

## Part 4. Quick Basic Music Theory: Keys, Chords and Scales

**A. The Chromatic (all the notes) scale** written twice: *interval between adjacent notes is always a half tone* (a 12th of an octave)

A A# B C C# D D# E F F# G G# A A# B C C# D D# E F F# G G# A

A#(sharp) means same as Bb (flat), D# means same as Eb, etc., so I am skipping the flat names for convenience.

Note that there is no # between B & C, or E & F. That is because those names are just a half tone apart, by definition (a clumsy naming system, but it's universal).

**B. The Diatonic Major Scale**, any key; working with the Chromatic scale, above, start from a ROOT note (**the root note gives it's name to the key**) and count numbers of half tones, collecting notes as you go; root, up 2,2,1,2,2,2,1 (or you could say "whole whole half, whole, whole, whole half").

Starting from G (root note) that would give: G, up 2 is A, up 2 is B, up 1 is C, up 2 is D, up 2 is E, up 2 is F#, up 1 is G. So a G major scale is the notes G A B C D E F# G, following the pattern of 2 2 1 2 2 2 1 (or W W H W W W H, which is more common). REMEMBER that there is just a half tone between B & C and E & F when you are counting.

From D ( a new root note) it would give D, E F# G A B C# D. Check my counting yourself!

### **C. The Strumstick Scale and the Extra Fret**

The Strumstick uses a diatonic major scale fretting pattern, plus(!) it adds one extra Fret. The G major scale goes G A B C D E F# G, but the Strumstick adds an F in between the E and the F#. That is a very useful note, it's called the flatted seventh of the scale; having the flatted seventh allows you to make some chords you could not make otherwise, and it permits the modified tuning (5 1 5) to give you a complete major scale in the new key. We still consider the Strumstick to be a Diatonic instrument, even though it is a teensy bit more complex than a pure diatonic instrument.

### **D. Minor Scales**

There are several minor scales. A typical one (called the Natural Minor Scale) uses the intervals:

root, up 2, 1, 2, 2, 1, 2, 2 (or W H W W H W W). Starting from A that would be the notes A, B, C, D, E, F, G, A. From E that would be E, F#, G, A, B, C, D, E.

### **E. Chord Theory**

**To create a Major Chord:** Write the scale for a given root, then select the first note, the third note, and the fifth note (called 1,3,5) from that major scale. The root names the chord.

G major scale; G, A B C D E F# G (1, 3, 5 equals G, B, D)

D major; D, F#, A

What would a C major chord be? how about a F# major chord?

**END OF SAMPLE**