

Major Scales

- Every pianist must (okay should) know their scales. These will ultimately help you in all your piano playing.
- Practice your scales every day.

Your Major Scales are built upon a pattern. That pattern is...

Whole Step-Whole Step-Half Step-Whole Step-Whole Step-Whole Step-Half Step

or W-W-H-W-W-W-H

Where **W**=Whole Step and **H**=Half Step

The figure^{fig.17} below shows what determines a Half Step from a Whole Step.

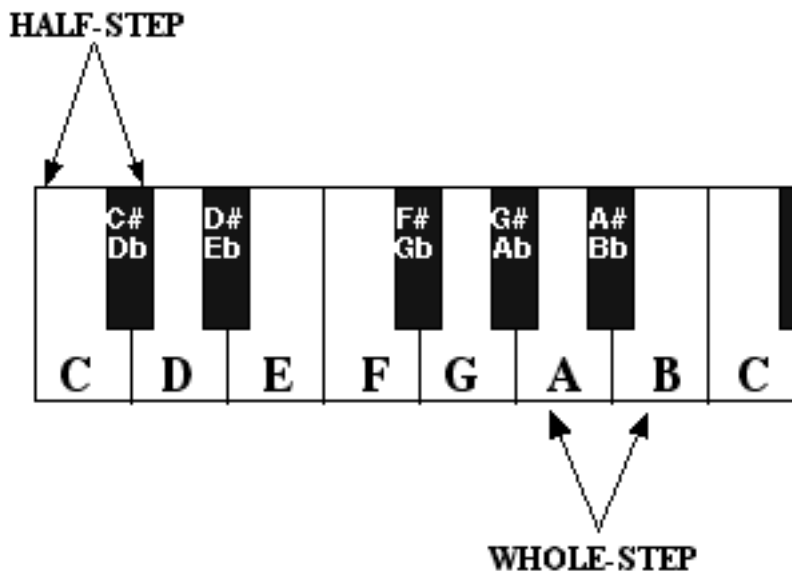


fig.17

A **Half Step** is from one key to the next and a **Whole Step** is...well two **Half Steps**

Major Scales: When you play the pattern **W-W-H-W-W-W-H** starting on any note it will sound harmonious to your ears. For example the **C Major** scale is **C-D-E-F-G-A-**

B- and back to **C**. If you go to your piano and play that you will notice how each note sounds in place. Keep this in mind when playing your scales. It will help to train your ears to hear patterns.

There is also specific fingering for scales also. Some feel it is important and some feel not so important. I think it is nice to know it and then adjust for your own hand size or ability. In the coming pages I have pictured the **Major Scale** fingering for the right hand. These are optional and I feel you should do what is comfortable.

Using the **Circle of Fifths**^{fig.18} to play through your scales makes it easy to get through them without missing one. What I mean is use the Circle of Fifths to guide you as to which scale to play next.

If you are unfamiliar with the **Circle of Fifths** it is the circular arrangement of the 12 keys of the piano in intervals of fifths. For example the fifth note of the **C** scale is **G** and of the **G** scale is **A** etc. The **Circle of Fourths** is the circular counterclockwise arrangement of the twelve keys in fourths . For example the fourth note of the **C** scale is **F** etc. You can also play through your scales with this pattern.

Notice also that the chords **Cb** and **B** and **Gb** and **F#** and **Db** and **C#** are across from each other on the Circle of Fifths. This is because they are **Enharmonic** or they have the same sound/tone but are written differently. You will also see this in the upcoming scales and chords.

Circle of Fifths and Fourths

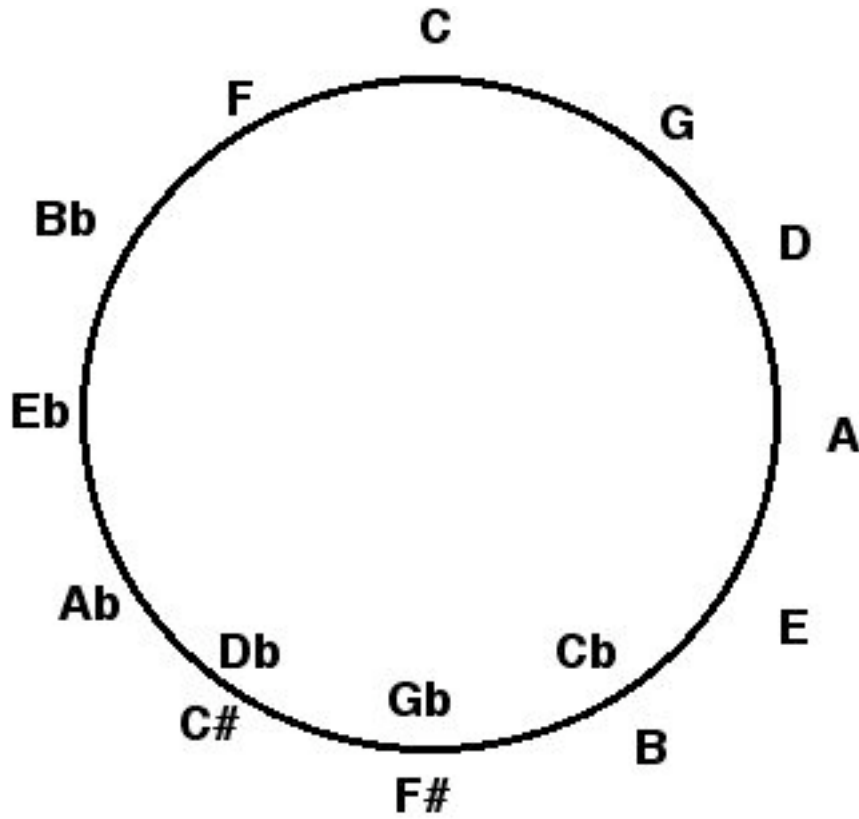


fig.18

The Circle of Fifths lays out in an easy pattern the increase of Sharps and Flats. As you move clockwise around the Circle the number of sharps increases by 1 ending at 7 sharps at C#. Then as you move counterclockwise around the Circle the number of flats increases by 1 ending with 7 flats at Cb.

Scales and Their Fingerings

Following is a list of Right and Left Hand Fingerings for all the Major Scales. For the Right Hand use the fingering listed as you ascend up the keyboard For the Left Hand use the fingering listed as you descend down the keyboard. Remember the fingers on your hands are numbered 1-5^{fig.19} starting with the thumb.

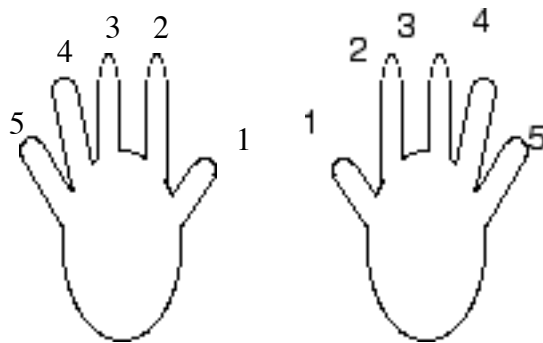


fig.19

(Although your finger numbering is 1-5 your scale numbering will be in numerical order 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8. So as you move to the right along the piano in your scales the notes are numbered 1 through 8)

PRACTICE: All the information needed to learn your scales makes it sound more difficult than it is but once you have the method down they can be played very quickly. Start with the key of C and don't move on until you master it doing the same with each key. Pay close attention to the numbering. Start with your right hand and play the highlighted keys while saying the numbering evenly in both directions. Then move to your left hand doing the same. The thumb should go under the index finger. Once you can play both directions smoothly work at playing both hands at the same time in both directions and opposing. This all really pays off in your piano playing.

C MAJOR SCALE



fig.20

C D E F G A B C

Right Hand Fingering - 1,2,3,1,2,3,4,5

Left Hand Fingering - 1,2,3,1,2,3,4,5

G MAJOR SCALE



fig.21

G A B C D E F# C

Right Hand Fingering - 1,2,3,1,2,3,4,5

Left Hand Fingering - 1,2,3,1,2,3,4,5

D MAJOR SCALE

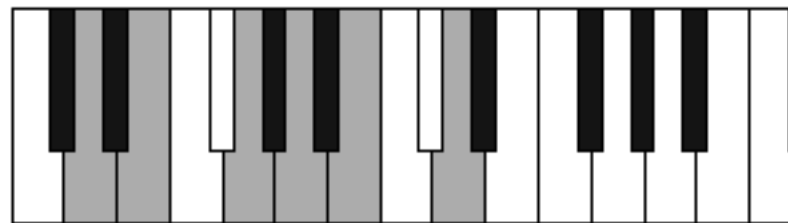


fig.22

D E F# G A B C# D

Right Hand Fingering - 1,2,3,1,2,3,4,5

Left Hand Fingering - 1,2,3,1,2,3,4,5

A MAJOR SCALE

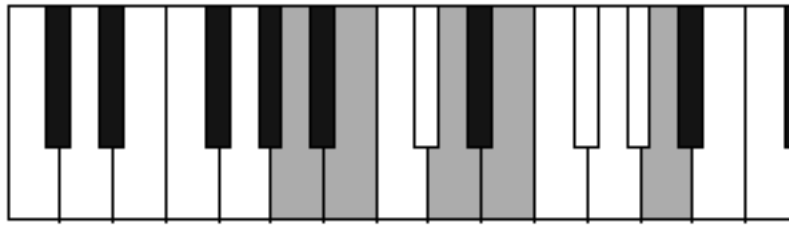


fig.23

A B C# D E F# G# A

Right Hand Fingering - 1,2,3,1,2,3,4,5

Left Hand Fingering - 1,2,3,1,2,3,4,5

E MAJOR SCALE

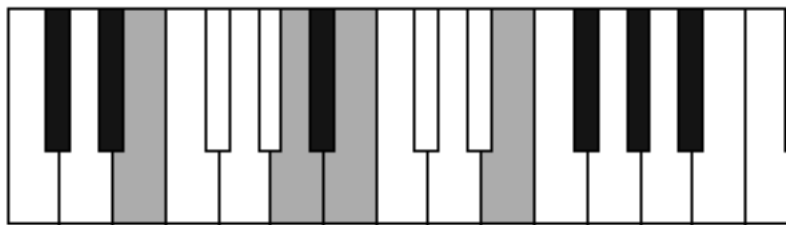


fig.24

E F# G# A B C# D# E

Right Hand Fingering - 1,2,3,1,2,3,4,5

Left Hand Fingering - 1,2,3,1,2,3,4,5

B/Cb*¹ MAJOR SCALE

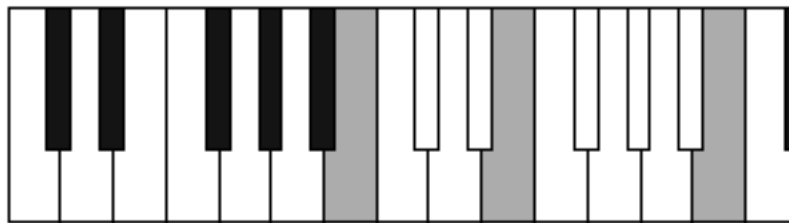


fig.25

B C# D# E F# G# A# B

Right Hand Fingering-1,2,3,1,2,3,4,5

Left Hand Fingering - 1,2,3,4,1,2,3,4

¹*Enharmonic

F#/Gb² MAJOR SCALE

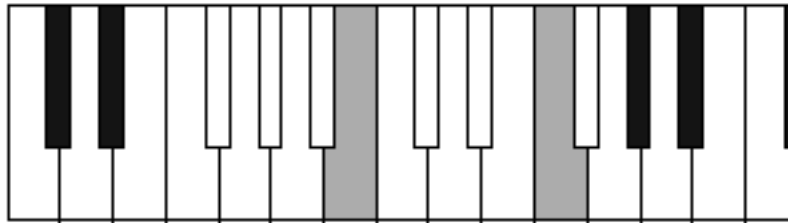


fig.26

F# G# A# B C# D# F F#

Right Hand Fingering - 2,3,4,1,2,3,1,2

Left Hand Fingering - 4,3,2,1,3,2,1,2

C#/Db^{*3} MAJOR SCALE

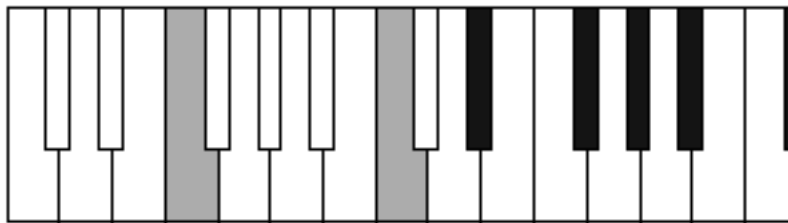


fig.27

C# D# F F# G# A# C C#

Right Hand Fingering - 2,3,1,2,3,4,1,2

Left Hand Fingering - 3,2,1,4,3,2,1,2

Ab MAJOR SCALE

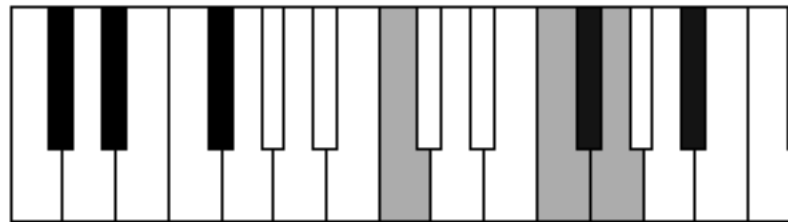


fig.28

Ab Bb C Dd Eb F G Ab

Right Hand Fingering - 2,3,1,2,3,1,2,3

Left Hand Fingering - 3,2,1,4,3,2,1,2

^{2,3} *Enharmonic

E_b MAJOR SCALE

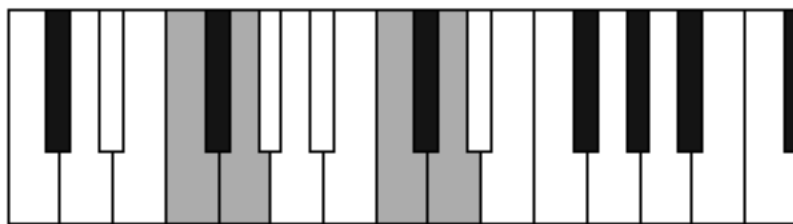


fig.29

E_b F G A_b B_b C D E_b

Right Hand Fingering - 2,1,2,3,4,1,2,3

Left Hand Fingering - 3,2,1,4,3,2,1,2

B_b MAJOR SCALE

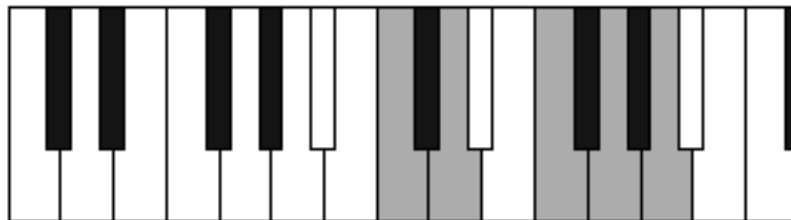


fig.30

B_b C D E_b F G A B_b

Right Hand Fingering - 2,1,2,3,1,2,3,4

Left Hand Fingering - 3,2,1,4,3,2,1,2

F MAJOR SCALE

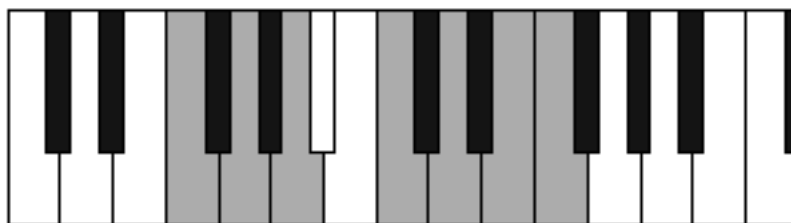


fig.31

F G A B_b C D E F

Right Hand Fingering - 1,2,3,4,1,2,3,4

Left Hand Fingering - 1,2,3,1,2,3,4,5

So as you do your scales attempt to make a smooth transition from the third or index finger back to the thumb.