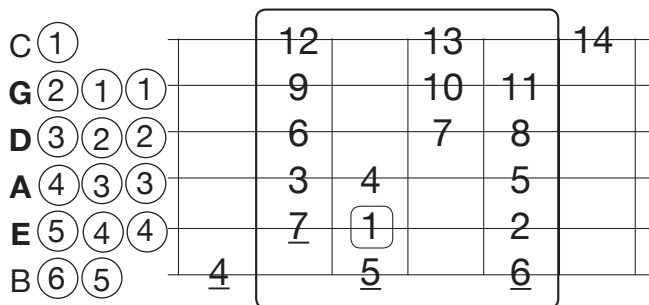


Improve Your Improvisation

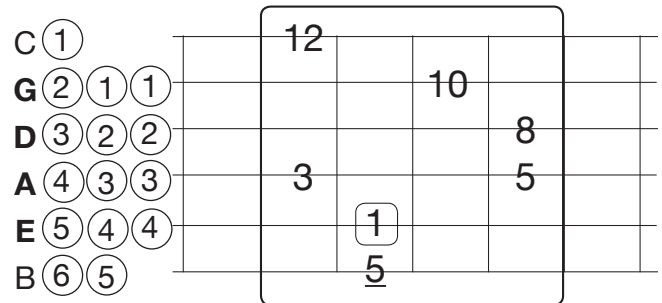
Last lesson, **Sign Before Symbol**, we learned that even if you know the **key signature**, you still don't know what **key** you are in because one key signature represents two keys: **major** and **relative minor**. And even after you analyze the song and know the key, you still won't be able to **improvise** because to do that, you need to know what **scale** to play. As we will learn in this lesson, that's not always a simple choice.

Let's begin with the traditional view of music which starts with one scale and then proceeds to **unfold** and spell many arpeggio and chord harmonies. Here's an example, the **C major scale** is spelled in **letters**: C D E F G A B and in scale degree **tone numbers**: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7. With this scale you can spell a **C major triad**: C E G, which is 1 3 5 in the first octave and 8 10 12 in the second octave. Now, from this elementary beginning we can introduce the idea that improvisation is the **enfolding** of one chord into many scales. In other words, improvisation is the traditional unfolding music process reversed in an enfolded retrograde manner. Said one more time in a different way, in traditional music the scale is known first and from that known scale you spell the harmony, but with improvisational music, the harmony is known first and then you are **free to choose** a scale that you feel sounds good with that harmony. The choice is yours!

Now, before we begin, let's review the **circle four-two major scale** as tone numbers.



Here is the **circle four-two major arpeggio** and the **circle four-one major chord**.



There are many scales that may be played with the major chord. In fact, any scale that contains the tone numbers 3 and 5 may be used. Remember, there are no right or wrong sounds in improvisation, only the sounds that you like. In other words, you are **free to choose** the sounds of any scale you wish. It's all about you!

The following are but a few of the many scales and modes that may be played with the **major chord**. For this lesson, think of a **mode** as just another altered scale. In the beginning a scale may sound unfamiliar and weird to you, that's okay, just keep playing that scale until it becomes familiar. At that point, you will begin to incorporate it into your improvisations.

Major pentatonic: 1 2 3 5 6

Scriabin: 1 b2 3 5 6

East Indian: 1 3 4 5 b7

Ionian: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Lydian: 1 2 3 #4 5 6 7

Mixolydian: 1 2 3 4 5 6 b7

Melodic minor lydian: 1 2 3 #4 5 6 b7

Melodic minor mixolydian: 1 2 3 4 5 b6 b7

Harmonic minor aeolian: 1 #2 3 #4 5 6 7

Hungarian major: 1 #2 3 #4 5 6 b7

Byzantine: 1 b2 3 4 5 b6 7

Hundusian: 1 2 3 4 5 b6 b7

Octotonic hybrid: 1 2 3 4 b5 5 6 7

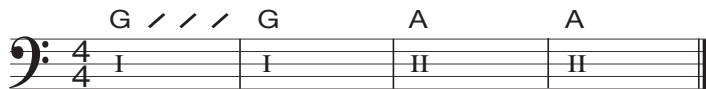
Symmetric hybrid: 1 b2 b3 3 b5 5 6 b7

Novem hybrid: 1 2 3 4 b5 5 6 b7 7

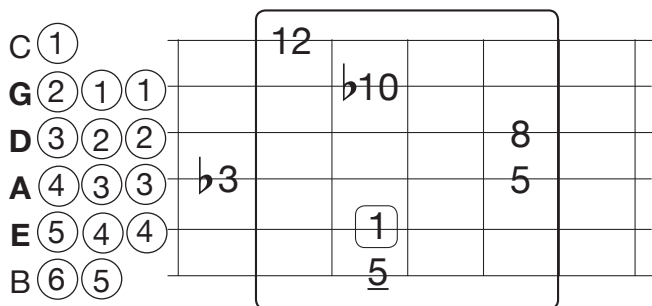
Taurus hybrid: 1 b2 b3 3 4 5 #5 6 7

OverMoto hybrid: 1 b2 2 3 4 b5 5 b6 6 b7 7

Here is a simple harmony progression for you to apply your new **major** scales knowledge.



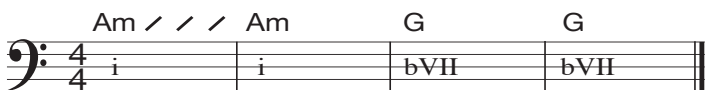
The following is the **circle four-two minor arpeggio** and the **circle four-one minor chord**.



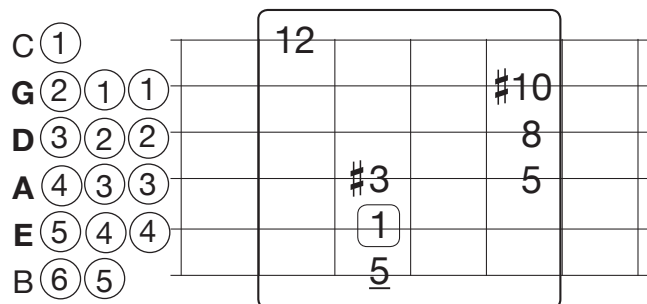
Let's discover a few scales and modes that may be played with this **minor** chord.

- Minor pentatonic:** 1 b3 4 5 b7
- Balinese:** 1 b2 b3 5 b6
- Japanese Hiro-Joshi:** 1 2 b3 5 b6
- Hawaiian:** 1 2 b3 5 6
- Scriabin minor:** 1 b2 b3 5 6
- Dorian:** 1 2 b3 4 5 6 b7
- Phrygian:** 1 b2 b3 4 5 b6 b7
- Melodic minor ionian:** 1 2 b3 4 5 6 7
- Melodic minor dorian:** 1 b2 b3 4 5 6 b7
- Harmonic minor ionian:** 1 2 b3 4 5 b6 7
- Harmonic minor lydian:** 1 2 b3 #4 5 6 b7
- Natural minor ionian:** 1 2 b3 4 5 b6 b7
- Natural minor lydian:** 1 2 b3 4 5 6 b7
- Natural minor mixolydian:** 1 b2 b3 4 5 b6 b7
- Neopolitan minor:** 1 b2 b3 4 5 b6 7
- Hungarian minor:** 1 2 b3 #4 5 b6 7
- Moroccan:** 1 2 b3 #4 5 b6 b7
- Romanian:** 1 2 b3 #4 5 6 b7
- Taurus hybrid:** 1 b2 b3 3 4 5 #5 6 7

Here is a simple harmony progression for you to apply your new **minor** scales knowledge.



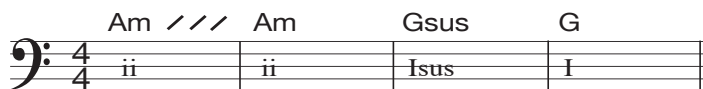
The following is the **circle four-two suspended arpeggio** and the **circle four-one suspended chord**.



Now, let's reveal a few scales and modes that may be played with the **suspended** chord.

- Scriabin Sus:** 1 b2 #3 5 6
- Japanese Kumoi-Joshi:** 1 b2 #3 5 b6
- Japanese Kokin-Joshi:** 1 b2 #3 5 b7
- Korea Ujo:** 1 2 #3 5 6
- Egyptian:** 1 2 #3 5 b7
- Korea P'yongjo:** 1 2 #3 5 6 b7
- Pacific:** 1 2 #3 #4 5 6 b7
- Lydian Sus:** 1 2 #3 #4 5 6 7
- Morollian:** 1 2 #3 #4 5 b6 b7
- Tarrian:** 1 #2 #3 #4 5 6 7
- Sharno:** 1 b2 #3 #4 5 b6 b7
- Diamond Sus:** 1 b2 #3 #4 5 6 7
- Enigmatic hybrid:** 1 b2 #3 #4 5 #5 #6 7
- Romanian Sus:** 1 2 #3 #4 5 6 b7
- Belmontian hybrid:** 1 b2 2 #3 b5 5 b6 6 b7 7

Finally, here is a simple harmony progression for you to apply your new **suspended** scales knowledge.



Be sure to look at pages 296 and 297 of **Bass EncycloMedia** to see some of the other scale and mode possibilities. And check out page 10 of the **BEM** to learn more triads.

'Til next time, have some scale fun, no matter what chord you're playing... I'll be listening!

Mike Overly is the creator of the *Tone Note® Music Method, Guitar & Bass EncycloMedia* and *Fretboard Flashcards*. Mike's publications are available from Bass Books.com, Amazon.com, JK Lutherie.com and many other fine music and book retailers around the world - just ask for them!