

# Beginning Piano

## Chord inversions

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Using chord inversions is one of the simplest ways to enhance your playing.

A chord is three or more notes played together. The most basic is called the I chord. It is made up of three tones within the notes of the scale. For example in the key of C the I chord is C - E - G. The IV chord in the key of C is F and the V chord is G. This most basic major chord, uses the 1 - 3 - 5 tones of the scale.

If we invert the first position C chord the C will be on the top E - G - C. If we invert it a second time the C is in the middle G - C - E.

This becomes interesting when we add the IV and the V chords because now we can keep a tonal center as we invert the chords. In example 1 the first bar uses the I and IV chords in the first position. The second bar uses the I chord in the first position and the IV chord in the second position or first inversion. The tonal center is C for both chords. Example 2 uses the same pattern only this time using the I and V chords. The tonal center for both chords is now G.

Ex.1                    C   F   C                    C   F   C                    C   G   C                    C   G   C

Joy to the World is an easy song to see how the use of inversions can simplify a song. The opening line of the song uses the I - IV - V chords to create the melody. The song begins using the C chord in the 2nd position followed by the G and F chords in the 3rd position. The use of the inversions allows us to use a minimum of hand movement. Since this song only uses the I - IV - V chords it is a great song to practice because it uses all three chord positions.

Ex.3                    C   G   F                    C   F   C   G   C                    F                    G                    C

Joy to the world! the Lord is come: Let earth re - ceive her king; ——— Let