

# The Diatonic Modes

Diatonic means to stick with the seven notes found in a major or minor scale and to not stray from those seven notes. The explanation of the term “modes” will follow. First things first . . .

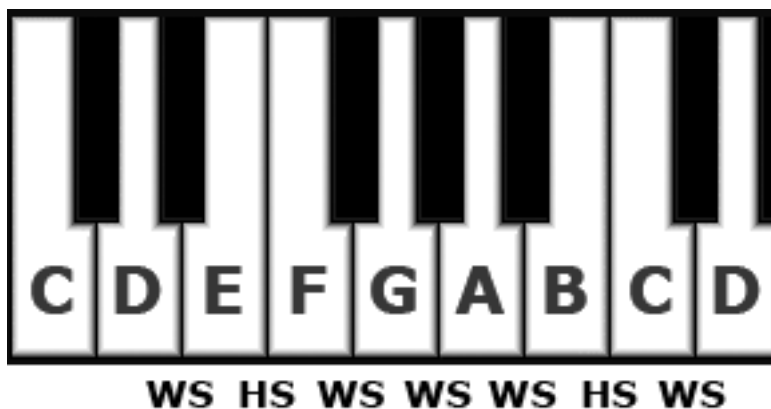
The major scale is built from a series of whole-steps (a jump from one note to the next with one note between) and half-steps (two notes right next to each other.)

Let’s take a look at the C major scale on the piano. C major has no sharps and no flats, meaning we’ll be skipping all the black keys and playing nothing but the white keys to play the scale.



Underneath the keys, you’ll see the pattern of whole-steps (notes jumping over a note to get to the next) and half-steps (neighboring notes). The major scale is built from a pattern of whole-step, whole-step, half-step, whole-step, whole-step, whole-step, half-step.

If we take the exact same seven notes of the C major scale, but start from a different starting point in that scale, say, D instead of C, we get a new pattern of whole-steps and half-steps.



Same seven notes, but by starting one up in the sequence, we get a new pattern of whole-steps and half-steps. This time, it’s whole, half, whole, whole, whole, half, whole.

We can find a different sequence of whole-steps and half-steps from each note in the major scale, so from the seven notes of the major scale, we find seven starting points and seven new patterns . . . these are the seven modes that are built off the major scale.

# The Diatonic Modes on Bass

Let's learn the names of the seven diatonic modes and see how they lay out on your bass. Seven modes, seven names to learn, but realize also that "Ionian" is more commonly referred to as "Major" and "Aeolian" is more commonly referred to as "Minor". This example covers the seven modes in C Major.

<b>C Ionian</b>	<b>D Dorian</b>	<b>E Phrygian</b>	<b>F Lydian</b>
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<b>G Mixolydian</b>	<b>A Aeolian</b>	<b>B Locrian</b>	<b>C Ionian</b>
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Even more importantly, if we can see the shape of the modes as they're laid out on the bass, we can then take those shapes and use them from any starting point on the bass.

<b>Ionian</b>	<b>Dorian</b>	<b>Phrygian</b>	<b>Lydian</b>	<b>Mixolydian</b>	<b>Aeolian</b>	<b>Locrian</b>
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Each shape works from the lower left to the upper right. Using the tab exercise as a guide, Ionian works from the lower left (tab note, 3<sup>rd</sup> fret, A-string) to the next note on that same string (5<sup>th</sup> fret, A-string) to the next three notes on the next string, the shape moving from left to right (2<sup>nd</sup> fret, 3<sup>rd</sup> fret, 5<sup>th</sup> fret on the D-string) and then up a string again for the last three notes (2<sup>nd</sup> fret, 4<sup>th</sup> fret, 5<sup>th</sup> fret on the G-string.)

If you can see the shape, you can play it in any key.

# Name That Mode

1. The Man Who Sold the World - Nirvana MODE:

2. Fascination Street - The Cure MODE:

3. Burn - Spun Honey MODE:

4. Around the World - Red Hot Chili Peppers MODE:

5. Popeye Theme MODE:

T 9 8 | 9 | 9 9 11 9 | 11 | 9 9 | 11 9 11 9 | 8 | 11 9 | 6 8

A

B 7 7 | 9 7 6 9 | 9 9 | 11 9 11 9 | 8 | 11 9 | 6 8

T 9 8 6 | 9 6 | 9 7 6 7 6 | 9 7 9 7 6 | 9 | 7 9 | 6 7 9 | 6 7 9 6 | 7 7

A

B 7 9 | 6 7 9 | 6 7 9 6 | 7 7

6. Hey Man Nice Shot - Filter MODE:

T 0 5 7 | 0 5 7 | 0 5 7 | 0 5 7 | 0 5 7 | 0 | 0 5 4 | 0 5 4 | 0 5 4 | 0 5 4 | 0 5 4 | 0

A

B 0 5 7 | 0 5 7 | 0 5 7 | 0 5 7 | 0 5 7 | 0 | 0 5 4 | 0 5 4 | 0 5 4 | 0 5 4 | 0 5 4 | 0

T 0 5 7 | 0 5 7 | 0 5 7 | 0 5 7 | 0 5 7 | 0 | 0 5 3 | 0 5 3 | 0 5 3 | 0 5 3 | 0 5 3 | 0

A

B 0 5 7 | 0 5 7 | 0 5 7 | 0 5 7 | 0 5 7 | 0 | 0 5 3 | 0 5 3 | 0 5 3 | 0 5 3 | 0 5 3 | 0