

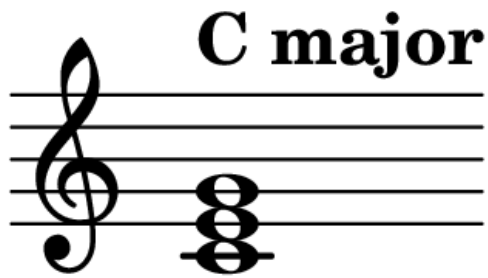
Tonic Triads in Root Position

Music Theory Foundations — Quick Reference

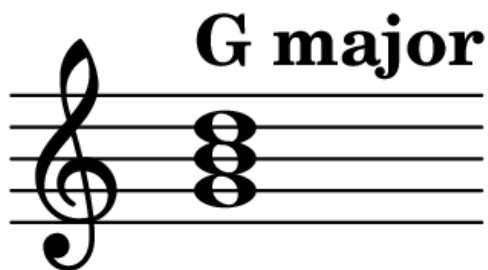
A triad is a three-note chord built by stacking two 3rds on top of each other. The tonic triad is built on the first note (the tonic) of a scale, and is the "home" chord of a key.

In root position, the tonic note sits at the bottom, with the 3rd and 5th of the scale stacked above it.

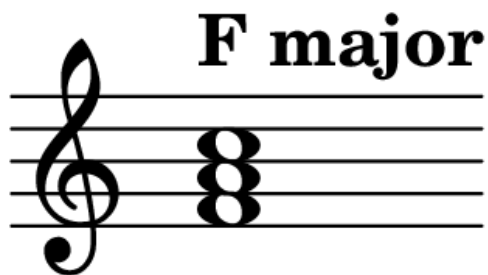
C Major Triad (C – E – G)



G Major Triad (G – B – D)



F Major Triad (F – A – C)



Key Rules to Remember

- A triad = the 1st, 3rd, and 5th notes of a scale, played together.
- "Root position" means the tonic note (the 1st) is the lowest note of the chord — if a different chord note were on the bottom, it would be called an inversion instead.
- Each note is a 3rd apart from the next — that stacked-3rds pattern is what makes a triad a triad.
- The tonic triad is the chord that a piece in that key will usually start and end on — it's the chord that feels most "at rest."