

Inverting Chords In A Progression

Chords in a progression can be inverted to create minimal movement between voices also called **smooth voice leading**.

Common Tones

Before chords are to be inverted in a progression, find the inversion for the first chord that best fits the song. The rest of the chords will be inverted in relation to that chord.

1. Look for common tones between the first chord in the progression and the next.
2. Identify whether the common tone is the root, third, or fifth of the second chord.
3. Determine which inversion moves the common tone to the correct voice.
4. Respell the chord using that inversion.
5. Repeat for the next chord.

	I	IV	IV	V
Top	G	C	A	D
Middle	E	A	F	B
Bottom	C	F	C	G
Chord	Cmaj	Fmaj	Fmaj	Gmaj
	Root Position	Root Position	Second Inversion	Root Position

C is a common tone between the I and IV chord, It is the fifth of the IV chord and needs to be in the bottom voice. Move the IV chord to second inversion to retain smooth voice leading

Consecutive Chords

If chords are next to each other in the scale, they will not have any common tones. In order to make the movement between these chords minimal, use the same inversion type as the previous chord.

	I	IV	IV	V	V
Top	G	C	A	D	B
Middle	E	A	F	B	G
Bottom	C	F	C	G	D
Chord	Cmaj	Fmaj	Fmaj	Gmaj	Gmaj
	Root Position	Root Position	Second Inversion	Root Position	Second Inversion

IV and V are next to each other in the scale and share no common tones. Move the V chord to second inversion to match the inversion of the IV chord and retain smooth voice leading.