



Lesson Twenty Five

Introducing Pentatonics

Gigajam Bass School Lesson 25 IBS IP

Lesson Objectives

- Introduce *Pentatonic Scale* and *Arpeggios*.
- Understand *construction theory*.
- Perform pentatonic based riffs.
- Visualise and transfer major pentatonic shapes.
- Understand the relationship between major pentatonic, major triad and major scale.

Understanding Pentatonics

A **Pentatonic Scale** is a scale containing five notes. The word **Penta** means five.

In a major pentatonic, five notes are selected from the major scale. On bass guitar it is usual to play the five notes of a Pentatonic scale separately as an Arpeggio.

Pentatonics are extremely useful to a Bass player, just add some rhythm to create a riff.

Major Pentatonic theory

The five notes of a major pentatonic scale are taken from the pentatonic scale.

A major pentatonic scale uses the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 5th and 6th notes of a major scale. Let's look at an example. In our first Fig, we have a C major scale.

Fig 1 C Major Scale



The C major pentatonic scale is therefore as shown in our table, **Fig 2**. The notes are shown on the staff in **Fig 3**.

Fig 2 C Major Pentatonic Scale

1st	2nd	3rd	5th	6th
C	D	E	G	A

Fig 3 C Major Pentatonic Scale



C major pentatonic scale

Now play the scale, taking great care to follow the fingering correctly. Remember to start with the middle finger (2) of the left hand. Major scales, triads and pentatonics are usually played beginning with the middle finger.

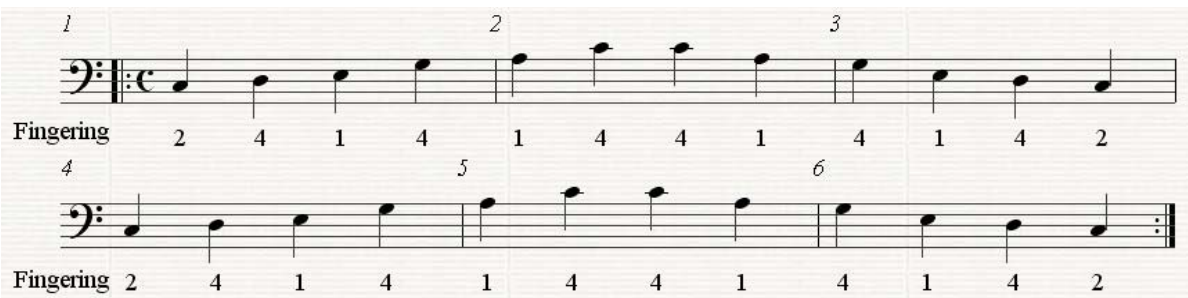
Use the multimedia files, along with the diagram of the pentatonic shape found in **Fig 4**. Once comfortable, then repeat the exercise around and around to develop fluency and familiarity.

Fig 4 C Major Pentatonic Scale

Note	D	C	E
	G		A
Fret	5	3	2
Fingering	4	2	1



Exercise 1
lesson025.ibsip.01

1

2

3

Fingering 2 4 1 4 1 4 4 1 4 1 4 2

4

5

6

Fingering 2 4 1 4 1 4 4 1 4 1 4 2

Visualisation

Try to memorise the C major pentatonic shape on the fingerboard. Look carefully at **Fig 4**. Notice how it contains the notes of a C major triad.

C major triad contains note numbers 1, 3 and 5.

C major pentatonic contains note numbers 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6.

When we use a pentatonic we also use the notes of the chord. This is why pentatonics are so successful and so useful. They sound so good that everybody uses them.

In addition to the notes of the triad there are two extra notes (2 and 6) in a major pentatonic. All these note numbers are of course taken from the major scale.

Comparing scale, triad and pentatonic

In the triad you have only the root, 3rd and 5th. In the pentatonic scale you do not use the 4th or 7th.

It is important to understand the relationship between the major scale, triad and pentatonic scale. Take a few minutes to compare the shapes on the fingerboard and how they relate to each other.

Fig 5 C Major Scale

Fret	5	4	3	2
Fingering	4	3	2	1




Fig 6 C Major Arpeggio

Fret	5	3	2
Fingering	4	2	1



Fig 7 C Major Pentatonic Scale

Fret	5	3	2
Fingering	4	2	1



Major scale, pentatonic and triad

Now try and consolidate your understanding by playing an exercise that incorporates each of these patterns.

The C major scale moves straight into the pentatonic and then into the triad. Play around and around to become completely familiar. Try to remember the shapes as you practise.

Exercise 2 lesson025.ibsip.02



1 C major scale 2 C major pentatonic scale 3 C major pentatonic scale 4 C major triad 5 C major triad 6 C major triad

Transferability

As has been said throughout the course, it is easily possible to transfer shapes and patterns to any note. Accordingly, it is also possible to play any major pentatonic scale.

Accordingly, transfer the major pentatonic shape to the notes of G, D and A.

The next exercise simply gets you to play each of these pentatonic scales one after the other.

Think about the shape and where the shapes need to start on the fingerboard. Once you feel you know what you are doing, check your understanding with the video files and then develop your ability to play the Pentatonic scales, by playing along with the media file on the BassXtractor

Exercise 3 lesson025.ibsip.03



1 C major pentatonic scale 2 C major pentatonic scale 3 G major pentatonic scale 4 G major pentatonic scale 5 D major pentatonic scale 6 D major pentatonic scale 7 A major pentatonic scale 8 A major pentatonic scale

Pentatonic riffs

The following examples are all based on the major pentatonic scale. The only difference between them is the rhythm. Make sure you understand both the notes used and the rhythm before you try to play along. Also, make sure you understand the notes of the pentatonic and how they are used to create each riff.

Exercise 4 lesson025.ibsip.04



Exercise 5 lesson025.ibsip.05



12 bar sequence

This last exercise comprises of a very well known sequence which is called a 12 bar. It is called a 12 bar simply because the pattern is played over 12 bars. You play 3 pentatonic scales in the pattern. Four bars of G, two bars of C, two bars of G, one bar of D, one bar of C and finish with two bars of G.

Use the multimedia files and repeat the sequence around and around. I am sure you will find the pattern familiar to your ear.

Exercise 6
lesson025.ibsip.06



1 2

3

5 6

7

9

11 12