

Fully-Diminished Chords as Pivots - Cheat Sheet

The $\text{vii}^{\circ 7}$ chord is special because it has four different roots depending on its spelling.

Four spellings of the same chord:

Diagram showing four spellings of the same fully-diminished chord on a single staff:

- Eb (labeled $\text{vii}^{\circ 7}$)
- Gb (labeled $\text{vii}^{\circ 4}_2$)
- A (labeled $\text{vii}^{\circ 4}_3$)
- C (labeled $\text{vii}^{\circ 6}_5$)

Arrows labeled "Root" point to the root note of each chord.

Because of this property, you can use the chord as a pivot to any of the keys that it has a leading tone relationship to.

Diagram showing a sequence of chords in C major:

C: I V^6_5 I $\text{vii}^{\circ 6}_5$ I V^7 I IV $\text{vii}^{\circ 6}_5$ I IV V^7 I $\text{vii}^{\circ 6}_5$ i $\text{ii}^{\circ 6}_5$ i^6_4 V i

Annotations below the staff:

- $\text{Eb}:\text{vii}^{\circ 7}$ (pointing to the $\text{vii}^{\circ 6}_5$ chord)
- $\text{Gb}:\text{vii}^{\circ 7}$ (pointing to the $\text{vii}^{\circ 6}_5$ chord)
- $\text{Am}:\text{vii}^{\circ 7}$ (pointing to the $\text{vii}^{\circ 6}_5$ chord)
- V (pointing to the V chord)

Sometimes it's spelled in the key it comes from (backwards facing)

Sometimes it's spelled in the key it's going to (forwards facing)

The reason this works is that the chords *sound* the same even though they're not spelled the same way.

Note that this is most useful in traveling to keys a minor third (or tritone or diminished 7th/ Major 6th) away.