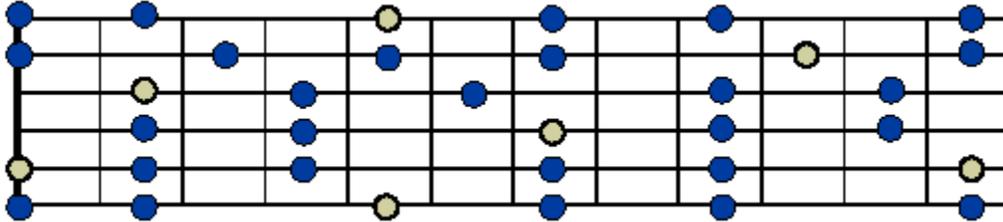


Guitar theory: Pentatonic Scales

Tried and true, this is the scale we all love to use. Guitar legends have been made from this scale. The good news is that it's one of the easiest scales to remember and it fits in just about everyone's style in some way or another. It's commonly used in country, jazz, rock, metal, folk, everything.

Major Pentatonic Scale

Lets start with the Pentatonic major scale. Below is the fretboard chart (in A) for it then we'll talk about what's going on in it.



Above you can see that there seems to be fewer notes than the major and minor scales. It's true. The major pentatonic eliminates the 4th and the 6th of the major scale. This may be the reason it is easier to remember. Also by eliminating the 7th it makes the scale more universally usable. The 7th note, remember, sets the flavor of the chord. Without defining it the scale can fit over more chords.

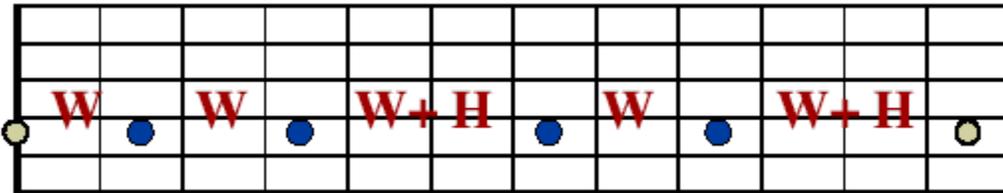
Every single major pentatonic scale for every single key signature follows the same pattern:

W ... W ... W + H ... W ... W + H
or

Whole step - Whole step - Whole step and a half - Whole step - Whole step and a half

A step is the distance between 2 notes: half step = 1 fret whole step = 2 frets

On the guitar you can play a whole major scale up to the 12th fret and see the pattern on one string.



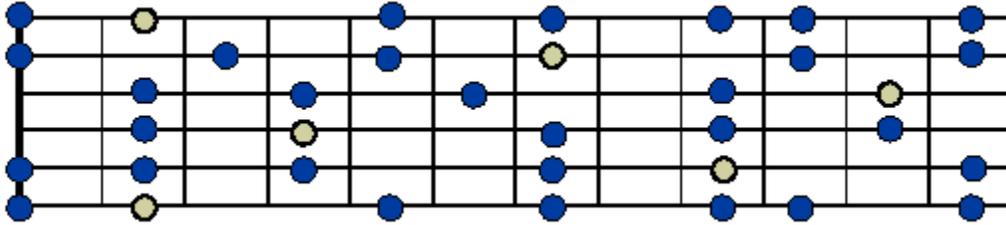
A very good idea would be to try to memorize or learn the major pentatonic scale for each of the keys A through G. Below is a chart that shows every key's major pentatonic scale.

Tonic (major pentatonic scale)	2nd	3rd	5th	6th
A	B	C#	E	F#
B	C#	D#	F#	G#
C	D	E	G	A
D	E	F#	A	B
E	F#	G#	B	C#
F	G	A	C	D

G	A	B	D	E
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Minor Pentatonic Scale

The minor pentatonic pretty much is the major pentatonic scale except you shift the tonic, or 1st note to 3 frets below. So the chart's notes remain the same but the root or tonic is different. Take a look.



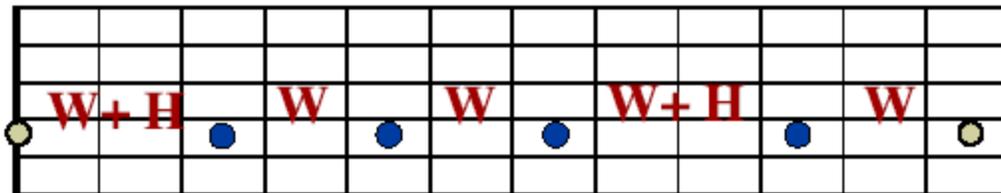
I made a mistake on the B string... the blue fretted note on the 3rd fret should actually be on the 2nd fret. My bad yo. hehe

Above you can see that there seems to be fewer notes than the major and minor scales. It's true. The major pentatonic eliminates the 4th and the 6th of the major scale. This may be the reason it is easier to remember. Also by eliminating the 7th it makes the scale more universally usable. The 7th note, remember, sets the flavor of the chord. Without defining it the scale can fit over more chords. Every single major pentatonic scale for every single key signature follows the same pattern:

W + H ... W ... W ... W + H ... W
or

Whole step and a half - Whole step - Whole step - Whole step and a half - Whole step

A step is the distance between 2 notes: half step = 1 fret whole step = 2 frets



So here are the notes for all of the minor pentatonic scales

Tonic (minor pentatonic scale)	flat 3rd	4th	5th	flat 7th
A	C	D	E	G
B	D	E	F#	A
C	E ^b	F	G	B ^b
D	F	G	A	C
E	G	A	B	D
F	A ^b	B ^b	C	E ^b
G	B ^b	C	D	F

So obviously these two scales are related because each major pentatonic shares the same notes with its pentatonic minor scale. Here are the scales as they relate.

Major Pentatonic Scale	Relative Minor Pentatonic Scale	
A	F#m	
B	G#m	
C	Am	
D	Bm	
E	C#m	
F	Dm	
G	Em	