SCALES, SCALES, SCALES

If music was genetic material, scales would be its DNA. Scales are so very important They will give you a deeper understanding of melody and harmony, they will help your ear training, they will further your understanding of music theory, and they will allow you to improvise and create melodies of your own.

There are a lot of scales to learn and you may find it tough to keep track of where you are and where you need to go. Lucky for you, there is a solution. Just after these scales is a scale checklist you can post in your practice room or leave in your case. As you master certain scales and patterns, mark them off on the sheet. Once you've marked them all off, start over and get them faster. Scale practice is forever. The more you practice scales and all their patterns, the more fluid your playing will become.

General Info About These Scales

On the next few pages you'll find the Major, natural minor, harmonic minor, ascending melodic minor, Major and minor pentatonic, and blues scales. Sound like a lot of scales? There are many more, but these are the basics and will give you a good start. Start memorizing them now!

The layout for these scales was handled by our Department of Redundancy Department. You'll notice the scales have both the key signature and the accidentals written in front of the note. This is to aid you in your practice of scales. Normally you'd see just the key signature.

Remember that there are 15 major scales, but three of them overlap, so you'll really only be practicing the fingering for 12 scales. Confusing? You bet. If you remember enharmonic notes, you'll understand why this is. The Major Scales that overlap are D*b*/C#, G*b*/F#, and C*b*/B. The minor scales that overlap are b*b*/a#, e*b*/d#, and a*b*/g#. The fingerings and the sound of these enharmonic scales is the same, but they're written differently.

The scales are shown ascending only, but be sure to practice them going up, going down, and for as many octaves as you can comfortably play. Vary the speed, be sure to start slowly, and memorize them as soon as possible. Don't neglect the modes. Start on the second degree and go an octave. The third degree, fourth, etc., etc. Apply the patterns I'll give you below to the modes as well.

A Word on Memorization

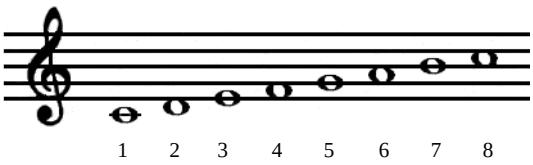
Your goal with all of these scales is to memorize them. Memorize the scale, memorize the pattern, memorize the sound, memorize how it feels. When you memorize something it becomes part of you, it becomes internalized. All this memorization is like filling up a glass with clear water. As the glass becomes full, it will overflow. Stuff enough music into your brain and into your soul and soon it will overflow and you'll be making your own music, writing your own songs.

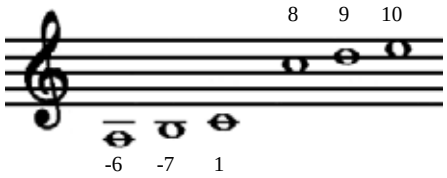
There is a Zen saying that goes, "The finger pointing at the moon is not the moon." It's the same with written music. Written music is only a guide. You are after the sound, not the note on the page. The sooner you memorize these scales and all the patterns, the more music you'll be able to create.

Once you have a scale's finger pattern memorized, you can practice the scale anywhere! As you practice the fingering away from the instrument, try to *hear* the notes and the intervals as you finger the scale. Try to visualize the scale too, if you can. This type of focused awareness is often more valuable than actual practice with the horn. Don't just sit there, finger you scales!

Scale Pattern Suggestions

Here are some ways to get these scales under your fingers. The numbers you see represent the degrees of the scale with 1 representing the tonic, or bottom note of the scale. Often at the beginning or end of the scale pattern, you'll go outside the octave. When you go below the tonic or root note, this is shown by a minus (-) sign. For example, one note below the tonic (the seventh degree of the scale) would be -7. In the key of C this would be the "B" just beneath the tonic. Going above the octave, just add another number. For example one note above the 8th note of the scale would be 9, then 10, etc. Here's what I mean.



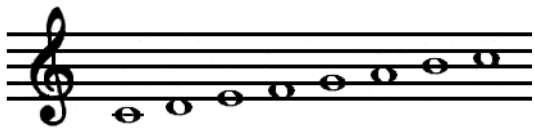


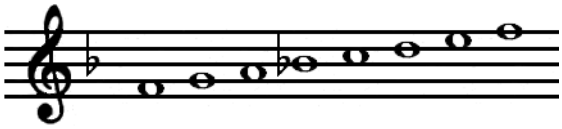
These patterns may seem difficult to understand at first. To make these more clear, write out the number under each scale degree, then write out the scale pattern itself. Once you play these a few times, you'll hear the pattern and they will make more sense. Soon you'll be able to apply a pattern to a memorized scale without looking at the music. This is your goal.

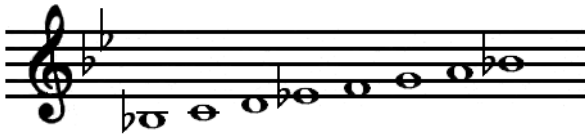
Scale Patterns

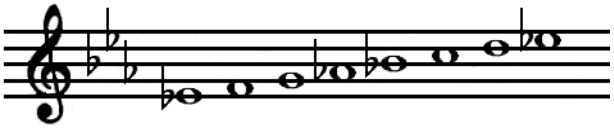
Pattern Name	Pattern
the scale	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,7,6,5,4,3,2,1
thirds	1,3,2,4,3,5,4,6,5,7,6,8,7,9,8,6,7,5,6,4,5,3,4,2,3,1,2,-7,1
fourths	1,4,2,5,3,6,4,7,5,8,6,9,7,10,8,5,7,4,6,3,5,2,4,1,3,-7,2,-6, 1
fifths	1,5,2,6,3,7,4,8,5,9,6,10,7,11,8,4,7,3,6,2,5,1,4,-7,3,-6,2,-5,1
rolling thirds	1,2,3,1,2,3,4,2,3,4,5,3,4,5,6,4,5,6,7,5,6,7,8,6,7,8,9,7,8 8,7,6,8,7,6,5,7,6,5,4,6,5,4,3,5,4,3,2,4,3,2,1,3,2,1,-7,2,1
rolling triplets (use 8th note triplet rhythm)	1,2,3,2,3,4,3,4,5,4,5,6,5,6,7,6,7,8,7,8,9,8 8,7,6,7,6,5,6,5,4,5,4,3,4,3,2,3,2,1,2,1,-7,1
rolling fifths	1,5,4,3,2,6,5,4,3,7,6,5,4,8,7,6,5,9,8,7,6,10,9,8,7,11,10,9,8 8,4,5,6,7,3,4,5,6,2,3,4,5,1,2,3,4,-7,1,2,3,-6,-7,1,2,-5,-6,-7,1
rolling fourths (use 8th note triplet rhythm)	1,4,3,2,5,4,3,6,5,4,7,6,5,8,7,6,9,8,7,10,9,8 8,5,6,7,4,5,6,3,4,5,2,3,4,1,2,3,-7,1,2,-6,-7,1

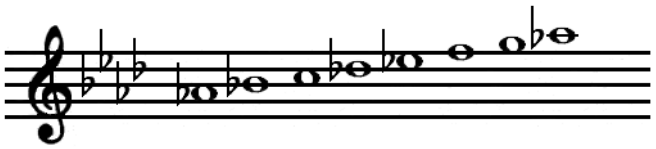
Major Scales (flats)

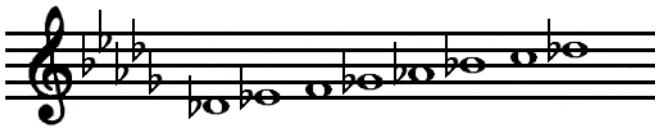


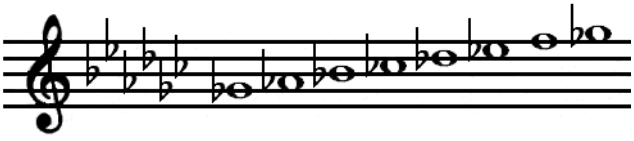


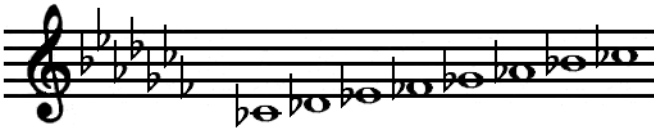












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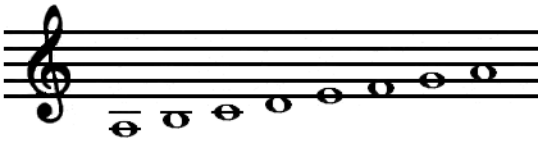

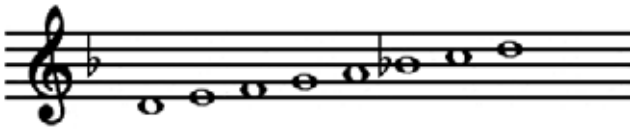

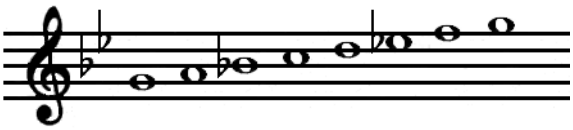

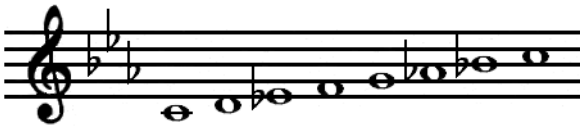

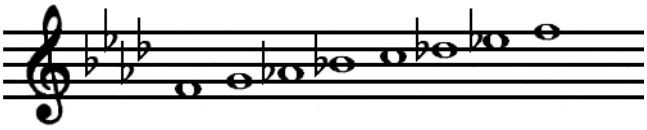

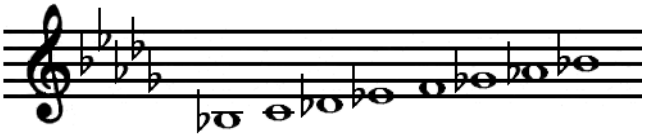

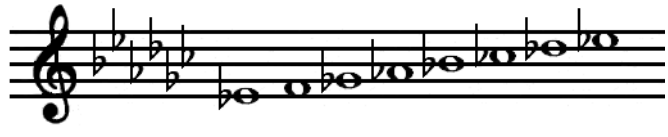

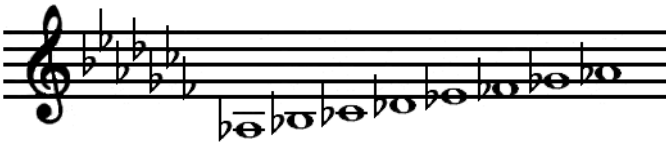

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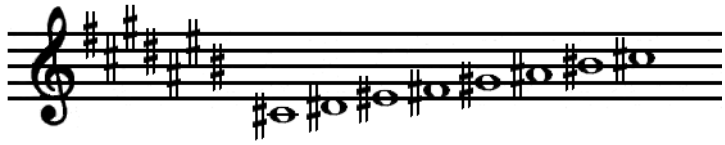

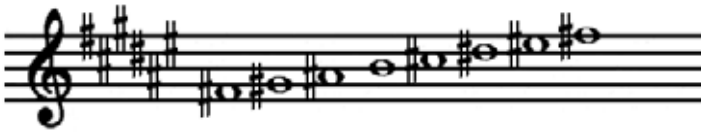

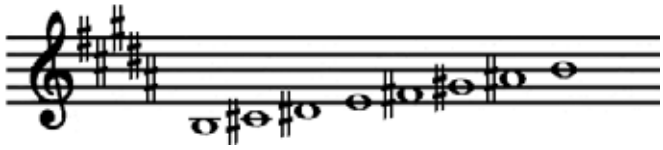

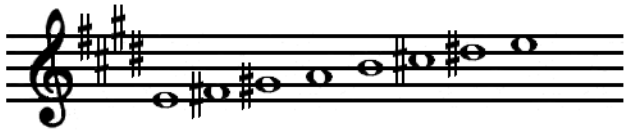

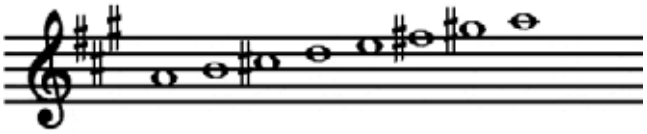

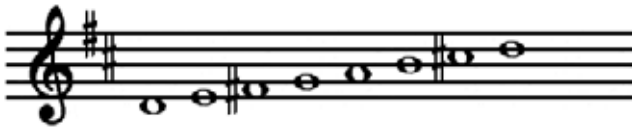

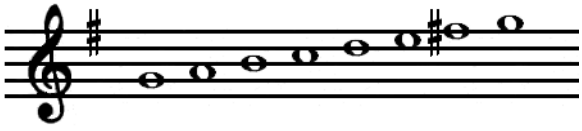

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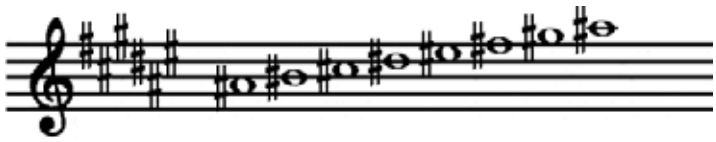
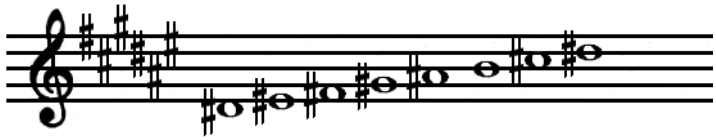
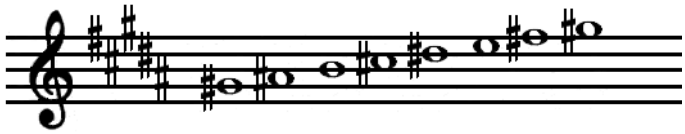
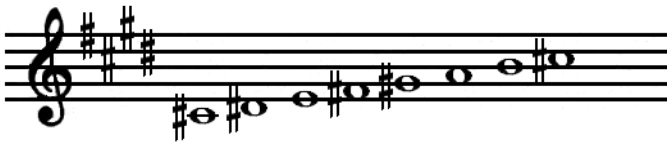
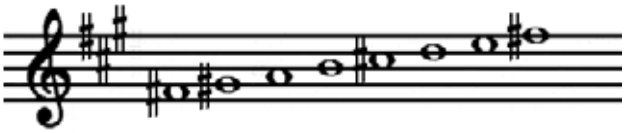
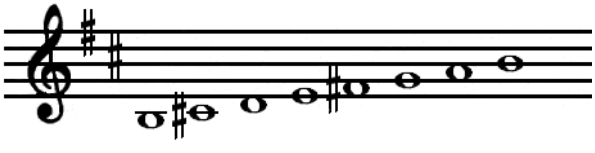


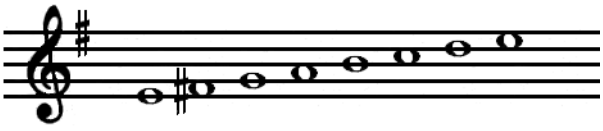




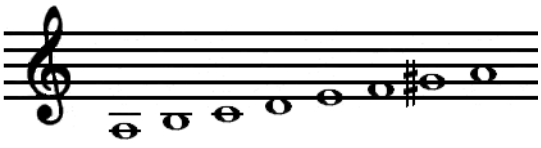


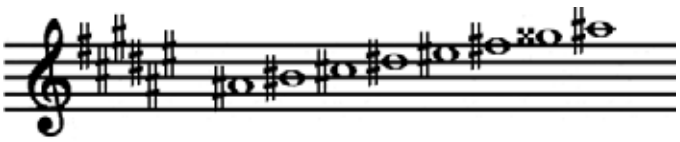


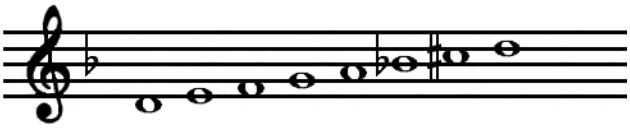


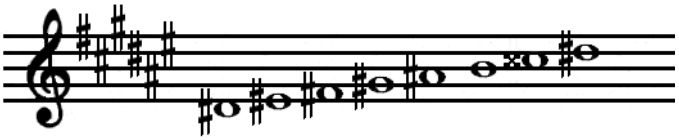


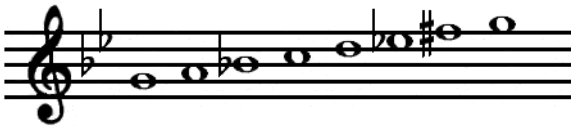
Harmonic minor Scales

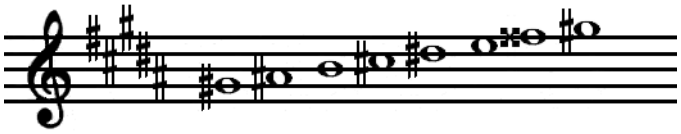


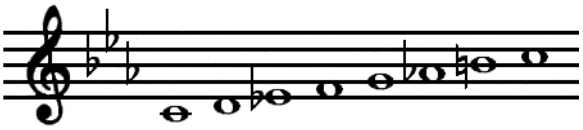


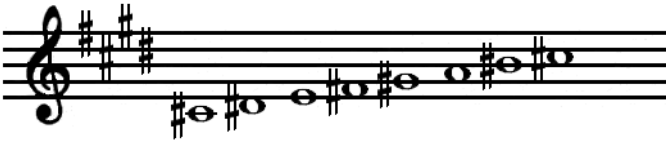


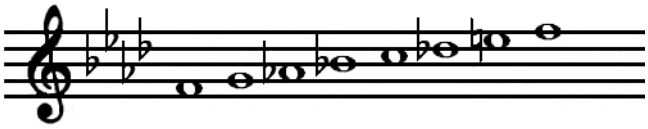


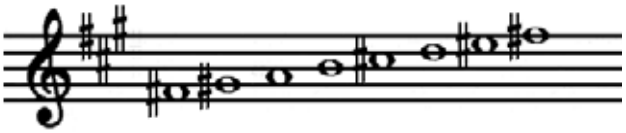


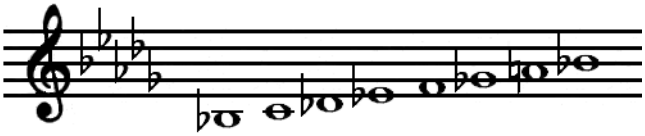


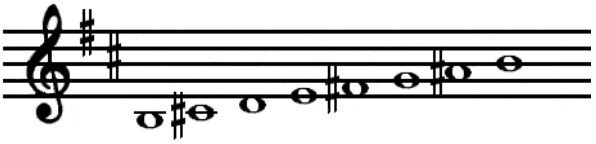


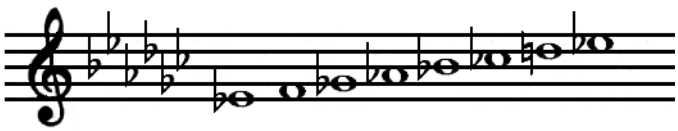


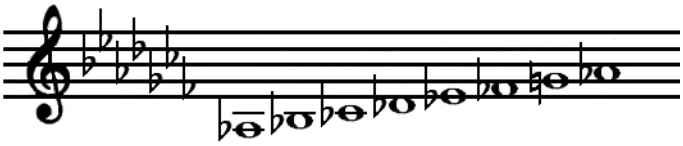




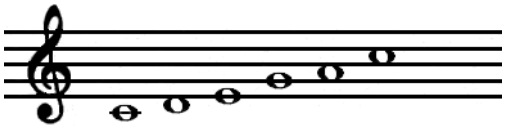


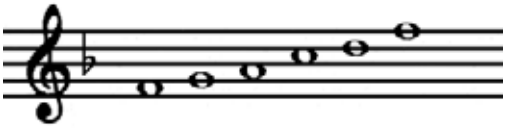


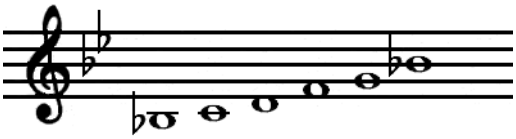


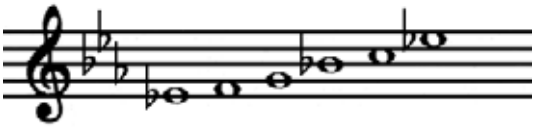


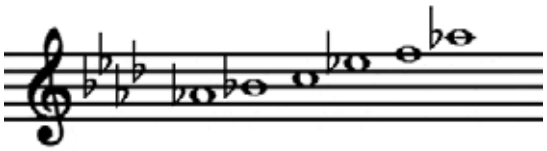
Major Pentatonic Scales (flats)

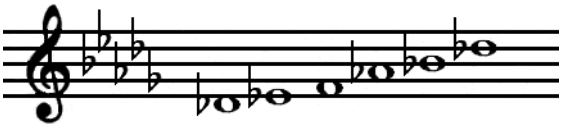


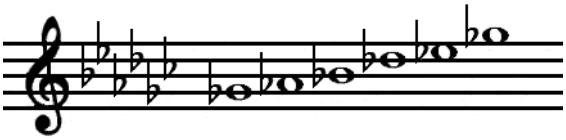


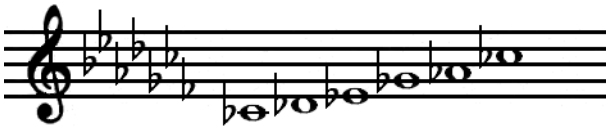




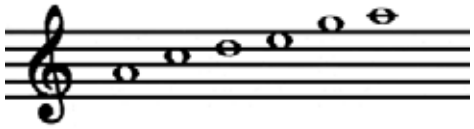


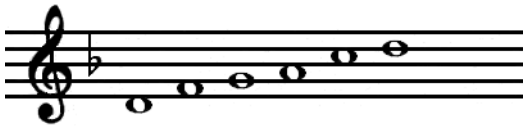


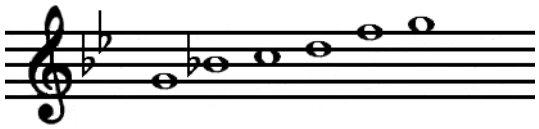


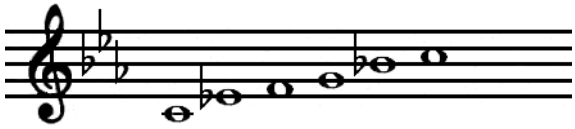


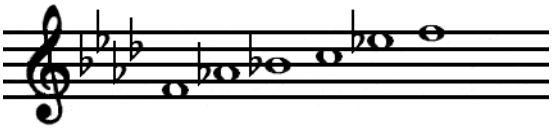
Minor Pentatonic Scales (flats)

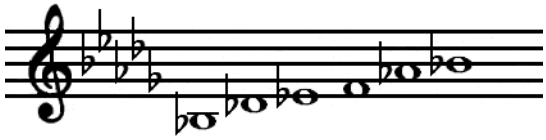


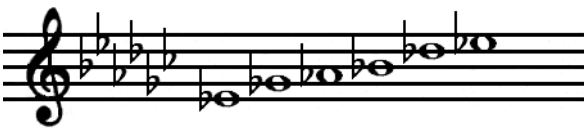


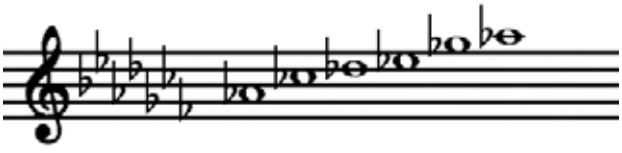




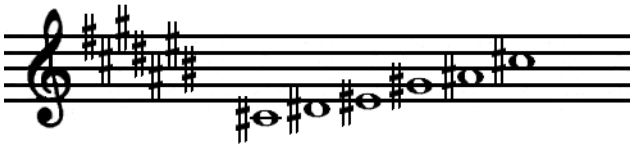


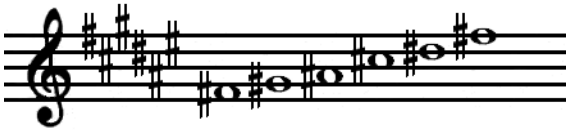


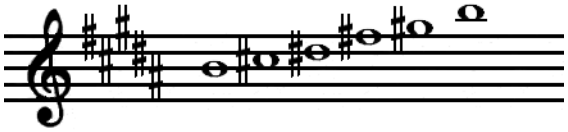


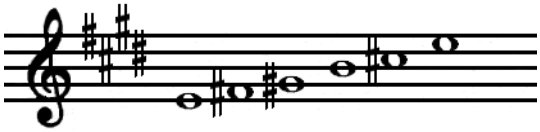


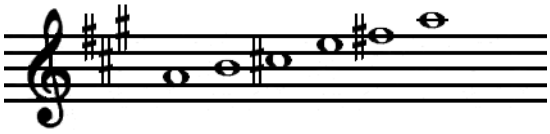
Major Pentatonic Scales (sharps)

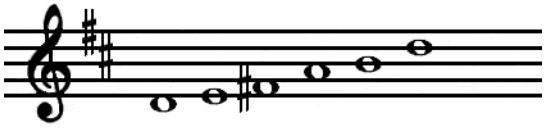


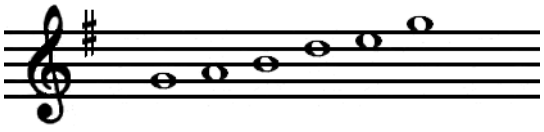




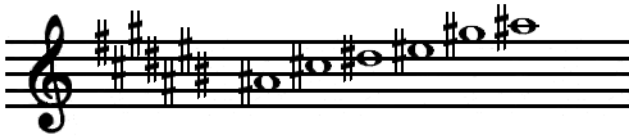


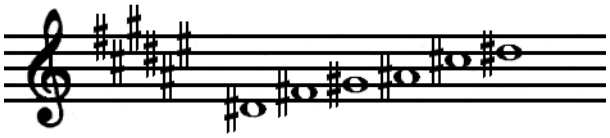


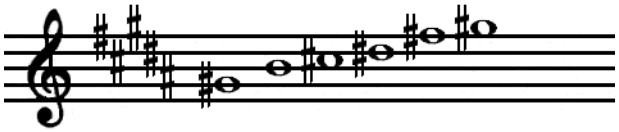


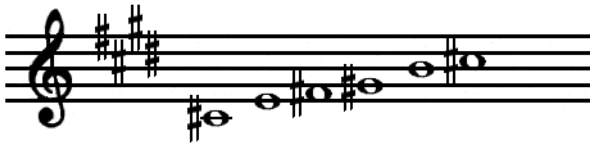


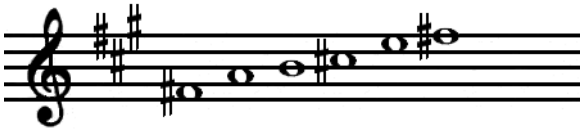
Minor Pentatonic Scales (sharps)

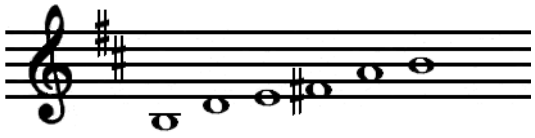


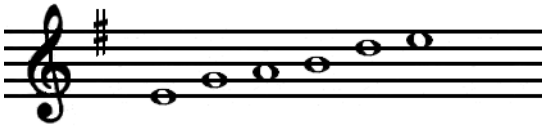




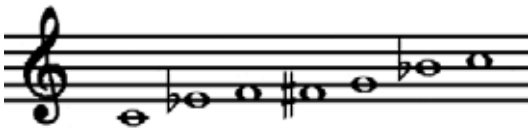


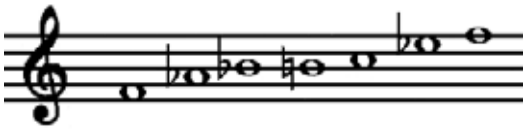


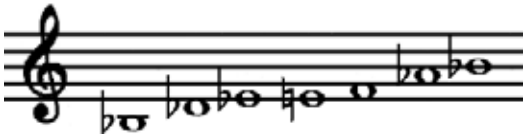


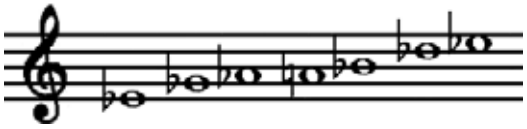


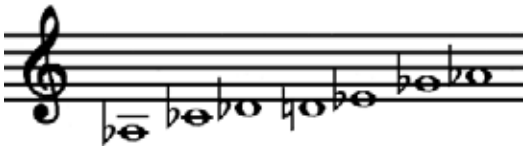
Blues Scales (flats)

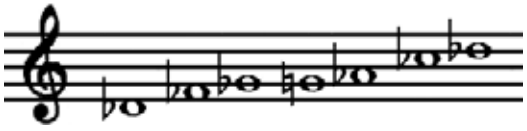


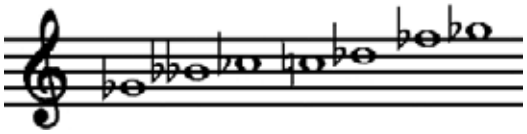


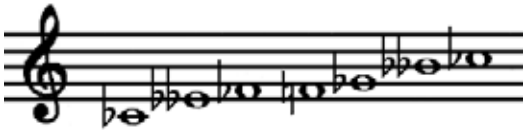




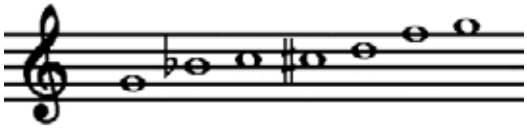


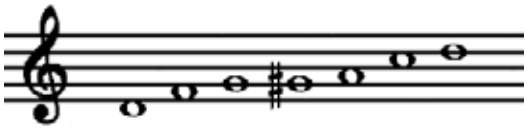


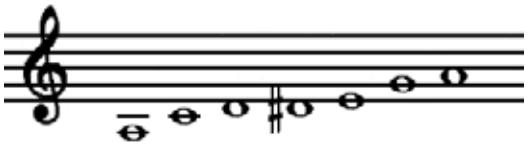


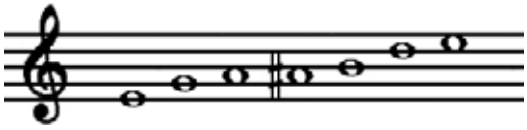


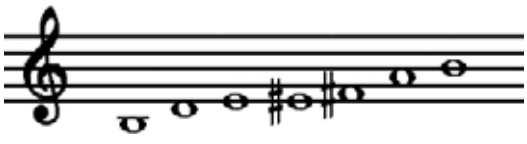
Blues Scales (sharps)

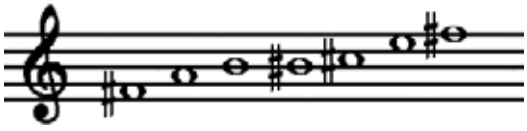


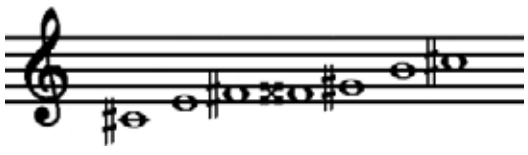




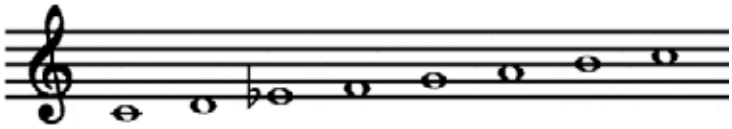


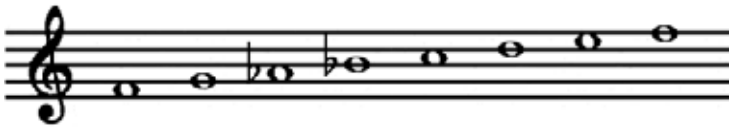


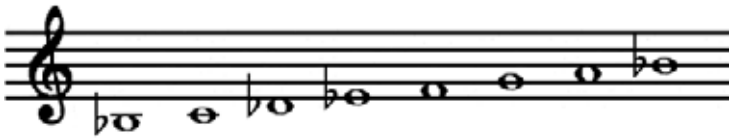


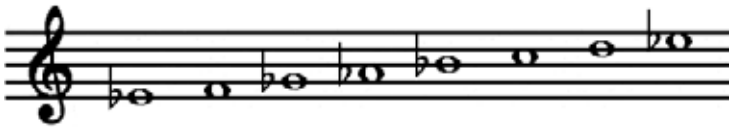


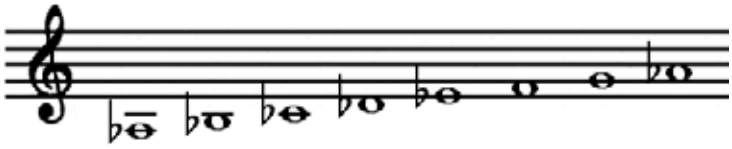
Ascending Melodic Minor Scales (flats)

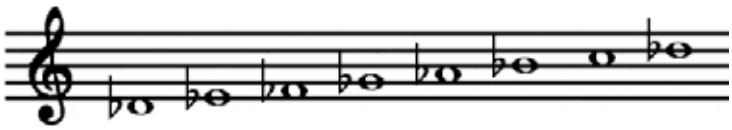


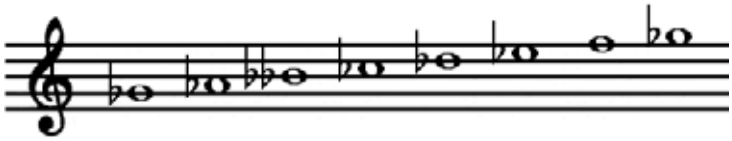


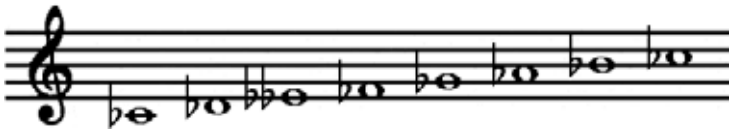












Ascending Melodic Minor Scales (sharps)