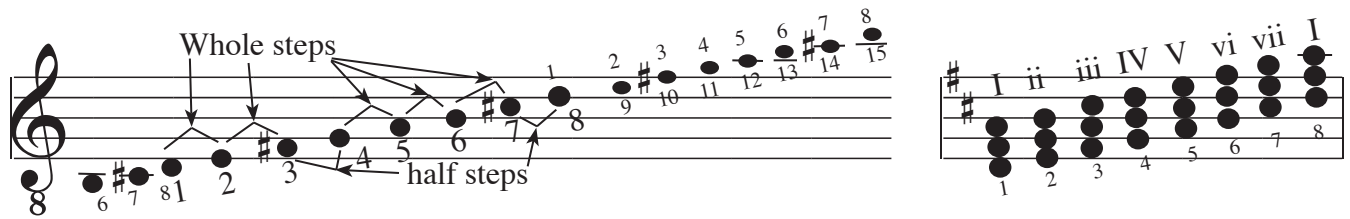# Major Scale

Our tonality in music is set up by the major scale, It is a series of 8 notes with a specific order of steps and half steps. If you can sing the "do, re, mi, fa, so, la, ti, do", you can sing a major scale. I assign each a number.
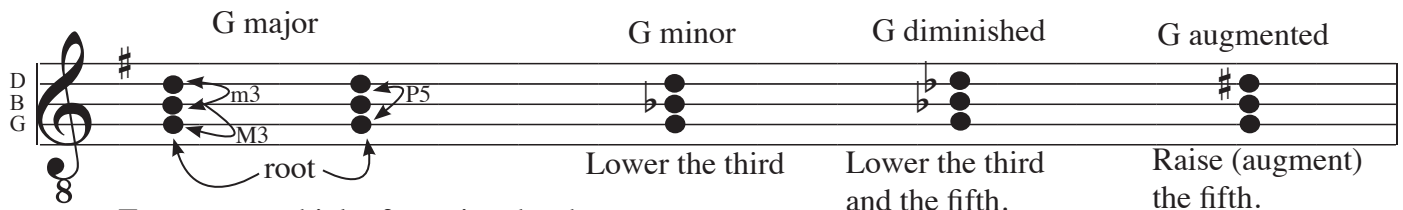

This is D scale. It starts on D, which is now considered tonic or root. It is a major scale because it consists of whole steps, except 1/2 steps inbetween the 3rd and 4th tone, and inbetween the 7th or 8th tone. If you change the order of the steps and 1/2 steps you will change the character of the scale. You can think of it as the "shape" of the scale. Notice that D is always root or 1. There are 6 octaves on a piano, meaning there are (7) D's. Every D is considered tonic, or 1, if you are in the key of D. I am showing how the numbers go higher and lower, but the numbering stays the same, because each note carries its own character within this "shape" of scale. As you count up, "1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7..." the next tone can be 8 or 1 again. If you are stacking chords in thirds, it is helpful to think as "9, 10, 11" because you are counting the 9th or 11th tone above the root.

If you build a chord in thirds (triad), you can name each chord by the number of the scale tone that you built the triad upon. Notice I put Roman numerals on the top. Upper case = major chord; lower case = minor chord.

The process of knowing the notes of a chord involve stacking thirds, either major or minor. The simplest way is to choose every other note: A B C D E F G A B C D E F G A B C D E F G A B C D E F G A B C D E F G A You can also think of every line or every space if you are looking at a clef.

Chords

G major   G minor   G diminished   G augmented

Lower the third   Lower the third and the fifth.   Raise (augment) the fifth.

Two ways to think of a major chord:
root, major third, and a P5.
Or, a m3 stacked on top of the M3.

Refer to my statement on page one "All chords are built off of the major chord". I'll first show you how this works. Then I'll explain in a different way below.

Between the Strings

String players are disadvantaged because music theory is not as visually simple as a piano. Plus, we have more than one place on the neck to place a given note, like the piano does. Once you understand intervals and how that makes scales and chords, and you see the intervals on the frets, then you have to think about the interval distance between strings. If you know the distance between two strings is a fifth, barring those two strings will always get you a P5; to get a major third, one finger needs to play three steps back. Here is three string instrument, tuned to a C major chord: C E G. (G = string 1) The interval distance from string 3 to 1 is a P5