

Scales

A **scale** is a series of notes constructed using a sequence of intervals. Functional scales: major, harmonic minor, and melodic minor are written in alphabetical order. A **scale degree** is the name given to the particular note in a scale and is written as a number with a caret on top. The following scale formulas are written with the intervals, half step (hs), whole step (ws), and augmented 2nd (+2), between scale degrees. Functional scales (major, harmonic minor, and melodic minor) need to be spelled alphabetically. This is called the **diatonic order**.

Common scale formulas

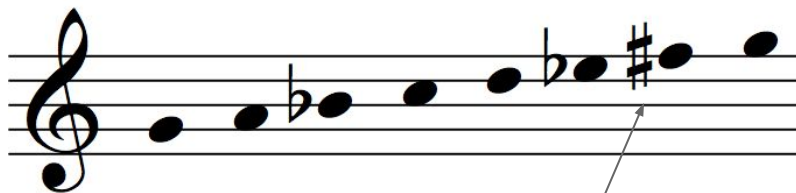
Major Scale: 1 (ws) 2 (ws) 3 (hs) 4 (ws) 5 (ws) 6 (ws) 7 (hs) 1
Harmonic Minor Scale: 1 (ws) 2 (hs) 3 (ws) 4 (ws) 5 (hs) 6 (+2) 7 (hs) 1
Melodic Minor Scale: 1 (ws) 2 (hs) 3 (ws) 4 (ws) 5 (ws) 6 (ws) 7 (hs) 1
Chromatic Scale: 1 (hs) 2 (hs) 3 (hs) 4 (hs) 5 (hs) 6 (hs) 7 (hs) 8 (hs) 9 (hs) 10 (hs) 11 (hs) 12 (hs) 1
Whole Tone Scale: 1 (ws) 2 (ws) 3 (ws) 4 (ws) 5 (ws) 6 (ws) 1
Half Whole Diminished Scale: 1 (hs) 2 (ws) 3 (hs) 4 (ws) 5 (hs) 6 (ws) 7 (hs) 8 (ws) 1
Whole Half Diminished Scale: 1 (ws) 2 (hs) 3 (ws) 4 (hs) 5 (ws) 6 (hs) 7 (ws) 8 (hs) 1

Spelling scales using intervals

1. Decide which scale formula will be used: **Harmonic minor**
2. Choose the starting pitch for the scale. The starting pitch for a scale is sometimes called tonic, the first scale degree, or the principal tone. **G**
3. Write the starting pitch down and label the first interval next to it.
G (ws)
4. Count up the correct amount of half steps and find the next note in the scale.
 - a. It helps to draw a piano to count half steps
 - b. The Major, harmonic minor, and melodic minor scale need to be spelled alphabetically**G (ws) A**
5. Continue steps three and four until the starting pitch is reached again
G (ws) A (hs) Bb (ws) C (ws) D (hs) Eb (+2) F# (hs) G
6. Write in scale degrees above the scale

G Harmonic Minor Scale

^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^ ^
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 1
G A Bb C D Eb F# G



F# is used instead of Gb
to keep the diatonic order