

Ukulele Doodling

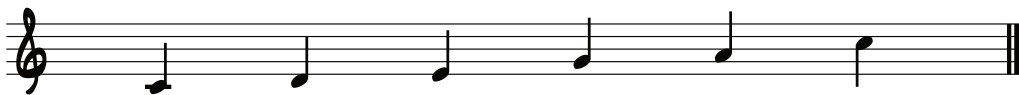
An Introduction to Scales and Soloing on Ukulele using the C Pentatonic

Licks, Scale, Riffs, Leads, spontaneous melodies, solos... In the guitar world, this is called Lead Guitar. In the ukulele world, we can call it whatever we want.

I call it *Ukulele Doodling!* Just like an artist can *doodle* around and draw whatever he or she fancies, we can do the same on ukulele. Anyone can have hours of fun just *doodling* around the ukulele – exploring its possibilities.

The Pentatonic Scale

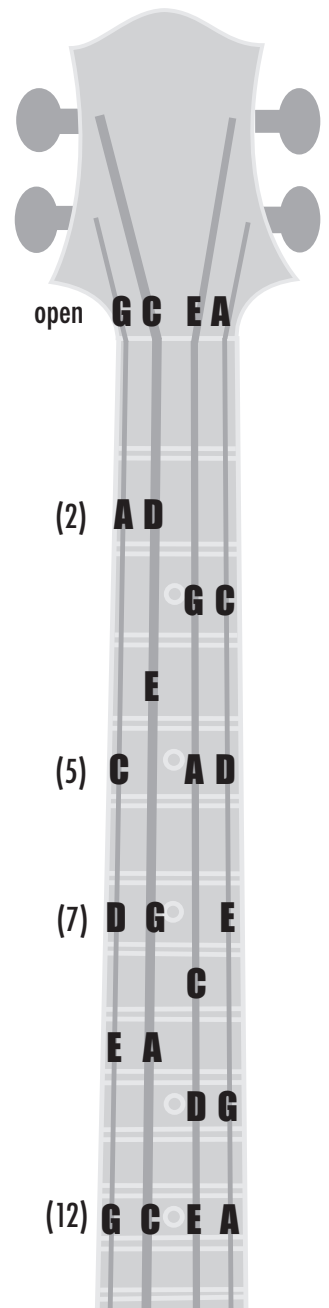
Sometimes called the *Major Pentatonic*, the pentatonic scale has been the source of more simple melodies than any other scale. Melodies like *Camptown Races* and *Amazing Grace*. Song hooks and licks like *My Girl* use the pentatonic scale.



C Pentatonic Scale (C D E G A)

For the musically literate, you can think of C Pentatonic as the C major scale with no 4th or 7th scale degrees (F and B). A super easy pentatonic scale to play on piano is F# pentatonic, the black keys only (F-Sharp, G-sharp, A-sharp, C-sharp, and D-sharp).

The ukulele on the right shows all the C, D, E, G, and A notes available from the open strings to the twelfth fret, regardless of the tuning.



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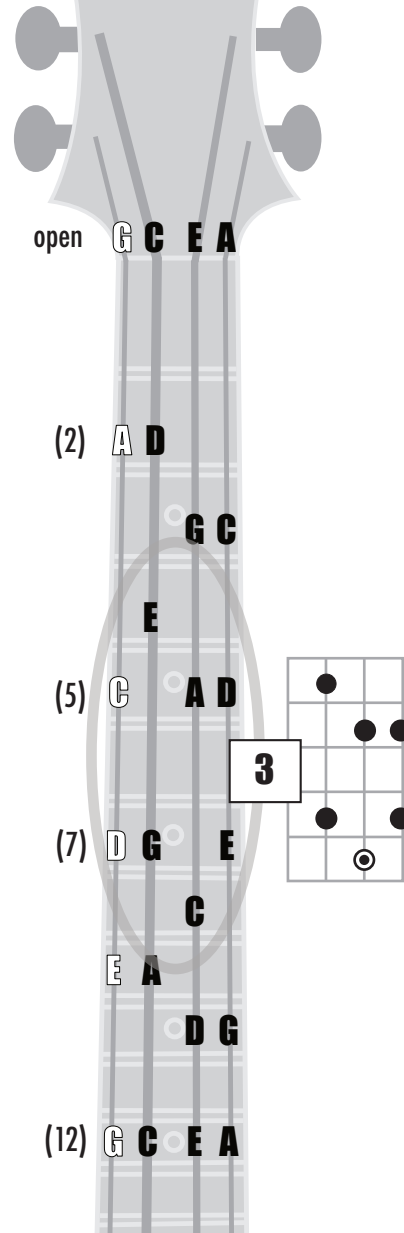
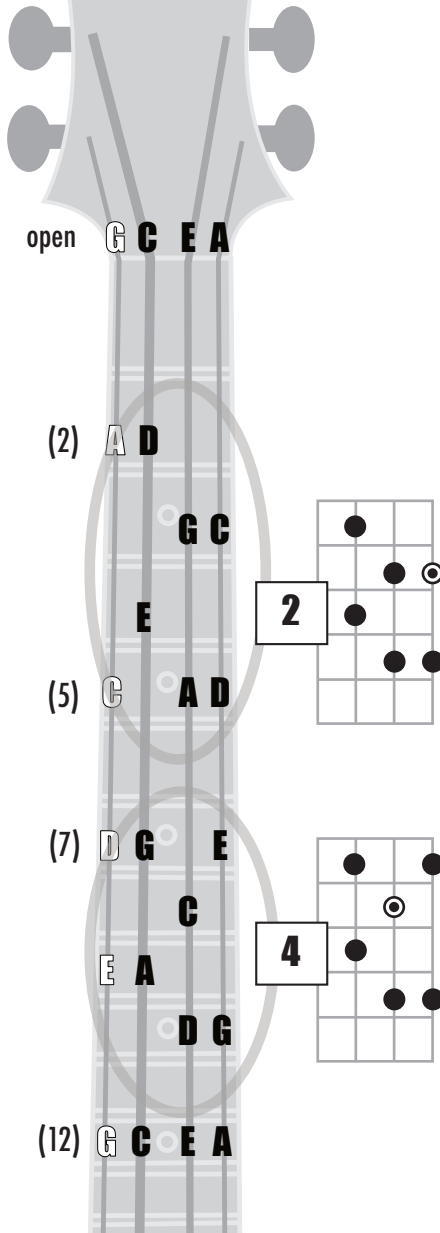
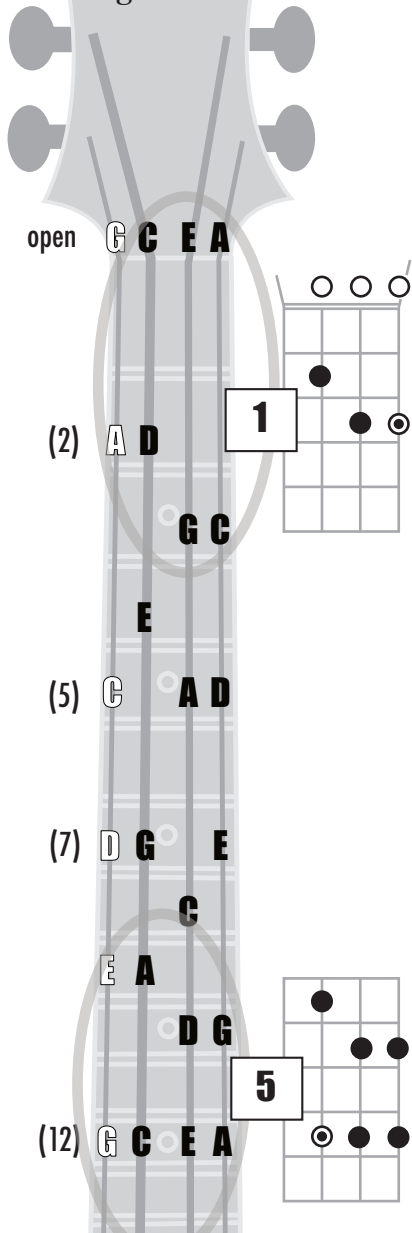
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Pentatonic Scale Shapes

Here are five manageable scale shapes that can be extracted from the larger set of available notes.

When working with the C Pentatonic Scale shapes, practice each from C to C', the root to the octave or from the lowest note to the highest note of the position. Practice both ascending and descending.



Note: The scale notes available on string four are shown for reference only but not used.

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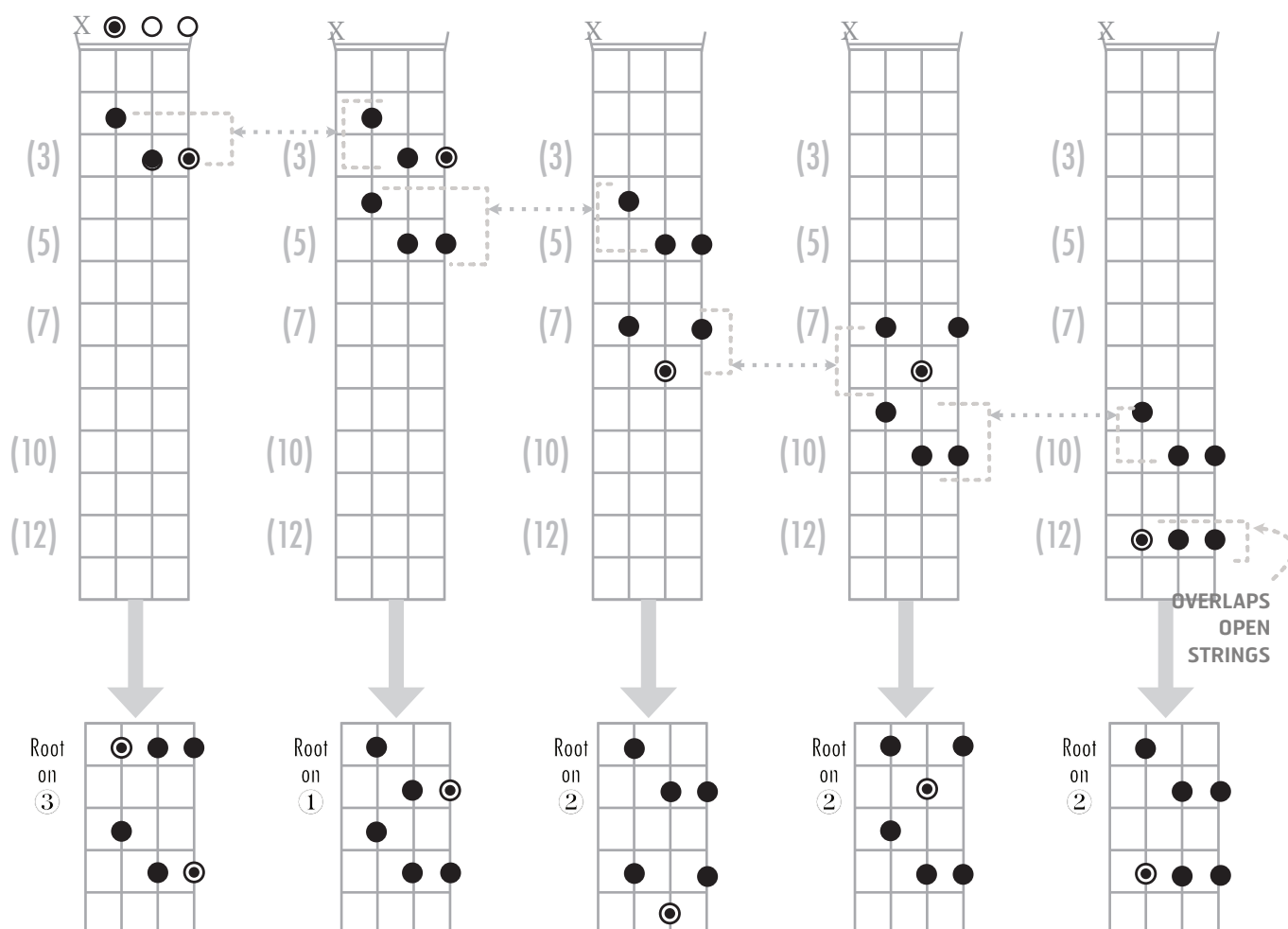




The Five Shapes

The root is indicated with a *birdseye* or *bullseye*. Note the overlap of one shape to the next. The higher fretted notes of one shape are the same notes as the lower fretted notes of the next shape. I've indicated this with the first two shapes. Memorize the shape or picture that each produces.

The five shapes are shown, first as C Pentatonic, in the position on the ukulele fingerboard and then as the C Pentatonic scale shapes. Any scale without open strings can be transposed to different keys by locating the root of the new scale.



As there are no standard names of the shapes, I organize them by the string and root.

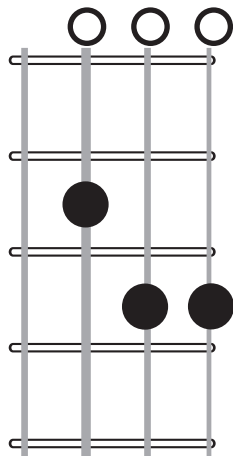
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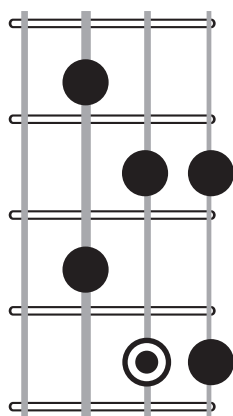
Here is the TAB for each of the five scale shapes

open



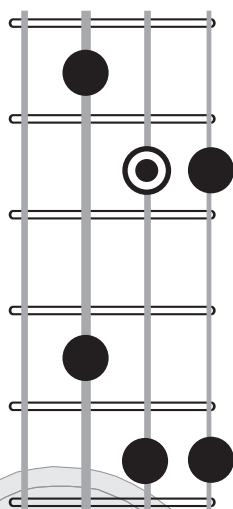
①	T				0		3	
②	A			0		3		
③	B	0		2				
④	B							
		C		D		E		G
						A		C'

(3)



①	T				3		5	
②	A			3		5		
③	B	2		4				
④	B							
		D		E		G		A
						C		D'

(5)



①	T				5		7	
②	A			5		8		
③	B	4		7				
④	B							
		E		G		A		C
						D		E'

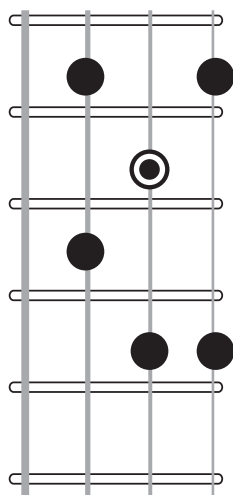
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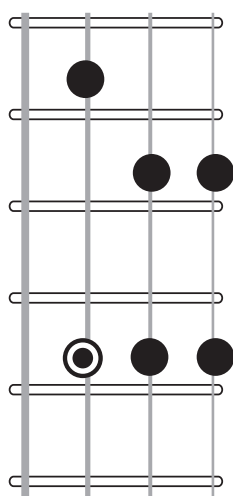
(8)



Fret	1st String (T)	2nd String (A)	3rd String (B)	4th String
7			7	
8		8		
9			9	
10		10		
11				
12				

G A C D E G'

(12)



Fret	1st String (T)	2nd String (A)	3rd String (B)	4th String
9			9	
10		10		
11				
12		12	12	
13				
14				

A C D E G A'



Root or letter name of the scale.

The fret of the root is indicated in parenthesis. This is the note used for reference, transposition and memorizing the shape and notes of the scale.

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Pentatonic Scale Chords

The basic chords for the C pentatonic scale are: **C, Dm, Em, F, G, G7, Am** and **Bb**. These are some of the first chords that new ukulele players learn.

In addition to the previous chords the following 4-part chords are good candidates for creating your licks and solos: Cmaj7, Dm7, Em7, Fmaj7, G7, Am7 and Bbmaj7.

These are chords common to the key of C or to a C major tonality. The primary chords of the key of C are: C, F, G and/or G7. These are the famous I, IV and V chords.

The Pentatonic Scale and Chord Tones

A chord tone is simply one of the notes of the chord. The C major triad contains the notes C, E and G. All three of these notes are in the C Pentatonic scale (**C D E G A C**).

Here are the chord tones for the chords of the C Pentatonic scale.

C	C	E	G	
Dm	D	F	A	
Em	E	G	B	
F	F	A	C	
G	G	B	D	
G7	G	B	D	F
Am	A	C	E	
Bb	Bb	D	F	

The Importance of Chord Tones

When creating your melodies a chord tone is a good place to start or emphasize. You'll sound good without even trying.

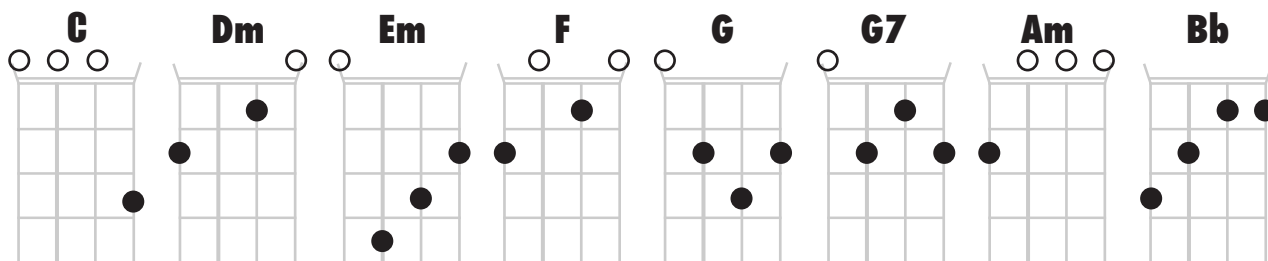
A chord tone can even be played that is not part of the scale. An example would be the F chord. The F note is available to play because it's a chord tone. Though it's not in the C pentatonic scale.

There is only one guideline that can come in very handy. **Any note that is one half step above a chord tone will sound dissonant.**





The Open Position Chords in the Key of C Major and C Pentatonic

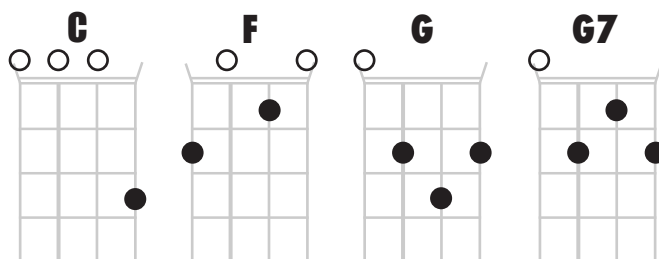


○ = open string

Bb is technically not an open position chord but is shown in order to have a complete set of chords to use in this position.

Primary Chords - C, F, G and G7

The primary chords in the key of C are: **C**, **F** and **G** or **G7**. Songs in the key of C use these chords. The **Dm**, **Em**, **Am**, and **Bb** are secondary chords but are very common.



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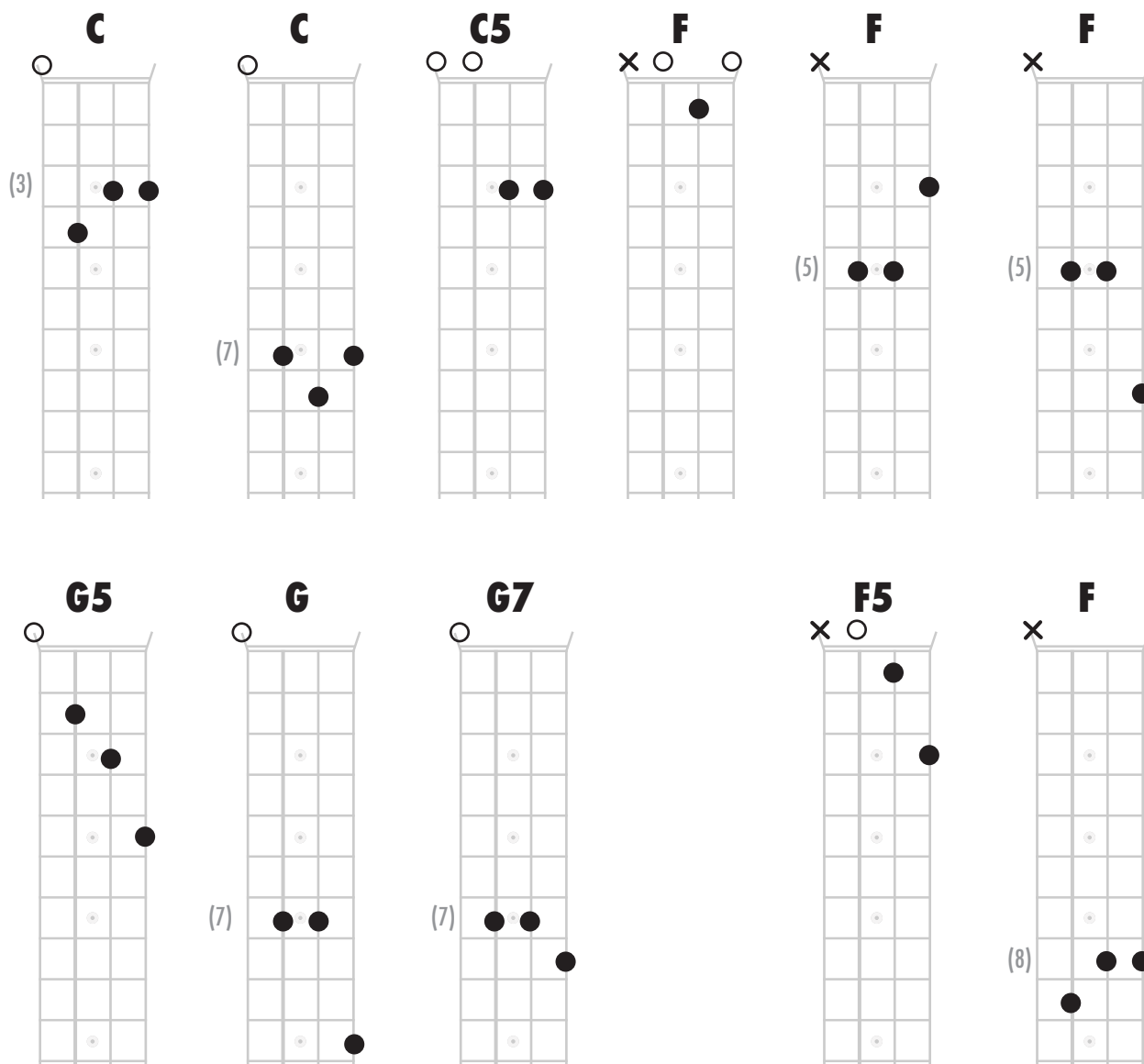
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Additional C, F and G Chords

Here are a few of the many **C**, **F** and **G** chord voicings available on ukulele. Both C and G contain a G note so the open string four can be used in voicings higher up the neck. For the F chord string four should not be played when using these additional F chords.



× = Not Sounded

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Essential Scales

The Pentatonic Scale is one of the six essential scales.

Essential scales are the first choice scales you need to improvise or create melodies.

There are six essential scales that will get you through the majority of common chord progressions and songs.

Essential scales are the *Blues*, *Pentatonic*, *Dorian*, *Mixolydian*, *Aeolian*, *Ionian*.

Of these six essential scales, the *Pentatonic* and *Blues* scales provide an easy start for soloing, improvisation and creating melodies. These pentatonic scales can also form the foundation for building other essential scale.

Scales can have alternate names. Alternate names are show in parentheses. Here are the alternate names for the six essential scales.

- **Ionian** (Major)
- **Aeolian** (Natural Minor)
- **Dorian** (Minor)
- **Pentatonic** (Major Pentatonic, Country Scale)
- **Blues** (Minor Pentatonic)
- **Mixolydian** (Dominant)

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