In the beginnings of harmony, the Tonic Subdominant, and Dominant triads were the pillars that established a sense of Tonality or Key. Gradually, the other diatonic triads were used more frequently, and finally the diatonic 7th chords were discovered. The Dominant 7th became a favorite of composers, used more frequently than all the other 7th chords put together; still later, the Supertonic 7th (ii7) came to be used in place of the Subdominant triad, especially in the cadence formula IV - V - I, (which became ii7 - V(7) - I).

You might wonder why IVmaj7, rather than ii7 wasn’t used for IV. It is because of the strongly dissonant interval of a major 7th (between root and 7th) in the IVmaj7 — this was apparently harsher to the ears of our forefathers than the mild dissonance of a minor 7th in the ii7. To modern ears the IVmaj7 is just as nice as a ii7, but through tradition and for other reasons not to be discussed here, the ii7 has remained the favorite chord to precede V(7) with, so a thorough understanding and familiarity with it are necessary for the student of music.

The following are some common examples of ii7 - V(7) given in the key of A or D. Practice them in various keys, and decoration, and resolve them to I. Then do them in minor keys, but use ii7 - V(7) – i instead of ii7 - V(7) - I.
ii7 - V(7) - I  

Ted Greene, 1974-11-28 and 1974-11-29  

Key of D

Key of A
Key of A

Also try connections like the following:

Very often, ii7⁵ or ii7⁴ progress to I₄ before going to V7 or V; likewise ii₅ entirely in minor keys to i₄.
In the beginnings of harmony, the TONIC, SUBDOMINANT, and DOMINANT triads were the pillars that established a sense of TONALITY or KEY. Gradually, the other diatonic triads were used more frequently, and finally the dissonant 7th chords became a favorite of composers, used more frequently than all the other 7th chords put together. Still later, the SUPERTONIC 7th (ii7) came to be used in place of the SUBDOMINANT chord, especially in the cadence formula IV-I (which became ii7-I). You might wonder why IV7 rather than ii7 wasn’t used for IV; it is because of the strongly dissonant interval of a major 7th (between Root+7th) in the IV7—this was apparently harsh to the ears of our forefathers than the more dissonant of a minor 7th in the ii7 (to modern ears the IV7 is just as nice as a ii7, but thru tradition and for other reasons not to be discussed here, the ii7 has remained the favorite chord to precede IV) with, so a thorough understanding and familiarity with it are necessary for the student of music.

The following are some common examples of ii7-IV-I (in all keys). Practice them in various keys, add decoration, and resolve them to I, then do them in minor keys but use ii7-IV-I instead of ii7-IV-I.
Also try connections like the following.

Very often, II7\#5 or II7\#5 progresses to I7 before going to I7 or V, likewise II7\#5, II7\#5 in minor keys to I7.