

An Introduction To Relative Minor & Relative Major

A Pentatonic Scale Approach

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The simple explanation is that there is a relationship between 2 different scales and both scales share the same notes. The 7 note (diatonic) Major Scale's Relative Minor is note 6. This is further explained in the Music Theory Intervals Lesson. In this example an A Minor Pentatonic Scale shares the same notes as it's Relative Major, the C Major Pentatonic.

On the guitar I call it the **3 Fret Rule** which is a Whole & Half Step Interval. The Relative is always 3 frets away one direction or the other. To determine the Relative Major of the A Minor Pentatonic shown below you will *ascend 3 frets toward the bridge*. String 6E fret 5 note A ascends 1 and 1/2 steps to fret 8 note is C. Take a look at the A Minor Pentatonic Scale Below and the notes it contains. Before you play this scale strum and Am Chord.

TAB A Minor Pentatonic Scale:

A C D E G A C D E G A C

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1E-----5--8-----
2B-----5--8-----
3G-----5--7-----
4D-----5--7-----
5A-----5--7-----
6E--5--8-----
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Now take a look at the C Major Pentatonic Scale below and the notes it contains. They are the same 5 notes, played at the same fret locations. To play the C Major Pentatonic Scale you will start on String 6E Fret 8 note C and then continue the A Minor Pentatonic TAB on string 5A fret 5 note A. Strum a C chord a few times before you play it to allow your ear to adjust to C.

TAB C Major Pentatonic Scale:

C D E G A C D E G A C

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1E-----5--8-----
2B-----5--8-----
3G-----5--7-----
4D-----5--7-----
5A-----5--7-----
6E-----8-----
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To find the Relative Minor from a Major Scale you will *descend 3 frets toward the Nut*. This is again an Interval or a Whole & Half Step. It is called "a Step and a Half" In this case from String 6E fret 8 note C to fret 5 note A.. A Minor Pentatonic is the Relative Minor of C Major Pentatonic. I use this Pentatonic scale shape, fret positions and the Relative Minor/ Relative Major concept for many other guitar lessons. Learn it.