

[PianoChordCharts.net](http://PianoChordCharts.net) presents

# “Understand how to invert any keyboard chord”

## A 10 minutes Crash-Course

*“...learning to play piano chords at their root position is only part of the game!! If you want to improve your chord understanding and keyboard skills you REALLY need to learn how to invert your chords. Once you master this simple art you will be able to play a chord progression without having to move your hands all over the keyboard to play the individual chords.....”*

Why should I learn chord inversions?

Knowing how to invert your chords will make your keyboard playing physically easier - and make your music sound so much better and more natural. If you only use root chords your hand(s) will need to “jump” around the keyboard as you play through a song.

If you play a C chord followed by a G chord - and you play both chords as root chords - your entire hand will need to move from the C key all the way up/down to the G key.

If you know how to invert your chords your hand can more or less stay in the same place on the keyboard - you only need to change a few notes to change your C chord to a G chord.

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## What is a chord?

By definition a chord is when you play 3 or more notes at the same time - also known as playing a harmony.

## What is a root note?

The root note is what gives name to any chord. The basis of the chord.

- If you play a C (major) chord your root note is C.
- If you play a Cm (minor) chord your root note is also C.
- If you play a Gmaj7 your root note is G.

So, in other words, your root note will always be the basis on which you build your chord.

## What is a root inversion?

When you want to make and understand any chord you always start out with the root inversion of the chord. This means that your root note will be the basis - at the bottom - of the chord. All the following notes in the chord will be built on top of the root note.

## What are inversions?

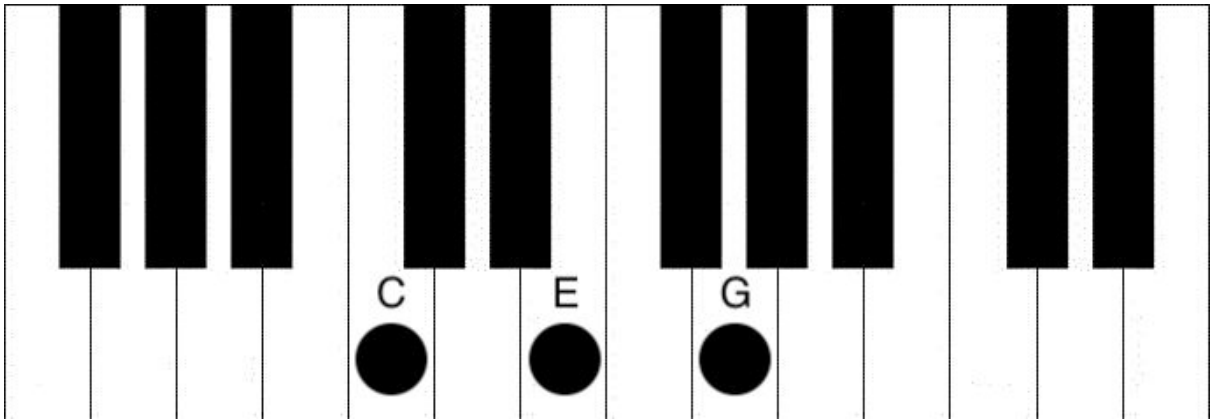
Once you understand your chord in its root position - and what notes your chord consist of - you can start to "turn the chord around".

***As long as you use the same notes as in your root chord it doesn't matter what note is at the bottom, in the middle or at the top of the chord. It will still be the same chord - only, now you have inverted it.***

Let's take an example:

If you play a C (major) chord your root chord will look like this:

- Your root note is C
- Your middle note is E
- Your top note is G



This is a C chord in its root position.

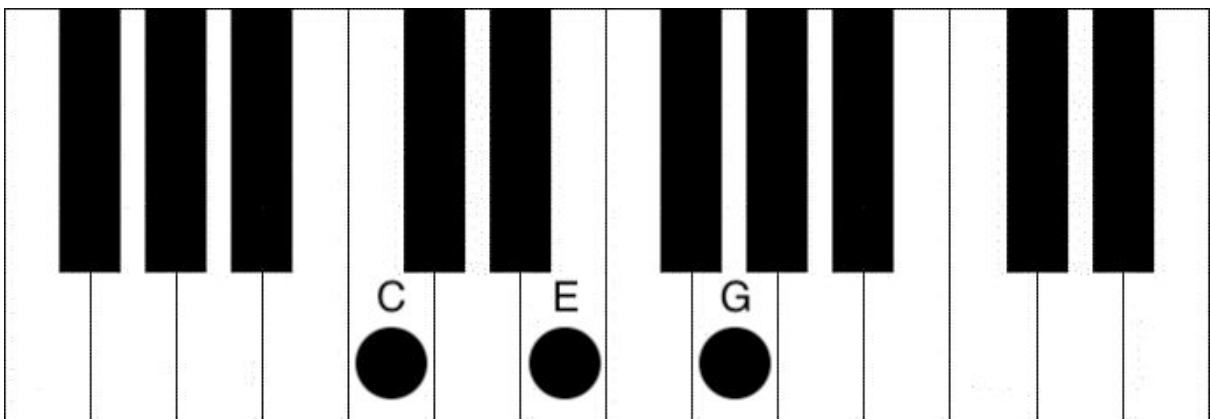
Since the chord consists of 3 notes you also have 3 ways of inverting it:

- You can have the root note at the bottom (root inversion)
- You can have the root note at the top of the chord (1st. inversion)
- You can have the root note in the middle of the chord (2nd. inversion)

(If you do one more inversion of a 3 note chord (moving up the keyboard) you will be back at your root position - only an octave higher on the keyboard)

So - let's look at this on the charts. First of all the root inversion of the C chord. Your basis. The one you already know. It looks like this:

- Your root note C at the bottom
- In the middle you have E
- At the top you have the note G

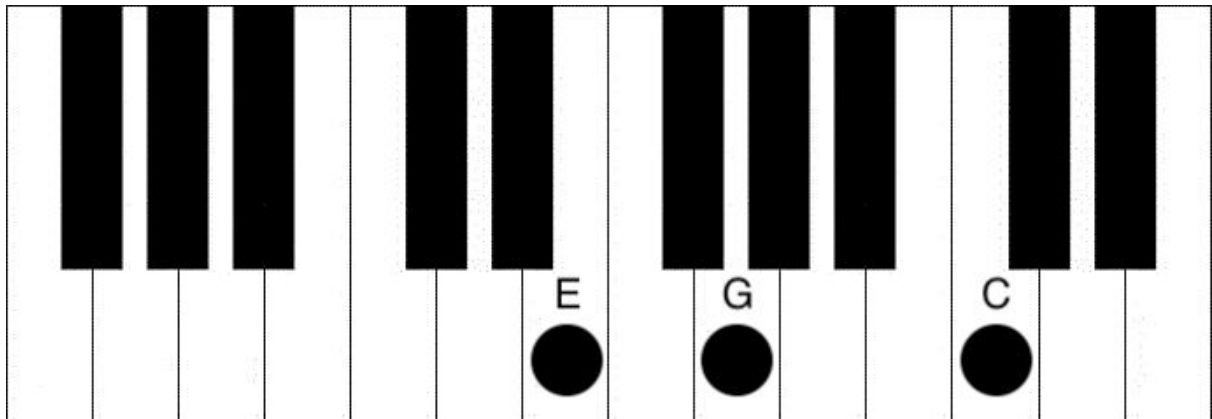


Now we will make an inversion of your C chord. This is quite simple and is done like this:

“Move” your root note, C, from the bottom of the chord - to the top of the chord - without changing the other 2 notes in the chord.

The chord you get is called: “C - 1st. Inversion”. It looks like this:

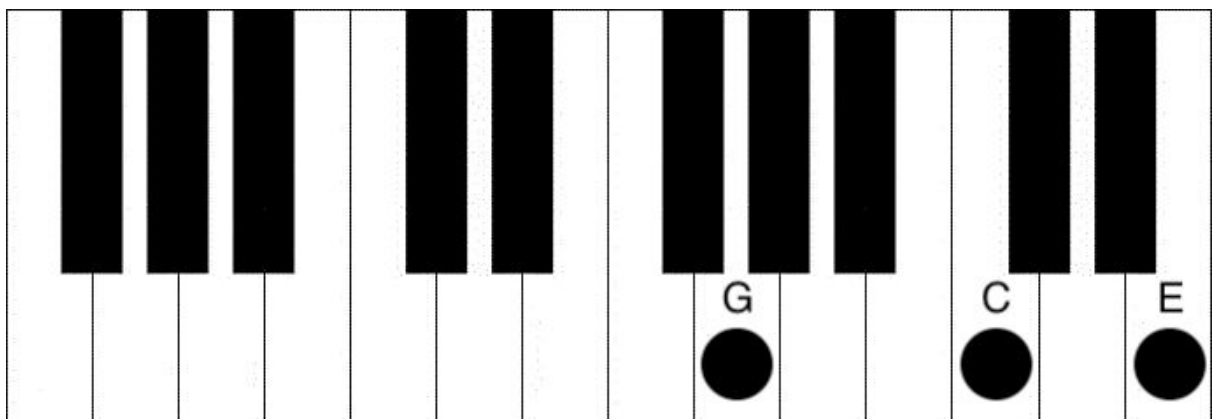
- E at the bottom of the chord
- G in the middle
- C at the top of the chord



Finally we will do the last possible inversion for our 3-note chord.

Starting at the previous inversion “C - 1st. Inversion” - once again we move the bottom note (E) to the top of the chord - without changing the other 2 notes. This will give you the last inversion of the C chord: “C - 2nd. Inversion”. It looks like this:

- G at the bottom of the chord
- C in the middle
- E at the top of the chord



## Practical use of inversions

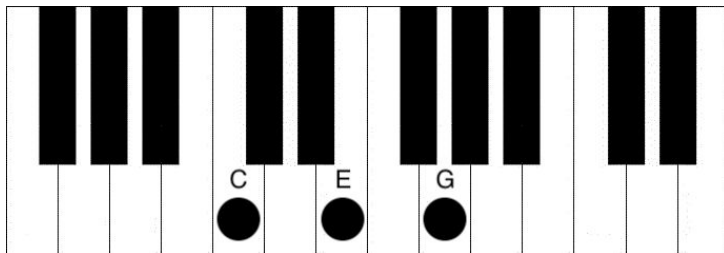
Now that you understand how to invert a 3-note chord let's have a look at a hands-on practical example. Let's look at why mastering chord inversions will make your playing more flowing and natural.

In our example we will play this chord progression:

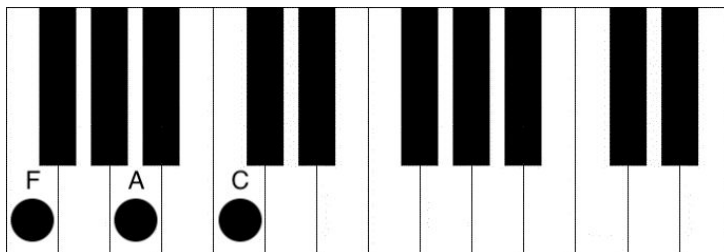
| C | F | G | C |

If you were to use only root note chords for this - it would look like this on the charts:

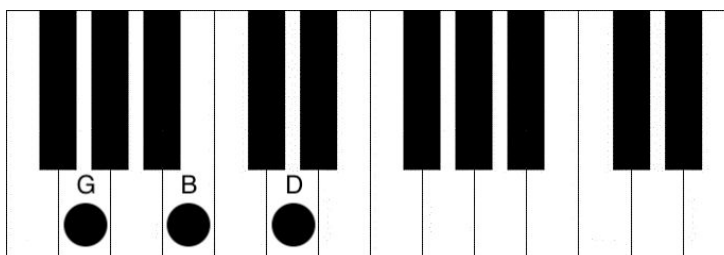
### From C root inversion...



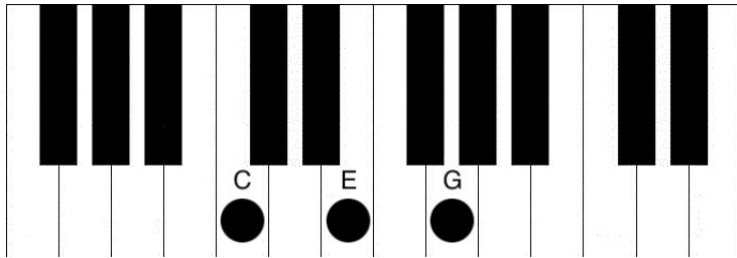
### ...to F root inversion...



### ...to G root inversion...



### ...and back to C root inversion

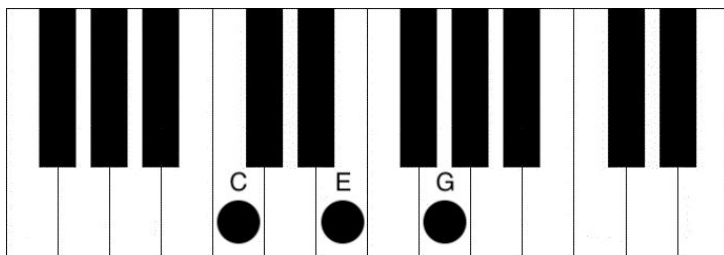


Your hand would need to jump between the different root notes.

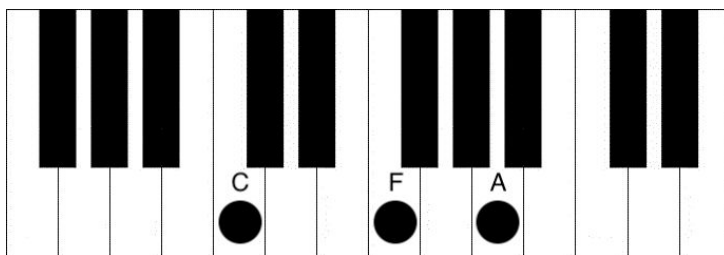
To make this chord progression much more fluent we will do the following:

- Play the chord C at its root inversion
- Play the chord F at its 2nd. inversion
- Play the chord G at its 1st. Inversion

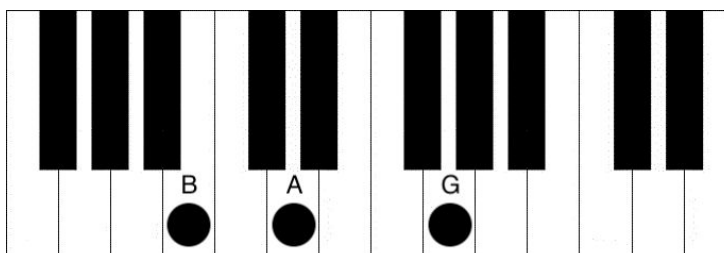
**From C root inversion...**



**...to F 2nd. inversion...**

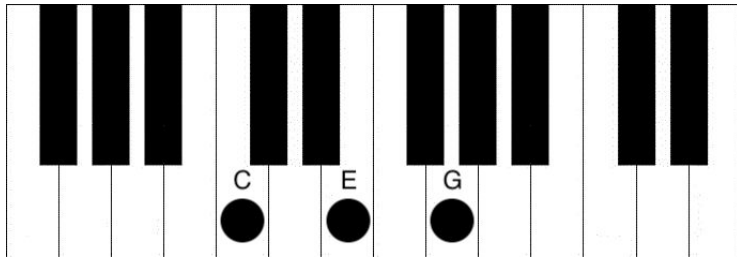


**...to G 3rd. inversion...**



**...and back to C root inversion**

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Play this example on your keyboard and notice how your hand hardly needs to move at all!

This is why it's so important to practice and master chord inversions. Life gets easier and your music will sound much smoother.

So - from now on - when you start learning a chord progression for a song - learn the inversions for all the chords on the song. Then find the easiest way to get from one chord to the next using chord inversions.

### Chords with more than 3 notes

To round up this crash-course let's have a quick look at chords with more than 3 notes.

It's still easy! The principle of chord inversion is the same as with a 3-note chord. Start out with building and understanding the root inversion of the chord. Root note at the bottom and the following build on top of that.

Once you have your root inversion of the chord - start inverting. Move the root note to the top - this is your 1st. Inversion. Then move the next note to the top - this is your 2nd. Inversion. Then move the next note to the top - this is your 3rd. inversion...and so on.....

The math is simple:

- If you have a 3-note chord you can have 3 inversions (root, 1st, 2nd.)
- If you have a 4-note chord you can have 4 inversions (root, 1st, 2nd, 3rd.)
- ...and so on

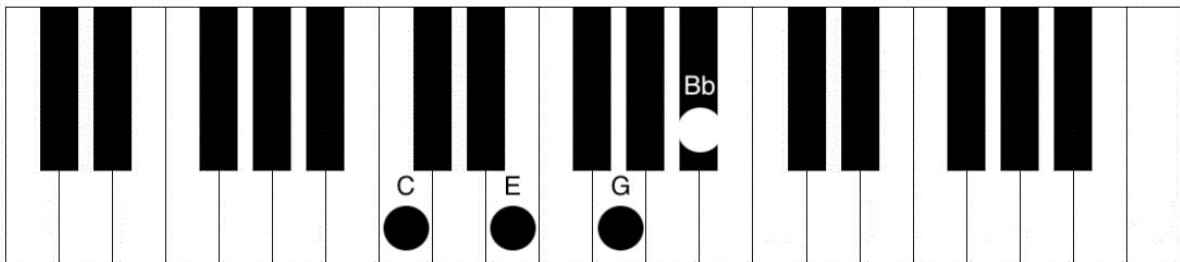
### Example of a 4-note chord inversion

Just to clarify the principles - here is an example of the 4 inversions of the 4-note chord C7:

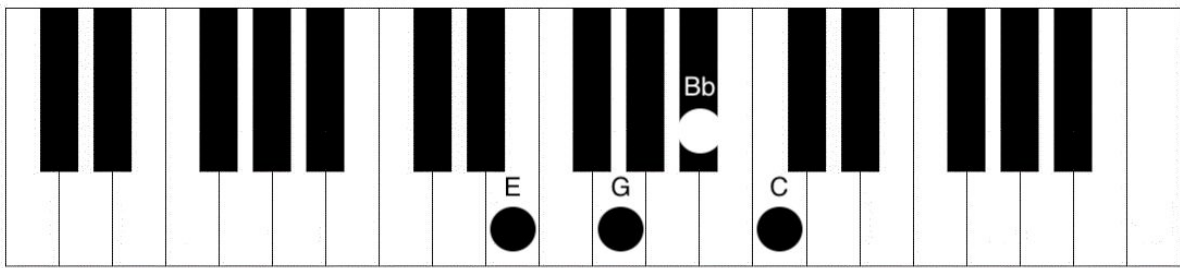
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- Root inversion: C - E - G - Bb
- 1st. Inversion (bottom note to the top): E - G - Bb - C
- 2nd. Inversion (next note to the top): G - Bb - C - E
- 3rd. Inversion (next note to the top): Bb - C - E - G

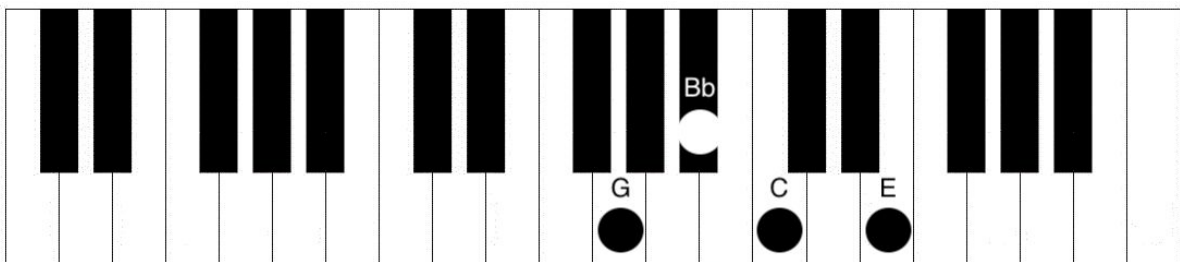
### C7 root inversion



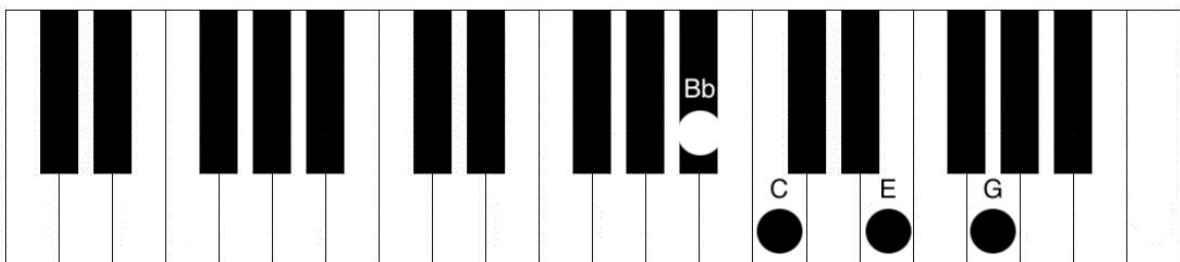
### C7 1st. inversion



### C7 2nd. inversion



### C7 3rd. inversion





That's it folks

I trust you now understand the principles of keyboard chord inversions. All you need to do now is start practicing. Remember - it always takes a while to implement new knowledge - but just do a couple of chord inversions every day and it will become second nature in no time - I promise ;-)

Thank you for your interest in my site [PianoChordCharts.net](http://PianoChordCharts.net)

Please check back as often as you like - to get more great information on how to improve your keyboard skills.

I am Niels Andersen - have a great day and keep practicing.....

Thanks.