Guitar Scales.

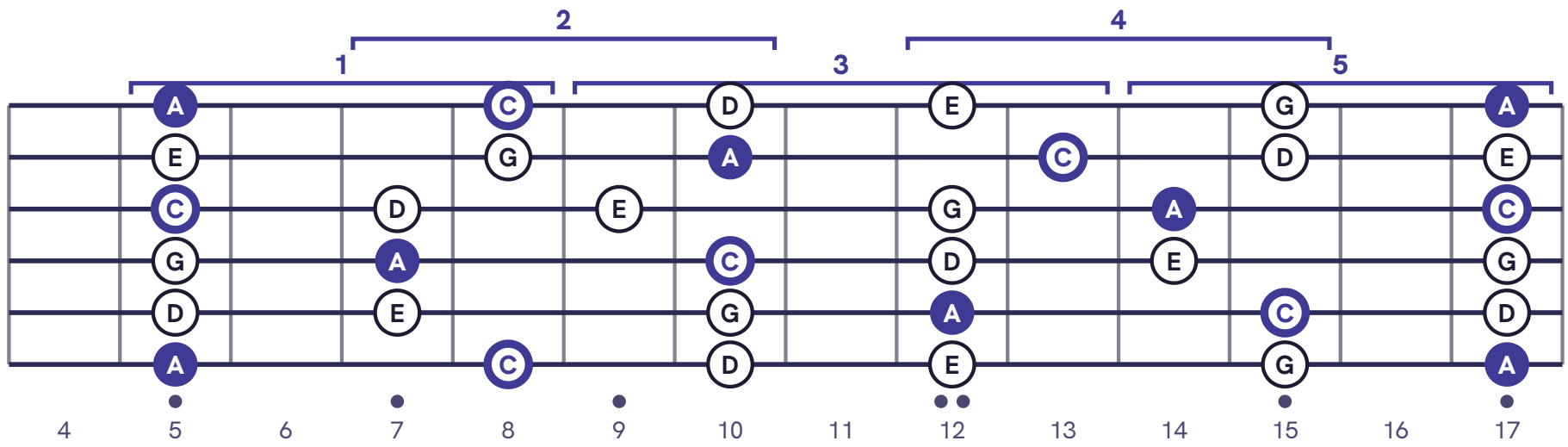
The five pentatonic positions across the neck, and the scales that grow from them.

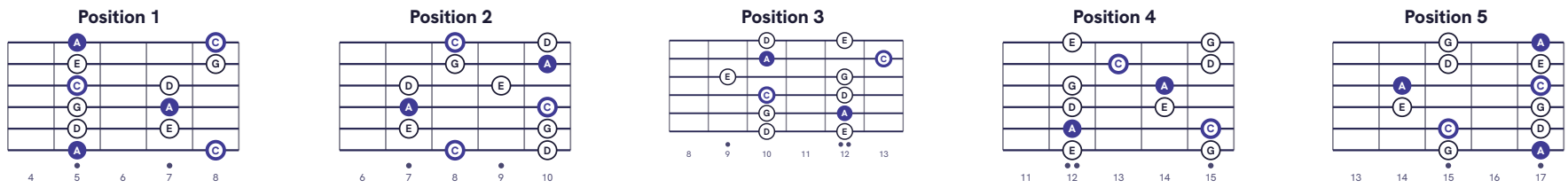
Free printable · 11 × 17 in

SCALES & KEYS

Pentatonic Positions

The five shapes of A minor pentatonic join up along the neck: the top of one shape is the bottom of the next.





Solid dots: A, the home note of A minor. Ringed: C, the home note of C major pentatonic, which uses the same notes.

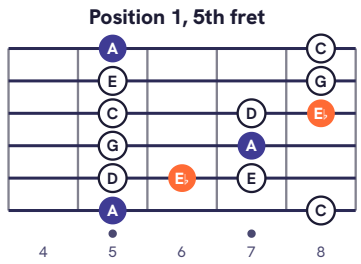
Learn position 1 first, then add the positions either side. Move every shape up or down together to change key.

SCALES & KEYS

The Blues Scale

Minor pentatonic plus one extra note, the flat 5th: the "blue note" that gives blues its bite.

Position 1, 5th fret



Solid dots: A, the root. The orange dots are E♭, the blue note: slide or bend into it rather than stopping on it.

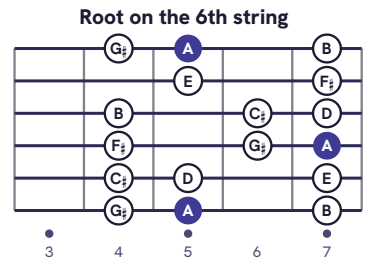
Play it over a 12-bar blues in A (A7, D7, E7).

SCALES & KEYS

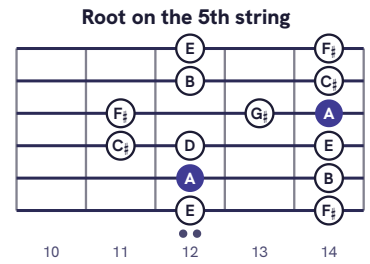
Major Scale Shapes

Two shapes cover most of the neck: one with the root on the 6th string, one with the root on the 5th.

Root on the 6th string



Root on the 5th string



Solid dots: A, the root. Both shapes are A major; slide either one to change key.

Play each from the lowest root up to the highest and back, slowly, one finger per fret.

SCALES & KEYS

Moving a Shape to Any Key

Every shape here is movable: put its root on the fret for the key you want.

6TH STRING (LOW E)	E open	F fret 1	G fret 3	A fret 5	B fret 7	C fret 8	D fret 10	E fret 12
5TH STRING (A)	A open	B fret 2	C fret 3	D fret 5	E fret 7	F fret 8	G fret 10	A fret 12

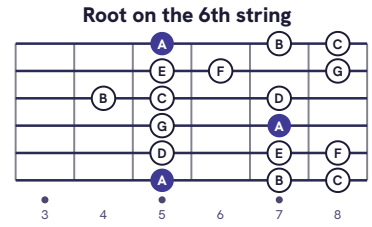
Sharps and flats sit on the frets in between: one fret up from G is G♯ or A♭.

SCALES & KEYS

Natural Minor on the Neck

The natural minor scale: the five pentatonic notes plus two more, B and F.

Root on the 6th string



Solid dots: A, the root. It has the same notes as C major, starting from A.

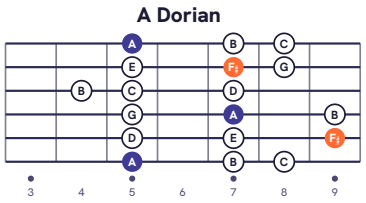
Compare it with position 1 of the pentatonic: the same shape with two notes filled in.

SCALES & KEYS

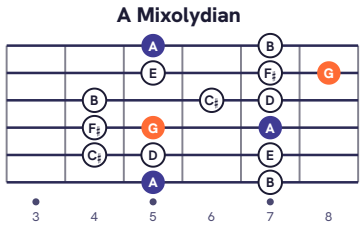
Two Modes to Try

Modes are the major scale started on a different note. These two are the ones guitarists use most.

A Dorian



A Mixolydian



Solid dots: A, the root. Orange: the note that gives each mode its sound (F♯ in Dorian, G in Mixolydian).

Dorian: minor with a brighter 6th, as in funk, rock and jazz solos. Mixolydian: major with a flat 7th, as in blues-rock and country.

PRACTICE TIP

Practise slowly. Speed comes from playing it right, not from playing it fast.

trebly

Read it. Write it. Hear it.

Free note-reading games and lessons at **trebly.fun**

Make your own poster
trebly.fun/posters