

Diminished Chords

C Dm Em F G Am B°
I ii iii IV V vi vii°

A musical staff in treble clef showing the seven chords of a major scale: C, Dm, Em, F, G, Am, and B°. Each chord is represented by a vertical line with a dot indicating the root note. Below the staff, the Roman numerals I, ii, iii, IV, V, vi, and vii° are aligned with their respective chords.

Naturally occurring as the 7th chord in a major scale (or harmonic minor scale)

3 Bm B°
i i°

A musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (D major). It shows the Bm chord (labeled 'i') and the B° chord (labeled 'i°').

Can be thought of as a minor triad with a lowered fifth

4 E° E°7

A musical staff in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B minor). It shows the E° chord and the E°7 chord.

Can be thought of as stacked minor 3rds

How to use diminished chords

Passing Diminished chords (to tonicize)

5 C F#° G G#° Am E° F

A musical staff in treble clef showing a sequence of chords: C, F#°, G, G#°, Am, E°, and F. Each chord is represented by a vertical line with a dot indicating the root note.

Common-Tone Diminished chords (to embellish)

9 C°7 C F°7 F G°7 G C°7 C

A musical staff in treble clef showing a sequence of chords: C°7, C, F°7, F, G°7, G, C°7, and C. Each chord is represented by a vertical line with a dot indicating the root note.