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Introducing Scales



Introducing Scales

In Lesson 1 we learned to play the major triads of A and G. In this lesson we will learn how to play a **scale** on each of these notes.

The scale of any note includes the notes of the triad. Furthermore it is useful to know that;

- The major triad has 3 notes.
- The major scale has 7 notes.

There is a relationship between the major triad and the major scale which we will use to build our first scale — the scale of G major.

Lesson Objectives

- Introduce **major scales** for the notes A and G.
- Understand the relationship between major triads and major scales
- Perform **ascending and descending scales** using quarter Notes.
- Introduce and apply right hand fingering for scales.

Triad/Scale Relationship

As we said in the introduction, there is a relationship between the major triad and the major scale and I want to explain it to you step by step.

In the G major triad we have the notes G, B and D.

Let's play this first exercise using the three notes of the G major triad. We are playing each note individually as a quarter note.

Use the multimedia files as always.

Exercise 1

lesson002.i.ksis.01

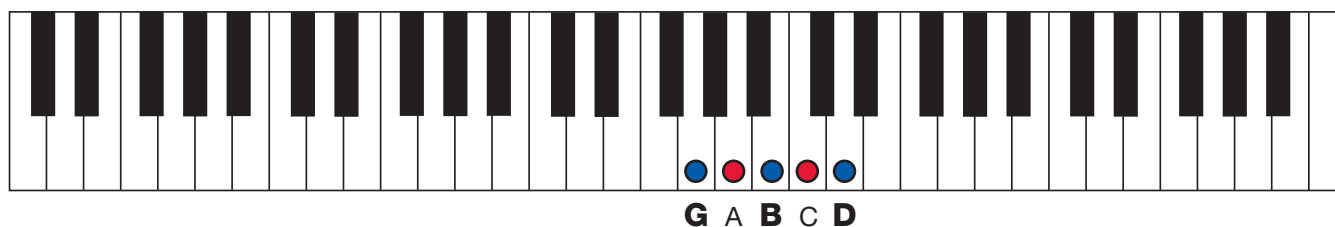


Adding A and C to our G Major Triad

Take a close look at our first *exercise* again. You will see that there are spaces between G and B and also between B and D. These spaces are where you find the notes of A and C on the staff.

If we now look at the keyboard example below, you will see the G major triad of G, B and D represented by blue dots for the moment and A and C with red dots.

Figure 1 – Adding A and C



Let's now hear what these five notes sound like and pay attention to playing them with the correct fingers.

Starting with your Thumb on G we use our four fingers to play A, B, C and D in order.

Exercise 2

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Musical notation for Exercise 2, showing a scale in G major (G A B C D) in the treble clef, with the bass clef empty. The notation is in common time (C).

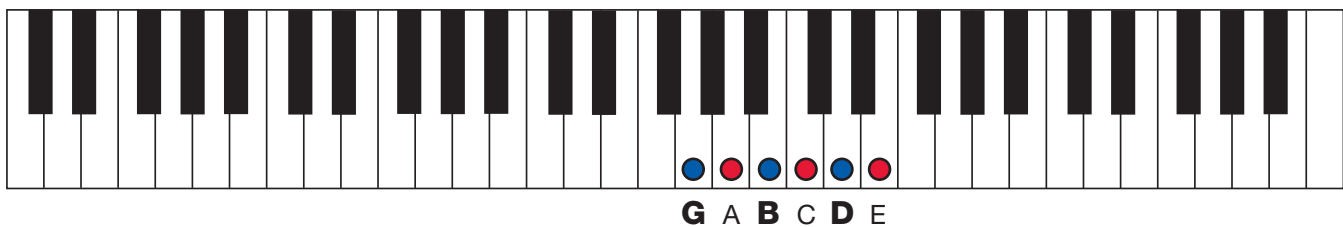
FINGER T 1 2 3 4 T 1 2 3 4 T 1 2 3 4 T 1 2 3 4

Introducing G Major Scale

We now have five notes (G, A, B, C and D). We need two more notes to complete a G Major scale, as we previously said that we have 7 notes in a scale.

Logic tells us that after D will come E and in fact we are already familiar with E, as we played E in our A triad chord in *Lesson 1*. Our next two figures show E included in our scale so far.

Figure 2 – Adding E



You can see that when we add E to our scale we now have the top space on the staff.

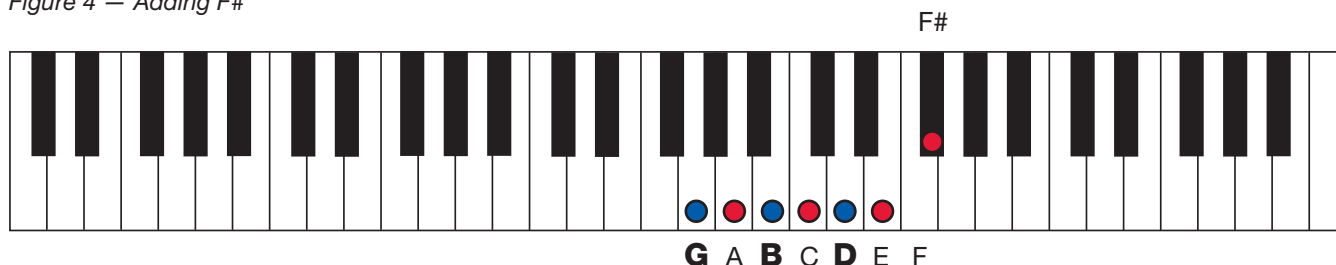
We are *not* going to play this as we now have 6 notes and only 5 digits (thumb + 4 fingers). Accordingly, when we have added our last note we will then show you how to finger 7 notes with only 5 digits.

Figure 3 – E added to our scale

Introducing F# to our G Major scale

Our last note is of course F, but to sound correct, it must actually be F#, the black note to the right of F on our keyboard shown in our next *figure* below.

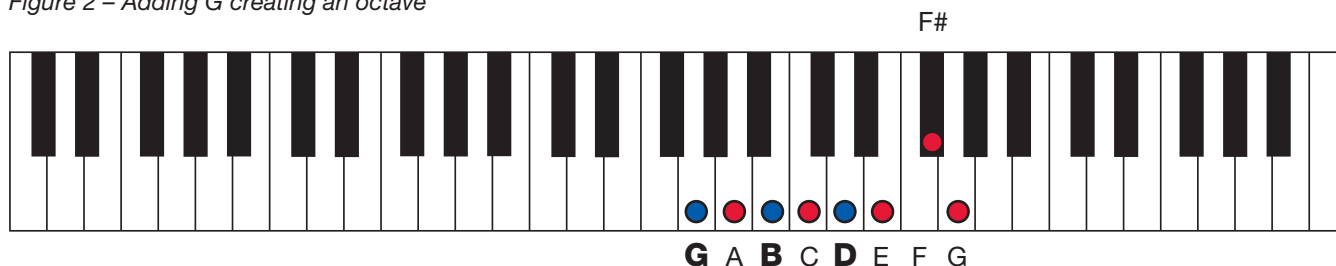
Figure 4 – Adding F#



Introducing the Octave to our G Major Scale

Although the last note in the scale is F#, the next note is G and we are going to conclude the scale by playing this G. This is known as an **octave**.

Figure 2 – Adding G creating an octave



Fingering the G major Scale

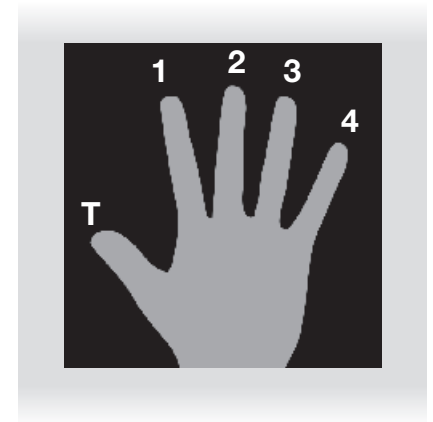
To play the G major scale correctly it is necessary to consider the fingering and learn a new technique.

Firstly, there is now a total of 8 notes in the G major scale. As we have 8 notes to play but only 5 digits we need to learn a new technique called the **thumb-under technique**.

Thumb Under Technique

Look at *Figure 6* below. You will see that we have indicated the fingering you will need to use underneath each note. We have allocated a number for each finger and T for your thumb, as follows.

Watch the video clip using the icon below to see how the thumb comes **underneath** your second finger, after playing B and then continues to play C, D, E, F# and G in the full sequence T, 1, 2, 3, 4.



The video shows our next exercise being played and when comfortable, you should then try and play along with the KeyboardXtractor to develop the smoothness of your thumb-under technique.

Figure 6 — Fingering a G major scale

G	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	
T	1	2	T	1	2	3	4	<i>G major scale</i>
								<i>Fingering</i>

Exercise 3

lesson002.iksis.03

Scale Practise

To help us become more familiar with the G major scale (both physically and mentally) we need to play it more frequently.

At the moment we are only playing up the scale. We need to be able to play down the scale and by doing so we can double our practise. We will then be able to play an **ascending scale** and a **descending scale**.

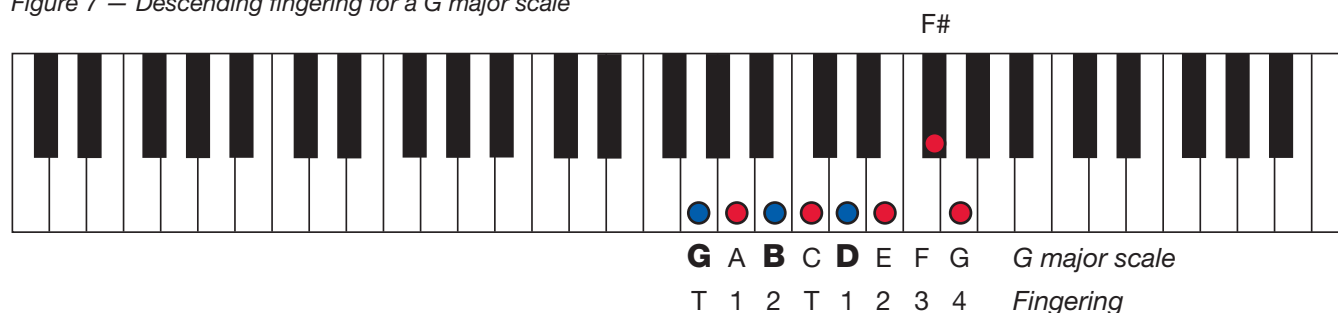
We therefore need to use our thumb under technique backwards or in reverse.

As with our ascending scale in our previous exercise we have written out the descending scale for G major below, with the fingering below each note.

Starting with your little finger on the top G, you then play the first 5 notes in reverse down the scale. Accordingly, you play the top G with your little finger 4, F# with 3, E with 2, D with 1 and C with your thumb. At this point you then bring your middle finger 2, **over the top** of your thumb and play B. You then finish the scale with finger 1 playing A and your thumb finishing on our bottom G.

As always use the multimedia files, watching the video first, then have a go at the exercise yourself using the KeyboardXtractor files.

Figure 7 — Descending fingering for a G major scale



Exercise 4

lesson002.i.ksis.04

The musical notation for Exercise 4 is written on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) in common time (C). The treble clef contains the notes of the descending G major scale: G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (quarter), B3 (quarter), A3 (quarter), G3 (quarter). The bass clef contains rests for all notes. The fingering is indicated by numbers 1-4 and 'T' (thumb) below the notes: 4, 3, 2, 1, T, 2, 1, T. The exercise is divided into three measures by bar lines.

A Major Scale

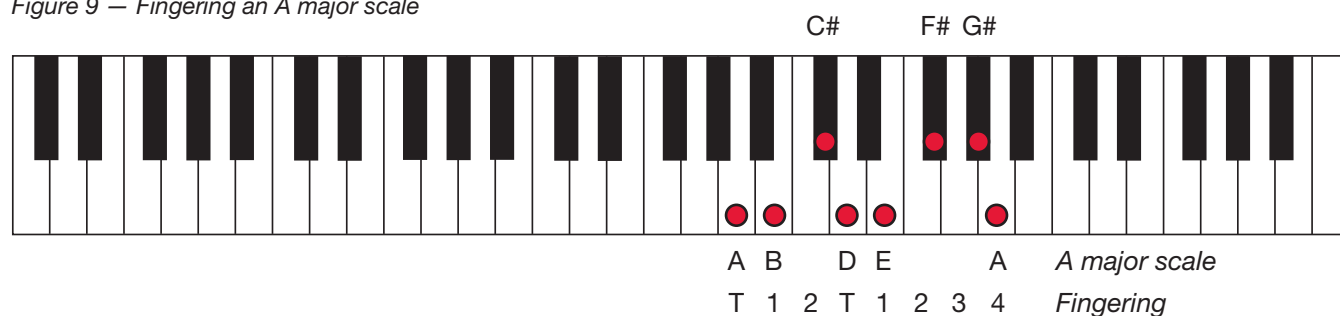
It is possible to use the thumb-under technique to play all scales and we can easily transfer this skill to play A major scale.

The notes of a major scale always appear in alphabetical order and the notes of the scale of A major are;

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

Use the diagram below for fingering and after using the multimedia files, play *the following exercise (6)* which is an ascending and descending A major scale.

Figure 9 – Fingering an A major scale



Exercise 6

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The musical notation for Exercise 6 is shown in treble clef with a common time signature (C). The scale is written in a single line. The notes are A, B, C#, D, E, F#, G#, and A. The fingering for each note is indicated below the notes: T, 1, 2, T, 1, 2, 3, 4, 4, 3, 2, 1, T. The exercise is divided into four measures, each starting with a measure number (1, 2, 3, 4) above the first note. The first measure contains notes 1-2, the second 2-3-4, the third 4-3-2-1, and the fourth 1-2-1. The piece ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Practising scales

Concentrate on the sound of the scale and pay attention to the fingering. Try to remember the names of all the notes and where they live on the keyboard and on the musical staff as you will need this knowledge as we progress through the course.