

The Major and Minor Scales

Of great importance is the Major Scale. And that's probably an understatement. Not only are most melodies and harmonies of most songs composed of the notes of a Major Scale, but also the Key Signatures, the Relative Minor Scale, the main seven Modes, the Major and Minor Pentatonic Scales, and the names of intervals and chords are all derived from the Major Scale.

The Major Scale sounds like the familiar Do Re Mi Fa So La Ti Do. It is composed of seven notes, but when it's played, the first note is often repeated an octave higher after the seventh note. The name "octave" is derived from its place as the eighth degree in the scale, as shown in the second chart below. The notes have specific spaces between them, measured in semitones (also known as half-steps and equal to one fret), which are called Intervals. There is a section on Intervals later in this book. All Major Scales have the following spaces. When added together, there are a total of 12 semitones.



The Interval name for 2 semitones is a Major Second, and for 1 semitone is a Minor Second.

In addition, the following Roman Numerals are called the Major Scale Degrees, and above them are the Scale Tone numbers. The notes of the D Major Scale are shown as an example. The names of the Intervals from the starting note are shown beneath.

