

THE MAJOR SCALE -written by David Taub

For the most part all music theory compares back to the major scale. The major scale is the elemental constant that all other scales are compared. You are probably familiar with the sound of a major scale – doe, re, mi, fa, so, la, ti, doe. There are many different fingerings and ways to play major scales all over the guitar neck. In this lesson you will learn a system of six major scales that I have found students gravitate to the fastest. With all six memorized, you can utilize the entire guitar neck. The scales overlap with each other and you need to note this as that is how we will get you started linking them together – through these overlaps, or link points.

The major scale is constructed from seven notes, built from the scale degrees of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7. Memorize the scales one at a time and take your time and play the scales slow and in time. As you move through each scale make a mental note of when you hit the root notes, which are illustrated below in black. The key signature for each scale is determined by the root note. For starters learn the scales below in the key of G. So 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. Much like moveable bar chords these scales can be moved up and down the guitar neck and should be practiced in all keys. It is essential that you know these major scales cold and are comfortable moving them around in all keys. In the next lesson you will learn to link them together so you can start to view the neck as one big scale because you will see the overlap and how they fit together – then just move that WHOLE chunk up or back to change key. If you know your major scales you will then know all the modes of the major scale – as they are just variations of the major scale – so its absolutely critical to get these scales down cold!

