The 12 Minor Scales

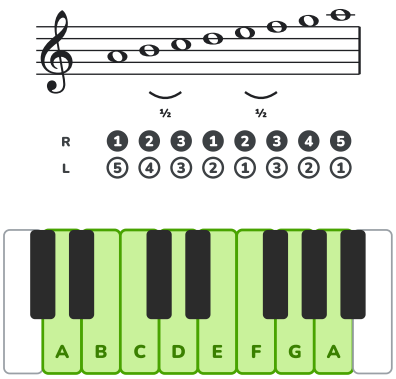
Natural minor with fingering · plus harmonic and melodic

★ Three kinds of minor

Using A minor – the arcs show the half steps (½).

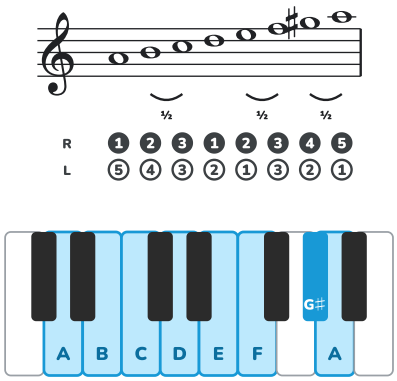
A minor · natural

The basic form: white keys only, half steps between 2–3 and 5–6.



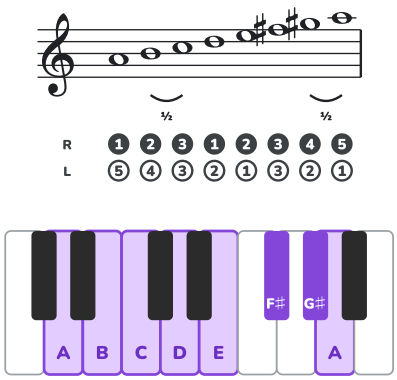
A minor · harmonic

The 7th note is raised (G → G♯). There is a big jump between F and G♯.



A minor · melodic

Going up: 6th and 7th notes raised (F♯, G♯). Going down, play natural minor again.



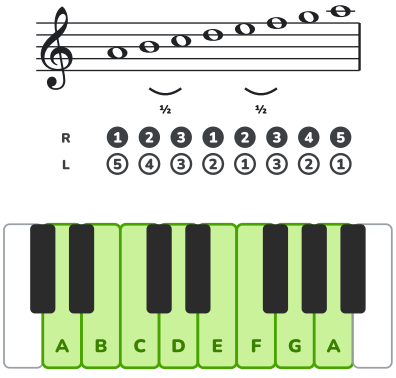
1 Same fingering

Just like major: five scales, one fingering.

Am — A minor

no sharps or flats · relative of C major

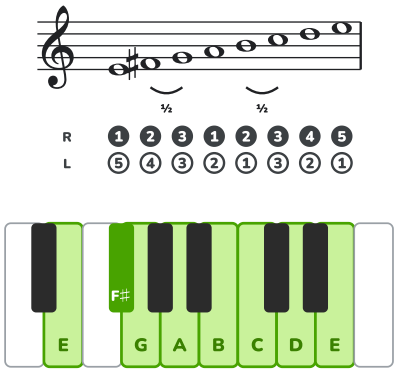
harmonic: G♯



Em — E minor

1 ♯ · relative of G major

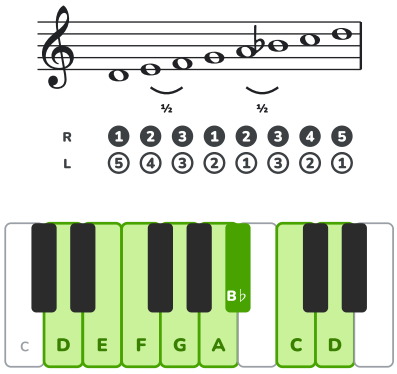
harmonic: D♯



Dm — D minor

1 ♭ · relative of F major

harmonic: C♯



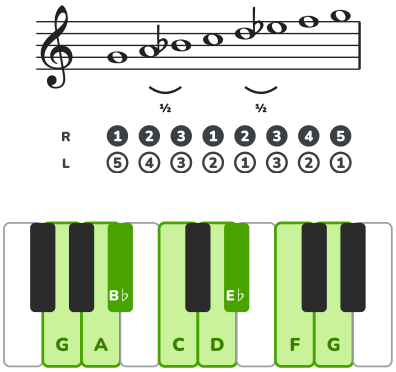
1 Same fingering (continued)

Just like major: five scales, one fingering.

Gm G minor

2 ♭ · relative of B♭ major

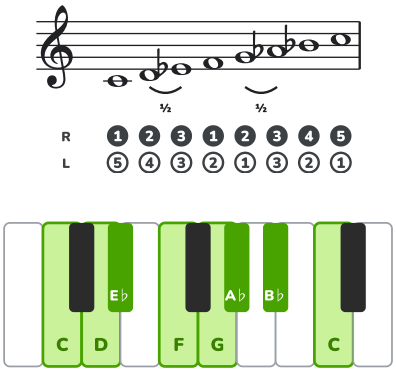
harmonic: F♯



Cm C minor

3 ♭ · relative of E♭ major

harmonic: B♮



Relative keys

Every minor scale has a major partner with **the same key signature**.

You find it **3 half steps higher**: A minor → C major, E minor → G major.

That's why songs in A minor and C major sound so related.

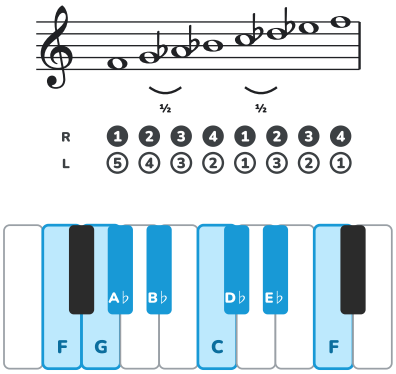
2 With one small exception

In F minor the right hand plays differently, in B minor the left.

Fm F minor

4 ♭ · relative of A♭ major

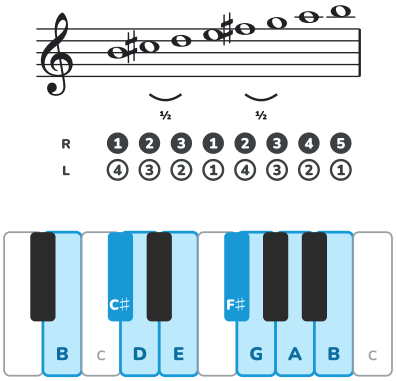
harmonic: E♮



Bm B minor

2 ♯ · relative of D major

harmonic: A♯



Your exercises

- [ ] Each scale natural, then harmonic.
- [ ] Play its major partner right after.
- [ ] First each hand alone, then both.
- [ ] Metronome: 60 → 80 → 100.

3 Starting on a black key

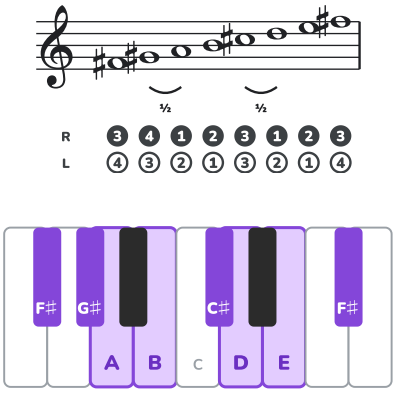
Again, the thumb only plays white keys.

F♯ minor

F♯m

3 ♯ · relative of A major

harmonic: E♯ (= F)

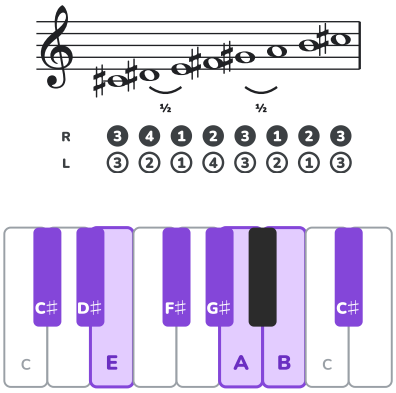


C♯ minor

C♯m

4 ♯ · relative of E major

harmonic: B♯ (= C)

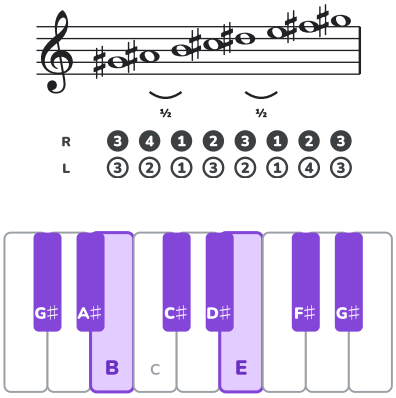


G♯ minor

G♯m

5 ♯ · relative of B major

harmonic: F𝄪 (= G)

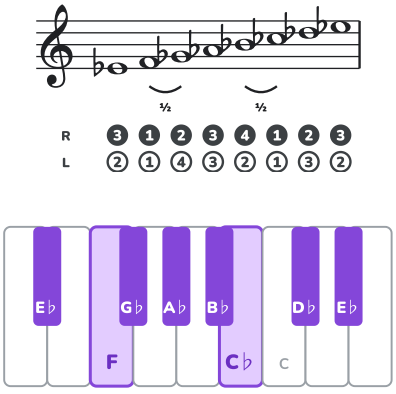


E♭ minor

E♭m

6 ♭ · relative of G♭ major

harmonic: D♮

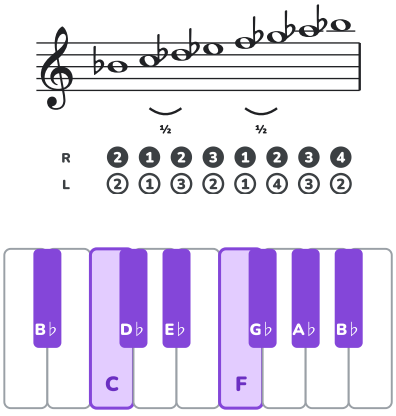


B♭ minor

B♭m

5 ♭ · relative of D♭ major

harmonic: A♮



Playing harmonic minor

Raise the **7th note** by a half step – which note that is is shown at the top of each card.

The fingering stays the same.

E♯ sounds like F, B♯ like C and F𝄪 like G – they are just written differently.