

Triad Trickery pt 1 – Major Triads (close-voiced)

So what are triads?

“3-note chords *voiced in thirds* containing a Root (R), a Third (3) and a Fifth (5)”.

There are 4 types of triad, containing the following intervals:

Major Triad	R, 3, 5
Minor	R, b3, 5
Augmented	R, 3, #5
Diminished	R, b3, b5

Inversions

We can play the triad with the Root as the lowest note, the Third as the lowest note (called a first inversion) or the Fifth as the lowest note (second inversion).

Example (C major triad)

C – root position

C/E or C/3 – first inversion

C/G or C/5 – second inversion

(Note: C/3 refers to the 3rd of the chord being in the bass, not 3rd of the scale)

Tip: the top note in 4th interval remaining after inversion = root.

Voicings

For each inversion, there are 2 ways the notes can be voiced:

“CLOSE” (eg. R, 3, 5) – here the notes are within one octave

“OPEN” (eg. R, 5, 3) - the voices are separated by more than one octave

*N.B. if the root is still in the bass with open voicing it's still a “root position” chord.
Don't confuse voicings with inversions...*

Assignments

1) Learn to play all the **close-voiced** shapes for a C major triad.

The 3 inversions can be played on 4 groups of strings, giving a total of 12 shapes.

Practise them along and across the neck.

2) Now take all these shapes and work out how to play the following triads:

- F major
- Bb major
- A major

(the aim is to get very familiar with these shapes and ultimately be able to play major triads in any key).

3) **Voice-lead** the following chord progressions using triads:

- G, C, D
- E, D, A
- F, Bb, Ab, Db

(find as many different ways to do this as you can...)