

Extremely **Easy Method** BY ROBERT MAY for Piano & Keyboard

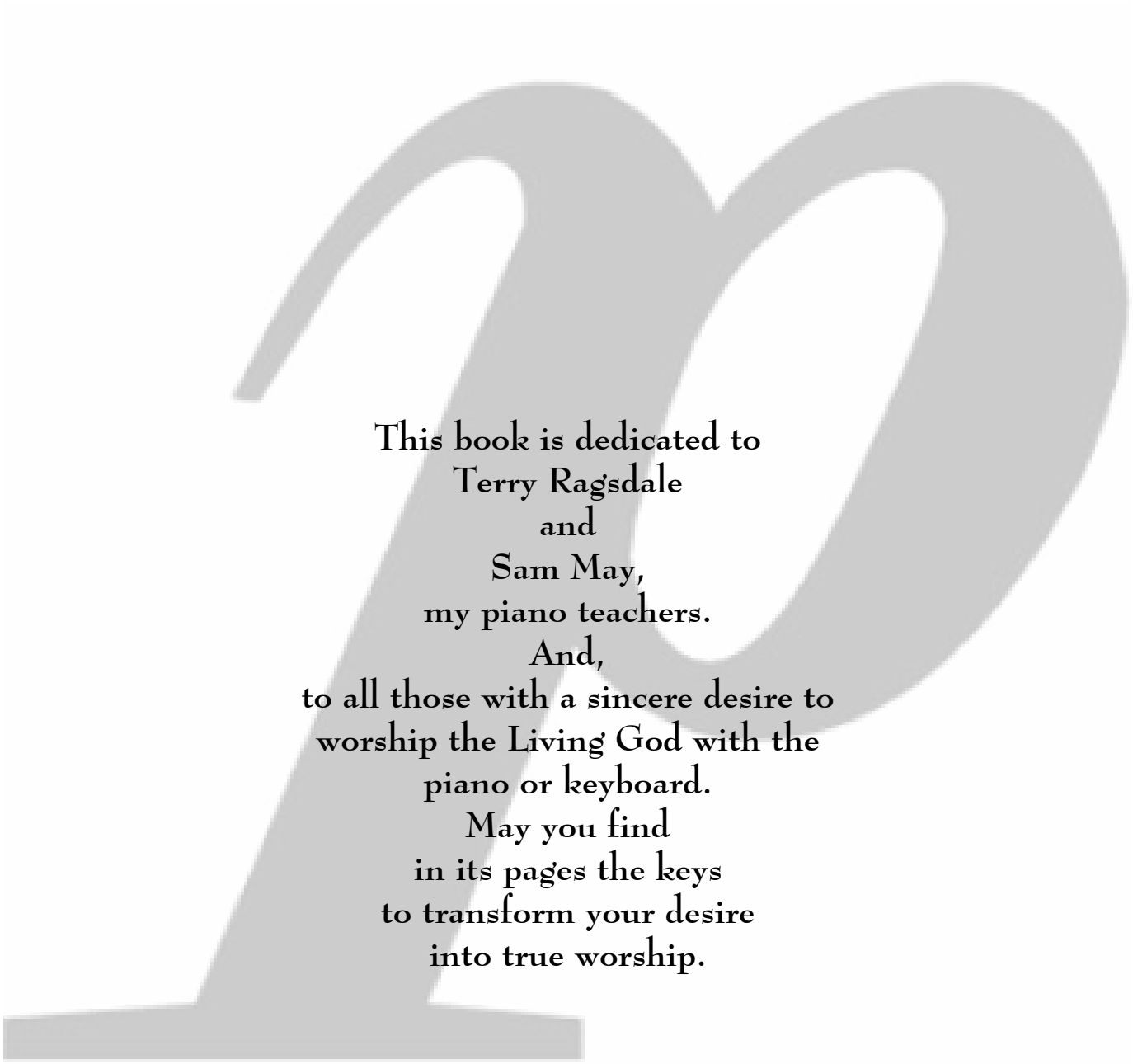


Even if you've had NO musical training, you can learn to play with this book
Arranged by key in an easy-to-follow format that anyone can understand
Simple illustrations show you exactly where to place your fingers for each chord
You'll be playing your first song within half an hour!

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This book is dedicated to
Terry Ragsdale
and
Sam May,
my piano teachers.
And,
to all those with a sincere desire to
worship the Living God with the
piano or keyboard.
May you find
in its pages the keys
to transform your desire
into true worship.

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Part One

- Introduction and Basics

- ✦ Introduction
- ✦ Fingers
- ✦ Music Basics
- ✦ Notes
- ✦ Chords & Keys
- ✦ Formula for Building Chords
- ✦ Key Signature
- ✦ The Circle of Fifths
- ✦ Time Signature
- ✦ Measures
- ✦ Dynamics



INTRODUCTION

This method for piano and keyboard was originally designed for the Christian who desires to worship God with music, but it can also be used to accommodate **ANY STYLE** of music. It is a very simple and basic method—so simple in fact that **virtually anyone**, adult or child, can learn to play the piano by ear if they truly have the desire and apply themselves to it.

THE KEY IS PRACTICE! I recommend at least ten to fifteen minutes a day to start with, then gradually increase the practice time.

This book is arranged in a **practical, easy-to-follow style**, with the six principle chords of each key illustrated in graphic form, each on a separate, single page. You will find this to be very helpful once you start playing your favorite songs.

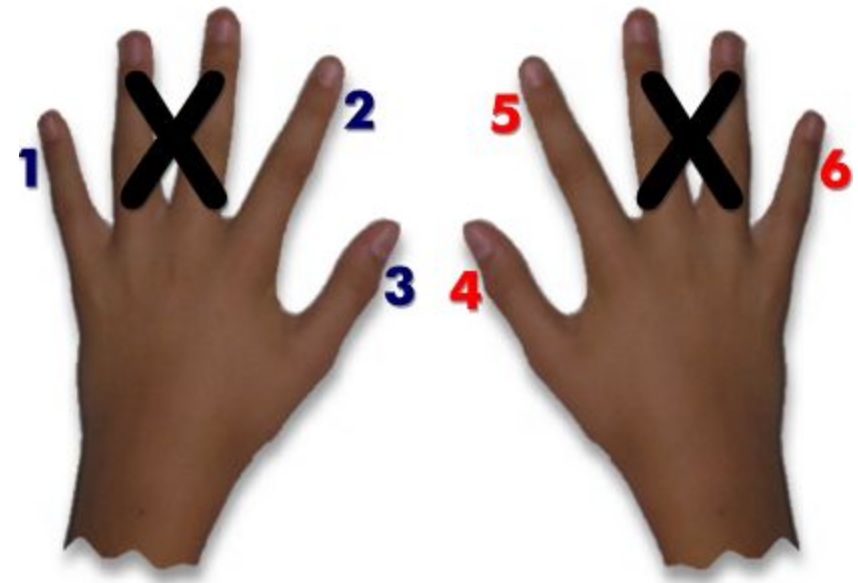
And speaking of those favorite songs of yours, did you know that you can download almost any song you can think of from the Internet for **FREE**, with the chords for piano and guitar? All it takes is a little searching. Also, most music books and sheet music come with the chords shown above the staff, so that you'll literally be able to play any song you want, once you have mastered this **Extremely Easy Method!**

I have been playing the piano **using only this method** for over twenty years; in church, for my personal enjoyment, and even doing a little recording. However, I don't want you to feel that you are limited to this very simple method. I encourage everyone to learn all they can about music, including theory, reading and writing music, and whatever instruments they have the opportunity to learn.

I first put this method into written form in Spanish, while living in Mexico in 1993, for the benefit of some of the Bible School students where I was teaching. Its effectiveness was immediately apparent, as several of the students were soon playing quite well, and later confirmed as some of those students took copies of the method and taught it to other people in more remote parts of Mexico, and **they also were soon playing the keyboard** in their worship services in their villages!



FINGERS



As you can see in the above illustration, **we are going to use only six fingers**. On the **left hand** we will call the little finger **#1**, the index finger **#2**, and the thumb **#3**. On the **right hand** we will call the thumb **#4**, the index finger **#5**, and the little finger **#6**.

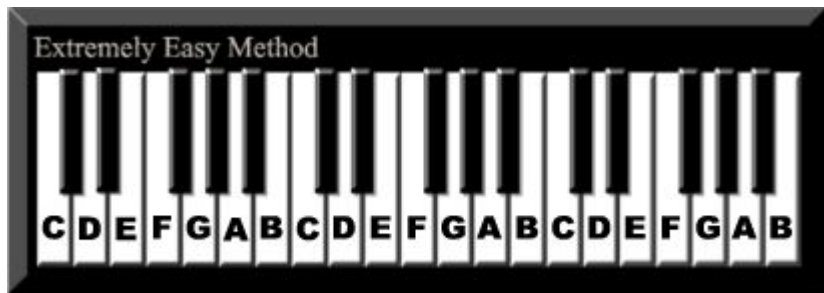
MUSIC BASICS

You don't need any prior musical training or experience to learn from this method. We will start out with a little basic music understanding, but if you're in a hurry to get started playing, [YOU CAN SKIP TO PART TWO, The Method](#), which begins on page 12, and come back to this section later.

NOTES

It is helpful to **memorize the name of each note on the keyboard**. The illustration below shows a picture of a keyboard with the names of all the white keys. **The black keys are sharps and flats**. The black key to the **left** of any white key is its **flat**. The black key to the **right** of any white key is its **sharp**.

For example, the black key to the immediate right of F is called F sharp (F[#]), but it is **also called** G flat (G^b). Therefore, every black key has two names. **This is how the keyboard is read:** C – C[#] (D^b) – D – D[#] (E^b) – E – F – F[#] (G^b) – G – G[#] (A^b) – A – A[#] (B^b) – B – C.



When naming the keys from lower to higher, that is, from **left to right**, we use the “**sharp**” name of the black keys: C, C sharp, D, D sharp, E, F, F sharp, G, G sharp, A, A sharp, B, C.

⇒ ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ ⇒
C – C[#] – D – D[#] – E – F – F[#] – G – G[#] – A – A[#] – B – C

When naming the keys from higher to lower, that is, from **right to left**, we use the “**flat**” name of the black keys: C, B, B flat, A, A flat, G, G flat, F, E, E flat, D, D flat, C.

⇐ ⇐ ⇐ ⇐ ⇐ ⇐ ⇐ ⇐ ⇐ ⇐
C – D^b – D – E^b – E – F – G^b – G – A^b – A – B^b – B – C

CHORDS & KEYS

A **chord** is made up of a combination of notes, and a **key** is made up of a combination of chords.

There are only three **notes** in a **basic chord**. These three notes are called a **triad**. The name of the chord is also the first note, or **ROOT**, of the triad. To “build” a chord, start at the root and count a certain number of half-steps to the right. **A half-step is the distance from one key to the next**, regardless of the color of the key.

For every **MAJOR KEY** we learn, we will learn three **MAJOR CHORDS** and three **MINOR CHORDS**. The following is a **formula** that shows how to determine which three notes you need to build any major or minor chord.

Formula for Building Chords

Start from the root note and count half-steps to the right. DO NOT count the root.

- ✎ For a major chord count 4 and 3
- ✎ For a minor chord count 3 and 4

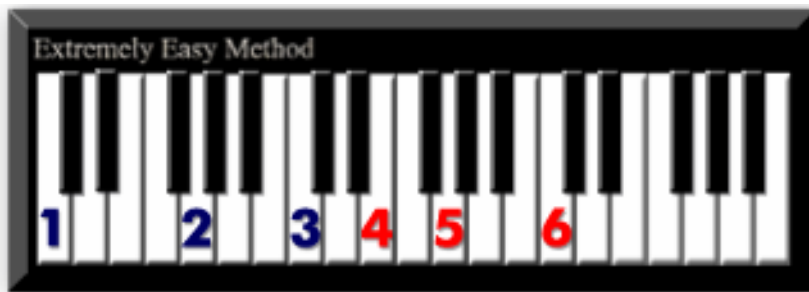
For example, to **build a C major chord**, follow these steps:

- ✎ Start at C
- ✎ Count four half-steps to the right, and arrive at E
- ✎ Count three more half steps, and arrive at G

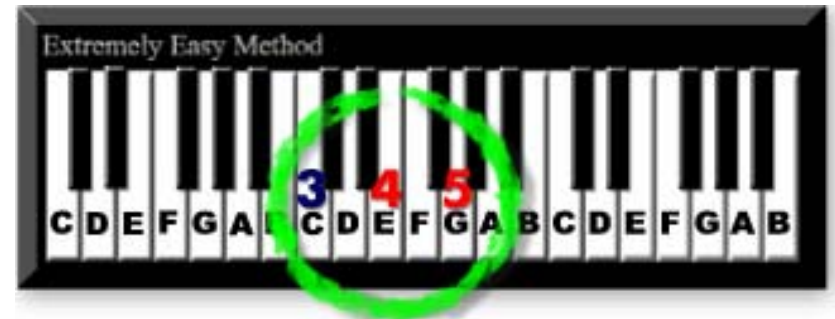
So, now we know that the three notes we need to build the C major chord are C, E and G. This is the **TRIAD** for the C major chord. Now the next question is, how do we play three notes with six fingers?

- ✎ We will play three C^s, one E, and two G^s

In summary, we will take the three notes that we derived from the Formula for Building Chords, in this case C, E and G, and **repeat some of the notes** so as to produce a fuller sound. Here's what it looks like:



The numbers on the keyboard correspond to the **fingers** that play each particular key. Notice that we play the **triad** with fingers **3**, **4** and **5**, and the other fingers repeat those same notes, giving us a more interesting sound.

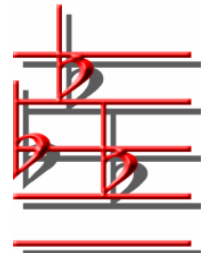


We'll also see in **Part 2, The Method**, how the extra fingers allow us to play more exciting rhythms. But for now, we need to get back to our basics.

KEY SIGNATURE

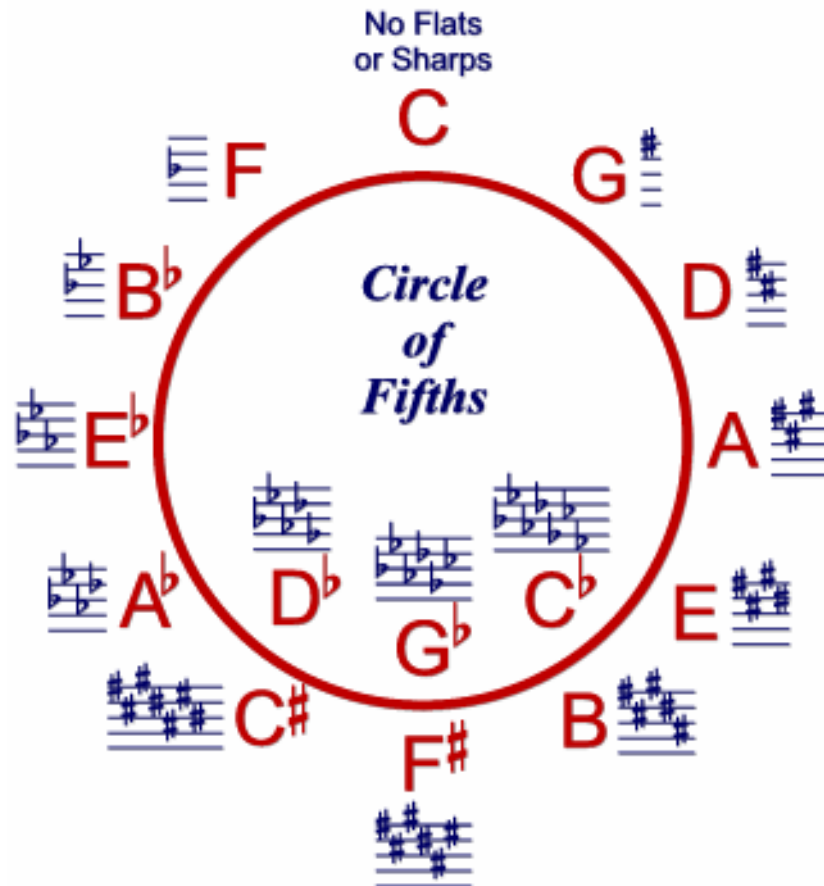
Whether you play a song from memory, from a chord sheet, or from sheet music, you have to know what key it is in. If you are playing from sheet music, the **Key Signature** will appear at the beginning of each line, in the form of a group of sharp or flat symbols. The key signature tells you what key to play the song in.

This is the Key Signature for E^b



THE CIRCLE OF FIFTHS

There is an amazing little tool called *The Circle of Fifths* that will help you memorize the number of sharps or flats that correspond to each key signature, as well as the relationship between keys.



As I mentioned earlier, for every **MAJOR KEY**, we will learn **3 MAJOR CHORDS** and **3 MINOR CHORDS**.

We'll learn some MINOR KEYS later, but for now we'll concentrate on the Majors. We will assign each chord within a key a **Roman numeral**.

For example, **in the key of C**, the **C** chord is number **I**; the **d^m** chord is number **ii**; the **e^m** chord is number **iii**; the **F** chord is number **IV**; the **G** chord is number **V**; and the **a^m** chord is number **vi**. Notice that the ii, iii and vi chords are all minor chords, while the I, IV and V chords are all major chords. **This is a rule that is true for every major key.**

In order to be able to play a song in the key of C, **we must learn to play all six chords** that make up the key of C. **The I, IV and V chords are the most commonly used** of the six. However, the three minor chords, the ii, iii and vi chords, are also important.

Following is a chart showing all twelve major keys, along with the **six principle chords** for each.

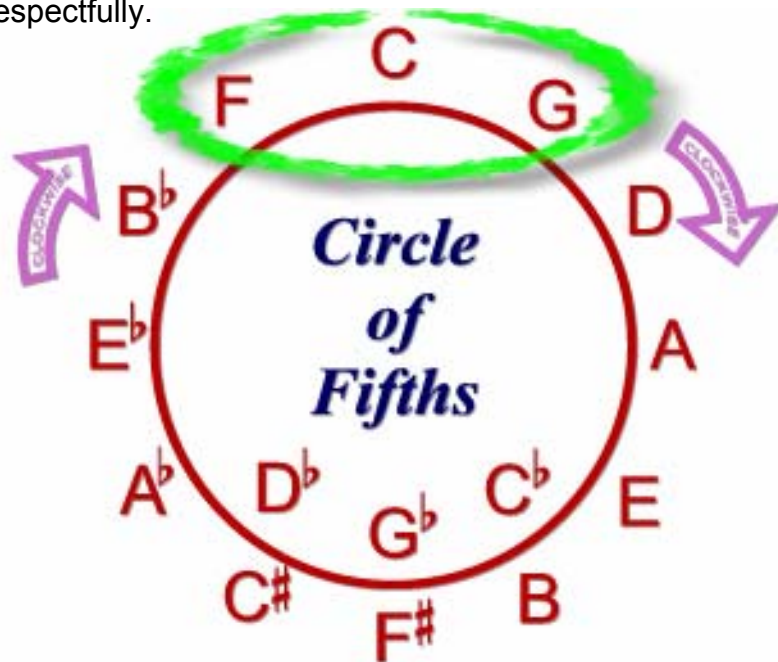
KEY ↓	CHORDS					
	I	ii	iii	IV	V	vi
C	C	D ^m	E ^m	F	G	A ^m
G	G	A ^m	B ^m	C	D	E ^m
D	D	E ^m	F ^{#m}	G	A	B ^m
A	A	B ^m	C ^{#m}	D	E	F ^{#m}
E	E	F ^{#m}	G ^{#m}	A	B	C ^{#m}
B-C ^b	B-C ^b	C ^{#m} -D ^b m	D ^{#m} -E ^b m	E-F ^b	F [#] -G ^b	G ^{#m} -A ^b m
F [#] -G ^b	F [#] -G ^b	G ^{#m} -A ^b m	A ^{#m} -B ^b m	B-C ^b	C [#] -D ^b	D ^{#m} -E ^b m
C [#] -D ^b	C [#] -D ^b	D ^{#m} -E ^b m	F ^m	F [#] -G ^b	G [#] -A ^b	A ^{#m} -B ^b
A ^b	A ^b	B ^b m	C ^m	D ^b	E ^b	F ^m
E ^b	E ^b	F ^m	G ^m	A ^b	B ^b	C ^m
B ^b	B ^b	C ^m	D ^m	E ^b	F	G ^m
F	F	G ^m	A ^m	B ^b	C	D ^m

To review this concept once more, **the key of C** is made up of the following chords: **C**, **d^m**, **e^m**, **F**, **G**, and **a^m**. Please note that **the minor chords do not have to be written in small letters**—I put them in small letters here to emphasize the difference between the major and minor chords. Also, you'll notice that the **I**, **IV** and **V** chords are in **red**. Remember: they are the most common chords in their respective keys.

We can easily determine the IV and V chords of any major key by referring to the Circle of Fifths.

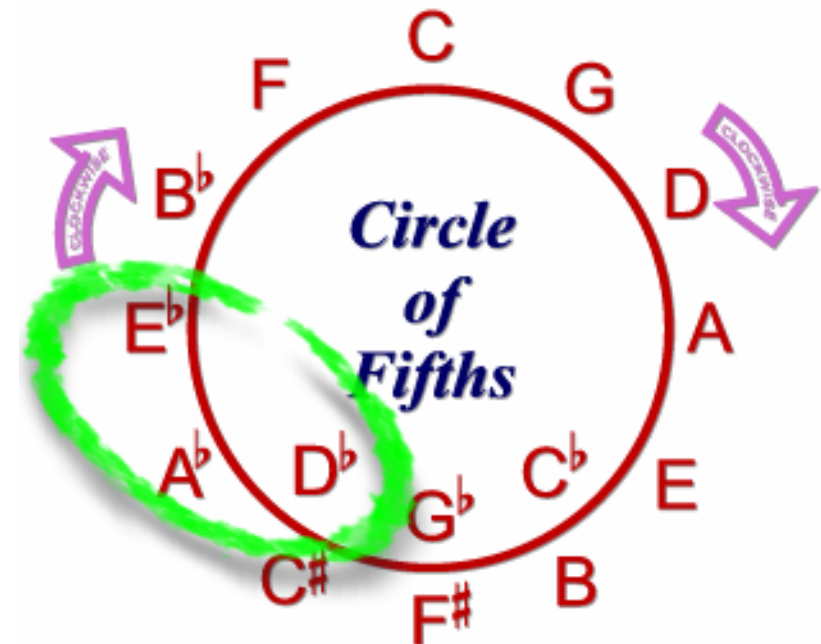
- ✦ Pick any major key
- ✦ The I chord has the same name as the key
- ✦ The IV chord is the letter immediately preceding it
- ✦ The V chord is the letter immediately following it

Moving **CLOCKWISE**, the letters immediately preceding and following a letter are its IV and V chords, respectfully.



In the preceding example, the key is C. The C chord is also the I chord. F is the IV chord, and G is the V chord. So, to play a song in the key of C, the primary chords will be C, F and G.

Here's another example:



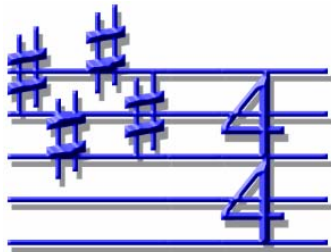
Remember we're moving clockwise. We want to determine the IV and V chords for the key of A^b. Do you see the IV chord? That's right; it's D^b! It's not C[#] because we keep flats with flats, and sharps with sharps. I'll bet you've already figured out the V chord, too. If you said E^b you were correct.

We can **use this same process for any key**. What about C^b, which, incidentally, is the same as B, since there's not a black key between B and C? The IV chord is E, and the V chord is G^b.

TIME SIGNATURE

After you determine the key you want to play a song in, and you know which chords to play, you then have to **establish the rhythm of the song**. Since we are learning to play “by ear,” we won’t get into an in-depth study of notes and rests. However, there are a few important details we need to understand to be able to play a song with the proper **beat** and **rhythm**.

Do you remember the Key Signature example at the bottom of page 7? If you were playing from sheet music, you would also see the **Time Signature**, just to the right of the Key Signature, on every line of music. It might look something like this:



In this example, the Key is E (refer to the Circle of Fifths on page 8), **and the time signature is 4/4**. The top number tells us how many beats there are per measure, and the bottom number tells us what kind of note equals one beat.

In the above example there are **four beats per measure**, and the quarter note equals one beat. This is the most common time signature, and is in fact sometimes referred to as “**Common Time**,” and indicated by the letter C instead of the numbers 4/4.



NOTE: Since the purpose of this book is to present a simple method for playing piano, we will not discuss note values here. However, as I stated earlier, I believe everyone should learn all they can about music, so don’t stop with this course—keep learning!

MEASURES

In order to play an instrument “by ear,” you must be able to **HEAR** the rhythm and beat. Even if you don’t see the music written, you have to “**keep the beat**” in your head, and play accordingly with your fingers.

Again, whether you see it written or not, the piece you are playing is divided into measures. In its written form, the **Musical Staff** is made up of five horizontal lines, and various vertical lines, called **Bar Lines**. These Bar Lines divide the song into measures.

After 4/4, the next most common time is **3/4**. Notice that in both cases the quarter note is equal to one beat; but **the point of interest for us is the top number—the number of beats per measure**. So, for our purposes we will determine if a song has three beats per measure or four beats per measure.

Perhaps the easiest way to learn this concept is by clapping the beat. First, **clap and say**:

One, two, three, four. One, two, three, four...

Emphasize the **ONE** beat. **Repeat the exercise a number of times**. This is **4/4** Time.

Now we’ll count and clap **3/4** Time. Again, emphasize the **ONE** beat, and **repeat the exercise a number of times**.

One, two, three. One, two, three...

We’ll talk more about this in Part 2, when we begin to play some songs. But first, there’s one more **important element we need to learn: Dynamics**.

DYNAMICS

The piano was invented in Italy, in 1709, by Bartolommeo Cristofori. He called his invention **pianoforte**, because the player could control the volume between soft and loud by applying less or more pressure to the keys. You see, in Italian, **piano** means soft and **forte** means loud. Thus his new instrument was called a **soft-loud**.

You may not be able to apply these dynamics if you are playing a less-expensive keyboard. However, many of the newer keyboards on the market today, even in the lower price range, have pressure-sensitive keys that allow the musician to control the volume by the amount of pressure applied to the keys. If you haven't purchased your keyboard yet, you may consider buying one that has this feature. **It will add an extra dimension to your performance.**

Not only is the name of the instrument Italian, but **MANY** musical terms are also Italian, including most of the terms that refer to the dynamics of playing or singing music. That shouldn't come as a surprise, since many of the most important early composers in the renaissance period were Italian, and during that period many musical terms first came into broad usage.

Following is a list of a few dynamics that **we can incorporate into our piano playing** as we interpret songs, even if we're playing by ear or by chords. Obviously, if we have the written music in front of us we can follow the dynamics that were written by the composer. But if not, we can nevertheless put "**feeling**" into our performance by varying the intensity, or volume, according to the mood of the piece.

Some Italian Terms for Dynamics

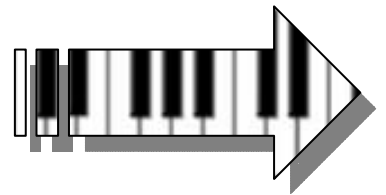
Italian Term	Literal Translation	Modern Definition	Symbol or Abbreviation
<i>Crescendo</i>	Growing	Becoming Louder	≡
<i>Decrescendo</i>	Shrinking	Becoming Softer	≡
<i>Forte</i>	Strong	Loud	<i>f</i>
<i>Fortissimo</i>	Very strong	Very Loud	<i>ff</i>
<i>Mezzo forte</i>	Half-strong	Moderately Loud	<i>mf</i>
<i>Piano</i>	Gentle	Soft	<i>p</i>
<i>Pianissimo</i>	Very Gentle	Very Soft	<i>pp</i>
<i>Mezzo piano</i>	Half-gentle	Moderately Soft	<i>mp</i>

Well, now that you've got some basics down, I think it's time to play some music! In the next section I'll lay out for you **step-by-step instructions for the Method**, followed by graphics that show **exactly** where to place each finger on the keyboard to play all six chords for every major key that we're going to learn. **Let's get started!**

Part Two

■ The Method

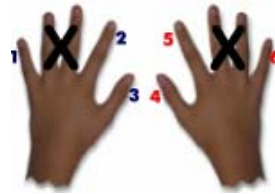
- ✦ Let's Start at the Very Beginning
- ✦ Different Strokes...
- ✦ Time & Speed
- ✦ A Slow Rhythm
- ✦ Our First Song
- ✦ Experiment
- ✦ Our Second Song
- ✦ Adding the Minor Chords
- ✦ The One-Two Beat
- ✦ Be Creative
- ✦ Practice



LET'S START AT THE VERY BEGINNING

Let's start at the very beginning—it's a very good place to start. The "musical alphabet" doesn't start at A, but C. The grand staff on sheet music, as well as the piano itself, is divided at Middle C. And if you recall, C is at the top of the Circle of Fifths. So, let's start by learning to play the C major chord.

Remember from page 5, this picture of the hands? Notice again that the fingers are numbered and color-coded. **This will be your key to understanding the graphics that show how to play each chord.**



For our Formula for Building Chords on page 7, we used C major as an example. Let's look at the graphic for the C major chord again, and this time, **follow the example and play it on your piano.**



You'll notice that the numbers 1, 2 and 3 are **BLUE**: They correspond to the three fingers that we use on our **Left Hand**. The numbers 4, 5 and 6 are **RED**: They correspond to the three fingers that we use on our **Right Hand**. To play the chord, simply place your fingers on the keys exactly as shown on the graphic, **AND PLAY**.

DIFFERENT STROKES...

A lot of people have asked me over the years, "But which note do I play first; or, What order do I play them in; or, How do I play different rhythms?" Those are all valid questions, but I'm afraid **the answers** are only found in **experience** and **experimenting**, and mostly the latter.

I believe that with time, **everyone develops their own style of playing**. You know—Different strokes for different folks. However, there are some **basic techniques** that we'll learn, and you can build on them as you go along.

TIME & SPEED

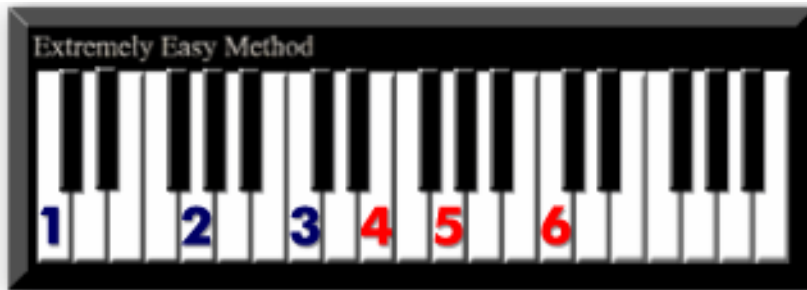
The two most basic considerations concerning rhythm and our style of playing for a particular song are **TIME** and **SPEED**. Listen to the song carefully, and notice if it is in 4/4 time or 3/4 time.

Actually, it could be in a number of other times, such as 4/2, 2/4, 6/4, etc. But, **our main concern**, to be able to play by ear, is whether we play in **measures of 3 beats or 4 beats**. **Clap along with the song**, and observe whether it feels "natural" to clap **ONE, TWO, THREE**; or **ONE, TWO, THREE, FOUR**.

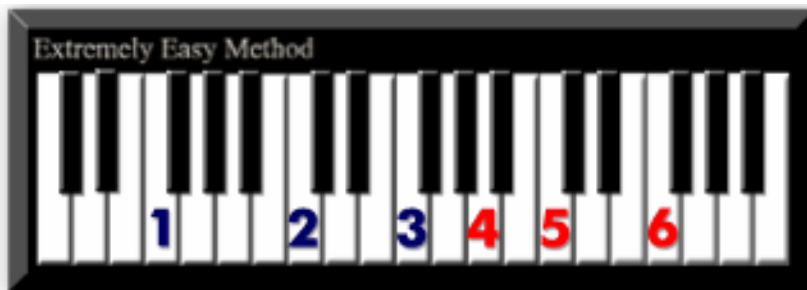
The next thing to consider is the **speed** of the song. We will employ a **different rhythm for slow songs** than we do for **fast songs**. For some fast songs I play a kind of **one-two, bouncy beat**, whereas for some slow songs I prefer a **flowing type of rhythm**, sometimes playing notes one at a time, and sometimes randomly combining several notes. On the next page, we'll explore a few ideas to get us started, and then we'll **LEARN OUR FIRST SONG**.

To make things a little more interesting, let's go ahead and **add two more chords: F and G**. **Note: From now on, if I don't specify that a chord is a minor chord, it is assumed that it is a major chord**. Now, referring back to our **Circle of Fifths** on page 9, we see again that the two principle chords that go with **C** to make up the **KEY OF C** are **F** and **G**.

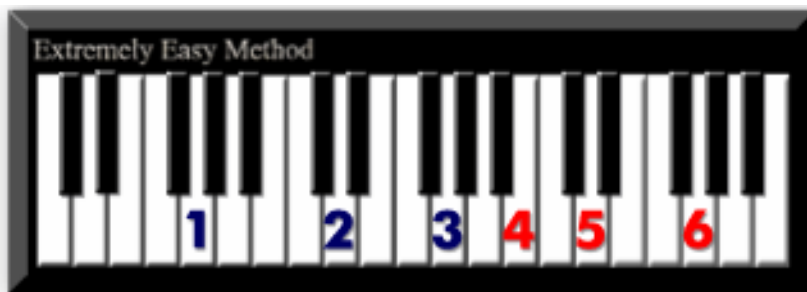
C Chord



F Chord



G Chord



A SLOW RHYTHM

Let's begin with a slow rhythm. **Lightly** place **all six fingers** on their respective keys on the piano to play a C chord (refer to the top graphic at left).

A Few Notes about Posture and Hand Position

- Sit up tall
- Lean slightly forward
- Keep wrists & forearms level with the keys
- Keep feet flat on the floor
- Keep fingers curved
- Keep wrists loose

Relax!

Start by establishing the **Tempo**, the speed at which you will play the song. Count out the **ONE, TWO, THREE** beat, only this time, instead of clapping, **count out loud**. Say, "ONE-AND-TWO-AND-THREE-AND." **Play a key every time you say a word. Let's start off playing the keys in this sequence: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.**

Play one key at a time, one after the other, in a **steady rhythm**. As you play each key, hold it down until you play it again. This gives a fuller sound.

Now try the same rhythm with the **F chord** (refer to the middle graphic at left), and the **G chord** (refer to the bottom graphic at left). **Practice each chord a number of times, until it begins to feel "natural."**

Finally, **practice switching** from one chord to another, going from C to F, then to G, then back to C, then to G, etc. Change it up randomly, and keep practicing until you can switch smoothly between any two chords.

OUR FIRST SONG


For our first song, we'll play the first verse of *Lullaby and Goodnight*. We'll use the **ONE-TWO-THREE beat**, and play it in the **key of C**.

Notice that the **chords** are placed **above** the lyrics **exactly where you start** playing them. **Keep repeating the same chord until a different one is indicated**. We'll play the **same three chords**, and use the same **1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 sequence** that we practiced on page 14.

Start very slowly, and gradually increase the tempo until you can play it at the normal speed. Play through the **1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 sequence ONCE as an introduction**, then start singing as you play the 5 finger the second time around.

Lullaby and Goodnight

by Johannes Brahms



C
Lullaby, and good night,
G
With roses bedight,
C
With lilies o'erspread,
C
Is baby's wee bed.
F C
Lay thee down now, and rest,
G C
May thy slumber be blessed!
F C
Lay thee down now, and rest,
G C
May thy slumber be blessed!

EXPERIMENT

In reality, I personally never play a song using the **1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6** sequence! **I usually play kind of a random sequence**, maybe starting with several fingers simultaneously at the start of each measure (where you count or clap **ONE** louder than the other numbers), and alternate all the fingers for the remainder of the measure, sometimes playing one finger at a time; sometimes two or more at a time.

Remember on page 13, I said that I believe **the best way for someone to learn to play different rhythms is by experimenting?** Well, let's experiment a little.

Let's play the same song again. Count **ONE-AND-TWO-AND-THREE-AND**. This time, at the start of each measure, as you count **ONE**, play **1, 3, 4, 5, 6** simultaneously. As you count the first **AND**, play **2**. For the remainder of the measure, as you count **TWO-AND-THREE-AND**, play any or all fingers, randomly, in any combination or any finger alone.

Repeat this process for each measure of the song, playing whichever chord is indicated for that measure. **Experiment with different combinations**. How does it sound?

Sometimes I don't play anything for a half beat or more—I just keep holding down the last key or keys I played. Other times I may play double the number of beats, just to add variety.

They say, "Variety is the spice of life." **Add some spice to your piano playing!** Keep experimenting until you develop your own personal style.

OUR SECOND SONG

Now let's play a slow song in 4/4 time. Remember to count **ONE-TWO-THREE-FOUR**, or **ONE-AND-TWO-AND-THREE-AND-FOUR-AND**. Experiment with different finger sequences. We'll play a **simplified version** of "Auld Lang Syne" in the key of C, using only the three chords we've learned so far. Later we'll play the song again using more chords.

auld lang syne (ôld' lang zīn') *n.* The times gone past; the good old days.

[Scots: auld, *old*; lang, *long*; syne, *since*]

Auld Lang Syne

by Robert Burns

C G
 Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
 C F
 And never brought to mind?
 C G
 Should auld acquaintance be forgot
 F G C
 And days of auld lang syne?

C G
 For auld lang syne, my dear,
 C F
 For auld lang syne,
 C G
 We'll take a cup o'kindness yet,
 F G C
 For auld lang syne!

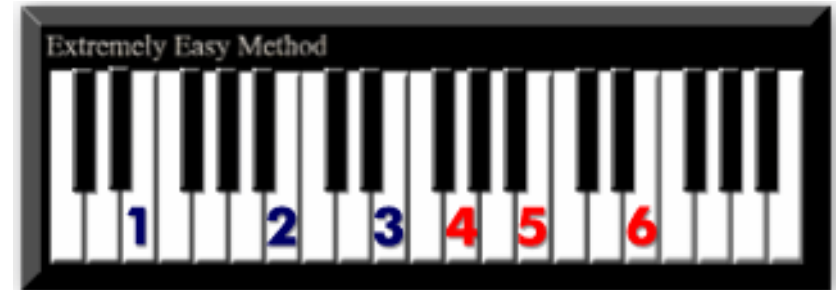
ADDING THE MINOR CHORDS

Now let's take a few minutes to learn the other three chords that go with the key of C: D^m, E^m and A^m. **Practice these new chords**, then turn the page to play an enhanced version of "Auld Lang Syne."

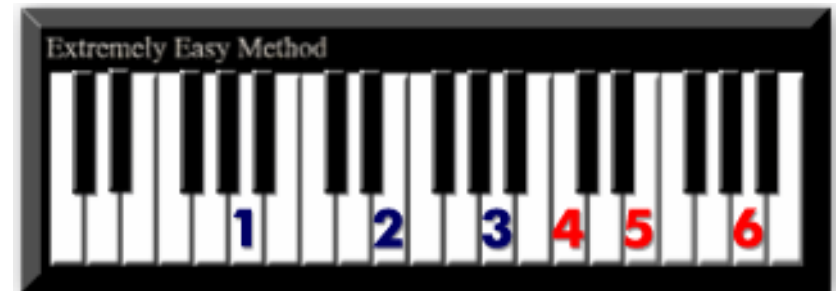
D^m Chord



E^m Chord



A^m Chord



Auld Lang Syne

by Robert Burns

C G
 Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
 C F
 And never brought to mind?
 C G
 Should auld acquaintance be forgot
 E^m A^m D^m G C
 And days of auld lang syne?

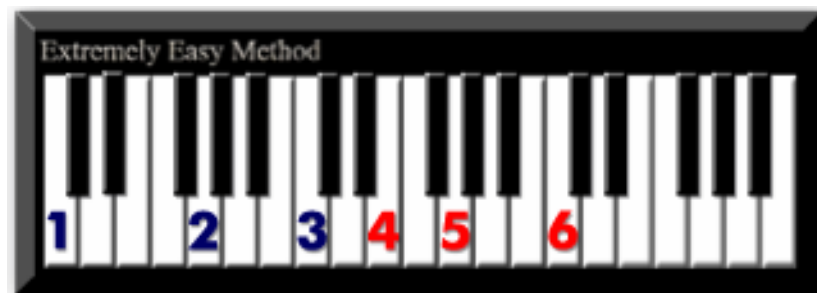
 F C G
 For auld lang syne, my dear,
 C F
 For auld lang syne,
 C G
 We'll take a cup o'kindness yet,
 E^m A^m D^m G C
 For auld la – ng syne!

Later on we'll play this song again, and add another little detail to make it sound even better. For now, **let's learn another rhythm**; the one I call the ONE-TWO beat.

THE ONE-TWO BEAT

This is, in my opinion, **the easiest rhythm to play**. I use it a lot on fast songs. Practice it first on the C chord. Play the notes in this sequence, in a ONE-TWO rhythm. **1, 3 – 4, 5, 6 – 2 – 4, 5, 6**. You'll notice that **the right hand plays all three fingers** every other beat, but **the left hand alternates** between the **1** and **3** fingers together every other beat, and the **2** finger alone every other beat.

C Chord



Here's the graphic of the C chord again. **Practice** the **ONE-TWO** beat until it begins to feel "natural."

Now let's add the F and G chords. **Practice** the **ONE-TWO** beat, changing from chord to chord. When you can **comfortably change back and forth** between the chords, then you'll be ready to move on to the next song.

We'll play the chorus of "Jingle Bells" in the key of C, using only the C, F and G chords. **Let's play it!**

Jingle Bells

by James Pierpoint

C
 Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way!
 F C
 Oh, what fun it is to ride
 G
 In a one-horse open sleigh, hey!
 C
 Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way!
 F C
 Oh, what fun it is to ride
 G C
 In a one-horse open sleigh!



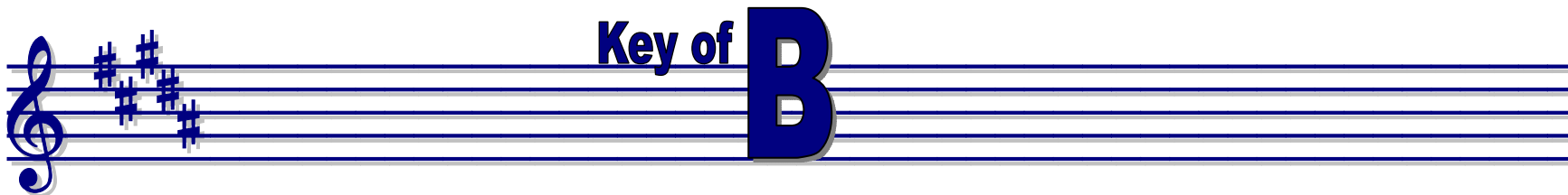
HELP! MY FINGER WON'T REACH!

Don't worry if your left pinky won't reach the key it's supposed to play. Just play fingers 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6. If you're young, your hand may grow enough to reach later on. If not, don't worry about it. It still sounds good playing with the five fingers. Just ignore the instructions for finger #1 in this manual, and **KEEP PLAYING!**

BE CREATIVE

Don't limit yourself to the straight one-two beat: **Experiment** with different rhythms. As with the slow rhythms, sometimes I'll hold a chord for more than one beat, and other times I'll play double the beats, or triple the beats. **BE CREATIVE.**

In the following section I will share with you what I consider to be **THE MOST EFFECTIVE METHOD IN THE UNIVERSE** for teaching piano by chords or by ear. It's a series of pages I call **Key Pages**. There is a separate

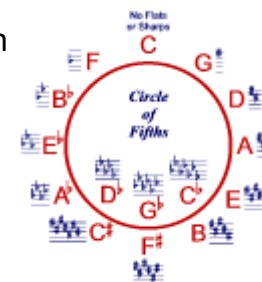


On the following page is a sample of the **sheet music** for the chorus of "Jingle Bells." You'll notice it's in a different key from the one we played it in earlier. Do you know what key it's in? Turn to **page 23** for the answer, and while you're there, why not try playing the song by ear? Concentrate, and train yourself to "hear" when to change chords. After you master this song, **practice another one**, maybe in a different key and with a different rhythm.

page for **each major key in Part 3. Part 4 teaches the minor keys.** Each Key Page shows:

- ✎ The key signature
- ✎ The name of the key
- ✎ A graphic for each of the six chords that are most commonly played with that key

I've arranged the Key Pages in **the same order as the Major Keys appear in the Circle of Fifths.** We'll start at C, and **go clockwise** around the circle. I've combined B and C^b, F[#] and G^b, and C[#] and D^b, since each pair contains the **same chords**, only with **different names**.



I've included the **key signature** in the header at the top of each key page, in case you want to play a song from sheet music that doesn't have the chords written in. You can **determine the key the song is in** from the key signature, and with the aid of the keyboard graphics from that Key Page, play the song "**by ear**." Below is a sample of the header for the key of B.

Jingle Bells

by James Pierpoint



Jin - gle bells, jin - gle bells, jin - gle all the way! Oh, what fun it is to ride in a



one-horse o - pen sleigh, hey! Jin - gle bells, jin - gle bells, jin - gle all the way!



Oh, what fun it is to ride in a one - horse o - pen sleigh!



PRACTICE

Take time to go through all the Key Pages, playing all the different chords, to begin to get a feel for them. You'll **refer back to some of the pages often**. Others you'll learn by heart—the more common keys that many songs are written in.

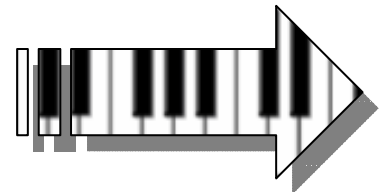
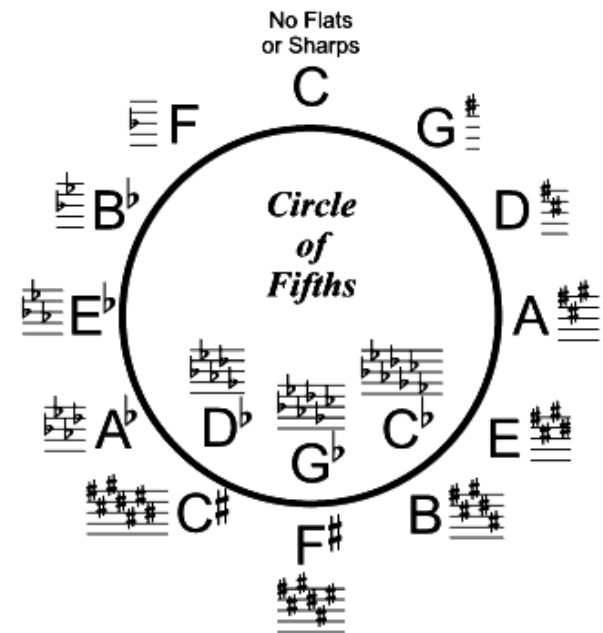
I can't stress enough the importance of practice. When I was first learning, I would go to the church on my lunch hour from work, and sit down at the piano (the same one that's pictured on the front cover of this book), and practice, practice, practice.

There's absolutely no substitute for it, and all the method books in the world won't make up for the lack of it. So, LET'S PRACTICE!

Part Three

- Major Keys

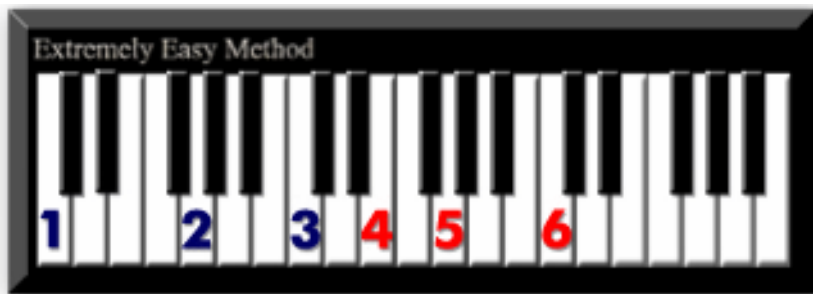
- | | |
|---|---------------------------|
| 🎹 Key of C | 🎹 Key of A ^b |
| 🎹 Key of G | 🎹 Key of E ^b |
| 🎹 Key of D | 🎹 Key of B ^b |
| 🎹 Key of A | 🎹 Key of F |
| 🎹 Key of E | 🎹 The Twelve Major Chords |
| 🎹 Key of B or C ^b | 🎹 Playing By Ear |
| 🎹 Key of F [#] or G ^b | 🎹 The Sustain Peddle |
| 🎹 Key of C [#] or D ^b | |





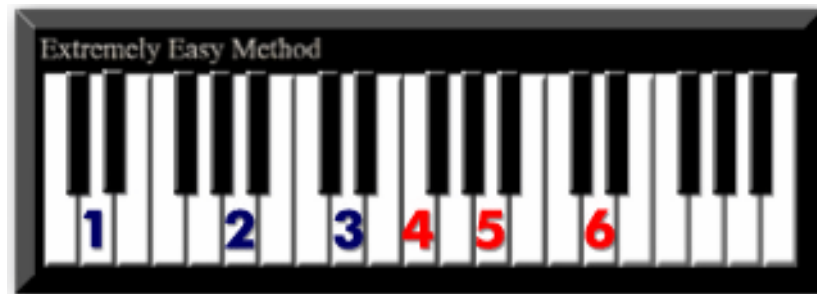
C Chord

I



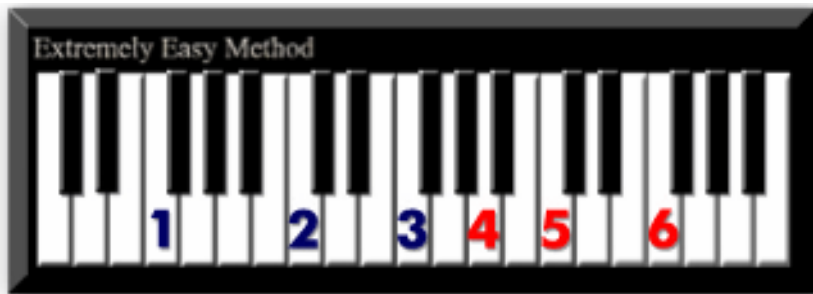
D^m Chord

ii



F Chord

IV



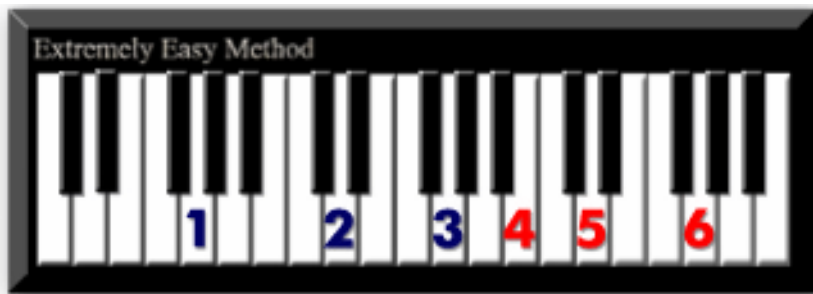
E^m Chord

iii



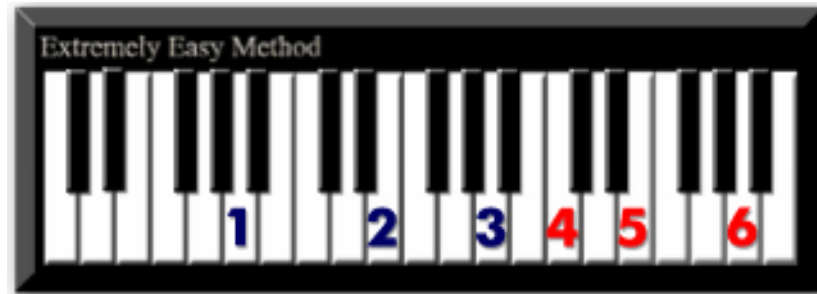
G Chord

V



A^m Chord

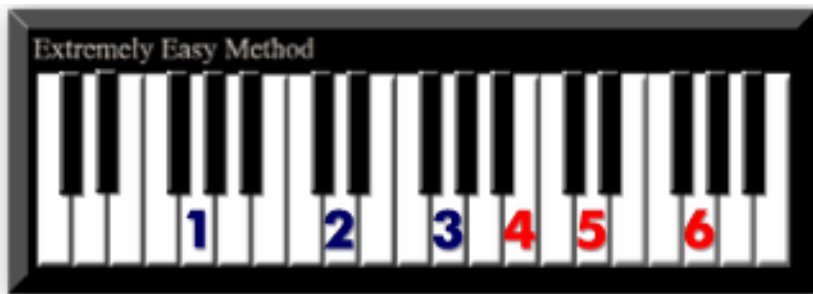
vi





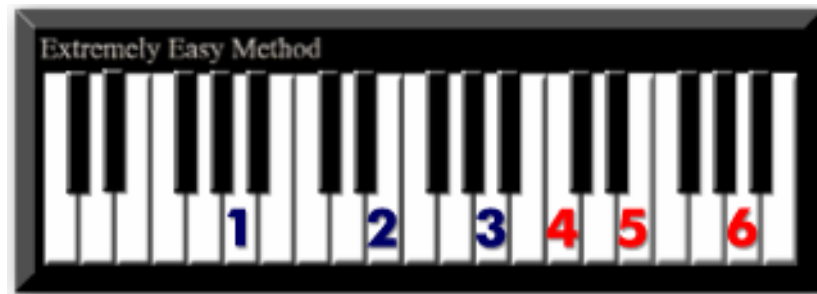
G chord

I



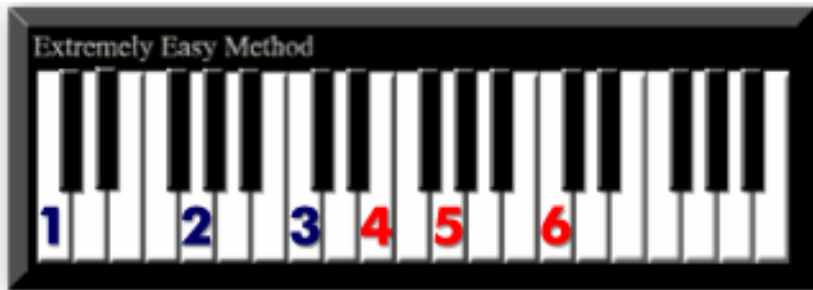
A^m Chord

ii



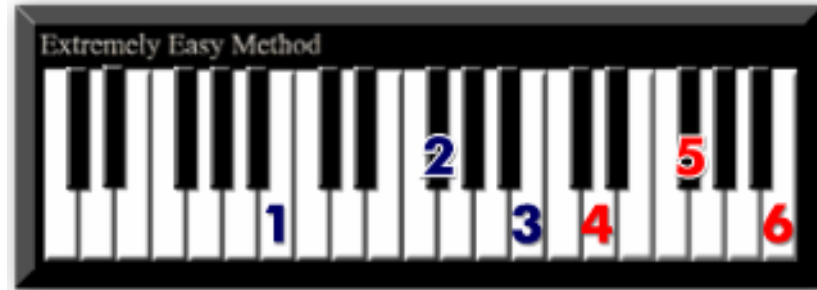
C Chord

IV



B^m Chord

iii



D Chord

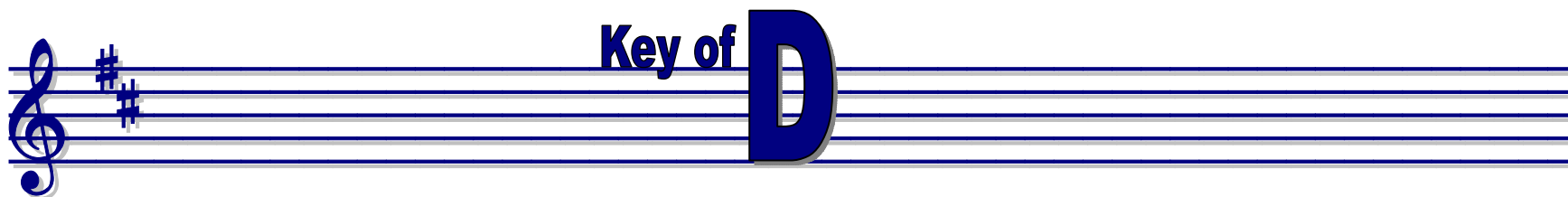
V



E^m Chord

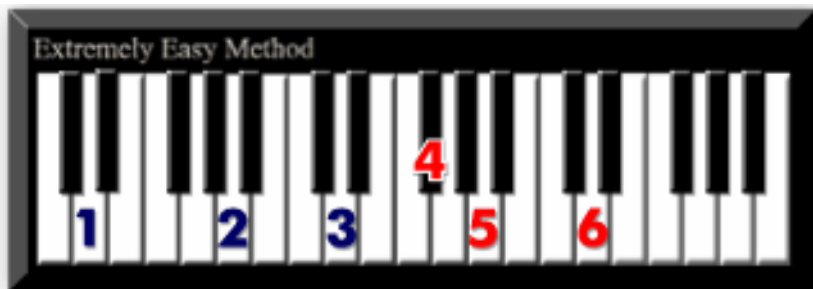
vi





D Chord

I



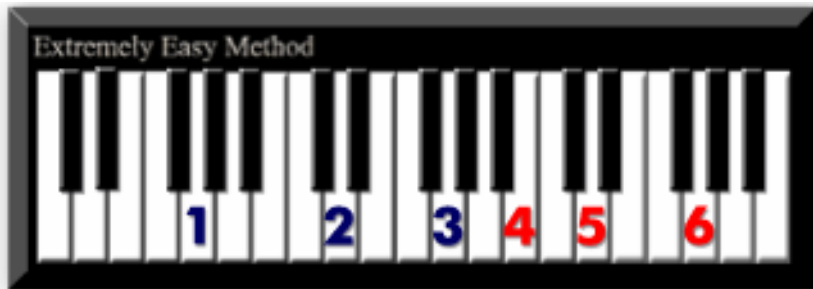
E^m Chord

ii



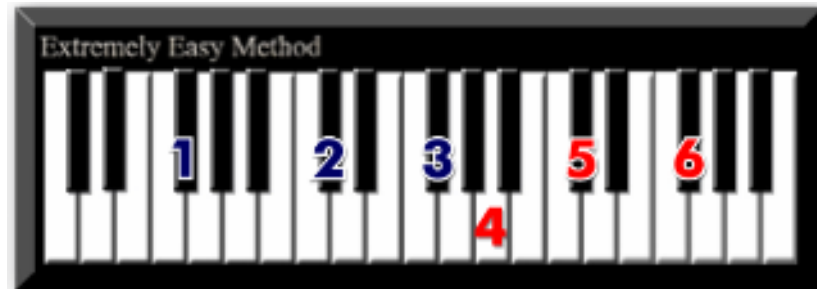
G Chord

IV



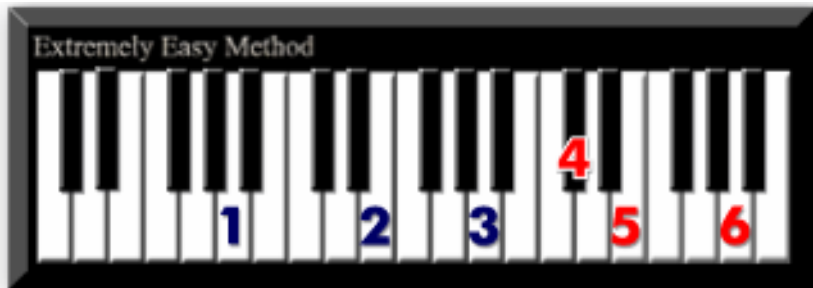
F^{#m} Chord

iii



A Chord

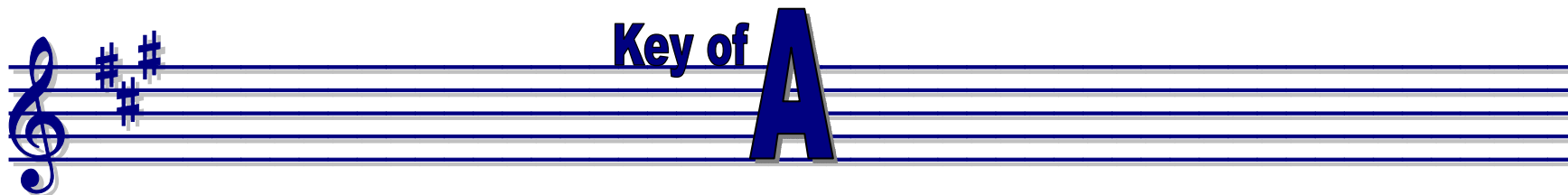
V



B^m Chord

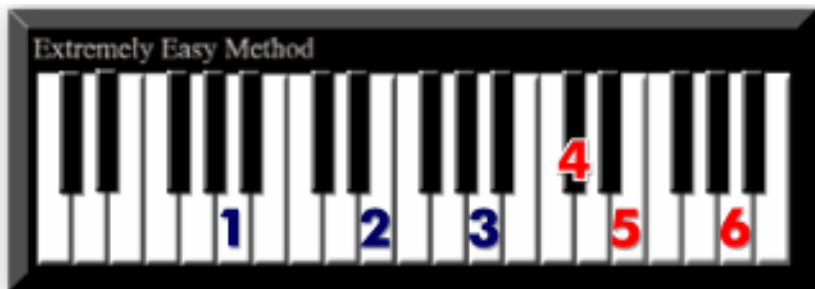
vi





A Chord

I



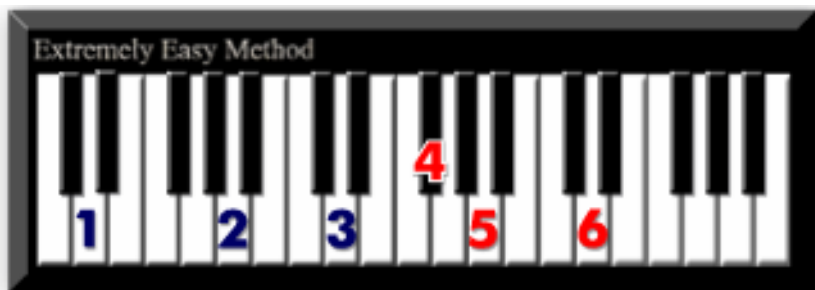
B^m Chord

ii



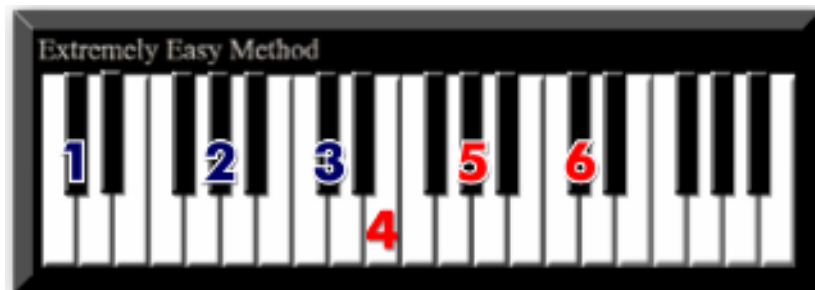
D Chord

IV



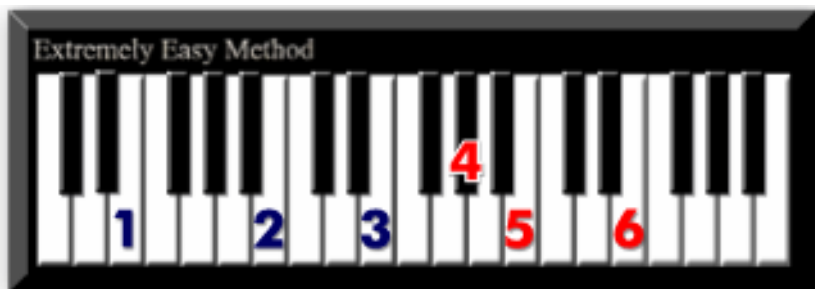
C^{#m} Chord

iii



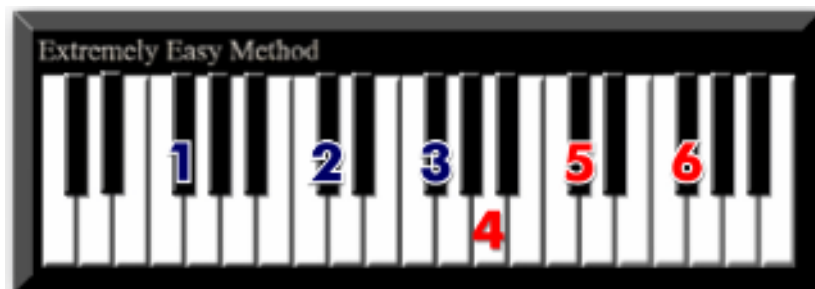
E Chord

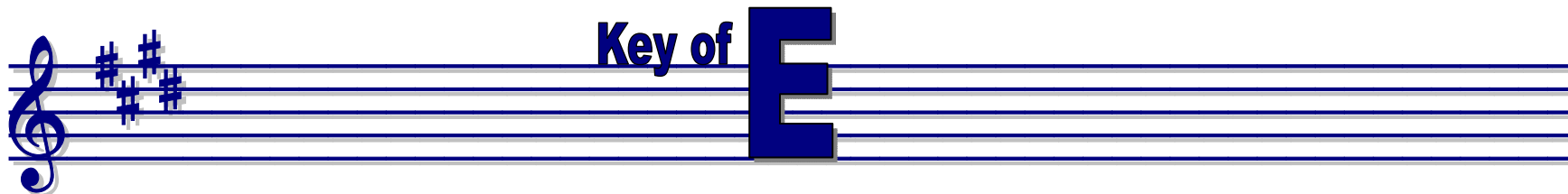
V



F^{#m} Chord

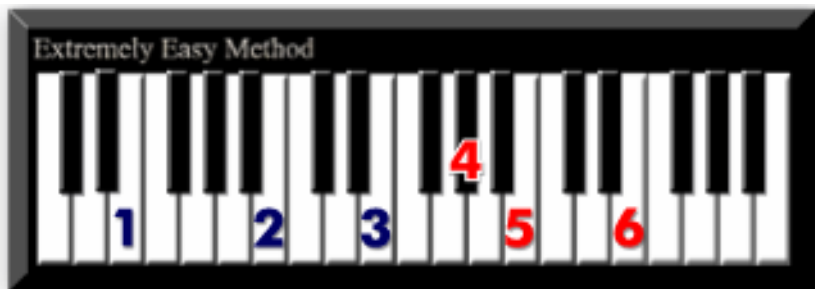
vi





E Chord

I



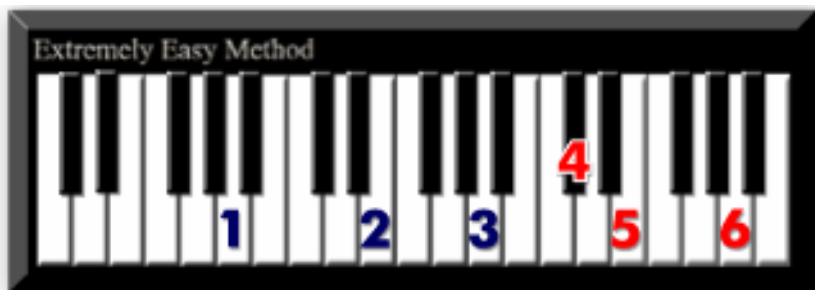
F#m Chord

ii



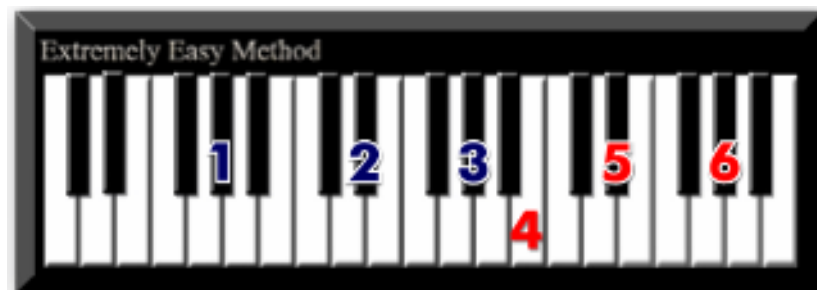
A Chord

IV



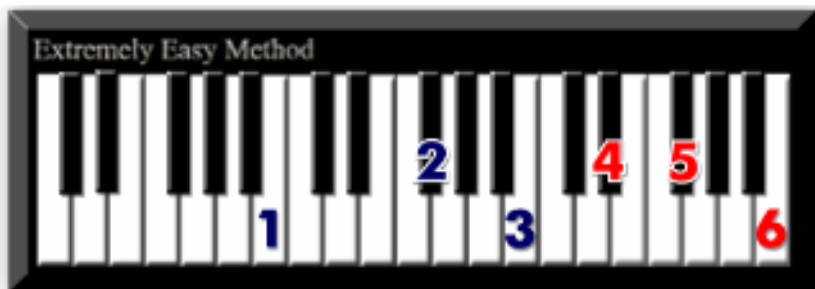
G#m Chord

iii



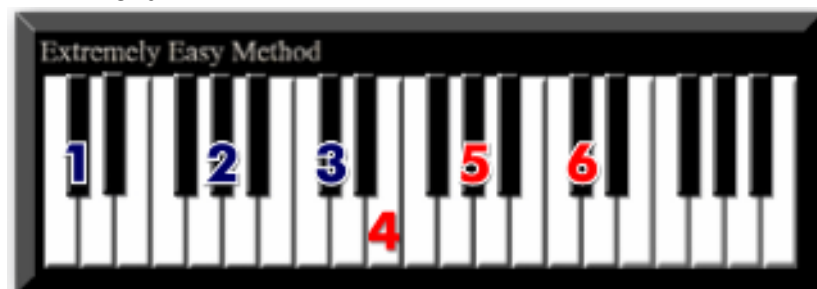
B Chord

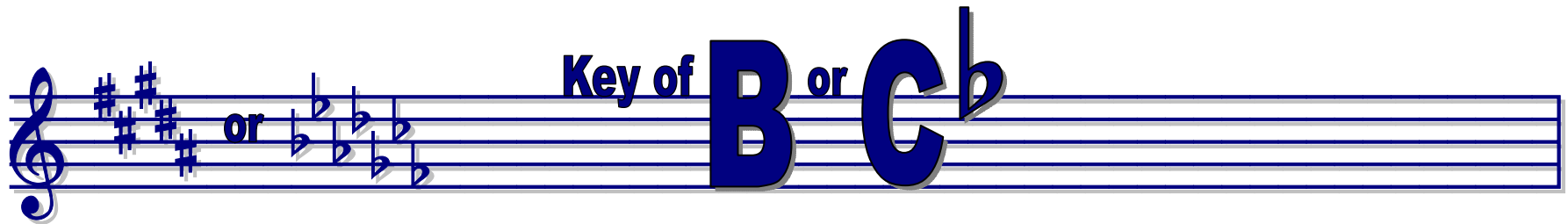
V



C#m Chord

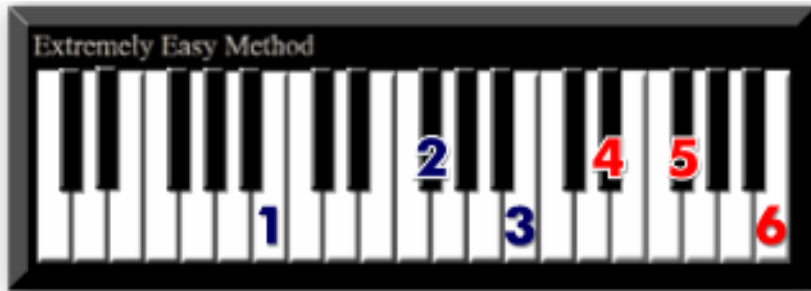
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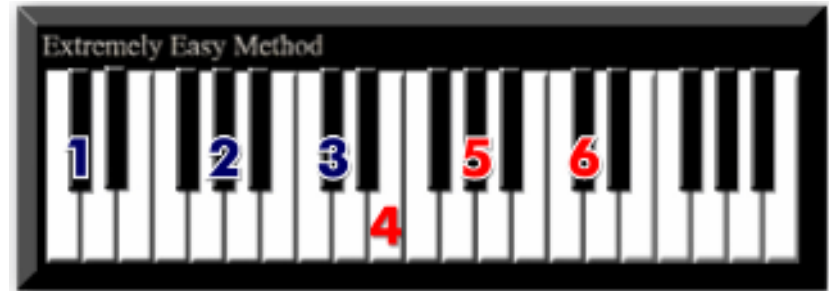
B or C^b Chord

I



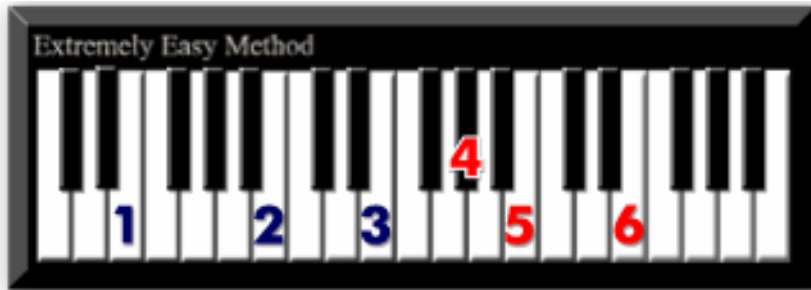
C^{#m} or D^{bm} Chord

ii



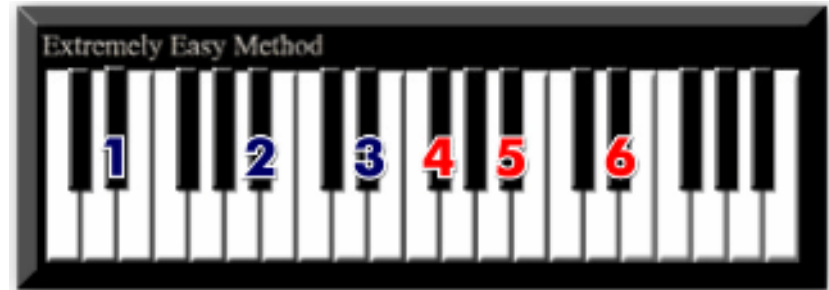
E or F^b Chord

IV



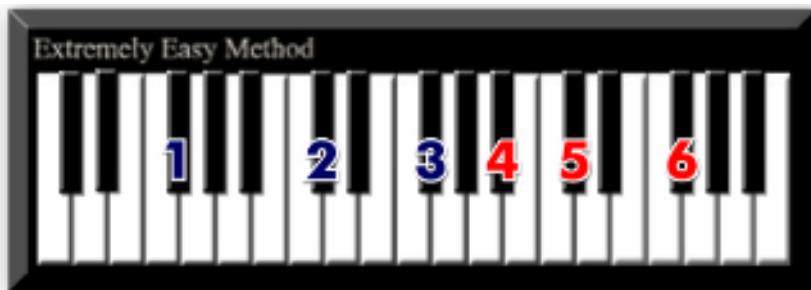
D^{#m} or E^{bm} Chord

iii



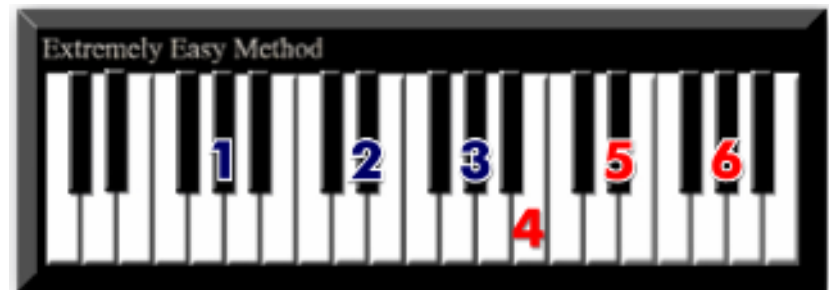
F[#] or G^b Chord

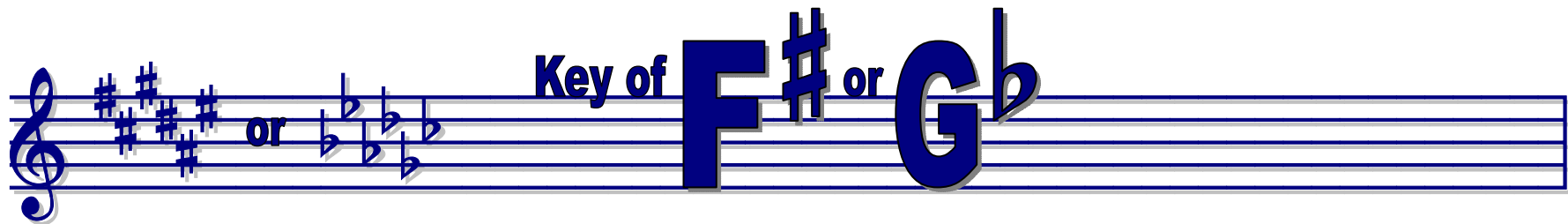
V



G^{#m} or A^{bm} Chord

vi





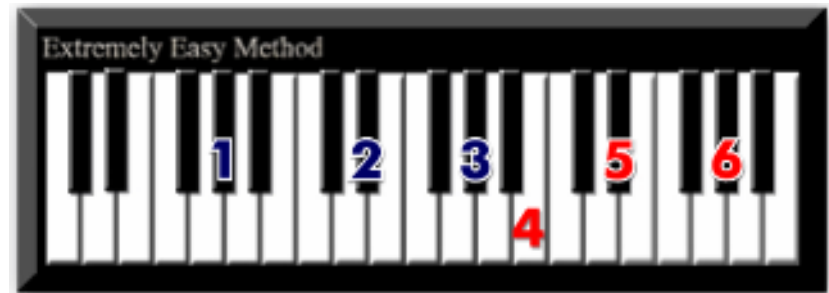
F# or G^b Chord

I



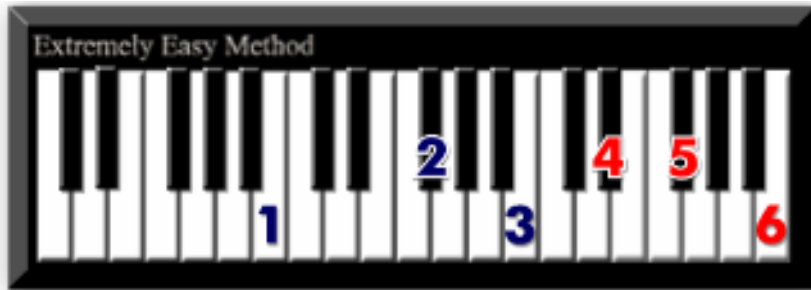
G#m or A^bm Chord

ii



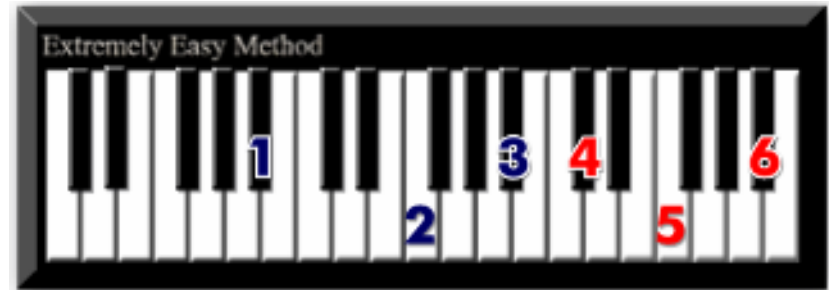
B or C^b Chord

IV



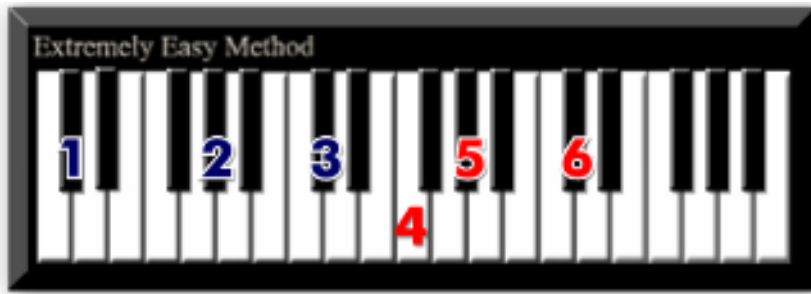
A#m or B^bm Chord

iii



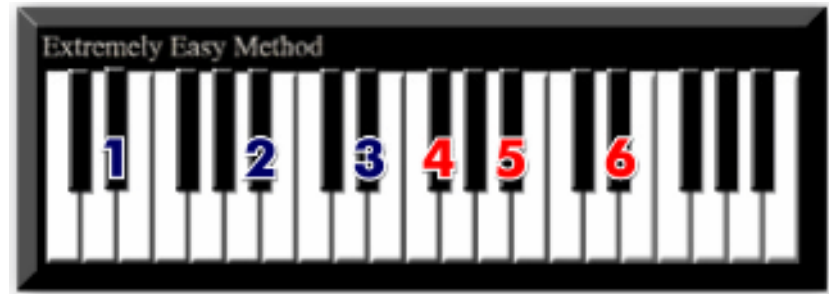
C# or D^b Chord

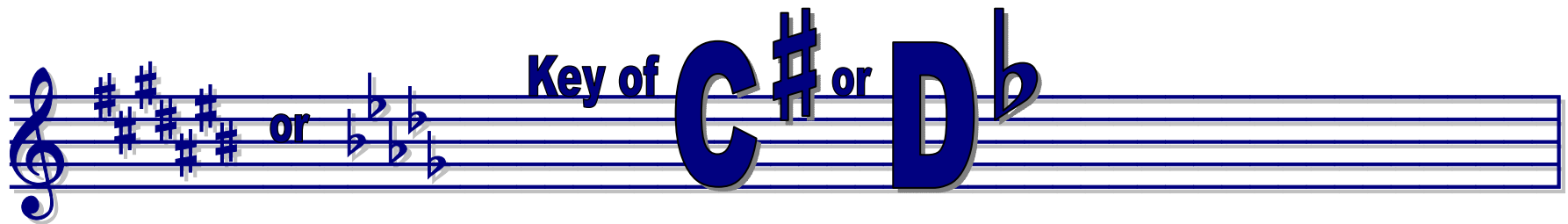
V



D#m or E^bm Chord

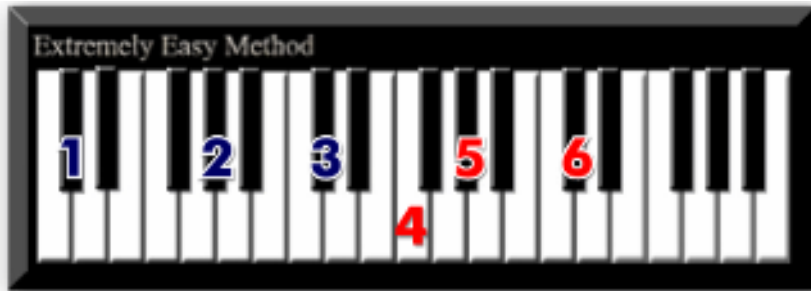
vi





C# or D^b Chord

I



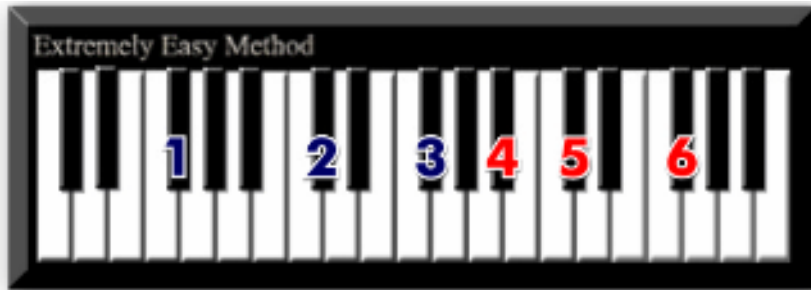
D#m or E^bm Chord

ii



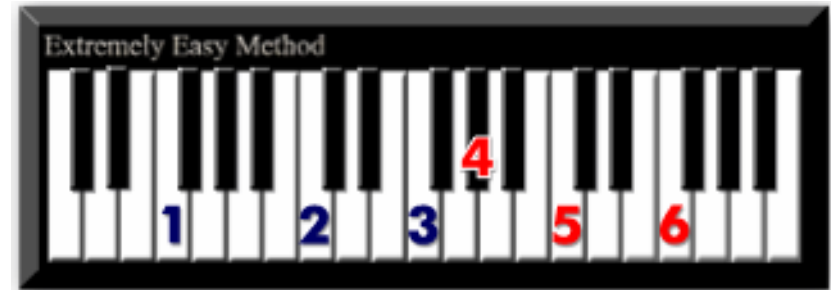
F# or G^b Chord

IV



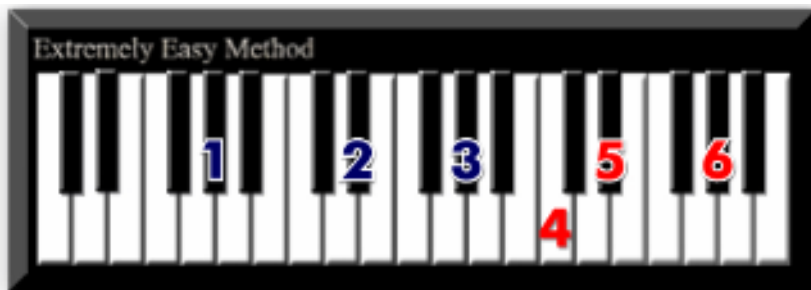
F^m Chord

iii



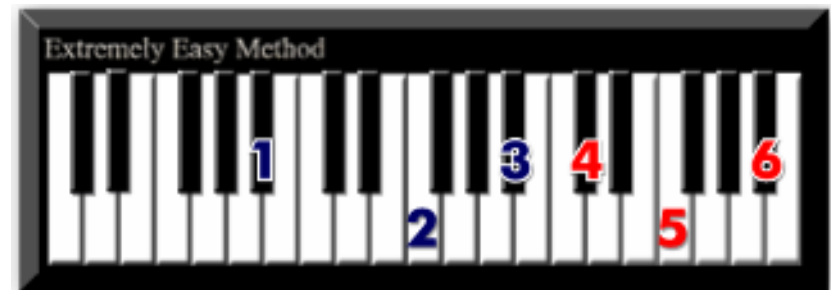
G# or A^b Chord

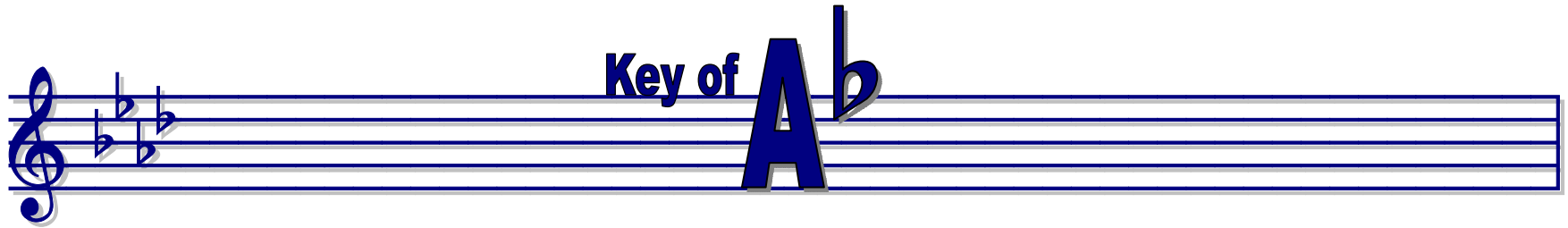
V



A#m or B^bm Chord

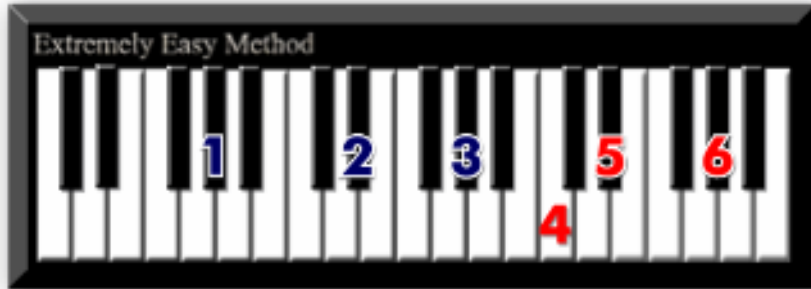
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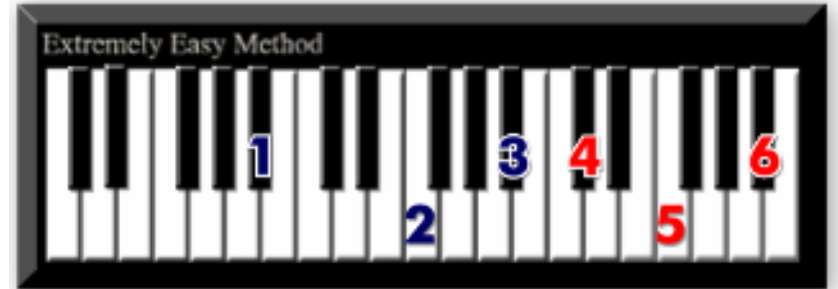
A^b Chord

I



B^{bm} Chord

ii



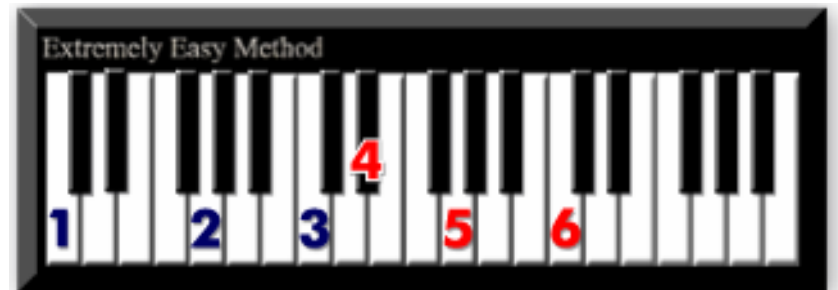
D^b Chord

IV



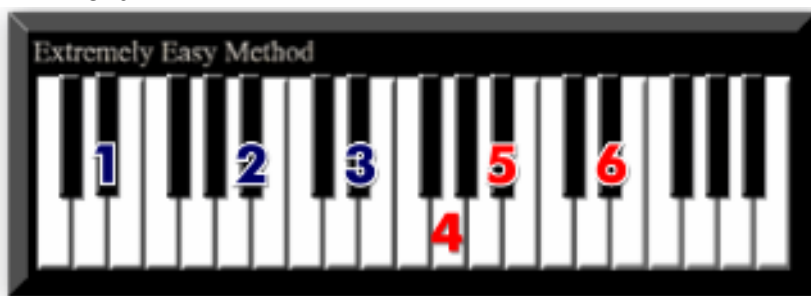
C^m Chord

iii



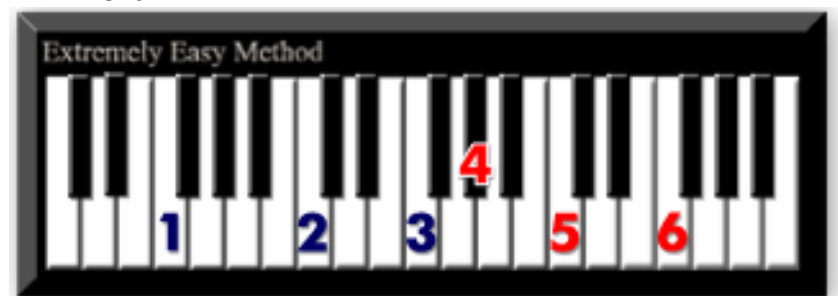
E^b Chord

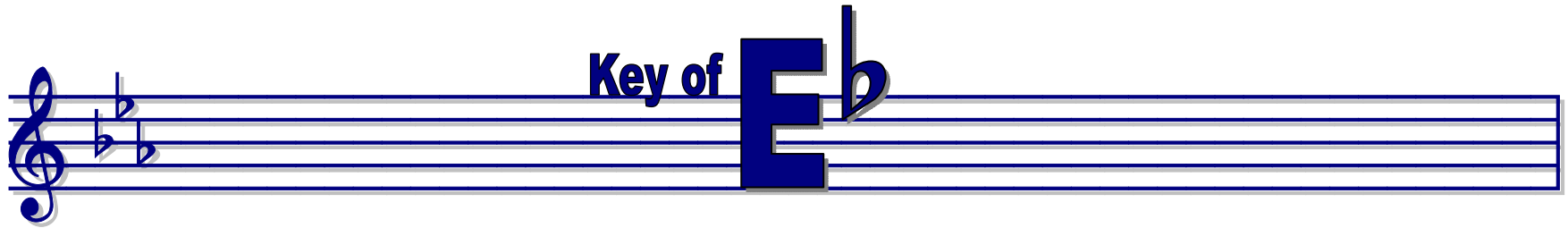
V



F^m Chord

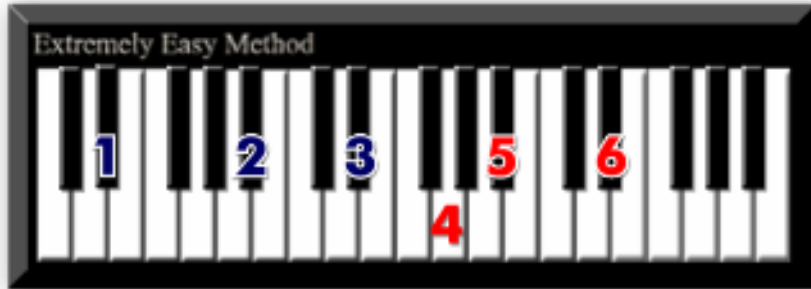
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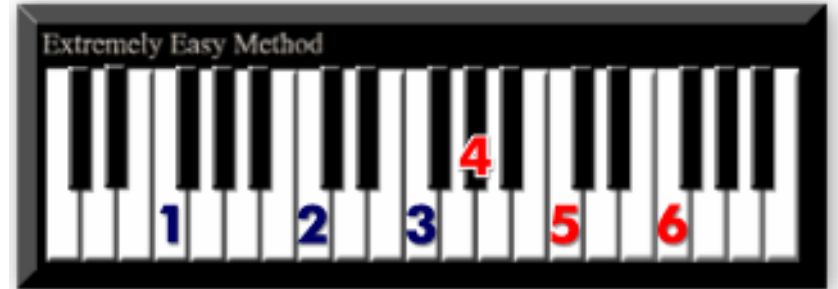
E^b Chord

I



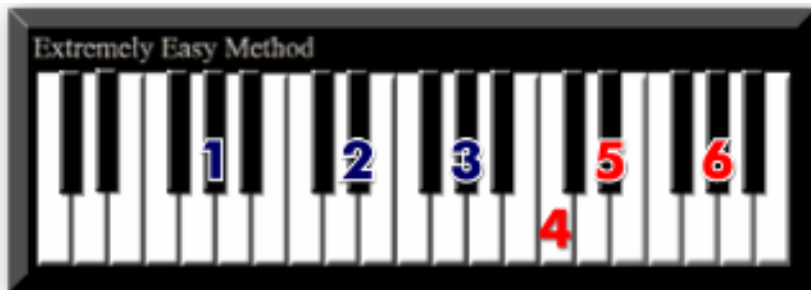
F^m Chord

ii



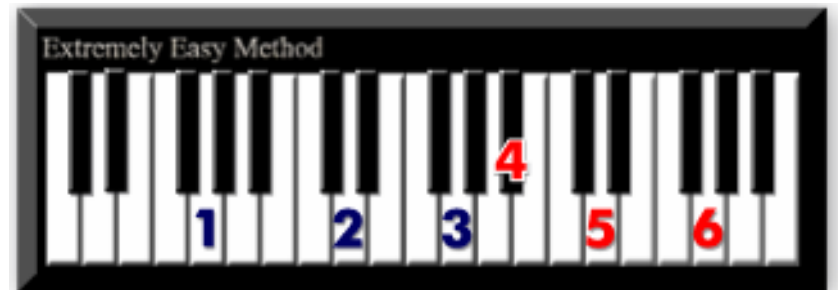
A^b Chord

IV



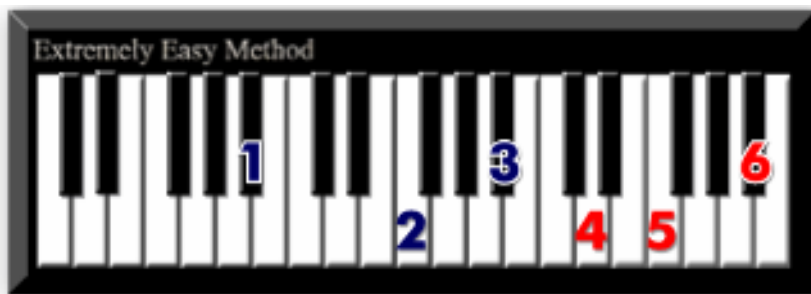
G^m Chord

iii



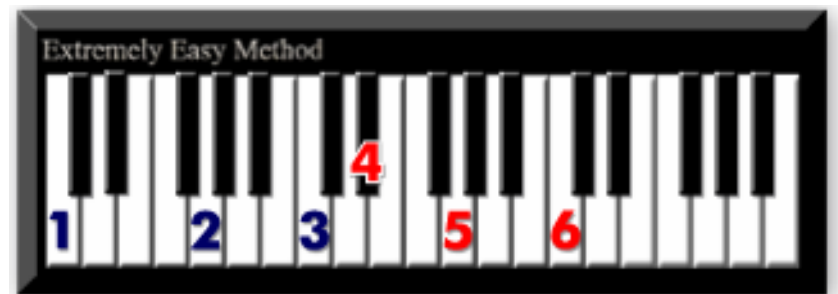
B^b Chord

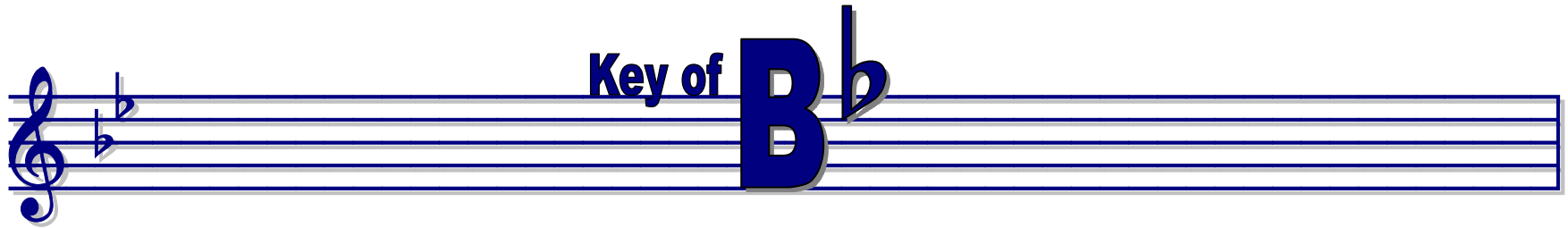
V



C^m Chord

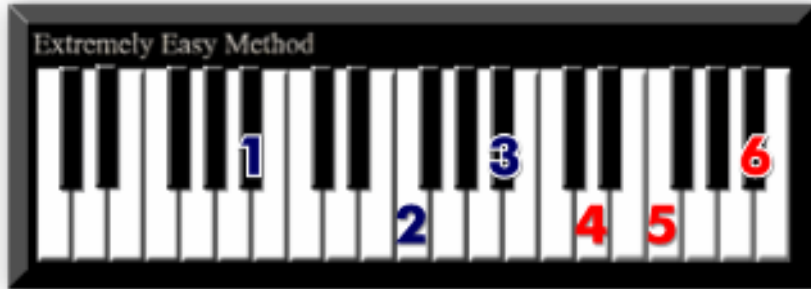
vi





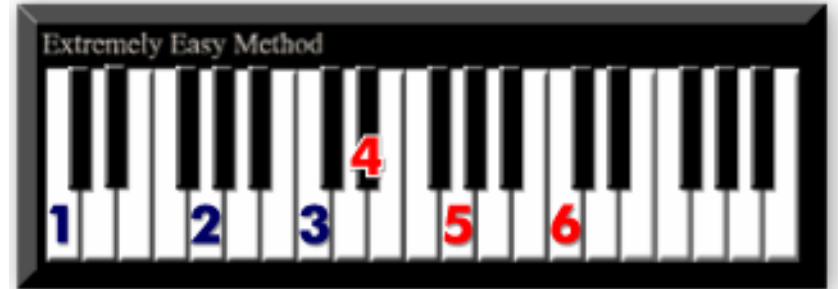
B^b Chord

I



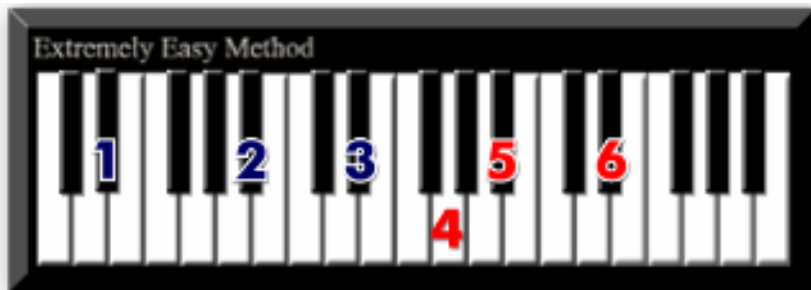
C^m Chord

ii



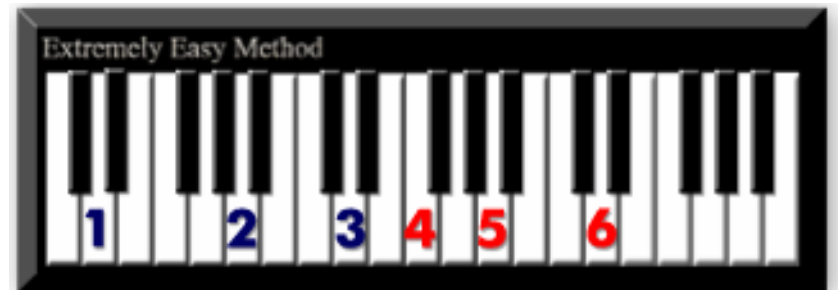
E^b Chord

IV



D^m Chord

iii



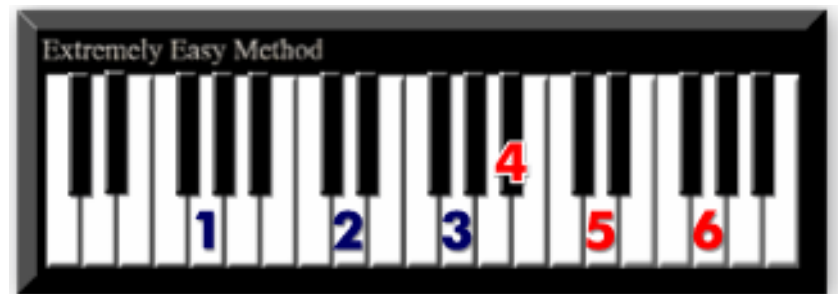
F Chord

V



G^m Chord

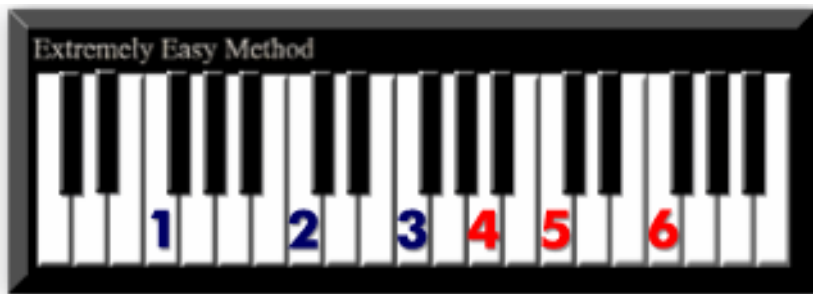
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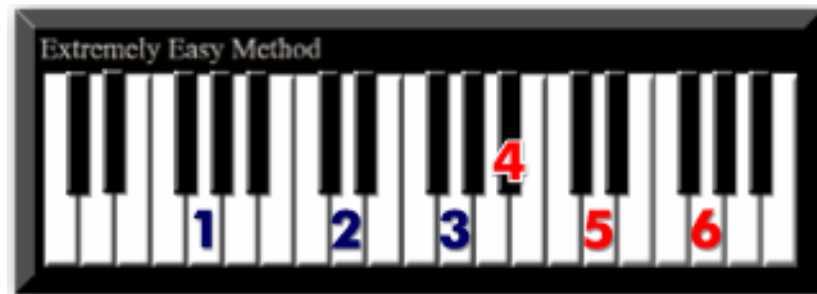
F Chord

I



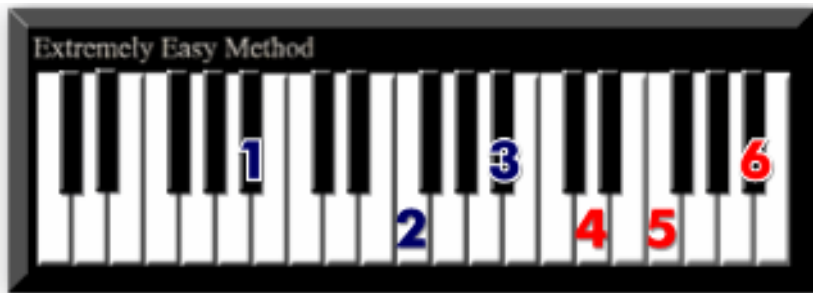
G^m Chord

ii



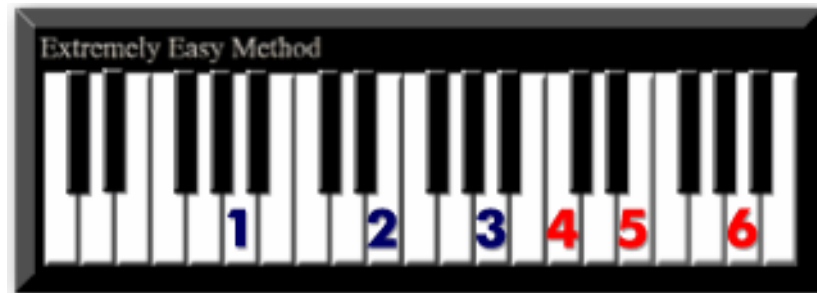
B^b Chord

IV



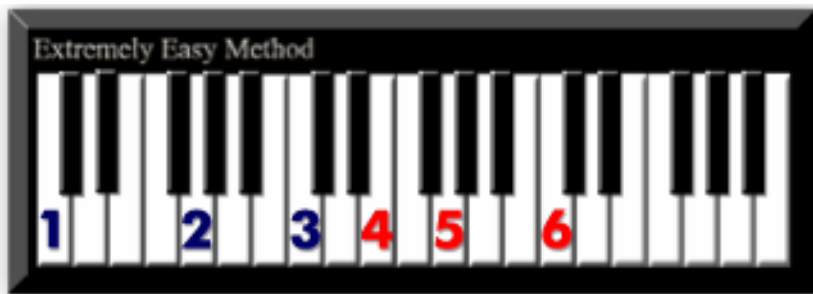
A^m Chord

iii



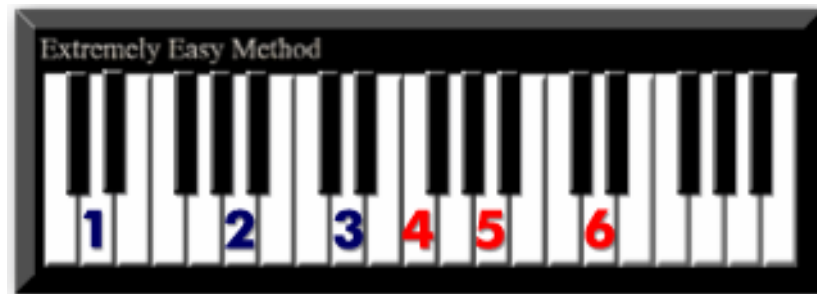
C Chord

V



D^m Chord

vi

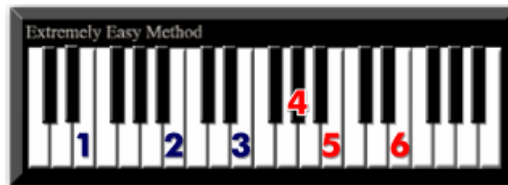


The Twelve Major Chords

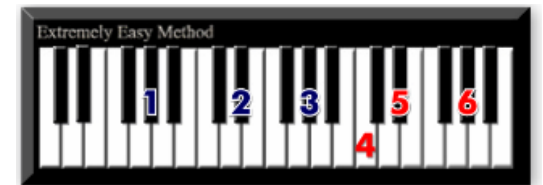
C



E



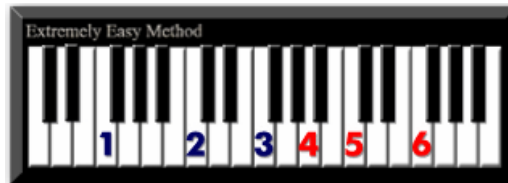
G# or A^b



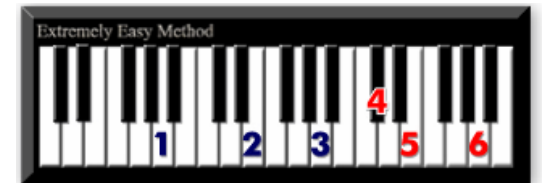
C# or D^b



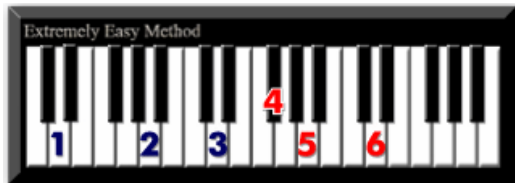
F



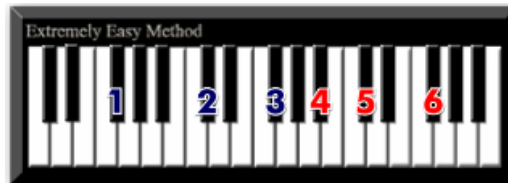
A



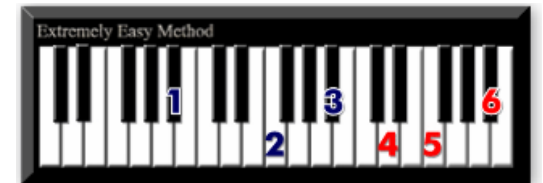
D



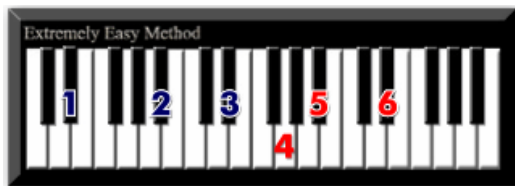
F# or G^b



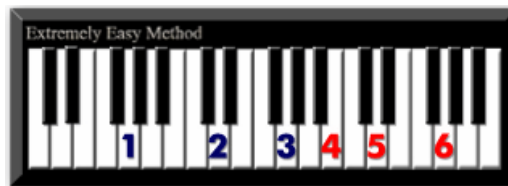
A# or B^b



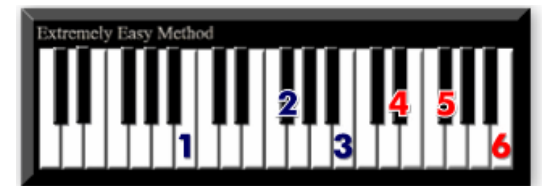
D# or E^b



G



B



PLAYING BY EAR

So, what key is the song in? Let's review what we've learned about determining the key of a song.

- ✦ **If you are playing from sheet music**, the Key Signature at the beginning of every line tells you what key to play in. I have included the Key Signature at the top of each Key Page as a guide.
- ✦ **If you are playing from a chord sheet**, the first chord is **USUALLY** the same as the key. Please note that **this is not always the case**, but in the great majority of cases it works.
- ✦ **If you are jamming** with a few friends, one of them may suggest doing a song in a certain key. From what you've learned from these Key Pages, and what you are about to learn from the Minor Key Pages, you can follow along in **ANY** key the other musician chooses.
- ✦ **If you hear a song on a CD** that you would like to play, sit down at the piano while you listen to it, and begin to **play some chords** until you hit one that matches. From there, commence experimenting with **the different keys that contain that chord**, until you discover what key the song is in

Also, you may decide you can sing a song more **comfortably** in a different key than the one on the CD. With the aid of these Key Pages you can easily **Transpose** (change the key of) the song to fit your vocal range. Or, the song may be in a key that you haven't yet mastered, so you may choose to play it in a key that is more comfortable for you. **Experiment!**

Remember to PRACTICE! The more you practice, the easier it will become, and the more fun you will have. Always be on the lookout for new songs to try.

Chords That Don't "Fit"

Sooner or later you will probably run up on a song with chords that don't seem to "fit" within the key the song is in. Many complicated songs will have such chords.

A chord may change from major to minor. A song may suddenly change keys! **These are things that you'll get used to with time.** As you learn to play **ALL** of the individual chords, you'll find that you can take these "curves" in stride.

Again, the six chords we are learning with each key are the **MOST COMMON** chords for that key. Later, in **Part 5, Final Touches**, we will learn some of the more important variations of the chords we are learning, such as seventh, major seventh, second, suspended, and split chords. These are all **very exciting enhancements** that you will be able to incorporate **EXTREMELY EASILY** into your playing! You're going to love them, **I guarantee it!**

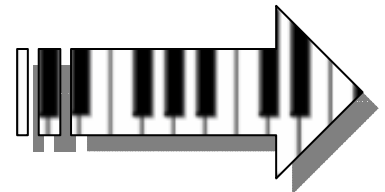
THE SUSTAIN PEDDLE

If you're playing a piano, or your keyboard is equipped with one, start experimenting with the **Sustain Peddle**. You'll find that it adds a fuller, smoother sound to your performance. Press and hold down the peddle with your right foot as you begin to play a chord, then let it up between chords. Press it again as you begin to play the next chord. **Be sure to let up on the peddle before playing another chord. Experiment with it.**

Part Four

- Minor Keys

- ✦ Relative Minor Keys
- ✦ Layout of the Minor Key Pages
- ✦ Key of A^m
- ✦ Key of E^m
- ✦ Key of B^m
- ✦ Key of F^{#m}
- ✦ Key of C^{#m}
- ✦ Key of G^{#m} or A^{bm}
- ✦ Key of D^{#m} or E^{bm}
- ✦ Key of A^{#m} or B^{bm}
- ✦ Key of F^m
- ✦ Key of C^m
- ✦ Key of G^m
- ✦ Key of D^m
- ✦ The Twelve Minor Chords



RELATIVE MINOR KEYS

Every Major Key has what is called a **RELATIVE MINOR KEY**. They are considered “relatives” because **they share the same key signature**.

In this section I will provide a **Key Page** for every minor key, **presented in the order of their relative majors**. Following is a list of all the keys in order, the major key and its relative minor.

Major Key	Relative Minor
C	A ^m
G	E ^m
D	B ^m
A	F ^{#m}
E	C ^{#m}
B or C ^b	G ^{#m} or A ^{b m}
F [#] or G ^b	D ^{#m} or E ^{b m}
C [#] or D ^b	A ^{#m} or B ^{b m}
A ^b	F ^m
E ^b	C ^m
B ^b	G ^m
F	D ^m

LAYOUT OF THE MINOR KEY PAGES

For each major key, we learned the I, ii, iii, IV, V, and vi chords. **There also exists a vii° (vii diminished) chord**, which has a rather unique sound, and is not particularly common in the styles of music that I normally play. If you turn to page 52, I'll show you how to **very easily play** the diminished (indicated °) or augmented (indicated +) of any chord.

Personally, I very rarely play the vii° of any major key, so I took the liberty to exclude it from the six most common chords that I teach for the major keys. However, once you see how **easy** it is to form the diminished of any chord, you won't have any trouble **including** it when needed.

Now, let's get back to the minor keys. **The main point** I want to make is, **major keys are simple**, and always the same—I, ii, iii, IV, V, vi and vii°. Unfortunately, **minor keys are not so straightforward**, due to the fact that there are three different ways to play any minor scale, which gives us three different choices of chord combinations. They are as follows:

Natural minor scale

- i, ii°, III, iv, v, VI, VII

Harmonic minor scale

- i, ii°, III⁺, iv, V, VI, vii°

Melodic minor scale

- i, ii, III⁺, IV, V, vi°, vii°

Based on my own experience, and perhaps the styles of music I most often play, I have come up with a **combination** of all three scales, and have put together what I consider to be **the most important six chords of each minor key**.

Again, keep in mind that the chords I have omitted could show up on a chord sheet you want to play. But, **DON'T WORRY!** After you see how **easy** it is to form the diminished or augmented of any chord, you will be able to **add them** in at any time.

So, here are **the six chords that I've chosen to include for each minor key**:

i, III, iv, V, VI, and VII

Notice that for the minor keys we are going to learn **two minor chords** and **four major chords**. As with the major keys, the **i, iv** and **V** chords are the most common, but the other three, the III, VI and VII, are also important. I especially use the VI and VII chords rather frequently.

Keeping It "Extremely Easy"

For simplicity's sake I've included only six chords for each key on the Key Pages. With these six chords you can play many thousands of songs. However, since it is so Extremely Easy to add the extra touches that you'll learn in Part 5, I encourage you to learn and implement them in your playing.

You (and your friends!) will be amazed at the complexity of songs that you will be playing **VERY QUICKLY**. Those **Final Touches** will add a new dimension to your playing that will delight you and dazzle your listeners.

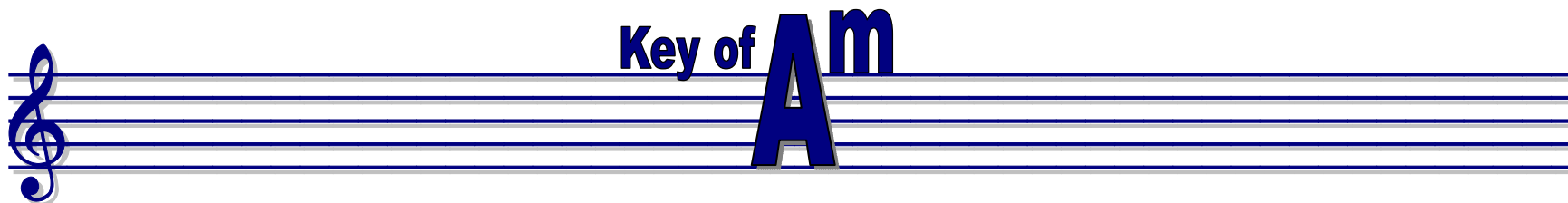
Following is a chart showing all the minor keys, along with **six principle chords** for each.

Key ↓	Chords					
	i	III	iv	V	VI	VII
A ^m	A ^m	C	D ^m	E	F	G
E ^m	E ^m	G	A ^m	B	C	D
B ^m	B ^m	D	E ^m	F [#]	G	A
F ^{#m}	F ^{#m}	A	B ^m	C [#]	D	E
C ^{#m}	C ^{#m}	E	F ^{#m}	G [#]	A	B
G ^{#m} -A ^b m	G ^{#m} -A ^b m	B-C ^b	C ^{#m} -D ^b m	D [#] -E ^b	E-F ^b	F [#] -G ^b
D ^{#m} -E ^b m	D ^{#m} -E ^b m	F [#] -G ^b	G ^{#m} -A ^b m	A [#] -B ^b	B-C ^b	C [#] -D ^b
A ^{#m} -B ^b m	A ^{#m} -B ^b m	C [#] -D ^b	D [#] -E ^b	F	F [#] -G ^b	G [#] -A ^b
F ^m	F ^m	A ^b	B ^b m	C	D ^b	E ^b
C ^m	C ^m	E ^b	F ^m	G	A ^b	B ^b
G ^m	G ^m	B ^b	C ^m	D	E ^b	F
D ^m	D ^m	F	G ^m	A	B ^b	C

As with the major **Key Pages**, I'll put the graphics of the **most common chords in the left column**, and **the other three in the right column**.

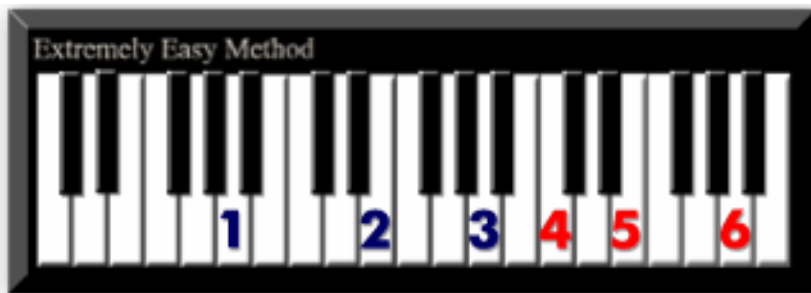
You will notice most of the same chords in the minor keys as were included in their relative majors, only in a different order. The left column from the relative major becomes the right column of the minor. The right column from the major becomes the left column of the minor (**with a few changes**). Therefore, after you've mastered the major keys, **you'll already know how to play ALL the chords** you'll need to play in **any minor** key as well!

How's that for Extremely Easy?



A^m Chord

i



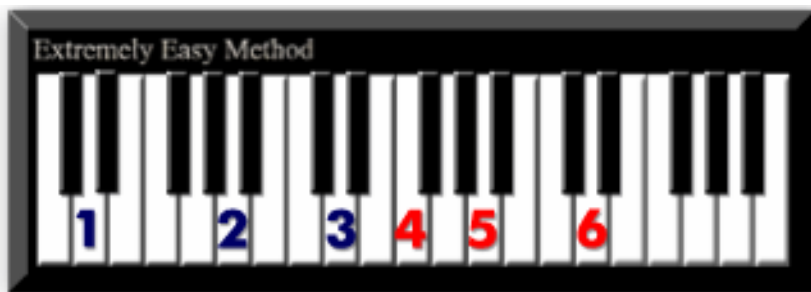
C Chord

III



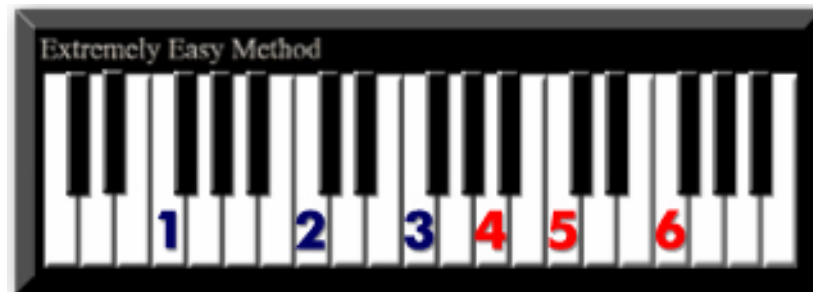
D^m Chord

iv



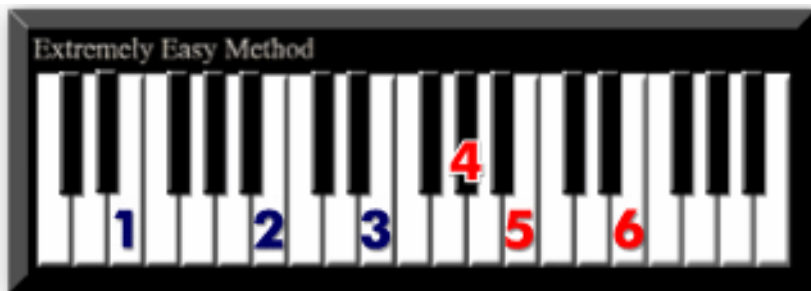
F Chord

VI



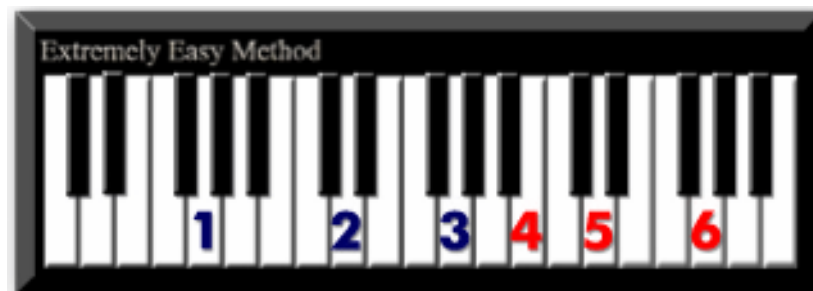
E Chord

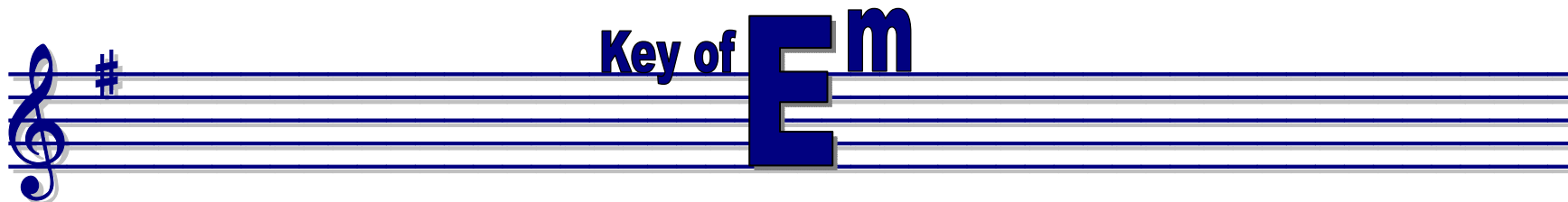
V



G Chord

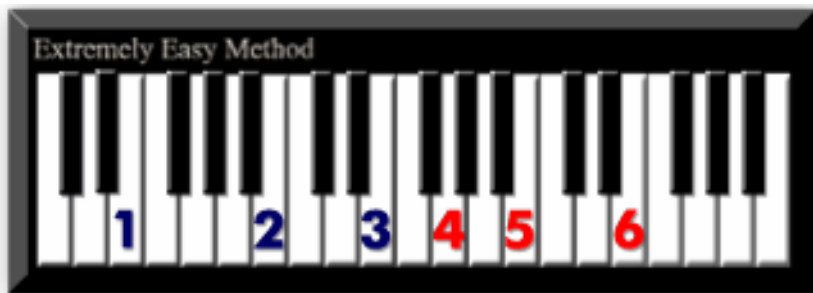
VII





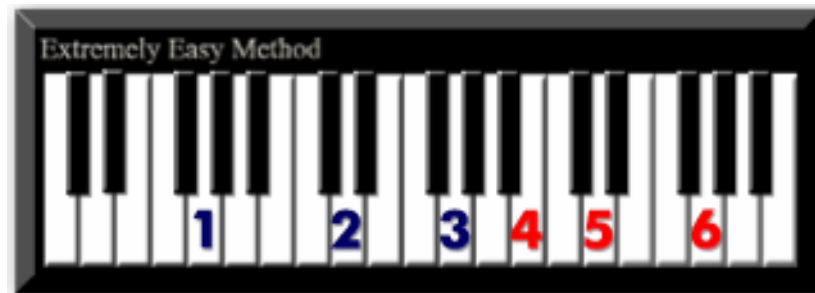
E^m Chord

i



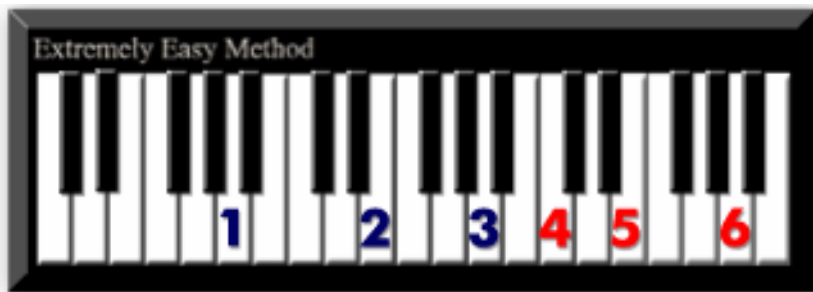
G chord

III



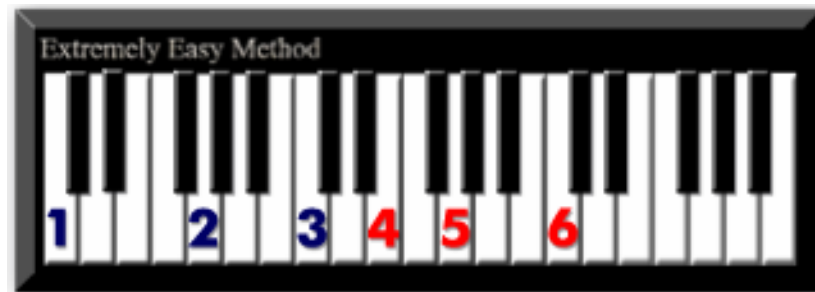
A^m Chord

iv



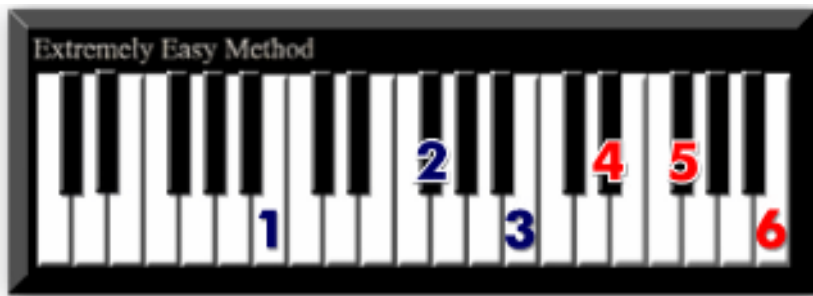
C Chord

VI



B Chord

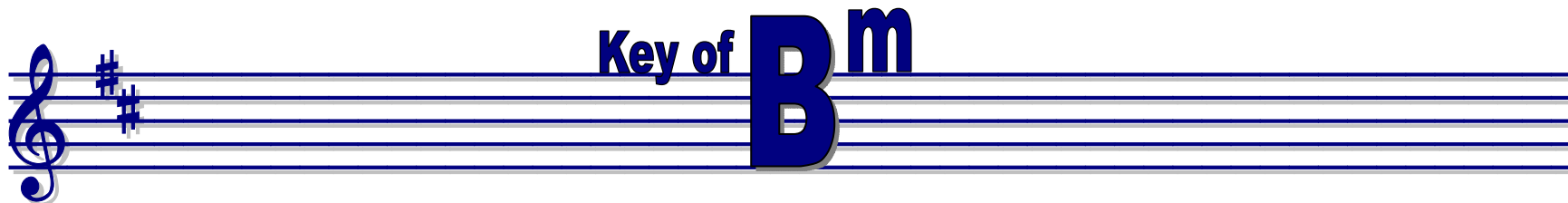
V



D Chord

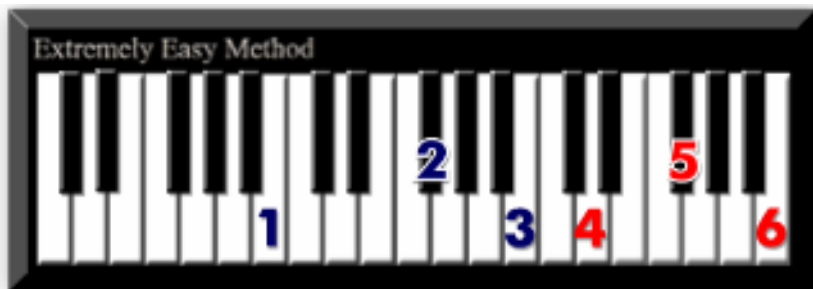
VII





B^m Chord

i



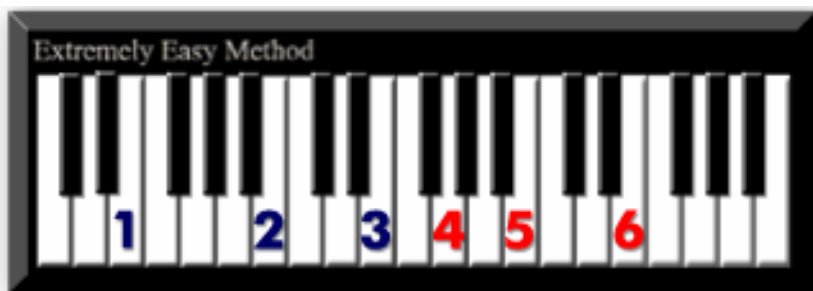
D Chord

III



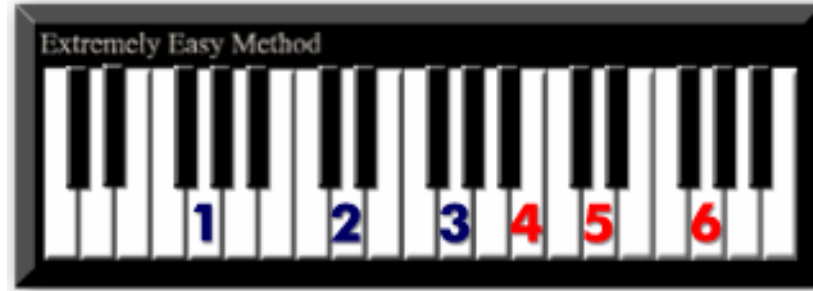
E^m Chord

iv



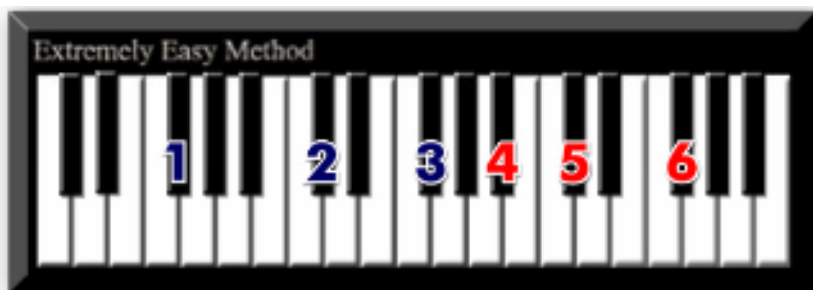
G Chord

VI



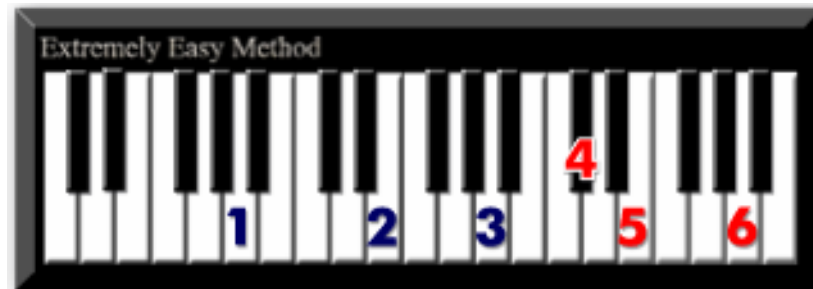
F[#] Chord

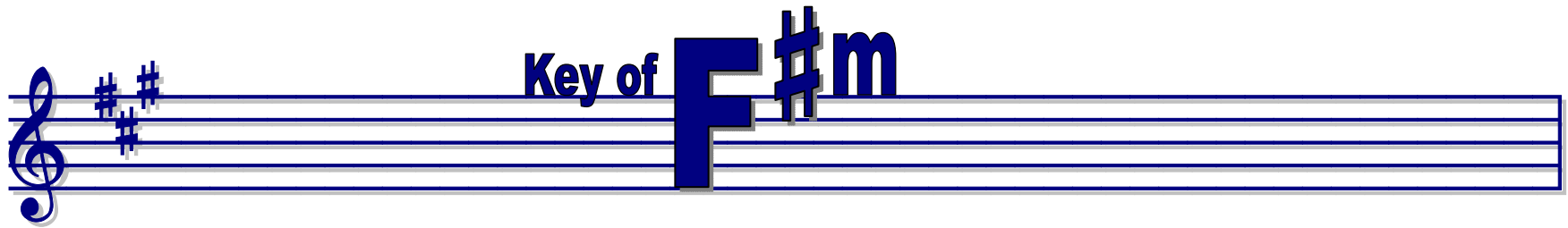
v



A Chord

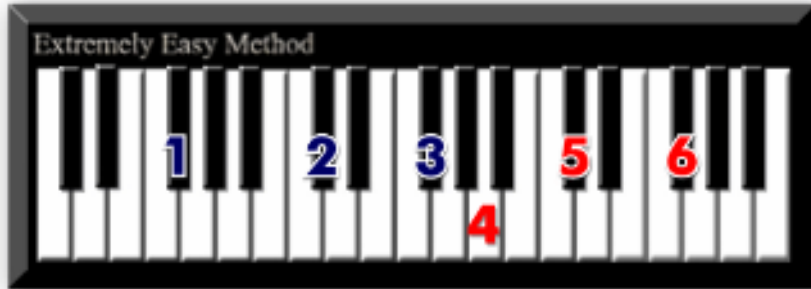
VII





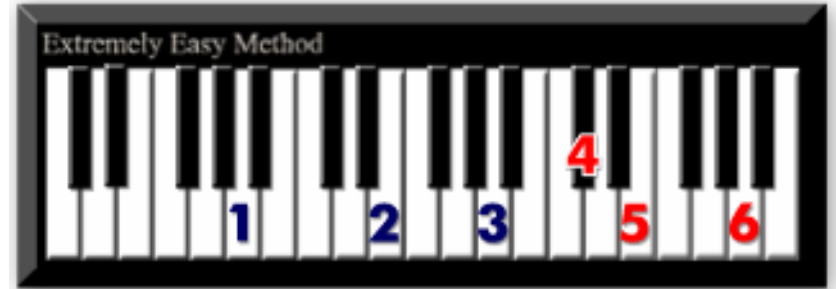
F#m Chord

i



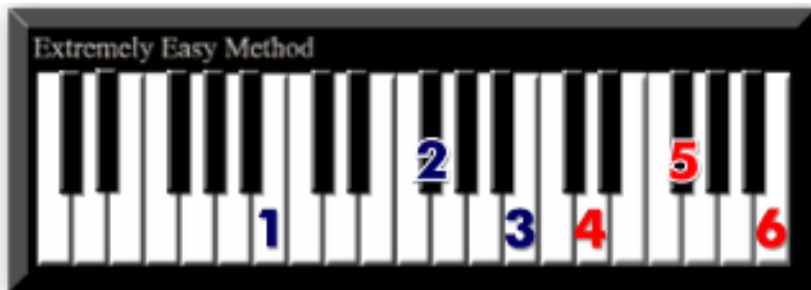
A Chord

III



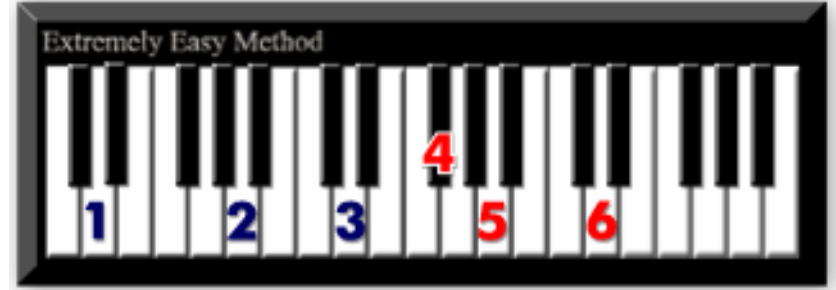
Bm Chord

iv



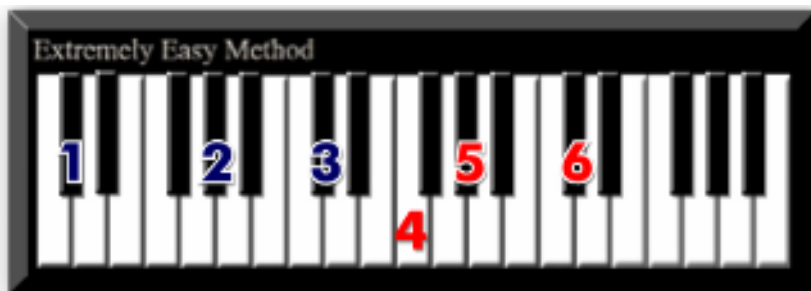
D Chord

VI



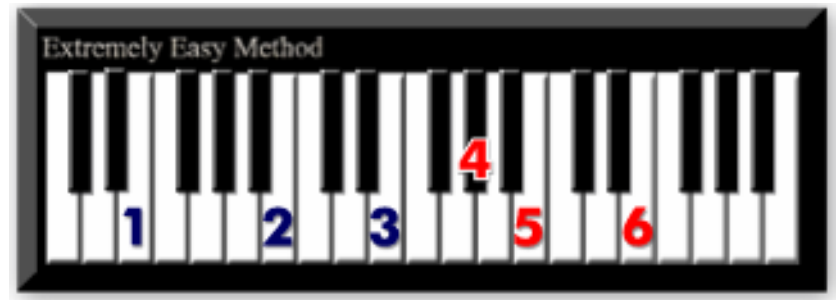
C# Chord

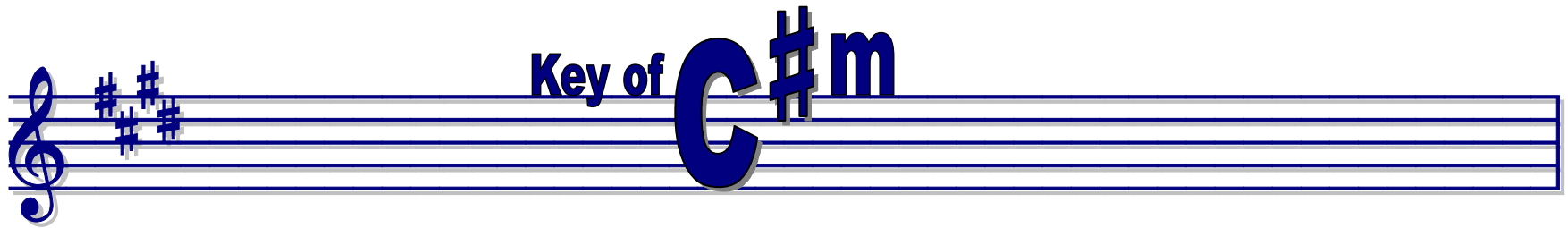
v



E Chord

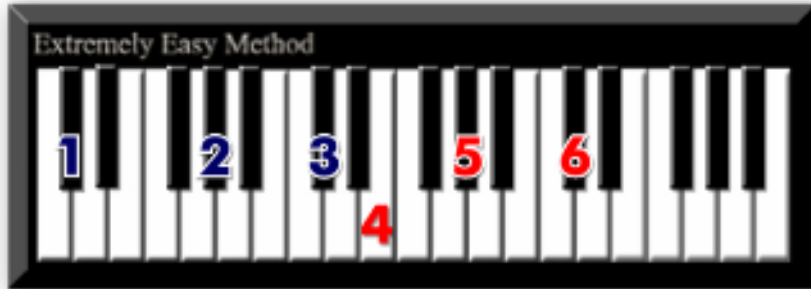
VII





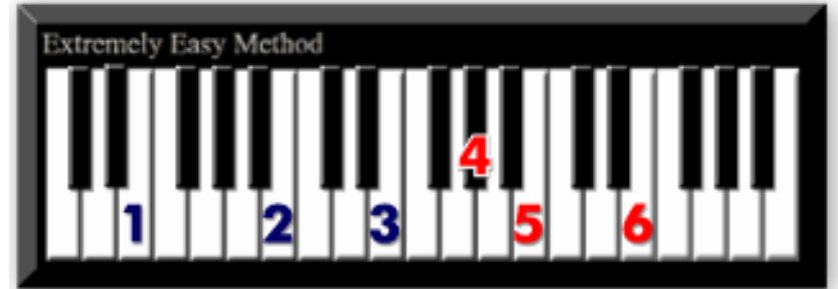
C#m Chord

i



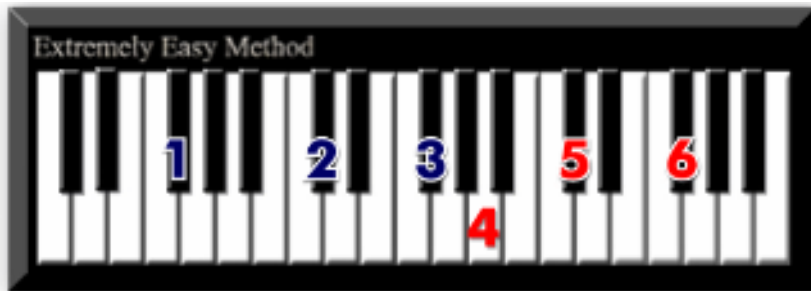
E Chord

III



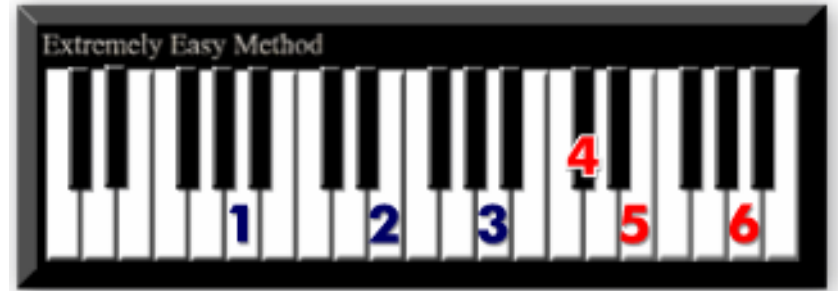
F#m Chord

iv



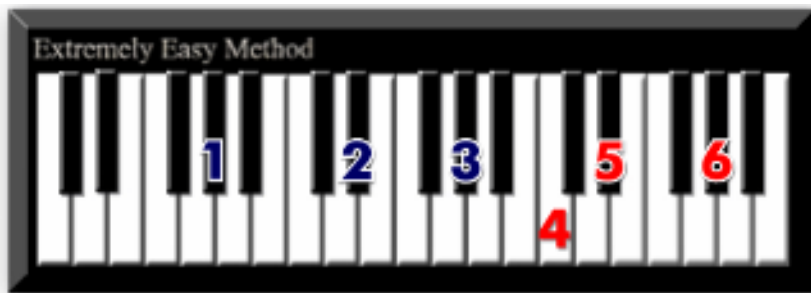
A Chord

VI



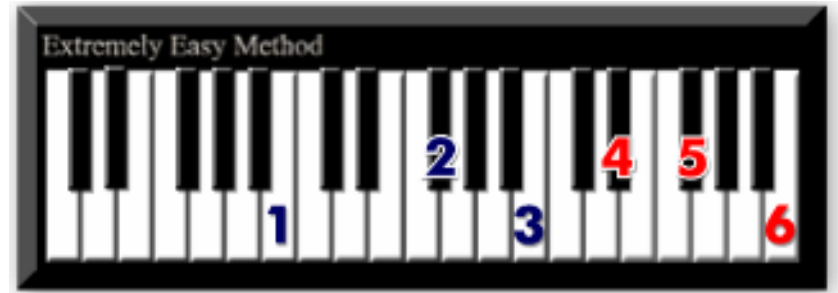
G# Chord

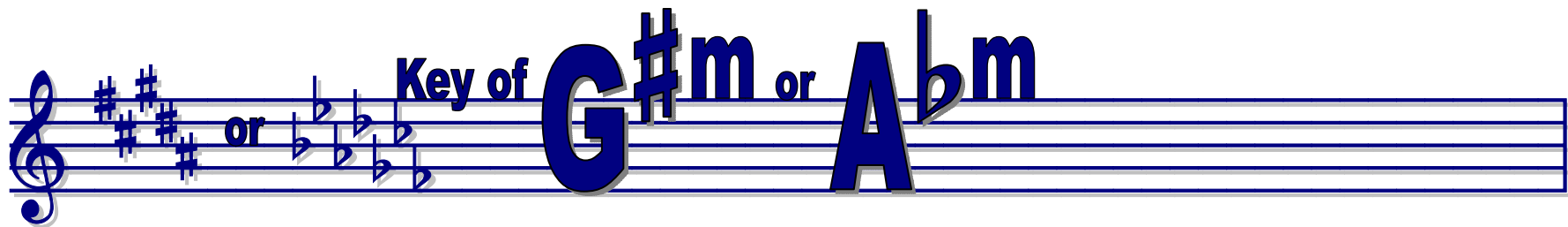
V



B Chord

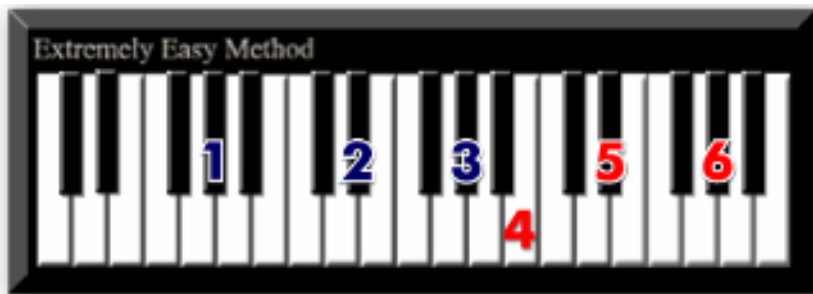
VII





G^{#m} or A^{b m} Chord

i



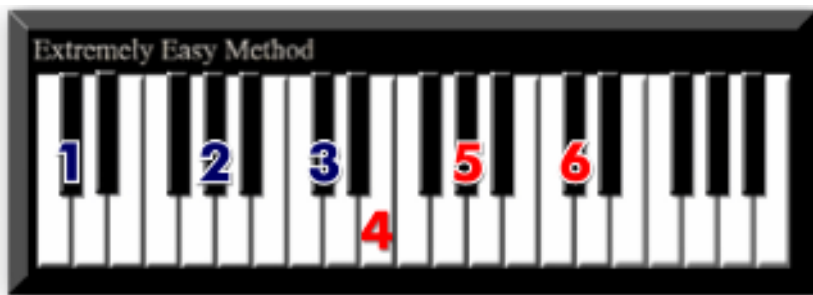
B or C^b Chord

III



C^{#m} or D^{b m} Chord

iv



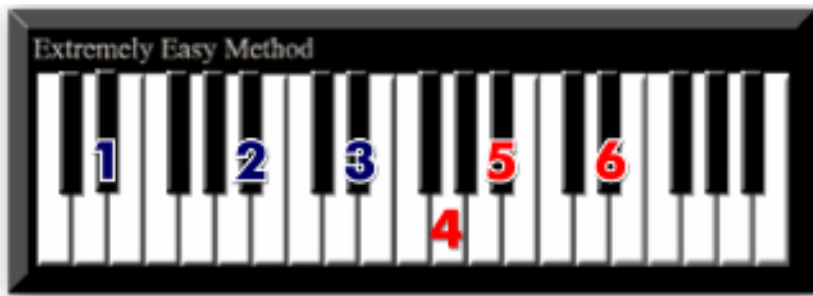
E or F^b Chord

VI



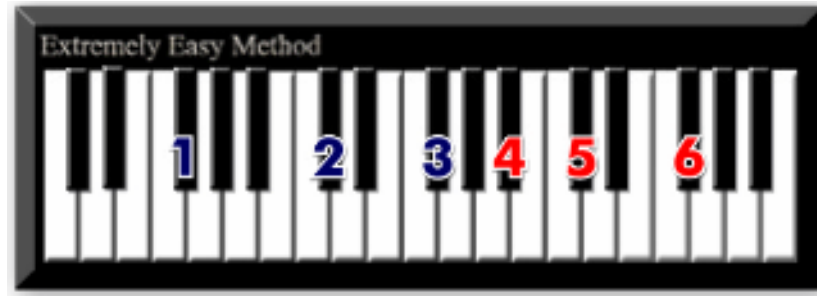
D[#] or E^b Chord

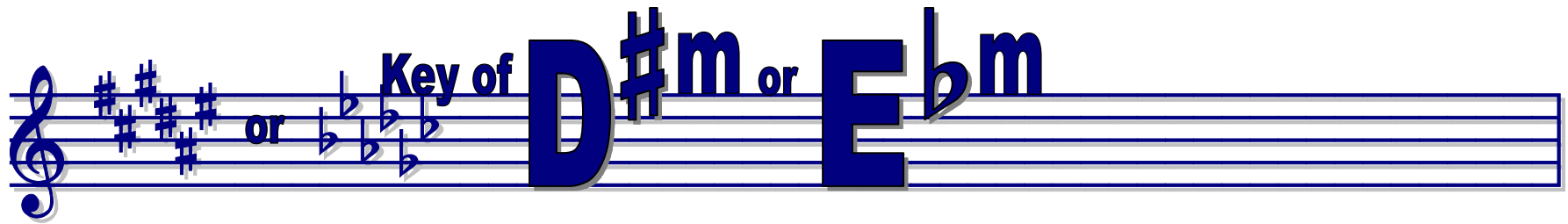
V



F[#] or G^b Chord

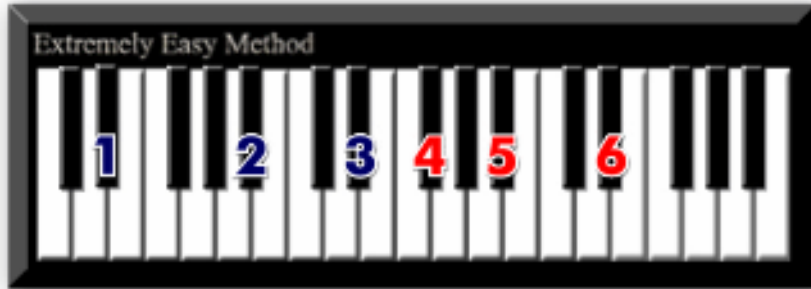
VII





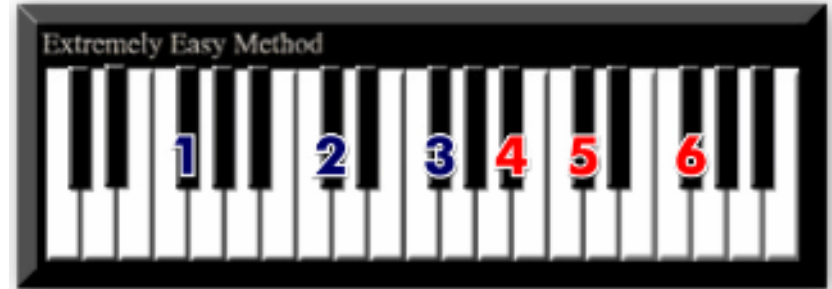
D[#]m or E^bm Chord

i



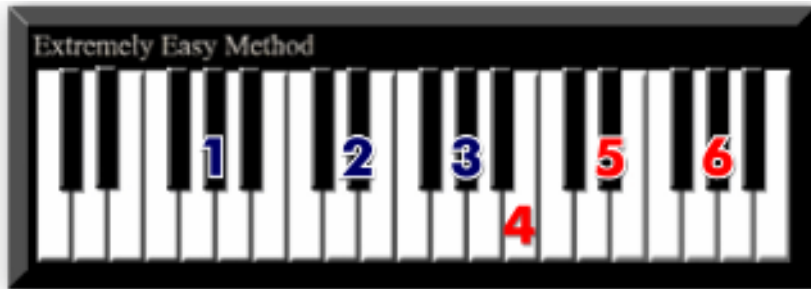
F[#] or G^b Chord

III



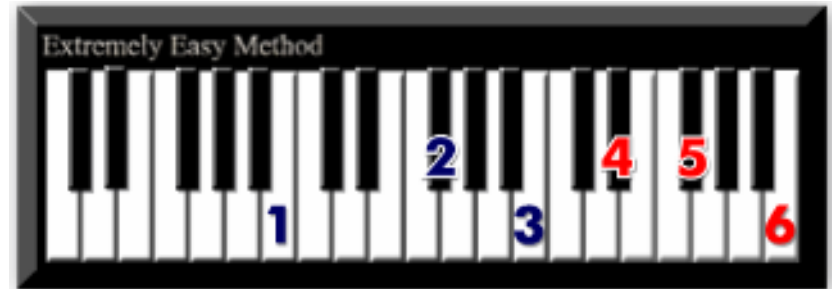
G[#]m or A^bm Chord

iv



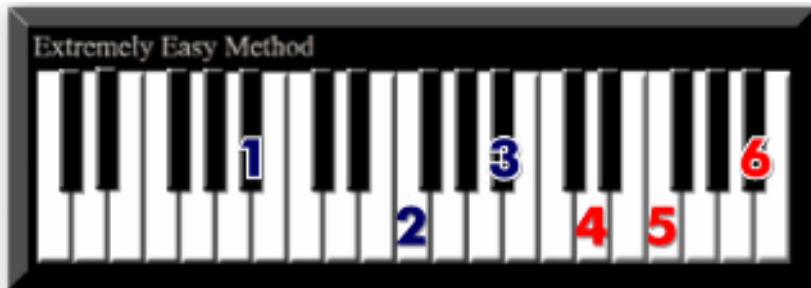
B or C^b Chord

VI



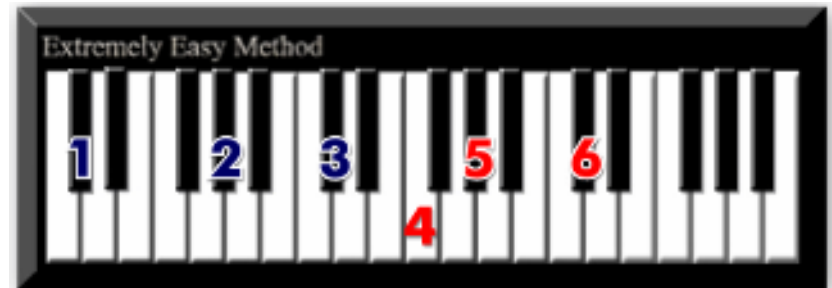
A[#] or B^b Chord

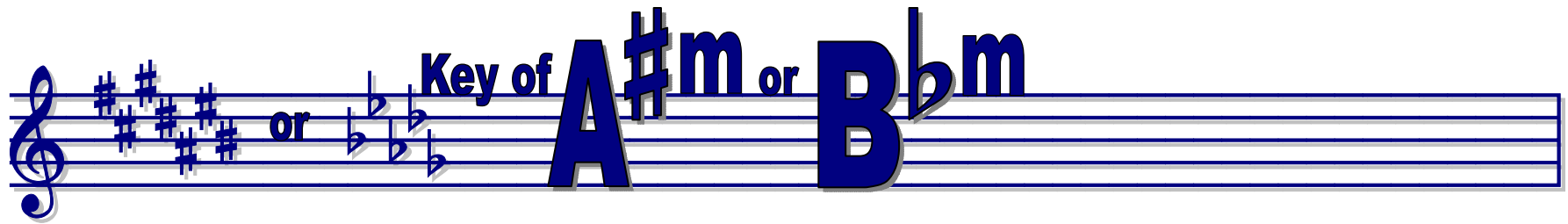
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C[#] or D^b Chord

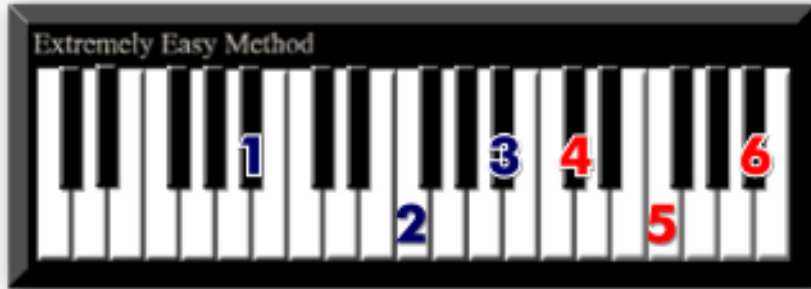
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A^{#m} or B^{b m} Chord

i



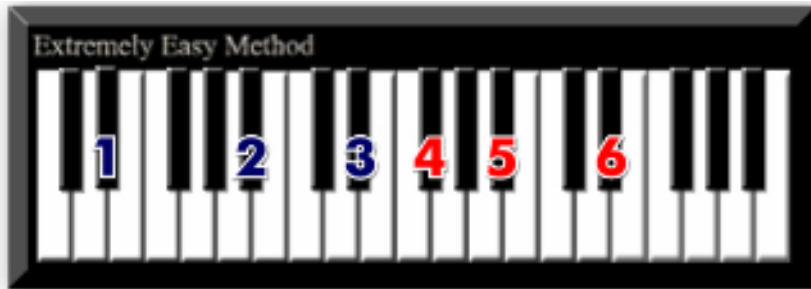
C[#] or D^b Chord

III



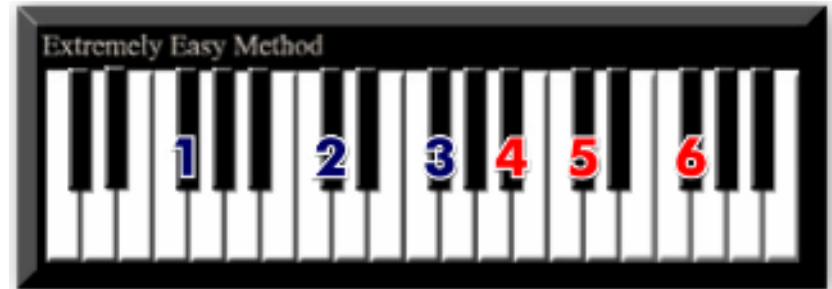
D^{#m} or E^{b m} Chord

iv



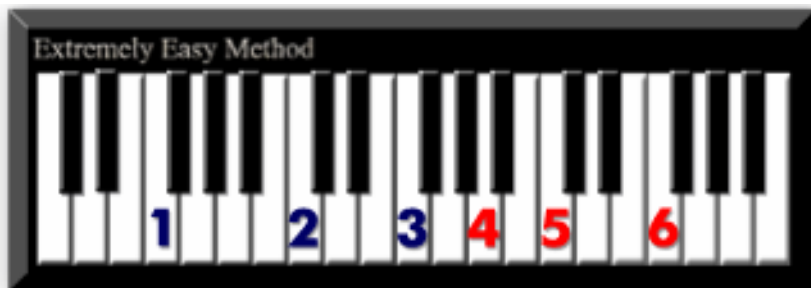
F[#] or G^b Chord

VI



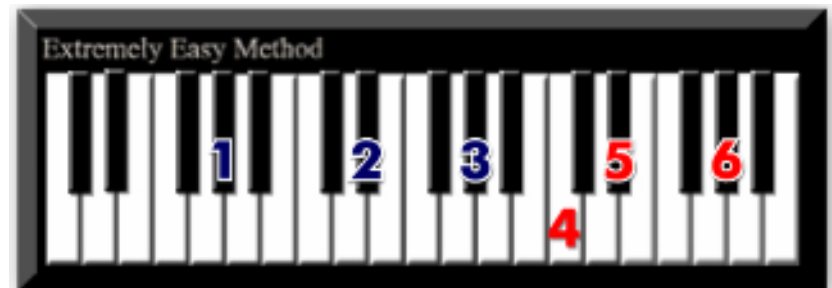
F Chord

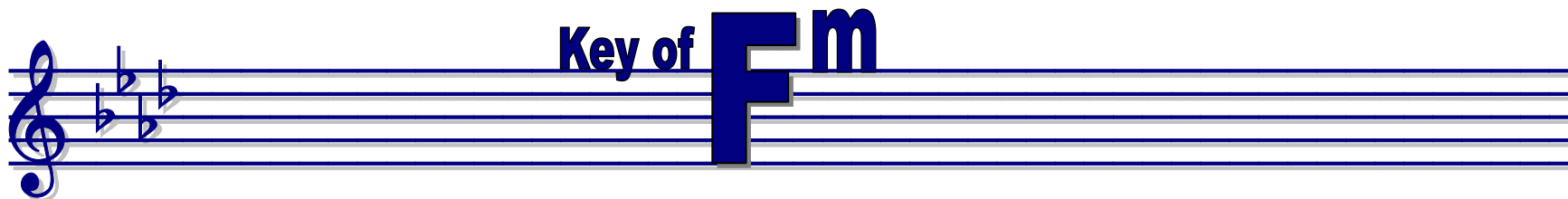
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G[#] or A^b Chord

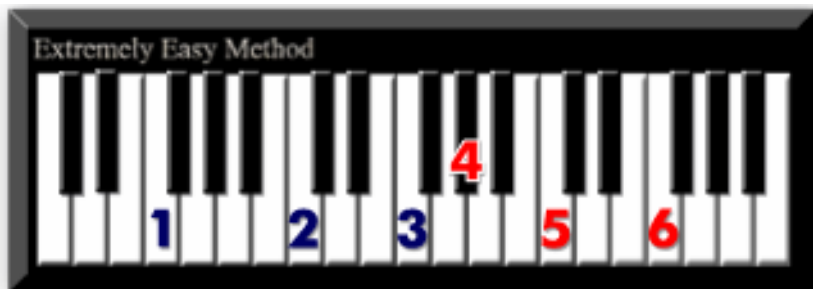
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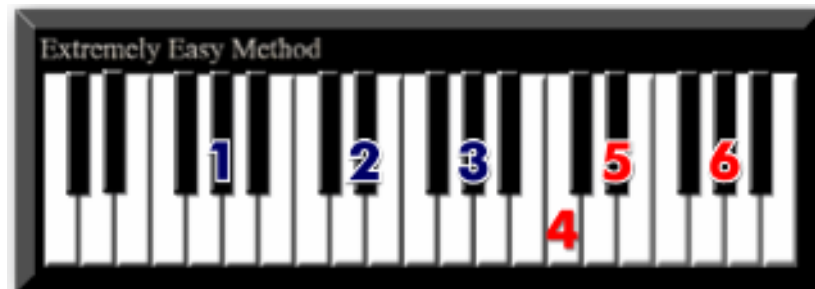
F^m Chord

i



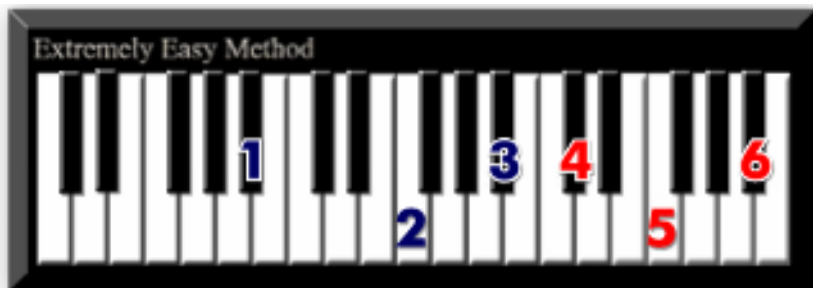
A^b Chord

III



B^bm Chord

iv



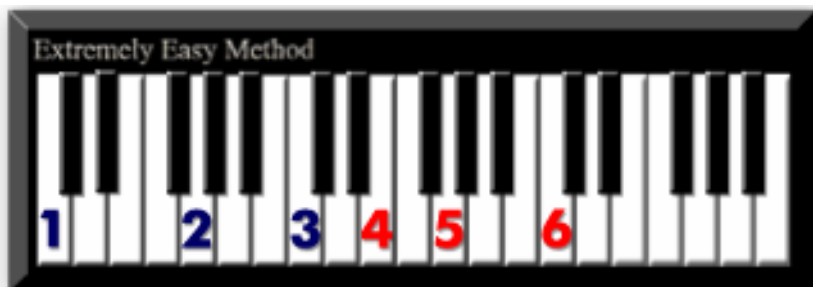
D^b Chord

VI



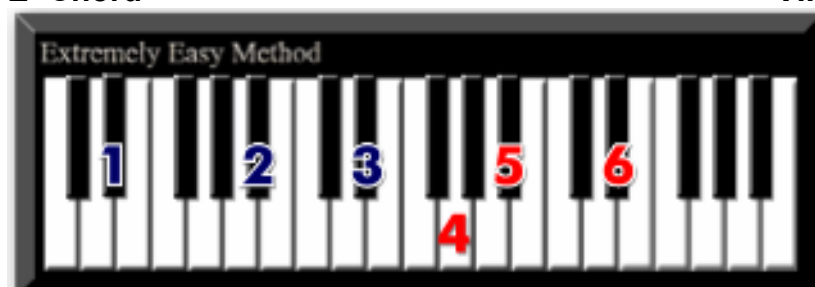
C Chord

V



E^b Chord

VII





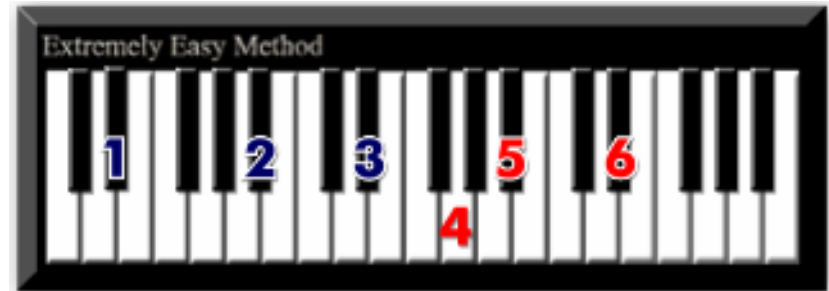
C^m Chord

i



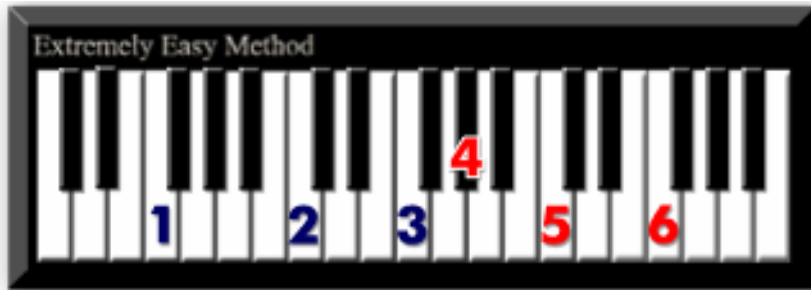
E^b Chord

III



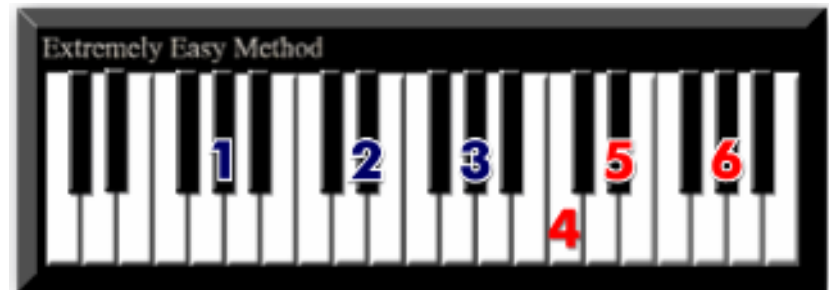
F^m Chord

iv



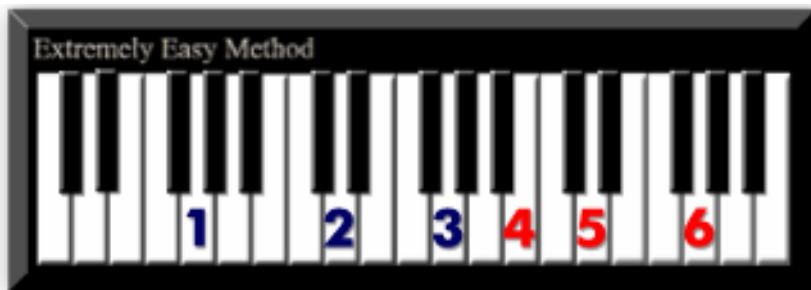
A^b Chord

VI



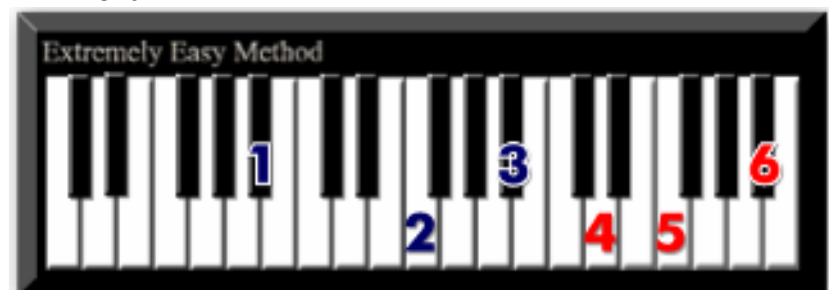
G Chord

V



B^b Chord

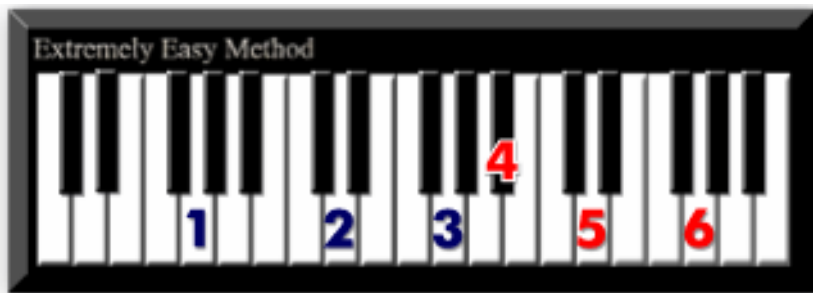
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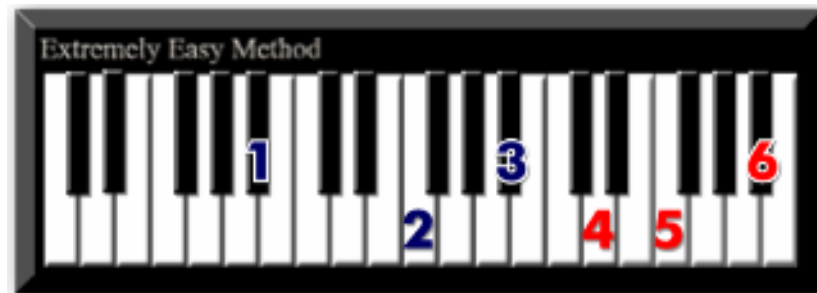
G^m Chord

i



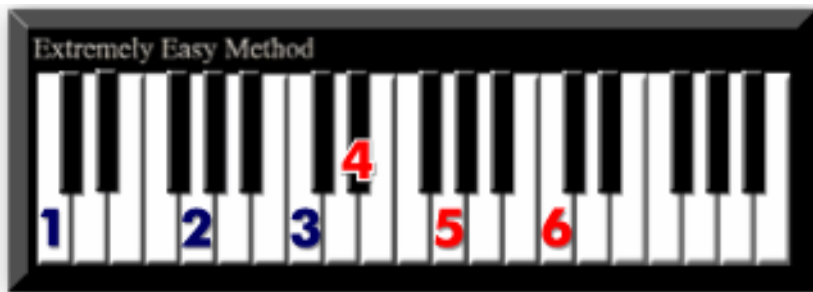
B^b Chord

III



C^m Chord

iv



E^b Chord

VI



D Chord

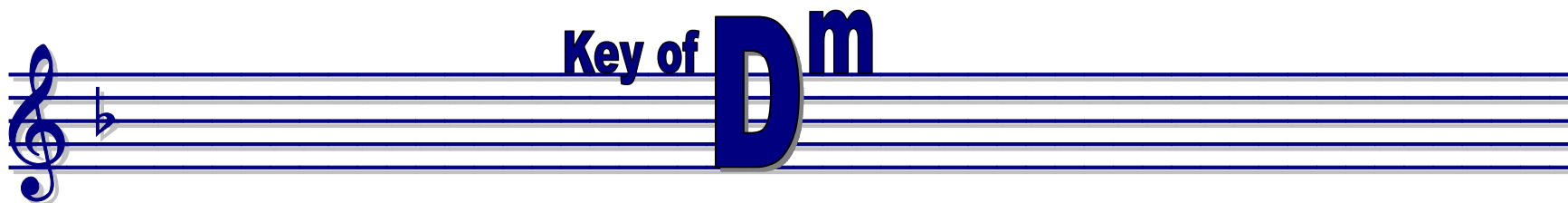
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F Chord

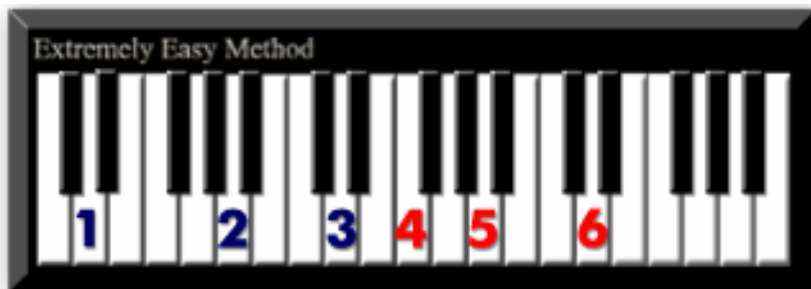
VII





D^m Chord

i



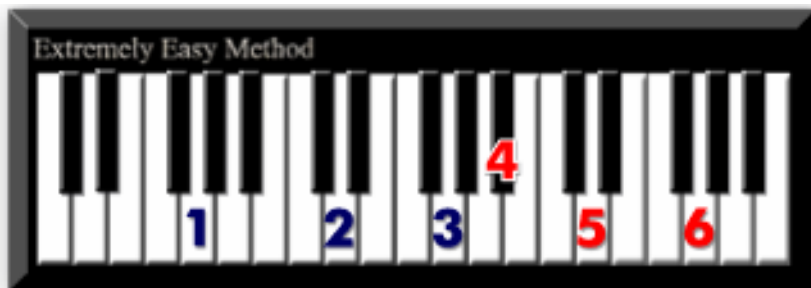
F Chord

III



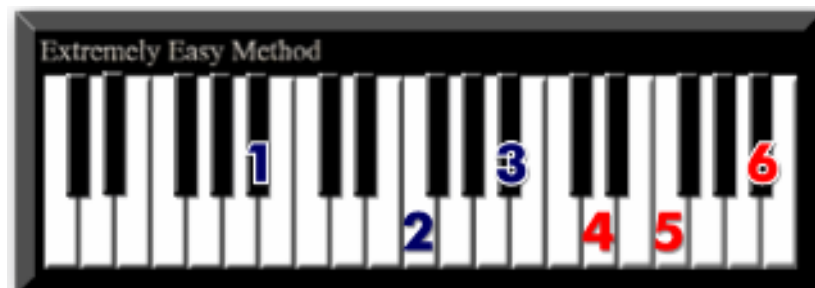
G^m Chord

iv



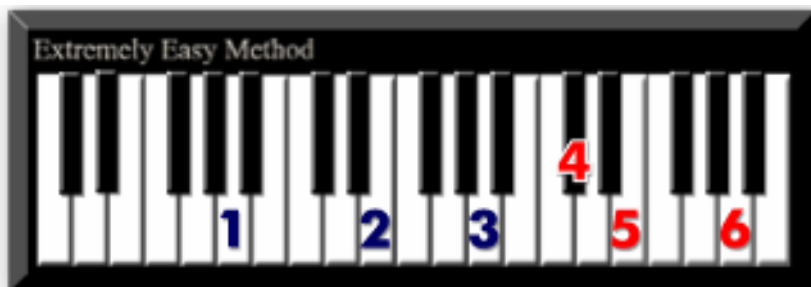
B^b Chord

VI



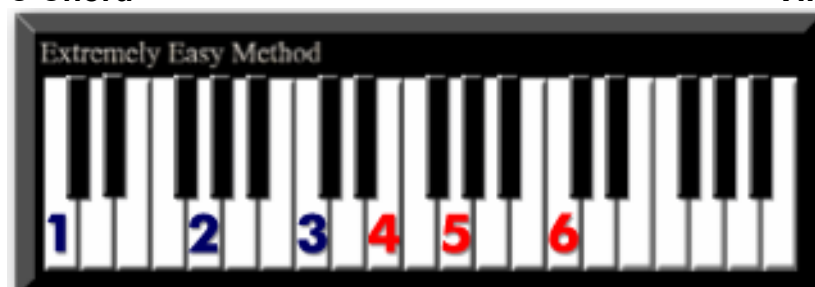
A Chord

V



C Chord

VII

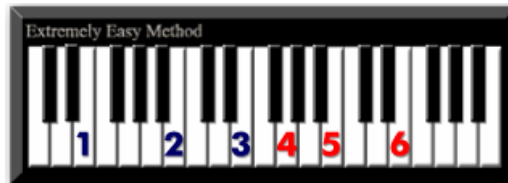


The Twelve Minor Chords

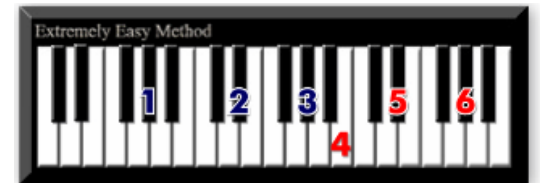
C^m



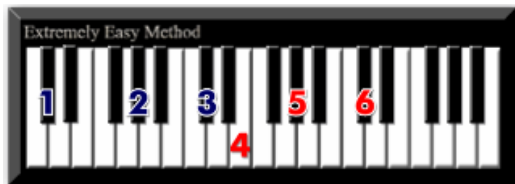
E^m



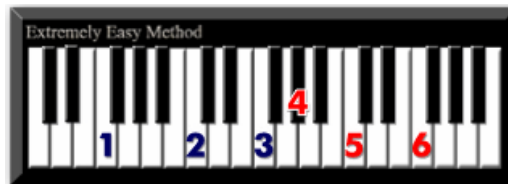
G^{#m} or A^{b m}



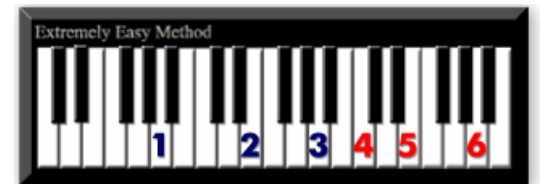
C^{#m} or D^{b m}



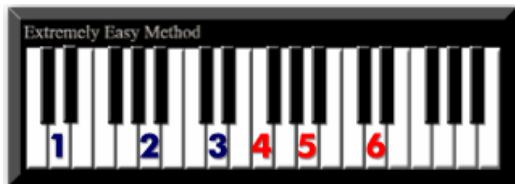
F^m



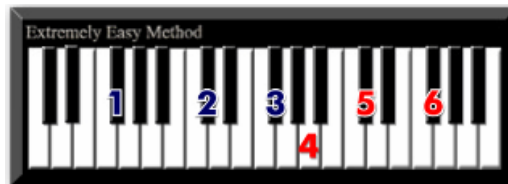
A^m



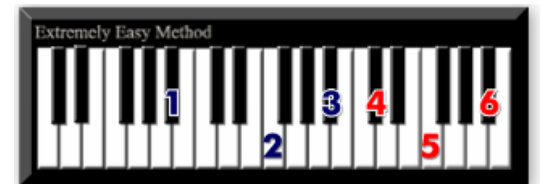
D^m



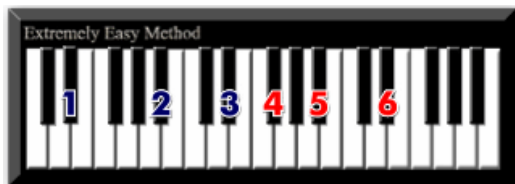
F^{#m} or G^{b m}



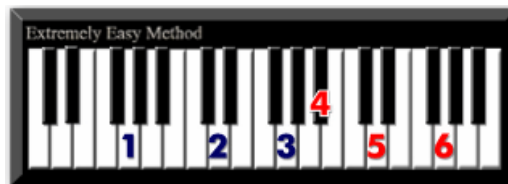
A^{#m} or B^{b m}



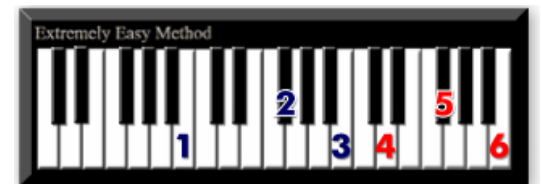
D^{#m} or E^{b m}



G^m



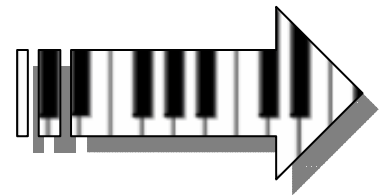
B^m



Part Five

■ Final Touches

- ✦ Beyond the Basics
- ✦ The Diminished Chord
- ✦ The Augmented Chord
- ✦ Leading Tones
- ✦ The Seventh Chord
- ✦ The Major Seventh Chord
- ✦ The Suspended Chord
- ✦ The Minor Eleventh Chord
- ✦ The Second Chord
- ✦ Experience & Experimenting
- ✦ Split Chords
- ✦ Some Common Split Chords
- ✦ A Word to Worshipers
- ✦ Conclusion

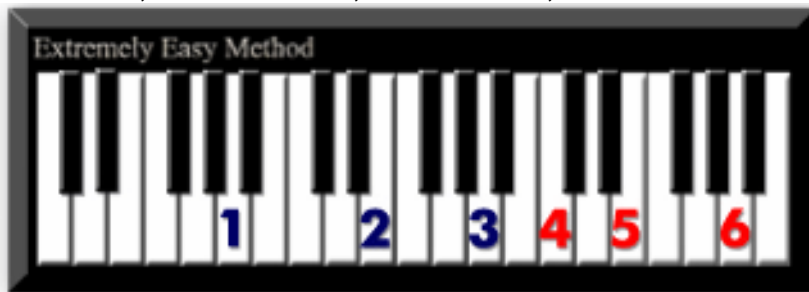


BEYOND THE BASICS

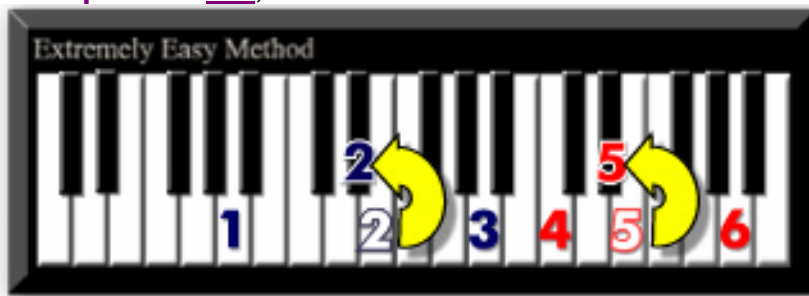
Now that you've learned the basics of the *Extremely Easy Method for Piano & Keyboard*, **LET'S GO BEYOND THE BASICS**. In this section you're going to learn some enhancements that will take your playing to a new level. But, before we get into those, allow me to make good on my promise from page 36, and show you how to play the **Diminished** and **Augmented** version of **ANY** chord.

THE DIMINISHED CHORD

A diminished chord is usually indicated by the symbol $^{\circ}$, for example, A° . The diminished chord is a form of the minor chord, so we **START WITH THE MINOR**. Therefore, to form the A° , start with A^m , like this:



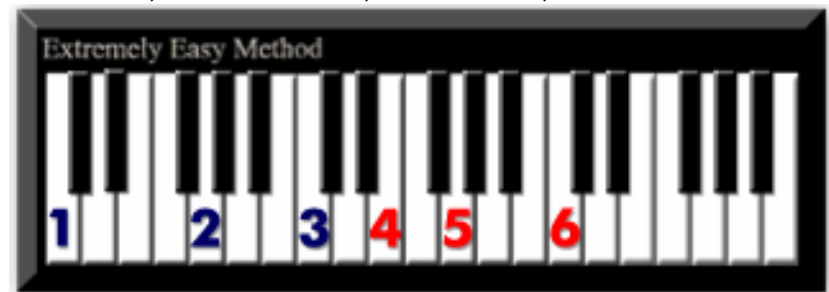
Then, **move both index fingers**, numbers **2** and **5**, $\frac{1}{2}$ **step to the left**, like this:



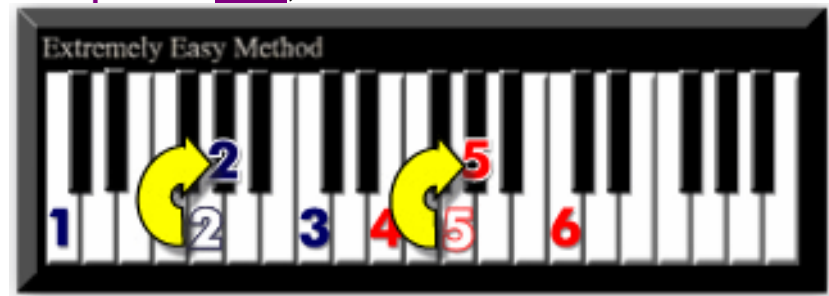
In case anyone were to ask, we're playing a minor triad with a lowered fifth; a simplified version of the diminished chord. But, when you play it I think you'll agree that **it serves the purpose**—it definitely sounds "diminished!" Why not **take a few minutes to practice** making the diminished of **all twelve minor chords**? You can find them illustrated on page 50. Simply follow the same procedure for each one: Move fingers **2** and **5** $\frac{1}{2}$ **step to the left**.

THE AUGMENTED CHORD

An augmented chord is usually indicated by the symbol $^{+}$, for example, C^{+} . The augmented chord is a form of the major chord, so we **START WITH THE MAJOR**. Therefore, to form the C^{+} , start with C, like this:



Then, **move both index fingers**, numbers **2** and **5**, $\frac{1}{2}$ **step to the right**, like this:



Our version of the augmented chord is simply a major triad with a raised fifth, but again it does the job, and can **VERY EASILY** be executed for **ANY** major chord. Why not **take a few minutes to practice** making the augmented of **all twelve major chords**? You can find them illustrated on page 33. Simply follow the same procedure for each one: Move fingers **2** and **5 ½ step to the right**.

LEADING TONES

Returning for a moment to our study of basic music theory that we started on page 6, I would like to show you **a few interesting details** about these diminished and augmented chords.

We learned that **a half-step is the distance from one piano key to the next**, regardless of the color of the key. A half-step is sometimes referred to as a **Leading Tone**, because it **“leads” the listener to another tone**. It doesn’t “sound right” to end on the half-step—you feel the need to play or sing another note or chord to end on. Let me show you what I mean. Play the C major scale on your piano by playing these **notes**, one after the other:

Play
C – D – E – F – G – A – B – C

Now play
C – D – E – F – G – A – B

Alright, go ahead and play the C, too. Did you hear how it didn’t sound **“natural”** to end on B? Didn’t you feel a strong desire to go ahead and play the C to end on? In this case, C feels like **“home,”** and the B, which is a half-step below C, serves as a leading tone to lead you home.

We’ll see **this same principle** on the next page when we look at the **seventh chord**, but here I want to very briefly explain how the diminished and augmented chords are used.

As I stated earlier, with the styles of music I generally play, I **rarely** have occasion to play diminished or augmented chords. However, **you may run across one from time to time**, so, it’s better to be prepared.

I looked through ten different music books for an example to include here, but couldn’t find a single one! So, instead of a song, we’ll just explore a few **Chord Progressions** (a series of chords played in a certain order). Diminished chords are sometimes used as **connector chords**. **Play these chord progressions** that include a **diminished chord**, and see how they sound to you:

Play
G – G[♯] – A^m – D⁷
Try this one
C – C[♯] – G

Now, let’s try the **augmented chord**:

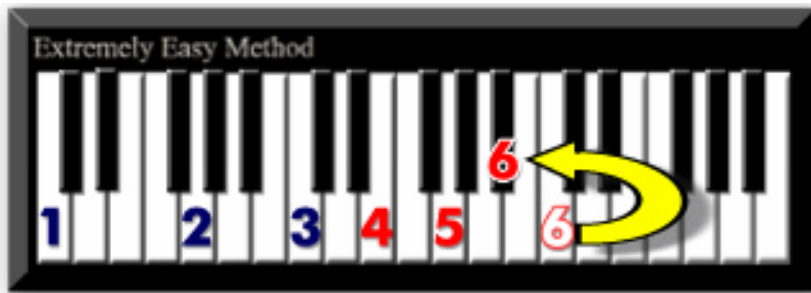
Play
C – C⁺ – A^m
Here’s one more
C – C⁺ – F

Interesting, huh? Now let’s move on to something **more common in most modern music—the Seventh Chord**.

THE SEVENTH CHORD

By far the **most important and most common chord enhancement is the Seventh**, which is indicated like this: ⁷. You will find this very frequently on **the V chord**, where it serves as a “**preparation**” for what follows.

The same procedure applies to both major and minor chords, and consists of simply adding the note that is a seventh above the root. This is accomplished by moving finger number **6 two ½ steps** (one whole step) **to the left**. Following is an illustration of the process for forming the C⁷ chord.



Again, notice that the **6** finger (the pinky of the right hand) moves two ½ steps to the left. **THE PROCEDURE IS THE SAME FOR EVERY MAJOR AND MINOR CHORD.**

Before we try this in a song, why don't you **practice** playing the seventh of **all twelve major chords** (see page 32), and **all twelve minor chords** (see page 50)?

Now play
C – F – G⁷ – C

Can you hear how the G⁷ “**leads you home**” to C?

Let's revisit “Auld Lang Syne,” and add that *little detail* I mentioned on page 17: **The seventh chord**. The V chord for the key of C is G, but notice that all of the G's are not G⁷'s. In this example we see a **common pattern** for the use of the seventh chord; in the **last line** of the verse and the **last line** of the chorus. Let's try it!

Auld Lang Syne by Robert Burns

C G
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
C F
And never brought to mind?
C G
Should auld acquaintance be forgot
E^m A^m D^m G⁷ C
And days of auld lang syne?

F C G
For auld lang syne, my dear,
C F
For auld lang syne,
C G
We'll take a cup o'kindness yet,
E^m A^m D^m G⁷ C
For auld la – ng syne!

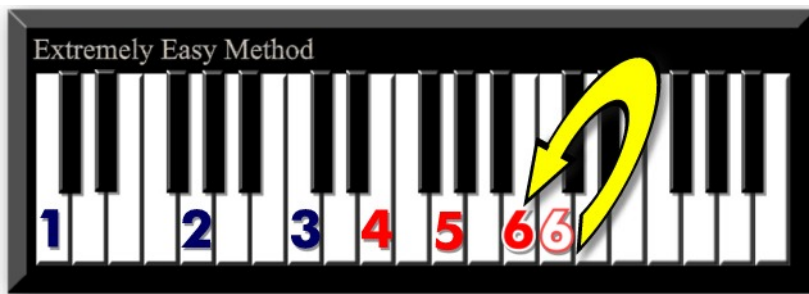
Did you hear it? Play it again, this time **without** the G⁷. Can you hear the difference? Now play it again with the G⁷. This is one **little detail** that makes a **BIG difference** in your performance.

On the following page, I want to introduce you to a chord variation that produces a **smooth, peaceful sound**: The **Major Seventh**. Let's look at it.

THE MAJOR SEVENTH CHORD

The **Major Seventh Chord** is usually indicated in one of three ways: maj^7 , M^7 , Δ . When I write it, I usually use the Δ , just because it's easier.

We'll apply this **ONLY** with the **MAJOR CHORDS**. It is accomplished by moving finger number **6 one half step to the left**. Following is an illustration of the process for forming the C^Δ chord.



Again, notice that the **6** finger (the pinky of the right hand) moves one half step to the left. **THE PROCEDURE IS THE SAME FOR EVERY MAJOR CHORD.**

Before we try this in a song, why don't you **practice** playing the major seventh of **all twelve major chords** (see page 33)?

Now play
 $C^\Delta - F^\Delta - C^{\text{maj}^7} - F^{\text{maj}^7} - C^{M^7} - F^{M^7}$

Doesn't that sound **pleasant**? Now, let's try an arrangement of the classic American folk song "Shenandoah." We'll play it in the key of D, and add in some **major seventh** and **seventh chords**.

Shenandoah

American

D B^m D D^7
 Oh, Shenandoah, I long to hear you,

G D
 Away you rolling river

G B^m
 Oh, Shenandoah, I long to hear you,

D $F^\sharp m$
 Away, I'm bound away,
 G^Δ A^7 D
 'cross the wide Missouri.

D B^m D D^7
 Oh, Shenandoah, I'm bound to leave you,

G D
 Away you rolling river

G B^m
 Oh, Shenandoah, I'm bound to leave you,

D $F^\sharp m$
 Away, I'm bound away,
 G^Δ A^7 D
 'cross the wide Missouri.

Remember the Dynamics from page 11? After you master this song, why not incorporate a few dynamics to make it sound even better? If you sing along, remember that dynamics apply to vocals, too.

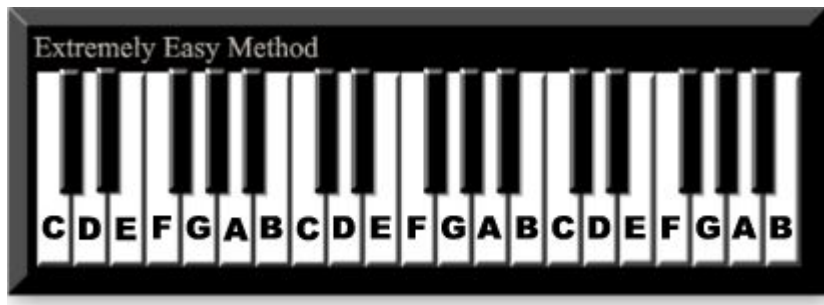
Start at *mp*; then do the second line at *mf*. *Decrescendo* to *p* by the end of the third line; *crescendo* to *mf* on the fourth, and end the verse at *mp*.

THE SUSPENDED CHORD

As the name implies, a **Suspended Chord** contains an extra note that gives it a “suspended” or “hanging” sound, **as if it were just hanging there, waiting to be resolved into the next chord**. It is usually indicated like this: ^{sus}.

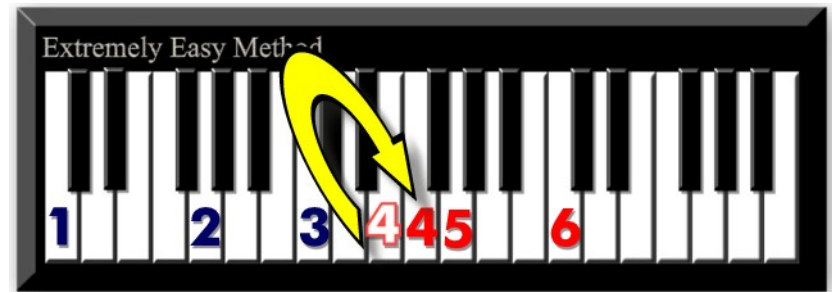
It is formed by adding the note that is an **eleventh above the root**. In fact, when the eleventh is added to a minor chord, it is called a Minor Eleventh Chord. We’ll explain that in more detail on the next page.

To count intervals, like the seventh we learned on page 54, and the eleventh that we’re exploring here, call **the root number one**, and count each note as you move up the keyboard, that is, **from left to right**.



For example, the note we’ll add to the C chord to make it C^{sus} is F, because it’s the eleventh from C. **Start at C as number one and count eleven notes to the right.**

For another example, let’s take F[#]. Count eleven notes: F, G, A, B, C, D, E, F, G, A, B. The eleventh of F[#] is B. Our method for playing a suspended chord is extremely easy. It is accomplished by moving finger number **4 one half step to the right**. Following is an illustration of the process for forming the C^{sus} chord.



Again, notice that the **4** finger (the thumb of the right hand) moves one half step to the right. **THE PROCEDURE IS THE SAME FOR EVERY MAJOR CHORD**. Let’s experiment with the suspended chord on one of my favorite hymns: “Holy, Holy, Holy.”

Holy, Holy, Holy

Reginald Heber

John B. Dykes

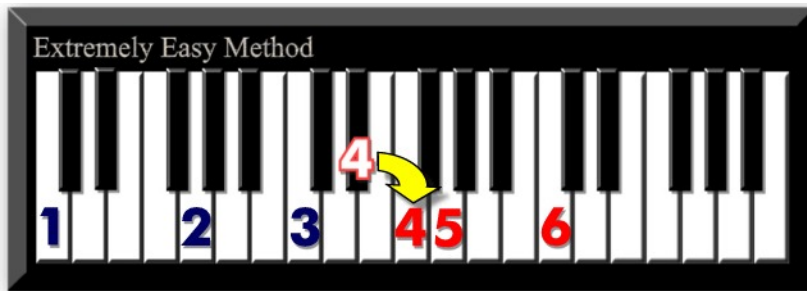
D B^m A G D
 Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty!
 F^{#m} B^m A
 Early in the morning
 G A^{sus} A
 Our song shall rise to Thee;

D B^m A G D
 Holy, Holy, Holy, Merciful and Mighty!
 B^m F^{#m} B^m F^{#m}
 God in Three Persons,
 E^m A D^{sus} D
 Blessed Trinity!

THE MINOR ELEVENTH CHORD

The **Minor Eleventh Chord**, usually indicated m^{11} , is basically the minor version of the suspended chord, in that it has a note added that is an eleventh above the root. However, **it is used differently**.

Let's take C^{m11} as an example. As in the example on the previous page of C^{sus} , we need to **count eleven notes starting at C**, and again the note we will add is **F**. But, since we are starting with the minor chord, we will move finger number **4 two ½ steps** (one whole step) **to the right**. Following is an illustration of the process for forming the C^{m11} chord.



Again, notice that the **4** finger (the thumb of the right hand) moves two ½ steps to the right. **THE PROCEDURE IS THE SAME FOR EVERY MINOR CHORD.**

The minor eleventh chord is fairly common in the styles of music I generally play. I would recommend you practice playing the eleventh of **all twelve minor chords** (see page 50).

You will likely run across **other weird chords** from time to time, like 13 , $+5$, $b5$, $2sus$, $no\ 3rd$, etc. These aren't as common as the ones I've presented in this method, and **can usually be skipped**. There is one more that **IS** very important: **The Second Chord**.

THE SECOND CHORD

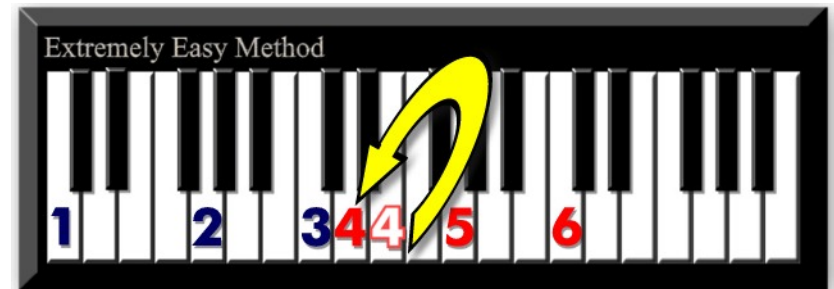
I've saved **the best** for last! The **Second Chord** is my very favorite, and I use it **ALL THE TIME** in my playing. You don't have to wait for it to be written in the music: **You can add a second chord yourself as an embellishment**. I'll show you what I mean in just a moment.

(Every now and then you may see a Ninth Chord. Since the second and ninth are the same note, I play them the same.)

You can add the second to both **major** and **minor** chords, but the procedure is **slightly different** for each. Let's take the major chord first. We'll use C^2 as our example.

C^2 Chord

Move finger number **4 two ½ steps** (one whole step) **to the left**. Following is an illustration of the process for forming the C^2 chord.

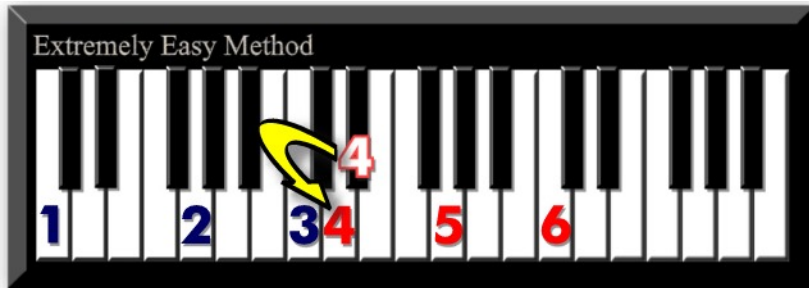


Again, notice that the **4** finger (the thumb of the right hand) moves two ½ steps to the left. **THE PROCEDURE IS THE SAME FOR EVERY MAJOR CHORD.**

Practice playing the second of **all twelve major chords** (see page 33).

C^{m2} Chord

For a minor chord, move finger number **4 one half step to the left**. Following is an illustration of the process for forming the C^{m2} chord.



Again, notice that the **4** finger (the thumb of the right hand) moves one half step to the left. **THE PROCEDURE IS THE SAME FOR EVERY MINOR CHORD.**

Using the Second Chord

As I stated earlier, I use the second chord a lot. Let's experiment with a few chord progressions, so you can begin to get a feel for how to incorporate the second chord into your playing.

Play
C – C² – C – C² – C – C² – C

Now play
C – C^{sus} – C² – C

Let's try E^m
E^m – E^{m2} – E^m – E^{m2} – E^m – E^{m2} – E^m

Now this one
E^m – E^{m11} – E^{m2} – E^m

Experience & Experimenting

Experience comes through **practice**. And, while you're practicing, be sure to **experiment** with these **Final Touches** that we've learned. Following is a quick-reference summary of all of them.

Major Chords

Place your fingers lightly on the keys to play a C.

- ✦ Move fingers **2** and **5** ½ step to the right to form the **augmented chord**.
- ✦ Move finger **6** two ½ steps (one whole step) to the left to form the **seventh chord**.
- ✦ Move finger **6** one half step to the left to form the **major seventh chord**.
- ✦ Move finger **4** one half step to the right to form the **suspended chord**.
- ✦ Move finger **4** two ½ steps (one whole step) to the left to form the **second chord**.

Minor Chords

Place your fingers lightly on the keys to play an E^m.

- ✦ Move fingers **2** and **5** ½ step to the left to form the **diminished chord**.
- ✦ Move finger **6** two ½ steps (one whole step) to the left to form the **seventh chord**.
- ✦ Move finger **4** two ½ steps (one whole step) to the right to form the **eleventh chord**.
- ✦ Move finger **4** one half step to the left to form the **second chord**.

Split Chords

A **Split Chord** (sometimes called a slash chord) is a combination of two chords. They are **VERY COMMON** in most styles of contemporary music, and with our method they are **extremely easy** to play!

They are indicated like a mathematical fraction: $\frac{C}{G}$ or C/G, for example.

- ✦ The chord indicated on **top** or to the **left** of the slash is the **upper** (treble) chord, which is played with the **right hand**.
- ✦ The chord indicated at the **bottom** or to the **right** of the slash is the **lower** (bass) chord, which is played with the **left hand**.

Unfortunately, these days split chords are almost always written in the **horizontal format** (C/G), which makes it a bit confusing at first. It helps me to **visualize** it in the vertical format, with the C above the G. That way it's easier to remember that **the C is played "above" the G on the keyboard**. Since **we read the keyboard from left to right**, we consider the notes played by the right hand to be **above** the notes played by the left hand.

If you don't want to take the time to learn to play split chords, you can play only the top (left) chord, and the bass player can play the bottom (right) chord. But, once you see how easy it is, and how good the split chords sound, I assure you **you'll be glad you took the time to learn to play them**.

We'll use the C/G as our example to learn by, then you can apply the same format to play **ANY** split chord you come across.

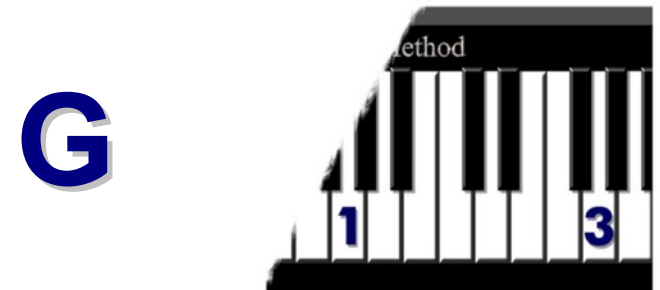
Right Hand

Until you get used to playing these, I think you'll find it easier to **position your right hand first**. The right hand (fingers **4, 5** and **6**) will play **EXACTLY THE SAME** as usual for the top (left) chord. For our example, C/G, the right hand will play the **same notes** as with a regular C chord. Here's what it looks like:



Left Hand

For our example, C/G, the left hand will play the usual notes, with the **EXCEPTION OF FINGER NUMBER 2, WHICH DOESN'T PLAY ANYTHING**. Here's what it looks like:



That's all there is to it! Use this same procedure to play any split chord. On the following page we'll practice some more chord combinations, and I'll give you some chord progressions that include split chords.

Some Common Split Chords

Let's practice a few of the more **common split chords**. This is by no means a complete list, but once you master these, you'll be able to adapt the principles to **any chord combination**.

In the following illustrations, the **left column** gives the **name** of the split chord; the **middle column** tells which notes the **right hand** plays (fingers **4, 5** and **6**); and the **right column** tells which notes the **left hand** plays (fingers **1** and **3**). Remember, don't use finger 2 for split chords.

	<u>Right Hand</u>	<u>Left Hand</u>
D/F#	F# - A - D	F# - F#
C/E	E - G - C	E - E
G/D	B - D - G	D - D
G/B	B - D - G	B - B

Play
 G - D/F# - C/E - G/D - C - G/B - A^m
 D^{sus} - D - G^{sus} - G² - G

Here are some more split chords for you to practice.

B ^b /D	D - F - B ^b	D - D
F/C	A - C - F	C - C
B ^b /A	D - F - B ^b	A - A

Play
 F - C/E - B^b/D - F/C - B^b - B^b/A
 C^{sus} - C - C⁷ - F

There are many, many other combinations of chords that you may run across, **but the same procedure applies to them all.**

My Secret Revealed

Don't tell anybody, but I sometimes skip chords, especially complicated ones. After all, this is the **Extremely EASY Method!**

Many times you can just play the six principle chords that go with the key the song is in, and skip the more complicated chords. Below is an example of how this is done.

- NOTE -

I want to encourage you to be continually expanding your repertoire of chords. Don't be afraid to experiment with new chords, and take time to learn new things as you go along.

Instead of this...

A^b/E^b A^b/B^b E^b/B^b A^b/E^b E^b B^{b9sus} B^b
 A^b/E^b E^b G/D G⁷ C^m F^{m7} E^b/G A^b B^bsus B^b
 A^b/E^b A^b/B^b E^b/B^b A^b/E^b E^b B^{b9sus} B^b E^b

I might play this...

E^b A^b E^b A^b B^bsus B^b
 A^b E^b A^b B^bsus B^b
 A^b E^b A^b B^bsus B^b E^b

Obviously, the more chords you play the fuller and better it will sound. The point I want to make is this: Don't avoid playing a song because you think it's too difficult.

Either simplify it; learn some new chords; OR BOTH!

A Word to Worshipers

As I led worship on the keyboard at the church here in Mexico the other night, with a group of about thirty believers, **I was reminded by the Holy Spirit of why I first learned to play the piano.**

Jesus said in John 4:23 and 24, **“But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.”**

And David, the sweet psalmist of Israel, wrote in Psalm 108:1-5, O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise, even with my glory. Awake, psaltery and harp: I *myself* will awake early. I will praise thee, O LORD, among the people: and I will sing praises unto Thee among the nations. For Thy mercy *is* great above the heavens: and Thy truth *reacheth* unto the clouds. Be Thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: and Thy glory above all the earth.

A Renewed Vision

I initially intended to just do a revision of my original method book, *Simple Method for Piano and Keyboard*, which I put together in 1993. I thought I would update the graphics and make a few minor improvements.

However, over the course of time that I’ve been working on it, **my “revision” has become a “renewed vision.”** I am more convinced than ever that music is an extremely powerful tool to motivate people, and to facilitate the expression of our praise and worship to God. **But, it is only a tool. True worship** must begin in the heart, and must be directed toward God.

Open Worship

During that worship service the other night, the Holy Spirit led us in a time of what we call **“Open Worship”** or “Free Worship.” To encourage the group (and myself) to just **worship God with the whole heart**, without having to read the overhead or worry about singing the “right” words, I just played some chord progressions that are conducive to worship.

This is **extremely easy** to do with our method. After any worship song, you can just keep playing in the same key. You can be creative, and experiment with different chord progressions, but here are a few ideas to get you started.

If you’re playing in a major key, switch back and forth between chords **I** and **IV**, playing four counts on each chord, and just **continue** with those two chords until the Spirit leads you to do something else. For example:

Play
D – G – D – G – D – G...

See the chart on page 8 for a complete list of the major keys and their respective chords. This is my favorite when I’m playing with the band, because it’s the easiest for them to follow my lead.

Another chord progression I like for open worship in a major key is **I – IV – I – V**. Here’s an example:

Play
A – D – A – E...

Again, refer to the **chart on page 8** to see which chords to play with any major key.

Here are a few others you can try with major keys, including the chords you would play **in the key of C as an example**:

✚ I – IV – V – I	C – F – G – C
✚ I – V – IV – V	C – G – F – C
✚ I – ii – iii – ii	C – D^m – E^m – D^m
✚ I – vi – IV – V	C – A^m – F – G

You can also **switch between the I chord and the chord a whole step below it**. For example, in **the key of D**;

D – C

If you're playing in a minor key, try one of these:

✚ i – iv – i – V	A^m – D^m – A^m – E
✚ i – V	A^m – E
✚ i – V – VI	A^m – F – G

See page 37 for a complete list of the minor keys and their respective chords. Here are a few more tips that may prove helpful.

- ✚ Add in some **second** and **suspended chords**. I personally use a lot of second chords.
- ✚ Use dynamics
 - ✚ You may start off softly, then build to a time of fervent praise and adoration, and finally end with a time of soft, intimate worship.
 - ✚ Or, you may end with a loud, joyful round of exaltation and applause.
- ✚ **Vary the rhythm** as you go along, at times a flowing rhythm, and at other times a harder, driving type rhythm.
- ✚ **BE LED BY THE SPIRIT!**

Conclusion

My sincere desire is that this method may be a blessing to you, and enrich your worship of the Living God. My wife can testify that this project has truly been a labor of love. But, all the long hours and late nights working on this project are all worth it every time someone tells me that they have received some benefit from the method.

I would love to hear from you either way; whether it is a testimony of how the book has helped you, or constructive criticism as to how the method might be improved.

Please feel free to e-mail me at:

rmay@goitc.net

And, please tell all your friends about the *Extremely Easy Method*, and direct them to my website at:

www.goitc.net/piano

Finally, I'd like to leave you with this exhortation from Psalm 150:

Praise ye the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise Him in the firmament of his power.
 Praise Him for his mighty acts: praise Him according to His excellent greatness.
 Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet: praise Him with the psaltery and harp.
 Praise Him with the timbrel and dance: praise Him with stringed instruments and organs.
 Praise Him upon the loud cymbals: praise Him upon the high sounding cymbals.
 Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD.