



**YOU PROBABLY KNOW THAT THERE ARE 12 NOTES  
BUT DID YOU KNOW THAT THERE ARE...**

## 21 NOTE NAMES\*?



- The seven white keys on the piano:
- They can all have #s:
- And they can all have flats:

A B C D E F G  
A# B# C# D# E# F# G#  
Ab Bb Cb Db Eb Fb Gb



#s make notes higher by a half step  
bs make notes lower by a half step

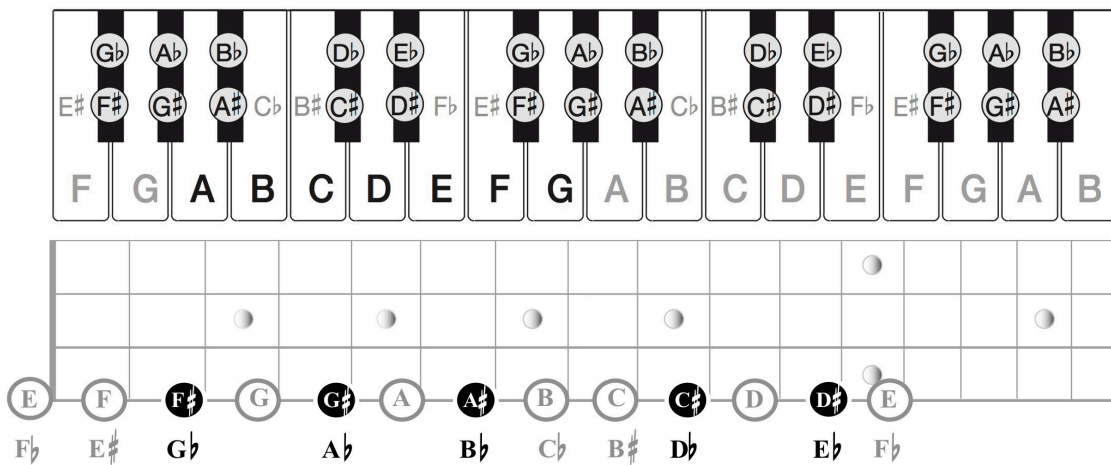
There are half steps between E/F and B/C  
All other letters = whole steps between them

\* To be precise, there are actually **35 notenames** if you include the double #s (x) & double flats (bb) for each note!  
Eventually you want to include those double accidentals, but for now, start with single sharps and flats!

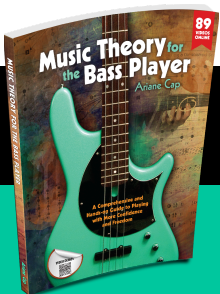
### GREAT DRILL TO UNDERSTAND THE FRETBOARD: FIND ALL 21 NOTES ON YOUR BASS - SEE HOW THEY RELATE!

- 1 - Find all naturals ("white keys")
- 2 - Find all sharps
- 3 - Find all flats
- 4 - Go up each string and say note names out loud

- 5 - Practice finding notes on each individual string
- 6 - Now stay within a 5-fret span and find them
- 7 - Name the notes on the dots
- 8 - Double-dare: find double-sharps & double-flats!



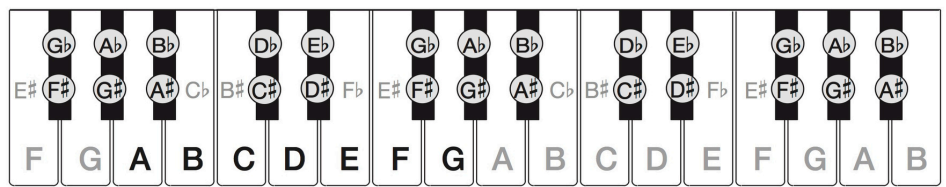
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To learn more on how to use this knowledge to improve your bass playing, check out *Music Theory for the Bass Player* on Amazon.

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# ARI'S SHORTCUTS TO MAJOR SCALES

To build a major scale start with the root. Count that as 1. Then go up in whole steps until you hit 3. Half step to 4. More whole steps until you hit 7, half step to octave. If done correctly, you will land on the same note you started on.

**FORMULA:** The major scale is built of all whole steps, except for half steps between 3/4 & 7/8

That way you can build ANY major scale. But will you NAME it correctly? And does it matter?

**Example - using the above formula I built this beast:**



## ARI'S EASY SHORTCUTS

Remember This One!

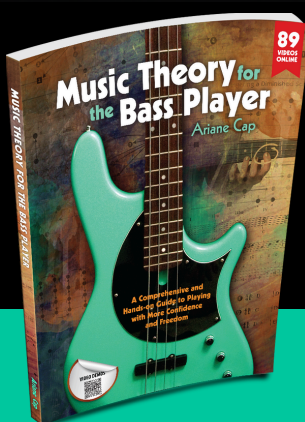
- Each letter name is represented once — NO DOUBLES and NO SKIPS!
 

That's why the above scale doesn't work! It has two G's and skips the E and A! Much better:

**E♭ F G A♭ B♭ C D E♭** <= way better!
- If a scale starts on a "white keyboard key" you will always end up using sharps (see rule #1)!
 

Exception: F major has a flat (if you followed rule #1 you got it right).  
C♭ also exists as a scale/key (it has 7 flats).
- If a scale starts on a "black keyboard key", name it by its FLAT name, else you run into double sharps to make #1 work and that's not used as a key!
 

Exceptions: F# and C# are also used as keys!



**Why you need this:** Most music is written in a "key". Understanding keys and scales (and chords) helps you understand music and create it.

**What's a key:** A key is the organization of music around a central note or scale, a collection of notes from which to build chords and songs. A key helps you orient yourself within a piece of music. For example, the root of the key is often felt as the center of gravity. There are 15 major keys and 15 minor keys.

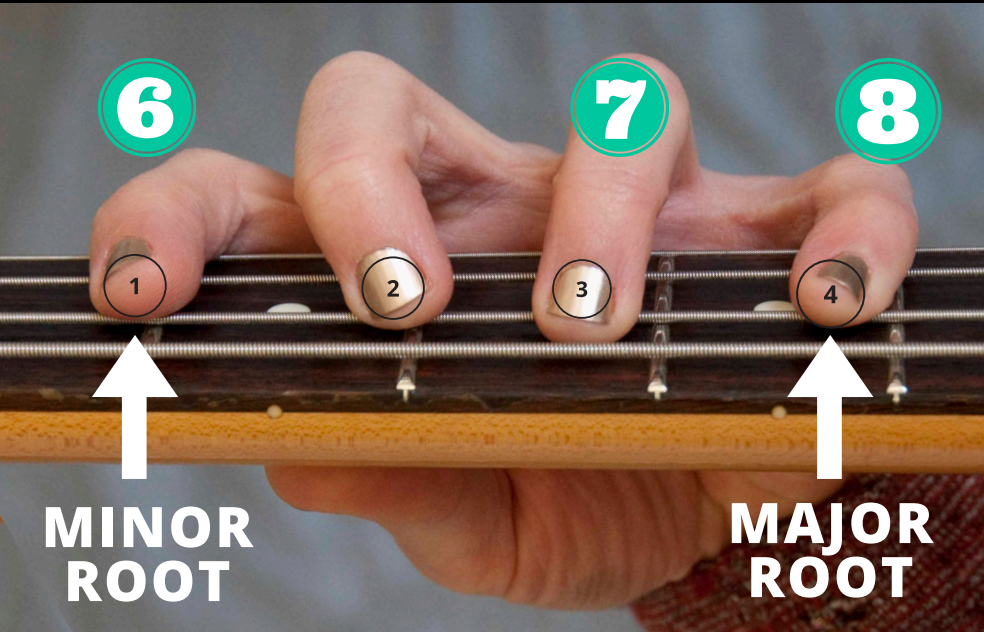
**What's a scale?** A scale is a collection of notes that help you determine which notes fit in a musical context. Often "scale" and "key" overlap, but not always.

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# NATURAL MINOR SCALES

- Major and minor scales share the same "key signature" (sharps and flats!) - they are "relatives"
- They share the same seven notes, but have a different starting note (point of reference/gravity)!
- The minor scale starts on the "sixth scale degree" (sixth note!) of the major scale.
- Either count out the sixth note from the major root to find the minor root or use the bass, like so:



**FIRST FINGER  
ON THE MINOR ROOT**

**FOURTH FINGER  
ON THE MAJOR ROOT**

**8** = scale degrees

**1** = **8**

**4** = fingering

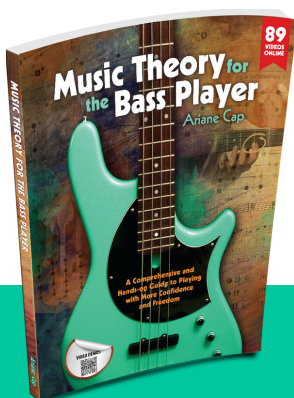
## ARI'S SHORTCUT TO MINOR SCALES

### CONSTRUCTING THE MINOR SCALE AND NOTE NAMING

*If you follow these rules you will never accidentally create scales with more accidentals than necessary*

## ARI'S EASY SHORTCUTS: MINOR SCALES

- 1 Each letter name is represented once – no doubles, no skips.
- 2 If a scale starts on a "white key" note – use flats!  
Exceptions: Am (no accidentals), Em (1 #), Bm (2 #s)
- 3 If a scale starts on a "black key" note – use sharps!  
Am In addition, Abm (7b), Ebm (6b), Bbm (5b) also occur



### Examples:

F G A $\flat$  B $\flat$  C D $\flat$  E $\flat$  F (F minor, relative to A $\flat$  major)

C $\sharp$  D $\sharp$  E F $\sharp$  G $\sharp$  A B C $\sharp$  (C $\sharp$  minor, relative to E major)

Learn your intervals and what they look like on the fretboard. There are only 12 of them!!  
Theory = lego pieces of music!

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## THE SHORTCUTS ON ONE PAGE

1 In a scale, each letter name is represented once:  
**NO DOUBLES • NO SKIPS!**

### MAJOR SCALES:

Formula: HS between 3/4 7/8  
all others: WS

### MINOR SCALES:

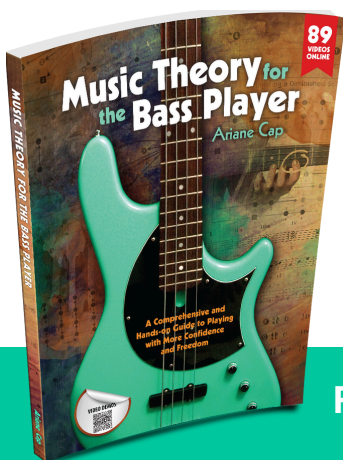
Formula: HS between 2/3 5/6  
all others: WS

2 If scale starts on a natural note — use sharps  
(except: F, Cb)

2 If a scale starts on a natural note — use flats  
(except: Am, Em, Bm)

3 If a scale starts on a "black keyboard key", name it by its FLAT name!  
(except: F#, C# work also)

3 If a scale starts on a "black keyboard key", name it by its SHARP name!  
(except: Abm, Ebm, Bbm work, too!)



### MAJOR AND MINOR SCALES ARE RELATED

(=share the same sharps/flats)!

Find the relationship with the RAWK TRICK:  
Same string, on your bass, one-finger-per-fret

First finger on the minor root

Fourth finger on the major root

MINOR

MAJOR



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