



## Modes of the Major Scale

The major scale has 7 individual modes. This means that we can play the major scale from 7 different starting points. Each mode has a distinctive character and can be used to improvise over different chord types. The 7 modes of the major scale are written below in the the key of C major.

**Ionian** - C D **E** F **G** A **B** C  
**Dorian** - D E **F** G **A** B **C** D  
**Phrygian** - E F **G** A **B** C **D** E  
**Lydian** - F G **A** B **C** D **E** F  
**Mixolydian** - G A **B** C **D** E **F** G  
**Aeolian** - A B **C** D **E** F **G** A  
**Locrian** - B C **D** E **F** G **A** B

By taking the root, 3rd, 5th and 7th of each mode (shown above in bold), we get a series of 7th chords that occur in a major key. The order of chord types is consistent in an all major keys. For example, the fifth chord in any major key will be a dominant 7th chord. These chord types are given numbers which are usually notated as roman numerals.

**I** = Major 7  
**II** = Minor 7  
**III** = Minor 7  
**IV** = Major 7  
**V** = Dominant 7  
**VI** = Minor 7  
**VII** = Minor 7b5