

Lesson Fifteen

Gigajam Bass School Lesson 15 IBS DS

Developing Scales

Lesson Objectives

- Develop understanding of the minor scale.
- Develop the concept of transferability of minor scales.
- Develop the ability to be able to play a minor scale on any Natural note.
- Develop the ability to perform any minor scale using quarter notes and eighth notes.
- Introduce minor scale from an Open string.
- Introduce new notes *Bb* and *Eb*.

Starting Notes

As a bass player we are used to playing the root note of the chord. When the chord changes, we change. We studied this in lesson 1, Understanding the Root Note.

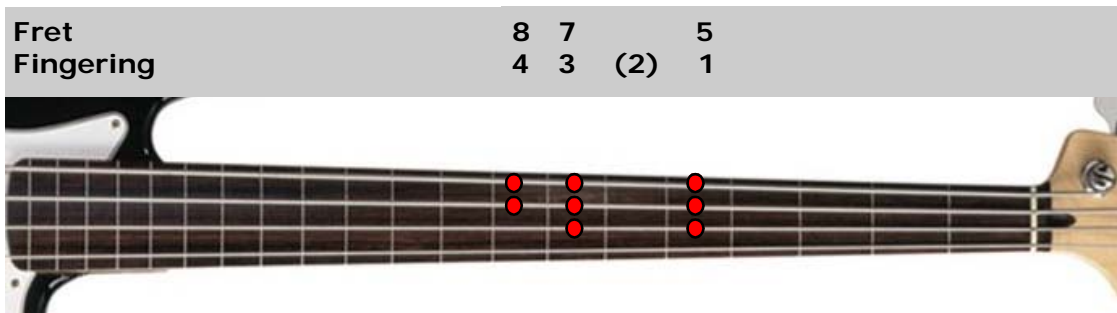
It is important to be able to do this for everything we learn to play on bass.

So far we have learned to play only the A minor scale. We now need to learn how to play a minor scale starting on any of the notes we have learned (A, B, C, D, E, F and G). We will therefore begin by focusing on how the minor scale shape is simply transferred on the fingerboard to produce different minor scales.

The Minor Scale Shape

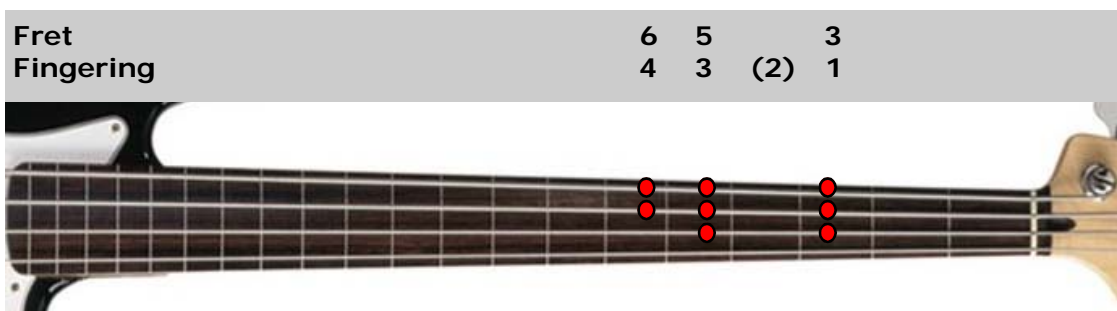
Because the fingerboard is symmetrical it is easy to transfer the shape from one Root note to another. Take a look at the A minor shape below in Fig 1 and then compare it to our second example in Fig 2.

Fig 1 A minor Scale on the Fingerboard



As we said before the minor scale shape can be transferred to different root notes. The fingering and the shape are the same, the only difference is that the starting note is a different root note. In our example in Fig 2 we are starting on the root note of G and so you see that all that has changed is the position of the minor scale shape on the fingerboard, which now starts at the 3rd fret.

Fig 2 G minor Scale on the Fingerboard



G Minor Scale

The scale takes its name from its Root note, so by starting on G, we have the G minor scale. As we did with the A minor scale, we should familiarise ourselves with its sound by practising it. As always we have the multimedia files to help you, so watch the video carefully, ensuring you have transferred the minor scale shape correctly to G, and that you are fingering correctly.

Exercise 1 lesson015.ibsds.01



Scale Practise

Use these next two examples to develop your ability to play the G minor scale fluently.

Exercise 2 helps develop your ability to play the Ascending and Descending G minor.

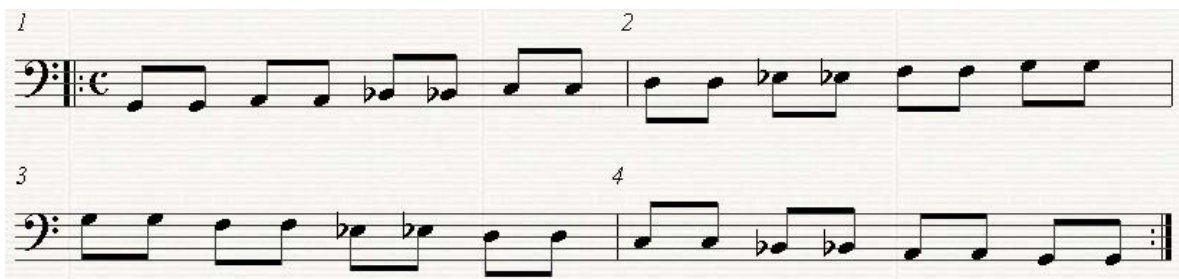
Exercise 3 helps develop playing eighth notes again using the Ascending and Descending G minor scale.

As with the A minor scale, it is important to spend some time playing the G minor scale to make sure you become totally familiar with it.

Exercise 2 lesson015.ibsds.02



Exercise 3 lesson015.ibsds.03



Note Names

It is important to learn the names of notes in the scale. As usual the letters appear in alphabet order starting from the root. As you can see however, there is something unusual about some of the note names in G minor. Learning the G minor scale means that we have found two new notes and it is time to introduce the notes of *Bb* (B flat) and *Eb* (E flat).

Let's take a close look again at the musical staff showing the G minor scale in Fig 3 below.

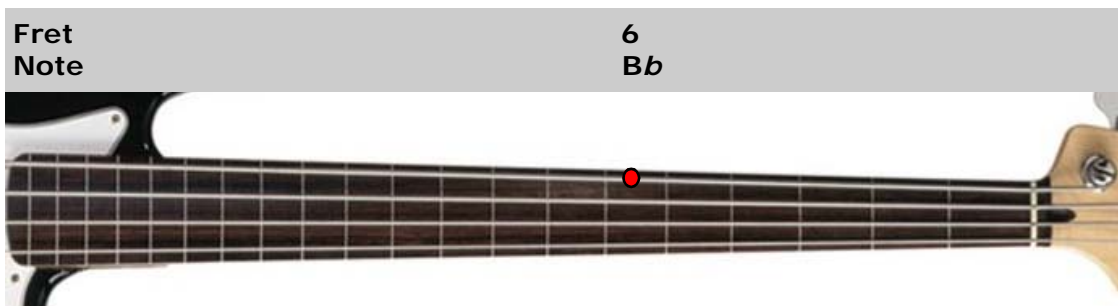
Fig 3 G minor Scale



Introducing B Flat *Bb*

Instead of B there is a *Bb* (B flat). *Bb* is played on the 6th fret of the E string, as you can see from Fig 4 below.

Fig 4 B Flat (*Bb*) on the E string



In this instance we find *Bb* between A at the 5th fret and B at the 7th fret. Accordingly, *Bb* is a lower sounding note than B in its pitch, hence its name.

Introducing E Flat *Eb*

There is one more new note to introduce. Instead of E there is an *Eb* (E flat). *Eb* is played on the 6th fret of the A string, as you can see from Fig 5 below.

Fig 5 E Flat (*Eb*) on the A string



In this instance we find *Eb* between D at the 5th fret and E at the 7th fret. Accordingly, *Eb* is a lower sounding note than E in its pitch.

Accidentals

You may well be wondering what Flats are. For the moment, all you need to know is that this musical symbol, **b** represents what are called Flats. In lesson 17, we will go on to explain a little more about the meaning of Flats, Sharps and Natural notes and introduce the subject of **Accidentals**. However, it is not appropriate to acquire this specific knowledge at this stage as it won't help you develop your performance skills on the bass guitar.

Minor Scales

The following exercises all feature the minor scale shape. The only difference is the starting note. Spend some time with each exercise.

The minor scale has the same basic sound irrespective of the starting note. You should use the same fingering for each of the minor scales, as you are of course, using the same shape each time!

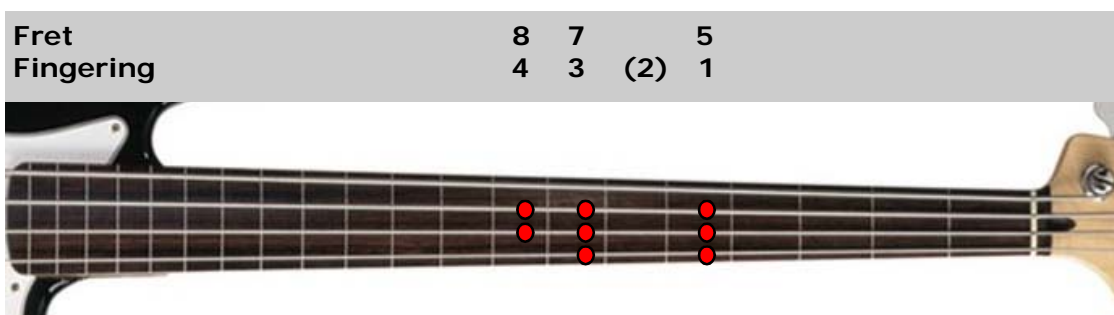
Pay attention, as we did when studying G minor, to the new non-natural note names which appear in these minor scales. As said before we will study this in more detail in lesson 17 when we introduce the subject of Accidentals. Developing scales not only helps with building and creating bass lines, but also provides you with a growing knowledge of the notes on the fingerboard and how to navigate around the neck of the bass more fluently using a simple but effective fingering structure.

You may or may not have noticed, but the fingering pattern for a minor scale is
134, 134, 13

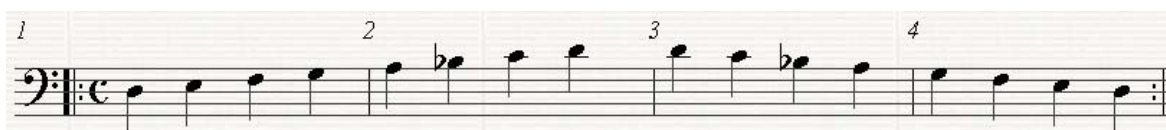
D Minor Scale

Look at the shape and starting note in Fig 6 and then use the multimedia files to develop your performance and familiarity with the scale of D minor.

Fig 6 D minor Scale on the Fingerboard



Exercise 4 D Minor Scale lesson015.ibsds.04



Exercise 5 D Minor Scale using Eighth Notes
 lesson015.ibsds.05



C Minor Scale

Look at the shape and starting note in Fig 7 and then use the multimedia files to develop your performance and familiarity with the scale of C minor.

This scale produces a new note for you. The note of **Ab** is found on the D string at the 6th fret.

Fig 7 C minor Scale on the Fingerboard

Fret	6	5	3
Fingering	4	3	(2) 1

Exercise 6 C Minor Scale
 lesson015.ibsds.06



Exercise 7 C Minor Scale using Eighth Notes
 lesson015.ibsds.07



F Minor Scale

Look at the shape and starting note in Fig 8 and then use the multimedia files to develop your performance and familiarity with the scale of F minor.

This scale produces a new note for you as well. The note of **Db** is found on the A string at the 4th fret.

Fig 8 F minor Scale on the Fingerboard

Fret	4	3	1
Fingering	4	3 (2)	1

Exercise 8 F Minor Scale
lesson015.ibsds.08



1 2 3 4

F G Ab Bb C **Db** Eb F F Eb **Db** C Bb Ab G F

Exercise 9 F Minor Scale using Eighth Notes
lesson015.ibsds.09



1 2 3 4

B Minor Scale

Look at the shape and starting note in Fig 9 and then use the multimedia files to develop your performance and familiarity with the scale of B minor.

Fig 9 B minor Scale on the Fingerboard

Fret	10	9	7
Fingering	4	3 (2)	1

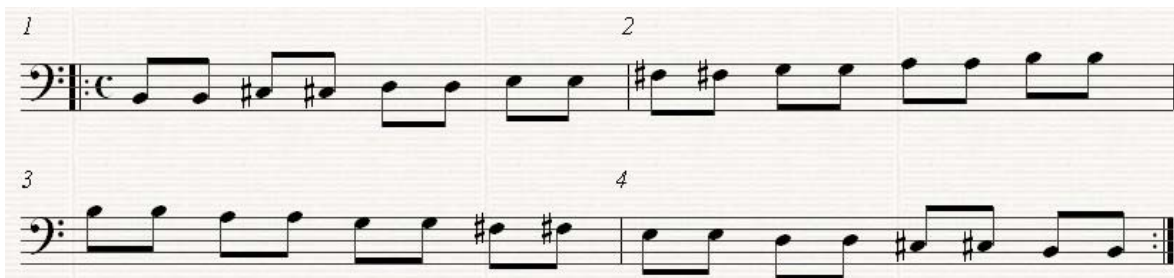
Exercise 10 B Minor Scale lesson015.ibsds.10



I am sure that you will have noticed that in the next exercise we have notes with # sign. These signs represent **Sharp** notes. As with **Flats**, this is all you need to know for the moment and the subject of **Accidentals** will be dealt with in lesson 17.



Exercise 11 B Minor Scale using Eighth Notes lesson015.ibsds.11



Open String Minor Scale Shape

As we have seen the minor scale shape is always the same and can be transferred anywhere on the fingerboard. Starting on an Open string however requires a slightly different fingering.

The first note of the minor scale (Root) is usually played with the first index finger of the left hand. When playing a minor scale from an open string the first (Root) note is played with an open string. Therefore, the first (index) finger has not yet been used and is free to play the second note of the scale.

Let's have a look at playing an A minor scale, this time playing the Root note from the open A string. Look at figure 10 and work out the position and fingering of the scale.

Fig 10 A minor Scale-Root from an Open String



As you can see in Fig 10, we have a fundamental difference in the shape of the minor scale. We firstly play the Open string (Blue circle) and then fret the notes with our left hand at frets 2 and 3 as shown with the Red circles.

Each time you move up a string, you play an Open note. Use the multimedia files to check your understanding and then practise by playing exercises 12 and 13 along with the Xtractor.

Exercise 12 A Minor Scale-Rooting from an Open String
 lesson015.ibsds.12



1 2 3 4

Open 2 3 Open 2 3 Open 2 2 Open 3 2 Open 3 2 Open

Exercise 13 A Minor Scale-Rooting from an Open String
 lesson015.ibsds.13



1 2

Open 2 3 Open 2 3 Open 2 Open 2

3 4

2 Open 3 2 Open 3 2 Open

E Minor Scale Rooted from an Open String

We can copy the scale shape of the open string from our A minor scale and shift it to the E string. As with the A minor scale we play the Open string (Blue circle) and then fret the notes with our left hand at frets 2 and 3 as shown with the Red circles.

Each time you move up a string, you play an Open note. Again as always, use the multimedia files to check your understanding and then practise by playing exercises 14 and 15 along with the Xtractor.

Fig 11 E minor Scale-Root from an Open String

Fret	Open			3	2
Fingering	Open			2	1

Exercise 14 E Minor Scale-Rooting from an Open String
 lesson015.ibsds.14



1 2 3 4

Open 2 3 Open 2 3 Open 2 2 Open 3 2 Open 3 2 Open

Exercise 15 E Minor Scale-Rooting from an Open String
lesson015.ibsds.15



1

2

Open 2 3 Open 2 3 Open 2

3

4

2 Open 3 2 Open 3 2 Open