

Circle of Fifths

Common chord progressions

One of the most common progressions is I, IV, V.

To find this just pick any letter around the circle and treat that as I. The letter to the left is IV, and the letter to the right is V.

For example, if we want to find I, IV, V in the key of C – I = C, IV = F, V = G.

Another VERY common chord progression is I, VI_m, IV, V.

To find the VI_m chord, just take the relative minor of the I chord.

Songwriting

The Circle of Fifths can help you to find closely related chords and keys.

1. Chords that are close together on the circle are closely related and tend to work well with each other.
2. If you want to change key in your song, you can use the circle to see which keys are closer to each other.

For example, if you're in the key of G, changing key to C or D would only involve changing one note in the scale (leading to a subtle key change). But if you changed key to B (further round the circle) more notes would change (leading to a more pronounced change).