A sample of the technology used in THE UNDERSTANDING OF MUSIC SEMINAR™

The ancient Greeks considered music to be a natural part of life and every child was expected to be able to play not just one, but several instruments as part of their education. A person was not required to have a special gift, talent or natural ability for music. Music was simple enough for EVERYONE to learn.

About 1600 years ago for reasons which are specified in the seminar, a complex system of musical rules began to be added to these simplicities. The following information is just a small sample of the technology taught in The Understanding of Music Seminar™ and is presented here to show just how quickly and simply many of the basic concepts in music can be explained.

I do not claim to be the only person who educates people using this approach but feel I can justifiably claim to be amongst the most successful in using it. Music really can be both simple and fun to learn!

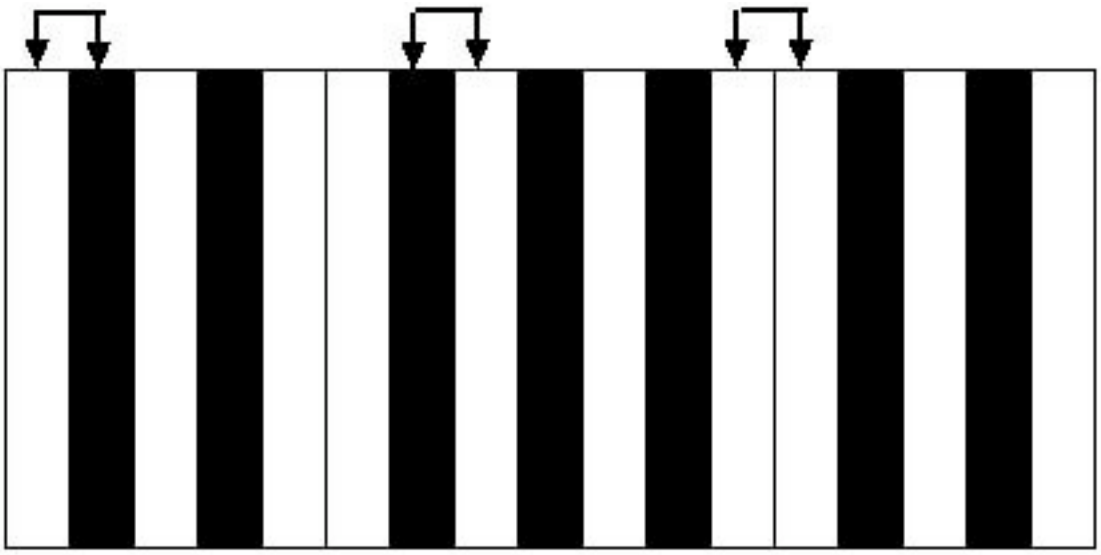
Understanding spaces

This is the most important concept to grasp when learning music and this concept of spaces (intervals) is more quickly understood on the keyboard. In the Understanding of Music Seminar™ each new concept is studied on both the keyboard and guitar.

All Western music (as opposed to Chinese music, Indian music etc.) is based on the interval or unit of musical space called the semitone or half step.

A semitone or half step is the SMALLEST interval or unit of musical space between two notes in Western music.

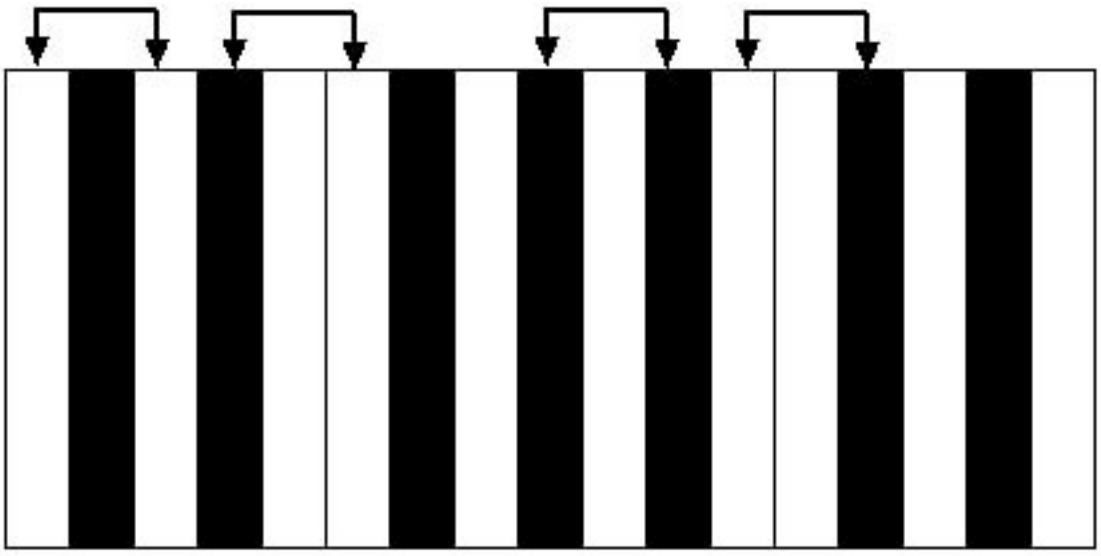
A simple way to see the interval or unit of musical space called a semitone or half step is to look at the diagram I have created called a cut-off keyboard (try to imagine taking a chainsaw to the keyboard and cutting off the bottom part of all the white notes):



The interval or unit of musical space of one semitone or one half step can exist between a white note and a black note, between a black note and a white note or between a white note and a white note.

I prefer to call this interval or unit of musical space simply ONE because the words semitone and half step can be confusing.

Now I am going to introduce you to an interval or unit of musical space consisting of two semitones or two half steps which is called a tone or whole step. A tone or whole step is simply an interval or unit of musical space equal to TWO semitones or TWO half steps. Look at the next cut-off keyboard diagram:



The interval or unit of musical space of a tone or a whole step can exist between a white note and a white note, between a black note and a white note, between a black note and a black note or between a white note and a

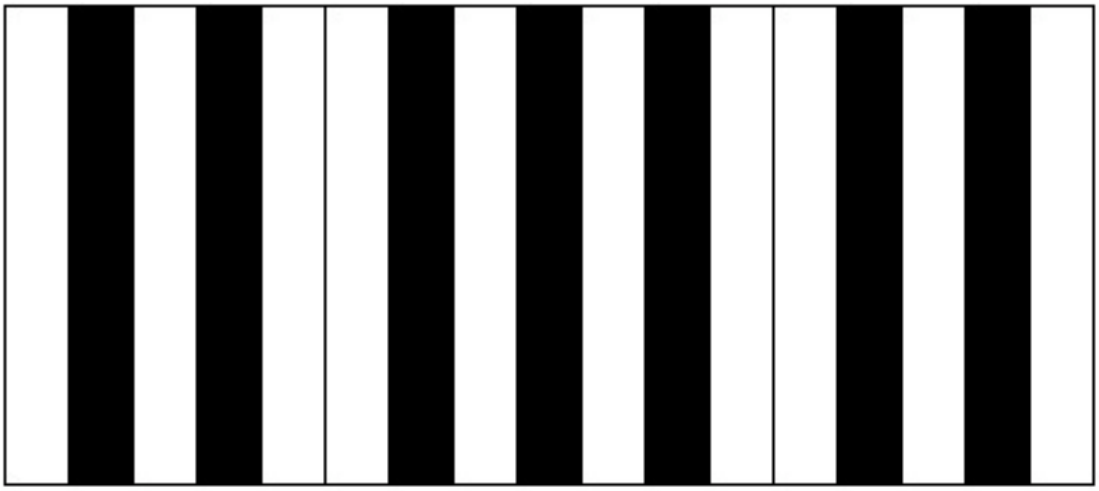
black note.

I prefer to call this interval or unit of musical space simply TWO because the words tone and whole step can be confusing.

You have learned how to see the intervals or units of musical space I call ONE and TWO using a simple diagram I created called a cut-off keyboard. An interval or unit of musical space of THREE is equal to 3 semitones or 3 half steps.

An interval or unit of musical space of FOUR is equal to 4 semitones or 4 half steps.

Try using the cut-off keyboard diagram below to practice moving UP the keyboard (LEFT to RIGHT) and DOWN the keyboard (RIGHT to LEFT) using intervals of ONE and TWO. Then try moving UP and DOWN the keyboard using intervals of THREE and FOUR:



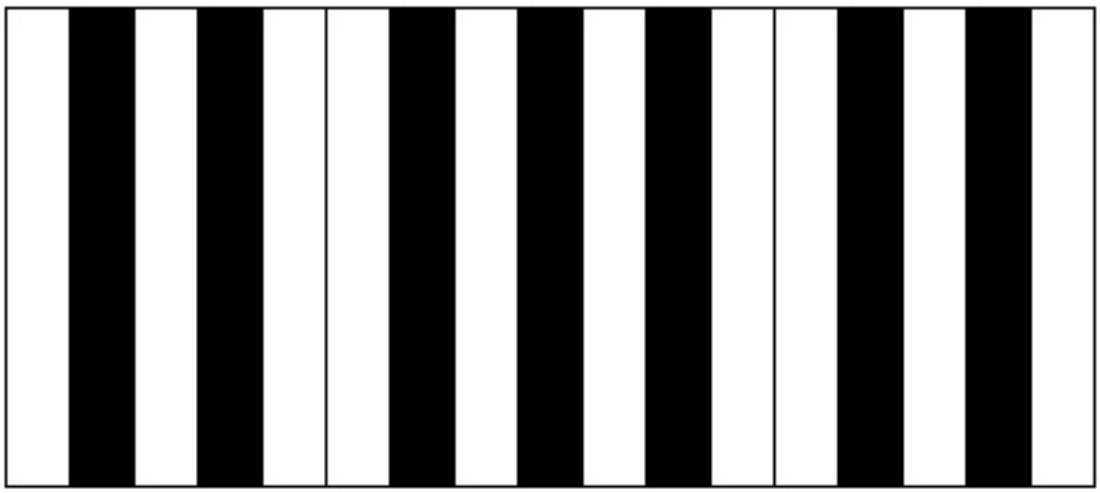
Why is it so important to be able to see intervals or units of musical space on the keyboard? Well, I have a surprise for you. You now have ALL the information you need to play SCALES and CHORDS. But before I get you to play those scales and chords I want to teach you the NAMES of the notes on the keyboard.

Naming the keys on the keyboard

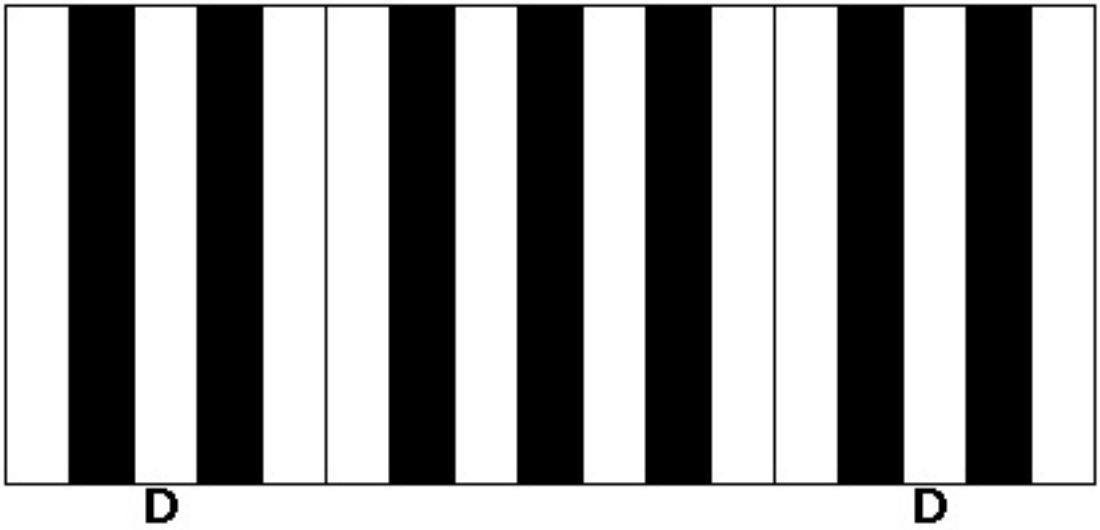
Notice that all keyboards have a simple pattern; a group of two black keys, a group of three black keys, a group of two black keys and so on.

Using the cut-off keyboard below, locate a **GROUP** of **TWO** black keys (do

NOT pick two black keys within a **GROUP** of **THREE** black keys). Now find the white key **between** those two black keys. The name of that white key is **D**. **D** for **Duncan**.



Now locate another **GROUP** of **TWO** black keys and find the white key **between** those two black keys. The name of that white key is also **D**. **D** for **Duncan**. The white key **between** each **GROUP** of **TWO** black keys is always **D**. **D** for **Duncan**.

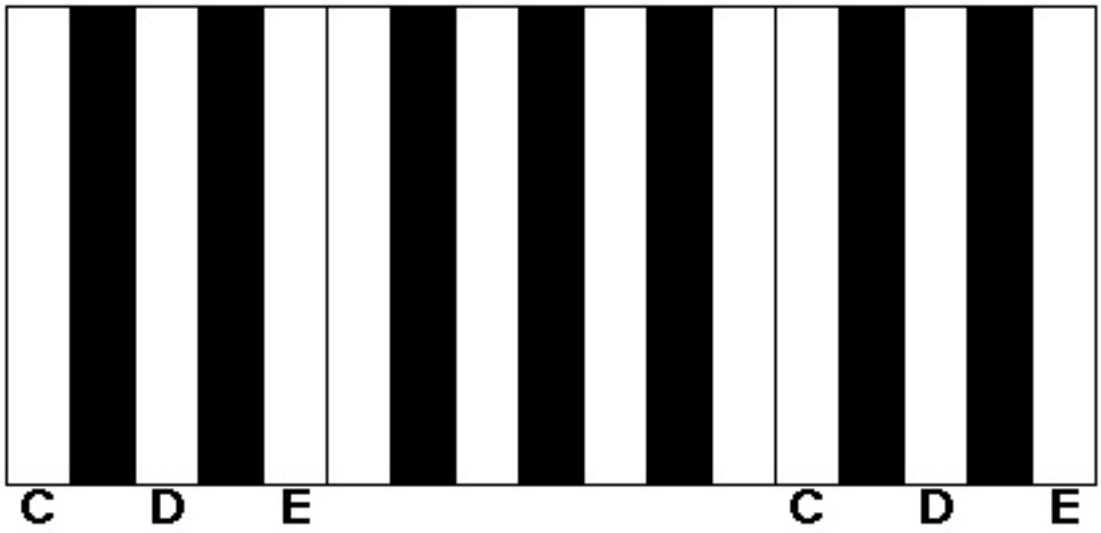


The alphabet letter **D** is repeated again and again across the keyboard. All **D**'s sound **SIMILAR** because the **frequency** (the number of vibrations per second) of each higher **D** is **double the frequency** of the previous **D**. These **D**'s have **SIMILAR** sounds **NOT** identical sounds.

The only letters of the alphabet that are used for the white keys of the keyboard are **A B C D E F G** and just like the letter **D** these are repeated again and again across the keyboard: **A B C D E F G A B C D E F G** and so on.

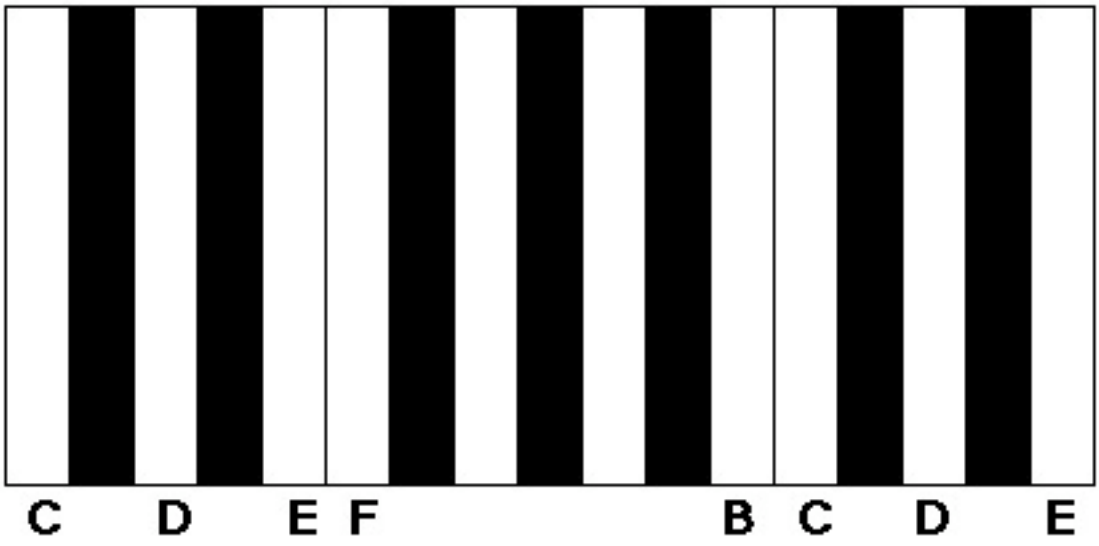
Remember, that these keys have **SIMILAR** sounds **NOT** identical sounds.

Now that you know how to find the location of every key called **D** you can start to work out the locations of the other keys:

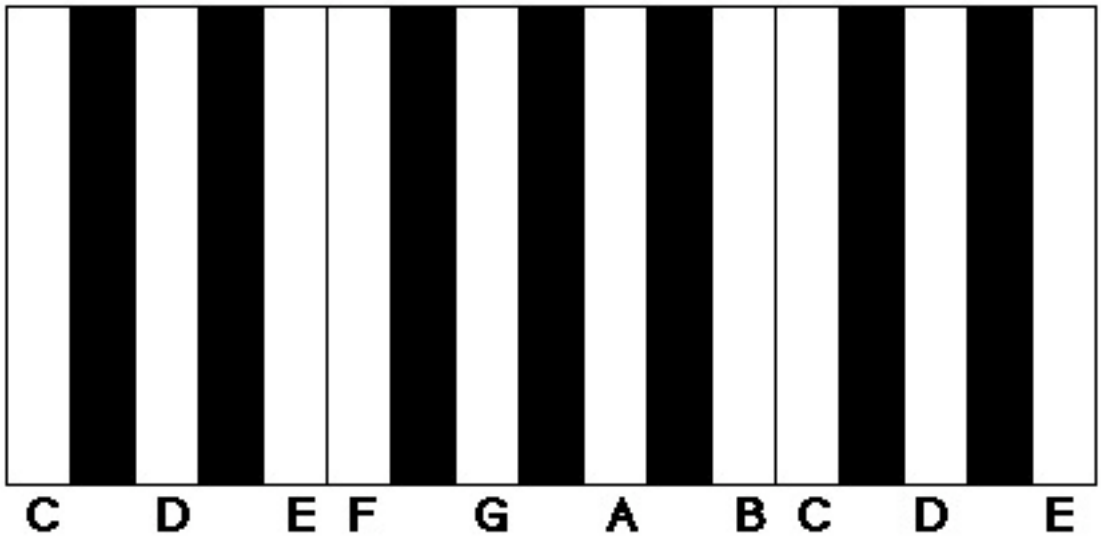


Originally, keyboards were designed without the number of keys they have today; the black keys were added much later. Therefore, the alphabet letters of **C** and **E** are **NOT** given logically to the **BLACK** keys on each side of every **D** but to the **WHITE** keys on each side of every **D**.

The keys **B** and **F** can next be found:



The keys **A** and **G** can next be found:



You now know the names of the white keys on the keyboard!

(**Special note**: The German musical theory system of naming the white keys uses a slightly different pattern: **A H C D E F G A H C D E F G** and so on and the Italian music theory system of naming the white keys uses **do re mi fa sol la si do re mi fa sol la si** and so on where **re** is equivalent to the white key of **D**. The reasons for these differences are explained in the **Understanding of Music Seminar™**).

Now you are ready to learn the names of the black keys.

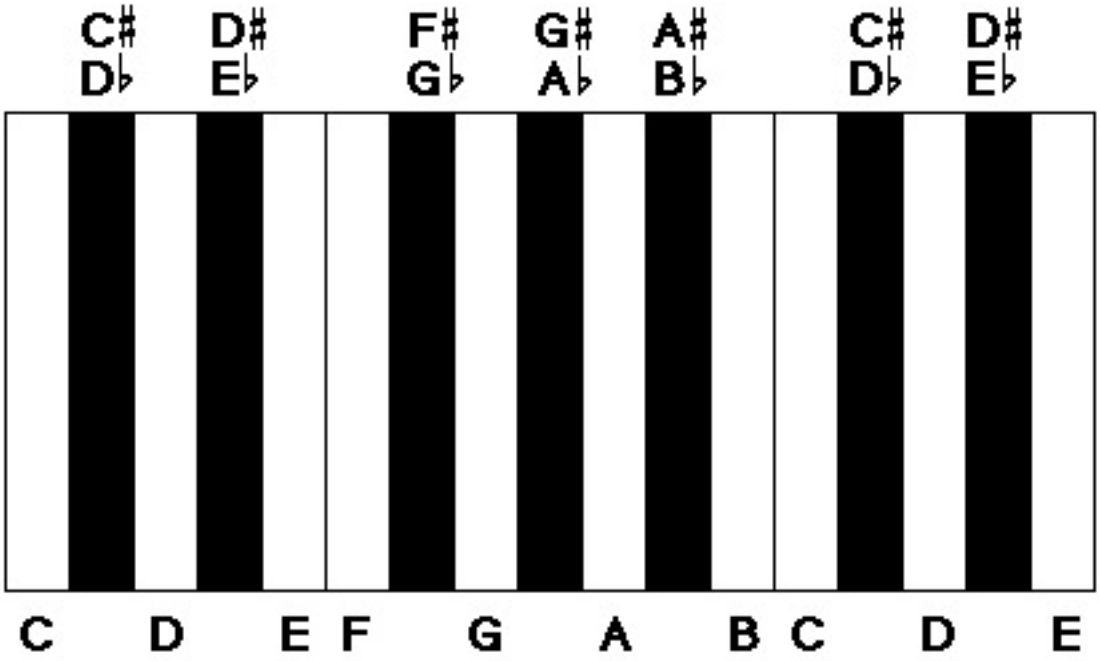
Black keys were later additions to the design of the keyboard and were given names that related to the existing white keys. The reason for this is explained in the **Understanding of Music Seminar™**. If black keys had been given their own names it would have **greatly simplified** the whole subject of music!

There are two rules for naming the all the rest of the keys on the keyboard:

Moving **UP** (**right**) **ONE** (a key one semitone or half step above) is called a **SHARP** and represented with this symbol:

Moving **DOWN** (**left**) **ONE** (a key one semitone or half step below) is called a **FLAT** and represented with this symbol:

With these two rules all the black keys can be named. Notice on the next cut-off keyboard that each black key has **TWO** names, a **SHARP** name **AND** a **FLAT** name. This happens because each black key can be related to either the white key on the left or on the right!



There is further information to understand with regard to naming the keys on the keyboard and learning how to name the strings and frets on the guitar which is explained in **Understanding of Music Seminar™**.

However, if you understand everything I have explained so far then you are ready to continue with learning how to play **SCALES**. If you have any doubts on **ANYTHING** I have explained so far please review all the information before you try to go any further.

Playing scales on the keyboard

Now I am going to teach you to play scales on the keyboard. **SCALES** are simply sequences of keys which can be found by using a specific pattern of intervals or units of musical space.

Scale patterns are made from combinations of the intervals **ONE**, **TWO** and **THREE**.

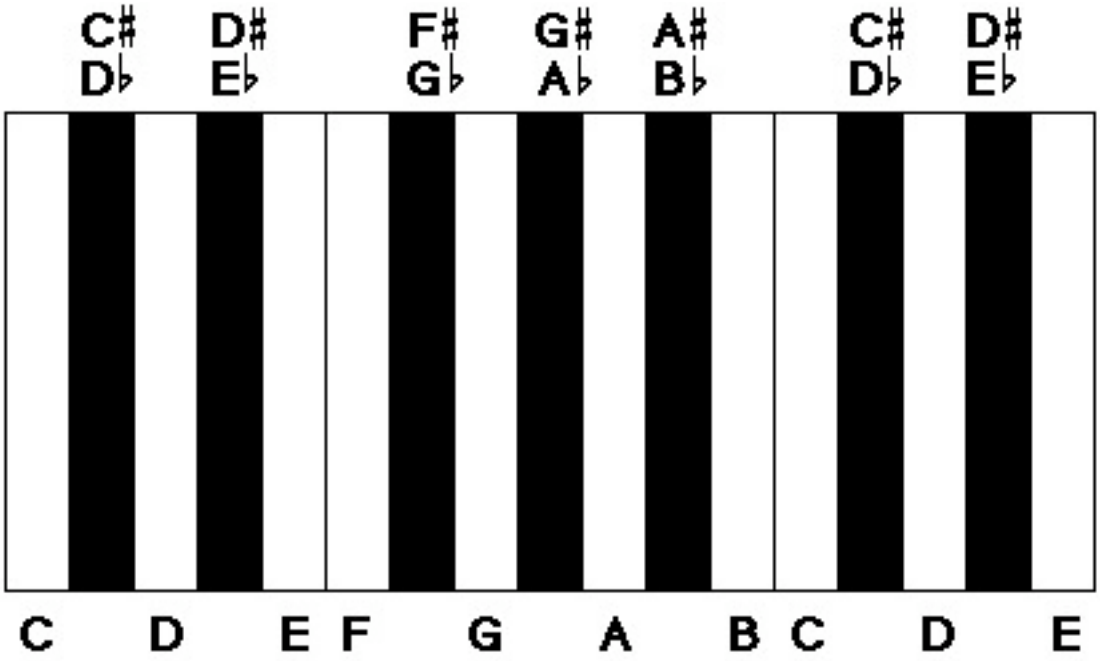
Any scale can be started on **any white key** or **any black key**.

I'll start by showing you the most common scale pattern called the **Major scale**. In this scale pattern the number **2** represents **TWO** (the interval of a tone or whole step) and the number **1** represents **ONE** (the interval of a semitone or half step):

Major scale: **2 2 1 2 2 2 1**

Here is an example of how to play this scale using your **INDEX** finger and starting on the white key of **D**:

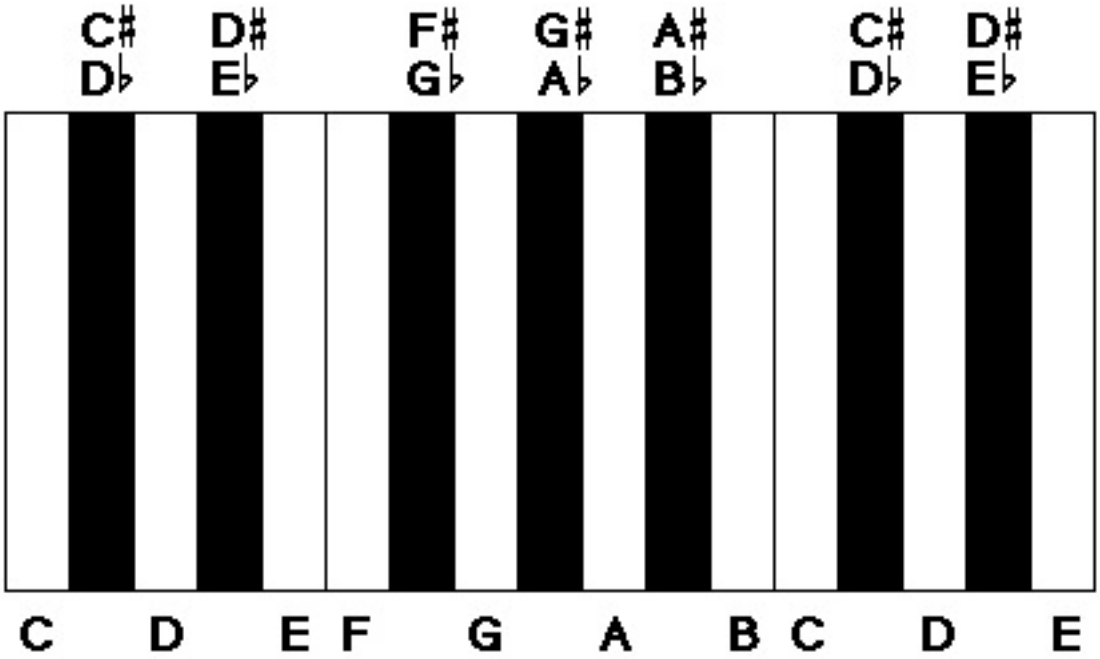
Play the white key of **D**.
Count up **TWO** and play the white key of **E**.
Count up **TWO** and play the black key of **F#** .
Count up **ONE** and play the white key of **G**.
Count up **TWO** and play the white key of **A**.
Count up **TWO** and play the white key of **B**.
Count up **TWO** and play the black key of **C#** .
Count up **ONE** and play the white key of **D**.



You just played **D Major scale** because you started on the white key of **D** and used the **Major scale pattern: 2 2 1 2 2 2 1**

Easy? Of course it is. Music is simple and when it stops being simple and fun it stops being music!

Now try playing the **Major scale pattern** (**2 2 1 2 2 2 1**) starting on other white keys or on black keys. Major scales are known by whatever key you start on, for example, **D Major scale**, **D# Major scale** (which could also be called **Eb Major scale**), **E Major scale** and so on.



Notice how the **Major scale pattern** can be started on **ANY** white key or **ANY** black key?

What are scales used for? A scale pattern started on any key produces a specific selection of white and black keys. This selection of white and black keys are then used as the building blocks to create different melodies.

Don't worry about the significance of the names of the scale patterns or which specific fingers to play each white or black key with for now. Just continue to use your **INDEX** finger and have fun playing around with them!

Remember, any scale pattern can be started on **ANY** white key or on **ANY** black key.

Here are some other scale patterns made from combinations of the intervals **ONE**, **TWO** and **THREE**.

In these scale patterns the number **2** represents **TWO** (the interval of a tone or whole step) and the number **1** represents **ONE** (the interval of a semitone or half step). The number **3** represents **THREE** (the interval equal to 3 semitones or 3 half steps).

Major scale: **2 2 1 2 2 2 1**

Natural minor scale: 2 1 2 2 1 2 2

Harmonic minor scale: 2 1 2 2 1 3 1

Jazz minor scale: 2 1 2 2 2 2 1

Hungarian minor scale: 2 1 3 1 1 3 1

Blues scale: 3 2 1 1 3 2

Major pentatonic scale: 2 2 3 2 3

Playing chords on the keyboard

Now I am going to teach you to play chords on the keyboard. **CHORDS** are simply groups of keys played together and each chord has a specific **chord pattern** just like each scale has a specific scale pattern.

Chord patterns are often made from combinations of the intervals **THREE** and **FOUR**.

Any chord can be started on **any white key** or **any black key**.

I'll start by showing you the **chord pattern** called the **Major chord**. In this chord pattern the number **4** represents **FOUR** (the interval equal to 4 semitones or 4 half steps) and the number **3** represents **THREE** (the interval equal to 3 semitones or 3 half steps).

Major chord: 4 3

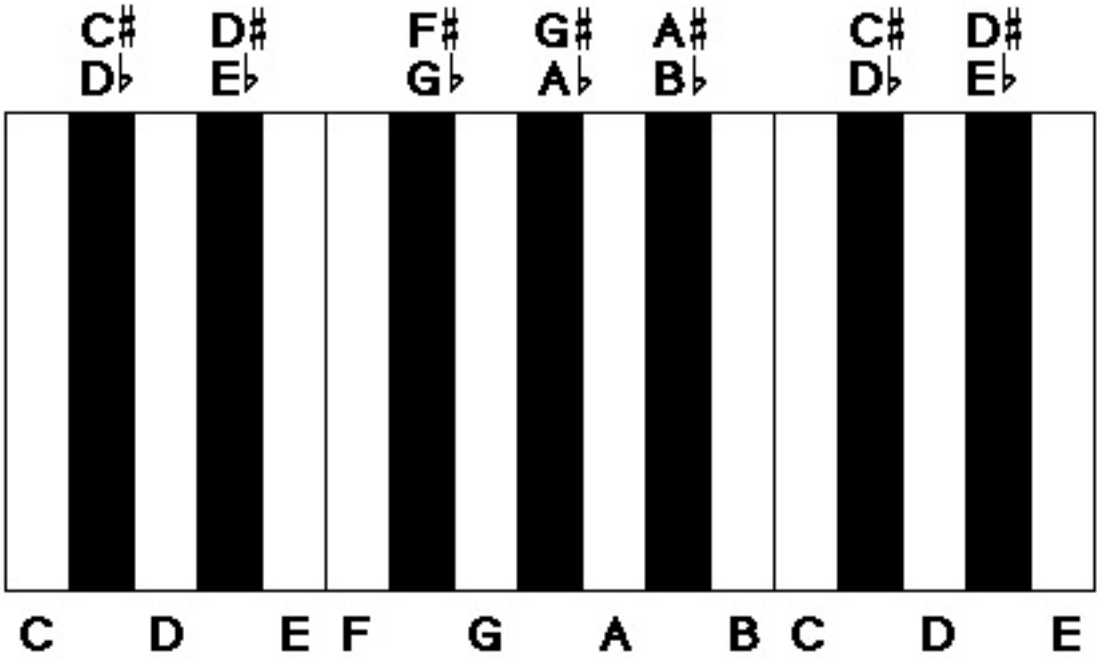
Here is an example of how to play this chord using your **RIGHT** hand thumb (finger number 1), index finger (finger number 2) and ring finger (finger number 4) starting on the white key of **D**:

Play the white key of **D** with your **RIGHT** hand thumb (1). Keep your thumb on **D**, count up **FOUR** and play the black key of **F#** with your index finger (2). Keep your thumb on **D** and your index finger on **F#** , count up **THREE** and play the white key of **A** with your ring finger (4). Play all three keys together.

You just played **D Major chord** since you started on the white key of **D** and used the **Major chord pattern: 4 3**

Difficult? Of course not. Music is si**mple and when it stops being simple and fun it stops being music!**

Now try playing the Major chord pattern starting on other white keys or on black keys. Major chords are known by whatever key you start on, for example D Major chord, D# Major chord (which could also be called Eb Major chord), **E Major chord** and so on).



Notice how the **Major chord pattern** can be started on **ANY white key** or **ANY black key**?

What are chords used for? Chords are used to add structure around melodies.

Don't worry about the significance of the names of the chord patterns or which specific fingers to play each key with for now. Just continue to use whatever fingers feel comfortable and have fun playing around with them!

Remember, any chord pattern can be started on **ANY** white key or on **ANY** black key.

Here are some other chord patterns made from combinations of the intervals **THREE** and **FOUR**.

In these chord patterns the number **4** represents **FOUR** (the interval equal to 4 semitones or 4 half steps) and the number **3** represents **THREE** (the interval equal to 3 semitones or 3 half steps).

Major chord: 4 3

minor chord: 3 4

diminished chord: 3 3

augmented chord: 4 4

dominant seventh chord: 4 3 3

minor seventh chord: 3 4 3

Major seventh chord: 4 3 4

In the **Understanding of Music Seminar™** you will learn the names of the strings and frets on the guitar as well and how to play scales and chords on the guitar with the same simplicity you just learned to play them on the keyboard!

You will learn how to read and play music for the keyboard **AND** guitar! You will learn how to start coordinating your fingers! You will be given a simple ten minute daily practice schedule and you will understand more about music than most musicians learn in a **lifetime**!

By the end of the weekend **YOU** will be reading and playing music by Johann Sebastian Bach slowly on the keyboard with both hands together even if you have never touched an instrument before that weekend!

In the **Understanding of Songwriting Seminar™** you will learn how to create your own melodies and how to create chords that fit with those melodies!

You will learn how to fit melodies to lyrics and how to create different rhythmic patterns for various styles of music! You will also learn about song structure and blues improvisation and lots of information about copyrighting, recording and promoting your songs.

By the end of the weekend you will be writing your own original songs in just a few minutes for each song!

(please note that you must be an **Understanding of Music Seminar™** graduate in order to attend the **Understanding of Songwriting Seminar™** - absolutely no exceptions).

Can it really be this simple to learn music? The thousands of graduates who have attended the seminars all think so.

Good Luck!