

3

Developing Scales and Triads



Scales and Triads in the left hand

The scales and triads we have learned so far can be played in the left hand as well as in the right.

The notes and the position of the notes on the keyboard and the staff remain the same, although you will now appreciate that the fingers are slightly different.

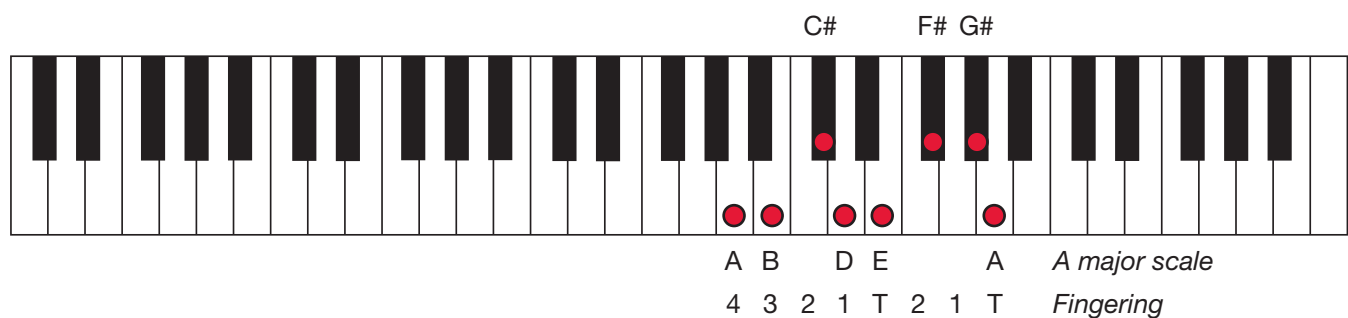
Let's start by playing the A major scale with our left hand. This will involve the use of the thumb-under technique, but it is in reverse as we play the ascending scale using our fourth finger firstly as opposed to our thumb! The descending scale starts with the thumb.

Look at the diagram below, particularly noting the fingering when watching the video clip.

Lesson Objectives

- Introduce the use of our left hand in playing the keyboard.
- Introduce the **bass clef**.
- Introduce and understand the role of **ledger lines** in the musical staff.
- Develop our understanding and playing of triads.
- Introduce and develop understanding and use of the concept of **transferability**.

Figure 1 – Left hand fingering for an A major scale



Exercise 1

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1 2 3 4

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

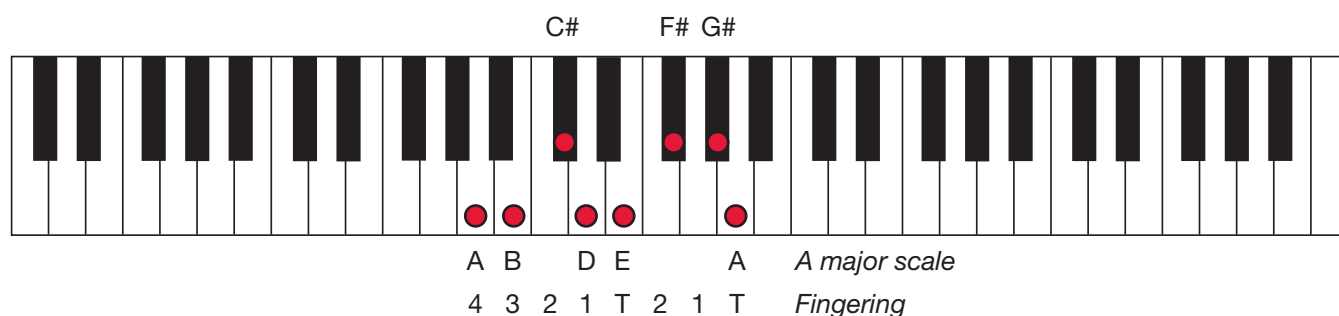
A Major Scale - One Octave lower

It is possible to play this scale one **octave** lower on the keyboard and this is broadly where your left hand tends to be used when playing the keyboard. The notes are exactly the same, as is the left hand fingering.

Notice how this is written on the staff. The extra lines below the staff are called **ledger lines**. You should also be aware that although the scale is exactly the same, the sound is lower.

Look at *Figure 2* below to see where the scale starts on the keyboard and then use the multimedia files as always.

Figure 2 — A major scale one octave lower



Exercise 2

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The musical notation for Exercise 2 is written in treble clef with a common time signature (C). It consists of four measures. The notes are A, B, C#, D, E, F#, G#, and A. The fingering is indicated below the notes: 4, 3, 2, 1, T, 2, 1, T. The notes C# and F# are marked with sharps above them. The notes G# and A are marked with sharps above them.

Performing Triads an Octave lower

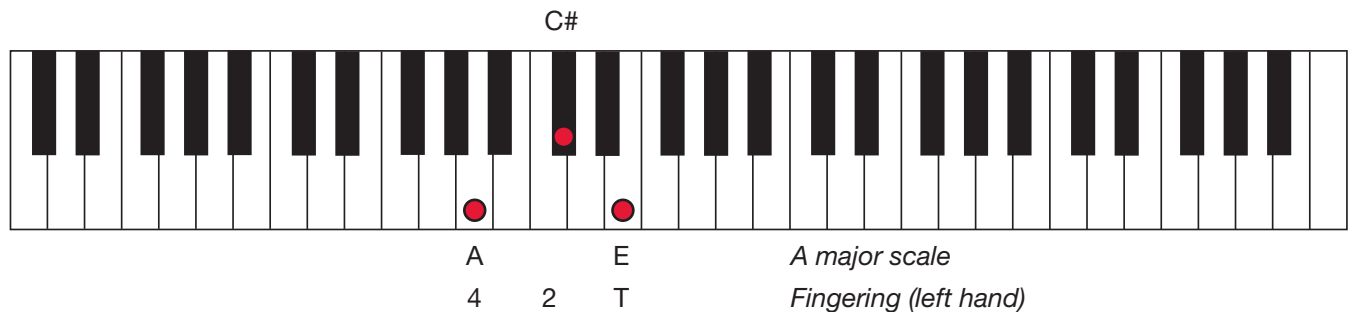
It is also possible to play the A triad one octave lower on the keyboard using your left hand. The notes are of course the same, namely A, C# and E. These notes are selected from the A major scale. If you count the notes in the scale you will see that they are the 1st, 3rd and 5th notes of the scale. Look at our table below.

Figure 3 – Table of A major scale

A	B	C#	D	E	F#	G#	A
1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	Octave

Practise playing the A major triad as shown in our next figure below and then play along with the multimedia files from our next exercise.

Figure 4 – A major triad one octave lower using your left hand



Exercise 3

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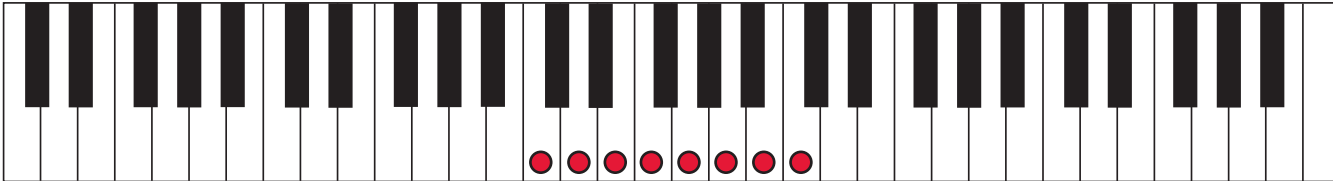


Transferability

It is important to realise that because of the layout of the keyboard it is possible to transfer what you have learned to other notes. For example, we can transfer the major scale to begin on C.

There are only natural notes in the C major scale. Look at our *Figure 5* below. We have included fingering for both the right and left hand.

Figure 5 — C major scale



C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C	<i>C major scale</i>
4	3	2	1	T	2	1	T	<i>Fingering (Left Hand)</i>
T	1	2	T	1	2	3	4	<i>Fingering (Right Hand)</i>

Let's play the C major scale firstly using our right hand. Play around and around until comfortable.

Exercise 4

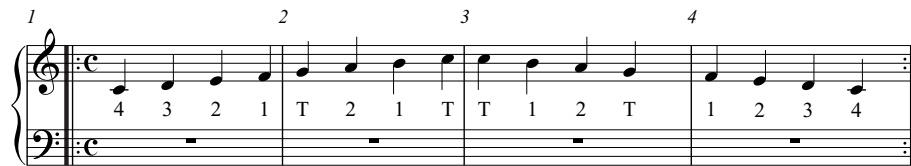
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Let's now play the C major scale now using our left hand. Again play around and around until comfortable.

Exercise 5

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As with all the triads and scales that we are learning, try and remember the note names and the position of the notes on the keyboard and on the musical staff.

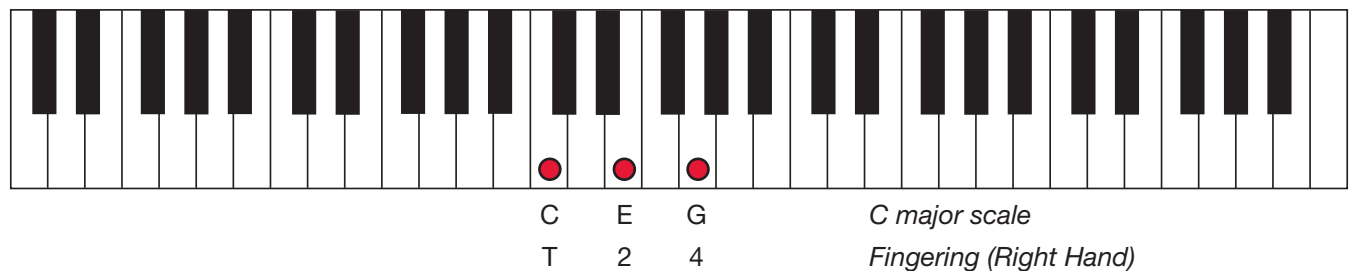
C Major Triad

Let's now look at playing the C major triad. We know that the triad is made up of the 1st, 3rd and 5th notes of its scale. So what notes are in the C major scale?

Figure 6 – Table of C major scale

C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C
1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	Octave

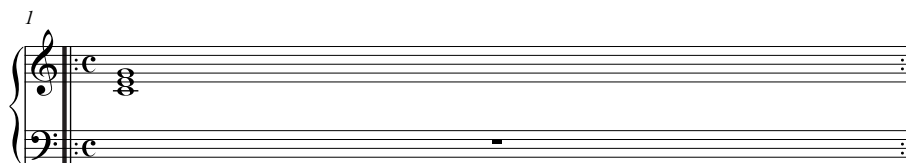
Figure 7 – C major triad



Using your right hand play our C major triad along with the multimedia files until comfortable.

Exercise 6

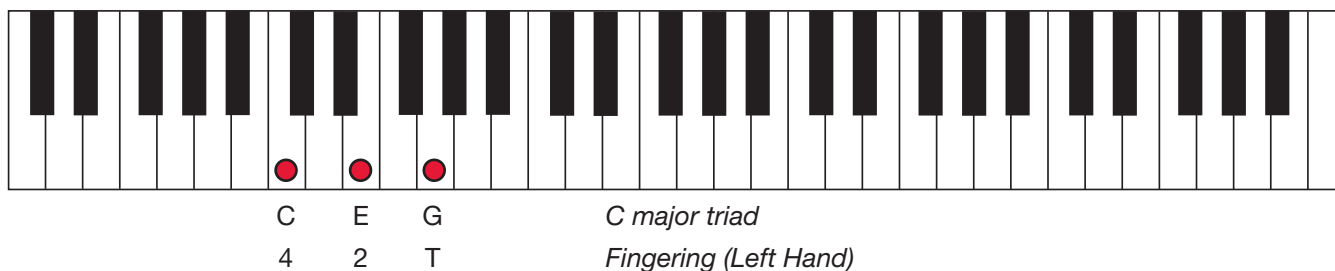
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Now, using your left hand, play our C major triad along with the multimedia files until comfortable. Note though that we have now moved the triad down an octave on the keyboard, as the left hand often plays in the bottom half of the keyboard.

It is also worth noting that the notes now appear in the **bass clef**, which represents the lower notes in the range of music and specifically here the bottom half of the keyboard.

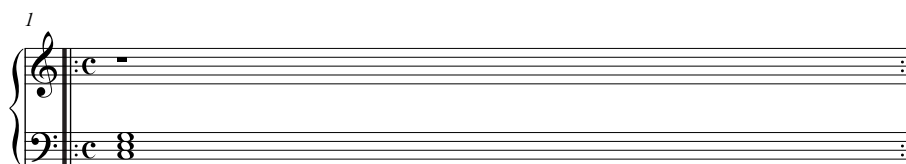
Figure 8 — C major triad an octave lower using your left hand



There is a full description of the notes and their positions in both treble and bass clefs at the end of this lesson.

Exercise 7

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Treble and Bass Clef

In general terms music for the guitar is written in the treble clef and music for the bass guitar is written in the bass clef. The keyboard/piano however has music written in both clefs and, again as a general rule, the treble clef is for your right hand and the bass clef is for your left hand. There can be crossover, so remember it is a general rule.

Developing your Left Hand C Major Triad

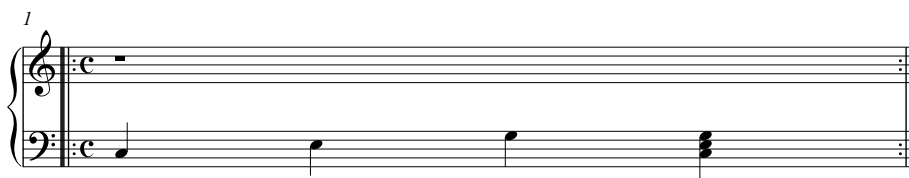
We have already played the left hand triad of C major in the bass clef, but let's try another exercise to develop use of our left hand.

Here we play the 1st, 3rd and 5th of the C major scale and then play the triad.

Use this exercise to develop not only your forming of the triad, but creating even sounds and playing smoothly, fluently and in time.

Exercise 8

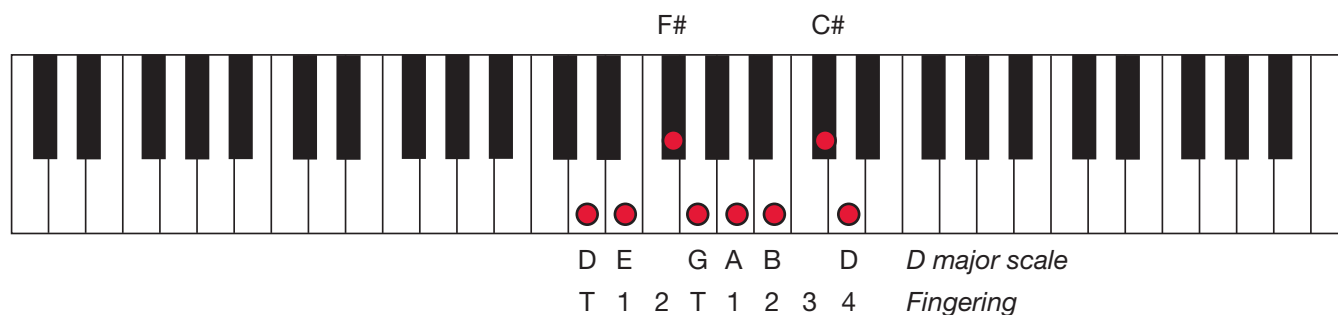
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More Transferability

As we said earlier, because of the layout of the keyboard it is possible to transfer what you have learned so far to other notes. For example, we can transfer the major scale to begin on D. The fingering is the same as before.

Figure 9 — D major scale (Right Hand Treble Clef)



Play the D major scale with your right hand developing your fingering further and learning the notes in the scale on the keyboard and on the staff at the same time. Use the multimedia files in the usual manner.

Exercise 9

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D Major down an Octave

Now if we take the D Major scale down an Octave, we should now play the scale with our left hand. This will enable us to develop our ability to play scales more fluently with both hands and also specifically help us understand and be able to play the D Major scale much better.

Figure 10 – D major scale (Left Hand, Bass Clef)

F# C#

D E G A B D *D major scale*
4 3 2 1 T 2 1 T *Fingering*

Exercise 10

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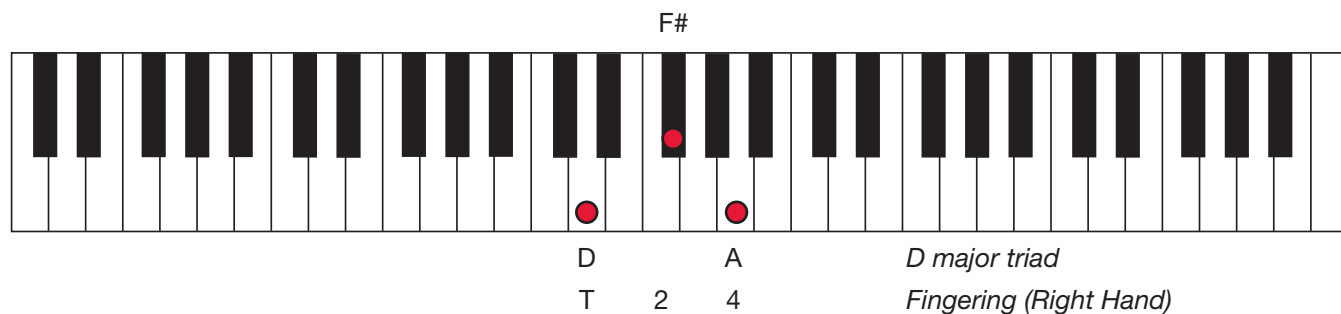
D Major Scale Triad

Now that we are familiar with our D major Scale, let's play the D major triad, forming the notes from our scale as usual. Once comfortable, go on to *Exercise 11* and develop using the multimedia files as usual.

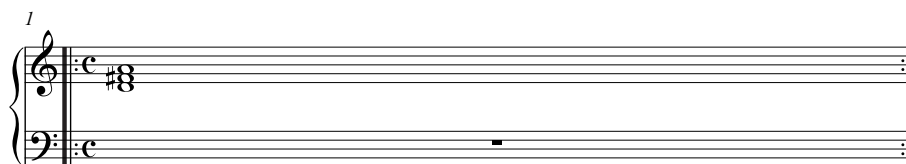
Figure 11 – D major scale

D	E	F#	G	A	B	C#	D
1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	Octave

Figure 12 — D major triad (Right Hand)

**Exercise 11**

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Try playing the individual notes from the triad and then forming the triad as a chord. Again this will help you learn the notes and develop your ability to form chords whilst playing.

Exercise 12

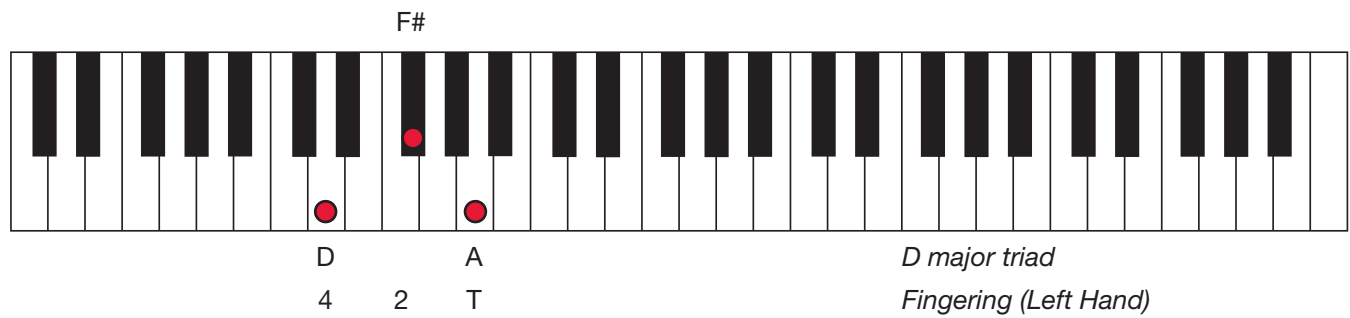
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D major triad down an octave

Now if we take the D major triad down an octave, we should now play the triad with our left hand. This will enable us to develop our ability to play triads more fluently with both hands and also help us understand and be able to play the D Major triad increasingly more fluently.

Figure 13 – D major triad (Left Hand, Bass Clef)



Exercise 13

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Try playing the notes from the triad and then forming the triad as a chord. Again this will help you learn the notes and develop your ability to form chords.

Exercise 14

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Developing transferability to play G major scale and triad

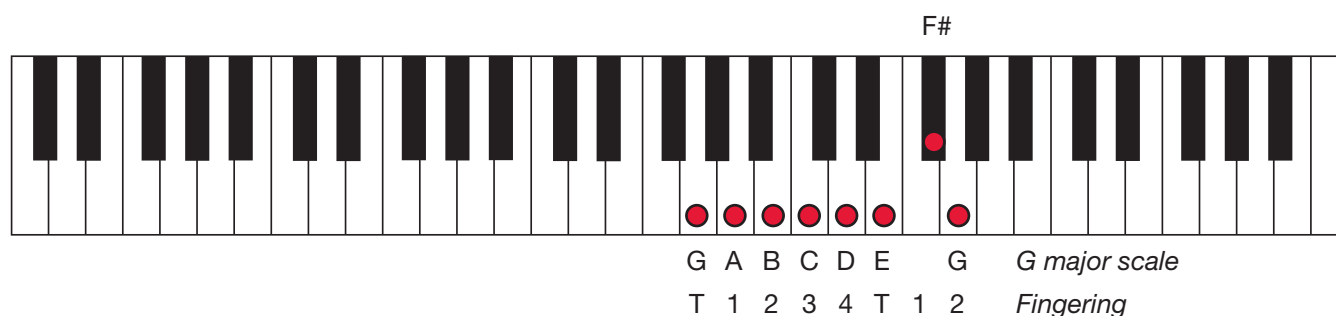
Let's repeat the process we went through to be able to play the D major scale. This will enable us to learn how to play the scale and triads for G major.

Firstly, let's learn the scale in both the right and left hands. Then we will develop the G major triad. Go through each exercise methodically developing your ability to play G major fluently.

Figure 14 – G major scale

G	A	B	C	D	E	F#	G
1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th	7th	Octave

Figure 15 – G major scale (Right Hand, Treble Clef)



Ascending and descending G major scale with your right hand.

Exercise 15

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Forming a G major triad in the right hand.

Exercise 16

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Ascending and descending G major scale using the left hand.

Exercise 17

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Forming a G major triad in the left hand.

Exercise 18

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Summary

Through this lesson we have developed the ability to play not only the scales of A, C, D and G, but also used them to form their triad chords. Furthermore, we have learned to use both right and left hands and be able to play in both treble and bass clefs.

To continually improve you need to practise each of the exercises in the lessons regularly, developing the muscles required to play fluently. It is a process that is unavoidable, but rewarding. Work with the play-along multimedia files it will help you develop your physical playing skills more quickly and more enjoyably.

Use the KeyboardXtractor to loop the exercises and to speed them up and/or slow them down so that you can practise comfortably, developing in speed and stamina in time.

Notation for Pitch – Understanding the Treble and Bass Clefs

Below we have four staves which show the position of each note. For the sake of clarity we have listed notes according to whether they fall on lines, or in the spaces between the lines.

Please feel free to return to this page, or even print it out and pin it on a wall, so that you can refer to it should you have difficulty remembering where each note falls on the staff.

Treble Clef – Notes that fall in the spaces on the treble staff

A musical staff with a treble clef. The staff is divided into four measures. Above the measures are the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4. In each measure, a single note is placed in a space between the lines. The notes are labeled below the staff as F, A, C, and E. The bass clef staff below is empty with a small dash in each measure.

Treble Clef – Notes that fall on the lines on the treble staff

A musical staff with a treble clef. The staff is divided into five measures. Above the measures are the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. In each measure, a single note is placed on a line. The notes are labeled below the staff as E, G, B, D, and F. The bass clef staff below is empty with a small dash in each measure.

Bass Clef – Notes that fall in the spaces on the bass staff

A musical staff with a bass clef. The staff is divided into four measures. Above the measures are the numbers 1, 2, 3, and 4. In each measure, a single note is placed in a space between the lines. The notes are labeled below the staff as A, C, E, and G. The treble clef staff above is empty with a small dash in each measure.

Bass Clef – Notes that fall on the lines on the bass staff

A musical staff with a bass clef. The staff is divided into five measures. Above the measures are the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. In each measure, a single note is placed on a line. The notes are labeled below the staff as G, B, D, F, and A. The treble clef staff above is empty with a small dash in each measure.