

Melodic scales

The 3 most commonly used scales are:

- ▶ the major scale,
- ▶ the melodic minor scale,
- ▶ the harmonic minor scale.

Many diagrams of these scales are possible, and those proposed here are chosen in such a way as to move as easily as possible from one scale to another: one goes from from the major scale to the melodic minor scale by lowering the third ($3 \rightarrow \flat 3$), and from the melodic minor scale to the harmonic minor scale by lowering the sixth ($6 \rightarrow \flat 6$).

The degrees starting the scales (noted 1 in bold) form a common diagram to the 3 scales.

Diagrams of the major, melodic minor and harmonic minor scales

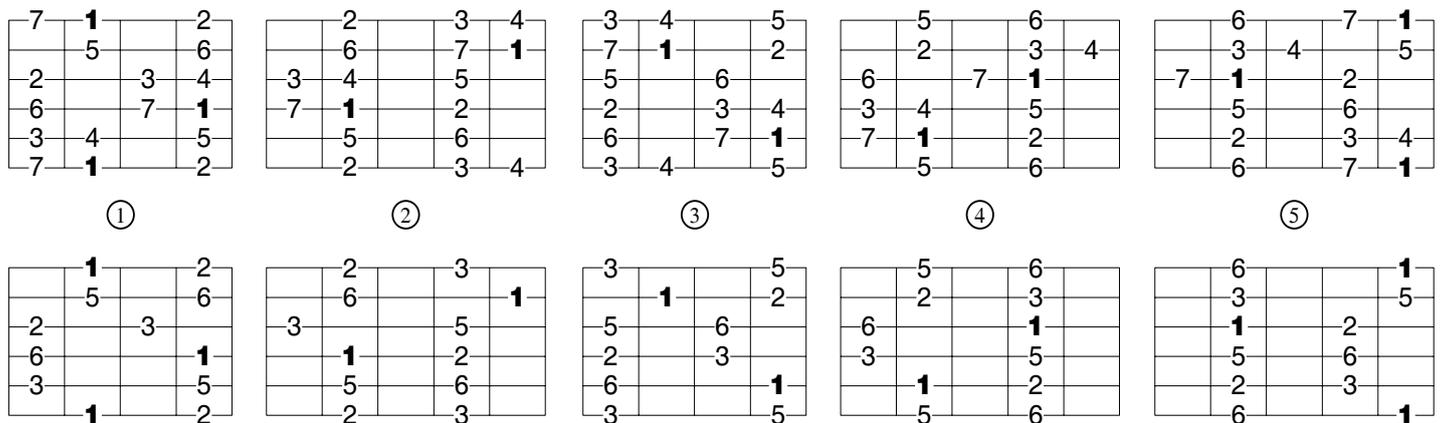
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From a heptatonic scale (7 notes), we can build a pentatonic scale (5 notes) by removing 2 degrees (here degrees 4 and 7) in order to suppress the semitones intervals. The pentatonic scale is thus included in the heptatonic scale. In the same way the pentatonic diagram is included in the heptatonic one as shown in the pairs of vertically aligned diagrams below.

Major scale

heptatonic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1
pentatonic	1	2	3		5	6		1

Major heptatonic and pentatonic scales diagrams

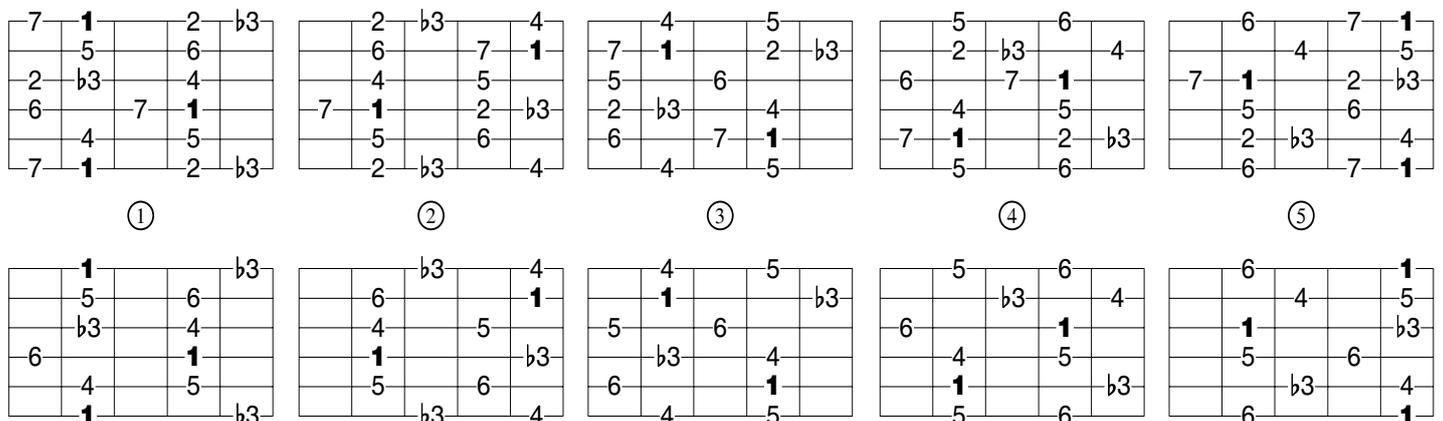


The melodic minor pentatonic scale is constructed by removing the degrees 2 and 7 of the heptatonic scale.

Melodic minor scale

heptatonic	1	2	b3	4	5	6	7	1
pentatonic	1		b3		5	6		1

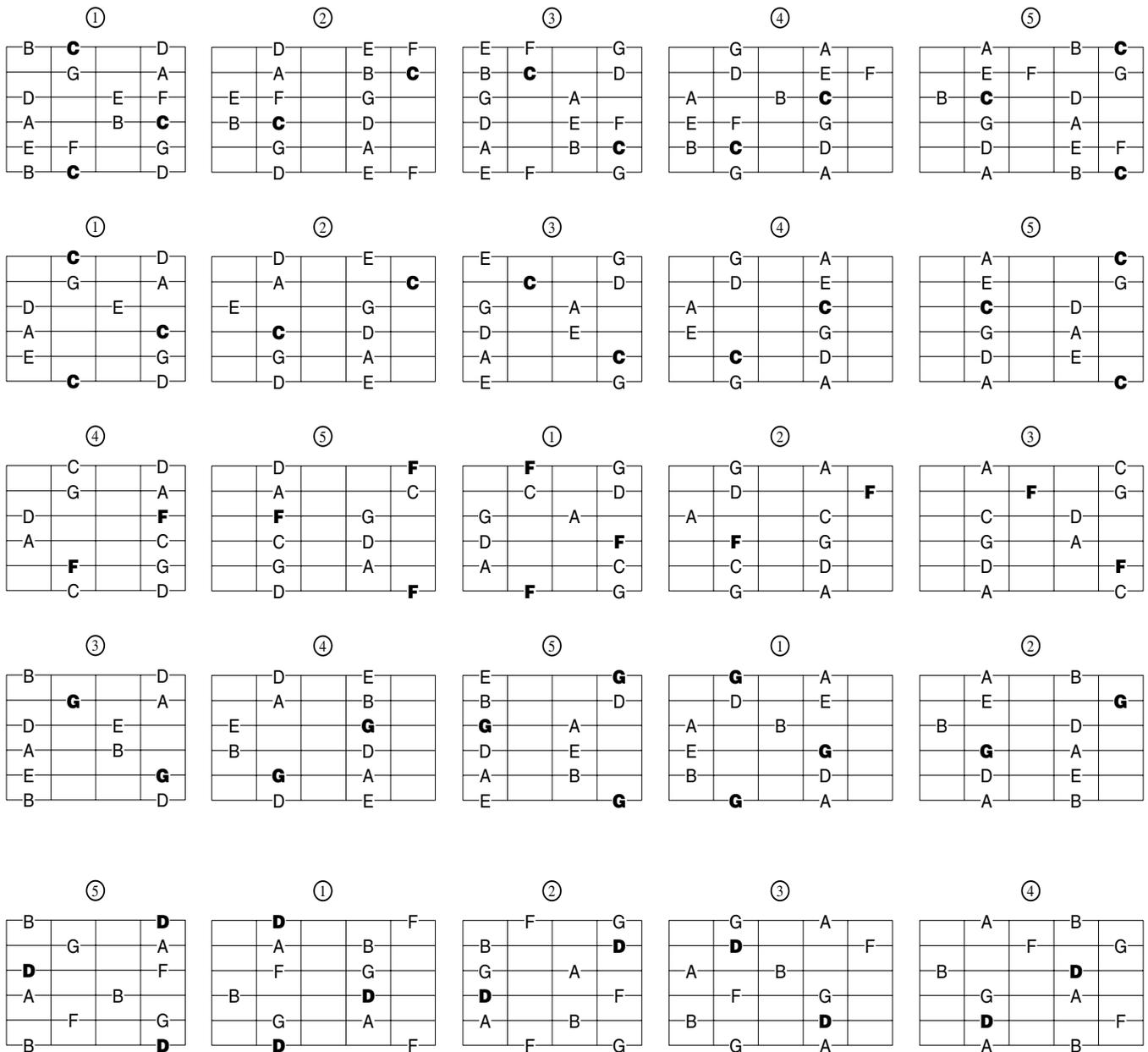
Melodic minor heptatonic and pentatonic scales diagrams



The heptatonic major scale contains 3 major pentatonic scales (abbreviated: pM) built on the I, IV and V degrees; and a melodic minor pentatonic scale (abbreviated: pmm) on the II degree. So in C, we have CpM, FpM, GpM and Dpmm.

The heptatonic diagrams contain those of these 4 pentatonics.

Diagrams of the pentatonic scales contained in C major scale



CpM = C D E G A
1 2 3 5 6

GpM = G A B D E
1 2 3 5 6

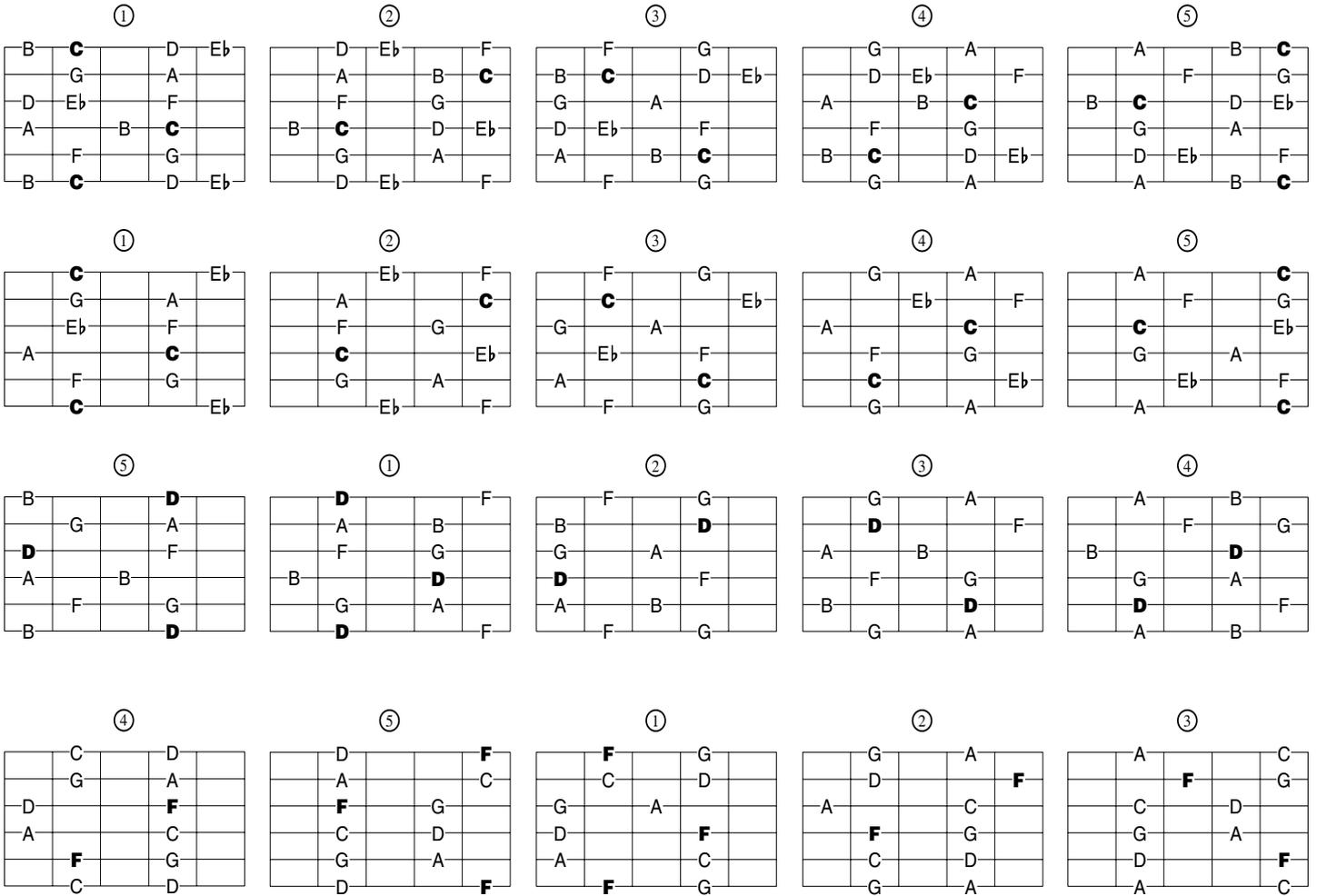
FpM = F G A C D
1 2 3 5 6

Dpmm = D F G A B
1 3 4 5 6

The melodic minor heptatonic scale contains 2 melodic minor pentatonic scales built on the I and II degrees and a major pentatonic scale on the IV degree. So in Do m, we have Cpmm, Dpmm and FpM.

The heptatonic diagrams contain those of these 3 pentatonics.

Diagrams of the pentatonic scales contained in the C melodic minor scale



Cpmm = C Eb F G A Dpmm = D F G A B FpM = F G A C D
 1 b3 4 5 6 1 b3 4 5 6 1 2 3 5 6

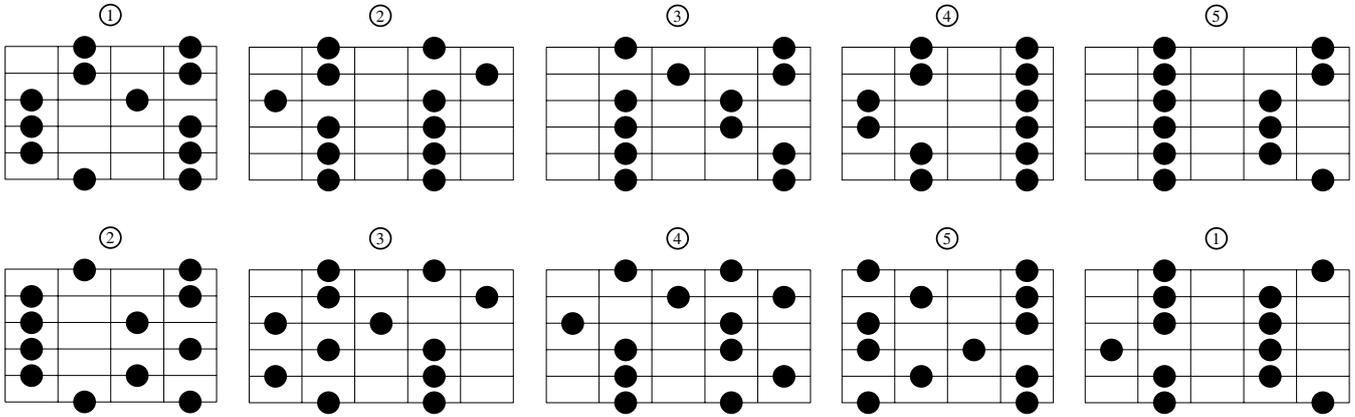
The major pentatonic scale built on the I degree and the melodic minor pentatonic scale built on the VI degree differ only by one degree.

For example in C: CpM = C D E G A; Apmm = A C D E F#

To go from CpM to Apmm, we lower the note G by a semitone: F#.

Pairs of IpM and Vpmm diagrams

The top line represents the major pentatonic diagrams. Below each of these diagrams, we have the melodic minor pentatonic diagram differing by only one degree.



These major and minor pentatonics constitute 2 neighbouring collections of notes that can be used for improvisation on the main tetrads.

Relative pentatonic and heptatonic modes

The 1st line represents the major pentatonic diagrams, the 2nd the melodic minor pentatonic diagrams and below are those of the neighboring heptatonic modes.

