

What is a Major Scale - Piano Edition

- **Transcripts:**

Musical introduction with piano audio and logos. Voiceover beings over slide show. In today's video, we're going to discuss what a major scale is and how to play it on the piano. Before we define a *major* scale, let's first discuss what a scale is. *New slide appears with the quote:* "A scale is a series of notes ordered by pitch". Remember, "pitch" is how high or low a note is. *A call out appears with the definition of pitch.* Normally, scales are notated from lowest to the highest pitch and descend from high to low. *Visual example of a scale, with an arrow moving.*

There are actually multiple types of scales out there, such as pentatonic, chromatic, minor, and even whole-tone scales. *(scales appear with the voiceover).* But today, we're just going to focus on the major scale, *red circle appears over "major",* otherwise called a diatonic scale (shoutout to the Greeks for coming up with the name!) *A picture of Ptolemy appears with the callout, "Greek mathematician Ptolemy was the first to coin the term "diatonic scale"!"*

Every scale is made up of a series of whole steps or half steps. But what is a whole step or half step? On the piano, they're easy to see. For example, a half step is when you go from a white key to a black key. On the piano it looks like this. *Video cuts to a person demonstrating a half step on the piano.* A half step is the smallest interval between two notes. A half step interval is also called a minor second.

Video goes back to voice over with slide show. A whole step goes from white to white key or a black to a black key. On the piano, it looks like this. *Video cuts to a person demonstrating a whole step on the piano.* A whole step is also called a major second interval. As you move forward in music theory, just know that these terms have multiple names. In today's video, I'll be referring to them as half and whole steps. *Video fades out to a voiceover with slideshow with the description of the "major scale".*

A major scale is the most common musical scale. It's normally considered the "happy" sounding scale and is used frequently in pop music or in movies to lighten up the mood.

Let's dig into what a major scale is. A major scale is, "seven different notes in the pattern 2-2-1-2-2-2-1, where 1 is a half step, and 2 is a whole step." Below is a C major scale. *Video cuts to an image showing a C major scale on a piano and on a music staff.* On the piano it looks likes this. *Video cuts to an example of a person playing a C major scale on the piano.*

Video goes back to voiceover with slideshow. Now that we understand what a major scale is, let's learn how to play it on the piano. The great thing about scales on the piano is that about 90% of them use the same fingering. So once you understand the structure of C major, you can figure out the other 11 major scales.

Let's start by assigning numbers to our fingers. *Video cuts to a video of a hand, numbers appear over the fingers as the voiceover label each finger.* Look at your hand, and label each finger, starting with the thumb: going 1, 2, 3, 4, then 5.

This is the number pattern we'll use for C major. *Video cuts to image with the finger pattern displayed.* The numbers being the numbers we just assigned to our fingers. This is the pattern: 1 - 2 - 3 - 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5.

Video cuts to a person playing middle C on the piano. Starting at the tonic, which is C, find your middle C on the piano. Here's what it sounds like. *Person plays the C major scale.* Make sure to cross under with your thumb. When you hit the top C, follow the same finger pattern but backward. Practice until it's smooth.

Let's work on the left hand now. *Video cuts to a video of a hand, numbers appear over the fingers as the voiceover label each finger.* Beginning with your left hand, label numbers again to each finger. Starting with your thumb as one, two, three, four, and five.

Then, starting on middle C, again, we're going to use our pinky this time and go from our fifth finger and all the way up to our thumb, cross over with your third finger and go up to that next C. Here's what it sounds like. *Video cuts to a video of a person playing the C major scale.* Then we're going to descend, ever so slowly following the same pattern but backwards. *Pop up appears with the backwards fingering for C major.* Feel free to pause and rewind as you need to reference it. Keep on practicing until it's smooth.

Video fades back to a voiceover with slideshow. You've learned what a major scale and mastered the most popular scale, C major. Thanks for tuning in! For more information on scales, check out these websites. *Video fades to a slideshow with websites.* Stay tuned for our next video, the minor scale. *Video fades out to credits, and plays the outro with background music and logo reel.*

Credits

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Kiely Kingsbury**

**Original Music and Audio written and performed by
Kiely Kingsbury**

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References

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