

# I HATE TO PRACTICE SERIES

Viola Charts for Scales,  
Arpeggios and Shifting  
Silent Exercises and Warm Ups

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String Play for All



[www.stringplayforall.com](http://www.stringplayforall.com)

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# Preface

During my college days, I diligently practiced scales, arpeggios, and double stops in all keys. I would get very frustrated with my progress. I was also envious of my harp colleagues. Every scale on harp involved the same fingering, you just changed the pedals. One fingering for all scales? That sounded like heaven to me! Eventually I realized that, actually, violin and viola were not that far removed from the one fingering for all scales of the harp. We have repeated finger patterns as well.

Scales and arpeggios are not just a torture device to make all students suffer. They are the foundation of Western classical music. The great works of Western tonal music for our instruments are based on these patterns. Scale and arpeggio practice develops a familiarity and a confidence to be able to accurately recognize and accurately reproduce these patterns. As Primrose states in the preface to *Technique is Memory*:

To know when to put a given finger in a given place at a given time; to know also its position relative to the other three fingers at the particular place and time, is to know all that is necessary in the search for accuracy.

Scale Charts are designed to take a student from elementary scale studies through more advanced three-octave scales and arpeggios. Along with the appropriate fingering for each pattern, we have included diagrams showing the finger placement on the finger board.

For double stops, we have focused on thirds and sixths. The fingerings for octaves are obvious and can be worked out by students on their own. We have found that few students are familiar with the major/minor pattern of scales in thirds and sixths. Placing the emphasis on spacing between the two fingers makes the goal clearer and practicing more efficient.

We have also included shifting exercises as well as silent practice exercises. The silent practice warm ups can be practiced in many different settings where students need to remain quiet. All the material is designed to be succinct and easy to memorize. At the beginning, all the arpeggios may seem overwhelming. As you become more comfortable with the patterns, gradually add new material.

Good luck on achieving your goals with the minimum amount of practice!

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Perrysburg, Ohio  
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# Section 1: Scales, Arpeggios & Finger Patterns

## Major Scale (G)

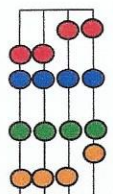
- △ = Half Step
- = First Finger
- = Second Finger
- = Third Finger
- = Fourth Finger

Scale Tonic Super Mediant Sub Domi- Dominant Sub Med- Leading Tonic  
 Degree: (1) Tonic (2) (3) nant (4) (5) iant (6) Tone (7) (8)

0 1 2 3 0 1 2 3 3 2 1 0 3 2 1 0

Whole Step Whole Step Half Step Whole Step Whole Step Half Step Half Step Whole Step Whole Step Whole Step Half Step Whole Step Whole Step

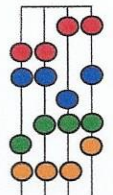
## Natural Minor Scale (G)



0 1 2 3 0 1 2 3 3 2 1 4 3 2 1 0

Whole Step Half Step Whole Step Whole Step Half Step Whole Step Whole Step Whole Step Whole Step Whole Step Half Step Whole Step Whole Step Half Step Whole Step

## Harmonic Minor Scale

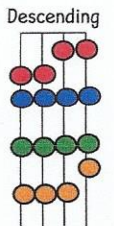
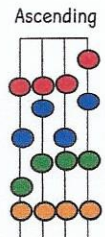


0 1 2 3 0 1 2 3 3 2 1 3 2 1 0

Whole Step Half Step Whole Step Whole Step Half Step Whole Step Whole Step Whole Step Whole Step Whole Step Half Step Whole Step Whole Step Half Step Whole Step

Augmented Second 3 Half Steps Augmented Second

## Melodic Minor Scale



0 1 2 3 0 1 2 3 3 2 1 4 3 2 1 0

## Chromatic Scale (All Half Steps)

Sliding Fingering

0 1-1 2-2 3 4 0 1-1 2-2 3 2-2 1-1 0 4 3 2-2 1-1 0

Chromatic Fingering

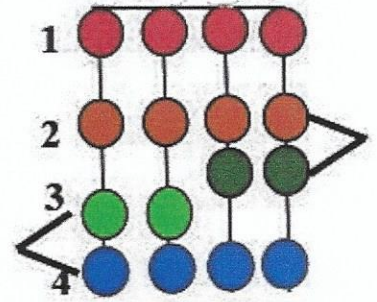
0 1 2-1 2 3 4 0 1 2-1 2 3 2 1-2 1 0 4 3 2 1-2 1 0

# ONE POSITION MAJOR SCALES AND ARPEGGIOS

## BEGINNING ON FIRST FINGER

Fingerboard 4

C G D A



Use only fourth fingers – NO OPEN STRINGS  
Same Fingering and Pattern for Each Scale

Note: C# Major has been intentionally left out because of the necessity of open "G" in the diminished seventh arpeggio.

^ v > = Half Step

D Major

1 4

1 1 E<sub>b</sub> Major

2 4 1 4 2

2 1 1 1

E Major

Continue ascending a half step for each scale until

D<sub>b</sub> Major



# 11 Three Octave Scale Fingers for the Viola with Galamian turn (top note is not repeated)

△ = Half Step  
- = Shift

Practice with *detache*, *martele*, and *colle* bowings, and slurring 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 12, and 24 notes per bow, within one beat for each slur. *Spiccato*: Start playing each note of the scale 4 times, then 3 times, 2 times, and finally just once.

## Major

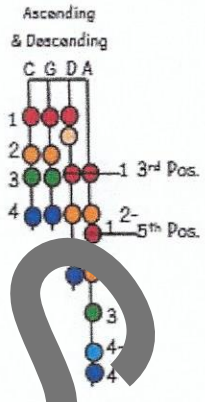
**C**

**Ascending**

C (0 2 1) 0 1 2 3  
 G 0 1 2 3  
 D 0 1 2 - 1 2 3 4  
 A 1 2 - 1 2 3 4

**Descending**

A 4 - 4 3 2 1 - 1  
 D 4 3 2 1 - 2 1  
 G 4 3 2 1  
 C 4 3 2 1 (0 2 1) 0



## Melodic Minor

**C**

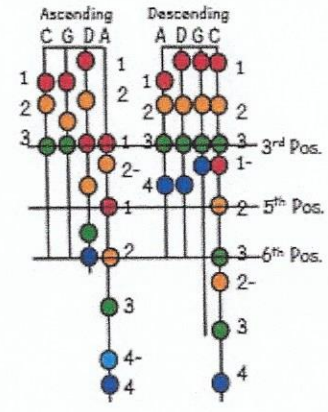
**Ascending**

C 0 2 1 0 1 2 3  
 G 0 1 2 3  
 D 0 1 2 - 1 2 3 4  
 A 1 2 - 1 2 3 4

**Descending**

A 4 3 2 - 3 2 1 - 3 2 1  
 D 4 3 2 1  
 G 4 3 2 1  
 C 4 3 2 1 0 2 1 0

Descending shifts occur on half steps.



Descending shifts occur on half steps, with the exception of the last shift to first position on the "A" string.

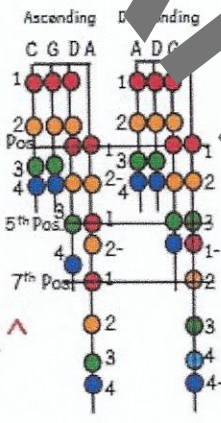
## D<sub>b</sub> and D

**Ascending**

C (1 3 2) 1 2 3 4  
 G 1 2 3 4  
 D 1 2 - 1 2 3 4  
 A 1 2 - 1 2 - 1 2 3

**Descending**

A 4 - 4 3 2 1 - 3 2 1  
 D 4 3 2 1 - 2 1  
 G 4 3 2 1  
 C 4 3 2 (1 3 2) 1



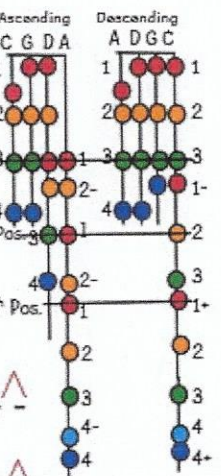
## E<sub>b</sub> and E

**Ascending**

C (1 3 2) 1 2 3 4  
 G 1 2 3 4  
 D 1 2 - 1 2 3 4  
 A 1 2 - 1 2 - 1 2 3

**Descending**

A 4 3 2 - 3 2 1 - 2 1  
 D 4 3 2 1 - 2 1  
 G 4 3 2 1  
 C 4 3 2 (1 3 2) 1



Descending shifts occur on half steps.

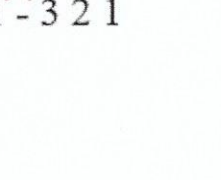
## E<sub>b</sub> and up

**Ascending**

C (2 4 3) 2 3 4  
 G 1 2 3 4  
 D 1 2 - 1 2 3 4  
 A 1 2 - 1 2 - 1 2 3 4

**Descending**

A 4 - 4 3 2 1 - 3 2 1 - 3 2 1  
 D 4 3 2 1  
 G 4 3 2 1  
 C 4 3 (2 4 3) 2



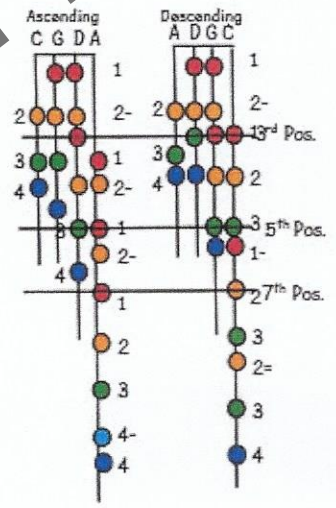
## E<sub>b</sub> and up

**Ascending**

C (2 4 3) 2 3 4  
 G 1 2 3 4  
 D 1 2 - 1 2 3 4  
 A 1 2 - 1 2 - 1 2 3 4

**Descending**

A 4 3 2 - 3 2 1 - 3 2 1  
 D 4 3 2 1 - 2 1  
 G 4 3 2 1  
 C 4 3 (2 4 3) 2







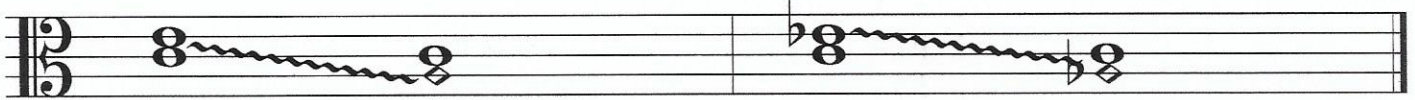
# Thirds

Major Third

Minor Third

Minor Third

Major Third



With thirds on viola the higher finger is on the bottom string. Placing both fingers on the same string, the spacing between the fingers for a major third is 3 Half Steps. The spacing for a minor third is 4 Half Steps. On the violin, the spacing between fingers for a minor third is 1 Half Step wider than for a major third, even though a major third is the bigger interval. We refer to a major third as "Close (C)" and minor third as "Wide (W)."

## Major Scale Pattern

Example: F Major

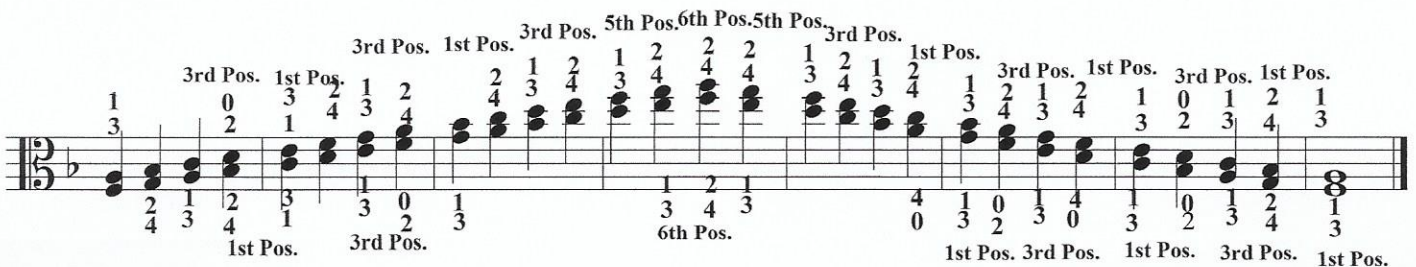
C W W C C W W C W W C C W C W C C W W C W W C C W W C



## Fingering

Standard Fingering: Alternating between 1 and 2

Open-String Fingering: Use open strings on shifts to aid in smoother connections between thirds.





# Finger Patterns from Scales

## Hi 2 Pattern

Half Step between 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Fingers

Two staves of musical notation in bass clef. The first staff shows a sequence of notes with fingerings 1, 2, 3, 4 and a half-step symbol (V) between 2 and 3. The second staff shows a similar sequence with fingerings 1, 2, 3, 4 and a half-step symbol (V) between 2 and 3. Arrows indicate finger lifts and presses.

## Lo 2 Pattern

Half Step between 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Fingers

Two staves of musical notation in bass clef. The first staff shows a sequence of notes with fingerings 1, 2, 3, 4 and a half-step symbol (V) between 1 and 2. The second staff shows a similar sequence with fingerings 1, 2, 3, 4 and a half-step symbol (V) between 1 and 2. Arrows indicate finger lifts and presses.

## Hi 3 Pattern

Half Step between 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Fingers

Two staves of musical notation in bass clef. The first staff shows a sequence of notes with fingerings 1, 2, 3, 4 and a half-step symbol (V) between 3 and 4. The second staff shows a similar sequence with fingerings 1, 2, 3, 4 and a half-step symbol (V) between 3 and 4. Arrows indicate finger lifts and presses.

	1 <sup>st</sup> Finger
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Finger
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Finger
	4 <sup>th</sup> Finger
	Half Step
	Hi
	Lo

A vertical diagram showing a line with colored circles representing fingers: red (1st), blue (2nd), green (3rd), orange (4th). It includes symbols for half steps (V) and finger lifts/presses (up/down arrows) corresponding to the patterns above.



# The Sixteen Shifts for Viola

Adapted from exercises created by Joachim Chassman

## Group A

Shifting on One Finger

Shifting finger: Up Down

**1 - 1**

**2 - 2**

**3 - 3**

**4 - 4**

## Group B

Shifting from a Lower to a Higher Finger

Up Down

**1 - 2**

**1 - 3**

**1 - 4**

**2 - 3**

**2 - 4**

**3 - 4**

## Group C

Shifting from a Higher to a Lower Finger

Up &  
Down

**2 - 1**

**3 - 1**

**3 - 2**

**4 - 1**

**4 - 2**

**4 - 3**

### Four Steps of Shift:

- 1) Release weight of finger and thumb from neck of instrument.
- 2) Move the whole hand together from the elbow joint with a smooth and slow glide to the new position.
- 3) Reapply weight of finger when you reach the new position.
- 4) Bring the elbow, arm and thumb under the neck of the instrument for fifth position and higher. This should be a continuous gliding motion.

### General Guidelines for Smooth, Clean, Quiet Shifting

- Slow, smooth, and light shifts are more successful than fast, jerky and pressed shifts. For transportation shifts, the shift itself should be inaudible.
- Move the whole hand as a unit, including the thumb, first from the elbow joint.
- Keep all fingers over the string involved in the shift.
- For ascending shifts, shift on the lowest finger. Exception: For an expressive shift (underslide), add the other finger just before the end of the shift.
- For descending shifts, shift on the old finger.
- When a string crossing is involved, shift on the old string.
- Thumb takes the lead on all shifts.