

The Major Scale

All music theory compares back to the major scale. You are probably familiar with the sound of the major scale – do, re, mi, fa, so, la, ti, do. We all sang that song endless times in elementary school. There are many different fingerings and ways to play major scales all over the guitar neck.

Below is a system of six major scales. With all six memorized, you can utilize the entire guitar neck. The scales overlap each other, and on the next page you will learn to link these scales together.

The major scale is constructed from seven notes built from the scale degrees of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. Memorize the scales one at a time. Take your time learning them, perhaps chipping away a little each day. As you move through each scale make a mental note of when you hit the root notes, illustrated in black.

The key signature for each scale is determined by its root note. First learn the scales below in the key of G major. The scales line up nicely in G, so G major is a good place to start. To play the #1 scale in G major, put your 2nd finger on the 3rd fret on the low E string, G note, and play the shape. You will now be playing a G major scale which consists of the seven notes G, A, B, C, D, E, and F#.

To play scale #2 in G, put your first finger on the G note on the low E string at the 3rd fret and play the shape. These scales can be moved up and down the guitar neck and should be practiced in all keys. Know your major scales cold and then you will also know all the modes of the major scale. To learn more on modal playing check out the written lessons in the *modal playing* section.

The diagram illustrates six major scale shapes, labeled #1 through #6, arranged on a guitar fretboard grid. Each shape is represented by a grid of circles, where the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4 indicate the fingerings to be used. Root notes are highlighted in black. A legend at the bottom shows a black circle for 'root notes' and a circle with a '#' for 'fingering to utilize'.

#1

#2

#3 Box

#4

#5

#6

● root notes # fingering to utilize

Major Scale Links

Now that you know six major scales from the previous lesson, let's link them together and play them across the neck. These links help view the entire neck as one big scale.

Below are two examples of three octave major scale links that combine three shapes. These are incredibly useful and are easy to play. Both utilize easy to remember repeated fingerings. These scale links help you to practice lateral playing across the neck. Shift with your first finger for both these examples when you get to the D and the B strings. Shift up a whole step or two frets, with the first finger for the 1-1 finger combination. Practice these links in all keys, they are super useful.

Link 1 utilizes 1-2-4 fingering to play the entire scale link. Shift up with the first finger as indicated. Link 2 utilizes 1-3-4 fingering to play the entire scale link. Again, shift up with the first finger as indicated. Be sure to always make mental notes when passing through root notes. Just like the other scales we have discussed in this eBook, these scale links are moveable with the root note determining the key.

To locate these scales fast, first find the low root note. To play these links in G major, first find the G notes. To play the Link 1 in G major, start with your 2nd finger on the 3rd fret of the low E-string and play the shape. Third fret low E-string is a G note.

To play Link 2 in G major, start with your 4th finger on the 15th fret of the low E-string and play the shape. The 15th fret low E-string is a G note.

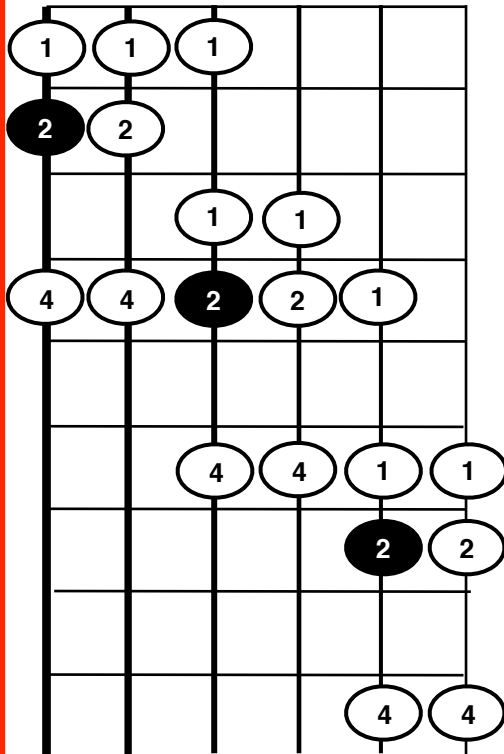
Find the root notes and blast away from there!

If you have a minor key jam, for example, let's say a jam in the key of A minor, you can still utilize these major scales in the parent scale of C major. C major's relative minor is A minor. Use major and relative minor as discussed in previous lessons.

Convert both of these shapes back to the parent scale of C major and start on and emphasize the A notes for A Aeolian, (A natural minor). Remember, its all about emphasis and mood.

Read more about that device and many others in the *Modes* written lessons in this series. Rock on!

**Three-Octave
Major Scale Link 1**
(links scales shapes #1,#2,#4)



**Three-Octave
Major Scale Link 2:**
(combines box shapes #6,#1,#2)

