

Useful & Common Chord Progressions  
*volume 2 - bigger, badder, and way more lit*

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## Foreword / Information About This Guide

In this guide, you'll find a bunch of chord progressions that have been used across all genres and eras [some more frequently than others, but these are all good to know]. Some of these progressions are mere modifications or permutations of others. Simply by omitting, adding, or reordering the same chords, we can create anything from a subtle change in attitude to a total dramatic shift in vibe.

The chord progressions are arranged into four charts. Parts I and II deal entirely with diatonic chord progressions, while Parts III and IV deal with progressions that use non-diatonic [borrowed] chords. Each progression has a clickable link to a song that uses said progression, and the specific chords in the song are provided. Each progression is also labeled as being a major progression, a minor progression, or a modal progression [with the specific mode listed].

Each chord progression is expressed in Roman numeral analysis format as well as with Arabic numbers. As a brief refresher:

Roman numerals use CAPITAL letters to express major chords and lowercase letters to express minor and diminished chords:

	"1" chord	"2" chord	"3" chord	"4" chord	"5" chord	"6" chord	"7" chord
<b>MAJOR</b>	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
<b>MINOR</b>	i	ii	iii	iv	v	vi	vii
<b>DIMINISHED</b>	i°	ii°	iii°	iv°	v°	vi°	vii°
<b>AUGMENTED</b>	I*	II*	III*	IV*	V*	VI*	VII*

When using Arabic numbers, we do not need to specify a major chord [major chords are assumed by default]:

	"1" chord	"2" chord	"3" chord	"4" chord	"5" chord	"6" chord	"7" chord
<b>MAJOR</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>MINOR</b>	1m [or 1min]	2m [or 2min]	3m [or 3min]	4m [or 4min]	5m [or 5min]	6m [or 6min]	7m [or 7min]
<b>DIMINISHED</b>	1° [or 1dim]	2° [or 2dim]	3° [or 3dim]	4° [or 4dim]	5° [or 5dim]	6° [or 6dim]	7° [or 7dim]
<b>AUGMENTED</b>	1* [or 1aug]	2* [or 2aug]	3* [or 3aug]	4* [or 4aug]	5* [or 5aug]	6* [or 6aug]	7* [or 7aug]

[Note: Augmented chords do not occur diatonically, but may be rooted by a diatonic note.]

Likewise, you'll notice some Roman and Arabic numbers have a flat (♭) symbol in front of them. This is the most technically accurate way to analyse a chord progression, because it further specifies the relationship each chord's root has to the root of your song's key [which allows you to accommodate borrowed chords]. Since pretty much everything is based off the major scale [whose intervallic relationships from root of scale to scale tones are all major or perfect], using a flat (♭) symbol before a number indicates a minor or diminished intervallic relationship [so for example, the C chord in the key of A minor would technically be your ♭3 chord, because the relationship from A to C is a minor 3rd. If you were using a C# chord in the key of A, you'd call that your '3' chord, because the relationship from A to C# is a major 3rd].

So, for example, if you're in the key of A, here's how chords with certain roots get analysed:

Root of Chord	Roman Numeral Analysis	Arabic Number Analysis	Why?
B♭	♭II, ♭ii, ♭ii°, or ♭II*	♭2	The relationship from A to B♭ is a minor 2nd [lowered from the major 2nd]
B	II, ii, ii°, or II*	2	The relationship from A to B is a major [natural] 2nd
C	♭III, ♭iii, ♭iii°, or ♭III*	♭3	The relationship from A to C is a minor 3rd [lowered from the major 3rd]
C#	III, iii, iii°, or III*	3	The relationship from A to C# is a major [natural] 3rd
D	IV, iv, iv°, or IV*	4	The relationship from A to D is a perfect 4th
D#	#IV, #iv, #iv°, or #IV*	#4	The relationship from A to D# is an augmented [raised] 4th [this is uncommon]
E♭	♭V, ♭v, ♭v°, or ♭V*	♭5	The relationship from A to E♭ is a diminished [lowered] 5th [this is more common]
E	V, v, v°, or V*	5	The relationship from A to E is a perfect 5th
F	♭VI, ♭vi, ♭vi°, or ♭VI*	♭6	The relationship from A to F is a minor 6th [lowered from the major 6th]
F#	VI, vi, vi°, or VI*	6	The relationship from A to F# is a major [natural] 6th
G	♭VII, ♭vii, ♭vii°, or ♭VII*	♭7	The relationship from A to G is a minor 7th [lowered from the major 7th]
G#	VII, vii, vii°, or VII*	7	The relationship from A to G# is a major [natural] 7th

## Playing the Progressions / Incorporating them into Your Songs

This guide gives you the tools to hear and comprehend many different chord progressions so that you can transcribe and transpose them for your own songs. Keep in mind that a major chord progression can only correctly transpose to any of the 12 major keys, a minor progression can only correctly transpose to any of the 12 minor keys, and modal progressions can only transpose to any of the 12 keys within that specific mode. To try to transpose a major progression to a minor key or vice versa will result in a change in chord qualities [and in some cases, different chord roots], which changes the progression altogether.

So to play these chords, one of the simplest ways is to play the root of the chord in your left hand [which you may opt to double at the octave or create a “power chord” by way of adding the note a perfect 5th up from the root if you like] and to play the chords in your right hand. Some degree of smooth voice leading is ideal to help you move effortlessly from chord to chord, but keep in mind that you do not have to \*perfectly\* voice lead your chords all the time. So here’s one example of how you might play a 1 - 4 - 5 - 6m [or I - IV - V - vi] in the key of A. [Red notes = right hand; blue notes = left hand]

The piano roll shows a 4-measure cycle of chords in the key of A. The right hand (red notes) plays the chords in a cycle: A4 (1), D4 (4), E4 (5), and F#4 (6m). The left hand (blue notes) plays the roots: A2 (1), D2 (4), E2 (5), and F#2 (6m). The piano roll shows a 4-measure cycle with a 'Cycle Range' label. The vertical axis is labeled with notes C1 through C5. The horizontal axis is labeled with measure numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4. The notes are represented by horizontal bars on a grid.

Alright! Let's get to some chord progressions. Thanks for reading. I hope this guide is helpful and inspires new song ideas for you!

## I. Diatonic Chord Progressions - The “4 Chords of Pop”

Chord Progression [Roman numerals]	Chord Progression [Arabic Numbers]	Type of Progression	Song Example	Chords in Example
i - v - iv	1m - 5m - 4m	Minor	<u>Justin Timberlake - “My Love”</u> [Em]	Em - Bm - Am - Am/C
I - IV - I - V	1 - 4 - 1 - 5	Major	<u>Chumbawumba - “Tubthumping”</u> [D]	D - G - D - A [verses / choruses]
I - V - IV - V	1 - 5 - 4 - 1	Major	<u>Blink 182 - “All The Small Things”</u> [C]	C - G - F - G [verses / choruses]
ii - V - I	2m - 5 - 1	Major	<u>Maroon 5 - “Sunday Morning”</u> [C]	Dm7 - G - Cmaj7 [all except the bridge]
I - vi - IV - V	1 - 6m - 4 - 5	Major	<u>Led Zeppelin - “D’yer Ma’ker”</u> [C]	C - Am - F - G [chorus]
vi - IV - I - V	6m - 4 - 1 - 5	Major	<u>Skylar Grey - “Love The Way You Lie”</u> [Bb]	Gm - Eb - Bb - F [all except bridge]
OR	OR	OR		
i - bVI - bIII - bVII	1m - b6 - b3 - b7	Minor	<u>Timbaland &amp; OneRepublic - “Apologize”</u> [Cm]	Cm - Ab - Eb - Bb/D
vi - IV - I	6m - 4 - 1	Major	<u>Sam Smith - “Stay With Me”</u> [C]	Am - F - C [verse; chorus uses G and E7 or G#° as turnaround chords in the chorus]
i - bIII - bVII - bVI	1m - b3 - b7 - b6	Minor	<u>Eric Prydz - “Call On Me”</u> [F#m]	F#m - A - E - D
OR	OR	OR		
vi - I - V - IV	6m - 1 - 5 - 4	Major	<u>Pitbull / Ke\$ha - “Timber”</u> [B]	G#m - B - F# - E
IV - I - V - vi	4 - 1 - 5 - 6m	Major	<u>Sia - “Elastic Heart”</u> [A]	D - A - E - F#m

Chord Progression [Roman numerals]	Chord Progression [Arabic Numbers]	Type of Progression	Song Example	Chords in Example
IV - I - V	4 - 1 - 5	Major	<u>Above &amp; Beyond w/Zoe Johnston</u> - "Good For Me" [Ab]	D $\flat$ - A $\flat$ - E $\flat$
IV - I - vi - V	4 - 1 - 6m - 5	Major	<u>Maroon 5 &amp; Wiz Khalifa</u> - "Payphone" [B]	E - B - G#m - F#
I - V - vi - IV	1 - 5 - 6m - 4	Major	<u>Lady Gaga</u> - "Paparazzi" [Ab]	A $\flat$ - E $\flat$ - Fm - D $\flat$ [chorus]
$\flat$ VI - $\flat$ VII - i - $\flat$ III OR IV - V - vi - I	$\flat$ 6 - $\flat$ 7 - 1m - $\flat$ 3 OR 4 - 5 - 6m - 1	Minor OR Major	<u>Major Lazer + DJ Snake + MØ</u> - "Lean On" [Gm]	E $\flat$ - F - Gm - B $\flat$ [flips from B $\flat$ sus4 to B $\flat$ ]
IV - V - vi	4 - 5 - 6m	Major [no '1' chord]	<u>The 1975</u> - "Falling For You" [Db]	G $\flat$ - A $\flat$ - B $\flat$ m [the chorus DOES end on the '1' chord, but this progression otherwise is just these 3 chords]
IV - vi - V	4 - 6m - 5	Major [no '1' chord]	<u>Katy Perry</u> - "Teenage Dream" [Bb]	E $\flat$ - Gm - F
V - vi - IV - I	5 - 6m - 4 - 1	Major	<u>Spice Girls</u> - "Wannabe" [C]	G - Am - F - C [verse]
V - vi - IV	5 - 6m - 4	Major [no '1' chord]	<u>Apparat</u> - "Komponent [Telefon Tel Aviv Remix]" [G]	D - Em - C
vi - IV - V - I	6m - 4 - 5 - 1	Major	<u>Seven Lions &amp; Kerli</u> - "Worlds Apart" [Eb]	Cm - A $\flat$ - B $\flat$ - E $\flat$ [1st verse / chorus / drop]
i - $\flat$ VII - $\flat$ VI - $\flat$ VII	1m - $\flat$ 7 - $\flat$ 6 - $\flat$ 7	Minor	<u>Active Child</u> - "Hanging On" [Fm]	Fm - E $\flat$ - D $\flat$ - E $\flat$
i - $\flat$ VI - $\flat$ VII - i	1m - $\flat$ 6 - $\flat$ 7 - 1m	Minor	<u>Snap</u> - "Rhythm Is A Dancer" [G#m]	G#m - E - F# - G#m

Chord Progression [Roman numerals]	Chord Progression [Arabic Numbers]	Type of Progression	Song Example	Chords in Example
I - V - vi - vi - V - IV	1 - 5 - 6m - 6m - 5 - 4	Major	<u>Jose Gonzalez - "Stay Alive" [F#]</u>	F# - C# - D#m - D#m - C#m - B [verse]
V - vi - V - I - IV - V	5 - 6m - 5 - 1 - 4 - 5	Major	<u>Deadmau5 - "Brazil 2nd Edit" [Db]</u>	A $\flat$ - B $\flat$ m - A $\flat$ /C - D $\flat$ - G $\flat$ - A $\flat$

**Note:** There are quite a few other simple, well-known progressions that aren't included in this chart, but worth mentioning:

i - iv - v [1m - 4m - 5m] - Minor key (or a permutation thereof, such as i - iv - i - v for instance)

I - IV - ii - V [1 - 4 - 2m - 5] - Major key (a variation on I - vi - ii - V)

i - VI - iv - v or V [1m - 6 - 4m - 5m or 5] the Minor key version of the I - vi - IV - V major progression

I - vi - ii - V [1 - 6m - 2m - 5] OR its minor version, i -  $\flat$ VI - ii $^\circ$  - v [or V] [1m -  $\flat$ 6 - 2 $^\circ$  - 5m or 5]



## II. Diatonic Chord Progressions Outside the “4 Chords Of Pop”

Chord Progression [Roman numerals]	Chord Progression [Arabic Numbers]	Type of Progression	Song Example	Chords in Example
i - bVI - bIII - iv	1m - b6 - b3 - 4m	Minor	<u>Seba</u> - “Painted Skies” [F]	Fm - D $\flat$ - A $\flat$ - B $\flat$ m
I - ii - vi	1 - 2m - 6m	Major	<u>Rihanna &amp; Mikky Ekko</u> - “Stay” [C]	C - Dm - Am [verse]
I - ii - vi - IV	1 - 2m - 6m - 4	Major	<u>Katy Perry</u> - “Firework” [Ab] [also the chorus of Rihanna/ Mikky Ekko - “Stay”]	A $\flat$ - B $\flat$ m - Fm - D $\flat$ [all except the verses]
IV - vi - V - ii	4 - 6m - 5 - 2m	Major [no ‘1’ chord]	<u>M83</u> - “Midnight City” [D]	G - Bm - Asus4 - Em7
ii - IV - I - V	2m - 4 - 1 - 5	Major	<u>Chet Faker</u> - “Talk Is Cheap” [Bb]	Cm - E $\flat$ - B $\flat$ - F7
I - iii - vi - IV	1 - 3m - 6m - 4	Major	<u>Adele</u> - “Someone Like You” [A]	A - C#m - F#m - D [verses]
i - bIII - bVI - iv	1m - b3 - b7 - 4m	Minor	<u>Miley Cyrus</u> - “Wrecking Ball” [Dm] (mod to F in chorus)	Fm - Ab - Eb - Bb
iv - bVI - i - bVII	4m - b6 - 1m - b7	Minor	<u>Ellie Goulding</u> - “Figure 8” [Gm]	Cm - E $\flat$ - Gm - F
bVI - i - bVII - iv	b6 - 1m - b7 - 4m	Minor	<u>Lana Del Rey</u> - “Summertime Sadness” [C#m]	A - C#m - B - F#m [all except bridge]
bVI - iv - i - bVII	b6 - 4m - 1m - b7	Minor	<u>Calvin Harries &amp; Ellie Goulding</u> - “Outside” [Dm]	B $\flat$ - Gm - Dm - C [played as C/E in the chorus]
i - iv - bVI - bVII	1m - 4m - b6 - b7	Minor	<u>Craig David</u> - “Walking Away” [Am]	Am - Dm - F - G
i - bVII - iv - bVI	1m - b7 - b6 - 4m	Minor	<u>Eiffel 65</u> - Blue [Gm]	Gm - F - Eb - Cm [chorus]
bVI - v - i - bVII	b6 - 5m - 1m - b7	Minor	<u>Alice DeeJay</u> - “Better Off Alone” [G#m]	E - D#m - G#m - F#

Chord Progression [Roman numerals]	Chord Progression [Arabic Numbers]	Type of Progression	Song Example	Chords in Example
i - $\flat$ VII - $\flat$ VI - v	1m - $\flat$ 7 - $\flat$ 6 - 5m	Minor	<u>Marian Hill - "Down" [Cm]</u>	Cm - B $\flat$ - A $\flat$ - Gm
i - $\flat$ VII - v - $\flat$ VI	1m - $\flat$ 7 - 5m - $\flat$ 6	Minor	<u>Ritual - "Josephine" [Em]</u>	Em - D - Bm - C [all except the first half of the chorus]
i - v - $\flat$ VI - iv	1m - 5m - $\flat$ 6 - 4m	Minor	<u>Alina Baraz &amp; Galimatias - "Fantasy" [Em]</u>	Em - Bm - C - Am [intro / verse 1]
ii - I - IV - V	2m - 1 - 4 - 5	Major	<u>k?d feat.RKCB - "Discover" [Eb]</u>	Fm - E $\flat$ /G - A $\flat$ - B $\flat$ [in the chorus, there's a Gm chord at the end of bar 4, and a Cm chord finishes off this particular progression]
i - $\flat$ III - $\flat$ VI - $\flat$ VI - $\flat$ VII - iv	1m - $\flat$ 3 - $\flat$ 6 - $\flat$ 6 - $\flat$ 7 - 4m	Minor	<u>Skrillex + Diplo + Justin Bieber - "Where Are Ü Now" [Fm]</u>	Fm - A $\flat$ - D $\flat$ - D $\flat$ - E $\flat$ - B $\flat$ m [THE DROP!]

### III. Modal Chord Progressions [Progressions with Borrowed Chords]

Chord Progression [Roman Numerals]	Chord Progression [Arabic Numbers]	Type of Progression	Song Example	Chords in Example
i - bIII - bVII - IV	1m - b3 - b7 - 4	Dorian	<u>Imagine Dragons - "Radioactive"</u> [Bm]	Bm - D - A - E
i - bIII - v - IV	1m - b3 - 5 - 4	Dorian	<u>Daft Punk / Nile Rogers / Pharrell - "Get Lucky"</u> [Bm]	Bm - D - F#m - E
I - bVII - IV	1 - b7 - 4	Mixolydian	<u>Sting - "If I Ever Lose My Faith"</u> [A]	A - G - D [verses]
i - bVII - IV	1m - b7 - 4	Dorian	<u>Chris Isaak - "Wicked Game"</u> [B]	Bm - A - D
I - v - IV	1 - 5m - 4	Mixolydian	<u>Coldplay - "Speed Of Sound"</u> [Bb]	Bb - Fm - Eb [verses]
I - v - bVII - I	1 - 5m - b7 - 1	Mixolydian	<u>David Guetta / Kelly Rowland - "When Love Takes Over"</u> [F#]	F# - C#m - Emaj7 - F#
I - bII - bIII	1 - b2 - b3	Spanish Phrygian	<u>Radiohead - "Everything In Its Right Place"</u> [C; mod to F chorus]  ALSO: <u>Kendrick Lamar - "How Much A Dollar Cost"</u> [F]	C - Db - Eb  F - Gb - Ab - Gb
i - bIII - IV	1m - b3 - 4	Dorian	<u>Zedd / Troye Sivan - "Papercut"</u> [Fm]	Fm - Ab - Bb [with a turnaround of Db - Cm - Ab - Bb every 8 bars]
IV - iv - I - V	4 - 4m - 1 - 5	Major [4m chord borrowed from parallel minor]	<u>A Perfect Circle - "The Nurse Who Loved Me"</u> [C#]	F# - F#m - C# - G# [chorus]
I - iv - bVII	1 - 4m - b7	Major [4m and b7 chords borrowed from parallel minor]	<u>Massive Attack - "Paradise Circus"</u> [C]	C - C/E - Fm - Bb
i - iv - V - i	1m - 4m - 5 - 1m	Harmonic [Classical] Minor	<u>Busta Rhymes &amp; Mariah Carey - "I Know What You Want"</u> [Ebm]	Ebm - Abm - Bb - Ebm
I - bVI - bVII	1 - b6 - b7	Major [b6 & b7 come from parallel minor]	<u>En Vogue - "Don't Let Go"</u> [F]	F - Db - Eb sus2/Bb

Chord Progression [Roman Numerals]	Chord Progression [Arabic Numbers]	Type of Progression	Song Example	Chords in Example
I - v - ii - IV	1 - 5m - 2m - 4	Mixolydian	<u>Sufjan Stevens - "Sister" [B]</u>	B - F#m/A - C#m/G# - E
i - bVI - bVI - bVII - I	1m - b6 - b6 - b7 - 1	Either: Minor with a borrowed '1' major chord OR Major with borrowed 1m, 6, and 7 chords	<u>Deadmau5 - "Some Chords" [G#]</u>	G#m - E - E - F# - G#

## IV. Chord Progressions with Secondary Dominants

Chord Progression [Expressed in Roman numerals]	Chord Progression [Expressed Numerically]	Type of Progression [Major / Minor / Modal]	Song Example	Chords in Example
I - V/vi - vi - IV	1 - 5/(6) - 6m - 4	Major	<u>Sam Smith - "I'm Not The Only One" [F]</u>	F - A - Dm - B $\flat$ maj7 [all except the bridge; at the end of each 8 bars there's an F - C - F turnaround]
IV - V - I - V/V OR $\flat$ VI - $\flat$ VII - i - V/VII	4 - 5 - 1 - 5/(5) OR $\flat$ 6 - $\flat$ 7 - 1 - 5/(7)	Major OR Minor	<u>Bruno Mars - "When I Was Your Man" [Am; chorus could modulate to C]</u>	F - G - Am - D7 [3rd line of the chorus; D7 <i>should</i> resolve to a G chord, but instead deceptively goes to F]
I - I7 [or V/IV] - IV - V/vi - vi - V/V - V7 - I	1 - 1(7) - 4 - 5/(6m) - 6m - 5/(5) - 5(7) - 1	Major	<u>Norah Jones - "Don't Know Why" [B<math>\flat</math>]</u>	B $\flat$ - B $\flat$ 7 - E $\flat$ - D7 - Gm - C7 - F7 - B $\flat$ [verse]

Secondary dominant chords were very common in 1950's - 1960's pop music; derived from both classical and jazz music, they can tend to sound a bit cliché in today's modern music, but still make a very tasteful appearance in current songs, particularly within the pop and "future" genres.