Playing Major and Minor Chords on a Piano

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Definitions:

Interval: The distance between two notes on the piano

Half step: The distance between two adjacent keys on the piano (the shortest interval). For example the distance from C to C# is one half step. (see keyboard diagram below)

Whole step: A whole step equals two half steps. For example the distance from C to D is one whole step.

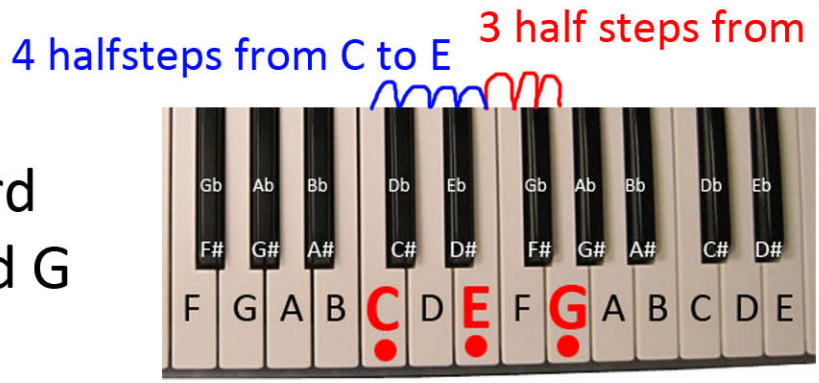
Trick to construct a major chord on the piano:

A major chord is made up of three notes - the root note and two other notes. For example with the "C" chord the root note is "C". To get the next note move four half steps to the right, which brings you to the "E" note. Then to get the final note in the chord, move three more half steps to the right which lands you on the "G" note. So notes C, E, and G form the triad for the C major chord.

Trick to construct a minor chord on the piano:

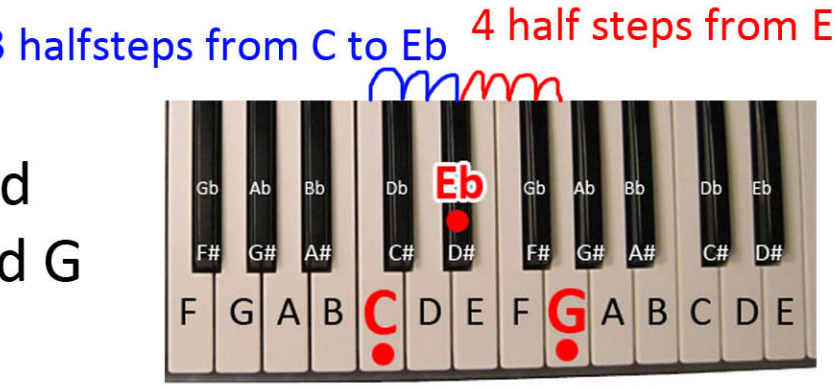
Same as the proceedure for forming a major chord except you first take three half steps to the right followed by four half steps. The C minor chord has notes C, Eb and G.

C Major Chord
Notes C, E, and G



C Minor Chord
Notes C, Eb, and G

Pronounced E flat



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