



C Major Scale for Beginners: Lesson 2

By Christopher Schlegel

What is the C major scale?

Remember, the major scale is formed by using this formula:

1st note, whole step, 2nd note, whole step, 3rd note, half step, 4th note, whole step, 5th note, whole step, 6th note, whole step, 7th note, half step, 8th note (which is one octave higher than the first note).

In the first lesson we put it all on one string to see it in a linear pattern: all on one string. We did this in order to more easily see the intervals of the major scale on the guitar.

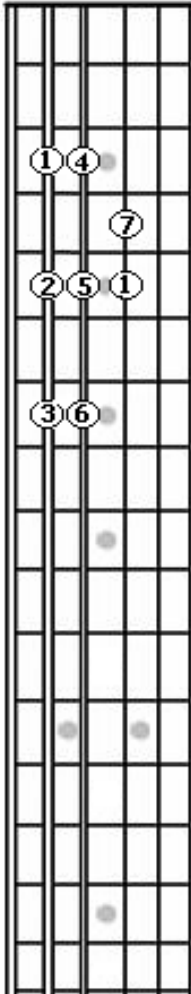
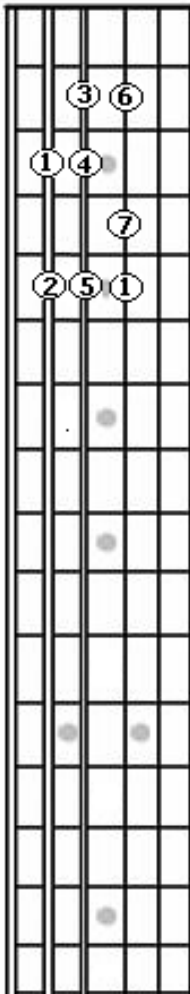
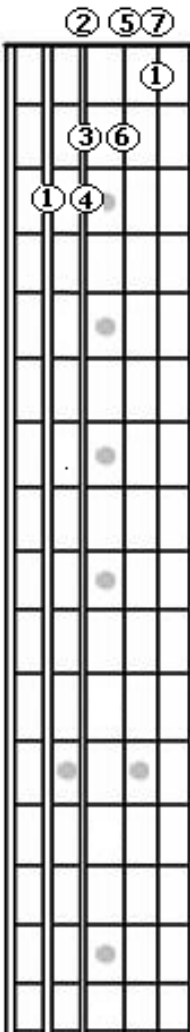
C - whole step - D - whole step - E - half step - F - whole step - G - whole step - A - whole step - B - half step - C

Again, this is similar to how the notes of a scale are arranged on a piano: all white keys starting on C in a straight line from the left to the right. But on the guitar we can play these same notes in different physical locations. This makes it much easier to play the major scale in one position without having to move our hand all the way up and down the neck!

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C Major Scale Patterns

Pattern 1	Fret #s	Pattern 2	Fret #s	Pattern 3 "Open Position"	Fret #s	
	1		1		1	
	2		2		2	
	3		3		3	3
	4		4		4	4
	5		5		5	5
	6		6		6	6
	7		7		7	7
	8		8		8	8
	9		9		9	9
	10		10		10	10
	11		11		11	11
	12		12		12	12
	13		13		13	13
	14		14		14	14
	15		15		15	15

C Major Scale Formula

① WS ② WS ③ HS ④ WS ⑤ WS ⑥ WS ⑦ HS ①
 WS = Whole Step
HS = Half Step



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Now we have taken the concept "major scale" and applied it to the guitar in a physical form. We have literally taken an aspect of music theory and put it into practice. Let's take a closer look at the major scale we can now play. First let's assign all the notes numbers, the term "scale degree" and a unique name:

C = 1 (1st scale degree) - root note
D = 2 (2nd scale degree) - second
E = 3 (3rd scale degree) - major third
F = 4 (4th scale degree) - fourth
G = 5 (5th scale degree) - fifth
A = 6 (6th scale degree) - major sixth
B = 7 (7th scale degree) - major seventh
c = 8 (8th scale degree) - octave of root

C Major Scale

Linear Pattern

1 2

T
A
B 3 5 7 8 10 12 14 15

Pattern 1

3 4

3 5 7 3 5 7 4 5

Pattern 2

5 6

3 5 2 3 5 2 4 5

Pattern 3 - "Open Position"

7 8

3 0 2 3 0 2 0 1

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C Major Scale Formula

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C Major Scale Notes

C D E F G A B C