

Triad Chords

Triads are three note chords built by stacking thirds. You have Major 3rds and minor 3rds. A Major 3rd is a distance of two whole steps (4 frets apart) For example, if you are on the 1st fret and want to go up a Major 3rd, you will go to the 5th fret. $1 + 4 = 5$

A minor 3rd is a distance of one whole step and one half step (3 frets apart). For example, if you are on the 7th fret and you want to go down a minor 3rd, you will be on the 4th fret. $7 - 3 = 4$

There are four triad combinations.

The following are the chord formulas for the triads. The numbers are the intervals which make up the chord. Chord formulas are combinations of different intervals. The roman numerals underneath the chord formulas are the positions in the Major Scale where these chords occur.

1, 3, 5 = Major

I – IV – V

From the 1st interval to the 3rd interval is a Major 3rd distance.

From the 3rd interval to the 5th interval is a Minor 3rd.

1, b3, 5 = Minor

ii – iii – vi

From the 1st interval to the b3rd interval is a Minor 3rd distance.

From the b3rd interval to the 5th interval is a Major 3rd.

1, b3, b5 = Diminished

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From the 1st interval to the b3rd interval is a Minor 3rd distance.

From the b3rd to the b5 interval is another Minor 3rd.

1, 3, #5 = Augmented

*Can be a substitute
for the V chord.*

From the 1st interval to the 3rd interval is a Major 3rd distance.

From the 3rd to the #5 interval is another Major 3rd.

Another way of looking at these formulas could be:

Major = **Major 3rd** followed by a **Minor 3rd**.

Minor = **Minor 3rd** followed by a **Major 3rd**.

Diminished = **Two Minor 3rds**.

Augmented = **Two Major 3rds**.

These are the triads in order as they are laid out in your Major Scale:

Major – minor – minor – Major – Major – minor – diminished
I ii iii IV V vi vii