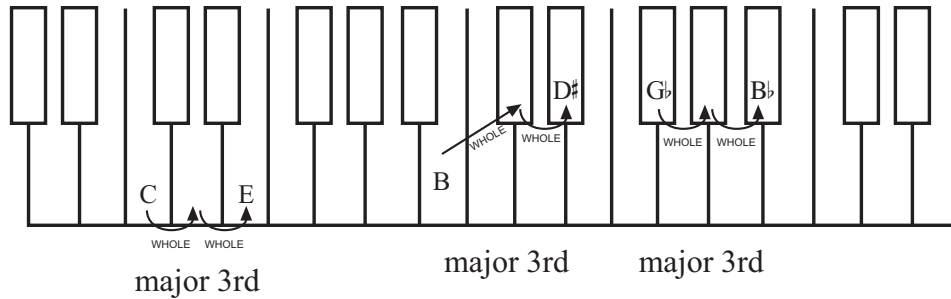


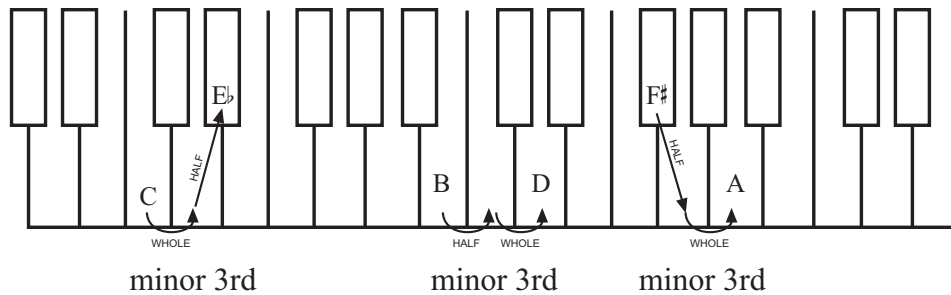
# Making Triads

In order to learn how to make triads, we'll first need to define a few intervals.

A **major third** is equivalent to two whole steps (or 4 half-steps.)

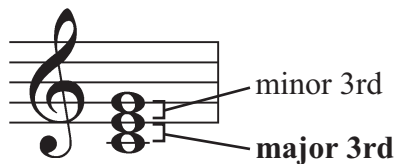


A **minor third** is equivalent to one-and-a-half whole steps (or 3 half-steps.)

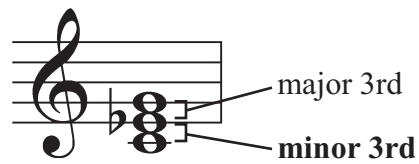


One creates a triad by **stacking** two thirds on top of one another. A **major triad** has a major third on the bottom, and a **minor triad** has a minor third - the two intervallic patterns are mirror images of each other.

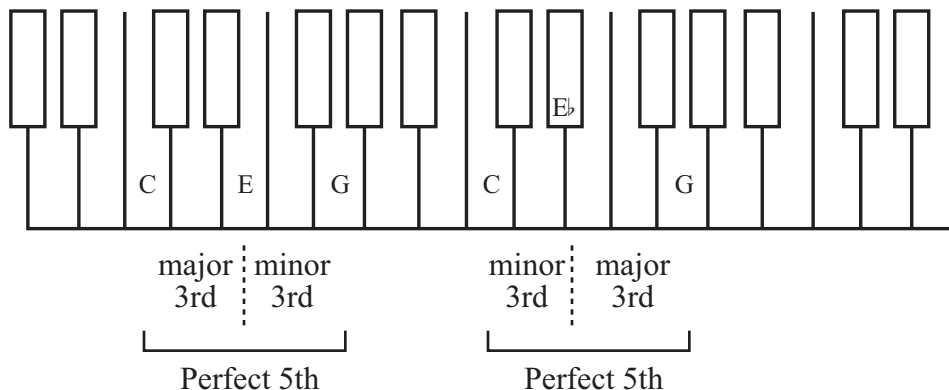
major triad



minor triad



The interval between the bottom note and the very top is called a perfect fifth. It is equal to seven half-steps. I don't think you need to worry about counting your fifths just yet, as long as you stack your thirds correctly.



You can also check your major or minor triad by thinking of the corresponding scale. If your triad notes match up to scale-degrees one, three, and five, you've made your triad correctly. (Some triads, however, don't have a corresponding scale.)

E $\flat$  major triad and scale



## Exotic triads: Diminished and Augmented

These are the other possible triads that can be built out of thirds. The diminished triad appears frequently enough in real music - it is dissonant and unstable because it features a diminished fifth (or “tritone”) instead of a perfect fifth. The augmented triad is also dissonant, and it occurs extremely rarely.

I think it is useful to think of a diminished triad as a “squashed” minor, and the augmented as a “stretched” major.

The diagram illustrates the relationship between triads through two rows of musical notation. Each row shows a transformation from a standard triad to an exotic one.

**Top Row:**

- minor triad:** Shown on a treble clef staff with notes G4, Bb4, and D5. The interval between G and Bb is labeled "major 3rd", and the interval between Bb and D is labeled "minor 3rd".
- Transformation:** An arrow labeled "squish" points to the right.
- diminished triad:** Shown on a treble clef staff with notes G4, Bb4, and Db5. The interval between G and Bb is labeled "minor 3rd", and the interval between Bb and Db is labeled "minor 3rd".

**Bottom Row:**

- major triad:** Shown on a treble clef staff with notes G4, A4, and C5. The interval between G and A is labeled "minor 3rd", and the interval between A and C is labeled "major 3rd".
- Transformation:** An arrow labeled "stretch" points to the right.
- augmented triad:** Shown on a treble clef staff with notes G4, Ab4, and C#5. The interval between G and Ab is labeled "major 3rd", and the interval between Ab and C# is labeled "major 3rd".