

Scales, Modes and the numeric system

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Always relate everything regarding scales, arpeggios and modes to the major scale. When and if you need to change a note, just alter it by adding a sharp or flat to create the desired interval distance.

Major Scale

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

The major scale is labelled 1 to 8 for a single octave or

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15

labelled 1 to 15 for two octaves. This gives you the correct labels when talking about upper extensions such as 9ths, 11ths and 13ths.

Major scale modes

Major (first mode) also known as Ionian

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15

Dorian (second mode)

1, 2, b3, 4, 5, 6, b7, 8

1, 2, b3, 4, 5, 6, b7, 8, 9, b10, 11, 12, 13, b14, 15

Phrygian (third mode)

1, b2, b3, 4, 5, b6, b7, 8

1, b2, b3, 4, 5, b6, b7, 8, b9, b10, 11, 12, b13, b14, 15

Lydian (fourth mode)

1, 2, 3, #4, 5, 6, 7, 8

1, 2, 3, #4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, #11, 12, 13, 14, 15

Mixolydian (Fifth mode)

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, b7, 8

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, b7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, b14, 15

Natural minor (sixth mode) also known as Aeolian

1, 2, b3, 4, 5, b6, b7, 8

1, 2, b3, 4, 5, b6, b7, 8, 9, b10, 11, 12, b13, b14, 15

locrian (seventh mode)

1, b2, b3, 4, b5, b6, b7, 8

1, b2, b3, 4, b5, b6, b7, 8, b9, b10, 11, b12, b13, b14, 15

Brightest to darkest

Lydian

Major

Mixolydian

Dorian
Minor
Phygrian
Locrian

Relating modes to pentatonic scales

Major Pentatonic

1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8

1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 15

Minor Pentatonic

1, b3, 4, 5, b7, 8

1, b3, 4, 5, b7, 8, b10, 11, 12, b14, 15

Major, Lydian and Mixolydian are related to the major pentatonic with added 4th and 7th

Major adds a 4 and 7

Lydian adds a #4 and 7

Mixolydian adds 4 and b7

Dorian, Phygrian and Minor are related to the minor pentatonic with added 2nd and 6th

Dorian adds a 2 and 6

Phygrian adds a b2 and b6

Minor adds a b2 and 6

Locrian is a standalone mode as it uses the b5. It is similar to the Blues scale which is a minor pentatonic with a 5 and a b5

By using the pentatonic scales, you can quickly change between modes when required by adding or subtracting the other intervals needed.