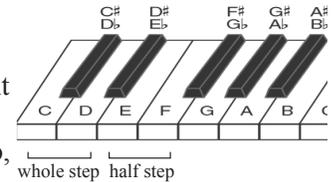


Learning to Solo

The first step in learning to solo is to learn scales. A scale is a series of notes that follow a specific pattern. There are many types of scales and each follows a different pattern, giving each scale a unique sound. Scales are very important in that they are the building blocks of everything in a song. The notes contained in the chords, vocal melody, bass notes, and guitar solo are all taken directly from the same scale. This is very important to realize as a soloist. If, in your solo, you play notes from the same scale everything else is built from, then what you play will always sound right. With that said, some notes will sound better than others. The notes you play should be primarily the same notes in the chords supporting your solo. You will need to train your ears to listen to your solo to make sure your notes match the chords.

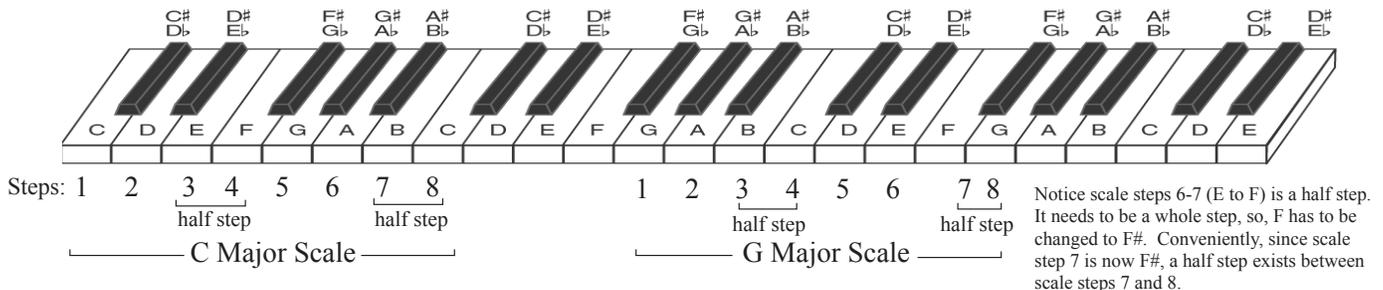
The Major Scale

Most songs are based on the **major scale**. The major scale is a series of eight notes separated by intervals of either half steps or whole steps. An **interval** is the distance between notes, and a **half step** is the smallest interval. On the piano, a half step is going from one key to the very next key, i.e. C to C#, or E to F. (see right) On the guitar, a half step is moving from one fret to the very next fret, i.e., moving from F to F#. A **whole step** is a slightly wider interval. On the piano, a whole step skips one key, i.e. C to D. (see right) On the guitar, a whole step skips one fret.



Constructing a major scale is really simple once you understand half step and whole step intervals. The pattern is this: **Half steps between scale steps 3 & 4, and 7 & 8.** Between all other scale steps are whole steps. That's it!

If you played a C on the piano and played all the white keys after C until you played C again, you will have played a C Major scale. (see below) The C major scale is the only major scale in which all the notes are white keys on the piano. In other words, there are no sharps or flats in a C major scale. However, if we start a scale on any other note, one or more notes have to be altered with a sharp or flat so that the pattern of half and whole steps works out. Such is the case with the G major scale. (see below) Notice that the note, F, has to be modified to F# so that the pattern works out. No two scales are exactly alike. The D major scale, for instance contains F# and C#. B major contains 5 sharps: F#, C#, G#, D#, and A#.



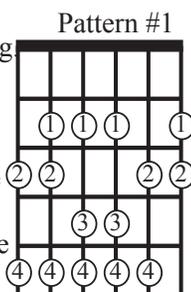
Scales and Keys

When a song is written using the notes in say, a G major scale, it is said to be in the "key of G". It's referring to the **key signature**. The key signature is shown at the beginning of each staff. It not only tells you what notes will be sharped or flat throughout the song, but because each scale is unique, each key signature is unique, and as such, you can tell what the key a song is in by the number of sharps or flats in the key signature. For instance, since the G major scale is the only scale that has only one sharp (F#), the key signature tells you that you're playing in the key of G.



Two Major Scale Patterns

This 2-octave major scale pattern starts on the 6th string. You can play this pattern anywhere on the fretboard. Here, the pattern starts on the 3rd fret. The note on the 6th string, 3rd fret is G. Therefore, playing the pattern here forms a G major scale. Playing this pattern on the 5th fret forms an A major scale since that is where the note, A is. Obviously, it's very important to know where to play this pattern when soloing. Of course, first you have to know what key the song is in!



The numbers indicate fingering, *not* frets.

Pattern #2 begins on the 5th string. Here, the pattern begins on the 3rd fret, which is where the note, C is. Therefore, playing the pattern here forms a C major scale. Notice that the hand must shift in order to play the second octave.

