

## **Augmented and Diminished Triads**

### **A quick reference to not mixing them up**

#### **Diminished: (dim, o, minor b5)**

Two minor thirds stacked (3 half steps). E.g. B, D, F

#### **How to hear it/listen to it:**

Listen to the diminished triad as the upper three notes of a Dominant 7th chord:

e.g. G7 = G, (B, D, F)—the B, D, F form a diminished triad.

Play the dominant chord, then omit the root and listen for the diminished triad. The diminished triad will have the tendency tones of the dominant. In the case of our G7 chord (G, B, D, F) the B will “want” to move up by half step to C and the F will “want” to move down by half step to E. Use this to distinguish the diminished triad from the augmented triad.

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#### **Augmented: (aug., +, major #5)**

Two major thirds stacked (4 half steps) e.g. C, E, G#

#### **How to hear/listen to it:**

Try to hear the major third intervals. Don't let the m6 (augmented 5th) between the root and the sharp five (e.g. C - G#) confuse you into hearing a minor triad or a diminished triad. If you can hear a major third you know it is an augmented triad—not diminished.

Play an augmented triad on the piano and sing the individual notes. Try to identify the major thirds.

Play a major triad and then raise the fifth to create an augmented triad. Try to hear the similarity between the major triad and the augmented triad.

A famous (and kinda cliché) chord progression is the: I, I+ (augmented 1), vi.  
Hearing the tonic move to the six via the augmented tonic chord may help hearing the augmented chord. Here are some songs that employ this:

[It's all been done, Barenaked Ladies](#) (pre chorus, 0:30-0:35)

[Tapioca Tundra, Monkeys](#) (first verse 0:31-0:34)

[Kashmir, Led Zeppelin](#) (opening) not really I, I+, vi, but you can hear the 5 sharpened to sharp 5 and then to 6 and on to sharp 6.

[and many more...](#)