



# Ukulele Workshops

by Curt Sheller

## Introduction To Soloing

This **Ukulele Workshop** introduces you to six essential scales for creating solos.

## What is a Scale?

A *scale* is a set of musical notes in order by pitch, either ascending or descending. Scales may be described according to the intervals they contain, for example *tonal*, *modal*, *diatonic*, *chromatic*, *synthetic*.

## Essential Scales

Essential scales are the first choice scales you need to improvise or create melodies. They're six essential scales that will get you through the majority of basic, common progressions.

The six essential scales are the *Blues*, *Pentatonic*, *Dorian*, *Mixolydian*, *Aeolian*, *Ionian*. Order depends on the styles of music you are most likely to perform.

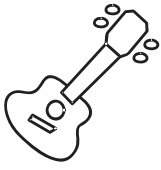
Of these six, the *Pentatonic* and *Blues* scales provide an easy start to soloing and creating melodies. The Pentatonic scale is the basis of countless songs.

Scales can have alternate traditional, contemporary, or modal names. A scale's traditional or alternate names are show in parentheses.

Here are the six essential scales:

- **Ionian** ( Major )
- **Aeolian** ( Natural Minor )
- **Dorian** ( Minor )
- **Pentatonic** ( Major Pentatonic, Country Scale )
- **Blues** ( Minor Pentatonic )
- **Mixolydian** ( Dominant )

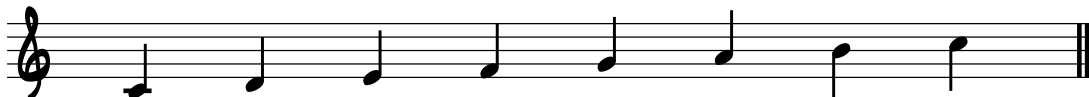




## Reference Scales

From the **Major** and **Natural Minor** scale, essential scales can be derived.

### C Major ( Ionian )



<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C'</b>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

A C Major scale contains only natural notes. These are the white keys of a piano. This is the melodic range of a ukulele in C tuning with a high “G” in open position.

Each note/scale degree of the major scale can be numbered 1 through 8. This aides in learning other essential scales.

C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C'
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

### C Natural Minor ( Aeolian )

Based on the scale degree numbers of a C Major scale (1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8) a C *Natural Minor* scale contains a lowered third, lowered sixth and lowered seventh (b3, b6, b7).



<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>A<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>B<sup>b</sup></b>	<b>C'</b>
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8

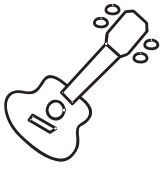


### QuickStart Scale Fingerings for Ukulele

Six essential scales for ukulele. Covers the Blues, Pentatonic, Dorian, Mixolydian, Aeolian and Ionian scales for a standard “low G” tuned (G C E A) Soprano, Concert and Tenor ukulele.

Volumes covering C, D and G Tunings





## Other Essential Scales from the Major and Natural Minor Scales

From the *Major* and *Natural Minor* scales you can derive the Mixolydian and Dorian scales.

<b>Major</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>B</b>	<b>C'</b>
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
<b>Mixolydian</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Bb</b>	<b>C'</b>
	1	2	3	4	5	6	b7	8
<b>Natural Minor</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Eb</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>Ab</b>	<b>Bb</b>	<b>C'</b>
	1	2	b3	4	5	b6	b7	8
<b>Dorian</b>	<b>C</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>Eb</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>Bb</b>	<b>C'</b>
	1	2	b6	4	5	6	b6	8

## C Major Pentatonic

The pentatonic scale is a common scale used to write melodies and improvise. It is a great first scale to use on the ukulele as it contains only natural notes and lays very well in the open position of a high or low “G”, C tuned ukulele.

**C**      **D**      **E**      **G**      **A**      **C'**  
 1      2      3      5      6      8

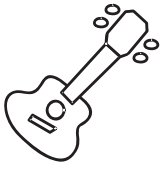
One way to remember the sound of this scale to associate it with a melody or riff you might already know. The main riff of the Temptations classic “*My Girl*” is the pentatonic scale. And the melody of *Camptown Races* uses all the notes of the pentatonic scale starting on the fifth of the scale, the fourth note..



### QuickStart Scale Fingerings for Tenor & Baritone Ukulele Volume I, Key of G Tuning

Scale Fingerings for Tenor & Baritone Ukulele is a highly organized, efficient system of scale fingerings. Each fingering pattern is shown with a fingerboard shape, TAB and standard music notation. Related chords are also explained for each scale.





## Learning the Fingerings for a Scale

### Finger, String, Fret Notation

Here is one suggested fingering in the open position. Alternate fingerings are possible and should be explored. A basic guideline is one finger per fret - *each finger can handle their own fret*.

Finger: 0      2      0      3      0      3

↑      ↑      ↑      ↑      ↑      ↑

The number indicates the fret to play and the string are the four strings from nose (bottom) to toes (top). In C tuning these are G C E A

## Chord Grids and TAB

Chord grids can be used to show scales and can be shown vertically or horizontally.

④   ③   ②   ①

①   ②   ③   ④

○ Open String  
● Fretted Note

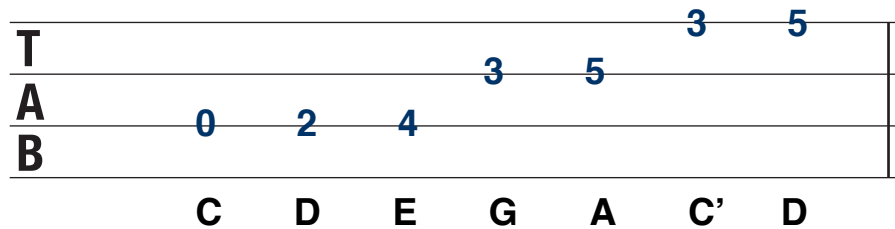
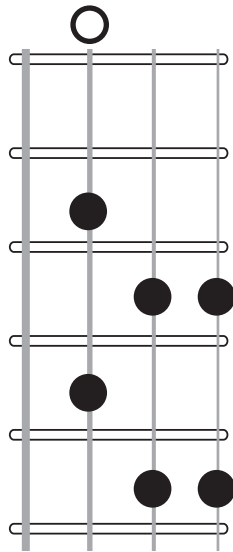




## Alternate Note Locations

An *Alternate Note Location* is the same pitch played on a different string and fret. These are duplicate notes and one of the reasons for the difficulty of reading or improvising on an instrument capable playing notes in alternate locations such as the ukulele.

Here are the same notes with some played at alternate locations.



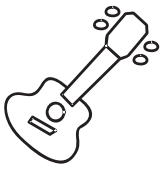
A scale can be expanded below the root and above the octave using available scale notes. D is added above the octave C. Any note from the scale can be added is available in the current position.

Multiple fingerings pathways are possible and should be explored to achieve the desired musical effect.

## Getting The Sound Under Your Fingers

The ear doesn't need much more than a few times to learn the sound of a scale or melody. Developing the motor skills and enforcing the connection between the ear and the hands is where all the work and time is.





Here are some suggested routines / variations for a exploring scale.

### Root to Octave, Ascending and Descending



### Octave to Root, Descending and Ascending



- Vary the Rhythm, short notes, long notes
- Start on any note and on any note
- Target particular notes
- Add dynamics, louder, softer, glissandos (slides), slurs, legato, staccato, hammer-ons, pull-offs ...



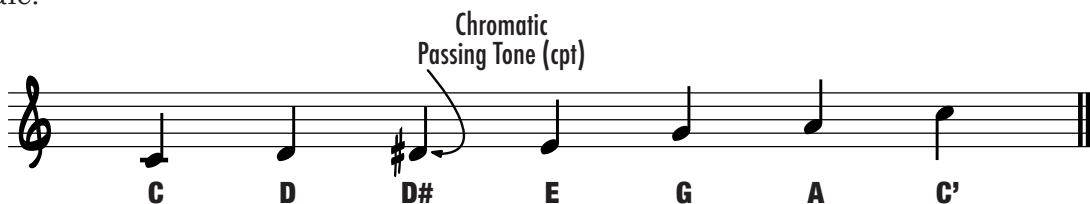
### Note Collections

Think of the notes of a scale as a collection of pitches, using any order, starting on any note ending on any note, etc...

### Adding Notes

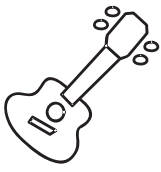
Any note can be added to a scale, some more common than others depending on the context.

**Add D#, Eb** - This is a common *chromatic passing tone* added between the D and E notes of the C Blues scale.



**Add Chord Tones** - Any note not already in the scale that is in the current chord being played can be added to the scale. An example: the notes F, A and C are the chord tones of an F major chord.

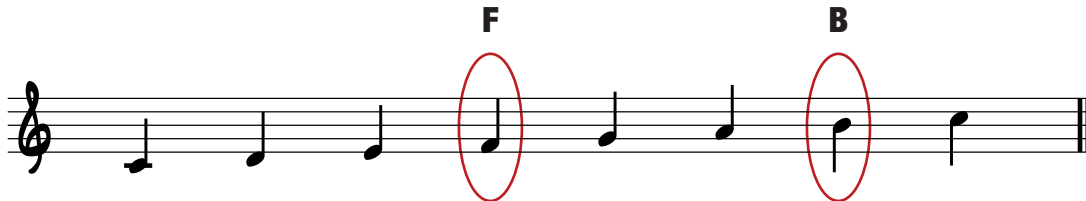




The A and C are already in the C pentatonic scale, the F can be added when the F chord is being played.

Add the B from the G chord ( G B D ).

With both **B** and **F** added we actually have the C Major / Ionian scale.



**Add Any Note** - any note can be added to a scale depending on the context and rhythmic placement.

Adding a **Bb** gives the C pentatonic scale a *bluesy* feel.

## The Chords For C Pentatonic

Every scale has an associated chord or set of chords. For the C Pentatonic scale the triads and 4-part chords are:

Triads:	<b>C</b>	<b>Dm</b>	<b>Em</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>Am</b>	<b>Bb</b>
4- Part:	<b>Cmaj7</b>	<b>Dm7</b>	<b>Em7</b>	<b>Fmaj7</b>	<b>G7</b>	<b>Am7</b>	<b>Bbmaj7</b>

## Chord Spelling

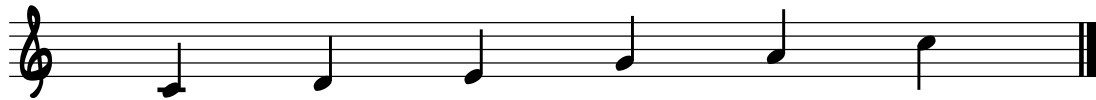
All chords are a collection of notes. Determining the notes of a chord allows you to added the notes that are in the chord to the current scale you are using.





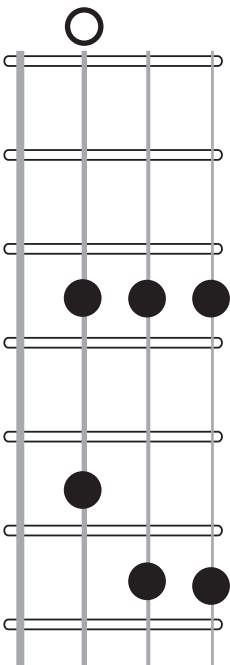
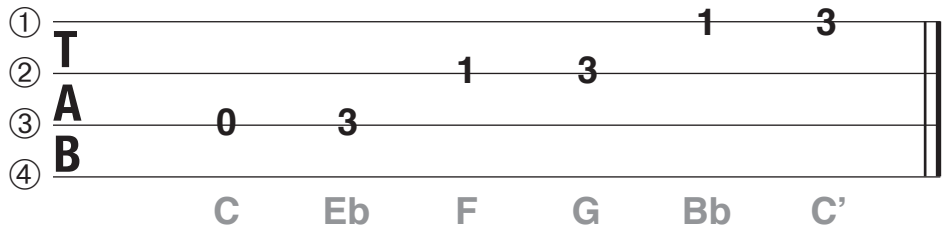
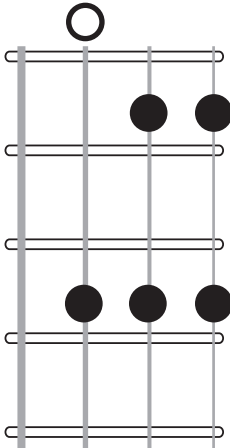
## C Minor Pentatonic aka C Blues

The minor pentatonic scale is another common scale used to write melodies and improvise with.



**C Eb F G Bb C'**

④ ③ ② ①

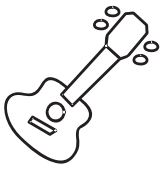


A scale can be expanded below the root and above the octave using available scale notes. Eb is added above the octave C.

Multiple fingerings and pathways are possible and should be explored to achieve the musical effect desired.



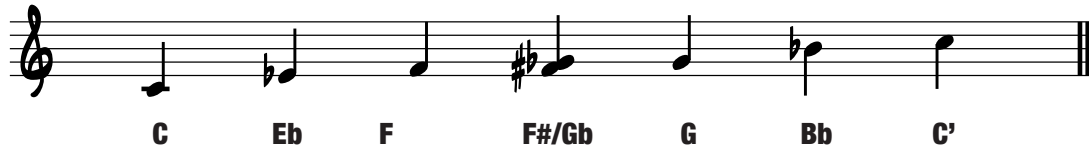




## Adding Notes

Any note can be added to a scale. Some will sound better than others depending on the context.

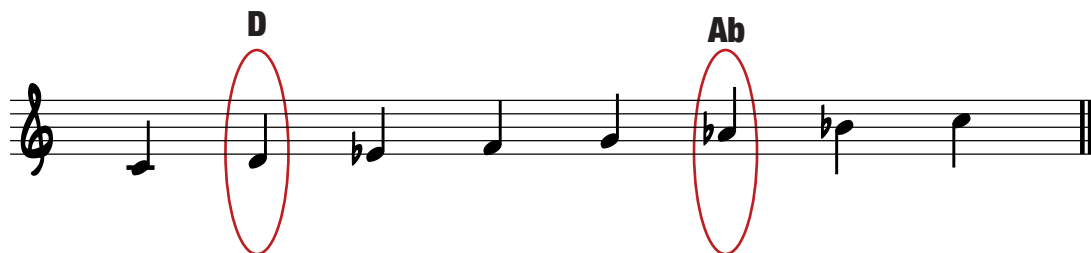
**Add F#** - This is a chromatic tone that can be added between F and G.



**Add Chord Tones** - Any note not in the scale already that is in the chord being played can be added to the scale (next section). An example: Fm - The Fm chord contains the notes F Ab and C. The F and C are already in the scale and the Ab can be added when the Fm chord is being played.

Add the D from the Gm chord (G Bb D).

With both Ab and D added we have the C Natural Minor ( Aeolian ) scale.



## The Chords For a C Blues Scale

Every scale has an associated chord or set of chords. For the C Blues the chords are:

<b>C</b>	<b>Cm</b>	<b>C7</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Fm</b>	<b>F7</b>
<b>G</b>	<b>Gm</b>	<b>G7</b>			
<b>Bb</b>	<b>Ab</b>	<b>Eb</b>			

## Chord Spelling

All chords are a collection of notes. Determining the notes of a chord allows you to add the notes that are in the chord to the current scale you are using.

**C** is C E G, **Cm** is C Eb G, **C7** is C E G Bb, **F** is F A C, **Fm** is F Ab C, **F7** is F A C Eb, **G** is B D F, **Gm** is G Bb D, **G7** is G B D F, **Bb** is Bb D F, **Ab** is Ab C Eb, **Eb** is Eb G Bb, **Ebmaj7** is Eb G Bb D.

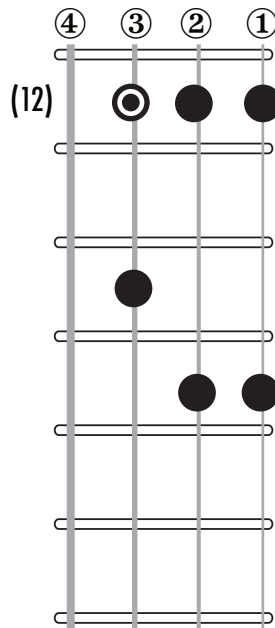
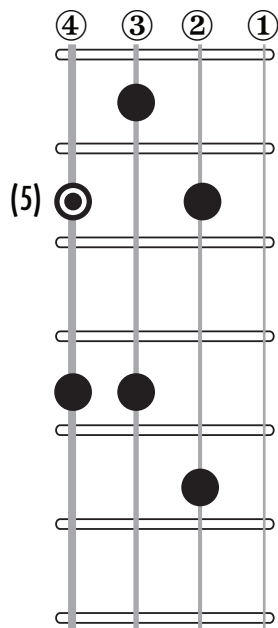
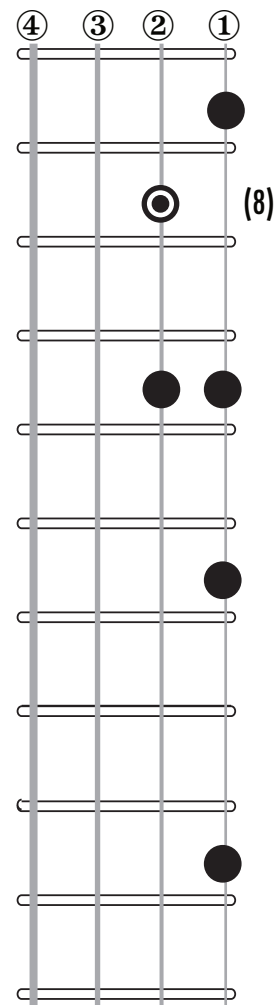
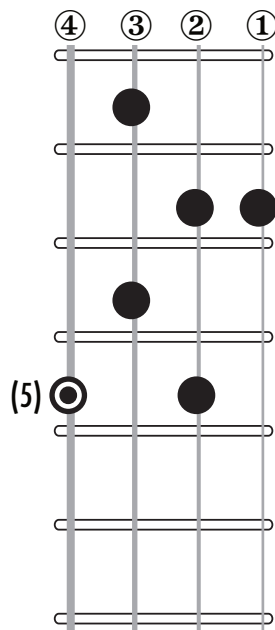
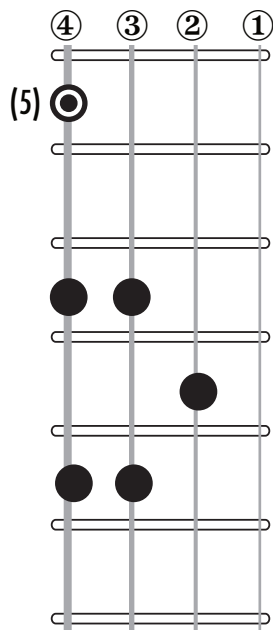




## One Octave C Pentatonic Scale Shapes

A few C Pentatonic scale shapes to get one going.

Scales are shown with the fret indication for the starting root. Like chords with no open strings, any scale can be transposed to additional keys.



**Note Regarding String Four** - If you are using a low "G" string four the scale remains linear and easy to incorporate, as these notes are generally lower than strings three, two and one.

