



## The Half/Whole Diminished Scale - Part 1

The Half/Whole Diminished Scale is an 8 note symmetrical scale. This means that the intervallic make up of the scale is a consistent pattern. In this case, the pattern is semitone - tone - semitone - tone - etc.

The scale in the key of C consists of the following notes -

**C Db Eb E F# G A Bb**

In jazz music, this scale is most commonly used to improvise over a dominant 7th chord. Here we can see how each note in the C half/whole diminished scale relates to a C dominant 7th chord.

**C = Root**

Db = b9

Eb = #9

**E = 3rd**

F# = #11

**G = 5th**

A = 13th

**Bb = 7th**

The half/whole diminished scale works so effectively on a dominant 7th chord because as well as containing all of the chord tones (marked in bold) the scale also contains several extensions which increase tension (marked in red) and one consonant extension (marked in purple).

Dominant 7ths chords often (but not always) resolve to a major chord in the same key. By increasing the tension on the dominant chord, we can make the resolution to the major chord all the more satisfying. Although in some contemporary jazz, the tension is not always resolved!