

Basic Chord Arpeggiation Exercise

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While there are many exceptions, jazz music typically relies on three general types of chords as its harmonic framework (major 7th, dominant 7th, and minor 7th). To better familiarize you with these shapes on your instrument, I am asking you to learn the following arpeggiation exercise. Each of these arpeggios includes the 9th of the chord (commonly included), which provides us with a more rhythmically viable exercise.

We begin by arpeggiating the major 7th chord:

C Maj7

Now, the dominant 7th chord. Notice that only one note, the 7th, has changed from the major 7th chord.

C7

Finally, the minor 7th chord. Again, notice that only one note, in this case the 3rd, has changed from the dominant 7th chord.

C min7

Now, string these chords together to complete the exercise. When you perform these for me on your first playing quiz, this is the format I would like you to use. I present them here in three keys. You are responsible for learning them in the remaining nine keys. Be sure to swing the 8th notes, and be smart about range. When these become uncomfortable for you on your instrument, change octaves when you need to.