

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_68dliL

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

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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>

The image displays three rows of musical notation on a five-line staff, each with a bass clef and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The notation is organized into two columns: Grip 1a on the left and Grip 1b on the right.

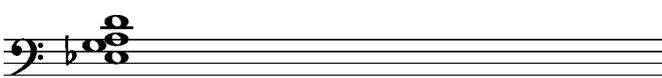
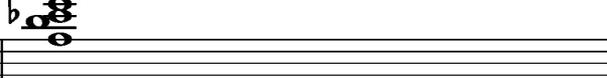
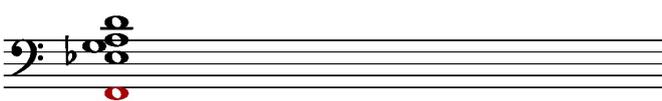
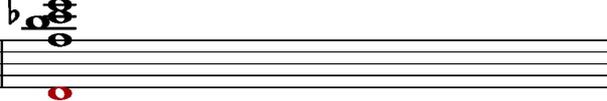
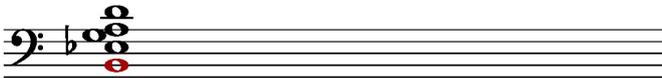
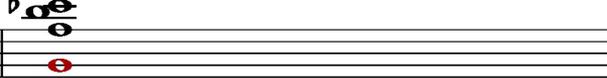
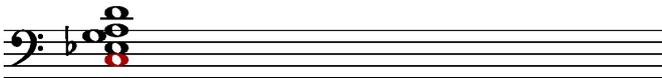
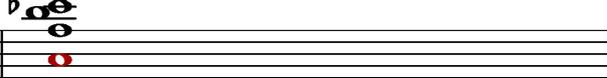
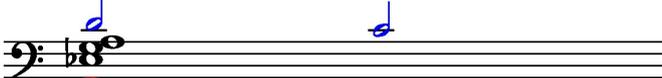
- Row 1:** Shows the chord shapes for Grip 1a and Grip 1b without a bass note. Grip 1a has notes on strings 2, 3, 4, and 5. Grip 1b has notes on strings 1, 2, 3, and 4.
- Row 2:** Shows the same chord shapes with a bass note (red circle) on the 2nd string for Grip 1a and the 1st string for Grip 1b. The chord is labeled "Cmi7 9".
- Row 3:** Shows the same chord shapes with a bass note (red circle) on the 4th string for Grip 1a and the 2nd string for Grip 1b. The chord is labeled "Fsus7 9 13".

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>

<p>Grip 2a</p> 	<p>Grip 2b</p> 
<p>F7 9 13</p> 	<p>F7 9 13</p> 
<p>B7alt</p> 	<p>B7alt</p> 
<p>Cmi 69</p> 	<p>Cmi 69</p> 
<p>Ami7 b5 (11)</p> 	<p>Ami7 b5 (11)</p> 

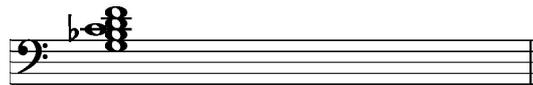
Grip "3" overview:

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/On3LgxXMh7E>

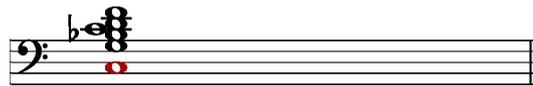
Grip 3



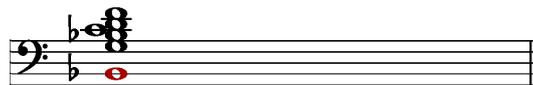
Dmi7 11 b13



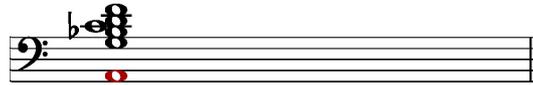
Csus4 79



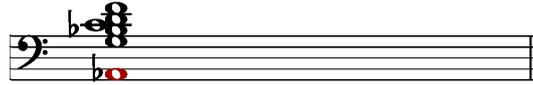
Bb 69



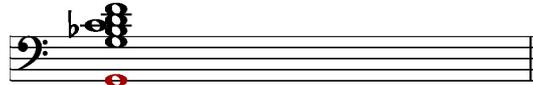
Ami7 b9 11 b13 no5



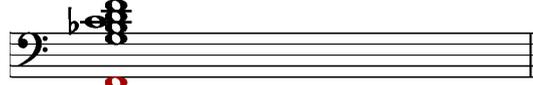
Abmaj7 b5 69



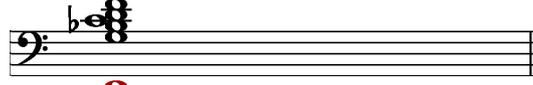
Gmi7 11



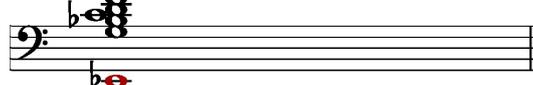
F 69 sus4



Emi7 b5 b9 b13



Eb maj7 69



mi7

These two exercises are explained in this video lesson: <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)

Dmi7 Grip 1b Gmi7 Grip 1a Cmi7 Grip 1b Fmi7 Grip 1a Bbmi7 Grip 1b Ebmi7 Grip 1a

Abmi7 Grip 1b C#mi7 Grip 1a F#mi7 Grip 1b Bmi7 Grip 1a Emi7 Grip 1b Ami7 Grip 1a

Enharmonic interpretation

Exercise 2)

G#mi7 Grip 1a C#mi7 Grip 1b F#mi7 Grip 1a Bmi7 Grip 1b Emi7 Grip 1a Ami7 Grip 1b

Dmi7 Grip 1a Gmi7 Grip 1b Cmi7 Grip 1a Fmi7 Grip 1b Bbmi7 Grip 1a Ebmi7 Grip 1b

SUS

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)

Exercise 3) shows six chords in two rows. The first row contains Gsus (Grip 1b), Csus (Grip 1a), Fsus (Grip 1b), Bbsus (Grip 1a), Ebsus (Grip 1b), and Absus (Grip 1a). The second row contains Dbsus (Grip 1b), F#sus (Grip 1a), Bsus (Grip 1b), Esus (Grip 1a), Asus (Grip 1b), and Dsus (Grip 1a). Red notes indicate the right hand, and black notes indicate the left hand. An 'Enharmonic interpretation' is noted for the Dbsus chord.

Exercise 4)

Exercise 4) shows six chords in two rows. The first row contains C#sus (Grip 1a), F#sus (Grip 1b), Bsus (Grip 1a), Esus (Grip 1b), Asus (Grip 1a), and Dsus (Grip 1b). The second row contains Gsus (Grip 1a), Csus (Grip 1b), Fsus (Grip 1a), Bbsus (Grip 1b), Ebsus (Grip 1a), and Absus (Grip 1b). Red notes indicate the right hand, and black notes indicate the left hand.

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>

Exercise 5)

The image displays two rows of musical notation for Exercise 5, each consisting of a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). Above each staff, a set of chords and their constituent notes are listed, color-coded to match the notes on the staff. The chords are arranged in a sequence of fifths.

Row 1:

- D7alt:** Cmi7b5, Ab7, Ebmi, Grip 2b
- G7alt:** Fmi7b5, Db7, Abmi, Grip 2a
- C7alt:** Bbmi7b5, Gb7, Dbmi, Grip 2b
- F7alt:** D#mi7b5, B7, F#mi, Grip 2a
- Bb7alt:** G#mi7b5, E7, Bmi, Grip 2b
- Eb7alt:** C#mi7b5, A7, Emi, Grip 2a

Row 2:

- Ab7alt:** F#mi7b5, D7, Ami, Grip 2b
- Db7alt:** Bmi7b5, G7, Dmi, Grip 2a
- Gb7alt:** Emi7b5, C7, Gmi, Grip 2b
- B7alt:** Ami7b5, F7, Cmi, Grip 2a
- E7alt:** Dmi7b5, Bb7, Fmi, Grip 2b
- A7alt:** Gmi7b5, Eb7, Bbmi, Grip 2a

mi7 - 7

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)

The exercise is presented in three systems of musical notation in bass clef, 4/4 time. Each system shows a sequence of chords with their corresponding grip diagrams and fingering (indicated by red numbers 1-2).

System 1:

- Ami7 (Grip 1a) → D7 (Grip 2a) → Dmi7 (Grip 1b) → G7 (Grip 2b) → Gmi7 (Grip 1a) → C7 (Grip 2a) → Cmi7 (Grip 1b) → F7 (Grip 2b)

System 2:

- Fmi7 (Grip 1a) → Bb7 (Grip 2a) → Bbmi7 (Grip 1b) → Eb7 (Grip 2b) → Ebmi7 (Grip 1a) → Ab7 (Grip 2a) → Abmi7 (Grip 1b) → Db7 (Grip 2b)

System 3:

- C#mi7 (Grip 1a) → F#7 (Grip 2a) → F#mi7 (Grip 1b) → B7 (Grip 2b) → Bmi7 (Grip 1a) → E7 (Grip 2a) → Emi7 (Grip 1b) → A7 (Grip 2b)

Each chord is accompanied by a diagram showing the fretting hand position on a guitar neck. Red numbers 1 and 2 indicate the fingers used for the root and the seventh of the chord. The progression moves in descending fifths (or enharmonic equivalents).

Enharmonic interpretation

sus - 7

The exercise below is explained in this video lesson: <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)

Dsus Grip 1a **D7** Grip 2a **Gsus** Grip 1b **G7** Grip 2b **Csus** Grip 1a **C7** Grip 2a **Fsus** Grip 1b **F7** Grip 2b
Bbsus Grip 1a **Bb7** Grip 2a **Ebsus** Grip 1b **Eb7** Grip 2b **Absus** Grip 1a **Ab7** Grip 2a **Dbsus** Grip 1b **Db7** Grip 2b
F#sus Grip 1a **F#7** Grip 2a **Bsus** Grip 1b **B7** Grip 2b **Esus** Grip 1a **E7** Grip 2a **Asus** Grip 1b **A7** Grip 2b

Enharmonic interpretation

mi7 - 7alt - sus - 7

The exercise below is explained in this video lesson: <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)

Ami7 Grip 1a Ab7alt Grip 2a Gsus Grip 1b G7 Grip 2b Gmi7 Grip 1a Gb7alt Grip 2a Fsus Grip 1b F7 Grip 2b

Fmi7 Grip 1a E7alt Grip 2a Ebsus Grip 1b Eb7 Grip 2b Ebmi7 Grip 1a D7alt Grip 2a Dbsus Grip 1b Db7 Grip 2b

C#mi7 Grip 1a C7alt Grip 2a Bsus Grip 1b B7 Grip 2b Bmi7 Grip 1a Bb7alt Grip 2a Asus Grip 1b A7 Grip 2b

Enharmonic interpretation

Tonic Major Chords

This exercise is explained in this video lesson: <https://youtu.be/On3LgxXMh7E>

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)

The image displays two staves of musical notation in bass clef, 4/4 time, illustrating tonic major chords in descending fifths. Each chord is shown with its name, 'Grip 3' fingering, and a diagram of the chord structure. Red notes indicate the right hand, and black notes indicate the left hand. The sequence of chords is: D, G, C, F, Bb, Eb, Ab, Db, F#, B, E, and A. The F# chord is noted as an 'Enharmonic interpretation' of the Bb chord. The final chord, A, is marked with a double bar line.

Chord	Fingering
D	Grip 3
G	Grip 3
C	Grip 3
F	Grip 3
Bb	Grip 3
Eb	Grip 3
Ab	Grip 3
Db	Grip 3
F#	Grip 3
B	Grip 3
E	Grip 3
A	Grip 3

ii-V-I in Major

These two exercises are explained in this video lesson: <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 (Grip 1a) D7 (Grip 2a) G (Grip 3) Gmi7 (Grip 1a) C7 (Grip 2a) F (Grip 3)

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

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

Enharmonic interpretation

Exercise 11)

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

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

Abmi7 (Grip 1b) Db7 (Grip 2b) Gb (Grip 3) F#mi7 (Grip 1b) B7 (Grip 2b) E (Grip 3)

Enharmonic interpretation

sus - 7 - 69

These two exercises are explained in this video lesson: <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)

Enharmonic interpretation

Exercise 13)

Enharmonic interpretation

mi7 - 7alt - 69

These two exercises are explained in this video lesson: <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)

Exercise 14) shows three rows of chords and bass notes. Each row contains six chords with their respective grips and bass notes indicated by red stems on a bass clef staff.

Row 1: **Ami7** (Grip 1a), **Ab7alt** (Grip 2a), **G** (Grip 3), **Gmi7** (Grip 1a), **Gb7alt** (Grip 2a), **F** (Grip 3)

Row 2: **Fmi7** (Grip 1a), **E7alt** (Grip 2a), **Eb** (Grip 3), **Ebmi7** (Grip 1a), **D7alt** (Grip 2a), **Db** (Grip 3)

Row 3: **C#mi7** (Grip 1a), **C7alt** (Grip 2a), **B** (Grip 3), **Bmi7** (Grip 1a), **Bb7alt** (Grip 2a), **A** (Grip 3)

Enharmonic interpretation

Exercise 15)

Exercise 15) shows three rows of chords and bass notes. Each row contains six chords with their respective grips and bass notes indicated by red stems on a bass clef staff.

Row 1: **Emi7** (Grip 1b), **Eb7alt** (Grip 2b), **D** (Grip 3), **Dmi7** (Grip 1b), **Db7alt** (Grip 2b), **C** (Grip 3)

Row 2: **Cmi7** (Grip 1b), **B7alt** (Grip 2b), **Bb** (Grip 3), **Bbmi7** (Grip 1b), **A7alt** (Grip 2b), **Ab** (Grip 3)

Row 3: **Abmi7** (Grip 1b), **G7alt** (Grip 2b), **Gb** (Grip 3), **F#mi7** (Grip 1b), **F7alt** (Grip 2b), **E** (Grip 3)

Enharmonic interpretation

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>

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

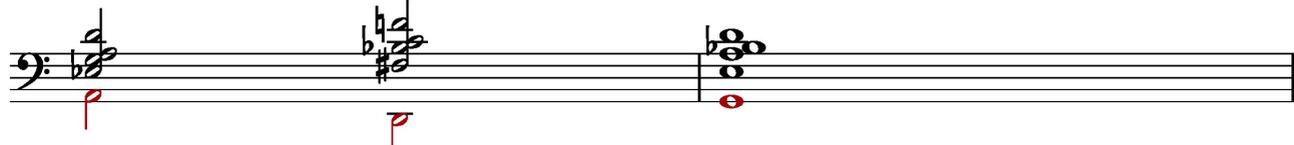
Exercise 17 shows the progression with inverted grips. So we have Grip **2b-2b-2a**. In this case in D minor.

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 :)

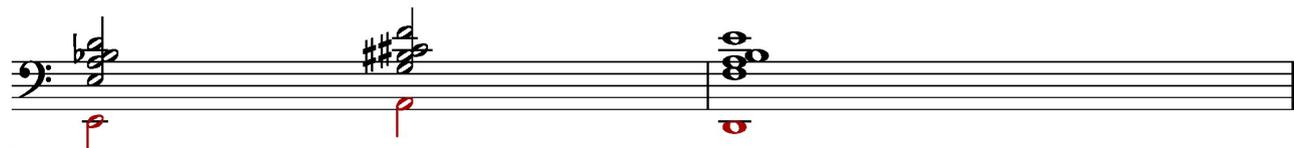
Exercise 16)

Ami7 b5 Grip 2a	D7 Grip 2a	Gmi Grip 2b
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Exercise 17)

Emi7 b5 Grip 2b	A7 Grip 2b	Dmi Grip 2a
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Try to exercise the “ii-V-i” progression in different tonalities...