

- Scale tones
- Gold: notes explained below

All examples in C / One octave per keyboard

MAJOR FAMILY

01

Major / Ionian

1 2 3 4 5 6 7



Major 3rd + major 7th: the reference shape.

Steps 2 2 1 2 2 2 1

MAJOR FAMILY

02

Lydian

1 2 3 #4 5 6 7



Major, with a raised 4th: F becomes F#.

Steps 2 2 2 1 2 2 1

MAJOR FAMILY

03

Mixolydian

1 2 3 4 5 6 b7



Major, with a lowered 7th: B becomes Bb.

Steps 2 2 1 2 2 1 2

MINOR FAMILY

04

Natural minor / Aeolian

1 2 b3 4 5 b6 b7



Natural minor has b6; Dorian has 6.

Steps 2 1 2 2 1 2 2

MINOR FAMILY

05

Dorian

1 2 b3 4 5 6 b7



Natural minor, with a raised 6th: Ab to A.

Steps 2 1 2 2 2 1 2

MINOR FAMILY

06

Phrygian

1 b2 b3 4 5 b6 b7



Natural minor, with a lowered 2nd: D to Db.

Steps 1 2 2 2 1 2 2

DIMINISHED TONIC

07

Locrian

1 b2 b3 4 b5 b6 b7



Natural minor, with b2 and b5: Db and Gb.

Steps 1 2 2 1 2 2 2

MINOR VARIANT

08

Harmonic minor

1 2 b3 4 5 b6 7



Natural minor, with a raised 7th: Bb to B.

Steps 2 1 2 2 1 3 1

FIXED / ASCENDING FORM

09

Melodic minor

1 2 b3 4 5 6 7



Natural minor, with raised 6th and 7th.

Steps 2 1 2 2 2 2 1

READING THE MAP

1 = root. Degrees refer to major: b lowers a note; # raises it by one semitone.

Steps count semitones, including the return to C. 1 = half step; 2 = whole step; 3 = three semitones.

Melodic minor: fixed jazz / classical ascending form shown; classical descent usually uses natural minor.

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FIVE NOTES

10

Major pentatonic

1 2 3 5 6



Major without the 4th and 7th.

Steps 2 2 3 2 3

FIVE NOTES

11

Minor pentatonic

1 $\flat 3$ 4 5 $\flat 7$ 

Natural minor without the 2nd and 6th.

Steps 3 2 2 3 2

SIX NOTES

12

Minor blues

1 $\flat 3$ 4 $\flat 5$ 5 $\flat 7$ Minor pentatonic plus $\flat 5$: G♭.

Steps 3 2 1 1 3 2

SYMMETRIC / SIX NOTES

13

Whole tone

1 2 3 $\sharp 4$ $\sharp 5$ $\flat 7$ 

Only whole steps; no perfect 5th.

Steps 2 2 2 2 2 2

SYMMETRIC / EIGHT NOTES

14

Octatonic: whole-half

1 2 $\flat 3$ 4 $\flat 5$ $\flat 6$ 6 7

Alternate whole and half steps, starting W.

Steps 2 1 2 1 2 1 2 1

SYMMETRIC / EIGHT NOTES

15

Octatonic: half-whole

1 $\flat 2$ $\flat 3$ 3 $\sharp 4$ 5 6 $\flat 7$ 

Alternate half and whole steps, starting H.

Steps 1 2 1 2 1 2 1 2

SEVEN NOTES

16

Hungarian minor

1 2 $\flat 3$ $\sharp 4$ 5 $\flat 6$ 7

Harmonic minor, with a raised 4th: F♯.

Steps 2 1 3 1 1 3 1

FIVE NOTES / COMMON WESTERN FORM

17

Hirajoshi

1 2 $\flat 3$ 5 $\flat 6$ 

Natural minor without the 4th and 7th.

Steps 2 1 4 1 4

FIVE NOTES / COMMON WESTERN FORM

18

Insen

1 $\flat 2$ 4 5 $\flat 7$  $\flat 2$ sits a half step above the root.

Steps 1 4 2 3 2

USE ANY ROOT

Keep the step pattern and start on another note. The intervals stay the same.

D major pentatonic = D E F♯ A B. Steps: 2 - 2 - 3 - 2 - 3. W = whole step; H = half step.

Common Western forms of Japanese scales are shown. Octatonic notes use readable enharmonic spellings.

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