

Add 11 Chords

Add 11 chords are achieved by adding the 11th interval to any of the triads. The 11th interval is the same note as the 4th interval. Typically, when the 3 or b3 is present, I consider the 4th interval the 11th. Usually the 11th interval is played above the octave of the root note, however, it is not necessary.

You can have an 11, #11, or even a b11 added. A b11 will be rare and not applicable in every situation because a b11 is the same interval distance as a 3. So, you could have a Minor Add b11, but not a Major Add b11.

The easiest way to add in an 11 is to lower the 5th interval in your chord. There are usually at least two 5th intervals in a chord shape.

The following formulas are for Add 11 chords that happen in the Major Scale. The roman numerals indicate where these chords appear in the Major Scale.

1, 3, 5 + 11 = Major Add 11
I – V

1, 3, 5 + #11 = Major Add #11
IV

1, b3, 5 + 11 = Minor Add 11
ii – iii – vi

1, b3, b5 + 11 = Diminished Add 11
vii

The following are the Add 11 chords as they appear in order in the Major Scale:

Major Add 11 – Minor Add 11 – Minor Add 11 – Major Add #11 – Major Add 11
I ii iii IV V

Minor Add 11 – Diminished Add 11
vi vii

When naming an Add 11 chord all you have to do is say Add after the type of triad you start with and what type of 11 you are adding. So you could have a Major Add 11, Major Add #11, or Minor Add b11.