Left Hand Jazz Chords
- Exercises & overviews

This compendium is about left hand expanded Jazz chords. A series of YouTube videos is made as well:
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLd8gNAxPUcJz6-veQ28QlwKB3V_68dItL

This compendium contains useful exercises performed in the videos, additional exercises and some nice overviews.

This compendium and the belonging videos show you a complete and simple left hand chord system consisting of only 3 main grips! With this simple system we have a very strong foundation and we’re able to manage all basics when playing expanded left hand Jazz chords. Furthermore we can also use this system of grips to push the Jazz Music beyond the traditions and make thrilling "NewJazz" sound...

We examine Grip “1”, Grip “2” and Grip “3”. With these three grips we can play many different chord qualities. All this is explained further in the videos associated with this compendium.

All chords in this document are rootless. So the chords are to be used when playing in a band with a bass player that makes the keynote. When we study and examine the chords having no bass player around, we just cross over with the right hand to make the bass notes. In that way we can practice the chords with our left hand. These “cross-over” bass notes are written in red in the sheets that follow.

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Oliver Prehn
https://www.youtube.com/c/newjazz
http://www.newjazz.dk/
Grip “1” overview:

We only have to learn Grip “1” in two inversions to play smooth chord progressions! We name the two inversions Grip 1a and Grip 1b.

The first line shows Grip 1a and Grip 1b without a bass note.

The second line shows the same two grips with a bass note attached. In this case we hear the ‘mi7’ chord expanded with a 9th step.

In the third line we use the exact same grip but we change the bass note and we play the sus7 chord expanded with a 9th and a 13th step.

All this is explained in this video lesson: [https://youtu.be/eqZoKKnf9i8](https://youtu.be/eqZoKKnf9i8)
Grip “2” overview:

We only have to learn Grip “2” in two inversions to play smooth chord progressions! We name the two inversions Grip 2a and Grip 2b.

The first line shows Grip 2a and the inverted Grip 2b without a bass note. The lines below show the Grip 2 with different bass notes attached, giving us different chord qualities.

The grip 2 is explained in this video lesson: https://youtu.be/terR7sZL7m4
**Grip “3” overview:**

The Grip 3 has the same structure as a minor pentatonic scale.

We only play the Grip 3 in ONE inversion. We don’t need to learn any other inversions to play smooth chord progressions.

The grip 3 is explained in this video lesson: [https://youtu.be/0n3LgxXMh7E](https://youtu.be/0n3LgxXMh7E)
These two exercises are explained in this video lesson: [https://youtu.be/eqZoKKnf9i8](https://youtu.be/eqZoKKnf9i8)

In both exercises we practice the “minor 7” chord by using Grip 1a and Grip 1b in a sequence of descending fifths (counterclockwise around the circle of fifths).

In exercise 2 we have inverted the chords compared to exercise 1. By doing both exercises we have exercised the minor 7 chord in all 12 tonalities in both inversions.

Look at the chords while you play them – say the chord names out loud. In this way you will memorize the different chord tonalities.

Cross over with the right hand: red notes=right hand; black notes=left hand

**Exercise 1)**

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**Exercise 2)**
These two exercises are explained in this video lesson: https://youtu.be/eqZoKKnf9i8

Exercise 3 and 4 are just like exercise 1 and 2. The only difference is that we have displaced the bass note with a descending fifth. The result is that we play “suspended” chords instead of “minor 7” chords. So we use the same left hand grips and the same transitions from one grip to another – but we hear a completely different sound!

In exercise 4 we have inverted the chords compared to exercise 3. By doing both exercise 3 and 4 we have exercised the expanded “sus” chord in all 12 tonalities in both inversions.

Cross over with the right hand: red notes=right hand; black notes=left hand

Exercise 3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gsus</th>
<th>Csus</th>
<th>Fsus</th>
<th>Bbsus</th>
<th>Ebsus</th>
<th>Absus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grip 1b</td>
<td>Grip 1a</td>
<td>Grip 1b</td>
<td>Grip 1a</td>
<td>Grip 1b</td>
<td>Grip 1a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exercise 4)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C#sus</th>
<th>F#sus</th>
<th>Bsus</th>
<th>Esus</th>
<th>Asus</th>
<th>Dsus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grip 1a</td>
<td>Grip 1b</td>
<td>Grip 1a</td>
<td>Grip 1b</td>
<td>Grip 1a</td>
<td>Grip 1b</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gsus</th>
<th>Csus</th>
<th>Fsus</th>
<th>Bbsus</th>
<th>Ebsus</th>
<th>Absus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grip 1a</td>
<td>Grip 1b</td>
<td>Grip 1a</td>
<td>Grip 1b</td>
<td>Grip 1a</td>
<td>Grip 1b</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
7, 7alt, mi tonic, mi7b5

In this exercise we do a sequence of fifths with Grip 2 by playing Grip 2b → 2a → 2b → 2a... and so on.

We attach different bass notes but use the very same Grip 2 sequence. The position of the grip and the position of the bass note, in relation, give us the different chord qualities. In that way we exercise the “7”, “7alt”, “mi tonic” and “mi7b5” chords in all 12 keys by using the very same Grip 2 sequence.

This exercise is from a newer video, thus the layout is a little different than the other exercises in this compendium (sorry about that). In blue we have the left hand Grip 2a and 2b. The chords and bass notes are illustrated in different colors so that a specific color of a bass note line fits a specific chord color (if you for example play the yellow bass notes we hear the yellow “7alt” chords). So pick a bass note color (pink, green, red or yellow) and try it out...

The exercise is further explained in this video lesson: [https://youtu.be/hACDMj5QGZY](https://youtu.be/hACDMj5QGZY)

Exercise 5)
The exercise below is explained in this video lesson: https://youtu.be/terR7sZL7m4

We practice the “minor 7” to “7” by using Grip “1” and Grip “2” in a sequence of descending fifths (counterclockwise around the circle of fifths).

Notice, we play each of the two grips in only two inversions. We play Grip 1a to 2a and the inverted Grip 1b to 2b. This is a smooth and very applicable progression!

Look at the chords while you play them – say the chord names out loud. In this way you’ll memorize the different chord tonalities.

*Exercise 6)*
**sus – 7**

The exercise below is explained in this video lesson: [https://youtu.be/terR7sZL7m4](https://youtu.be/terR7sZL7m4)

The left hand voicing in this exercise is just like the former exercise 6: Grip 1a to 2a to 1b to 2b. Now we’ve just lowered the bass note with a perfect fifth on the former Grip “1” minor 7 chord and we got the suspended chord instead. So we play “suspended” resolved to “7” repeatedly in a sequence of descending fifths.

*Exercise 7)*

![Enharmonic interpretation of sus - 7 chords](image-url)
mi7 – 7alt – sus – 7

The exercise below is explained in this video lesson: [https://youtu.be/terR7sZL7m4](https://youtu.be/terR7sZL7m4)

The left hand voicing in this exercise is just like the two former exercises 6 & 7: Grip 1a to 2a to 1b to 2b. Now we’ve just changed the bass notes once more. Now we play “minor 7” to “7 altered” to “suspended” to “7”. This progression is played repeatedly in a sequence of descending fifths.

Notice that the different bass notes in exercise 6, 7 and 8 provide the very same grip progression with completely different chord qualities. In that way we can reuse the very same grips and grip progressions in many different contexts.

**Exercise 8)**
Tonic Major Chords

This exercise is explained in this video lesson: [https://youtu.be/0n3LgxXMh7E](https://youtu.be/0n3LgxXMh7E)

We practice tonic Major chords by using Grip “3” in a sequence of descending fifths. Note that every second time we can play the same notes in the left hand. So the Grip 3 can be placed two different places to derive the Major chord. All this is explained in the video lesson above.

Look at the chords while you play them – say the chord names out loud. In this way you will memorize the different chord tonalities.

Again: remember to cross over with the right hand: red notes=right hand; black notes=left hand. Then you will practice the chords using the left hand ;)

*Exercise 9*}
ii-V-I in Major

These two exercises are explained in this video lesson: [https://youtu.be/0n3LgxXMh7E](https://youtu.be/0n3LgxXMh7E)

In both exercises we practice the “ii-V-I” progression by playing “minor 7” to “7” to “tonic”. We make a Major to minor chord substitution when moving to the next “ii-V-I” tonality.

In exercise 11 we’ve just inverted the Grip “1” and “2” to the b-inversions.

**Exercise 10)**

Ami7  D7  G  Gmi7  C7  F
Grip 1a  Grip 2a  Grip 3  Grip 1a  Grip 2a  Grip 3

Fmi7  Bb7  Eb  Ebmi7  Ab7  Db
Grip 1a  Grip 2a  Grip 3  Grip 1a  Grip 2a  Grip 3

C#mi7  F#7  B  Bmi7  E7  A
Grip 1a  Grip 2a  Grip 3  Grip 1a  Grip 2a  Grip 3

**Exercise 11)**

Emi7  A7  D  Dmi7  G7  C
Grip 1b  Grip 2b  Grip 3  Grip 1b  Grip 2b  Grip 3

Cmi7  F7  Bb  Bbmi7  Eb7  Ab
Grip 1b  Grip 2b  Grip 3  Grip 1b  Grip 2b  Grip 3

Abmi7  Db7  Gb  F#mi7  B7  E
Grip 1b  Grip 2b  Grip 3  Grip 1b  Grip 2b  Grip 3
**sus – 7 – 69**

These two exercises are explained in this video lesson: [https://youtu.be/0n3LgxXMh7E](https://youtu.be/0n3LgxXMh7E)

We use the exact same grip progression as in exercise 10 and 11. But the bass note on Grip 1 is changed. So now we play “suspended” to “7” to “Major tonic”.

In exercise 13 we’ve just inverted the Grip “1” and “2” to the b-inversions.

**Exercise 12)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dsus</th>
<th>D7</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>Csus</th>
<th>C7</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grip 1a</td>
<td>Grip 2a</td>
<td>Grip 3</td>
<td>Grip 1a</td>
<td>Grip 2a</td>
<td>Grip 3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Exercise 13)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Asus</th>
<th>A7</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>Gsus</th>
<th>G7</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grip 1b</td>
<td>Grip 2b</td>
<td>Grip 3</td>
<td>Grip 1b</td>
<td>Grip 2b</td>
<td>Grip 3</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fsus</th>
<th>F7</th>
<th>Bb</th>
<th>Ebsus</th>
<th>Eb7</th>
<th>Ab</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grip 1b</td>
<td>Grip 2b</td>
<td>Grip 3</td>
<td>Grip 1b</td>
<td>Grip 2b</td>
<td>Grip 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dbsus</th>
<th>Db7</th>
<th>Gb</th>
<th>Bsus</th>
<th>B7</th>
<th>E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grip 1b</td>
<td>Grip 2b</td>
<td>Grip 3</td>
<td>Grip 1b</td>
<td>Grip 2b</td>
<td>Grip 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
mi7 – 7alt – 69

These two exercises are explained in this video lesson: [https://youtu.be/0n3LgxXMh7E](https://youtu.be/0n3LgxXMh7E)

We use the exact same grip progression as in exercise 10, 11, 12 and 13. By changing the bass notes in relation to the grips we now play “minor 7” to “7 altered” to “Major tonic”.

In exercise 15 we’ve just inverted the Grip “1” and “2” to the b-inversions.

**Exercise 14)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ami7</th>
<th>Ab7alt</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>Gmi7</th>
<th>Gb7alt</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grip 1a</td>
<td>Grip 2a</td>
<td>Grip 3</td>
<td>Grip 1a</td>
<td>Grip 2a</td>
<td>Grip 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fmi7</th>
<th>E7alt</th>
<th>Eb</th>
<th>Ebmi7</th>
<th>D7alt</th>
<th>Db</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grip 1a</td>
<td>Grip 2a</td>
<td>Grip 3</td>
<td>Grip 1a</td>
<td>Grip 2a</td>
<td>Grip 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C#mi7</th>
<th>C7alt</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>Bmi7</th>
<th>Bb7alt</th>
<th>A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grip 1a</td>
<td>Grip 2a</td>
<td>Grip 3</td>
<td>Grip 1a</td>
<td>Grip 2a</td>
<td>Grip 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Exercise 15)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>E7mi7</th>
<th>Eb7alt</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>Dmi7</th>
<th>Db7alt</th>
<th>C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grip 1b</td>
<td>Grip 2b</td>
<td>Grip 3</td>
<td>Grip 1b</td>
<td>Grip 2b</td>
<td>Grip 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cmi7</th>
<th>B7alt</th>
<th>Bb</th>
<th>Bbmi7</th>
<th>A7alt</th>
<th>Ab</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grip 1b</td>
<td>Grip 2b</td>
<td>Grip 3</td>
<td>Grip 1b</td>
<td>Grip 2b</td>
<td>Grip 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abmi7</th>
<th>G7alt</th>
<th>Gb</th>
<th>F#mi7</th>
<th>F7alt</th>
<th>E</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grip 1b</td>
<td>Grip 2b</td>
<td>Grip 3</td>
<td>Grip 1b</td>
<td>Grip 2b</td>
<td>Grip 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**ii-V-i in minor**

Notice! We can play the entire “ii-V-I” progression in minor by using only Grip “2”. Visit this lesson and learn more: [https://youtu.be/wl1pgzCHeaE](https://youtu.be/wl1pgzCHeaE)

Exercise 16 shows the progression by playing Grip 2a-2a-2b in G minor.

Exercise 17 shows the progression with inverted grips. So we have Grip 2b-2b-2a. In this case in D minor.

By inverting the grips we are more flexible regarding where to place the chords on the register.

The chords written down are as usually only the main chord qualities. The Grip “2” indeed expands the chords. So actually we play “mi7b5 sus4” to “7 altered” to “mi69”. Enjoy the sound of the expanded Jazz chords :)

**Exercise 16)**

Ami7 b5  
D7  
Gmi

Grip 2a  
Grip 2a  
Grip 2b

**Exercise 17)**

Emi7 b5  
A7  
Dmi

Grip 2b  
Grip 2b  
Grip 2a

Try to exercise the “ii-V-i” progression in different tonalities...