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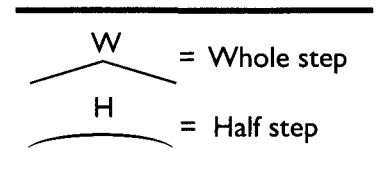
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Chapter 3: The Major Scale

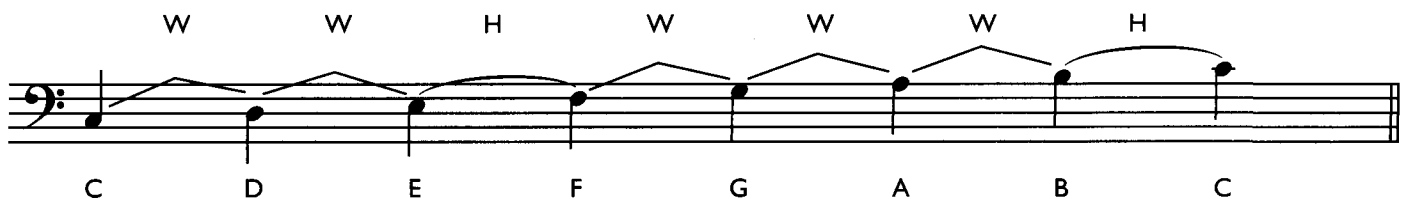
Major Scale Construction

The *major scale* is one of the most important parts of music theory, or the study of the mechanics of music. This is because much of the music theory you will be learning in the future is either derived from, or related to the major scale. It is very important that you not only learn how to play the major scale, but also understand how it's built and how it sounds. Everyone from the Beatles to Led Zeppelin has used the major scale.

The major scale follows a set pattern of whole steps and half steps from one pitch to an octave above that pitch. Using the C Major scale, from the notes C to C, the pattern is whole step, whole step, half step, whole step, whole step, whole step, half step.

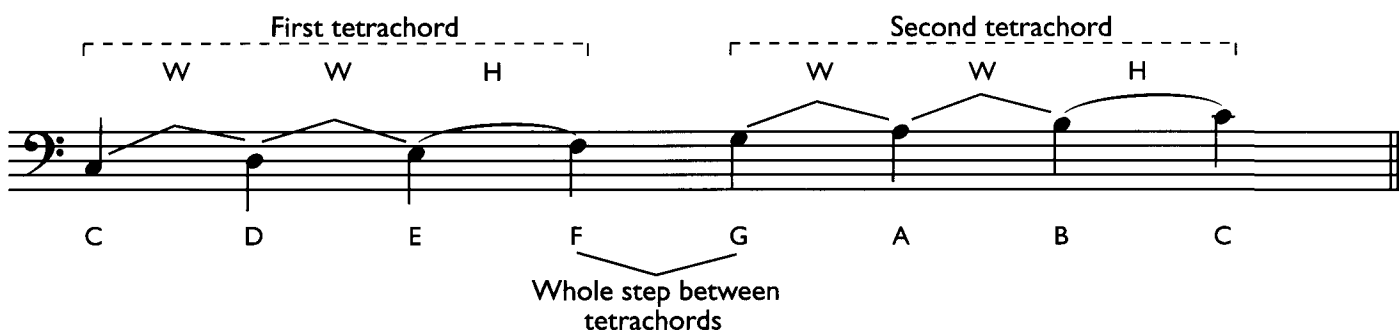


C Major Scale



The major scale consists of seven different notes, one for each letter of the musical alphabet. The scale gets its name from the first note, or *tonic*, of the scale. You may also hear the tonic referred to as the *root* of the scale. In the case below, because we are going from C to C, the scale is a C Major scale.

The octave, or 8th note in the scale, allows us to divide the scale into two groups of four notes. These groupings of four consecutive notes are *tetrachords*. Below, you can see that the major scale is made of two tetrachords that share the same pattern of whole steps and half steps: W–W–H. The tetrachords are separated by one whole step.



Thinking about the major scale in terms of tetrachords will make it easier for you to figure out various fingerings across the fretboard of the bass. Being able to play the major scale in more than one way will give you greater versatility as a bassist and will make your playing much more fun.