

# LESSON - DIATONIC CHORDS

FROM THE MAKERS OF AURALIA & MUSITION MUSIC SOFTWARE

## Introduction

The term 'diatonic chords' refers to chord shapes and structures that occur naturally within a diatonic or harmonic context (ie key centers). If we construct triads from each degree of a scale (ie. stack consecutive 3rds on top of the scale note, using notes from the scale), then different chord qualities will be formed from each degree. The same chord qualities apply to each scale degree of that scale type in all keys.

The following shows the diatonic triads and 7ths in major tonalities, and diatonic triads in natural, harmonic and melodic minor tonalities. Please note that there are a few different Roman numeral variations commonly used for labelling 7ths (ie whether they are major or minor) and also scale degrees (mainly in minor keys where you may need to differentiate between a chord starting from a note natural to the key signature, or an altered scale degree Eg Chords VI and vii).

## Diatonic Triads - Major Scale

I	ii	iii	IV	V	vi	vii°	I
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Tonic	Supertonic	Mediant	Subdominant	Dominant	Submediant	Leading Note	Tonic
Major	Minor	Minor	Major	Major	Minor	Diminished	Major

## Diatonic Triads with 7ths - Major Scale

I <sup>7</sup>	ii <sup>7</sup>	iii <sup>7</sup>	IV <sup>7</sup>	V <sup>7</sup>	vi <sup>7</sup>	vii <sup>°7</sup>	I <sup>7</sup>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Tonic	Supertonic	Mediant	Subdominant	Dominant	Submediant	Leading Note	Tonic
Major 7	Minor 7	Minor 7	Major 7	Dominant 7	Minor 7	Half Dim7	Major 7

## Diatonic Triads - Natural Minor Scale

i	ii°	III	iv	v	VI	VII	i
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Minor	Diminished	Major	Minor	Minor	Major	Major	Minor

## Diatonic Triads - Harmonic Minor Scale

i	ii°	III <sup>+</sup>	iv	V	VI	vii°	i
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Minor	Diminished	Augmented	Minor	Major	Major	Diminished	Minor

## Diatonic Triads - Melodic Minor Scale

i	ii	III <sup>+</sup>	IV	V	vi°	vii°	i
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Minor	Minor	Augmented	Major	Major	Diminished	Diminished	Minor