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Learn Four Simple Chords to Play Hundreds of Songs





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Just Four Simple Chords

Is that all you really need? If you're talking about how many chords you need to know to play hundreds or thousands of pop songs, then the answer is yes.

The simplest way for me to show you these four simple chords is in the key of C Major. But don't let that limit you. They can be played in all 12 keys. They can also be played with different voicings. The possibilities are endless! Just to make sure you're up to speed on the basics that lead up to this instructional guide, I'll cover those also.



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First of all, you should know the seven lettered notes in music: A,B,C,D,E,F, and G.

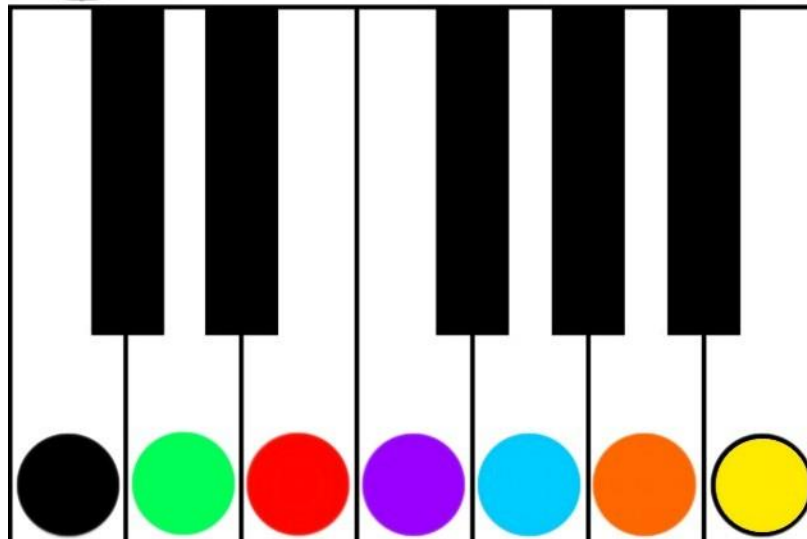
A B C D E F G



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A key of music is a menu of seven different notes in which you choose from. The easiest key for beginners to play in is the key of C Major. This is mainly because there isn't any combination of black and white keys to confuse a beginner at the piano.

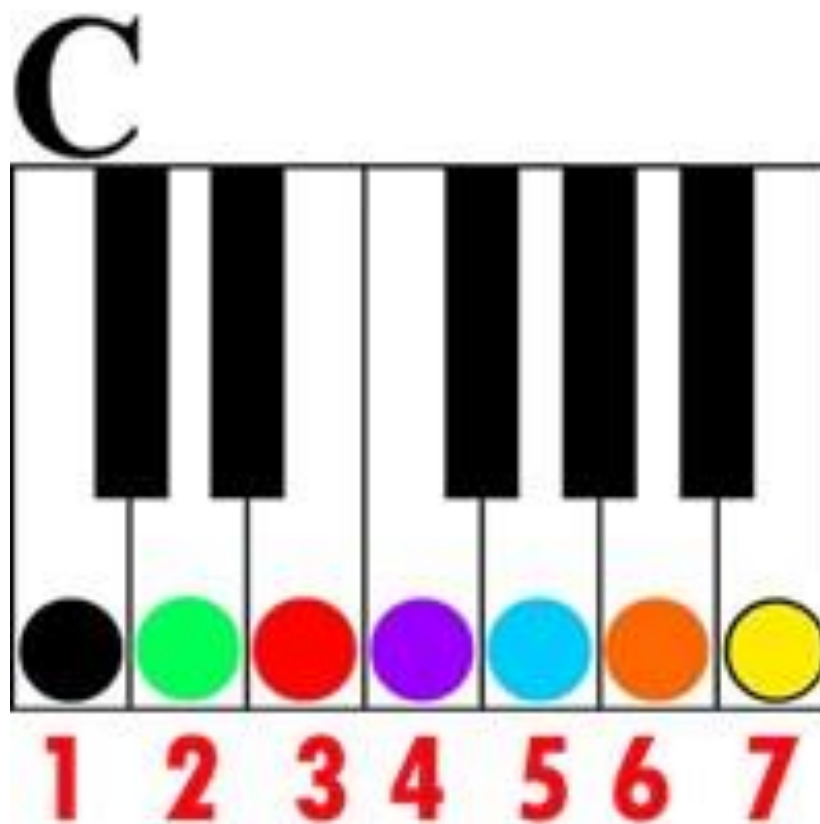
C





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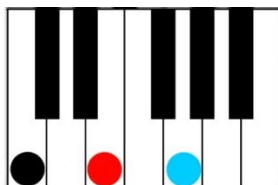
Here's the number system for C Major.





The 7 diatonic chords for C Major.

C



D_m



E_m



F



G



A_m

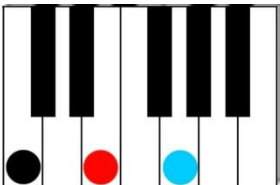








B_{dim}





The number system for the 7 diatonic chords for C Major.

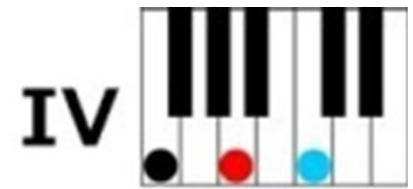
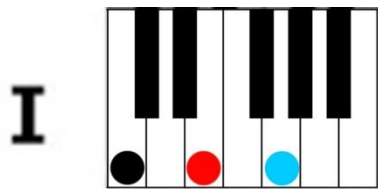
I  **ii**  **iii**  **IV** 

V  **vi**  **vii^o** 



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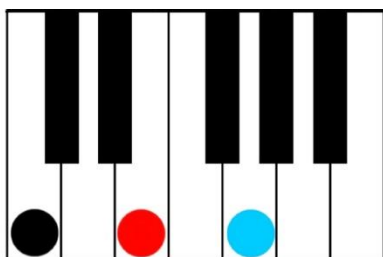
The four simple chords that you need to play virtually any pop song is the 1, 4, 5 and 6 chords.



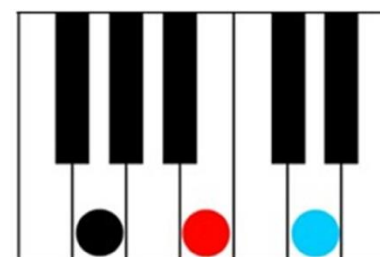


The four simple chords that you need to play virtually any pop song and their chord symbols.

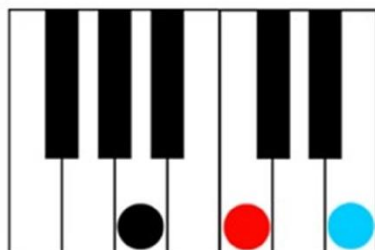
C
I



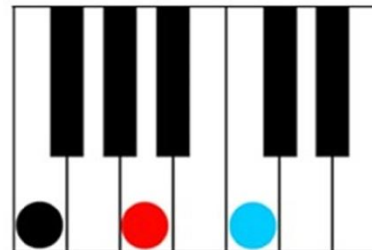
G
V



A**m**
vi

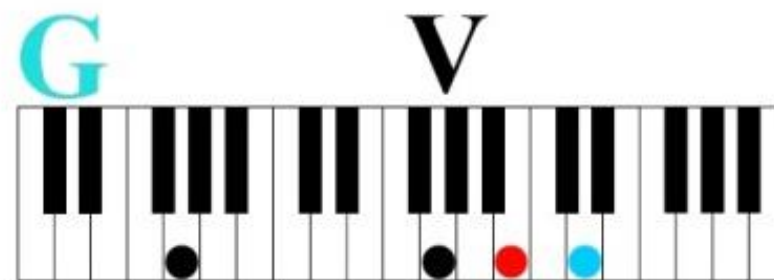
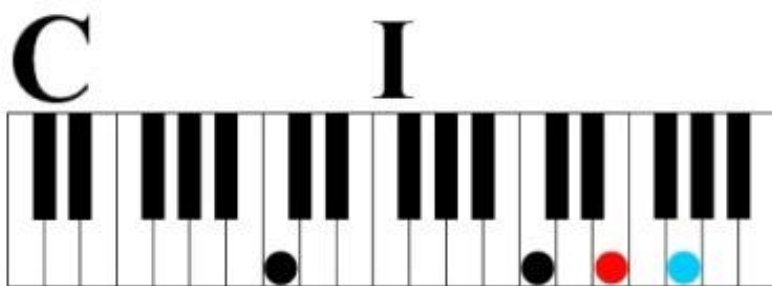


F
IV



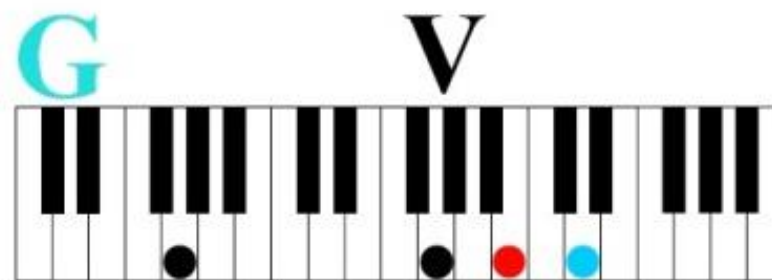
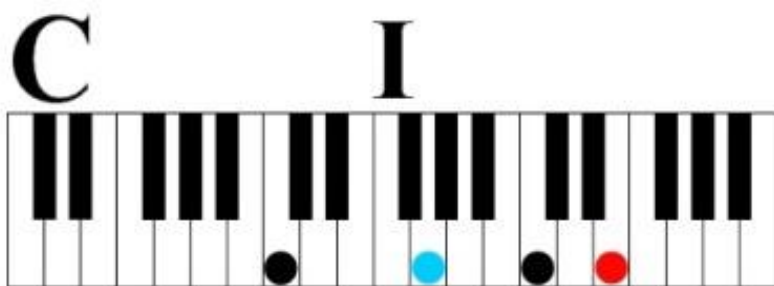


Let's voice these chords by playing them in our right hand and the root in our left.



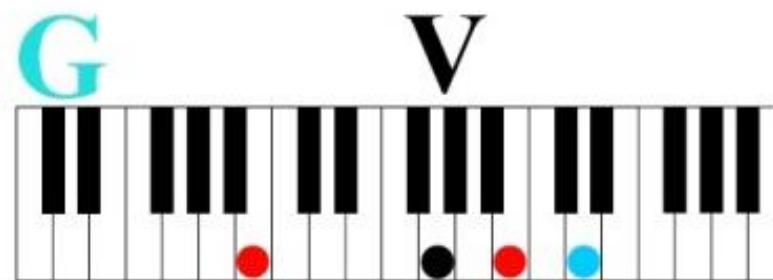
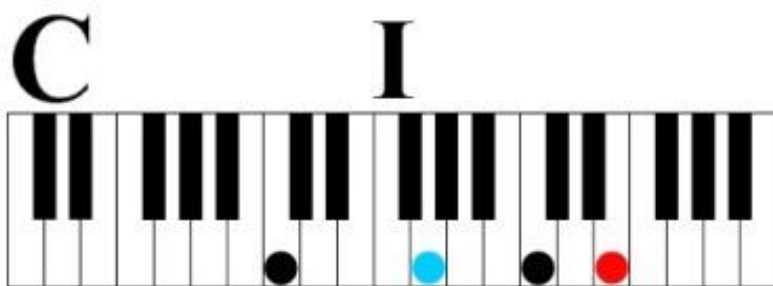


Now play the progression starting on C Major in second inversion.



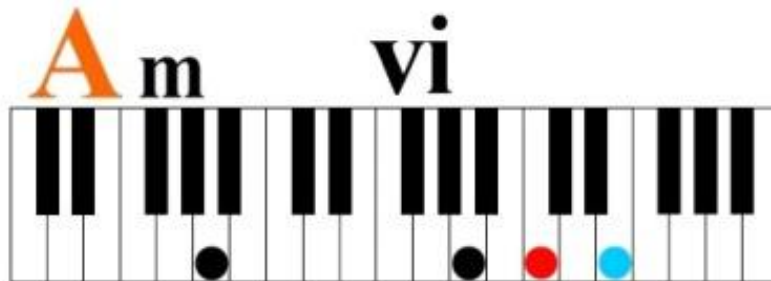
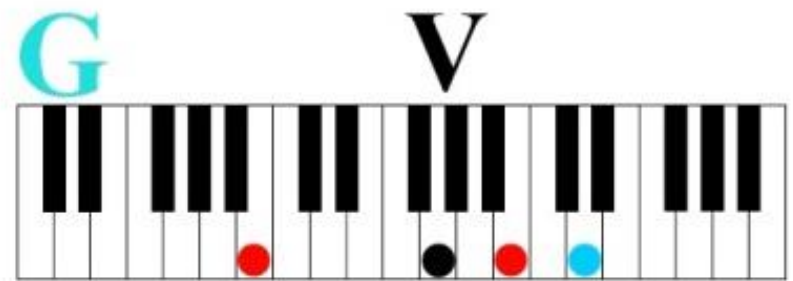
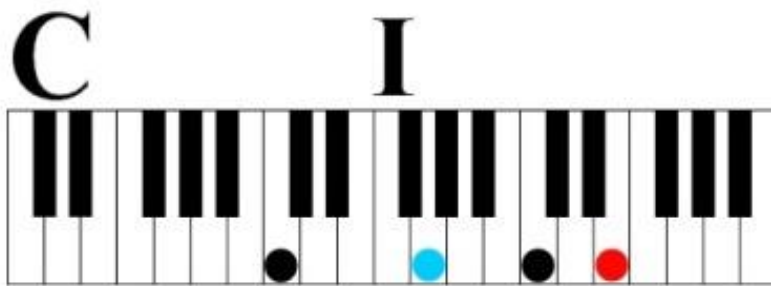


Now play the progression with the B in your left hand when you play the G Major chord.



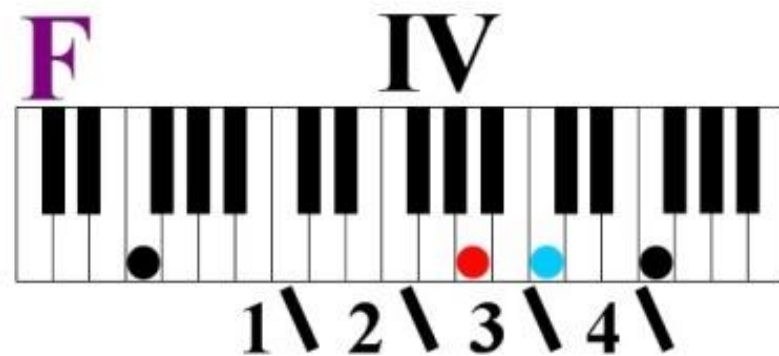
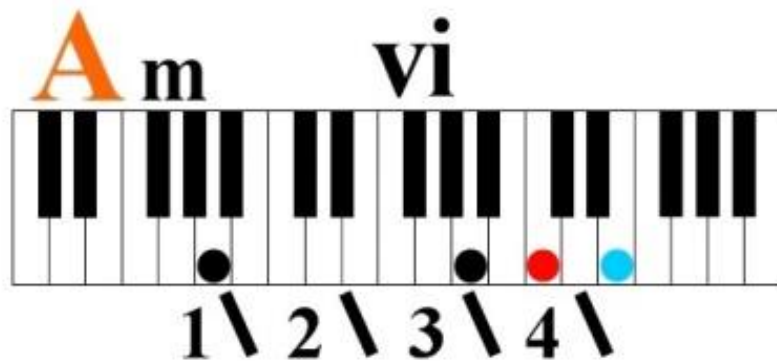
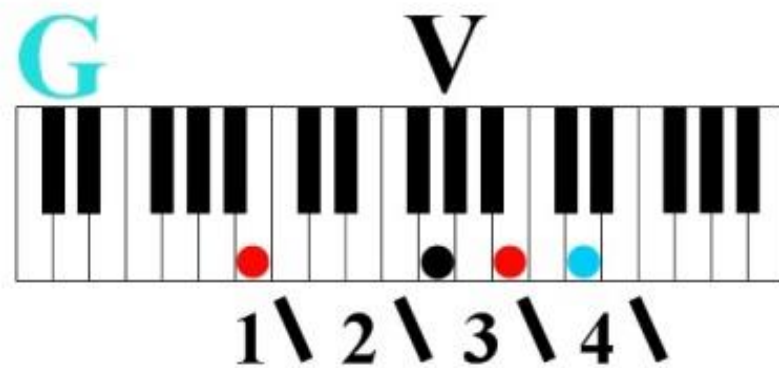
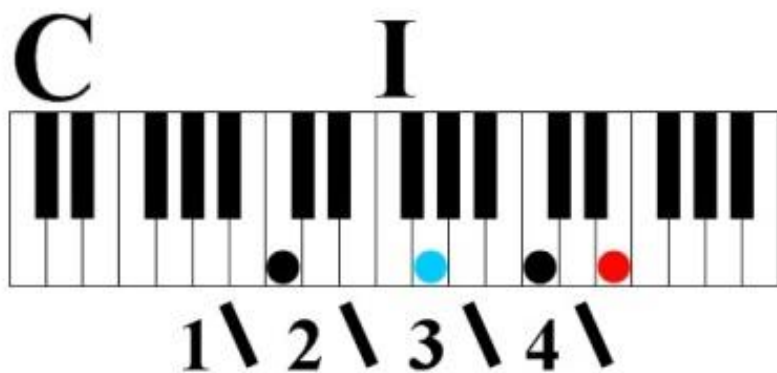


This time, let's voice the F Major chord in first inversion. This way, you're only moving one note when you transition from the A minor chord to F Major. major





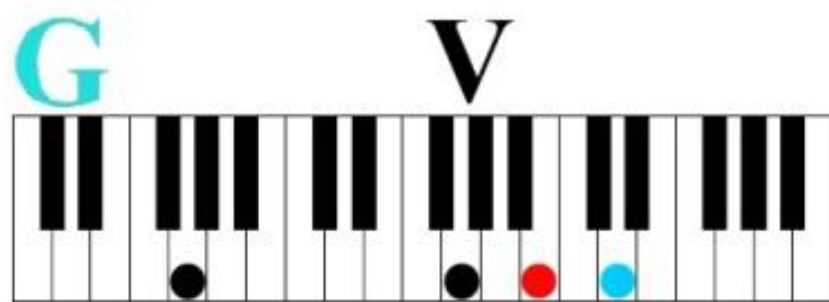
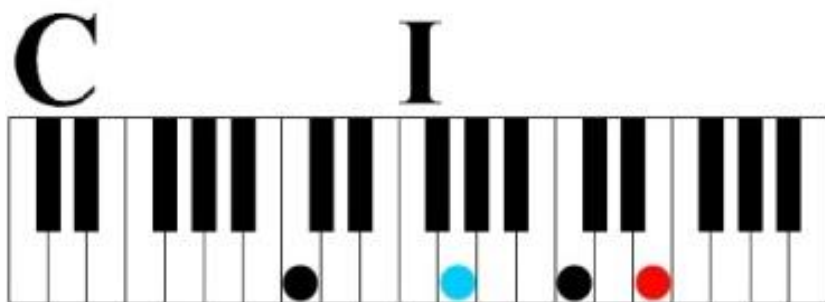
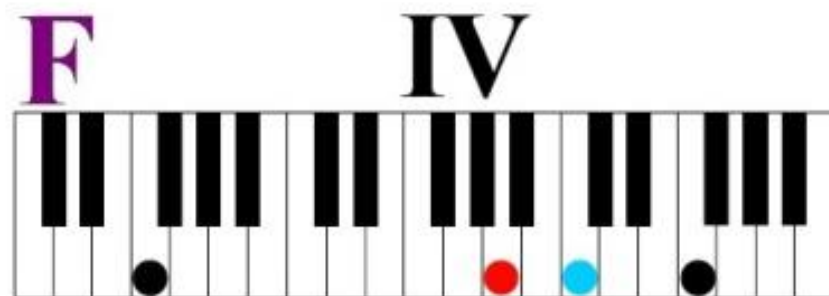
After some repetition, this chord progression should really start soaking your ear. Now let's play it with a pulse of four beats per chord.





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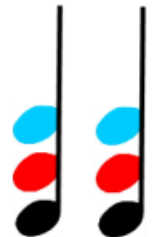


Remember, these four chords can be in any order or progression even though the chords remain the same.
Here's the 6 4 1 5 chord progression.



Now that we understand the concept of these four chords and how to play them in different voicings and progressions, let's now play them in a simple 4 chord per measure rhythm.



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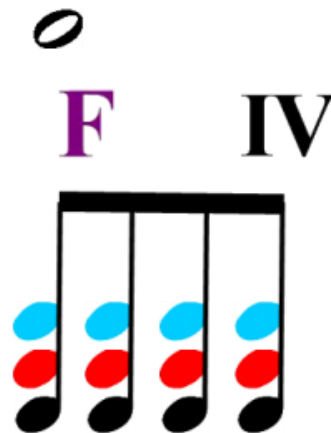
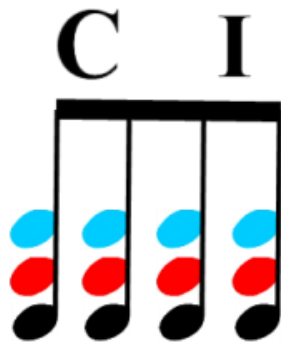
C	I	G	V
			
			
A_m	vi	F	IV
			
			

The notes that you see here are called Noteshots. They're simple tools that are based on standard music values with color to represent their numeric value. To find out more about Noteshots, visit: learncolorpiano.com

Now let's play a pulse of eighth note chords in this rhythmic example. Each chord will last for two full beats.



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Even though these voicings are showing the chords in root position, you should also play them in the alternate voicings shown earlier in the [Keyshots](#).

Now play the full chord on the first beat and arpeggiate the chord for beats 2, 3 and 4.



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C	I		G	V	
A_m	vi		F	IV	

You can also play the arpeggiated rhythm with the alternate voicings shown earlier in the [Keyshots](#).

Continue to experiment with your own voicings and rhythms with these four chords.



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You can have variations on the progression of these four chords. Here's some examples of the most common ones.

vi—IV—I—V

I—V—vi—IV

IV—I—V—vi

vi—I—V—IV

Continue to experiment with your own voicings and rhythms with these four chords.



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