

# THE NASHVILLE NUMBER SYSTEM

The Nashville Number System uses numbers to show how chords relate to each other in a key, instead of writing out their names. Each number stands for a note in the scale—so in the key of C, 1 = C, 2 = D, 3 = E, 4 = F, 5 = G, 6 = A, and 7 = B. Chords are built from those notes, and each number has a typical major or minor quality: 1, 4, and 5 are usually major; 2, 3, and 6 are minor; and 7 is diminished. This means a pattern like 1–4–5 sounds the same in any key—you just start on a different note. The system helps musicians quickly understand and play chord progressions, as well as have the ability to transpose into other keys on short notice.

Here are some examples of common keys and how the Nashville Number System works:

## Key of C

C Dm Em F G Am B°

1 2m 3m 4 5 6m 7°

## Key of D

D Em F#m G A Bm C#°

1 2m 3m 4 5 6m 7°

## Key of G

G Am Bm C D Em F#°

1 2m 3m 4 5 6m 7°

## Key of B

B C#m D#m E F# G#m A#°

1 2m 3m 4 5 6m 7°