Add 9 Chords

Add 9 chords are achieved by adding the 9th interval to any of the triads.

The 9th interval is the same note as the 2nd interval. Typically, when the 3 or b3 is present, I consider the 2nd interval the 9th. Usually the 9th interval is played above the octave of the root note, however, it is not necessary.

If you see a chord labeled as an Add 2, it implies the same note names played/used in an Add 9.

The easiest way to add in the 9th interval to any chord is to raise an octave of the root note being repeated in the chord shape you are working with.

You can have a 9, b9, or even a #9 added. A #9 will be rare and not applicable in every situation because a #9 is the same interval distance as a b3. So, you could have a Major Add #9, but not a Minor Add #9.

The following formulas are for Add 9 chords that occur in the Major Scale. The roman numerals indicate where these chords appear in the Major Scale.

1, 3, 5 + 9 = Major Add 9
I – IV – V

1, b3, 5 + 9 = Minor Add 9
ii – vi

1, b3, 5 + b9 = Minor Add b9
iii

1, b3, b5 + b9 = Diminished Add b9
vii

The following are the Add 9 chords as they appear in order in the Major Scale:

Major Add 9 – Minor Add 9 – Minor Add b9 – Major Add 9 – Major Add 9
     I   ii   iii   IV   V

Minor Add 9 – Diminished Add b9
    vi   vii

When naming an Add 9 chord all you have to do is say Add after the type of triad you start with and what type of 9 you are adding. So you could have a Major Add 9, Major Add b9, or Major Add #9.