

Introduction to Scales

- A scale is a sequence of notes related to a common “key” or “tonal center”. For example, in Western music, a C major scale starts on a C and contains the following seven notes: C, D, E, F, G, A, and B.
- The name of a scale is identified by its root note and type. For example: “C major” indicates that the root is C and that the type is major. The type describes the quality or function of the scale; for example, major, minor, augmented, diminished, etc.
- Each note in the scale is referred to as a scale step. The step is a number used to describe its place within the scale. For example, a D note is the 2nd step of the C major scale.
- Some scales have one form when they are played in ascending order and a different form when played in descending order. For example, the melodic minor scale is played with a major 6th and 7th steps when ascending (C, D, Eb, F, G, A, B, C) but the 6th and 7th steps are lowered or flatted when descending (C, Bb, Ab, G, F, Eb, D, C).

Scales

Name	Form	Construction*	Scale (Starting on C)
Major	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	W W H W W W H	C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C
Natural Minor	1, 2, b3, 4, 5, b6, b7, 8	W H W W H W W	C, D, Eb, F, G, Ab, Bb, C
Harmonic Minor	1, 2, b3, 4, 5, b6, 7, 8	W H W W H 3H H	C, D, Eb, F, G, Ab, B, C
Melodic Minor Ascending	1, 2, b3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8	W H W W W W H	C, D, Eb, F, G, A, B, C
Melodic Minor Descending	8, b7, b6, 5, 4, b3, 2, 1	W W H W W H W	C, B ,A, G, F, E, D, C
Whole Tone	1, 2, 3, #4, #5, b7, 8	7W	C, D, E, F#, G#, Bb, C
Diminished Scale, Whole–Half	1, 2, b3, 4, b5, b6, 6, 7, 8	W H W H W H W H	C, D, Eb, F, Gb, Ab, A, B, C
Diminished Scale, Half- Whole	1, b2, b3, 3, #4,5, 6, b7, 8	H W H W H W H W	C, Db, Eb, E, F#, G, A, Bb, C
Diminished Symmetric	1, b3, b5, 6, 8	3H 3H 3H 3H	C, Eb, Gb, A, C
Chromatic	1, b2, 2, b3, 3, 4, b5, 5, b6, 6, b7, 7, 8	12H	C, Db, D, Eb, E, F, Gb, G, Ab, A, Bb, B, C
Pentatonic Major	1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8	W W 3H W 3H	C, D, E, G, A, C
Pentatonic Minor	1, b3, 4, 5, b7, 8	3H W W 3H W	C, Eb, F, G, Bb, C
Blues	1, b3, 4, b5, 5, b7, 8	3H W H H 3H W	C, Eb, F, Gb, G, Bb, C
Bebop Major	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, #5, 6, 7, 8	W W H W H H W H	C, D, E, F, G, G#, A, B, C
Bebop Dorian	1, 2, b3, 3, 4, 5, 6, b7, 8	W H H H W W H W	C, D, Eb, E, F, G, A, Bb, C
Bebop Dominant	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, b7, 7, 8	W W H W W W H H	C, D, E, F, G, A, Bb, B, C
Altered Dominant	1, b2, b3, 3, #4, #5, b7, 8	H W H W W W W	C, Db, Eb, E, F#, G#, Bb, C

* W = Whole Step , H = Half Step