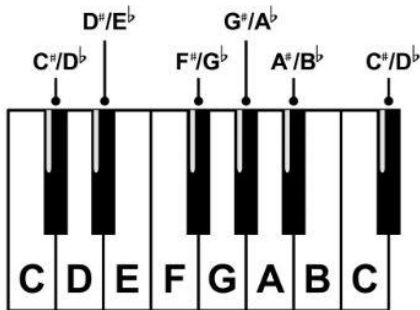


Summary of “No Bull Music Theory For Guitarists” vol. 1 by James Shipway

Chapter 1: The Musical Alphabet and the Chromatic Scale

1. The Musical Alphabet

- The musical alphabet uses **seven letters**:
A, B, C, D, E, F, G
These are called the **natural notes**.
- Once you reach **G**, the cycle repeats back to **A**. This repeating loop is part of what we call **octaves**.



2. Sharps and Flats

- Between most natural notes is a note with a sharp (#) or flat (b).
 - A sharp (#) raises a note by **one semitone** (half step).
 - A flat (b) lowers a note by **one semitone**.
- Example:
 - A → A# is one semitone higher.
 - A# → A is one semitone lower (A# = Bb).
- Enharmonic equivalents:**
Some notes have **two names**, depending on context:
 - C# = Db
 - F# = Gb
 - A# = BbThese are the **same pitch**, just notated differently.

3. No Sharp or Flat Between These Pairs

- There is **no note between** the following pairs:
 - B & C**
 - E & F**
- This can be remembered with the mnemonic:
"Big Cats Eat Fish"
→ B–C and E–F are direct neighbors with **no sharp or flat between**.

4. The Chromatic Scale

- The **chromatic scale** includes **all 12 notes** of the musical alphabet, using sharps/flats where appropriate.
- If you start on **C**, the chromatic scale is:
C, C#/Db, D, D#/Eb, E, F, F#/Gb, G, G#/Ab, A, A#/Bb, B, C
- This scale moves in **semitone steps**, meaning each note is **one fret apart** on the guitar.

Chapter 2: Semitones and Tones

1. Semitones (Half Steps)

- A **semitone** is the **smallest distance** between two notes in Western music.
- On the guitar, this is the distance of **1 fret**.

Example:

- From the 5th fret to the 6th fret on the same string is a semitone.
- E to F is a semitone (no sharp/flat between them).
- In U.S. terminology, a semitone is also called a **half step**.

2. Tones (Whole Steps)

- A **tone** (also called a **whole step**) is equal to **2 semitones**.
- On the guitar, this is the distance of **2 frets**.

Example:

- From the 3rd fret to the 5th fret is a tone.
- C to D is a tone (it skips over C#/D♭).

3. Why This Matters

- Understanding semitones and tones is crucial for:
 - Building scales
 - Navigating the fretboard
 - Understanding chord shapes and transpositions
 - Analyzing intervals and melody movement

Chapter 3: The Major Scale

1. Major Scale Structure

- The **major scale** is a 7-note scale built using a specific sequence of tones and semitones.
- The **formula** is:
Tone – Tone – Semitone – Tone – Tone – Tone – Semitone
(Or: W – W – H – W – W – W – H, where W = whole step, H = half step)

2. Root Note (Tonic)

- The **starting note** of the scale is called the **root** or **tonic**.
- The formula must always start from this note and follow the same sequence.

3. Unchanging Pattern

- You **cannot change** the pattern of tones and semitones.
If you do, the result is no longer a **major scale**—it becomes a different type of scale altogether.

4. Number of Major Scales

- There are **12 major scales**, one for each of the 12 notes in the chromatic scale.

5. C Major and Accidentals

- The **C major scale** contains **no sharps or flats**.
- **All other major scales** contain at least **one sharp or flat**.

6. Octave Completion

- When you play a major scale **ascending from the root**, the **eighth note** is the **same as the starting note**, but one **octave higher**.

Chapter 4: Triads and Power Chords

1. Triads

- Triads are chords that contain 3 notes.

2. Major Triad Formula

- A major triad is built using the 1st (root), 3rd, and 5th degrees of the major scale.
- Formula: **Root + 3rd + 5th**

3. Minor Triad Formula

- A minor triad uses the root, a flattened 3rd, and the 5th.
- Formula: **Root + b3rd + 5th**

4. Major vs. Minor Triads

- The **only difference** between major and minor triads is the 3rd.
- A minor triad has a **flattened 3rd**, while the major triad does not.

5. Examples

A. Triads in the D Major Scale

- The notes in the D major scale are: D, E, F#, G, A, B, C#
- D major triad: D – F# – A
- D minor triad: D – F – A

B. Triads in the Bb Major Scale

- The notes in the Bb major scale are: Bb, C, D, Eb, F, G, A
- Bb major triad: Bb – D – F
- Bb minor triad: Bb – Db – F

6. Power Chords ('5' Chords)

- Power chords are not triads—they contain **only 2 notes**: the root and the 5th.
- Because they lack a 3rd or b3rd, they are **neither major nor minor**.
- Power chords are named with a 5 after the root, as in Bb5, F#5, D5, etc.

Chapter 5: Major Scale Intervals

1. What Is an Interval

- An **interval** is a way of describing the **distance between two notes**, either by pitch (e.g., 3rd, 5th) or by fret spacing on the guitar.
- Intervals are the building blocks of melodies and chords, and they help define the sound and structure of music.

2. Major Scale Intervals

- To understand intervals, we start with a major scale, since interval names are based on it.
- The **A major scale** is: A, B, C#, D, E, F#, G#, A

3. Intervals from A in Scale Order

- A to B = Major 2nd
- A to C# = Major 3rd

- A to D = Perfect 4th
- A to E = Perfect 5th
- A to F $\sharp$ = Major 6th
- A to G $\sharp$ = Major 7th
- A to A = Octave (also called a Perfect 8th)

4. How Interval Names Are Determined

- Interval names are based on two things:
 - The **number of letter names** between the root and the target note (A to C is a 3rd because it spans A–B–C)
 - The **number of semitones** between the two notes, which determines whether it's **major**, **minor**, **perfect**, **augmented**, or **diminished**
- That's why A to C $\sharp$ is a **major 3rd** (3 letter steps, 4 semitones), while A to C (3 letter steps, 3 semitones) would be a **minor 3rd**.

Chapter 6: Chromatic Intervals

1. What Is a Chromatic Interval?

- A **chromatic interval** is an interval that has been **altered** from the standard version found in the major scale—either **sharpened** ($\sharp$) or **flattened** ($\flat$).
- These intervals help describe the distances between notes that don't fit neatly within a major scale.

2. Standard Intervals from the Major Scale

- In any major scale, the intervals above the root are:
Major 2nd, Major 3rd, Perfect 4th, Perfect 5th, Major 6th, Major 7th, and Octave
- These are called **diatonic intervals**.

3. Chromatic Alterations and Qualities

- When you **flatten** a major interval (except the 5th), it becomes a **minor** interval:
 - Major 3rd → Minor 3rd
 - Major 6th → Minor 6th
 - Major 7th → Minor 7th
 - Major 2nd → Minor 2nd
- The **Perfect 5th**, when flattened, becomes a **Diminished 5th** ($\flat 5$).

4. Interval Qualities: Major, Minor, Perfect, Augmented, Diminished

Major intervals occur naturally in the major scale and include 2nd, 3rd, 6th, and 7th

Minor intervals are one semitone **lower** than their major counterparts:

- A flattened Major 3rd is a Minor 3rd
- A flattened Major 6th is a Minor 6th
- A flattened Major 7th is a Minor 7th
- A flattened Major 2nd is a Minor 2nd

Perfect intervals are stable and unaltered in both major and minor scales:

- 1st (unison), 4th, 5th, and 8th (octave)

Augmented intervals are one semitone **higher** than major or perfect intervals:

- The **Perfect 5th**, when sharpened, becomes an **Augmented 5th (#5)**.
- The **Perfect 4th**, when sharpened, becomes an **Augmented 4th (#4)**.

Diminished intervals are one semitone **lower** than minor or perfect intervals:

- The **Perfect 5th**, when flattened, becomes a **Diminished 5th (b5)**

These labels describe both the **size** and **quality** of an interval. Learning to recognize them is essential for understanding chords, scales, and harmony.

4. Chromatic Intervals from the C Major Scale

- C major scale: C, D, E, F, G, A, B
- Chromatic alterations from C:
 - b2nd = D $\flat$ → Minor 2nd
 - #2nd = D $\sharp$ → Augmented 2nd
 - b3rd = E $\flat$ → Minor 3rd
 - #3rd = E $\sharp$ → Augmented 3rd (very rare, enharmonic to F)
 - #4th = F $\sharp$ → Augmented 4th
 - b5th = G $\flat$ → Diminished 5th
 - #5th = G $\sharp$ → Augmented 5th
 - b6th = A $\flat$ → Minor 6th
 - #6th = A $\sharp$ → Augmented 6th
 - b7th = B $\flat$ → Minor 7th

5. Why We Use Names Like B $\sharp$ or F $\flat$

- Notes like **B $\sharp$** or **F $\flat$** might seem unnecessary (since B $\sharp$ = C, and F $\flat$ = E), but they are used to preserve **correct spelling** in harmonic or melodic contexts.
- For example, in the key of **C $\sharp$ major**, the 7th note is **B $\sharp$** , not C, because you must include one of every letter name in the scale.
- These naming conventions help musicians understand the **function** of a note in a given key or chord.

Chapter 7: Keys and Chord Families

1. What Is a Key?

- A **key** tells you what **scale** a song is based on.
- It defines the set of notes that most of the song's **melody, bassline, and chords** will come from.

2. Key of A Major Example

- If a song is in the **key of A major**, then the melody, chords, and bassline will primarily use notes from the **A major scale**.
- The A major scale: A, B, C $\sharp$, D, E, F $\sharp$, G $\sharp$

3. Number of Major Keys

- There are **12 major keys**, one for each note in the chromatic scale.
- Each has a corresponding major scale and chord family.

4. Chord Families

- Each key has a **chord family** made up of **seven chords**, one built on each scale degree.
- These chords are usually formed by stacking **thirds** from the notes of the scale.

Key	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
C	C	Dm	Em	F	G	Am	B°
C#	C#	D#m	E#m	F#	G#	A#m	B#°
D	D	Em	F#m	G	A	Bm	C#°
Eb	Eb	Fm	Gm	Ab	Bb	Cm	D°
E	E	F#m	G#m	A	B	C#m	D#°
F	F	Gm	Am	Bb	C	Dm	E°
F#	F#	G#m	A#m	B	C#	D#m	E#°
G	G	Am	Bm	C	D	Em	F#°
Ab	Ab	Bbm	Cm	Db	Eb	Fm	G°
A	A	Bm	C#m	D	E	F#m	G#°
Bb	Bb	Cm	Dm	Eb	F	Gm	A°
B	B	C#m	D#m	E	F#	G#m	A#°

5. Parent Scale

- The scale that gives rise to these chords is called the **parent scale**.
- It provides the tonal foundation for both **melodic** and **harmonic** content in the key.

Chapter 8: Major Key, Part 2

1. To find the chords in a key, we build a triad (a 3-note chord) on each note of the major scale by stacking thirds.

That means starting on one note, then adding a note a 3rd above it, and then another 3rd above that—using only notes from the scale.

Let's use the **C major scale**: C – D – E – F – G – A – B

Now we'll build a triad on each note, using only the notes in the **C major scale**.

Let's look at a couple of examples closely:

• Chord II (D – F – A): D Minor

- From **D** (the 2nd note of the C major scale), go up a **third**: **F**
- From **F**, go up another **third**: **A**

So we have: **D – F – A**

Now ask: what kind of chord is this?

- From D to F is a **minor third** (3 half steps)
- From F to A is a **major third** (4 half steps)

This creates a **minor triad**: minor 3rd on the bottom, major 3rd on top

→ **D minor**

• Chord IV (F – A – C): F Major

- Start on **F**, go up a **third**: **A**
- From **A**, go up another **third**: **C**

So we have: **F – A – C**

- F to A is a **major third** (4 half steps)
- A to C is a **minor third** (3 half steps)

This creates a **major triad**: major 3rd on the bottom, minor 3rd on top
→ **F major**

Triads in the Key of C Major

Scale Degree	Chord	Notes	Quality	Interval Breakdown
I	C	C–E–G	Major	C→E = major 3rd, C→G = perfect 5th
II	Dm	D–F–A	Minor	D→F = minor 3rd, D→A = perfect 5th
III	Em	E–G–B	Minor	E→G = minor 3rd, E→B = perfect 5th
IV	F	F–A–C	Major	F→A = major 3rd, F→C = perfect 5th
V	G	G–B–D	Major	G→B = major 3rd, G→D = perfect 5th
VI	Am	A–C–E	Minor	A→C = minor 3rd, A→E = perfect 5th
VII	B°	B–D–F	Diminished	B→D = minor 3rd, B→F = diminished 5th

2. The Harmonized Major Scale Formula

From any **major scale**, if you stack 3rds on each degree using only scale notes, the result is:

I is Major – II is Minor – III is Minor – IV is Major – V is Major – VI is Minor – VII is Diminished

This is true in all 12 major keys. It's a powerful formula to remember for songwriting, improvisation, and analysis.

3. Relative Minor

The **VI chord** in any major key is its **relative minor**.

- It shares the **same notes** and **same key signature**, but starts on a different root.
- In **C major**, the 6th scale degree is **A**, so:
 - **A minor** is the **relative minor** of **C major**
 - Likewise, **C major** is the **relative major** of **A minor**

To find the relative minor of any major chord on guitar, move down **three frets** from the root note.

- Example: Play G on the 6th string, 3rd fret.
Move down 3 frets = open E → **E minor** is the relative minor of G major.

Chapter 9: Chord Progressions and Roman Numerals

1. What Is a Chord Progression?

- A **chord progression** is a sequence of chords played in a particular order.
- Progressions give a song its harmonic movement and emotional contour.
- Common progressions often repeat or cycle, and they form the foundation of countless songs.

2. Roman Numerals in Music

- Chords in a progression are labeled using **Roman numerals** based on their position in the key.
- Uppercase numerals = **major chords** (I, IV, V)
- Lowercase numerals = **minor chords** (ii, iii, vi)
- Diminished chords use a ° symbol (vii°)

3. The I–IV–V Progression

- One of the most common progressions in music.
- Example: In **G major**, I–IV–V = G – C – D
- This progression creates a strong sense of resolution, especially when it ends on I.

4. The V–I Movement (Perfect Cadence)

- A **V–I** movement is called a **perfect cadence**.
- It gives a strong, conclusive feel, signaling a musical “full stop” or return home.
- Example: In C major, G (V) → C (I)

5. Transposing Progressions to New Keys

- Once you know a chord progression in Roman numerals, you can **transpose** it to any key by applying the same Roman numerals to a new scale.
- Example:
Progression: I–vi–IV–V
- In G major: G – Em – C – D
- In E major: E – C#m – A – B

6. Using a Chord Chart

- A **chord/key chart** shows you the chords that correspond to each degree in every major key.
- It's a handy tool for quickly transposing progressions and identifying Roman numerals.

Chapter 10: Pentatonic and Blues Scales

1. What Is a Pentatonic Scale?

- A **pentatonic scale** is a scale made up of **five notes**.
- The word “penta” means five, and “tonic” refers to tones (notes).

2. The Major Pentatonic Scale

- The **major pentatonic** is built from the **major scale**, but with the **4th and 7th notes removed**.
- The interval formula is: **1 – 2 – 3 – 5 – 6**
- Example: **G major scale** = G, A, B, C, D, E, F#
→ **G major pentatonic** = G, A, B, D, E
- It is built on a **major triad** (1–3–5) and is often used for **melodies, licks, and solos in major keys**.

3. The Minor Pentatonic Scale

- The **minor pentatonic** is a 5-note version of the **natural minor scale**, omitting the **2nd and 6th** degrees.
- The interval formula is: **1 – b3 – 4 – 5 – b7**

- It is built on a **minor triad** and is used for **minor keys** as well as **12-bar blues**.
- Example: **C minor pentatonic** = C, E $\flat$, F, G, B $\flat$

4. F Major Pentatonic Example

- **F major scale** = F, G, A, B $\flat$, C, D, E
- **F major pentatonic** = F, G, A, C, D

5. The Blues Scale

- The **blues scale** is very similar to the minor pentatonic, but adds a single extra note: the **b5th**.
- Formula: **1 – b3 – 4 – b5 – 5 – b7**
- This added “blue note” creates the **bluesy, expressive sound** that defines the style.

Chapter 11: The Natural Minor Scale

1. What Is the Natural Minor Scale?

- The **natural minor scale** is a 7-note scale that shares the **same notes** as its relative major, but starts on a different note (the 6th degree of the major scale).
- It is often used to create **darker, more emotional moods** in music.

2. Interval Formula

- The natural minor scale has the following formula of intervals:
Root – 2nd – b3rd – 4th – 5th – b6th – b7th
- The three altered degrees compared to the major scale are the **b3rd, b6th, and b7th**.

3. Major vs. Minor Example: A Major vs. A Minor

- A major scale: A – B – C $\sharp$ – D – E – F $\sharp$ – G $\sharp$
- A natural minor scale: A – B – C – D – E – F – G
- Notice the **3rd, 6th, and 7th** are **flattened** in the minor scale.

4. C Natural Minor Example

- C major: C – D – E – F – G – A – B
- C natural minor: C – D – E $\flat$ – F – G – A $\flat$ – B $\flat$

5. E Natural Minor Example

- E major: E – F $\sharp$ – G $\sharp$ – A – B – C $\sharp$ – D $\sharp$
- E natural minor: E – F $\sharp$ – G – A – B – C – D

6. Mode Name

- The natural minor scale is also called the **Aeolian mode**.
- It is the **6th mode** of the major scale system.

7. Relationship to the Minor Pentatonic

- The **minor pentatonic scale** is a simplified version of the natural minor scale.
- It uses only 5 of the 7 notes:
1 – b3 – 4 – 5 – b7
- In other words, it **leaves out the 2nd and b6th** from the natural minor scale.

Chapter 12: Minor Key Basics

1. Mood of Minor Keys

- Minor keys tend to sound more **sad, dark, or emotional**, while major keys often sound **bright, happy, or uplifting**. This difference is due to the $\flat 3$ rd found in the minor scale.

2. Relative Minor and Chord Families

- Each major key has a **relative minor**—the **VI chord** in the major key becomes the **I chord** in the minor key.
- The remaining chords in the scale stay the same but are **renumbered** using the minor key as the new tonic.

3. Chord Types in a Minor Key

- Just like major keys, minor keys have **7 chords** in their chord family. These are derived from the **natural minor scale**. The chord qualities follow this pattern:

Scale Degree	Chord Quality
I	minor
II°	diminished
III	major
IV	minor
V	minor (<i>sometimes major</i>)
VI	major
VII	major

- I, IV, and V = **minor**; III, VI, VII = **major**; II = **diminished**

4. Example: B Minor from D Major

- D major scale chords: D, Em, F $\sharp$ m, G, A, Bm, C $\sharp$ dim
- B minor is the **relative minor** (6th degree), so the B minor chord family is: Bm, C $\sharp$ dim, D, Em, F $\sharp$ m, G, A

5. Common Variations

- In some songs, chords like **IV** or **V** are made **major** to create tension or variety.
- This is especially common in **minor key cadences**, where **V** is changed to major (e.g., E major instead of E minor in A minor).

6. Soloing in Minor Keys

- When improvising in a minor key, you can use:
 - The **natural minor scale**
 - The **minor pentatonic scale**
 - The **blues scale**

7. Chord Progression Analysis Example

- Chord progression: C $\sharp$ m – E – A – B
- In the key of **C $\sharp$ minor**, the Roman numerals are:
 - C $\sharp$ m = I; E = III; A = VII; B = VII

You can solo over this progression using either the **C $\sharp$ natural minor scale** or the **C $\sharp$ minor pentatonic scale**.