

Reference Scales

Base Your Scale Knowledge on Two Main Scales

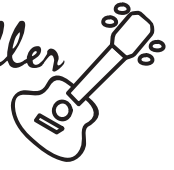
There are two scales that can be memorized and all other essential scales *referenced* from these two. The two scales are the **Major** and **Natural Minor** scales. These are traditional scales and very common scales used in contemporary music.

This **UkuleleLesson** will explore these two scales and the valuable information that can be used to learn additional scales.

Alternate Scale Names

Scales can have alternate names, such as the Major scale also being known as the Ionian scale. Both scales contain the same notes. Alternate names are show in parentheses.

- **Major** (Ionian)
- **Natural Minor** (Aeolian) - sometimes mistakenly referred to as the minor scale. It is a minor scale by not *the minor scale*.
- **Blues** (Minor Pentatonic)
- **Pentatonic** (Major Pentatonic, Country Scale, Nashville Scale)
- **Dorian** (Minor)
- **Mixolydian** (Dominant)



Using C as the root of the scale here are the *major* and *natural minor* scales.

C Major (Ionian)

Notes	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C'
Scale Degrees	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

C Major contains ALL natural notes, C D E F G A B C'. In sequence starting on C and ending on C one octave, or eight letters higher. These are the white keys of a piano

Numbering each note of the scale 1 through 8 helps with learning other scales and transposing. Each note of a scale as called scale degree. These scale degrees go up to 13 for the purposes of creating chords. All scale degree numbering will be based off the major scale degrees.

C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	A
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13

C Natural Minor (Aeolian)

Notes	C	D	E \flat	F	G	A \flat	B \flat	C'
Scale Degrees	1	2	b3	4	5	b6	b7	8

For C Natural Minor lower or flat the E, A and B one half step. A lowered or flat 3, 6, and 7.

Intervallic Notation

Minor (-)

Lower upper note of any MAJOR interval 1/2 step.

Diminished (o)

Lower upper note of any PERFECT interval 1/2 step.

Lower upper note of any MAJOR interval 1 step.

Augmented (+)

Raise upper note of any MAJOR or PERFECT interval 1/2 step.

Functional Notation

\flat	(flat sign)
\sharp	(sharp sign)
maj	(major)
m	(minor)
dim	(diminished)
aug	(augmented)



Generically

The Natural Minor scale can be summarized using the scale degrees based on the major scale.

Major

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Natural Minor

1 2 **b3** 4 5 **b6** **b7** 8

Common Pentatonic Scales

Five note pentatonic scales are the most common scales use in rock, blues and county music. Typically the first scales a beginning student learns.

C Major Pentatonic

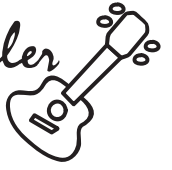
Notes	C	D	E	G	A	C'
Scale Degrees	1	2	3	5	6	8

A Major Pentatonic scale is the Major scale with no 4th and 7th scale degrees.

C Minor Pentatonic (Blues)

Notes	C	E \flat	F	G	B \flat	C'
Scale Degrees	1	$\flat 3$	4	5	$\flat 7$	8

A Minor Pentatonic scale is the Natural Minor scale with no 2nd and 6th scale degrees.



Essential Scales

Essential scales can be considered the first choice scales that you need to improvise or create melodies. There are six essential scales needed for the majority of common progressions.

The learning order depends on the styles of music you are playing. A country player might start with the Pentatonic scale, a jazz musician would start with the major scale, a blues player would go with the Blues scale.

- Major
- Natural Minor
- Blues
- Pentatonic
- Dorian
- Mixolydian

C Mixolydian

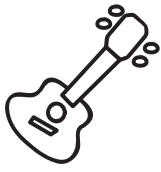
Notes	C	D	E	F	G	A	Bb	C'
Scale Degrees	1	2	3	4	5	6	b7	8

Mixolydian is the major scale with a lowered or flat 7th.

C Dorian

Notes	C	D	E _b	F	G	A	B _b	C'
Scale Degrees	1	2	b3	4	5	6	b7	8

Dorian is the natural minor scale with a natural 6th.



Additional Scales

Phrygian

1 **b2** b3 4 5 b6 b7 8

Aeolian (Natural Minor) with a lowered or flat 2nd.

Lydian

1 2 3 **#4** 5 6 7 8

Ionian (Major) with a raised or sharp 4th.

Locrian

1 **b2** b3 4 **b5** b6 b7 8

Aeolian (Natural Minor) with a lowered or flat 2nd and lowered or flat 5th.

Harmonic Minor

1 2 b3 4 5 b6 **7** 8

Aeolian (Natural Minor) with with a natural 7th.

Tonic Minor (Jazz Minor, Melodic Minor)

1 2 b3 4 5 **6** **7** 8

Aeolian with a natural 6th and natural 7th. Or, major with a flat 3rd.

Mixolydian -2 -6

1 **b2** 3 4 5 **b6** **b7** 8

Mixolydian with a flat 2nd and flat 6th.

Mixolydian +4 (Lydian Dominant)

1 2 3 **#4** 5 6 **b7** 8

Mixolydian with a raised 4th.

Diminished

The Diminished scale is a symmetric scale consisting on alternating whole steps and half steps.

W H W H W H W H

There are only three diminished scales needed to cover all keys.

Whole Tone

The Whole Tone scale is a symmetric scale consisting of a whole step between each scale degree.

W W W W W W

There are only two whole tone scales that cover all keys.