



Pentatonic Scales

Five-note scales that sound good over almost everything

Pentatonic scales use only five notes. Because they avoid the half-steps that can clash, they are extremely forgiving for improvising and melody writing.

The two essential pentatonics

Scale	Degrees	Notes in C / A	Character
Major Pentatonic	1 2 3 5 6	C D E G A	Bright, open, folk
Minor Pentatonic	1 b3 4 5 b7	A C D E G	Bluesy, rock, soulful

C major pentatonic

C	D	E	G	A	C
1	2	3	5	6	1

A minor pentatonic (relative)

A	C	D	E	G	A
1	b3	4	5	b7	1

Why they are so popular

- Major pentatonic = folk, country, pop melodies.
- Minor pentatonic = blues, rock, soul solos.
- The same five notes work as both major and relative minor pentatonic.
- Almost impossible to play a "wrong" note.

These scales are the bridge between knowing chords and starting to improvise.