

Major Scale Modes

For every Major Scale, there are seven Modes. They are built on the seven Degrees of each Major Scale. These Modes have seven notes, similar to the Major and Minor Scales. The seven notes of a Mode are the same as the seven notes of the Major Scale that it's built in, but each of the Modes start on one of the Scale Degrees of that Major Scale. In a way, the Major Scale and its Modes are a lot like Chords and their inversions, in that they have the same collection of notes, but each has its own quality and sound based on the arrangement of the notes.

An example may show it best.

Modes in the Key of D Major

<u>Color on Diagram</u>	<u>Major Scale Degree</u>	<u>Note of Degree</u>	<u>Notes of Mode Built on Degree</u>	<u>Name of Mode</u>
Red	I	Root D	D E F# G A B C#	D Ionian
Orange	II	E	E F# G A B C# D	E Dorian
Yellow	III	F#	F# G A B C# D E	F# Phrygian
Green	IV	G	G A B C# D E F#	G Lydian
Blue	V	A	A B C# D E F# G	A Mixolydian
Purple	VI	B	B C# D E F# G A	B Aeolian
Brown	VII	C#	C# D E F# G A B	C# Locrian

Something to notice in the above table is that D Ionian has the same notes and starting note as the D Major Scale, and B Aeolian has the same notes and starting note as the B Relative/Natural/Pure Minor Scale. So playing the Ionian Mode is the same as playing the Major Scale, and you could think "D Ionian Mode" instead of "D Major Scale" in Key of D Major songs and over Chords where you would play the D Major Scale. And playing the Aeolian Mode is the same as playing the Natural Minor Scale, so you could think "B Aeolian Mode" instead of "B Minor Scale" in Key of B Minor songs and over Chords where you would play the B Minor Scale. From the perspective of playing the Modes contained in the Positions of the Fretboard Positions Diagrams and the Reference Diagrams, it could actually be more straight-forward to think in terms of Modes for solos and improvising, and to know that you still have the Major Scales and Natural Minor Scales covered if you do.

The colors listed under "Color on Diagram" represent the starting notes of the Modes. For example, on the Fretboard Positions Diagram for the Key of D Major, to play the F# Phrygian Mode, start playing on any yellow colored note and play up to the orange note in any of the Positions. The starting note of the Phrygian Mode is also indicated on the Legend on page 6. The thing to realize is that on all of the Fretboard Positions Diagrams and Reference Diagrams, the yellow colored notes are the starting notes for the Phrygian Mode. Similarly, the red colored notes are the Ionian Mode starting notes, the orange colored notes are the Dorian Mode starting notes, and on down the list.

It would get pretty complicated if you always had to look up or determine a Mode's Major Key to know what notes to play for the Mode. That's more or less what took place in the last example by using the Diagram for the Key of D Major to play the F# Phrygian Mode. Instead, if you next want to play the A Phrygian Mode, decide on a Position, look at the Fretboard Positions Diagram on page 5 again to see where the yellow notes are for the Position (or have them memorized), then move the Position so that you are playing the note A for the yellow notes. For example, if you choose the G Position, the yellow notes occur