

Scale Templates

Scales follow templates in their construction. All major scales, for example, follow the same pattern of consecutive intervals (T = tone, S = semitone):

T T S T T T S

Expressed chromatically (in terms of semitones) this would look like:

2 2 1 2 2 2 1

In the example of C major, below, we can see that:

C – D = tone

D – E = tone

E – F = semitone

F – G = tone

G – A = tone

A – B = tone

B – C = semitone



The minor scales similarly follow their own templates:

Natural minor: T S T T S T T

Harmonic minor: T S T T S +T S (N.B. there is an augmented 2nd interval between 6th and 7th notes).

Melodic minor (ascending): T S T T T T S

Notation examples of the minor scales:

Natural minor:



Harmonic minor:



Melodic minor:



Note that traditionally the melodic minor scale descends as the natural minor. However in popular musics the ascending version is generally adhered to whether ascending or descending – sometimes known as jazz melodic minor.

Pentatonic scales:

Pentatonic (5 note scales) can be made from both the major scale and the natural minor scale.

The **major pentatonic** scale uses the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 5th and 6th of the major scale (template: M2 M2 m3 M2 m3):



The **minor pentatonic** scale uses the 1st, 3rd, 4th, 5th and 7th of the minor scale (template: m3 M2 M2 m3 M2):

