

# The chords, sounds and keys that make it funky.

## Chords that groove Voicings shown from C3 to C5. Green keys = the notes you play.

### Minor 7 **Em7**

E G B D

The home base of most funk vamps.



### Minor 9 **Em9**

G B D F#, bass E

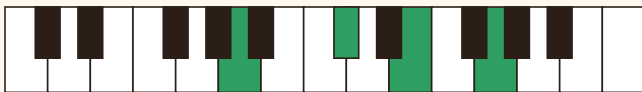
Add the 9th and it opens up. Smooth, still tough.



### Dominant 7 **A7**

A C# E G

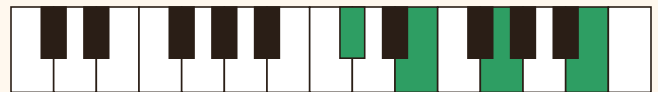
Bright, with an edge from the b7.



### Dominant 9 **A9**

C# E G B, bass A

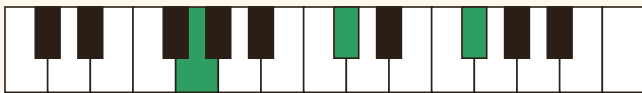
The dominant with a 9th on top. A staple of funk rhythm parts.



### Dominant 13 **A13**

G C# F#, bass A

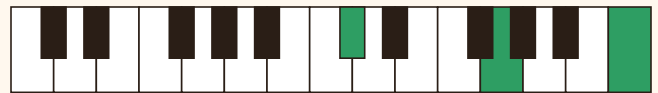
b7, 3rd and 13th. Three notes, all the flavor.



### 7#9 **A7#9**

C# G C, bass A

Major 3rd and #9 together: the chord with an edge.



## Chords that pull you out of the groove

### Plain triads, held **E**

E G# B

Held for a whole bar they sound pop or rock. Funk stabs them short or adds the 7th.



### Major 7, held **Emaj7**

E G# B D#

Lush and soft. Lovely in ballads, but held over a funk vamp it takes the bite away.



### Diminished 7 **Edim7**

E G Bb C#

Dramatic, like a movie scene. Use it as a quick passing chord, not a groove.



### Augmented **Eaug**

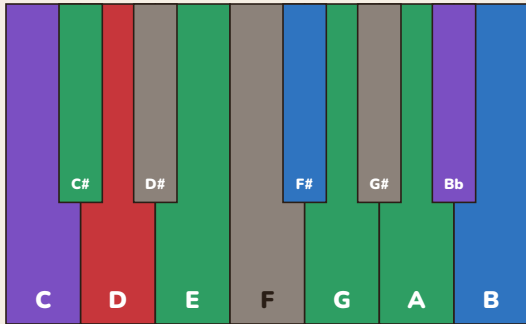
E G# C

Unstable and dreamy. It lifts the groove off the floor.



## Which notes work over A7?

A funk vamp in E Dorian (Em7 to A7). This is how a traffic-light keyboard thinks.



CHORD TONE

COLOR

BLUE NOTE

AVOID

OUTSIDE

Green fits, blue adds color, purple adds grit, red clashes. Gray is outside the key: only as a quick passing note.

|    |            |                                                  |
|----|------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| A  | CHORD TONE | The root. Home.                                  |
| Bb | BLUE NOTE  | The b5 of E: the blues note. Slide in and out.   |
| B  | COLOR      | The 9th. Color without the clash.                |
| C  | BLUE NOTE  | The #9 over A7: grit against the major 3rd.      |
| C# | CHORD TONE | The 3rd. Bright and always safe.                 |
| D  | AVOID      | A half step above C#. Land on it and it clashes. |
| D# | OUTSIDE    | Outside the key. Quick passing note only.        |
| E  | CHORD TONE | The 5th. Safe and neutral.                       |
| F  | OUTSIDE    | Outside the key. Quick passing note only.        |
| F# | COLOR      | The 13th. A classic funk color on a dominant.    |
| G  | CHORD TONE | The b7. The edge that makes A7 a dominant.       |
| G# | OUTSIDE    | Outside the key. Quick passing note only.        |

## Sounds that bite

**Clavinet.** Percussive and nasal. The sound of seventies funk keys.

**Rhodes.** Bell-like electric piano for chords and stabs.

**Organ.** Stabs and swells with grit.

**Synth bass.** Fat, round low end for bass lines on the keys.

## Sounds that blur

**Acoustic grand.** It works, but its long ring smears sixteenths. Keep it short.

**Slow strings and pads.** The attack is too slow to land on a sixteenth.

**Big reverb presets.** The groove drowns in the tail.

## Which keys?

Any key can be funky. Bass and guitar players love E, A, D and G because of their open strings, so a lot of funk lives there. Learn a groove in one key, then move it: the shape on the keys changes, the feel doesn't.

## Your MIDI keyboard

**Velocity-sensitive: yes.**

Dynamics come from how hard you hit. Almost every USB controller has it.

**25 keys works.**

49 or more is more comfortable for two hands.

**Weighted keys: not needed.**

Synth-action keys are great for stabs.

## Know the notes? Now train the pocket.

On The One is a Mac app that hears every note you play on your MIDI keyboard and grades the pocket: timing, dynamics, articulation and space. 41 lessons, an endless jam band and export to Ableton.

**\$9.99 one-time · 30-day money-back guarantee · [ontheoneapp.com](https://ontheoneapp.com)**