

15 WAYS TO MASTER SCALES ON GUITAR



Learning and practicing your scales is a fundamental part of any serious guitarist's routine.

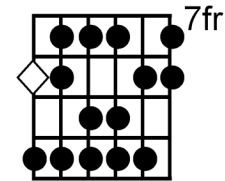
But, let's face it... playing scales up and down - over and over is BORING! What if we could play scales in ways that they actually work in music and soloing?

This lesson will show you over 15 ways to practice scales that will improve your picking, your ear, and even soloing. Let's get the most possible from our scale practice!

To begin, we will use this moveable form of the C major scale as our base form. The root is notated with the diamond.

C Major Scale (Moveable Form – 7th Position)

Start by playing the C major scale up and down the neck.



Ascending Descending

Musical notation for the C major scale in the 7th position, ascending and descending. The notation is in 4/4 time, with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The ascending scale is shown in the first measure, and the descending scale is shown in the second measure. The notation includes fingerings (1-4) and a diamond symbol for the root note C.

An easy way to see scales in a new way is to play them descending first, then ascending.

Descending Ascending

Musical notation for the C major scale in the 7th position, descending and ascending. The notation is in 4/4 time, with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The descending scale is shown in the first measure, and the ascending scale is shown in the second measure. The notation includes fingerings (1-4) and a diamond symbol for the root note C.

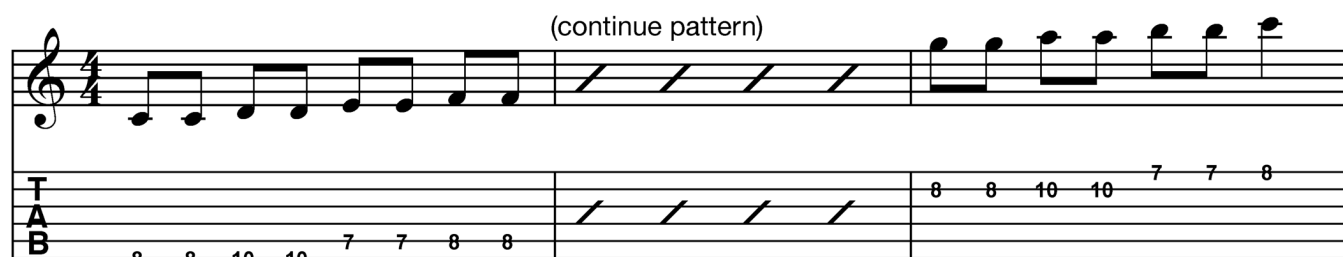
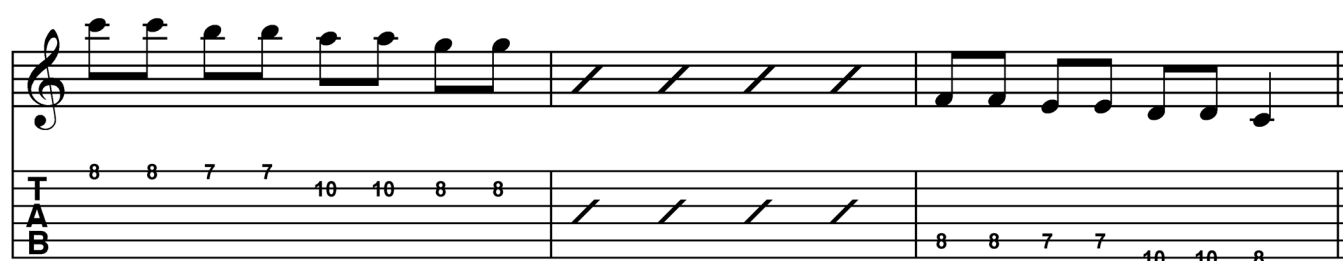
Picking Practice

Exercise 1) All Downstrokes – Play the same scale above using only downstrokes.

Exercise 2) All Upstrokes – Play the scale using only upstrokes.

Now, play each note twice with a down – up picking pattern. (Continue the pattern through the middle bar until you get to the ending notes in the next measure.)

(continue pattern)

Or, we could play them with three strokes per note. This pattern is particularly helpful because it requires some string skipping to keep the down-up pattern consistent. Play the pattern ascending and descending.



To practice your jazz feel, you could play eighth notes with a triplet feel.



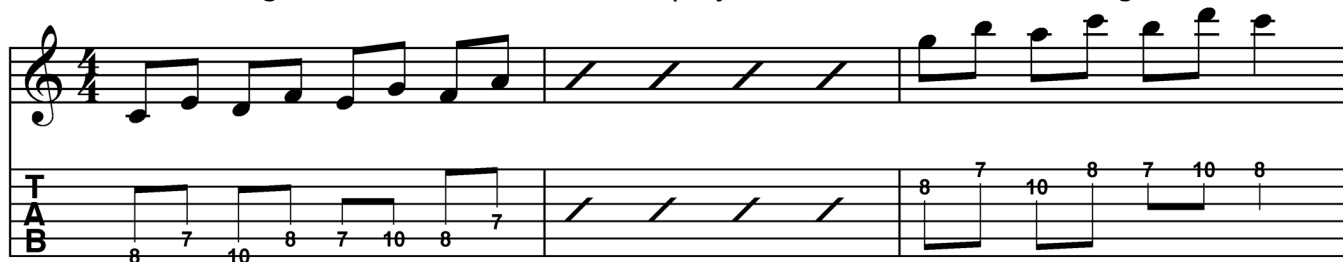
The first system of the musical score for 'The Wind' consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef with a 12/8 time signature. It contains a melody of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some measures containing beamed sixteenth notes. The bottom staff is a guitar tablature, labeled 'T' and 'B' on the left. It shows fret numbers (8, 10, 7, 8, 10, 8, 10, 8, 10, 7) corresponding to the notes in the melody above. There are also some rests and a final measure with a double bar line.

[illegible]

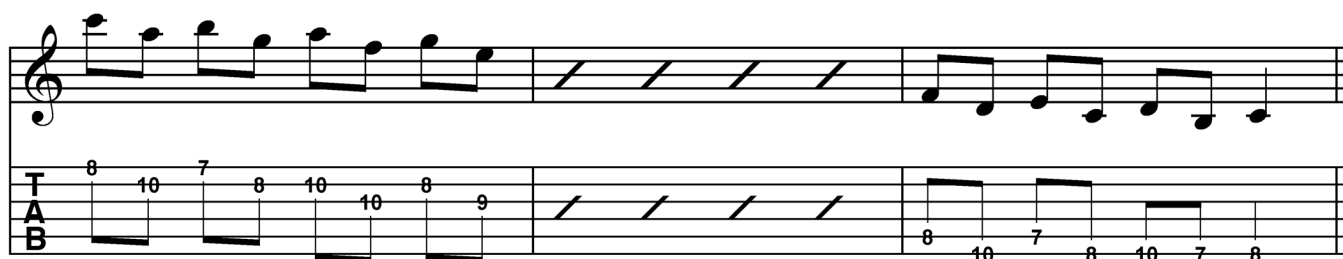
The image displays a musical score for the song "The Wind" by The Beatles. It consists of three systems of music, each with a guitar part (treble clef) and a bass part (bass clef). The guitar part is written in standard notation, while the bass part includes both standard notation and guitar tablature (TAB). The score is divided into three measures, with the second measure containing a double bar line and a repeat sign. The guitar part features a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the bass part provides a rhythmic accompaniment using octaves and chords. The tablature for the bass part is written in a simplified format, using numbers 1-10 to represent frets.

Playing Scales Using Intervals

Now, let's start mixing in a few intervals. You can play scales in thirds – ascending and descending.



First system of musical notation showing a scale in thirds, ascending and descending. The notation includes a treble clef, a 4/4 time signature, and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The scale is played in thirds, with the first string (T) and second string (B) indicated. The fret numbers are 8, 7, 10, 8, 7, 10, 8, 7 for the ascending scale and 8, 7, 10, 8, 7, 10, 8, 7 for the descending scale.

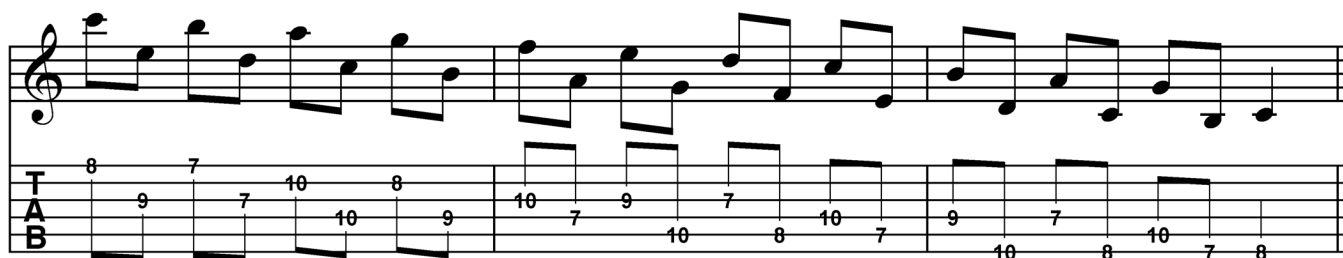


Second system of musical notation showing a scale in thirds, ascending and descending. The notation includes a treble clef, a 4/4 time signature, and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The scale is played in thirds, with the first string (T) and second string (B) indicated. The fret numbers are 8, 10, 7, 8, 10, 8, 9 for the ascending scale and 8, 10, 7, 8, 10, 7, 8 for the descending scale.

Or, in 6ths.

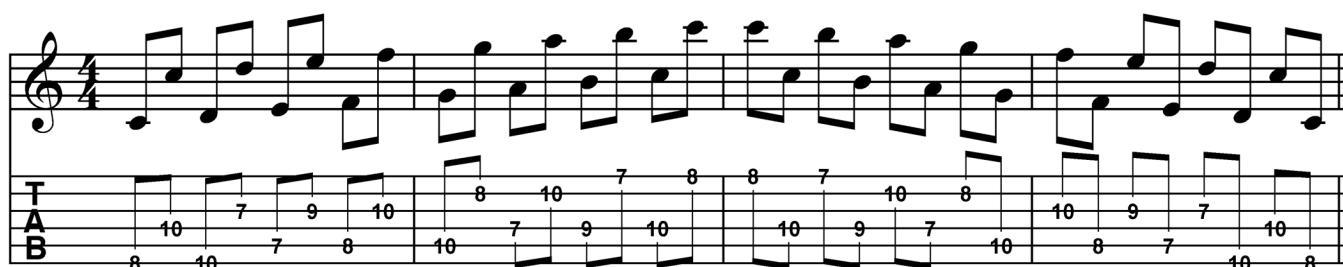


Third system of musical notation showing a scale in 6ths, ascending and descending. The notation includes a treble clef, a 4/4 time signature, and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The scale is played in 6ths, with the first string (T) and second string (B) indicated. The fret numbers are 8, 7, 10, 9, 7, 10, 8, 7 for the ascending scale and 8, 10, 7, 9, 10, 8, 7, 10 for the descending scale.



Fourth system of musical notation showing a scale in 6ths, ascending and descending. The notation includes a treble clef, a 4/4 time signature, and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The scale is played in 6ths, with the first string (T) and second string (B) indicated. The fret numbers are 8, 9, 7, 10, 10, 8, 9, 10 for the ascending scale and 8, 10, 7, 9, 10, 8, 7, 10 for the descending scale.

Or, in octaves.



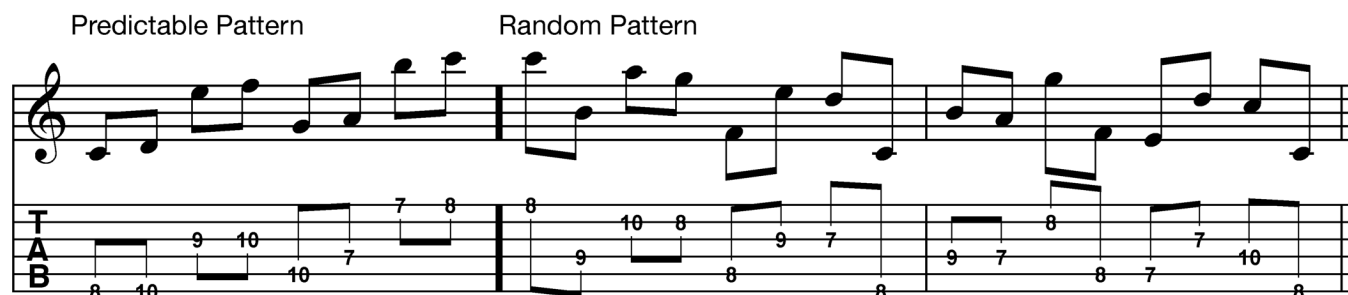
Fifth system of musical notation showing a scale in octaves, ascending and descending. The notation includes a treble clef, a 4/4 time signature, and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The scale is played in octaves, with the first string (T) and second string (B) indicated. The fret numbers are 8, 10, 7, 9, 10, 8, 10, 7 for the ascending scale and 8, 10, 7, 9, 10, 8, 10, 7 for the descending scale.

Here's a tricky one, try displaced octaves.

Displaced octaves can be done by a predictable pattern as in the first measure.

Or, you can play them in an unpredictable pattern as in the last two measures to create a very dis-jointed, "outside" sound.

Predictable Pattern Random Pattern



Another very helpful way to practice scales is to play triads.



Switchbacks

Often times when a melody makes a large jump in one direction, commonly an interval of a 6th, it will continue stepwise in the opposite direction.

Since this is such a common pattern, it's helpful to practice that motion.

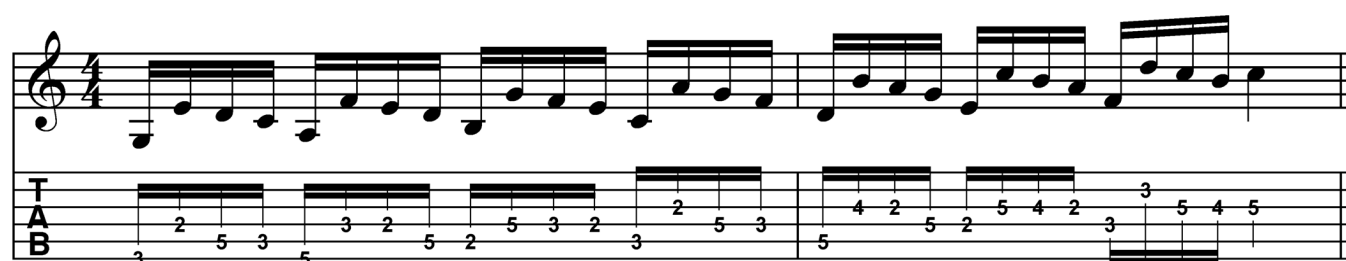
The next exercise starts on the 5th of the scale to make the first 6th interval jump.



The descending form starts with a descending 6th then ascends stepwise up.



Finally, let's practice it an octave lower in the 2nd position.



Let's Practice & Learn

Try these exercises as shown.

Then play in other keys.

Extra Challenge:

Pick a different type of scale and try to do a few patterns.

- Natural Minor Scale
- Harmonic Minor Scale
- Pentatonic Scale

Other Scale Challenges:

- Play a Scale on Only One String. Then try some simple patterns.
- Play Using Only Two Adjacent Strings.
- Play Scales and Patterns Using Hammer-Ons and Pull-Offs - only picking the string for the first note of each string's notes.