

Dan's Basic Tonal Harmony Workout (for major keys):

- 2 voices in each hand at all times
- choose a major key
- choose a metronome marking, one beat per chord (30 bpm is a good goal but you may have to start much slower; just find the rate where you can do it properly)
- use good voice leading. this means searching for minimal movement between voices. hence most chords are going to be inverted, rather than root position.
- play all chords as triads except for the 7th degree, which should be played as a 7th chord (half diminished).

* go through the following sequences:

1 3 5 7 2 4 6 1 (i.e. up in 3rds)

1 6 4 2 7 5 3 1 (i.e. down in 3rds)

1 4 7 3 6 2 5 1 (i.e. up in 4ths)

1 5 2 6 3 7 4 1 (i.e. down in 4ths)

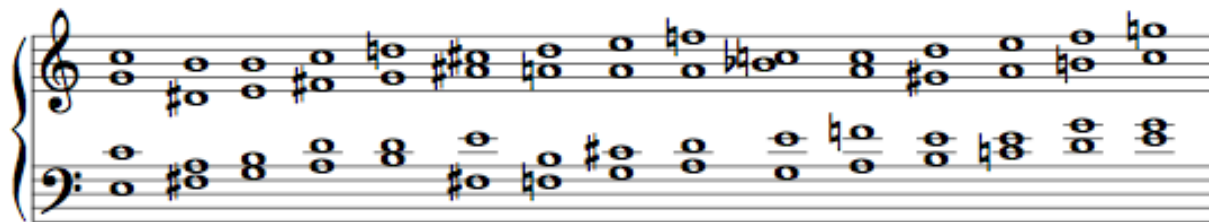
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 1 (i.e. up in 2nds)

1 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 (i.e. down in 2nds)

in C major for the fourth line above (down in 4ths) this would give: C G D- A- E- B \flat 7 F C, which could for example be voiced as:



• once the above is comfortable in all twelve keys, precede each chord in the sequence with a secondary dominant. in C major for the first line above (up in 3rds), this gives: C B7 E- D7 G F#7 B \flat 7 A7 D- C7 F E7 A- G7 C, which could for example be voiced as:



note that all 7th chords should use all 4 notes of the chord, no doubling (whereas of course for the triads you will have to double one of the tones).

• once the above is comfortable in all twelve keys, precede each chord in the sequence with a diminished 7th approach chord (root a half step below the target chord). in C major for the fourth line above (down in 4ths), this gives:

C F# \circ 7 G C# \circ 7 D- G# \circ 7 A- D# \circ 7 E- A# \circ 7 B \flat 7 E \circ 7 F B \flat 7 C, which could for example be voiced as:



- It's essential to do these exercises in all twelve keys. I suggest picking a key a day, or per week. Getting through it all may take a while; this is a long-term job.
- Make sure you are always improvising the exercise, mentally creating the harmonic movement afresh every time. Try to move through the chords in different ways every time you do it. This may require a very slow metronome! You want to push yourself, but not too much. This exercise is about engaging your mind, not memorizing hand positions.