

**The 50's cliché- Part 2:**  
I - iv - IV - V7 - I



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# Chord Progressions for Guitar: The 50's cliché- Part 2: I - iv - IV - V7 - I



The 50's cliché Part 1:  
I - vi - IV - V7 - I

The ii-chord - supertonic  
In the ii-V-I context



## Relations between chords

Now it is time for some theory. The **vi chord** is the *relative minor* to the major tonic. As a sneak preview of what is covered in the lesson **A Minor Relation**, we can lay out the scale of natural minor, and compare it to a major scale. A natural minor scale has the steps 1 - 2 3 - 4 - 5 6 - 7 - 1. If we put it side by side with the **C-major**, we will see that the natural **A-minor** contains the same notes as **C-major**, but it has a different root. And **Am** is the root chord (tonic) in A minor. That is why it is called a relative minor. I will not list the relative minors to all the major keys. Just look in the column of the **vi chord** in the **harmonized scale**, and there you have the relative minor.

Take a look at common notes in the chords of this progression. **C-major** is C, E and G. **A- minor** is A, C and E. Voila! Only one note has changed: The G is gone, and the A has arrived. That gives us a smooth move, both harmonically and technically from the **C** to the **Am** chord.

Then look at **F**: It is F, A and C. Take the E out of an **Am**, and put in an F, and you have a **F-major** chord. One note in the chord is moved one half step up, that is all. The move from **F** to **G7** is not that smooth. **G7** is G, B, D and F, meaning that they have only F in common. **G7** and **C** have only the G in common, but as we shall see later, B and F are the two most important notes in the **G7** in its function as turnaround or cadence back to tonic.

Did you skip the Inversion and **Harmonized Fretboard** lessons because you found them too theoretical? Then it is time to pay back what you thought you could gain by that shortcut. Now we will apply some of that knowledge for making smooth chord changes in every key, all over the fingerboard. If we play the I-vi-IV-V7-I change in **F-major**, the chords will be **F-Dm-Bb-C7-F**. Play on strings 4-3-2, starting with the F-shape chord, which is the root major chord in root position. Then play Dm in 1. inversion on the same strings (2nd and 3rd fret), continue to **Bb** in 2nd inversion (3rd fret), and then a **C7** fragment using Dm-shape on the same strings, before you finally return to the chord you started from. This will give you the following sequence:

<b>F-major</b> Root position	<b>D-minor</b> 1. inv	<b>Bb-major</b> 2. inv	<b>C7-fragment</b>	<b>F-major</b> Root

You can play a similar sequence on the bottom set of string. In A-major, the chord sequence is **A-F#m-D-E7-A**. It can be played like this:

<b>A-major</b> Root position	<b>F#m</b> 1. inv	<b>D-major</b> 2. inv	<b>E7-fragment</b>	<b>A-major</b> Root position

You may use another **E7** fragment that you might find easier. You will see that it is what I call the "**Middle D-shape**". But you leave out the root, and instead includes the fifth of the chord. As a matter of fact, this "E7-fragment" without the root, is a **G#dim** chord (VII dim), functioning as an **E7** (V7) chord.

<b>A-major</b> Root position	<b>F#m</b> 1. inv	<b>D-major</b> 2. inv	<b>E7-fragment</b> =G#dim, 1. inv	<b>A-major</b> Root position

If you have worked your way through the **Harmonized Fingerboard** lesson, you know that you can move this progression across to the next set of three strings, giving D-major if you play on the same frets. And I leave it as a work assignment for you play the same progression, with the same sequence of inversions, on the top three string. Use C-major.

When you see, and listen to these subtle changes, and realize the harmonic effect of the changes, it should come as not surprise that it is not always easy to detect these changes by ear. When you start to play the progressions on your guitar, you will probably use open sounding, full chords. And then the changes stands out sharp and clear. When they are used in another musical context, it will often be closed chords with few notes, and smooth changes. It might also be another instrument that changes the crucial note, while the guitar just keeps on playing the notes that are common to both chords. If you as a guitarist concentrate on the guitar, you might miss the change. Listening to the bass is often a good idea when trying to detect chord changes.

We can do on as we just did, starting with an inverted chord, and see what is happening. So off we go, this time starting from a I chord in first inversion. In the first example, I started with a chord-change that is well suited to illustrate the point. Now we take an explorers approach, starting with one chord and see what kind of changes we can make. And I start at the bottom set of strings with a chord in first inversion, the key of E-major. The chord sequence will then be **E-C#m-A-B7-E**.

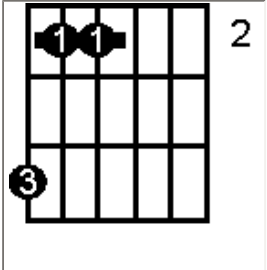
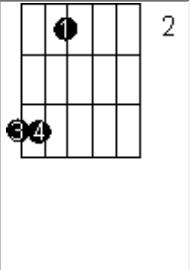
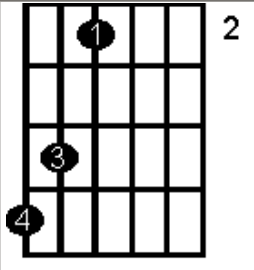
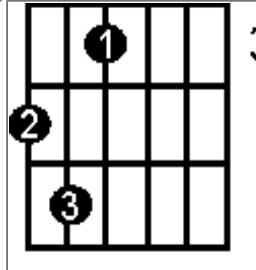
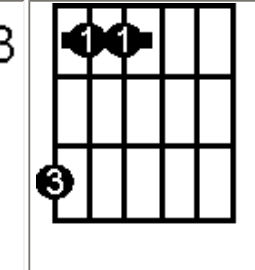
The first chord is given by our decision on a starting chord. The next, **C#m**, has the notes C#-E-G#. Note that it has two notes in common with the E-chord: E and G#. The only difference is the change from B to C#. So we have to raise that B at 5th string, 2nd fret, up to a C# at fourth fret. But while B is the 5th of the E, it is the root of C#m, which means that we have the root as the mid-note of the chord. And that gives us 2nd inversion. So the next chord must be **C#m** in 2nd inversion.

Then our next chord is an **A**, with A, C# and E. Again it is only one note that is changing: We go from G# to A. We have the G# at 1st string, 4th fret, and the only thing we have to do is to move up to the 5th fret. Then we have the root in bottom, meaning that it is an **A-major** chord in root position.

The **B7** is a four note chord, with the notes B, D#, F# and A. It is not possible to play a full four note chord on three strings, so to maintain the three string approach, we have to leave out one note from the chord. (I do not say that you cannot or should not add the fourth note, to get the full chord. But to illustrate the changes, it is better to keep it tight.) The two most important notes in a dominant seventh chord, is the third and the seventh. In **B7**, this is the D# and the A. These two notes give us the diminished fifth interval, that has such a strong leading effect. Refer to the V7-I lesson for more details on this chord. But this means that we at least have to keep those two notes. On the bottom strings, you find a D# on 6th string 11th fret, on 5th string 6th fret and on 4th string 1st fret. Using 11th fret from the position we are working in gives us a long jump. We do not want to do that. So then we are left with 6th or 1st fret. The A can be found on 6th string 5th fret, on 5th string open or on 12th fret, or we can use 4th string, 7th fret. If we go for 6th string 5 and 5th string 6, we must find either a B or an F# on the fourth string. B, the root note, would be the best choice if we have any. But then we have to go for 9th fret, and that is a finger stretcher. So we must stick to the F# on 4th fret. And the we end with the **D-minor shape**.

If we leave out the root, and keep the rest, then the rest constitutes a dim chord on the third in the chord we were going for. So what we have done, i actually substituting **B7** with a **D#dim**. This gives you another little taste of chord substitution. And as a dim-chord, it will be in second inversion.

And then it is back to E again.

				
<b>E-major</b> 1. inv	<b>C#m</b> 2. inv	<b>A-major</b> root	<b>B7-fragment</b> = <b>D#dim</b> , 2. inv	<b>E-major</b> 1. inv

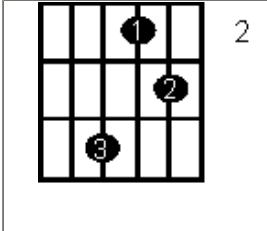
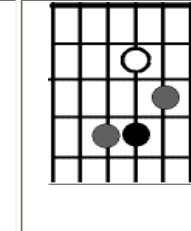
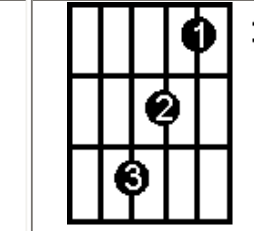
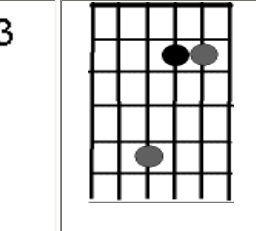
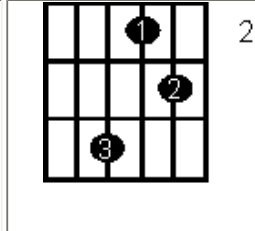
An alternative fingering for a **B7** fragment, is one that covers 5th, 2nd and 1st fret on strings 6, 5 and 4. It will include the root, but leave out the fifth. It might be a better choice musically, but technically a more difficult one. You could also use 2. inversion of the **D#dim**. But then you have to include an open A string. And finally you could use a B chord i 2. inv, leaving out the 7th. But this leaves out one of the important notes, and you will no longer have that diminished fifth interval. A choice of a straight major instead of a 7th will not be wrong in the sense that it crashes with any of the other notes - all notes of a 7th is also in a basic major triad. But you miss the drive and direction of the 7th chord. On the other hand: That might be just what you want for a particular song.

You should have understood by now that you can move the whole sequence across to the next set of three strings, and repeat it all in A-major. I will not say anything more about that.

The middle set will also give us interesting changes. This time we will play the sequence in D-major, which gives the chords **D-Bm-G-A7-D**. And again we start with first inversion, as a point of departure for our exploration. If the sequence is as the previous, the next should be Bm in 2nd inversion. You just put down your pinky on the 3rd string, fourth fret to get B, and there you are. You have probably played this as a melodic embellishment over a **D** chord many times. And now you know that what is happening from a harmonic perspective, is that you are changing from **D** to it's relative minor chord, **Bm**, and maybe back to **D** again. If the B on the third string tend to sound like a melodic variation if it is just quick note, but it is as if the harmonic change catches up if you let the note ring a bit longer.

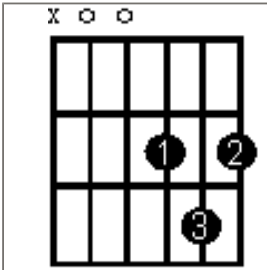
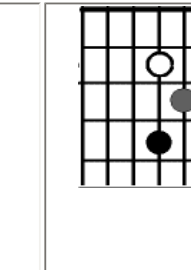
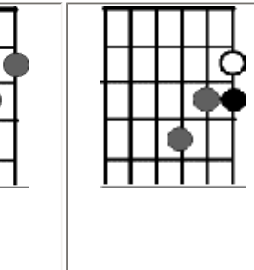
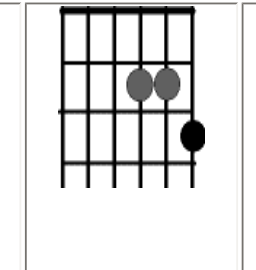
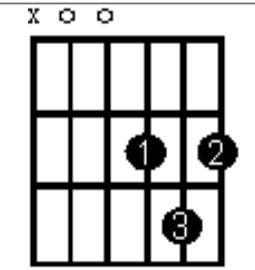
The following **G** is in root position (F-shape). You keep both the B and the D from the **Bm**, and just move the F# up to G. But you will probably have to change fingering.

For the **A7**, we once again have to make a choice. The choices are a substitution with a **C#dim** in first inversion with an open 3rd string, or in 2nd inversion (5th and 6th fret), or a sort of "**long A**", with a partial barré on second fret and then fifth fret on the fourth string. I would prefer the latter, but it is a matter of your personal taste.

				
<b>D-major</b> 1. inv	<b>Bm</b> 2. inv	<b>G-major</b> root	<b>A7-fragment</b>	<b>D-major</b> 1. inv

Once again I leave it to you to figure out the corresponding sequence on the top three strings. I would have done that in the key of G.

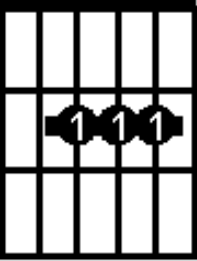
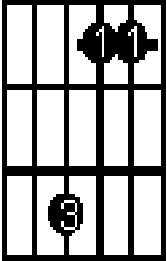
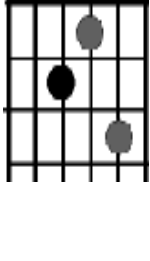
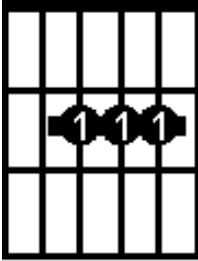
The second inversion of a major chord is really nice as an "anchor" for such changes. And this time I will start at the top strings, in D. There should be no need for more explanation by now, so I just give you the sequence.

				
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<b>D-major</b> 2. inv	<b>Bm</b> root	<b>G-major</b> 1. inv	<b>A7</b> -fragment	<b>D-major</b> Root position
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Note how you can play around a **D-chord**.

A similar progression in A-major, on the middle set, is also nice:

	 2	{ short description of image }		
<b>A-major</b> 2. inv	<b>F#m</b> Root	<b>D-major</b> 1. inv	<b>E7</b> -fragment	<b>A-major</b> Root position

And I leave it to you to figure out what you can do on the bottom set.

In a normal playing situation, you will not do all these changes horizontally. Some nice vertical chord changes will be discussed in the lesson on the I-vi-iiV7-I change.

**"50's Cliche" variation: Alternating I-vi-IV-V and I-vi-ii-V 50C2**  
 Listen to these tracks to hear the difference between **I-vi-IV-V** and **I-vi-ii-V**. You will hear **I-vi-IV-V**, then **I-vi-ii-V**, back to **I-vi-IV-V**, etc. I have applied different styles to each key, to illustrate how it sounds with different instruments and musical styles.

<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Eb</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Bb</b>
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The 50's cliche Part 1:  
I - vi - IV - V7 - I

The ii-chord - supertonic  
In the ii-V-I context



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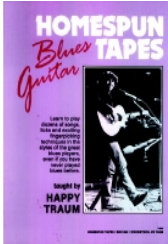
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# The ii-chord - supertonic - in the ii-V-I context



The 50's cliché- Part 2:  
I - iv - IV - V7 - I

The I-vi-ii-V7 progression



The **ii-chord** is called **supertonic** because it is built on the note one step above the tonic note.

The chord will often precede the V-chord, before resolving to I, and we get the **ii-V-I** which is the main chord sequence in jazz. In this context, the chord is a substitute for the IV-chord. If you compare the sound of **I-IV-V-I** and **I-ii-V-I**, you will hear that the latter has a smoother sound. And as you will see in the next lesson, the **ii-chord** may substitute the **IV-chord** in the **50's cliché progression**, giving **I-vi-ii-V-I** instead of **I-vi-IV-V-I**.

### Backing Track

Listen to these tracks to hear the difference between **I-IV-V** and **I-ii-V**. You will hear **I-IV-V**, then **I-ii-V**, back to **I-IV-V**, etc. I have applied different styles to each key, to illustrate how it sounds with different instruments and musical styles.

	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Eb</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Bb</b>
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If we once again go to the key of C-major, the **ii-chord** is **D-minor**. **Dm** has the notes **D-F-A**, and you will see that it has two notes, the **F** and **A** in common with the **IV-chord F**. And as these are the two most important notes of the **F** chord, Dm will often work well as a substitution. If you try to look for a substitution in the other direction, it will be the chord with its root one diatonic third below D, which in this case will take us to B. You will get a chord with the notes B-D-F, which is the **Ddiminished**, often labeled **B°**, **Bdim** or **B-**. But this is a different sounding chord, and we will leave it for later.

We can play a little more with the **Blowing In The Wind** chords. First we can substitute all the F-chords where they are preceding a G7 chord in the chorus.

C	F	C	Am
C	F	<b>G7</b>	<b>G7</b>
C	F	C	Am
C	F	G7	G7
C	F	C	Am
C	F	G7	G7
<b>Dm</b>	G7	C	Am
<b>Dm</b>	G7	Am	C

And then we can substitute the other F-majors preceding G7.

C	F	C	Am
C	<b>Dm</b>	<b>G7</b>	<b>G7</b>
C	F	C	Am
C	<b>Dm</b>	G7	G7
C	F	C	Am
C	<b>Dm</b>	G7	G7
Dm	G7	C	Am
Dm	G7	Am	C

And finally we substitute the rest of the F-chords.

C	<b>Dm</b>	C	Am
C	Dm	<b>G7</b>	<b>G7</b>
C	<b>Dm</b>	C	Am

C	Dm	G7	G7
C	<b>Dm</b>	C	Am
C	Dm	G7	G7
Dm	G7	C	Am
Dm	G7	Am	C

In my ears, this is far too much Dm. It does not sound wrong in the sense that it crashes with the melody, but it sounds dull. But this might be so because I have been playing the progression we were starting from for 35 years, so a new harmonization does not sound as I am used to hear the song. Experiment, and let your ear decide. Maybe just the last **F** should be substituted by **Dm**?

We who are playing folk, blues, rock or pop will usually play the same chords in each verse of a song. But you might vary the harmonization from one verse to the other just for the variation, or to underscore the mood in the lyric. In more "composed" songs, this is often the case (the melody might vary as well). If we stick to our **Blowing In The Wind** example, you might for instance try to use minor harmony when the lyric goes "how many deaths will it take till he knows, that too many people have died?". (If you want the lyric, **the lyric to all Bob Dylan's songs are on his official web-site.**)

In this **MIDI-file** you can hear all 5 harmonizations of the tune. First the two from the **The vi-chord - relative minor**, and then the three variation presented here. Listen to how we start with major chord only, and introduce a few new minor chords for each new verse, until we end up with no F-chords. Then it goes back to first all major version, and the whole sequence is repeated (total three times).

You can also hear the **ii-chord** in a **chord stream**, but we will come back to these progressions soon.



**The 50's cliché- Part 2:**  
I - iv - IV - V7 - I

**The I-vi-ii-V7 progression**



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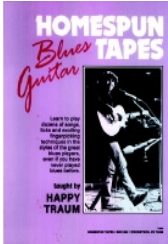
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# The I-vi-ii-V7 progression

Part 1: Open chords and barré chords



The ii-chord - supertonic  
In the ii-V-I context

The I-vi-ii-V7-I progression Part 2:  
Closed chord positions



The I-vi-ii-V7- progression, **C-Am-Dm-G7-C** if you play in the key of C, is just a slight variation of the 50's cliché I-vi-IV-V7-I, and they are in fact both 50's clichés. But they are still alive. One could stop there, and you could ask why I did not say that in the previous lesson. We will look more into the differences and similarities between the two progressions. But first you should listen for the differences. This tracks are not the most exciting music you can listen to. But they are some kind of a "work-out" that will help you get musically fit.

### Backing Track

Listen to these tracks to hear the difference between **I-vi-IV-V** and **I-vi-ii-V**. You will hear **I-vi-IV-V**, then **I-vi-ii-V**, back to **I-vi-IV-V**, etc. I have applied different styles to each key, to illustrate how it sounds with different instruments and musical styles.

C	D	E <sub>b</sub>	E	F	G	A	B <sub>b</sub>
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You might find it a bit hard to identify the two changes. You should be able to tell that there is a difference, but it might not be easy to which progression it is. The only cure is to listen over and over again, until you get it.

But before we move on, you should learn some basic fingerings for this progression too. Again we can start in the key of C, with open chords.

C	Am	Dm	G7	C

And as usual, G sounds well with open chords too. The chords will then be **G-Em-Am-D7-G**. Listen to **Bruce Springsteen's Hungry Heart** for an example of this progression in the key of G. Note the **fingering of the G-chord**.

G	Em	Am	D7	G

To demonstrate the harmonic relations between the chords, we can again start with some horizontal playing with the same chord voicings. We will use the "F-shape", "Fm-shape" and "F7-shape" barré chords, but there still are some variations. The I-vi-ii-V7 progression does not work very well played horizontally, because there is so much jumping up and down the fingerboard. But we will never the less give it a try. And we will do it in four different keys. I assume the you by now know the "F-shape", "Fm-shape" and "F7-shape" barré chords, and that it is no longer necessary to give the diagrams. If not, you have to review the **"50's cliché, I-vi-IV-V progression, part 1"** lesson. I will now just give you a table telling the chords and the frets.

Key	I: F-shape	vi: Fm-shape	ii: Fm-shape	V7: F7-shape
<b>F</b>	<b>F</b> : 1th	<b>Dm</b> : 10th	<b>Gm</b> : 3rd	<b>C7</b> : 8th
<b>Eb</b>	<b>Eb</b> : 11th	<b>Cm</b> : 8th	<b>Fm</b> : 1st	<b>Bb7</b> : 6th
<b>Bb</b>	<b>Bb</b> : 6th	<b>Gm</b> : 3rd	<b>Cm</b> : 8th	<b>F7</b> : 1st
<b>Ab</b>	<b>Ab</b> : 4th	<b>Fm</b> : 1st	<b>Bbm</b> : 6th	<b>Eb7</b> : 11th

A similar table, with horizontal playing based on the "Bb-shape", "Bbm-shape" and "Bb7-shape" i four different keys, will be:

Key	I: Bb-shape	vi: Bbm-shape	ii: Bbm-shape	V7: Bb7-shape
<b>Bb</b>	<b>Bb</b> : 1st	<b>Gm</b> : 10th	<b>Cm</b> : 3rd	<b>F7</b> : 8th
<b>Ab</b>	<b>Ab</b> : 11th	<b>Fm</b> : 8th	Bb: 1st	<b>Eb7</b> : 6th
<b>Eb</b>	<b>Eb</b> : 6th	<b>Cm</b> : 3rd	<b>Fm</b> : 8th	<b>Bb7</b> : 1st
<b>Db</b>	<b>Db</b> : 4th	<b>Bbm</b> : 1st	<b>Ebm</b> : 6th	<b>Ab7</b> : 11th

With combination of horizontal and vertical movements, and the "F-shape family" and "Bb-shape family" chords, it all works much better. Once again I will only give you a table with selected keys.

Key	I	vi	ii	V7
<b>F</b>	<b>F</b> : F-shp, 1st	<b>Dm</b> : Bbm-shp, 5th	<b>Gm</b> : Fm-shp, 3rd	<b>C7</b> : Bb7-shp, 3rd
<b>F</b>	<b>F</b> : Bb-shp, 8th	<b>Dm</b> : Bbm-shp, 5th	<b>Gm</b> : Fm-shp, 3rd	<b>C7</b> : Bb7-shp, 3rd, or F7-shp, 8th
<b>D</b>	<b>D</b> : Bb-shp, 5th	<b>Bm</b> : Bbm-shp, 2nd	<b>Em</b> : Bbm-shp, 7th	<b>A7</b> : F7-shp, 5th
<b>Bb</b>	<b>Bb</b> : F-shp, 6th	<b>Gm</b> : Fm-shp, 3rd	<b>Cm</b> : Bbm-shp, 3rd	<b>F7</b> : F7-shp, 1st, or Bb7-shp, 8th

Also for the **I-vi-ii-V7** progression, we will look at some closed chord movements in part 2.

My experience is that it is rather easy to identify a chord progression as being one of the two. But it is not always easy to decide if it is the one or the other. Again, if you play with open, clear ringing full chords, it is not difficult to hear the difference if you compare. But if you play more subtle changes, like we did in the previous lesson, it is harder.

I have found that the best method is to listen for that crucial note: Both an **F-chord** and a **Dm-chord** has the notes F and A, so they will not help you in determine what kind of chord it is. But The F has a C, and the **Dm** has a D. That means: Listen for Cs and Ds. If you hear a C or two, and no Ds, it is an **F-chord**. If you hear Ds, but no Cs, then it is a Dm. Play and listen to the following sequence of notes and chords, and identify the F and Dm chords. You should of course know the chords when you see them and play them. But try to identify them by ear too.

<eks>

Then you might ask: What if I hear both a C and a D? Sometimes it is really not possible to tell the difference. If we still are in the key of C, the IV-chord is an **F**, with the notes F-A-C, and the ii is a Dm, with the notes D-F-A. They have two notes in common. If we extend the **F-chord** to a **F6** chord, we add the sixth to the chord, which is D. This gives us F-A-C-D. And if we extend the **Dm** to a **Dm7**, it will have the notes D-F-A-C. If you the play a chord with the notes C-F-A-D, is it an inversion of **F6** or an inversion of **Dm7**? It is not possible to tell the difference. In such situation, the context may tell you what kind of chord it is. But here the IV and ii both fit the progression.

If you have F, A and C in the bass, and D is just a passing note in the melody, then it will be an **F-chord**. And if you have D, F and A, with the melody passing on a C, it will be **Dm**.

## Vertical movements

In the **50's cliché lesson**, all the examples showed subtle horizontal movements (movements up and down the fingerboard). This time we will look at some vertical movements, which means movements across strings.

xxxxx

## Circling in inversions

In the **50's cliché lesson**, all examples ended on the tonic chord in the same inversion as we started from. But you may also end on the same chord in another inversion, and then start a new round of the same chords, but in another inversion.

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[Click here for a list of songs with the I-vi-ii-V progression](#)



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In the ii-V-I context](#)

[The I-vi-ii-V7-I progression Part 2:  
Closed chord positions](#)



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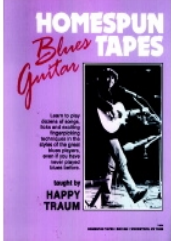
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# The I-vi-ii-V7-I progression

Part 2: Closed chord positions



The I-vi-ii-V7 progression Part 1:  
Open chords and barré chords

Bopping around in  
ii-V7-I turns



If we play the I-vi-ii-V7-I change in **F-major**, the chords will be **F-Dm-Gm-C7-F**. Play on strings 4-3-2, starting with the F-shape chord, which is the root major chord in root position. Then play Dm in 1. inversion on the same strings (2nd and 3rd fret), continue to G-minor in root position, and then a C7 fragment using Dm-shape on the same strings, before you finally return to the chord you started from. This will give you the following sequence:

F-major Root position	D-minor 1. inv	G-minor Root	C7-fragment	F-major Root

You can play a similar sequence on the bottom set of string. In A-major, the chord sequence is A-F#m-Bm-E7-A. It can be played like this:

A-major Root position	F#m 1. inv	B-minor Root position	E7-fragment	A-major Root position

You may use another E7 fragment that you might find easier. You will see that it is what I call the "mirror D-minor shape". But you leave out the root, and instead includes the fifth of the chord. As a matter of fact, this "E7-fragment" without the root, is a G#dim chord (VII dim), functioning as an E7 (V7) chord.

A-major Root position	F#m 1. inv	Bm Root position	E7-fragment =G#dim, 1. inv	A-major Root position

The next example is in the key of E, with the chords E, C#m, F#m and B7.

E-major 1. inv	C#m 2. inv	F#m 1. inv	B7-fragment =Ddim, 2. inv	E-major Root position

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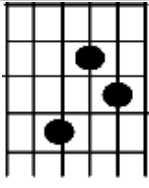
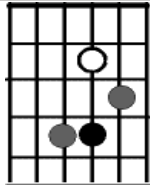
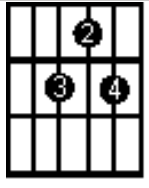
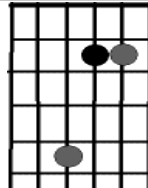
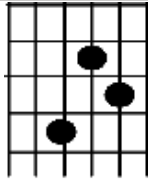


You should know by now that you can move the whole sequence across to the next set of three strings, and repeat it all in A-major. I will not say anything more about that.

The middle set will also give us interesting changes. This time we will play the sequence in D-major, which gives the chords D-Bm-Em-A7-D. And again we start with first inversion, as a point of departure for our exploration. If the sequence is as the previous, the next should be Bm in 2nd inversion. You just put down your pinky on the 3rd string, fourth fret to get B, and there you are. You have probably played this as a melodic embellishment over a D chord many times. And now you know that what is happening from a harmonic perspective, is that you are changing from D to it's parallel minor chord, Bm, and maybe back to D again. If the B on the third string tend to sound like a melodic variation if it is just quick note, but it is as if the harmonic change catches up if you let the note ring a bit longer.

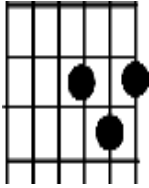
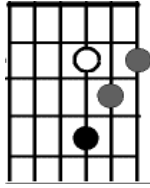
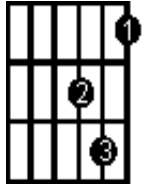
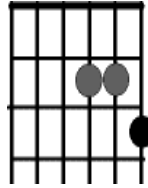
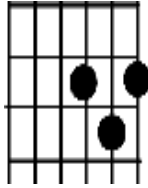
The following G is in root position (F-shape). You keep both the B and the G from the Bm, and just move the F# up to G. But you will probably have to change fingering.

For the A7, we once again have to make a choice. The choices are a substitution with a C#° in first inversion with an open 3rd string, or in 2nd inversion (5th and 6th fret), or a sort of "long A", with a partial barré on second fret and then fifth fret on the fourth string. I would prefer the latter, but it is a matter of your personal taste.

				
D-major 1. inv	Bm 2. inv	Em 1. inv	A7-fragment	D-major 1. inv

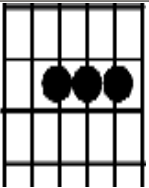
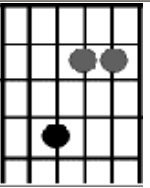
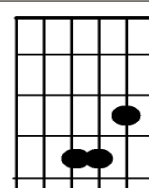
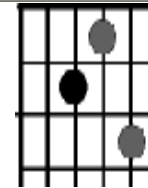
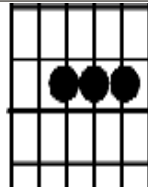
Once again I leave it to you to figure out the corresponding sequence on the top three strings. I would have done that in the key of G.

The second inversion of a major chord is really nice as an "anchor" for such changes. And this time I will start at the top strings, in D. There should be no need for more explanation by now, so I just give you the sequence.

				
D-major 2. inv	Bm root	Em 2. inv	A7-fragment	D-major Root position

Note how you can play around a D-chord.

A similar progression in A-major, on the middle set, is also nice:

				
A-major 2. inv	F#m Root	Bm 2. inv	E7-fragment	A-major Root position

And I leave it to you to figure out what you can do on the bottom set.





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## Bopping around in ii-V7-I turns



**The I-vi-ii-V7-I progression Part  
2:  
Closed chord positions**

**Variations over the I - vi - IV - V /  
I - vi - ii - V progression**



We have already met the ii-V7-I progression as part of the **I-vi-ii-V7-I progression**, and for fingerings I will mainly refer you back to this lesson. But the ii-V7-I progression is really worth a study on it's own. It is *the progression* of be-bop jazz, and in the jazz literature you will find many volumes devoted to this progression only.

The ii-V7-I progression is closely related to the IV-V7-I progression, in the same way as the I-vi-ii-V7-I progression is related to the I-vi-IV-V7-I progression. The ii and IV chord have two notes in common, and can often substitute each other. In the key of C the ii chord is **Dm**, with the notes D-F-A, and the IV chord is **F** with the notes F-A-C.

But the ii-V7-I is not only a jazz progression. A song that is based on the ii-V7-I progression is *In the Ghetto*, made famous as an *Elvis Presley* hit in xxx. (The song i written by, and the original title was *The Vicious Circle*.)

**Click here for a list of songs with the ii-V-I progression.**

In a 12-bar blues the ii-V7-I progression can be used in the bars 9 to 11, instead of the V7-IV7-I progression.

xxxx

Other examples are xxxx

In jazz, one will usually use more complex chords than the basic triads. Played with diatonic 7th chords, the progression will be ii7-V7-Imaj7. We will look more into 7th chords in the "7 means 4" lesson. But we can at this stage play some basic fingerings of the ii7-V7-Imaj7 progression with closed and moveable chords.

xxxxx

Modulation xxxxx



**The I-vi-ii-V7-I progression Part  
2:  
Closed chord positions**

**Variations over the I - vi - IV - V /  
I - vi - ii - V progression**



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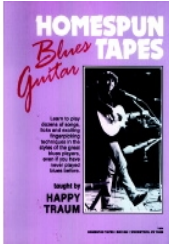
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## Variations over the I - vi - IV - V / I - vi - ii - V progression



Bopping around in ii-V7-I turns

The iii-chord:  
Mediant



When you have both the I-vi-IV-V-I and the I-vi-ii-V-I progression down in a way where you are able to identify the progression, and to play it in if not all, so at least several keys, it is time to look at some variations.

### I - IV - ii - V

XXXX

[Click here for a list of songs with variations of the I-vi-ii-V progression.](#)

[Click here for a list of songs with xxx](#)



Bopping around in ii-V7-I turns

The iii-chord:  
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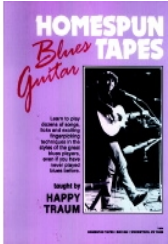
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## The iii-chord - Mediant



Variations over the I - vi - IV - V /  
I - vi - ii - V progression

I-ii progression



The **iii-chord** is our third **secondary chord**. The third note is called the **mediant**, which means the chord in the middle (almost ...) between the tonic and the dominant, and the diatonic chord built on this note is the **mediant chord**.

The **iii-chord** does not have as clearly defined function as the **vi** or the **ii** chords. If we look at it from a chord substitution perspective, it might substitute the **I** or the **V** chord. In the key of C-major, the iii-chord is **Em**. **C** has the notes C-E-G, while **Em** has E-G-B. The V-chord, **G**, has G-B-D. From what we discussed in the lesson on the **vi-chord**, the **Em** will mainly substitute G (V), but in a minor context it is more likely to be substituted by **C**. You might have noticed that the **iii-chord is the relative minor to the V-chord**, and the **ii-chord is the relative minor to the IV chord**. A nice example of a song where **iii** substitutes **I** is **The Beatles There's A Place**. At the beginning of the bridge, "And it's my **mind** ..." the melody is first sung over **iii-IV** chords (**G#m-A**), and then the same melody is repeated in the next bars, but now over the **I-IV** chords (**E-A**).

But as the I and V chords are the ones that really defines the key (go to the theory lessons on **Authentic Cadence** and the **Dominant V7 chord** for a discussion of this), they are the chords that we are least likely to substitute. The chord will often be used to add some color. The most famous song with a prominent use of this chord is **The Beatles' She Loves You**. It is in the key of **G-major**, and the each line in the verse has these chords: **G - Em(7) - Bm - D7**, which in generic terms is **I - vi(7) - iii - V7**. Note that it goes from tonic (root) to it's relative minor, then to the relative minor of the dominant before going to the dominant. You might also use the chord as a passing chord when going from tonic to dominant or vice versa. But it tends to weaken the relationship between the I and V chord, and it does not always sound good to my ears.

You might also hear the chord in a **chord-stream** context, which will be discussed a little bit later.

If you have not already crossed over to the **Theory series**, I think you should do it now and read about **The Harmonized Scale**.

Go here for a list of song with the **iii-chord**.



Variations over the I - vi - IV - V /  
I - vi - ii - V progression

I-ii progression



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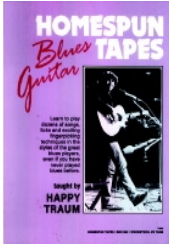
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## I-ii progression



The iii-chord  
: Mediant

Chord stream:  
I-ii-iii progression



When I think of this progression, *The Beatles Don't Let Me Down* always comes to my mind. It is in the key of E-major, and is mainly built over the two chords **E** and **F#m** (a few **A** and **B7** chords pops up as well). Another example is the verse (?) of *The Beatles P.S. I Love You*. The song is in D-major, and the verse opens with the sequence **D-Em-D**. But from there on, there are other chords.

The I-ii progression might have been classified as a **Chord stream**, but as it would have been a very short stream, I reserve this label for the next lesson.

As we saw in the lesson on the **ii-chord**, this chord is closely related to the **IV-chord**. The **ii** is the **relative minor** to the **IV**. If we are in the **key of C**, then **ii=Dm** and **IV=F**. If we compare the chords, we see that they have two out of the three notes in common. A **Dm** has the notes **D-F-A**, while the **F** has **F-A-C**. One can often substitute the ii chord with the IV chord and vice versa.

If we extend the chords, we can see even closer relations. A **Dm7** has the notes **D-F-A-C**, and the **F6** has the notes **F-A-C-D**. It is not really possible to say in general if a chord with the notes **F-A-C-D** is a **F6** or **Dm7** in **first inversion**. It depends on the context. Just to illustrate: In *The Beatles Complete Scores [US] [Europe]* the opening of the song *The Fool On The Hill* is notated with **D6** and **Em7**, while *Alan W. Pollack* notate the same chords as **D** and **G6**. As **Em7** and **G6** consists of the same notes, there is no right or wrong here.

Why am I saying all this? The point is that it is not easy to distinguish between a **I-IV** and a **I-ii** progression. With triads, it is clear. But it get blurred if the second chord is a **ii7 of IV6 chord**. You should know the relation between the two progressions and compare them.

Click here for a [list of songs with I-ii progression](#)



The iii-chord  
: Mediant

Chord stream:  
I-ii-iii progression



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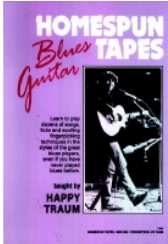
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## Chord stream - I-ii-iii progression



I-ii progression

Chord stream:  
I-ii-iii-IV progression



A "**chord stream**" is characterized by sliding, step wise root movement from chord to chord. This is a technique is most closely associated with either early twentieth century Impressionism or Jazz and it happens to break one of the standard old-fashioned rules against using parallel octaves and fifths between chords. Aesthetically, it suggests a languid sensuality. (This is taken from **Alan W Pollack's comments to P.S. I Love You**) We will stick to some more basic application of this harmonization. I think of it as **climbing the harmonized scale**, and this was the name I had given to such progressions until I learned the term "chord stream".

If we climb just three steps **I-ii-iii**, the first song that comes to my mind is **The Beatles' Ask Me Why**. It is in the key of **E-major**, and the main part of the song is built around the chords **E-F#m-G#m-F#m**. You just move up and down between these chords.

Go here for a **list of songs with a chord stream three steps up the harmonized scale**.



I-ii progression

Chord stream:  
I-ii-iii-IV progression



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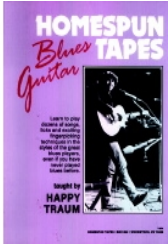
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## Chord stream - I-ii-iii-IV progression



Chord stream:  
I-ii-iii progression

Minor harmony:  
a major challenge



Now we take the chord stream one step further up the harmonized scale, and get the **I-ii-iii-IV** progression. And I do of course go once again to a song by **The Beatles: Here, There and Everywhere**. Many holds this as the best song written by **Lennon & McCartney**. I am not a great fan of this kind of contests, so I am not going to give my vote. But it is a great song.

The song is in the key of G-major, and the verse starts with the chords **G-Am-Bm-C**, which is then repeated.

Go here for a list of **songs with a chord stream four steps up the harmonized scale**.



Chord stream:  
I-ii-iii progression

Minor harmony:  
a major challenge



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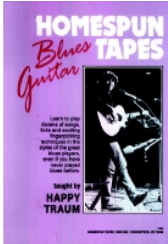
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## Minor harmony - a major challenge



Chord stream  
I-ii-iii-IV progression

A minor relation



Major harmony is firm and solid, with many clearly defined harmonic structures. Not so with minor. Minor is less stable, both melodic and harmonic. The first five overtones of a note will give you the notes of a *major pentatonic scale*. The note that identify the minor, the *minor third* is not among those notes. This means that the minor scale is not in harmony with the natural overtones of the root note, This creates more unsettled and unclear, but at the same time often more interesting harmony. The firmness of major harmony will in a way lock you in. It is easier to escape from the basic structure of minor, which also often makes it easier to improvise over minor chords.

[Click here for a list of songs in minor keys.](#)

Just a few words about blues: The blues-scale is a minor scale, but it is usually played over major chords. Since we often use 7th (or 9th etc.) chords in blues, it does not have the same firm harmonic structure as songs based in the diatonic chords of a **harmonized major scale**. In a standard major harmonic structure, both the I and IV chords should have been maj7 chords, if they are extended to four note harmonies. But in blues we use 7th chords, which will take us more in the mixolydian direction. But mixolydian is still a major scale with a major third, while the minor pentatonic and the blues scale both have minor thirds and are minor scales. The tension between the major harmony and minor melody is one of the musical aspects of blues that makes it so interesting.

### Harmonic minor - a major step for a stronger ending

We have touched some minor scale and minor harmony in the **Relative Minor** lesson. But this was all based on the natural minor scale. As said in the xxx lesson, the *minor 7th* chord does not give a clear lead back to the root. The notes of the *7th* chord that gives this leading effects, are tritone interval between the 4 and the 7 of the scale (F and B in the key of C major), which is resolved when the leaning note 4 goes to major 3 (F to E in C-major), and the leading note 7 goes to the root (B to C in C-major). The 4 and the 7 of the scale is the 7 and the 3 of the chord - it should no be easy. The figure might illustrate the relation between the scale notes and the chord notes.

The minor 7th chord has a *minor third*, and the interval between the *third and the seventh* is a *perfect fifth*. This is a nice and harmonic interval - the most harmonic of them all - and it does not create any tension. This means that the minor 7th chord gives you nothing to dissolve.

By lifting the 7th of a natural minor chord, we get a major 7th instead of the minor 7th in the scale, which gives a stronger leading note. This also will change the *V-chord* to a major chord. (the 7th of the scale is the 3rd of the V chord, and when we lift the 7th of the scale from a minor 7th to a major 7th, then the third in the V chord is changed from a minor 3rd to a major 3rd. The we get both the *lead note* and the *tritone* between the major 3rd and the 7th.

By changing the V chord from minor to major, we get at stronger ending, and a clearer statement of the key, with the V7-i change. To facilitate that, we change the *7th* note of the scale, and that gives us the *harmonic minor scale*.

Still the V7-i (major to minor) change is not as strong a statement as the V7-I (major to major). The reason is that we still do not have the *leaning note* in the change V7-i. The 4 to min3 is a whole step, while the 4 to maj3 is a half step. In earlier years, composers would always end their compositions on a major chord, even if the tune was in a minor key, to get that stronger ending. If the tune was in D-minor, they would end on a D-major chord. But today, one will also use the minor chord as the final chord.

### Melodic minor

Also in the melody, one will often want the strong leading note when going to the root. That means that one will have the leading notes when the melody goes up to. But when we are lifting the 7th from minor to major, then we get an interval of one and a half note (a minor third) between the minor 6th (6b) of a natural minor scale, and this does not work very well melodically. To compensate for that, one will also lift the minor 6th to a major sixth, thus creating a whole step from the 5th to the major 6th, and a whole step from the major 6th to the major 7th.

Harmonically, we will keep the minor 6th. If we change the minor 6th to a major 6th in the harmony, then we

will change the *fourth chord* from minor to major, and we usually don't want that to happen. So in the harmonic minor, we keep the minor 6th.

When the *melody goes down from the root*, we do not need the strong leading note. On the contrary, the leading note is leading *up*, and we better avoid that when going down. So when the melody goes down, we keep the *minor 7th* of the natural minor. And with the minor 7th, we do not get the problem with the large interval between the 6th and the 7th. So we also keep the minor 6th. This gives us a *melodic minor scale* which has a *major 6th and major 7th when the played upward*, and *minor 6th and minor 7th (natural minor) when played downward*. This might seem very confusing, and it is. Minor is not as clear as major, which is also reflected in the harmony.

xxx The basic **i-V** or **V-i** progression.

A list of songs with the **i-V** or **V-i** progression

### Scandinavian songs

The minor version of the "**Three Chord Wonder**" will either be **i-iv-v7** or **i-iv-V7**, and you should now understand the different harmonic function of the v7 and the V7 chord in this context. In **A-minor** the chords will be **Am - Dm - Em7** or **Am - Dm - E7**

In a minor chord progression, we will often add parallel major chord and V chord of the same major scale. In a minor scale context, this will be the **IIIb** and **VIIb** chords. (One might argue that the flats (b) should be omitted. The **III** chord is the chord built on the third of the scale. But I prefer the IIIb to indicate that it is built on the minor third.)

If we are in the key of **d-minor**, it will be **F** (IIIb) and **C** (VIIb). In **A-minor** it will be **C** and **G**.

Drop the **iv** chord, and you have the chords of the **la folia** theme, which is **covered in another lesson**.

If you then add the **IV** chord of the relative major scale, which will be the **IVb** chord of the minor scale, it begins to become interesting. Once again, forget the **iv** chord, and you have the progression I often call **Spanish**, a progression you can hear in *Dire Strait's "Sultan of Swing"*. The progression is **covered in another lesson**.

If you drop the **V7** as well, you end of with the progression of "*All Along The Watchtower*" (written by *Bob Dylan* and made really famous by *Jimi Hendrix*), and *Eric Clapton's "Layla" (chorus)*. This **progression is covered in yet another lesson**.

The **ascending melodic minor** have a **major sixth** while the **natural minor** has a **minor sixth**( the same as descending melodic minor and harmonic minor). None of the chords mentioned so far has the major sixth in them. The **iv** chord has a minor 6th, and half tone from the minor to the majors creates a strong dissonance.

The song **For Your Love** recorded by **Eric Clapton with The Blues Breakers (John Mayall)** has a progression with the IV-chord. It goes **Em - G - A - Am**, which means that it changes from IV to iv.

[ii or IV chord?] [Knockin' On Heavens Door]

**i-VIb-IIIb-IV**

**i-VIb-VIIb-i**

**i-VIIb-VIb-iv-i**

**i-iv-IIIb-VIb-ii-V-i**



**Chord stream**  
**I-ii-iii-IV progression**

**A minor relation**



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## A Minor relation



Minor harmony:  
a major challenge

Minor Blues  
Lesson 1, Part 1



To every major key, there is a relative minor scale. At this stage, we keep it simple and deal only with **natural minor**. We will look deeper into minor harmony in the lessons on **Minor harmony – a major challenge**.

### A source of confusion.

In my language, Norwegian, we use the term **parallel minor** for the concept that in English is called **relative minor**. When I first wrote this lesson, I used the literary translation "parallel minor", and it is still the name of the file. This is one of the more difficult aspects of translation: We have the same words, but they are used to describe different concepts. I am trying to correct the mistake. But there might still be some references to "parallel minor" when the correct term should be "relative minor".

The relative minor basically contains the same notes as the connected major scale. But the tonal center is different. The scales are closely related, and some songs shift back and forth between the relative major and minor key. Some examples are **The Eagles** hit *Hotel California*, which changes back and forth between **Em** and **G**. **Bruce Springsteen** also seems to favor this relative major/minor alteration. xxxxx

[Click here for a list of songs with movement between relative major and minor.](#)

The relative minor starts on the 6<sup>th</sup> note of the corresponding major scale. Just as a starting example, the relative minor to C major is A minor. The relation between the C major and the relative A minor can be illustrated as such:

<b>A-minor</b>	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	A		
<b>C-major</b>			C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C

The basic chords in A minor are **Am**, **Dm** and **Em7** or **E7**. If we stick to pure natural minor, the v chord is **Em**. But a minor 7<sup>th</sup> does not give a strong lead back to the root, so one would often use a major chord, even though it is not a diatonic chord in **Am**. That it the reason why there is a variation of the minor scale called **Harmonic minor**, but more about this in the lesson **Minor harmony – a major challenge**.

As the notes of the major scale and the relative minor scale are the same, and the primary chords of a natural minor are the **secondary chords** of the relative major and vice versa (**primary chords** in major are secondary chords in the relative minor), it is not always easy to decide if you are in the major key or it's relative minor. **Friedrich Chopin** seems to have given up in some of his piano compositions, as they are labeled for instance as being in the key **E/C#m**. The more minor chords you use, the more "minorish" will it sound, just as the major chords will make it sound "majorish". In the lesson **The III-chord - Major Mediant**, I discuss a little how the major key is weakened by using secondary minor chords in **The Beatles'** song **There's A Place**, before it finally modulates to the relative minor.

There are a few ways to modulate between the relative major and minor. When going from major to relative minor you can you can for instance go via **The III-chord - Major Mediant**.

From minor to relative major, you can xxxx

### More on relative major/minor relation

- Progressions: The vi-chord - relative minor
- Progressions: A Minor relation
- Songlist: Shifting between parallel major and minor



**Minor harmony:  
a major challenge**

**Minor Blues  
Lesson 1, Part 1**



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# Chord Progressions – Minor Blues - Lesson 1, Part 1



Minor Blues  
Lesson 1, Part 2

Minor Blues  
Lesson 1, Part 2



You can substitute all major chords in a 12-bar blues with the parallel minor chords, and voila: You get a minor blues. In the key **A-minor**, a **12-bar blues Type 1** would be like this:

Am

Dm Am

Em Dm Am

I have not included a turnaround chord, which would be an **Em7** if we should stick to minor chords throughout the tune. But as there are no tritone in the **m7** chord, it does not have the turnaround effect. It is the tritone in the **V7** chord that calls for a resolution to the **I** chord, which has the turnaround effect.

Some examples of tunes played with this progression are:

Artist	Tune	Key	CD Main link goes to Amazon US, Amazon UK link in parenthesis)	Source	Comments
Eric Clapton	All Your Love (I Miss Loving)	Am	John Mayall and the Bluesbreaker (UK)	<a href="#">The Bluesmen (from Musicroom)</a>	An <b>Otis Rush</b> tune. The middle (shuffle section) modulates to major, and then it modulates back to minor.
Otis Rush	All Your Love (I Miss Loving)	F#m		Guitar White Pages	

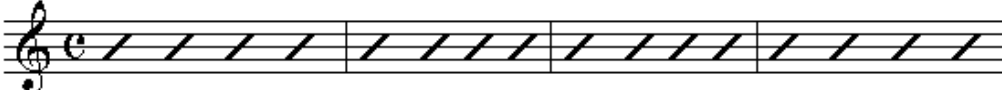
I have not written out any arrangements in this lesson, as it is the chord progression and not a particular playing style that is covered. Instead I have included backing tracks in various keys and styles. The **minor pentatonic scale** should be the basis for your soloing over these progressions.

**Backing Track - MinorBlues-1**  
A **Basic Minor Blues progression Type 1**: Minor chords only, **i** chord in bar 2, no turnaround. Download all files in on **zip-file**


<b>65 Very slow</b>	Cm	C#m	Dm	Em	F#m	Gm	G#m	Am	Bm
<b>90 Slow</b>	Cm	C#m	Dm	Em	F#m	Gm	G#m	Am	Bm
<b>120 Medium</b>	Cm	C#m	Dm	Em	F#m	Gm	G#m	Am	Bm

If we write the similar progression as a **Type 2** progression, it would be like this:

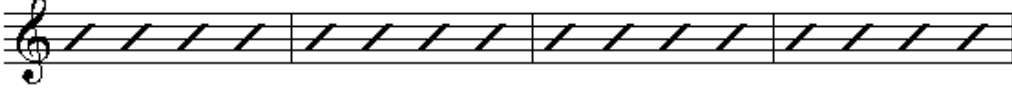
Am                      Dm                      Am



Dm                                      Am



Em                      Dm                      Am



Here are some backing tracks to practise with.

**Backing Track - MinorBlues-2**  
 A **Basic Minor Blues progression Type 2**: Minor chords only, **iv** chord in bar 2, no turnaround. Download all files in on **zip-file**

<b>65 Very slow</b>	Cm	C#m	Dm	Em	F#m	Gm	G#m	Am	Bm
<b>90 Slow</b>	Cm	C#m	Dm	Em	F#m	Gm	G#m	Am	Bm
<b>120 Medium</b>	Cm	C#m	Dm	Em	F#m	Gm	G#m	Am	Bm



**Minor Blues**  
 Lesson 1, Part 2

**Minor Blues**  
 Lesson 1, Part 2



**Further references**

GP= **Guitar Player** \* TG=**Total Guitar** \* GT=**Guitar Technique** \* AG=**Acoustic Guitar** \* FsG=**Fingerstyle Guitar** \*  
 G1=**GuitarOne** \* GWA=**Guitar World Acoustic** \* Gu=**Guitar** \* Gst=**Guitarist** \* HTPG=**How To Play Guitar**  
 I=**Interview** \* F=**Feature** \* A=**Analysis** \* Ls=**Analysis** \* C=**Comment** \* Li=**Licks** \* R=**Review**



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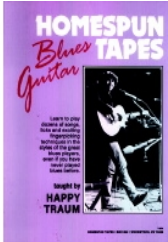
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## Walk, Don't Run to Spain For a Meeting with Mark Knopfler and friends



Minor Blues  
Lesson 1, Part 3

The i - VIIb - VIb progression:  
"Half Spanish" - "Watchtower progression"



The progression **i-VIIb-VIb-V** gives me Spanish associations. It has a flamenco touch. A pop-classic with this progression is *Walk, Don't Run*, recorded **The Ventures** and included on many compilations, for instance the new **Ultimate Collection**. **Mark Knopfler** of **Dire Straits** use this progression in many of his songs. And with this information, you probably understand why I have given this lesson such a strange title. A well-known song for any guitarist where you can hear this progression is **Dire Strait's "Sultans of Swing"**, included on the **"Sultans of Swing: The very best of Dire Straits"** collection. The main progression in the verse is **Dm-C-Bb-A**.

[Click here for a list of songs with a i-VIIb-VIb-V progression.](#)

Notice how the **A-chord** change the sound. The **i-VIIb-VIb** is well known progression too, but it does not have the mood you get by adding the V-chord. That is why I have called the lesson covering this progression **Stopping at the Spanish border**. **"Sultans of Swing"** actually have both progressions.

You can hear another example of this progression in **Bob Dylan's "One More Cup of Coffee"** from his **"Desire"** album. There he plays in the key of Am, with the progression **Am-G-F-E**.

If you are a fingerpicker, you have probably heard **Davey Graham's** instrumental **"Angie"** or **"Anji"**. (On some records his name is spelled Davey, on others Davey. And some spell the song Angie, others spell it Anji, and I do not know who is right ...) The most well known recording is by **Bert Jansch** on his debut album from 1964, simply called **"Bert Jansch"**. For some reason the album seems not to be available in US - it is at least not listed by CD Now. But Angie is included on **"The Best of Bert Jansch"**. (If you do not know **Bert Jansch**, you should definitely lend him your ears. **Pete Townshend** of **The Who** once called **Bert Jansch** *"The Jimi Hendrix of acoustic guitar"*.)

When you come to the V chord, the A if you play in D-minor, you do not really know if you are getting away or coming home. You could start from the V-chord, playing **A-Bb-C-Dm**, and the progression could in generic terms had been noted as **I-IIb-IIIb-iv**. Play this progression in the key of E. If you play the chords **E-F-G**, you get the stereotype flamenco-progression, played by anyone who would pretend being able to play flamenco. Then you can add the Am to the progression.

If you would try to play some fake flamenco solos over these chords, you should try the Phrygian mode. Phrygian E.-minor is E-F-G-A-B-C-D-E.

When staying in Spain, you should also try the progressions **Em-F-G**. If one should write a "Bluffers Guide to Flamenco", this progression would definitely be part of it.

Someone with more musical knowledge than I have might tell what is really the root of this progression, but I can't. Maybe we have some alternate roots. But this tonal uncertainty is really what make the progression so fascinating.



Minor Blues  
Lesson 1, Part 3

The i - VIIb - VIb progression:  
"Half Spanish" - "Watchtower progression"



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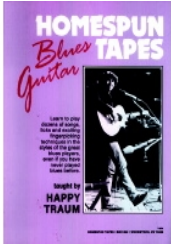
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## The i - VIIb - VIb progression "Half Spanish" - "Watchtower progression"



Walk, Don't Run to Spain For a Meeting with:  
Mark Knopfler and friends

La Folia



Numerous of rock songs have the progression i-VIIb-VIb. If you play in Am, the chords will be **Am-G-F**. You can then take the same route back to Am, giving you the following chords: **Am-G-F-G-Am**.



You might wonder what this has to do with the Spanish border, and it is really not very much. But if you add just one more chord, the E if you start from **Am**, then you suddenly end up in some Spanish sounding territory. For more about this progression, you should see my "**A Touch of Spain**" lesson.

One famous example of this progression is **Bob Dylan's "All along the watchtower"**. **Jimi Hendrix** made the song into one of the greatest rock guitar classics.

**Bob Dylan's** play the progression using open chords in Am. Compare this with **Jimi Hendrix'** barré chord playing in C#m.

**Click here for a recording of the progression, played with open chords (MP3)**

You can of course play the progression in other keys. Go to D-minor, and you have the main chords of another rock classic: **Eric Clapton's "Layla"**. Here the chords are **Dm-C-Bb-C-Dm**.

You can also hear these chords in the chorus in **Dire Strait's "Sultans of Swing"**.

I have made some backing tracks. Listen to the chord changes and use them to practise soloing over this progression.

**Backing Track - HalfSpanish**  
**A Half Spanish: i-bVII-bVI**

<b>65 Very slow</b>	<b>Cm</b>	<b>C#m</b>	<b>Dm</b>	<b>Em</b>	<b>F#m</b>	<b>Gm</b>	<b>Am</b>	<b>Bm</b>
<b>90 Slow</b>	<b>Cm</b>	<b>C#m</b>	<b>Dm</b>	<b>Em</b>	<b>F#m</b>	<b>Gm</b>	<b>Am</b>	<b>Bm</b>
<b>120 Medium</b>	<b>Cm</b>	<b>C#m</b>	<b>Dm</b>	<b>Em</b>	<b>F#m</b>	<b>Gm</b>	<b>Am</b>	<b>Bm</b>

Click here for a [list of songs with Half Spanish progression](#)

You might also here the progression in reverse order, **bVI - bVII - i**

Click here for a [list of songs with the Reverse half Spanish progression](#)

Listen to [Pink Floyd's Comfortably Numb](#) for another ending to this progression.



[Walk, Don't Run to Spain For a Meeting with:  
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[La Folia](#)



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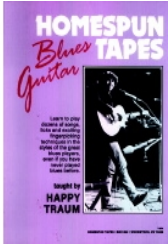
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## La Folia



The **i - VIIb - VIb** progression  
"Half Spanish" - "Watchtower progression"

The Minor Walk



You can find a very good web site, **La Folia, a Musical Cathedral**, devoted to this popular musical theme which can be heard in classical compositions, folk songs and popular music. I refer those of you who want more information to this web site. On the web site, La Folia is described as follows:

"La Folia (literally meaning mad or empty-headed) is one of the most remarkable phenomena in the history of music. This simple, but intriguing tune was first published in 1672. Its roots go back to the 16th century. It would remain a major challenge for numerous composers up to the present day; it ranges from a part of a famous Bach Cantata to a popular film tune in the hit charts by Vangelis. The flexibility of the theme to incorporate and adapt features of new musical styles is not only amazing but also essential for its survival.

As this is a series of lessons on chord progressions, we will only look at the chords of La Folia, and use it as a name of this minor key progression. But you should be aware that La Folia usually is in 3/4 time.

The typical La Folia is a 16 bar structure, with two lines of 8 bars. The progression is as follows:

**i - V7 - i - VIIb - IIIb - VIIb - i - V7**  
**i - V7 - i - VIIb - IIIb - VIIb - i/V7 - i**

In the key of **d-minor** it will be:

**Dm - A7 - Dm - C - F - C - Dm - A7**  
**Dm - A7 - Dm - C - F - C - Dm / A7 - Dm**

In the key of **A minor** it will be:

**Am - E7 - Am - G - C - G - Am - E7**  
**Am - E7 - Am - G - C - G - Am / E7 - Am**

At **La Folia, a Musical Cathedral** you will find an extensive list of compositions based on La Folia

Click here for my **list of songs based on the La Folia progression**



The **i - VIIb - VIb** progression  
"Half Spanish" - "Watchtower progression"

The Minor Walk



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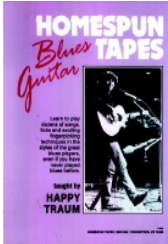
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## The Minor Walk



La Folia

The harmonic stronghold:  
The V7-I progression



The term "*Minor Walk*" is taken from some articles by *Dominic Pedler* on *Beatles'* song writing in the *Total Guitar* magazine. It is a very typical *Beatles'* device.

In a Minor Walk, we start from a minor chord, and walks down from the root in chromatic steps. The typical chord sequence will be **m - mM7 - m7 - m6**, but sometimes it continues with **mb6** and end on the dominant chord, built on the 5th note.

A good example, where this harmonic move is very clear, is the opening of *The Beatles'* song *Michelle*. This part of the tune is in **F-minor**, and the chords are: **Fm - FmM7 - Fm7 - Fm6 - Fmb6 - Bm7-C**.

It goes like this:

F m    Fm(maj7)    Fm7    Fm6    Fmb6    Bbm7    C

The image shows a musical score for the opening of 'Michelle' in F minor. The top staff is in treble clef, 4/4 time, with a key signature of one flat. The chords are indicated above the staff: Fm, Fm(maj7), Fm7, Fm6, Fmb6, Bbm7, and C. The bottom staff shows the guitar fretboard with fingerings for the T, A, and B strings. The T string has notes 8, 9, 9, 9, 8, 8, 6, 6, 8, 8, 8. The A string has notes 10, 10, 9, 9, 8, 8, 7, 7, 6, 6, 6, 6. The B string has notes 10, 10, 10.

If you want to dive a little bit deeper into the chords, read my comments to *Michelle* and the discussion of the **mM7 chord**.

### For more on the augmented triad and related chords, go to:

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chords: Augmented chord</li> <li>• Chords: mM7 chord</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theory: Diminished and augmented triads</li> <li>• Progressions: The Minor Walk</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Song: The Beatles' song <b>Michelle</b></li> </ul> |
|--|---|---|

Click here for a [list of songs with The Minor Walk](#).



La Folia

The harmonic stronghold:  
The V7-I progression



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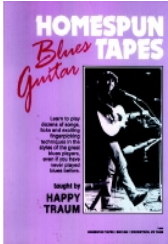
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## The double message of the I-IV change



IV-I – The Plagal Cadence.  
A softer ending – amen

[Deceptive Cadence](#)



I have called this lesson **The double message of the I-IV change**, and the reason is that it could also be labeled a **V-I** change in the subdominant key. If we play **C-F** in the key of C, it will be a I-IV change. But if we play the same chords in the key of F, they will be a V-I change in this key. The V-I change is a stronger harmonic device than the I-IV change, as is explained in the lessons on the **Authentic cadence** and on the **Dominant 7th chord** in the **Theory series**. What might happen is that the V-I effect will get the upper hand, and knock you out of key. You might end up with a **modulation to the subdominant key** without really noticing. This is particularly likely if we play **I7-IV** instead of **I-IV**. When improvising over this change, it might be difficult to "find the way home", because you have ended in another key without really noticing. In the backing tracks, I have tossed in a few **I7** and **IV7** chords. Try to identify them, and note the effect.

If we change key to the subdominant key (the IV-key), one interesting aspect of the I-IV change become clear. The I chord of the root key becomes the V of the IV key. In the key of C, the IV chord is **F**. And in the key of F, the **C** chord is the V chord. To make it a little easier to follow, we will stay with the key of C as the root (tonic) key. The change from **C** to **F** will then be a I-IV change in the key of C. But it might also be a V-I change in the key of F. This means that you can modulate from the key of C to the key of F with these two chords. As said in the **V7-I lesson**, the V7-I change makes a stronger harmonic statement than the V-I change. So if we really want to change to the IV key, then we might prefer a sequence of I-I7-IV, which equals V-V7-I in the IV key. Listen to the difference between just **C - F** and **C - C7 - F**. In the latter example, the **C7** creates a tension that is resolved when you play the **F** chord, and by that you have changed (modulated) to the key of F.

If you play a 12 bar blues, you will often change from I to I7 chord in the 4th bar, before changing to the IV7 chord in bar 5. By the change to I7, you start on a modulation to the IV key. But since you usually will play a IV7 chord, and not the IV chord, the IV key is not really established as a new key. And as I will say many times in these lessons: The harmonic uncertainty, or ambiguity of the blues is one of the elements that makes it so fascinating. Sometimes when improvising, I change key from the I to IV when playing over the IV chord in a blues progression. If I play I blues in A, I might change to the D blues scale over the **D7** chords. It works well. But sometimes I do it subconsciously, without realizing what is happening. And then I might get lost, not finding the way back to the tonic key (A) in bar 7. I guess I am not the only one who has been running into this kind of trouble.

Many songs has the structure of verse - verse - bridge - verse, and will often modulate to the IV key in the bridge part. An easy way to facilitate this modulation, is by playing the I7 chord just before the bridge part starts. When returning to the tonic key, you have to make a I - V modulation (**C** is the dominant or V key to the key of F). You might play **C** (instead of **C7**), **G7** and then back to **C**, and the key of C is reestablished. You might also use a sequence with more chords, but we will come back to that when we look more into modulation.

### More on the application of the IV chord

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progressions: The double message of the I-IV change</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Theory: Plagal Cadence: The IV-I ending</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Progressions: Intro - a start from the subdominant</li> </ul> |
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IV-I – The Plagal Cadence.  
A softer ending – amen

[Deceptive Cadence](#)



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Happy Traum:  
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# Ending on the iv-chord



Minor Blues  
Lesson 1, Part 2

12-bars, Two Chord Shapes  
and a Touch of Jazz - part 1



We expect the songs to end on the tonic chord.

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## A salty dog at Alice's Restaurant



The Three-chord Trick:  
I-IV-V progression

Voice leading



I have called this lesson "A salty dog at Alice's Restaurant" because it is about a chord progression that I have seen to as "Salty Dog". Do not ask me where that name come from – I do not know. I put this dog into Alice's Restaurant, because Arlo Guthrie used the progression in is famous song "Alice's Restaurant".

You can hear this progression in many ragtime blues songs. Listen to old blues players like **Blind Blake** and **Big Bill Broonzy**, and you will hear it a lot. You will also hear it in the blues classic "Nobody Knows You when You're Down and Out". There are many recordings of "Nobody Knows You", and I am not going to express any opinion on who has made the best vocal recording of the song. But a guitarist should definitely listen to **Eric Clapton's** two recordings of the song, and specially to his "Unplugged" recording.

If you play the progression in the key of C, the chords are:

**C-E7-A-A7-D-G-C.**

If we number these chords with C as the root, it will be:

I-III-VI-II-V-I

You should here notice the circle of fourth movements. The first move, from **C** to **E7** is a move from I to III7, so it does not start with a fourth. The E7 is by the way a non-diatonic chord, meaning that it is not a chord built with notes from the C-major scale. The **diatonic III** chord in C is **E-minor**, not **E-major**. The **E-major** chord have a G# in it, that does not belong to the C-major scale. But the progression continues with non-diatonic chords. Both the VI (A) and the II (D) should be minor chords if we had been following the harmonized diatonic scale. The **A-chord** has a C# and the **D** has a F#, none of which belong to the C-major scale.

Try to play the progression with diatonic chords, and listen to the difference. It will be

**C-Em-Am-Dm-G-C.**

From the III-chord, the progression continues in fourths. **A** is the IV of E, D is the fourth of A, **G** is the fourth of D and **C** is the fourth of G.

Although I think of this progression as some C-major progression, you can of course play it in other keys. I G-major, the chords would be:

**G-B7-E-A-D-G.**

You can play several variations of the progression xxxx.



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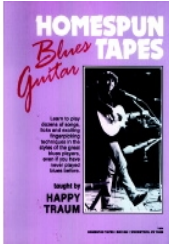
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# V of V - the II7 chord



[The Circle of Fifths](#)

[The Buddy Holly - VI b-chord](#)



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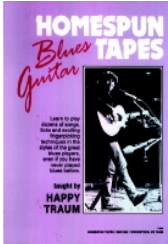
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## The Buddy Holly - V1b-chord



V of V - the 117  
chord

Major mediant – III – preparing for a  
modulation to the relative minor



I have taken the nick name "**The Buddy Holly chord**" from **Alan W. Pollack's analysis** of **The Beatles** tune **It Won't Be Long**. It is taken from the **Buddy Holly** song **Peggy Sue**. The chord appeared in the chorus, at the words "... pretty, pretty, pretty, pretty Peggy Sue". It is in the key of **G-major**, and the **V1b-chord** is **Eb**. It is quite easy to hear that he is playing a "foreign" non-diatonic chord.

The song **It Won't Be Long** is in the key **E-major**, and the **V1b-chord** is **C**. You hear it in the verse, and again it is not too difficult to hear that non-diatonic chord. (But it is not too easy to say what is verse, what is chorus and what is bridge in this song). You can also hear the chord in the bridge of **I Call Your Name**, once again as a **C**-chord played in E-major.

To put the chord in a harmonic context, you might think of it as **the vi-chord of the parallel minor**, meaning that it is the vi chord of E-minor if the root key is E-major. Another way to think of the chord is as **the relative major to the parallel minor of the IV-chord**. This might sound complicated. But if you listen to **The Beatles'** song **I Saw Her Standing There**, you might get the point. The first line of the chorus has these chords: **E - A - C** or is it **E - A - Am**? In some books it is labeled C-major and in other books it is labeled A-minor. **Alan W. Pollack** have this comment in his **analysis of the song**:

"The chord in measure 12 sounds very much like the C-Major, flat-VI chord, but closer listening proves it to be an a-minor chord placed in its first (aka 6/3) inversion by the C-natural in the bass line. Harmonically it's an example of "the minor iv chord appearing in a major key." The movement of the bass line for the second chord is an unusual ploy and, along with the falsetto "wooh" in the vocal of that measure, heightens the impact of the C# versus C-natural cross-relation between the chords. It's a delightfully groin-tightening and ambiguous momentary spike of intensity; leaving it up to us listeners to decide whether the protagonist's tension is one of approach / avoidance or more simply the joy of confident anticipation."

I am not going to give my vote in the debate. As I am mainly playing alone and not in a band context, I have to adapt the song to one guitar and cannot play exactly as The Beatles (and there is really no reason why you should not try to make your own twist to the song). I used to play Am, but recently I have more often been playing C. Both chords work, and they both add some tension.

To illustrate the ambiguity of this harmony even more, we can include **The Beatles' Do You Want To Know A Secret?**. After some circles of the **E-G#m-Gm-F#m-B7-E** (the song is in E-major), we suddenly get **E-G#m-Gm-F#m-C** (just before *Closer ..*), or do we? In the **Wise score** the chord is labeled **C**, but **Alan W. Pollack will label this chord as an F** over C in the bass (2nd inversion).



V of V - the 117  
chord

Major mediant – III – preparing for a  
modulation to the relative minor



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# Minor to Major substitution



Major mediant – III – preparing for a modulation to the relative minor

Dorian, but not Grey



Click here for a [list of songs with Minor to Major substitution](#)

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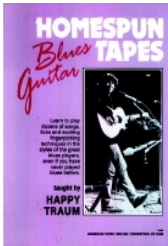
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## Dorian, but not Grey



Minor to Major substitution

Dorian - i - (b)III - IV - (i)



Many songs - particularly folk songs - are based on the *dorian mode*. One well known example is the English folk song made famous by **Simon and Garfunkel**: **Scarborough Fair**. Another song is **John Lennon's Working-class Hero**.

I say about **Scarborough Fair**, that it was "*made famous by Simon and Garfunkel*". **Paul Simon** learned the song from **Martin Carthy**, a very important figure in the UK folk scene. He did not get credit when **Scarborough Fair** was a hit by **Simon and Garfunkel**, and many not so very nice things have been said about how **Paul Simon** made a hit out of how he had learned to play the song from **Martin Carthy**. Finally there has been a reconciliation between the two, and if you go to my **Martin Carthy** page, you will find a link to the sealment of the reconciliation: A duet recording of the song **Scarborough Fair** by **Paul Simon** and **Martin Carthy** from **Paul Simon's** latest London Concert.

The basic chord progression of dorian mode - at least in folk songs - is **i-VIIb**. In **Dorian D-minor**, which is a very nice key for dorian, the basic chords are **Dm** and **C**. In **Dorian A-minor**, another good key for dorian, is **Am** and **G**. This is the key of *Working-class Hero*.

The dorian scale is a popular scale for improvisations. It contains all the notes of the *minor pentatonic scale*, it is just the second and sixth that is added. I works well over a blues progression.

(Check **Knocking on Heavens Door** with the progression **G-D-Am**)

### Scales: Dorian Mode

Box 1	Box 2	Box 3	Box 4	Box 5	Box 6	Box 7
Ex 1	Ex 1	Ex 1	Ex 1	Ex 1	Ex 1	Ex 1
Ex 2	Ex 2	Ex 2	Ex 2	Ex 2	Ex 2	Ex 2

### Theory: Modal, Dorian

Progressions: Dorian, but not Grey

Dorian - i - (b)III - IV - (i)



Minor to Major substitution

Dorian - i - (b)III - IV - (i)



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## Dorian - i - (b)III - IV - (i)



Dorian, but not Grey

A Mixolydian Mix:  
The I-bVII progression



This progression is first characterized by not having a dominant chord, meaning that it has only a **plagal cadence** with a major to minor resolution. The other characterizing element is that it has a **major IV chord**. This indicates a **major 6th** in the scale, which leads us away from **natural minor** (which has a minor 6th and a minor iv-chord). The minor scales that have a major 6th are **melodic minor** and **dorian**. The **melodic minor has a major 7th**, while the **dorian has a minor 7th**. The **relative major (b)III-chord** - a major chord built on the minor third of the scale - will have the scale notes b3-5-b7. This harmonic structure with major 6th and minor 7th points clearly in the direction of **dorian mode**.

A song where you can hear this progression is in **A Taste Of Honey**, a song recorded by **The Beatles** on their debut album. The song is in **F#m dorian**, and the chords are - simplified - **F#m - A - B - F#m**. I say simplified because it has a variation of a **minor walk**, with the chords **F#m - F#mMaj7**. The the next chord is labeled **F#7** in the **Wise score**. I have chosen to label the chord **A**, but it should then really be **A/F#**, indicating that it is an **A-major with an F# (6th) in the bass**. For those interested in the details, the chord has - given that the **Wise score** is correct here - an **A-natural**, while **F#** has an **A#**. So if it is some kind of an **F#**, it should in my opinion be **F#m7**. (As this is a cover version, and not an original Beatles' song, it is not as much analyzed as the original Beatles song, so I cannot lean on other authorities.)

The chorus of **A Taste Of Honey** has the chords **i-(b)III-(b)VII-i**, which is another dorian progression, covered in another lesson.

Scales: Dorian Mode						
Box 1	Box 2	Box 3	Box 4	Box 5	Box 6	Box 7
Ex 1	Ex 1	Ex 1	Ex 1	Ex 1	Ex 1	Ex 1
Ex 2	Ex 2	Ex 2	Ex 2	Ex 2	Ex 2	Ex 2

Theory: Modal, Dorian	
Progressions: Dorian, but not Grey	Dorian - i - (b)III - IV - (i)



Dorian, but not Grey

A Mixolydian Mix:  
The I-bVII progression



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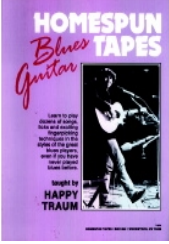
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# A Mixolydian Mix - the I-bVII progression



Dorian - i - (b)III - IV - (i)

A Green Onion After Midnight will Change the World



The *mixolydian mode* or *mixolydian scale* is a major scale, which means that it has a *major third*. The difference between a normal major scale and mixolydian, is that the mixolydian scale has a lowered 7th. This means that it does not have a low leading note, which again means that it does not give as strong lead back to the root as the major scale.

If you start from the notes of a major scale, you will get the *mixolydian* scale if you are playing from the *fifth to fifth*. To put it in other words, it is the scale with the *dominant* as the root. Some call the scale the *dominant 7th*, or just the *7th* scale. If we use the C-major as the basis scale, then you get a mixolydian scale if you are playing from G to G. (This is much easier to explain and to understand if you also play some keyboard: If you are playing on the white keys from G to G, then you get a mixolydian scale.)

The diatonic chord on the fifth of a mixolydian scale will be a *minor chord*. If the song is in *G-mixolydian* (no sharps or flats), the 5th chord will be **Dm**. But the **v-I** relationship does not establish a key in the same way as the **V-I** relation. To establish the tonal center and by that the key, we have to rely on other chord changes. xxx

Many songs based on the mixolydian scale has the basic chord progression xxxx. Or if you start from the other side: Songs with the chord progression xxx is usually based on the mixolydian scale. Some examples are xxxx.

You may also use the mixolydian scale to play over a standard blues progression. It will give you more of a major sound, compared to the pentatonic minor or the blues scale. But it still sound bluesy. **B.B. King** often play the *mixolydian blues*.

Click here for a [list of songs in mixolydian mode](#).

Songs with **I - VIIb - VIb - V - (I)** progression.

Variation: **I-IV-v**

Variation: **v-ii-IV-I**

Variation: **ii-VIIb-I**

## Scales: Mixolydian Mode

Box 1	Box 2	Box 3	Box 4	Box 5	Box 6	Box 7
Ex 1	Ex 1	Ex 1	Ex 1	Ex 1	Ex 1	Ex 1
Ex 2	Ex 2	Ex 2	Ex 2	Ex 2	Ex 2	Ex 2

## Theory: Modal, Mixolydian



Dorian - i - (b)III - IV - (i)

A Green Onion After Midnight will Change the World



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## A Green Onion After Midnight will Change the World

- the I - IIIb - IV and I - IV - IIIb progression



A Mixolydian Mix:  
The I-bVII progression

12-bars, Two Chord Shapes  
and a Touch of Jazz - part 1



Play the **Harmonized Shuffle** slow. If you are in the key of E, then try playing the chords **E - A - G - A**. It really is the harmonized shuffle. It is a **I - IV - IIIb - (IV)** progression. Try playing **E - A - G | G - A - E**. Play it slow with the chords of the harmonized shuffle, and you have the beginning of **Eric Clapton's Change The World**.

The following is the chord structure of the harmonized shuffle and of *Change The World*. But it is the way I play the chords, and not an **Eric Clapton** transcription. In fact it is a rhythmically simplified version of my playing - I did not spend the time to write the rhythm as it actually is played. But listen to the recording. You will hear it both as written, and as I usually play it. Click here for **a standard notation/tabulature example The Changing World lick** (Finale File - click here **if you need a viewer**).

Try another sequence: **E - G - A** - the **I - IIIb - IV** progression. It can be used either as a chord structure for a song, as in **After The Midnight**, or as some kind of a chord shuffle, as in **Steve Cropper's Green Onion**. And by now you probably understand the strange title of this lesson. Click here for **a standard notation/tabulature example of With A Taste of Onion** (Finale File - click here **if you need a viewer**).

Click here for an MP3 recording of the lick (not active yet)

I am not really able to associate this progression with a scale or a mode. But I think of it as a **minor pentatonic progression**.

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Click here for a **list of songs with the I - IIIb - IV and/or I - IV - IIIb progression**



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