

Major and Minor Scales, Chords, Arpeggios

Ted Greene - 1975-04-28 & 1976-02-29

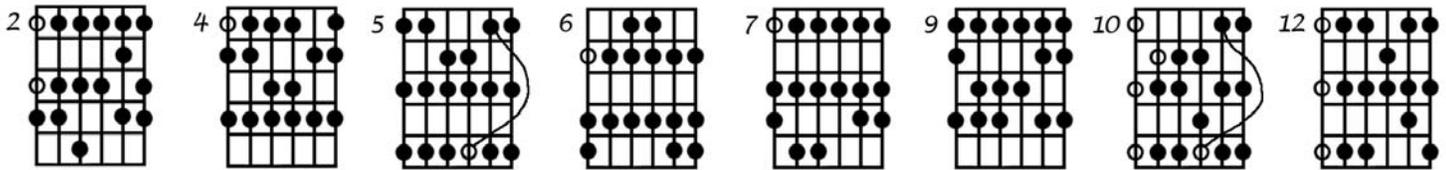
The Major Scale

The major scale is one of the foundations of almost all types of music in Western culture. Its diatonic triads (3-note chords built in 3rd intervals, using only notes of the scale) are I ii iii IV V vi vii^o.

Some important positions for multi-line music are (some of these are not that important for single-note playing):

SCALES

(Key of A)



If you do not know the names of notes in the major scales commonly used, write them out starting from C, G, D, A, E, B, F#, C#, Cb, Gb, Db, Ab, Eb, Bb, and F. Then gradually memorize all these.

TONIC ARPEGGIOS

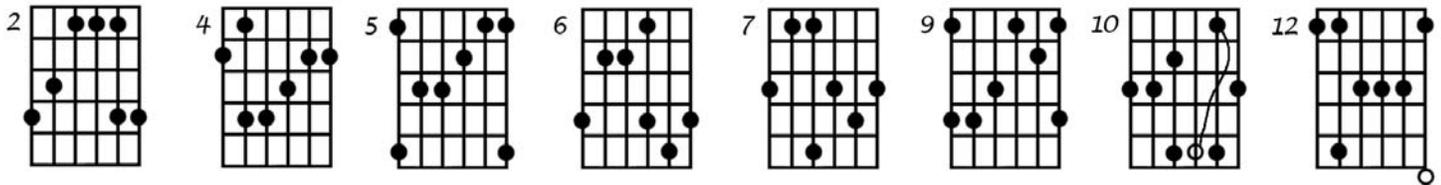
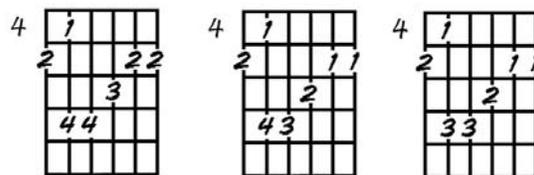


Figure out similar arpeggios for the other chords in the key.

Various *fingerings* are possible for the same notes in some arpeggios.

Example:



The first arpeggio is the most logical if you are going to play other notes in the scale mixed in with the arpeggio. The other two fingerings are more practical for "pure" arpeggio playing.

The Natural Minor Scale

1976-02-29

All minor scales have a **b3rd** tone. This is what makes them “minor.”

The *natural* minor scale has a **b3rd, b6th, and b7th** tones.

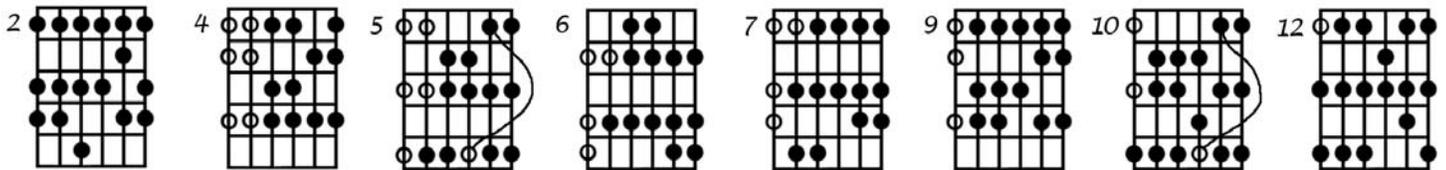
Example: taking an A major scale (A, B, C#, D, E, F#, G#, A), if we lower the third, sixth, and seventh tones we would now have A, B, C, D, E, F, G, A — this is the A natural minor scale.

Following is a list of the commonly used natural minors:

| Key | Scale | Key | Scale |
|----------------|--|-------------|---|
| Am | A B C D E F G A | Dm | D E F G A B \flat C D |
| Em | E F \sharp G A B C D E | Gm | G A B \flat C D E \flat F G |
| Bm | B C \sharp D E F \sharp G A B | Cm | C D E \flat F G A \flat B \flat C |
| F \sharp m | F \sharp G \sharp A B C \sharp D E F \sharp | Fm | F G A \flat B \flat C D \flat E \flat F |
| C \sharp m | C \sharp D \sharp E F \sharp G \sharp A B C \sharp | B \flat m | B \flat c D \flat E \flat F G \flat A \flat B \flat |
| G \sharp m | G \sharp A \sharp B C \sharp D \sharp E \sharp F \sharp G \sharp | E \flat m | E \flat F G \flat A \flat B \flat C \flat D \flat E \flat |
| D \sharp m | D \sharp E \sharp F \sharp G \sharp A \sharp B C \sharp D \sharp | A \flat m | A \flat B \flat C \flat D \flat E \flat F \flat G \flat A \flat |
| (A \sharp m) | (A \sharp B \sharp C \sharp D \sharp E \sharp F \sharp G \sharp A \sharp) | | |

Here are the positions for the natural minors. They are given in the key of F \sharp m; you will notice that they are the same as given above. This is because due to coincidence, any natural minor scale has the same notes as a major scale, whose root is the 3rd note of the natural minor scale. To make these natural minors *sound* like minor scales and not just major scales a b3rd higher, you should play the chord progression F \sharp m – Bm – F \sharp m – C \sharp m – F \sharp m before you play each position of the scale (the reason will be explained later).

SCALES



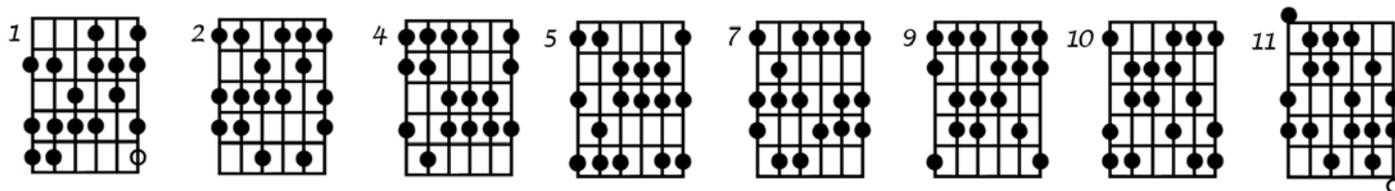
Try working out the tonic arpeggios (hint: you already know them if did your homework above).

The Harmonic Minor Scale

The harmonic minor is formed by *raising the 7th degree* of the natural minor scale.
(Example: F# harmonic minor has an E# note instead of an E note.)

SCALES

(Key of F#m)



The diatonic triads in harmonic minor scales are: i ii^o III⁺ iv V VI Rvii^o [R = “raised”]

Figure out the diatonic arpeggios as before; the tonic arpeggio will help you to visualize the scale fingerings.

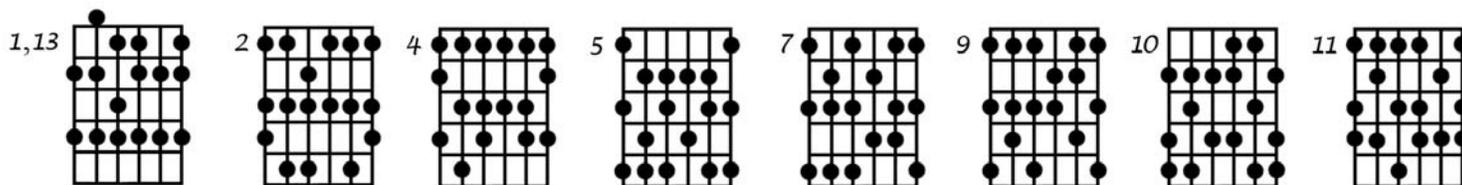
The Melodic Minor Scale

The melodic minor scale is formed by raising the 6th and 7th degrees of the natural minor scale.

Example: F# melodic minor → F# G# A B C# (D# E#) F#

SCALES

(key of F#m)



The diatonic triads in melodic minor are: i ii III⁺ IV V Rvi^o Rii^o [R = “raised”]

As usual, it would be good to know the arpeggios of the scale.

Melodic minors can also be viewed as major scales with b3rd's (check this out).

MAJOR + MINOR SCALES, CHORDS, ARPEGGIOS

The major scale is one of the foundations of almost all types of music in Western culture. Its diatonic triads (3 note chords built in 3rd intervals, using only notes of the scale) are I ii iii IV V vi vii°.

Some important positions for multi-line music are: (Key of A) (Some of these are not that important for single-note playing).

SCALES

TONIC ARPEGGIOS - Figure out similar arpeggios for the other chords in the key.

If you do not know the names of the notes in the major scale commonly used, write them on a starting from C, G, D, A, E, B, F#, C#, G#, D#, A#, F, (check the circle on the page).

Various fingerings are possible for the same notes in some arpeggios.

Example:

The 1st arpeggio is the most logical if you are going to play other notes in the scale mixed in with the arpeggio - the other two fingerings are more practical for "pure" arpeggio playing.

2-29-76

THE NATURAL MINOR SCALE

All minor scales have a b3rd tone, this is what makes them "minor". The natural minor scale has a b3rd, b6th and b7th tones. Example:

Taking an A major scale (A B C# D E F# G# A), if we lower the third, sixth and seventh tones, we would now have A B C D E F G A - this is the A natural minor scale. Following is a list of the commonly used natural minors:

| KEY | SCALE | KEY | SCALE |
|--------------------|-------------------------|------------------|---|
| A ^m | A B C D E F G A | D ^m | D E F G A B ^b C D |
| E ^m | E F# G A B C D E | G ^m | G A B ^b C D E F G |
| B ^m | B C# D E F# G A B | C ^m | C D E ^b F G A ^b B ^b C |
| F ^{#m} | F# G# A B C# D E F# | F ^m | F G A ^b B ^b C D ^b E ^b F |
| C ^{#m} | C# D# E F# G# A B C# | B ^b m | B ^b C D ^b E ^b F G ^b A ^b B ^b |
| G ^{#m} | G# A# B C# D# E F# G# | E ^b m | E ^b F G ^b A ^b B ^b C ^b D ^b E ^b |
| D ^{#m} | D# E# F# G# A# B C# D# | A ^b m | A ^b B ^b C ^b D ^b E ^b F ^b G ^b A ^b |
| (A ^{#m}) | A# B# C# D# E# F# G# A# | | |

Here are the positions for the natural minors. They are given in the key of F#m; you will notice that they are the same as given above. This is because, due to coincidence, any natural minor scale has the same notes as a major scale, whose root is the 3rd note of the natural minor scale. To make these natural minors sound like minor scales and not just major scales a 3rd higher, you should play the chord progression F#m Bm F#m C#m F#m before you play each position of the scale (the reason will be explained later).

SCALES

Try working out the tonic arpeggios (hint: you already know them if you did your homework above).

THE HARMONIC MINOR SCALE

The harmonic minor is formed by raising the 7th degree of the natural minor scale (EXAMPLE: F# harmonic minor has an E# note instead of an E note).

(Key of F#m) **SCALES** - The diatonic triads in harmonic minor scales are:

i ii° III+ IV V VI RVII° Figure out the diatonic arpeggios as before; the tonic arpeggio will help you to visualize the scale fingerings.

THE MELODIC MINOR SCALE

The melodic minor scale is formed by raising the 6th and 7th degrees of the natural minor scale (EXAMPLE: F# melodic minor -> F# G# A B C# D# E# F#).

(Key of F#m) **SCALES** - The diatonic triads in melodic minor are:

As usual, it would be good to know the arpeggios of the scale. Melodic minors can also be viewed as major scales with b3rd's (check this out).