Diatonic Chord Progressions

A sequence of chords in a key is called a **diatonic chord progression.** The table below shows which chords sound best next to each other. A chord can be used more than once in a progression and a strong progression starts or ends on a stable chord

Stable

↑
┊
↓

Unstable

I	→	**Anything**
vi	→	**IV, V, I, ii**
IV	→	**I, V, vi, iii**
V	→	**I, IV, vi**
iii	→	**vi, I, IV, ii**
ii	→	**V, IV, iii**

Sample Progressions

Here are some sample progressions created using the table above. Examples are written using roman numerals and letters in the key of C.

Starts stable

<u>**vi**</u> **V** **IV** **iii**

Am G F Em

Ends stable

iii **I** **vi** <u>**IV**</u>

Em C Am F

Remember lower case roman numerals are minor chords and capital roman numerals are major chords.