

(Book 5.) Lesson 4.

Four Part Chords: Practical Voicings

This page is meant only as a demonstration of the practical fingering system that is used for generating four note chords.

Four voiced chords will, for the time being, always be played in open voicing. To generate the fingering, move the second lowest note of the "close voiced" chord, up one octave.

The diagram shows four voicings of a D7 chord on a treble clef staff. Each voicing is labeled: Root Position, First Inv., Second Inv., and Third Inv. The notes are indicated as R (Root), b7th, 3rd, and 5th. Fingerings are shown in circles: 4 for the 3rd and 5th in Root Position, 4 for the 3rd and 5th in First Inv., 4 for the 3rd and 5th in Second Inv., and 4 for the 3rd and 5th in Third Inv. The lowest note (Root) is consistently on the 4th string across all voicings.

Notice that the low note of the chord is still used to determine the inversion type even though the highest voice of the chord has changed.

The diagram shows four voicings of a C7 chord on a treble clef staff. Each voicing is labeled: Root Position, First Inv., Second Inv., and Third Inv. The notes are indicated as R (Root), b7th, 3rd, and 5th. Fingerings are shown in circles: 5 for the 3rd and 5th in Root Position, 5 for the 3rd and 5th in First Inv., 5 for the 3rd and 5th in Second Inv., and 5 for the 3rd and 5th in Third Inv. The lowest note (Root) is consistently on the 5th string across all voicings.

The diagram shows four voicings of an F7 chord on a treble clef staff. Each voicing is labeled: Root Position, First Inv., Second Inv., and Third Inv. The notes are indicated as R (Root), b7th, 3rd, and 5th. Fingerings are shown in circles: 6 for the 3rd and 5th in Root Position, 6 for the 3rd and 5th in First Inv., 6 for the 3rd and 5th in Second Inv., and 6 for the 3rd and 5th in Third Inv. The lowest note (Root) is consistently on the 6th string across all voicings.

When you work out the fingerings for the above examples, you should notice that the four notes in each chord are still on an adjacent set of four strings.

When harmonizing with four part chords, observe that the Root Position chord will harmonize the 3rd.
the First Inversion chord will harmonize the 5th
the Second Inv chord will harmonize the b7th
the Third Inversion chord will harmonize the Root

An adventurous student might try to incorporate some four part dominant 7th chords in some chord solos but I would suggest that you wait until you have completed a slightly more, in depth look, at the following lessons which deal with Major 6th, Dominant 7th, Major 7th and Minor 6th chords, and their applications in the interchangeable chord concept.