

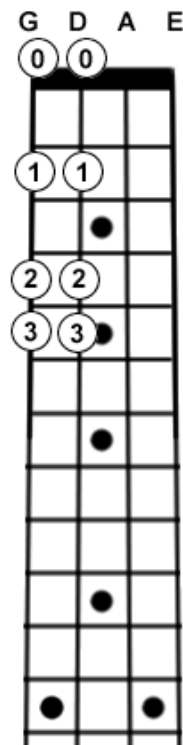
Playing Simple Scales

MandoLessons Lesson Supplement

In this lesson you will learn how to play your first set of scales. These scales are the G major scale, the D major scale, the A major Scale, and the C major scale. If you are unfamiliar with the basic concept behind music theory (i.e. notes of a scale, sharps and flats, etc.), please get comfortable with the information at www.mandolessons.com/lessons/musictheory.html.

The first scale in the video, the G scale, can be played by hitting the following notes from the lowest note to the highest note. The numbers inside the circles represent what finger you use (1 being your index finger, 2 your middle finger, 3 your ring finger, and 4 your pinky). When you see a 0 inside a circle, that means that this note is the string played without fretting any note (also known as an open note). In the diagram, the thick black horizontal line at the top represents the nut (the piece of white material holding the strings off the fretboard near the top of the mandolin), and each consecutive thin black horizontal line represents a fret (the shiny bars of metal on your mandolin's fretboard):

The G Scale

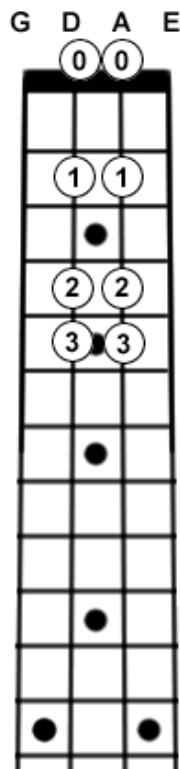


Now, the great thing about

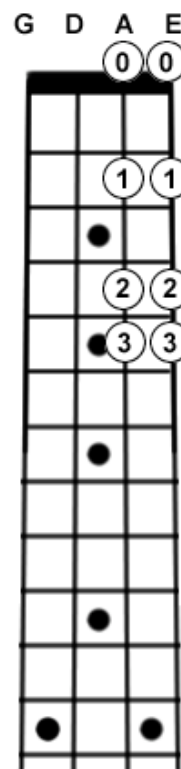
the mandolin is that once you

know one major scales you know all the major scales (in theory). This is because the mandolin is tuned in fifths. What does that mean? Well, I will get into what it means in terms of music theory in a different lesson, but the general idea is as follows. If you count the open note of your G major scale as 1, the second note of the scale (an A note) as 2, the third (a B note) as 3, the fourth (a C note) as 4, and the fifth note (a D) as five, something happens. When you get to that fifth note, you stop playing on the lowest string (the G string) and move to the next highest string (the D string). The great thing about this little phenomenon is that it can be applied to every other scale on the mandolin, look at the next two scales:

The D Scale



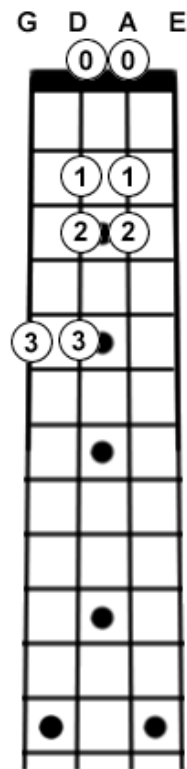
The A Scale



As you can see, the scale pattern for the G, D, and A scales are all the same. The open string is followed by the second fret, followed by the fourth fret, followed by the fifth, followed by the next highest string, etc.

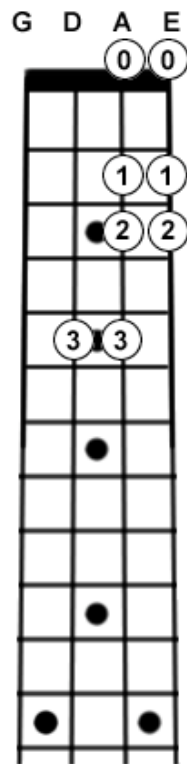
While this scale pattern works for every scale, think about playing the C scale. the C note does not lie on an open string, and your first finger would have to start on the 5th fret of the G string, creating all sort of problems which will be addressed in later lessons. Therefore, we must stray from this pattern and we get the following pattern for the C major scale:

The C Scale

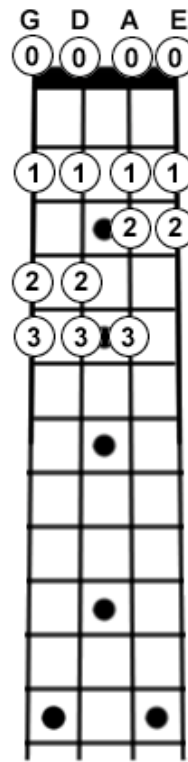


Again, we can use the great versatility of the mandolin and its connection with perfect fifths to create another scale from the same scale pattern. A fifth above the bottom C is a G (the high note in the G scale we learned earlier), and therefore, we can move the entire scale pattern to start on that higher G. As a result we get another G scale up an entire octave from the first. Then, By combining the two G scales we have learned, we can play a g scale starting from the open low G string and end on the 3rd fret of the high E string. Check it out:

High G Scale



2 Octave G Scale



And there you have it, simply from the way the mandolin is tuned you can get more than one scale out of a single scale pattern. Don't expect all of this to stick in your brain at once, the only road to mastering the mandolin is through time, energy, and practice practice practice.

Your homework for this lesson is to play around and see if you can figure out some more scales on your own. Use this lesson, the MandoLessons music theory page (www.mandolessons.com/lessons/musictheory.html), and your imagination to figure out some more scales and scale patterns. For example, start with figuring out the keys of B flat and F.

Questions? Comments? Drop me an email at lessons@mandolelessons.com