“Non-Voice Leading” Exercises on Important Progressions
(4-Part Triads)

Ted Greene, 1974-11-15

To add variety, voice-leading is sometimes abandoned. One common instance of this (when working with 4-note triads whose top 3 notes are in close position) is to move the top 3 notes to the position opposite the normal direction. This opens up the possibility of passing tones.

Example: A to D

Normal:

When connecting chords whose roots go down in 3rds, take the next higher position than normal. When connecting chords whose roots go up in 3rds, take the next lower position than normal.

Following is a list of progressions with the places to change position circled; once you change direction, continue chord connecting procedures as usual (from wherever you are now).

Example: given: I - IV - V - I

Using as a starting place ➔

...you would get two changes of position, because D to E is a chord progression by 2nds, and as you have learned, these normally are played with a change of position to avoid parallelism.

The goal of these exercises (as with most) is not to have each one memorized by a separate title (like “I-IV-I-V-I with a change of position on I”) but rather, to get you familiar with the neck of the guitar so you will feel free to move in different directions instead of one fixed pattern.

This is not to say, however, that you shouldn’t know what you are playing, that is, the names of the chords. These should always be present – you just don’t need all the ultra-specifics to be uppermost in your mind when playing a simple progression.

For instance, no matter how you play a I-IV-I it is still I-IV-I — the main thing is to know lots of nice I-IV-I patterns all over the neck, not to clutter up the brain with too many specifics. The human mind can only think of so much at once — the names of the chords, the particular inversions, and the Roman numerals will be plenty.
Try to add passing tones where possible in all examples.

1) \[ I \rightarrow IV \rightarrow I | I \rightarrow IV \rightarrow I | I \rightarrow IV \rightarrow I \]

2) \[ I \rightarrow V \rightarrow I | I \rightarrow V \rightarrow I | I \rightarrow V \rightarrow I \]

3) \[ I \rightarrow IV \rightarrow V \rightarrow I | I \rightarrow IV \rightarrow V \rightarrow I \]

4) \[ I \rightarrow ii \rightarrow V \rightarrow I | I \rightarrow ii \rightarrow V \rightarrow I \]

5) \[ I \rightarrow vi \rightarrow V \rightarrow I | I \rightarrow vi \rightarrow V \rightarrow I \]

6) \[ I \rightarrow vi \rightarrow ii \rightarrow V \rightarrow I | I \rightarrow vi \rightarrow ii \rightarrow V \rightarrow I | I \rightarrow vi \rightarrow ii \rightarrow V \rightarrow I \]

7) \[ I \rightarrow vi \rightarrow IV \rightarrow V \rightarrow I \]

8) \[ iii \rightarrow vi \rightarrow ii \rightarrow V \rightarrow I | iii \rightarrow vi \rightarrow ii \rightarrow V \rightarrow I \]

9) \[ I \rightarrow iii \rightarrow IV \rightarrow V \rightarrow I \]

10) \[ vi \rightarrow iii \rightarrow IV \rightarrow I | vi \rightarrow iii \rightarrow IV \rightarrow I \]

11) \[ ii \rightarrow vi \rightarrow IV \rightarrow I \]

[\(\bigcirc\) = place to change position]
Important Progressions in Minor Keys (with and without voice-leading)

1) $i$ - iv - $i$ | $i$ - iv - $i$ | $i$ - iv - $i$

2) $i$ - V - $i$ | $i$ - V - $i$ | $i$ - V - $i$

3) $i$ - iv - V - $i$ | $i$ - iv - V - $i$ | $i$ - iv - V - $i$

4) $i$ - iv - i - V - $i$ | $i$ - iv - i - V - $i$ | $i$ - iv - i - V - $i$

5) $i$ - VI - V - $i$

6) $i$ - VI - ii° - V - $i$ | $i$ - VI - ii° - V - $i$

7) $i$ - VI - iv - V - $i$ | $i$ - VI - iv - V - $i$

8) III - VI - ii° - V - $i$ | III - VI - ii° - V - $i$

9) i - III - iv - V - $i$ | i - III - IV - V - $i$

10) VI - III - iv - $i$ | VI - III - iv - $i$
To add variety, voice leading is sometimes abandoned. One common instance of this (when working with 4 NOTE TRIADS whose top 3 NOTES are in close position) is to move the top 3 NOTES to the position opposite the normal direction. **EXAMPLE:** A to D

This opens up the possibility of passing tones.

**EXAMPLE:**

When connecting chords whose roots go down 3rds, take the next higher position than normal. When connecting chords whose roots go up in 3rds, take the next lower position than normal.

Following is a list of progressions with the places to change position circled.

Once you change directions, continue chord connecting procedures as usual (from wherever you are now). **EXAMPLE:** given \( \text{I} \xrightarrow{\text{IV}} \text{V} \xrightarrow{\text{I}} \text{IV} \xrightarrow{\text{V}} \text{I} \) as a starting place you would get 2 changes of position because D to E is a chord progression by 2nds, and as you have learned, these normally are played with a change of positions avoided.

The goal of these exercises (as with most) is not to have each one memorized by a separate title (like \( \text{I} \xrightarrow{\text{IV}} \text{V} \xrightarrow{\text{I}} \) with a change of position on \( \text{I} \)) but rather to get you familiar with the feel of the guitar so you will feel free to move in different directions instead of a fixed pattern. This is not easy however, that you shouldn't know what you are playing that is the name of the chord. These should always be present you just don't need all the ultra-specifics to be uppermost in your mind when playing a simple progression. For instance, no matter how you play a \( \text{I} \xrightarrow{\text{IV}} \text{I} \) it is still a IV I the main thing is to know lots of nice I IV I patterns all over the neck, not to clutter up the brain with too many specifics. The human mind can only think so much at once - the names of the chords, the particular inversion and the roman numerals will be plenty.

**IMPORTANT PROGRESSIONS IN MINOR KEYS**

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