

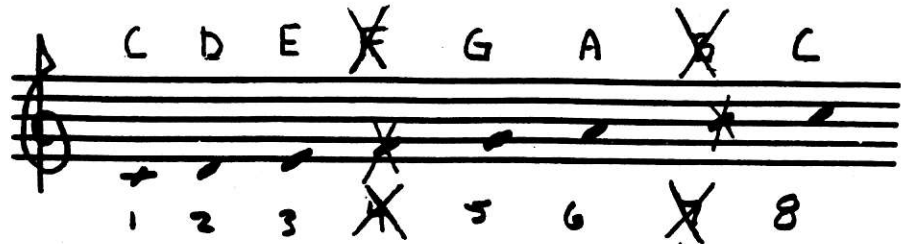
# Chapter 3 Pentatonic Scales (and a short description of relative minor)

## Major Pentatonic

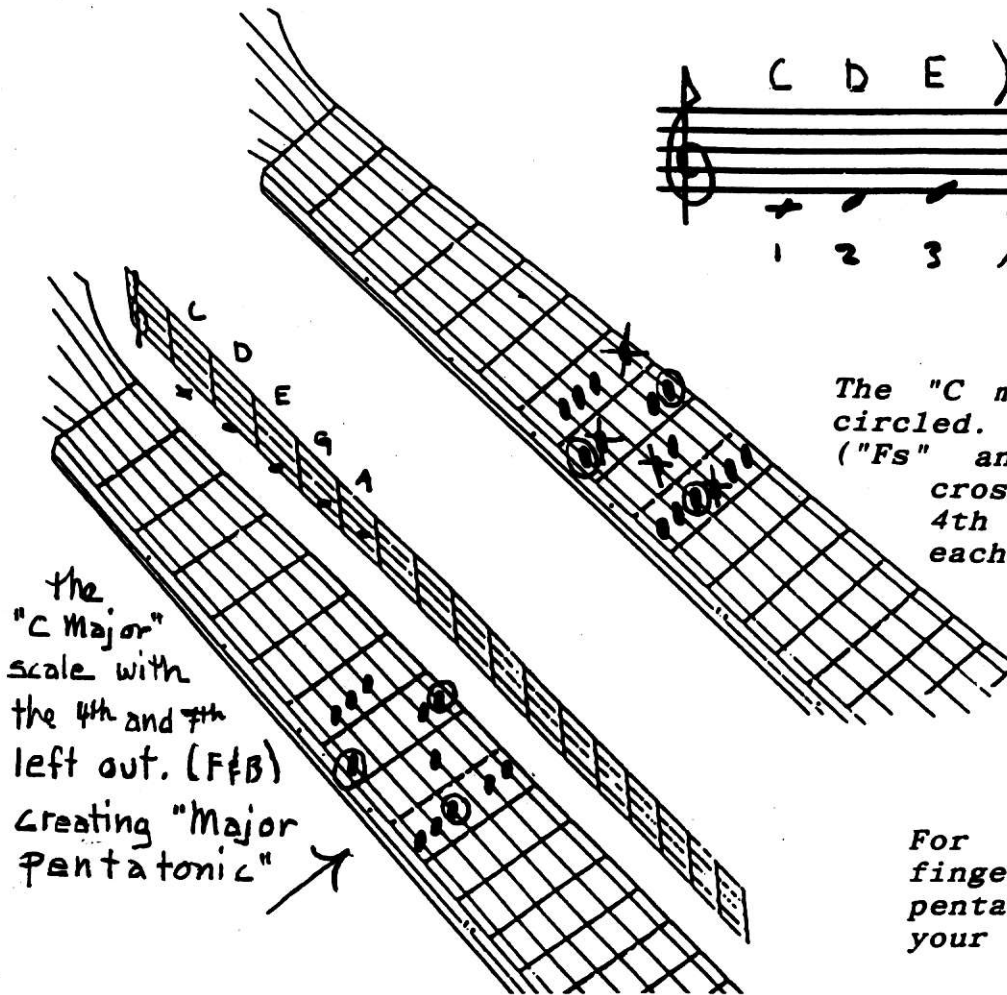
On the subject of scales lets cover another important one used a lot in rock: *the pentatonic scale*. There are two widely used pentatonic scales: major pentatonic and minor pentatonic, lets start with the major.

Remember in the first chapter I said we can analyze musical ideas by comparing them to the major scale? When comparing major pentatonic to the major scale we see they are identical except, in the pentatonic two notes are left out, the 4th and the 7th steps.

So all you have to do to play a major pentatonic scale is play a regular major scale and then leave out the 4th and 7th.



The "C major scale" - roots circled. The "4th" and "7th" ("Fs" and "Bs") have been crossed out, notice the 4th and 7th occur twice each in this pattern.



For the 5 traditional fingering patterns for pentatonic see page 1 of your scale glossary.

Because the major pentatonic scale uses only notes from the major scale then when soloing, wherever you use the major scale you can also use the major pentatonic.

## Exercise 1

Open to page one of your scale glossary, using the "traditional five Pentatonic" patterns (by locating where the roots are), adjust each to the correct location to play them in the keys of:

- 1) G major
- 2) D major
- 3) A major
- 4) E major
- 5) B major

Again this may be a lot of work, especially if you don't know the notes on your guitar but remember, it's important to be able to play in different keys.

### Exercise 1 A.

Try these two sequences in all five pentatonic scale patterns:

#### Sequence 1

1 2 3 4 - 3 4 5 6 - 5 6 7 8 - 7 8 9 10 (as sixteenth notes)

*(This sequence is written using the fingering pattern on the previous page)*

#### Sequence 2

2 1 2 - 3 2 3 - 4 3 4 - 5 4 5 - 6 4 6 (play as triplets)

## Relative Minor

Before going into the massively used minor pentatonic scale I want to briefly explain this totally cool concept: "Relative Minor". As with most music theory this is basically simple but if it's new to you it can be confusing.

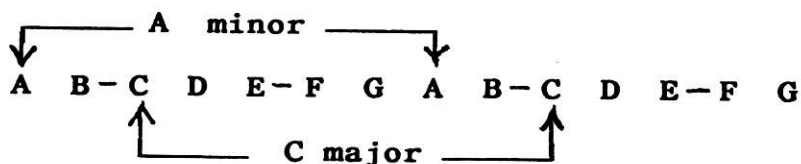
If you play in the "C major scale" notes, you are also playing the "A minor scale" notes - simultaneously.

Here's an example: all the white keys on the piano are the notes in the C major scale right? (If you didn't know, they are). Well they're also the same notes as the A minor scale!

What's the difference then, between C major and A minor? Nothing... except the starting place - the notes are the same, the roots are different (more on this later in chapter 14 and 15).

*"C major" and "A minor" scale - same notes. When using them in "A minor" the music will be centered around the root "A", and when using them in "C major" the music will be centered around "C".*

If you were to play the two scales from their roots up through one octave:



Notice the relative minor starts a whole and half step below the root for major. (If you are confused, hang in there and just keep plowing through, chances are this will clear up later as you learn more).

Every major scale has a relative minor, Cs relative minor is A. The formula to find the relative minor of a major scale is simple: Go down a whole step and a half step from the root of the major scale, that note will be the root of its relative minor.

Here is how to use this concept: play a "major scale" over a "minor chord" located a whole and half step below the root: for example play the "C major scale" over an "A minor" chord, or the "G major" scale over an "E minor" chord. Even though you're playing the major scale it sounds like minor... in fact you are playing minor. All the same notes as major but over the relative minors first chord, the sound is minor.

If you notice in the scale glossary every major or pentatonic scale pattern has two groups of roots, the circled notes if the scale is being used for major, and the roots for minor, the notes with squares around them.

We'll cover this more later when we get into modes, the main reason I brought it up in this chapter is that you can use this concept for the major and minor pentatonic scales as well. All the fingering patterns for major pentatonic can also be used for minor pentatonic.