How to Create Chords
Out of the Major Scale
And assign them Roman Numerals

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Okay, first lets take a look at the C majors scale and its notes. When learning anything about theory the C scale is a great place to start because there are no sharps (#) or flats (b). On a Piano this would be all the white keys, none of the black keys.

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  C D E F G A B C
A|----------0-2-3--|
E|----0-1-3--------|
C|0-2--------------|
g|----------------|
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The first and last note are both C notes, these is called the octave, the scale would then go own to repeat itself.

Now lets lay the scale out in a straight line.

C D E F G A B C

To form a chord you simply start with a note, skip the following note, play the next, and skip the following. For example, the notes of a C note will be in bold.

C D **E** F **G** A B C

We can see that the notes are C, E, G. We simply started with a C and skipped the D, landed on the E, skipped the F and landed on the G. This works throughout the scale.

C D **E** F **G** A **B** C

For example, here we have an E minor following the same every other note formula.

This means that in a major scale, we also have seven chord, because there are seven notes, the seven chords created from the C major scale are

C Dm Em F G Am B°

The chords order goes major, minor, minor, major, major, minor, diminished

We can also assign roman numerals to each of these chords as following.

I ii iii IV V vi vii°
C Dm Em F G Am B°

See how the minor chords are lower cased. This is the same for every single major scale. When you write out the notes of the major scale and use the same formula to make the chords you will always get the same order of Major and Minor chords. Let's look at the E major scale for example.

The notes are

E F# G# A B C# D#

The chords are

E F#m G#m A B C#m D#°

And the roman numerals are

I ii iii IV V vi vii°
E F#m G#m A B C#m D#°

So how does this apply to transposition?

Well, a chord progression like C-F-G-C can also be thought of as a I-IV-V-I in the key of C. So if we know the I IV and V chords of other keys, we can simply change the chords to make the key. Take are E scale for example? What is the I-IV-V-I? If you said E-A-B-E you are right, and that should be a familiar progression.

Your next step should be to print this out and try to find the I-IV-V-I in the following keys and write them here. Commiting this to memory will help you later transpose songs to fit your voice, but also help your improvisation immensely.

The key of D

The key of F

The key of G

The key of A

The key of B