

MAJOR PENTATONIC SCALES

SCALE DEGREES 1, 2, 3, 5, AND 6 FROM THE MAJOR SCALE

MAJOR PENTATONIC SCALES ARE BEST SUITED FOR THESE CHORDS:

C C^b C^b/₉ Cadd^b Cadd⁹ (USING "C" FOR PURPOSES OF EXAMPLE ONLY)

ANATOMY OF A MAJOR PENTATONIC SCALE

W = WHOLE STEP 1½ = ONE AND A HALF STEPS

BY LEAVING IN THE CHORD TONES (1, 3, AND 5) BUT ELIMINATING THE HALF STEPS (BETWEEN THE 3RD AND 4TH, 7TH AND ROOT) IN A MAJOR SCALE, THE MAJOR PENTATONIC AVOIDS THE LIKELIHOOD OF DISSONANCE DURING IMPROVISATION OVER THE APPROPRIATE CHORD.

THREE BLUE NOTES ARE AVAILABLE TO THE MAJOR PENTATONIC SCALE. THEY ARE THE LOWERED THIRD, LOWERED FIFTH, AND LOWERED SEVENTH. IN THE KEY OF C, FOR INSTANCE, THE BLUE NOTES WOULD BE Eb, Gb, AND Bb.

A MAJOR PENTATONIC SCALE CONTAINS THE SAME FIVE NOTES AS THE MINOR PENTATONIC BEARING THE SAME KEY SIGNATURE. A MINOR PENTATONIC CAN BE USED SPARINGLY OVER A MAJOR CHORD CHANGE, BUT A MAJOR PENTATONIC SHOULDN'T BE USED OVER A MINOR CHORD CHANGE.