

# Scale Learning Cheat Sheet

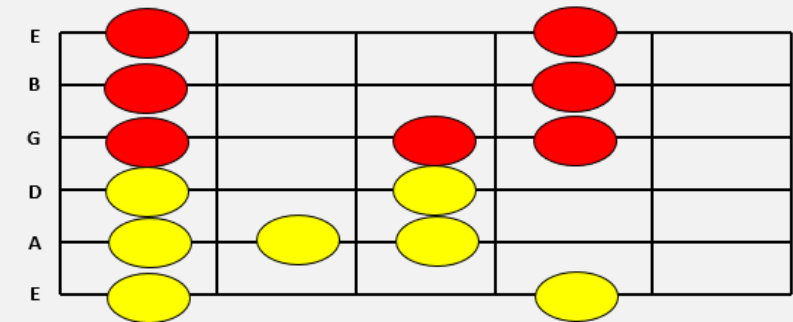
## BASICS

There are two parts to learning anything – WHAT you learn and HOW you learn it. To master something quickly, you need to focus on both.

### WHAT

1. MASTER one shape before going on to the next. Mastery means it's effortless; you know all of the notes in sound, feel and fretboard shape. It should feel like you could play it in your sleep!
2. Learn the most useful things first; don't go and learn a byzantine scale if you don't know the minor scale yet. Advanced scales are only useful if you know how to USE THEM IN CONTEXT, which comes from knowing the basics first.

Blues Scale Example:

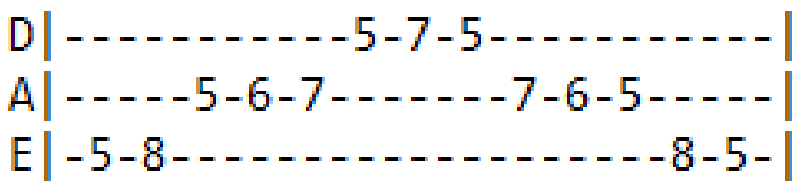


You could break it down and master just the yellow bit first, then just the red part, and then put them together once you've mastered each individually

3. Start with the first five or six notes, and get used to them. Learn the scale in smaller "blocks" like this to learn it faster. Then, combine the blocks to form the full scale shape. Breaking it down into small chunks will help you to learn much, much faster.
4. Don't limit yourself to just ONE system; try others too and integrate them. There are advantages to the "three-notes-per-string" patterns, for example, but also advantages to viewing each string individually, or viewing the scale as a bunch of octave shapes, etc. Focus on one system at first and master it, and then move on to another and see how they compare. It's all the same notes – different systems are just different ways of looking at them.

1. There's a big difference between "knowing" something and "mastering" it. If you know a scale shape that's fine, but if you MASTER it then you'll be able to use it in any situation with ease. Don't aim to know – aim to master.

Blues Scale in A Example:



Start by playing the shape up and down slowly to get used to where the notes are. This is just the yellow part of the blues scale shape – remember to learn it in little chunks.

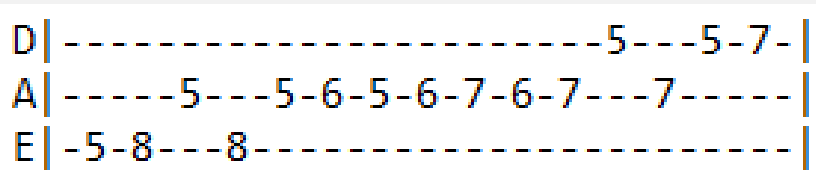
2. Start by playing the shape slowly up and down, paying attention to where each note is and what it sounds like. Is the shape similar to any others that you know? What are the differences?
3. Try singing the scale as you play it slowly up and down; see how accurately you can sing the pitches. This is GREAT for developing your fretboard-to-ear connection, which is vital for creating catchy melodies and solos. Once you've done that, try singing the scale without playing it!

4. Now, learn the intervals that are present in the scale shape; this is a great way of comparing it to other scales. If you've never learned anything about intervals then leave this out, but definitely come back to it when you're more experienced.

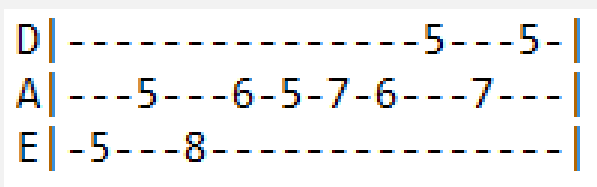
5. Next, try some sequencing. A good one to start with is playing three notes up, and then skipping back down a note, and then playing up another three notes, going down one, etc. The tabs show a couple of interesting sequences you can try out. This is not only a great way to learn scale shapes, but also a good way to come up with interesting melodies and parts for songs. By this point you should know the scale pretty well; all that's left is to take it to mastery.
6. Sing a sequence as you play it. If you get good at this, you'll have great aural skills and be able to create far catchier songs and solos than before.

Blues Scale in A Example:

Triplet Sequence



Classical-Style Sequence



7. Now comes the fun bit – improvising! Grab a free backing track from [www.tomguitar.co.uk/38-free-backing-tracks](http://www.tomguitar.co.uk/38-free-backing-tracks) and get playing. Do this every day – try to make it a habit. It's great for improving your scale knowledge.
8. Next, improvise while singing every note that you play. This requires you to know the scale shape REALLY well, but once you can do it the benefits are enormous. You'll be able to play anything you hear in your head (in that scale, at least) immediately, as well as being able to figure out songs by ear. Get good enough, and you'll be able to write songs and figure out melodies in your head – without even touching the guitar – because your knowledge of how the notes sound is so good. This is where you reach mastery.

Then, go on to the next scale shape. Once you've mastered one the rest will be much easier, because you'll already know the sound and feel of the notes of the scale – the only new thing is the fretboard pattern.  
Have fun!

To download the free guide "Pentatonic Scale Secrets", covering how to master the blues, dorian, major and minor scales all from an easy pentatonic framework, head to [www.tomguitar.co.uk](http://www.tomguitar.co.uk)!