

Introduce Scales-Part 1 (Understanding the A minor scale)

Lesson Objectives

- Introduce the concept of *Scales*.
- Understand the *A minor scale*.
- Develop the ability to play up and down the A minor scale using quarter notes and eighth notes.
- Develop the ability to visualise the minor scale shape.

Introducing the A minor scale

In lesson nine we made a list of all the notes we have learned to play so far:

A, B, C, D, E, F, G.

In our first example below, Fig 1, we have all the notes written on our musical Stave. With the addition of an A at the top of the scale, the Octave note, these notes collectively form a scale. This scale is called the A minor scale.

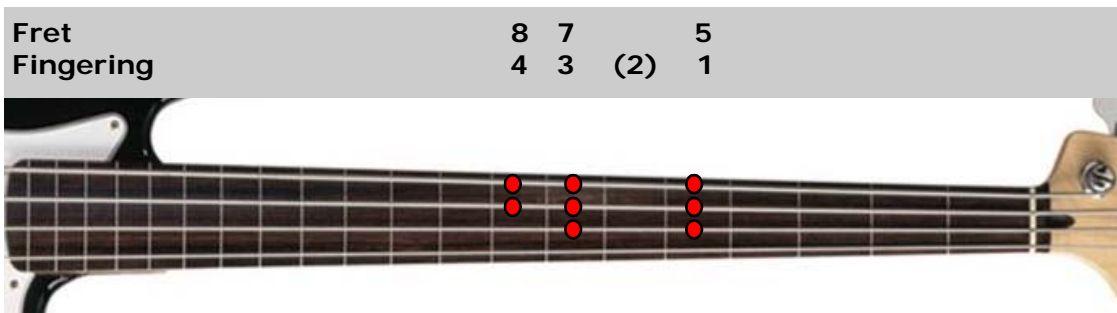
Fig 1 The A minor Scale (All learned notes plus the Octave)



Performing the A minor scale

Let's now practise playing the scale. The first thing to do though is to have a good look at the fingerboard to see where we find the notes of the scale and play in a logical order with the appropriate fingers. Take a look at the fingerboard below.

Fig 2 A minor Scale on the Fingerboard



You should certainly take a close look at the multimedia files to confirm how you play the A minor scale, but let's just walk through it step by step. Technically speaking you should use a finger per fret.

- So the first note is A, which you will play at the 5th fret on the 4th, 'E' string.
- The next note B is found at fret 7 on the 'E' string and accordingly you use your 3rd finger.
- The next note C is found at fret 8 on the 'E' string and accordingly you use your 4th finger.

So you have played the first three notes in the scale on the bottom string. Let's now have a look at C,D, and E.

Continuing to look at the fingerboard diagram.

- On the 'A' string, play the note of D at fret 5 using your 1st finger.
- At fret 7, again on the 'A' string play the note of E at fret 7 using your 3rd finger.
- Now play F on the 'A' string at fret 8 with your 4th finger.

Finally, let's now finish the scale on string 2, the D string.

- Play the note of G at fret 5 with the 1st finger, then
- Play the octave note of A at fret 7 with the 3rd finger.

After running through these instructions, use the multimedia files to confirm your understanding and then practise with the Xtractor to perfect your skill of playing the A minor scale.

Exercise 1 lesson012.ibsis1.01



Playing up and down the A minor Scale

Now that you have a good understanding of the scale and where the notes are found on the fingerboard, you need to be able to play both down and up the scale.

Repeat this next exercise over and over until you are comfortable with it and are very sure of what you are doing. Ensure that you are using the correct fingering.

Exercise 2 lesson012.ibsis1.02



Visualising the shape

It is important to be able to memorise the shape of the A minor scale on the fingerboard, so that you can recall how to play it when needed in the future.

Scale Practise

Musicians know that practise makes perfect. That's why we practise scales over and over again. The following exercises will help you become completely comfortable with playing the A minor scale by practising it in different ways.

For example, instead of playing one note on each beat, quarter notes, try playing two notes on each beat. This is simply a right hand double on each note of the scale. Remember to alternate your right hand fingers as you play these eighth notes.

Play the following exercise which uses two eighth notes on each note. Alternate your right hand fingers and use the fingering we learned in the first two exercises, with one finger per fret starting with the note of A, at the 5th fret on the E string.

Use the multimedia files as always, paying particular attention to timing, fluency and fingering.

Exercise 3
lesson012.ibsis1.03



1 2

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

3 4

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