
Why are scales important?

There are many reasons and it's important you know them:

- Scales hugely improve all aspects of your finger technique, facility and control.
- Arpeggios improve your ability to move around the piano with ease.
- Knowing your scales and arpeggios will speed up the learning of new pieces because so much material is based on scale and arpeggio patterns, and will improve your sight reading both in dealing with technical issues and reading melodic patterns.
- Knowing your scales and arpeggios will develop your sense of key.
- Playing scales and arpeggios well and with confidence will earn good marks in exams.

Scales and exams

So that's also why scales are an important part of exams! They really do help to develop your playing. In an exam, the examiner will be listening out for:

- Evenness of pulse, rhythm and tone with no unnecessary accents
- The smooth passage of the thumb
- A sense of key
- A prompt response and a sense of fluency and dexterity
- A musical shape for each example

Think about each of these during practice sessions. Tick them off in your mind.

Fingering made easy!

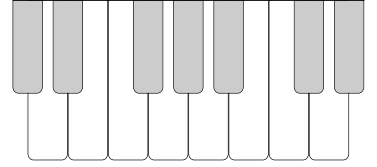
At Grade 5 you have to play all the keys but that really doesn't represent too great a work-load! You need to think yourself into each key – the pattern of white and black keys and the fingering. Think about the character too – for example, how does D \flat major differ from E major in sound quality and feel? Consider why the fingering patterns have been devised and why they work well. It will make learning them very straightforward.

Almost all the scales in grade 5 use finger patterns that you already know. There are only four new scales to learn: **F# major** which requires a new RH pattern: **234 1231 234 1231 2**; and B \flat , E \flat , and F# minors. You will have to learn just three new left-hand patterns to accommodate these scales: **E \flat minor** uses: **21 4321 3 21 4321 32**. **F# major** and both forms of the minor scale uses: **4321 321 4321 321 2**. **B \flat minor** uses: **21 321 43 21 321 432**.

There are no new arpeggio fingerings to learn for Grade 5. The two arpeggios that use only black notes (F# major and E \flat minor) both use the standard pattern.

D major

Fill in the scale:



The relative minor of D major is: _____

TOP TIP Practise your scales with different dynamics, including crescendo and diminuendo.

Finger fitness

1

2

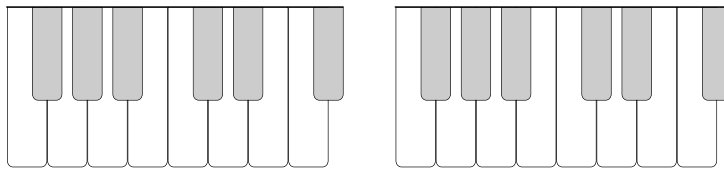
Domino Key piece in D major

3

Maestoso

F minor

Fill in the scales:



The relative major of F minor is: _____

TOP TIP F minor follows exactly the same fingering pattern as F major.

Finger fitness

Harmonic

Melodic

1

2

Fiendish Key piece in F minor

Scherzo - poco vivo

3