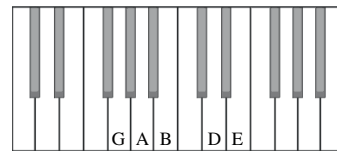
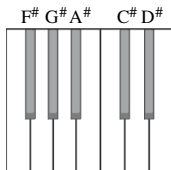
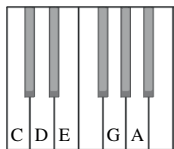


# Pentatonic Scales



## Pentatone -- A "5-tone" scale

By removing the 4th and the 7th notes of a major scale, we are left with five tones. The half steps have been removed and what remains are intervals of either whole steps or 1 1/2 steps. For the major scale of C, the notes F and B are removed leaving the notes: C-D-E-G-A (see above).

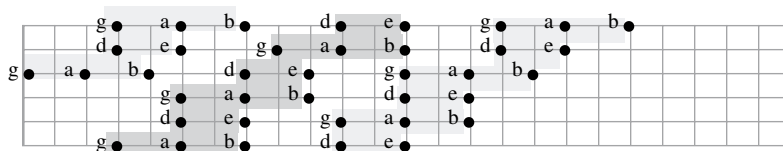
The pattern of this scale's intervals can easily be seen by looking at only the black keys of a piano. For the key of F sharp, the black keys would be the notes of its major pentatonic scale: F#-G#-A#-C#-D# (see above).

## Why do this?

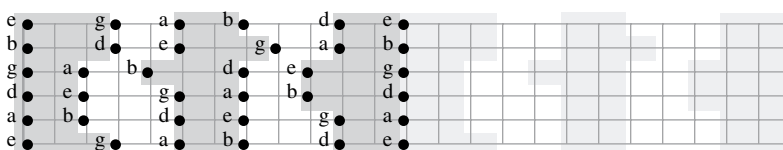
By simplifying the scale to five tones what remains is very useful. In the same way that the root note of a scale or a key becomes the home or anchor tone of a song's melody and harmonies. These five tones become safe notes to return to when improvising leads or adding harmonies to a song. Even as the progression of chords change within the song, these same five notes can be used. The exception to this is if chords exist in the song that are not normal to the key of the song.

## On the guitar

The first figure shows this scale of five notes on a fretboard for the key of G. The pattern is very helpful in showing the intervals involved. All the whole steps are on individual strings. Three notes on one string, two on the next, three on the next, two on the next, etc. (following the shaded areas).

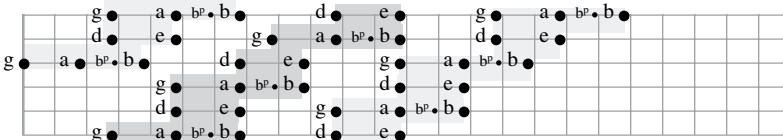


The second figure is of different patterns or modes for these same five notes in the key of G. Rather than being a pattern that moves diagonally up the fretboard, these patterns are limited to certain fret locations (different modes are shown in both the shaded and the white areas).

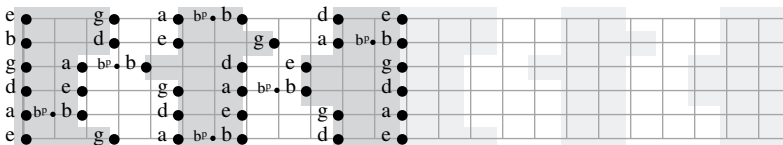


## Different Flavors

These figures are also for the key of G. The difference is that a "blue" note has been added -- B flat. For the guitar, often this note is hit and then bent to raise the pitch a half step -- resolving to B natural. Though this is often referred to as a "blues scale," its use is not limited to any style of music.



What to call these scales? Since there are many ways that these scale patterns can be used, different names are often used to describe these notes. The following three examples are basically different names for the same thing.



G major pentatonic: G-A-B-D-E

E minor pentatonic: E-G-A-B-D -- (same notes as before but in different order)

Key of E blues scale: E-G-A-(Bp)-B-D -- (same, but with an optional note added)

Since these share the same notes -- the patterns to learn on the guitar are basically the same for each. The reason for the different names relate to how the being used. These same notes sound quite different when they are used with a progression of predominantly major chords (key of G), or with minor chords (key of E minor), or even with a progression of seventh chords (key of E).