Left Hand Jazz Chords - Exercises

This compendium is about left hand expanded Jazz chords. The compendium is in progress and will be done during autumn 2018. A series of video lessons will be made and the compendium will expand as well. The compendium contains exercises performed in the videos, additional exercises and useful overviews of the grips in use.

In the end we will have a complete simple left hand chord system containing only 3 main grips! With this simple system we have a very strong foundation and we will be able to manage all basics when playing 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 – but much more about that later on...

So far we have examined the Grip “1”, Grip “2” and Grip “3” partly. With these three grips we can play many different chord qualities. All this is explained in the videos gathered in this playlist about the left hand jazz chords: https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLd8gNAxPUcJz6-veQ28Qlw6V68diil

This document contains some useful exercises. Doing the exercises we will learn to master the grips in all tonalities and in all relevant inversions. At the same time we will learn different kinds of useful chord progressions.

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 all written in red in the sheets that follows.

Donations are very much appreciated. Donations help me to produce more Music stuff by cutting down the hours at my regular daytime work. But don’t feel obligated to donate anything – all Music stuff from NewJazz is free and public – money or no money!

https://www.patreon.com/newjazz
https://www.paypal.me/newjazz

Have Fun and enjoy Music 😊

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 minor 7 chord expanded with a 9th.

In the third line we use the exact same grip but we change the bass note and we play the sus 7 chord expanded with 9th and 13th.

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 shows 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](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 are 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 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. 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)**

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

Exercise 3 and 4 are just as 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. 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></th>
<th>Gsus</th>
<th>Csus</th>
<th>Fsus</th>
<th>Bbsus</th>
<th>Ebsus</th>
<th>Absus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grip</td>
<td>1b</td>
<td>1a</td>
<td>1b</td>
<td>1a</td>
<td>1b</td>
<td>1a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Exercise 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<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</td>
<td>1a</td>
<td>1b</td>
<td>1a</td>
<td>1b</td>
<td>1a</td>
<td>1b</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

Cross over with the right hand: red notes=right hand; black notes=left hand
**mi7 – 7**

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

We practice the “minor 7” to “7” 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 will memorize the different chord tonalities.

*Exercise 5*)
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 as the former exercise 5: Grip 1a to 2a to 1b to 2b. Now we have 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 6)**
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 as the former two exercises 5 & 6: Grip 1a to 2a to 1b to 2b. Now we have 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 5, 6 and 7 provide the very same grips with completely different chord qualities. In that way we can reuse the very same grips and grip progressions in many different contexts.

**Exercise 7)**
Tonic Chords

Exercise 8 is explained in this video lesson: https://youtu.be/0n3LgxXMh7E

We practice tonic chords using Grip “3” in a sequence of descending fifths. Notice 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 tonic chord. All this is explained in the video lesson.

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 8)
II-V-I in Major

These two exercises are explained in this video lesson: https://youtu.be/0n3LgxXMr7E

In both exercises we practice the II-V-I progressions 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 10 we have inverted the Grip “1” and “2” to the b-inversions.

Exercise 9)

Exercise 10)
**sus – 7 – 69**

These two exercises are explained in this video lesson: [https://youtu.be/0n3LgxXMr7E](https://youtu.be/0n3LgxXMr7E)

We use the exact same grip progression as in exercise 9 and 10. But the bass note on grip 1 is changed. So now we play “suspended” to “7” to “tonic”.

In exercise 12 we have inverted the Grip “1” and “2” to the b-inversions.

### Exercise 11)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>sus</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>69</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dsus</td>
<td>G7</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grip 1a</td>
<td>Grip 2a</td>
<td>Grip 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Exercise 12)

<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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Enharmonic interpretation*
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 9, 10, 11 and 12. By changing the bass notes in relation to the grips we now play “minor 7” to “7 altered” to “tonic”.

In exercise 14 we have inverted the Grip “1” and “2” to the b-inversions.

**Exercise 13**

- **Ami7** (Grip 1a)
- **Ab7alt** (Grip 2a)
- **G** (Grip 3)
- **Gmi7** (Grip 1a)
- **Gb7alt** (Grip 2a)
- **F** (Grip 3)

**Exercise 14**

- **Emi7** (Grip 1b)
- **Eb7alt** (Grip 2b)
- **D** (Grip 3)
- **Dmi7** (Grip 1b)
- **Db7alt** (Grip 2b)
- **C** (Grip 3)

**Enharmonic interpretation**
II-V-I in minor

Notice! We can play the entire 2-5-1 progression using only Grip “2”. Visit this lesson and learn more: https://youtu.be/wl1pgzCHeaE

Exercise 15 shows the progression playing grip 2a-2a-2b in G minor.

Exercise 16 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 usual 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 15)

Ami7 b5  
Grip 2a

D7  
Grip 2a

Gmi  
Grip 2b

Exercise 16)

Emi7 b5  
Grip 2b

A7  
Grip 2b

Dmi  
Grip 2a

Try to exercise the II-V-I progression in different tonalities...