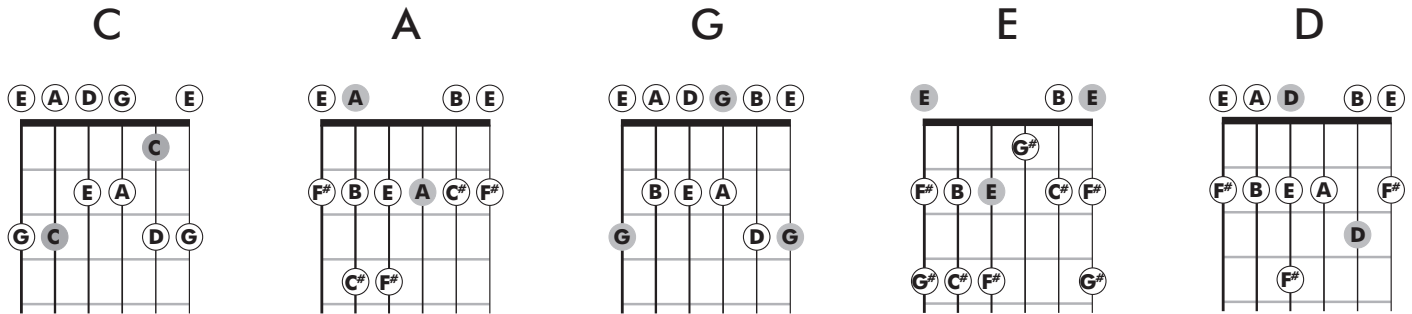


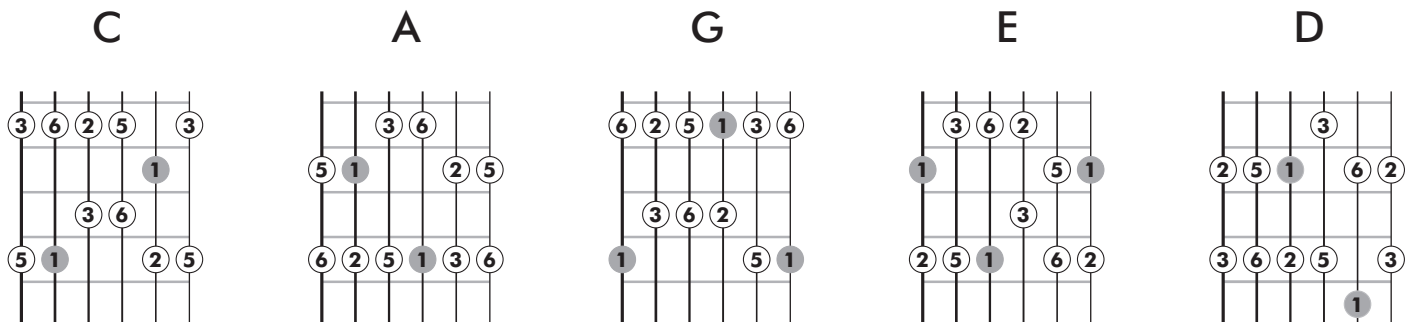
Intro to the Major Pentatonic Scale

The major pentatonic scale consists of scale degrees 1 - 2 - 3 - 5 - 6. You might think of it as a major scale with the 4th and 7th removed. It is a very useful scale for improvising over major chords because, of the five notes in the scale, three of them are chord tones – 1, 3 and 5. This ‘grounds’ the scale very securely in the chord and leaves only so much room for getting lost. It’s also worth noting that neither of the other two notes in the scale – the 2nd and 6th scale degrees – are particularly dissonant when played against a major chord. So even if you hit a non-chord tone at a less-than-optimal moment these notes will be relatively forgiving. (Something that cannot be said of the two notes of the major scale that are *not* included in the major pentatonic scale – the 4th and 7th.) There are three ways you’ll want to learn your major pentatonic scale forms: in open position, as closed (mobile) scale forms and as horizontal scale forms that span several chord shapes. Here they are:

Major Pentatonic Scales in Open Position



Closed (Mobile) Major Pentatonic Scales Forms



Horizontal Scale Forms

Although the scale forms above make it relatively easy to see how the scale relates to the underlying chord, they do not always offer the easiest fingerings. The “horizontal” scale forms shown to the right are one way around this problem.

The two extended scale forms (shown far right) use the 2-string, 5-note “unit” (shown immediate right) as a building block. Play this unit with the 1st and 3rd fingers, sliding either up or down on the 3rd finger into a new position as indicated by the arrows. The only time this unit will require slight adjustment is when you are moving between the 3rd and 2nd strings.

Use the root of each scale unit to orient yourself. These scale forms offer a comfortable way to traverse the entire fingerboard using major pentatonic scales.

