

Choose The Best Chords For Your Song

Tonic functions: I, vim, iiim. The I chord is the strongest tonic, and the iiim is the weakest tonic.

The subdominant function chords are iim and IV. These chords have a quality of movement.

The dominant function chord brings the most movement and drama.

When we move from one chord function to another chord with the same function, e.g. one tonic function chord to another, we get less of a sense of change than if we move from a tonic chord to a subdominant or dominant. We can harness this to make more precise choices as to where in our song we want to hear more contrast and where we want more continuity.

TONIC	SUBDM	TONIC	SUBDM	DOMINANT	TONIC
I	iim	iiim	IV	V	vim
G	Am	Bm	C	D	Em

Play through each chord pair and make a note of how pronounced the quality of movement / change is each time:

G - Am _____

G - Bm _____

G - C _____

G - D _____

G - Em _____

Applications:

1. Reserve a particular chord function for a later section in the song. That will give the music a lift when it arrives. Write a section of music that omits a particular chord function and then another sequence that includes it.
2. Repeat a chord sequence using different tonic or subdominant chords. Write a four chord sequence and repeat the order of chord functions, but with different chords - e.g. a vim tonic instead of a I tonic.

Common pop turnarounds

G D Em C = Tonic, Dominant, Tonic, Subdominant

G Em C D = Tonic, Tonic, Subdominant, Dominant

Em C G D = Tonic, Subdominant, Tonic, Dominant

TONIC	SUBDM	TONIC	SUBDM	DOMINANT	TONIC
I	iim	iiim	IV	V	vim
G	Am	Bm	C	D	Em

Application:

Take the turnarounds and rewrite them, changing at least one of the tonics or subdominants for another tonic or subdominant. Write in a chord from the key of G that matches underneath each chord function:

1. Tonic Dominant Tonic Subdominant
2. Tonic Tonic Subdominant Dominant
3. Tonic Subdominant Tonic Dominant

What now? Ready to transform your chord progressions into finished songs?

You've chosen some chords you like the feel of. Now what about writing the lyrics?

Download ["Five Ways To Write Great Lyrics"](#) – your free e-guide, to learn five core principles about writing lyrics that connect with your listener.

Inside this guide, you'll discover:

- How to analyze lyrics you love to understand what makes them work
 - The secret to balancing concrete imagery with emotional depth
 - Simple writing practices that sharpen your lyrical skills
 - Why brainstorming first (before writing lyrics) leads to better songs
 - Pacing techniques to keep listeners engaged from start to finish
- Stop relying on hope and chance when writing lyrics.

Move beyond "throwing in any lyrics that kinda fit" to creating words that truly serve your ideas and your music.

Plus: Get bonus songwriting prompts and a printable lyric analysis table to jumpstart your practice.

Your songs deserve expressive lyrics. [Get your free guide now](#) and start writing with confidence and purpose.

Click here to download the free guide [‘Five Ways To Write Great Lyrics’](#)