



Major and Minor Chords and Arpeggios -

Let's begin by explaining what a chord is. A chord is a term used to describe the playing of 2 or more notes simultaneously. We will discuss arpeggios at the same time, as they are directly related. The term arpeggio simply means that we play the notes of a chord separately, rather than simultaneously.

Major and minor chords are 2 of the most commonly used chord types. We can follow 2 paths in order to find the notes of a major or minor chord. To find a major chord, we take the 1st, 3rd and 5th note of a major scale. We can see this below with the C major scale -

C D E F G A B = C Major Scale
C E G = C Major Chord

We can follow the same process to find the notes of a minor chord. We take the 1st, 3rd and 5th notes of a minor scale =

C D Eb F G A B = C Minor Scale
C Eb G = C Minor Chord

The second path we can follow to find the notes of a major or minor chord is by looking at the distance between the notes. We refer to the notes of a major chord as the root, 3rd and 5th. The 3rd is 4 semitones higher than the root note. The 5th is 7 semitones higher than the root note.

The same process can be applied to a minor chord with one adjustment. The 3rd of a minor chord is only 3 semitones higher than the root note. The 5th is 7 semitones higher than the root note (the 5th is the same in a major and minor chord).

It is worth noting that a major chord can be made into a minor chord by taking the 3rd and lowering it by one semitone (a half step for American readers).