

Creative Scale Practice

In classical music education, you usually practice major and minor scales from low to high and back down again. There are so many other ways to play scales in more interesting and musical ways!

Improvise with scales

Pick a scale.

- over a drone, play a melody using the scale
- invent a rhythm. Over a rhythmic drone, play a melody using the scale
- Get to know your palette: Listen closely each step of the scale. What is its color, its character, its degree of tension? Use this when you improvise melodies!

„Scale yoga“

Instead of playing your scales up and down, invent new patterns to play your scale.

For example:

A) 3 up, 1 down. Repeat. etc. (c-e, d-f, e-g, f-a, etc. - you probably know that pattern!)

B) 1 up, 1 up, 1 down. Repeat (c-d-e, d-e-f, e-f-g, f-g-a, etc.)

C) 3 up, 3 up, 4 down. Repeat (c-e-g, d-f-a, e-g-b, f-a-c, etc.)

D) 6 up, 1 down, 3 down, 1 down. Repeat. (c-a-g-e, d-b-a-f, e-c-b-g, etc.)

Invent patterns of your own. Try them in different scales and keys.

Combine your scale with rhythm:

Play example A (which is melodically grouped in two), bow & emphasize the notes in groups of three

Play example B or C (melodically grouped in three), bow & emphasize the notes in groups of two, or groups of four – etc.

Different scales

Of course, there are many kinds of scales, much more than just major and minor!

Try the „church modes“ (dorian, phrygian, etc.)

Or a pentatonic scale,

the melodic minor scale (using the same shape upward and downward),

phrygian major (= „flamenco scale“)

the whole-tone scale,

the diminished scale,

the blues scale,

invent a scale of your own

...etc.