

Bite size Composition THEME - Building chords from a minor scale.

By writing out the scale of the key we have chosen to work in, putting numbers underneath and then stacking the tonic triads on top we can see the chords we have available within our key and in number order. In the following example I have used the A natural minor scale, which is the relative minor of C Major. (Check out videos on day 1, 2 and 3 if you want more info on scales and keys)

When building chords from a **natural minor** scale the pattern of chords will always go like this:

Looking back at yesterday's chart made from C Major, (keeping in mind C Major and A minor are relates and use the same notes) you will see the same chords are present but their positions have changed.

One thing that is consistent is the idea that Chord 1 (Tonic) is the most important chord. After that the strongest chords are again 4 (Subdominant) and 5 (dominant) so these are good chords to play around with first.

If you decide to use the **harmonic minor** (Natural minor with the 7th raised by a semitone/step) remember to include the raised 7th note in all your chords in the chart.

Notice how this changes a few of the chords, chord 3 is expanded and so becomes an augmented chord, chord 3 very importantly becomes Major - this is really effective harmonically as the raised 7th note pulls the chord towards the tonic chord even more to find resolve, play it and see what it sounds like. Chord 7 the sharp moves the mores closer together making it a diminished (Squished chord)

Е	F	G#	Α	В	С	D
С	D	Ε	F	G	FA	В
Α	В	С	D	Ε	F	G#
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

- 1. Pick a **minor key**, write out the scale and number each note, write out the triads on top.
- 2. Play up the scale in these root position triads, thinking of each as a number.
- 3. Playing the chords in whatever way you are comfortable with, e.g both hands same shape root position triad, RH triad LH bottom note of the chord, or any other combination, move around from chord to chord.
- 4. Here are some common chord progressions to try, then have a go at creating your own, you can also have a look at your favourite tunes and see if you can work out the chord sequences.
- i v i, i iv v i, i VII i, set the raised 7th for the harmonic minor and try i V(Major) i