

# The Notes of the SCALE

The most basic parts of music/songs are the notes of the scale (the ‘do-re-me-fa-so-la-te-da’ from elementary school). There are quite a few different types of SCALES, but beginners need only to focus on two scales until they become second nature, or automatic. We’ll talk about MAJOR and MINOR scales, notes, and chords, the “meat and potatoes” of music. You can worry about exotic scales and fancy jazz chords down the road, if you like.

The notes of the C major SCALE are as follows: C, d, e, F, G, a, B, C, ... repeat... That’s 7 *different* notes. There are no FLATS or SHARPS in the C major scale. On the Piano, it would be all the white keys, no black keys – the black keys are the sharps/flats.

The A MINOR scale is the same as the C Major scale, only it starts at A – A, b, c, D, E, f, G, A... No sharps, no flats. Starting at the A, *but using the notes for C*, gives it a dark, or “Rock n Roll” sound. This is referred to as Relative Minor – the Relative Minor to the C Major scale/key is Am (A Minor).

Notes can be combined to form chords. Chords are simply 2 or more notes played together. A triad consists of 3 notes – usually the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> notes. A Power Chord uses just 2 notes – the 1<sup>st</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup> notes. Sometimes, the 7<sup>th</sup> is used for a dominant sound all its own. Basically, you can add extra 1, 3, and 5 notes to a cord, but when you add the 4<sup>th</sup> note, you’ll actually change the chord to an augmented 4<sup>th</sup> which is actually just an inverted IV chord. Sound confusing? Don’t worry...

The most important notes/chords of a scale (not including Classical music, Heavy Metal, and Jazz) are the I, IV, and V. That is, the 1<sup>st</sup> note of the SCALE, also known as the ROOT note (TONE center, or KEY of the song), the 4<sup>th</sup> note/chord, and the perfect 5<sup>th</sup> (note/chord) of a SCALE. The minor 2<sup>nd</sup> (ii) is used quite often in Jazz. The minor 3<sup>rd</sup> (iii) makes a dark sounding tone and is used for changing the sound of a song from happy to sad, for example. The minor 6<sup>th</sup> (vi) is also known as the RELATIVE MINOR of that particular MAJOR SCALE/KEY. Next to the I-IV-V chords/notes, the 6<sup>th</sup>/vi is the next most popular chord/note. It’s used in all but the happiest of songs. Lastly, the 7<sup>th</sup> note/chord of a SCALE has a Dominant sound all its own. It’s not a major or minor sound, as it leads right back into the TONE note of the scale. For beginners we’ll use the 7<sup>th</sup> note in our rhythm licks, and the 7<sup>th</sup> chords as substitutes to make easy chords changes on the guitar. On the Piano, the 7<sup>th</sup> chords will be the next step after MASTERING triads (3 note chords).