

The Double SLAP

Voice-leading rules in Bach Chorales

Double (Root pos. – double root; 1st inv. – double third or root (except **Vb**); **lc** – double fifth; **viib** – double third)

S Spacing

- Top three parts should be as high as possible (within their ranges)
[In each phrase the tenor should not be more than a 12th lower than the soprano and must at some point be less than an octave]
- Make sure the parts don't cross

L Leaps

- Avoid excessive leaps in bass
- Avoid leaps in alto and tenor
- Avoid two leaps in the same direction
- Avoid leaping to and from 1st inversions

A Accidentals

- Sharpened seventh in minor keys
- All accidentals needed for changes of key

P Parallels

- Avoid consecutive parallel octaves
- Avoid consecutive parallel fifths
- Avoid hidden fifths and octaves (leaping to these intervals in the soprano when the bass is moving the same direction)

Suspensions

Make sure suspensions are prepared and resolved. Common suspensions are

- I17b
- V4-3

Leading notes

Avoid moving from the seventh degree of the scale to the third (particularly likely at perfect cadences)

Awkward intervals

- Avoid tritones (diminished fifths/augmented fourths)
- Avoid augmented seconds

Passing sevenths

At perfect cadences, check that your passing note makes a seventh with the dominant (not a ninth!)

DOs	DON'Ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep most of the harmony simple by starting from stage one and only harmonic changes that are necessary in order to improve the bassline • Use characteristic progressions from Bach's own chorales as often as you can • Ib and VI are the best approach chords to Iib7 in the run up to a cadence • All other things being equal, it is a good idea to keep a root position I on the first strong beat of a chorale or its upbeat (in fact, this is not a bad rule of thumb for all phrases) • Root progressions using falling thirds (e.g. VI to IV and I to VI) are much better than those using rising thirds • If you use the same chord twice in a row, make sure that one is in root position and one is in first inversion • Play through at least the soprano and bass lines together to check it sounds right 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't use second inversions other than IC in IC - V - I • Avoid progressions using II other than as an approach chord to V • Don't use II in root position in minor keys (it is a diminished chord) • Don't use VII other than as VIIb resolving either to I or Ib • Don't use III other than as an approach to VI and avoid in minor keys altogether • Only use VI in root position • Avoid progressions between IV and V unless the melody is going in the opposite direction to the root progression of the two chords