

Basics of the Major Scale

Scales are a foundational element of music. With scales we are able to build chords, chord progressions, harmonize, and create melodies that fit the specific chord or progression.

If we look at the C major scale we find there are 7 notes with an assigned number also known as intervals. Underneath that is the Whole step and half step pattern for the major scale. For us guitarists a whole step is 2 frets and a half step is 1 fret.

Notes-	C	D	E	F	G	A	B
Intervals-	I	ii	iii	IV	V	vi	vii°
Steps-	W	W	H	W	W	W	

Harmonizing the major scale

Now let's look at how the scale becomes basic chords

Cmaj	Dm	Em	Fmaj	Gmaj	Am	Bdim
I	ii	iii	IV	V	vi	vii°

The interval numbers themselves illustrate which chords are major and minor. If it's upper case it's a major chord, lower case and it's a minor chord. The only exception is the 7th note in the scale which is diminished. It's quite an ugly, but highly tense sounding chord.

So if you ever hear someone say let's play a I IV V in C (a common chord progression) you now know all that means is to play the chords:

C F G
I IV V

The same information shown above applies to other Keys. Knowing the whole step/half step pattern try to figure out what the notes are in the G major scale. Then try to figure out the chords. Good luck!

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