

Basic and Exotic Scales **for Native American Style Flutes**

Clint Goss
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This document explores a progression of scales that can be played on many current Native American Style flutes. It begins with the basic pentatonic (5-note) scales and progresses to more exotic hexatonic (6-note) and heptatonic (7-note) scales. Each scale has a different feel, and evokes a different culture and style of song.

These scales work on many (but not all) Native American and Native American style flutes made since about 1980. Depending on the tuning of the flute, you may have to use the alternate fingerings suggested to get a pleasing scale progression. I have chosen not to use any half-holed notes - they're just too unreliable (for me) in performance.

Notes in **yellow shading** are the "tonal center" of this scale ... melodies often work best when they begin and/or end on this tonal center note. Notes in **orange shading** are in the upper register and may be difficult to play cleanly or may be shrill.

The first page has a summary of the scales covered. Later pages are "detail pages" that explore each scale in-depth. The detail pages provide the scale, with possible alternate fingerings, for both 6-hole and 5-hole flutes. The scale is also shown in Nakai Tablature (used with permission from R. Carlos Nakai), together with the concert pitch notes for each key of Native Flute.

A "Scale Ladder Exercise" is provided with each scale. This exercise helps build finger proficiency with the scale. You might try the Scale Ladder Exercise with four different articulations:

- Legato - long notes with no breath-separation between the notes
- Single-tonguing - a short break between notes, using an attack such as "Ta" or "Ka" to begin each note.
- Stacatto - Very short notes with a sharp attack and a silence between each note.
- Double-tonguing - Two rapid attacks on each note, using an attack such as "TaKa" or "DiKa".

For more Native Flute resources, see:

- www.FluteKey.com - Flute Key web site with related Native Flute resources.
- www.NAFTracks.com - Backing tracks and Flute-related educational products.
- www.ClintGoss.com - My performance and music facilitation web site with upcoming workshops.
- www.NativeFluteSchool.com - Upcoming Native Flute Schools.

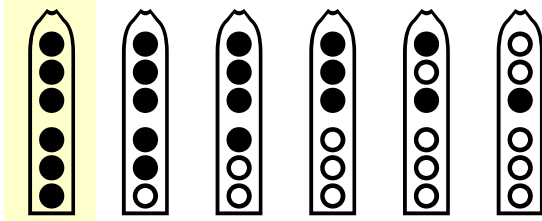
If you have any questions, issues, thoughts, or suggestions, feel free to contact me at clint@goss.com.

-- Clint Goss - September 30, 2009

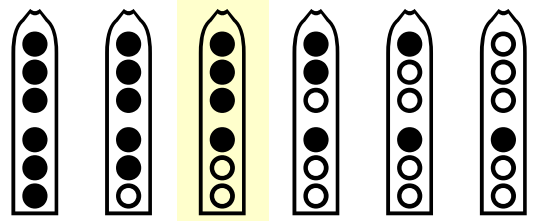
Scale Summary

This page summarizes the scales, showing the notes for a six-hole Native Flute.

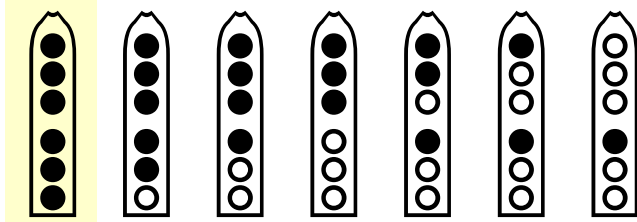
Pentatonic Minor



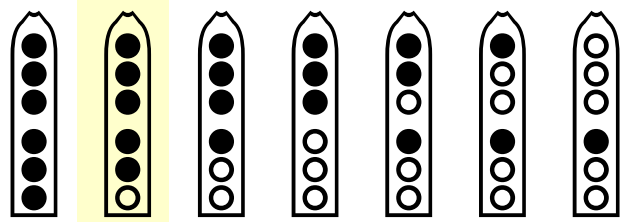
Mode 4 Pentatonic Minor



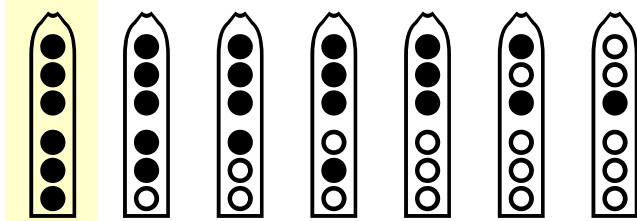
Hexatonic Minor



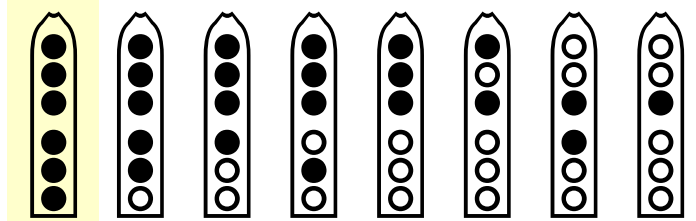
Major



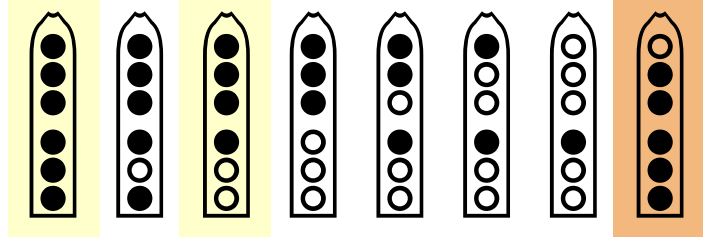
Blues - Six Note



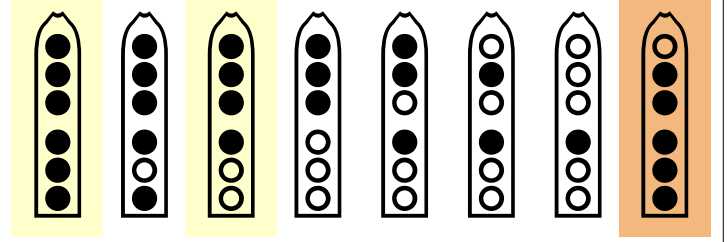
Blues - Seven Note



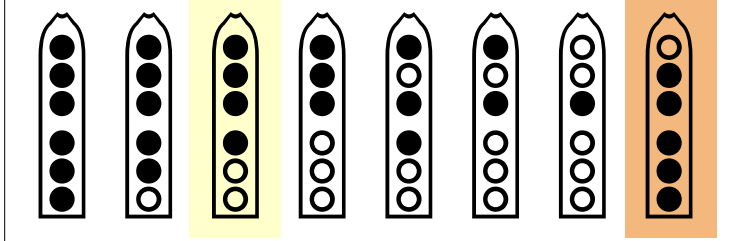
Spanish Gypsy - Extended



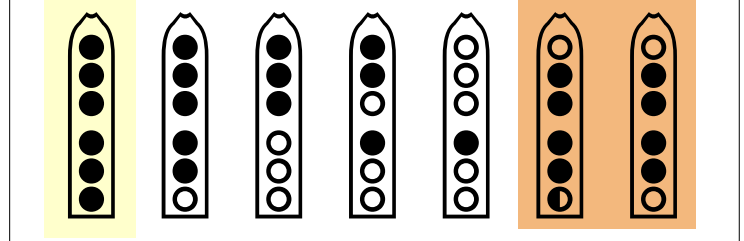
Byzantine - Extended



Hindu Scale - Extended



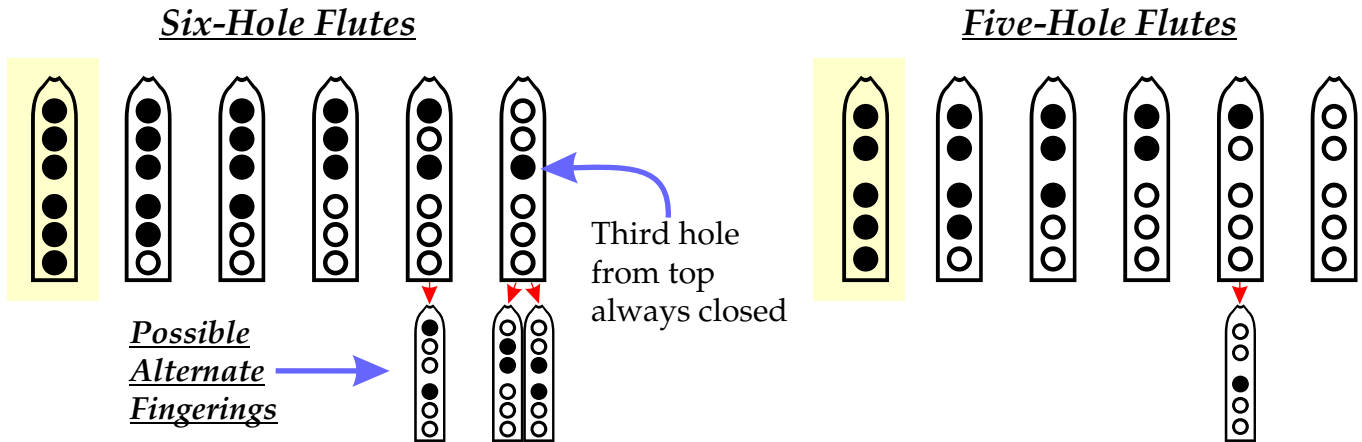
Hirajoshi - Extended



Pentatonic Minor Scale for Native American Style Flutes

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This is the "basic" scale for Native American and Native American style flutes made since about 1980. This scale is sometimes referred to a "Mode 1" since it begins on the bottom note of the flute.



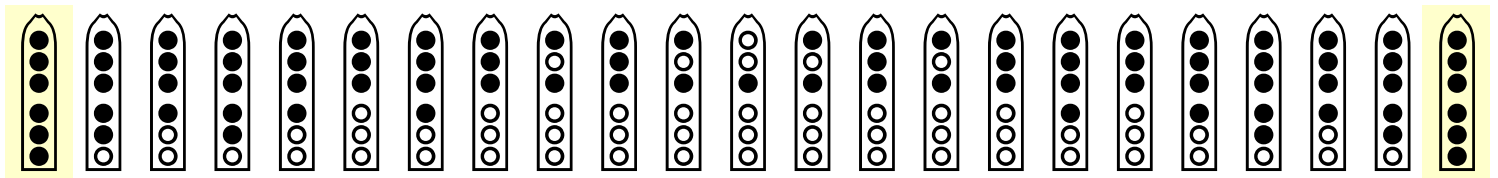
Nakai Tablature with Notes
for All Flute Keys

F#	...	A	...	B	...	C#	...	E	...	F#
G	...	Bb	...	C	...	D	...	F	...	G
Ab	...	B	...	C#	...	Eb	...	F#	...	Ab
A	...	C	...	D	...	E	...	G	...	A
Bb	...	C#	...	Eb	...	F	...	Ab	...	Bb
B	...	D	...	E	...	F#	...	A	...	B
C	...	Eb	...	F	...	G	...	Bb	...	C
C#	...	E	...	F#	...	Ab	...	B	...	C#
D	...	F	...	G	...	A	...	C	...	D
Eb	...	F#	...	Ab	...	Bb	...	C#	...	Eb
E	...	G	...	A	...	B	...	D	...	E
F	...	Ab	...	Bb	...	C	...	Eb	...	F

Green numbers show the number of half-steps between notes

Key of flute

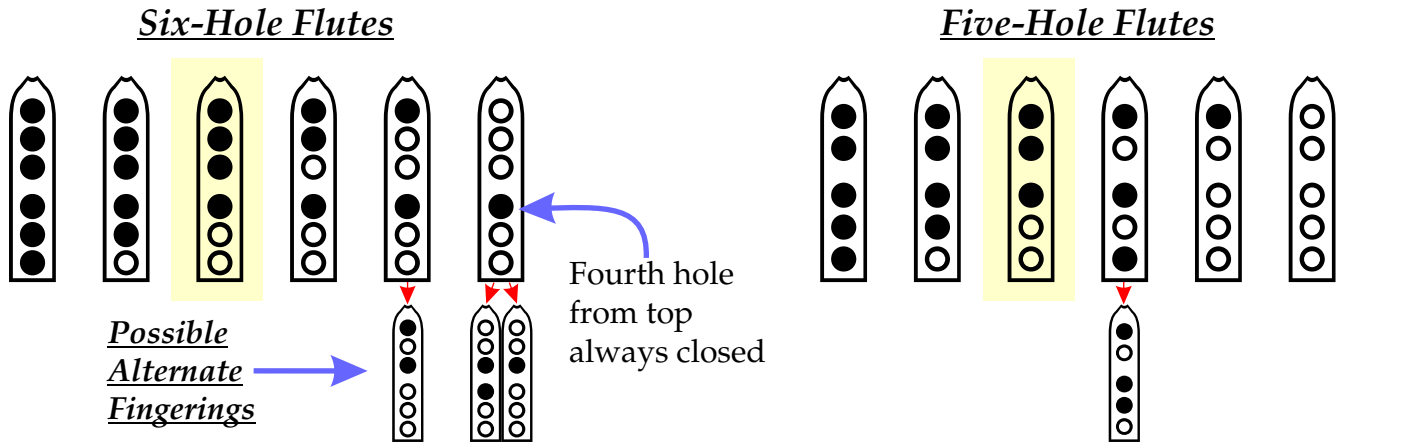
Scale Ladder Exercise



Mode 4 Pentatonic Minor Scale for Native American Style Flutes

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This is a second Pentatonic (5-note) scale available on most Native American style flutes. The tonal center for this scale is in a different place than the Mode 1 Pentatonic Minor scale.



Nakai Tablature with Notes
for All Flute Keys

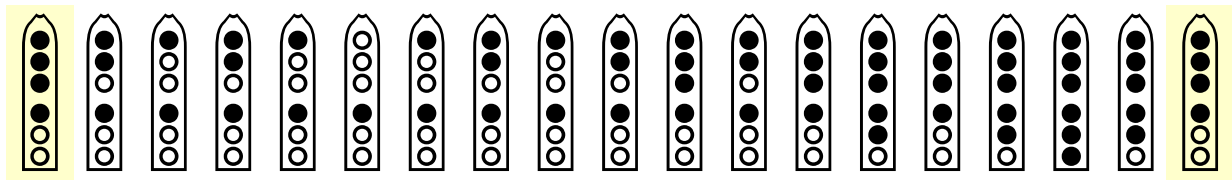
One note different from the Mode 1 Pentatonic Minor scale

F#	...	A	...	B	...	D	...	E	...	F#
G	...	Bb	...	C	...	Eb	...	F	...	G
Ab	...	B	...	C#	...	E	...	F#	...	Ab
A	...	C	...	D	...	F	...	G	...	A
Bb	...	C#	...	Eb	...	F#	...	Ab	...	Bb
B	...	D	...	E	...	G	...	A	...	B
C	...	Eb	...	F	...	Ab	...	Bb	...	C
C#	...	E	...	F#	...	A	...	B	...	C#
D	...	F	...	G	...	Bb	...	C	...	D
Eb	...	F#	...	Ab	...	B	...	C#	...	Eb
E	...	G	...	A	...	C	...	D	...	E
F	...	Ab	...	Bb	...	C#	...	Eb	...	F

Key of flute

Tonal Center of this scale

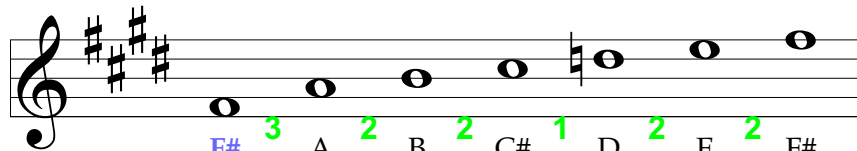
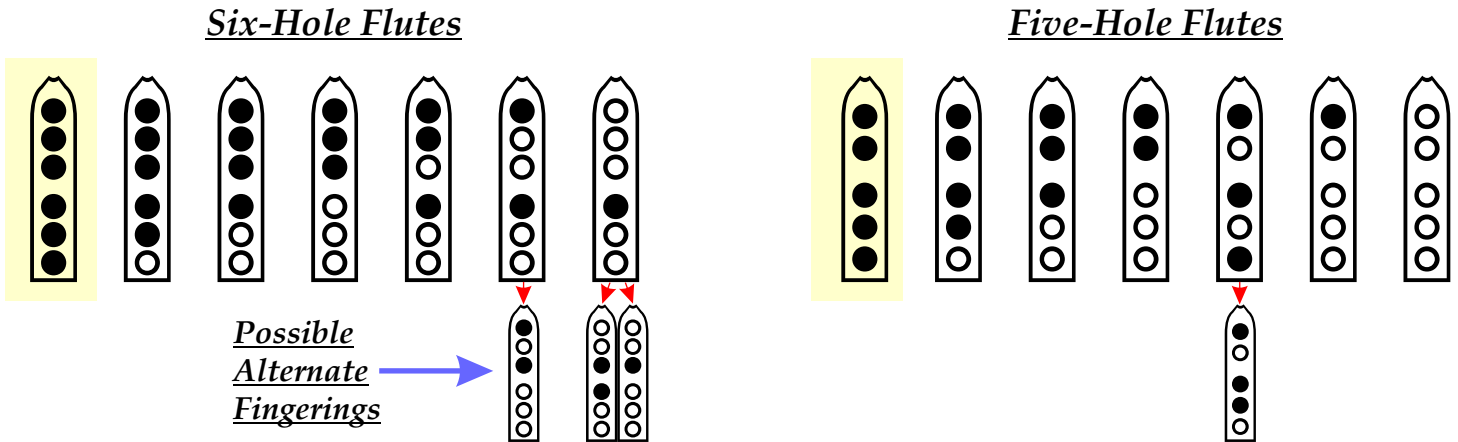
Scale Ladder Exercise



Hexatonic Minor Scale for Native American Style Flutes

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This Hexatonic (6-note) scale combines the Mode 1 and Mode 4 Pentatonic scales. It adds one additional note to the Pentatonic Minor scales to create more complex melodies.

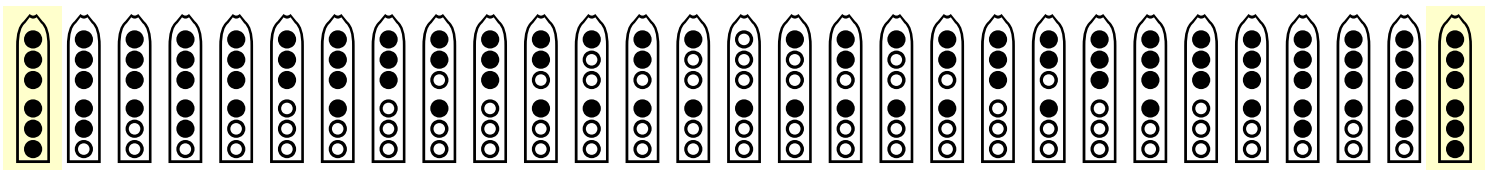


Nakai Tablature with Notes
for All Flute Keys

F#	...	A	...	B	...	C#	...	D	...	E	...	F#
G	...	Bb	...	C	...	D	...	Eb	...	F	...	G
Ab	...	B	...	C#	...	Eb	...	E	...	F#	...	Ab
A	...	C	...	D	...	E	...	F	...	G	...	A
Bb	...	C#	...	Eb	...	F	...	F#	...	Ab	...	Bb
B	...	D	...	E	...	F#	...	G	...	A	...	B
C	...	Eb	...	F	...	G	...	Ab	...	Bb	...	C
C#	...	E	...	F#	...	Ab	...	A	...	B	...	C#
D	...	F	...	G	...	A	...	Bb	...	C	...	D
Eb	...	F#	...	Ab	...	Bb	...	B	...	C#	...	Eb
E	...	G	...	A	...	B	...	C	...	D	...	E
F	...	Ab	...	Bb	...	C	...	C#	...	Eb	...	F

Key of flute

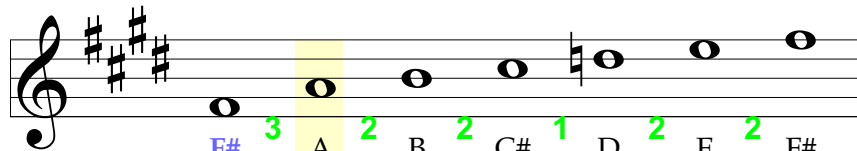
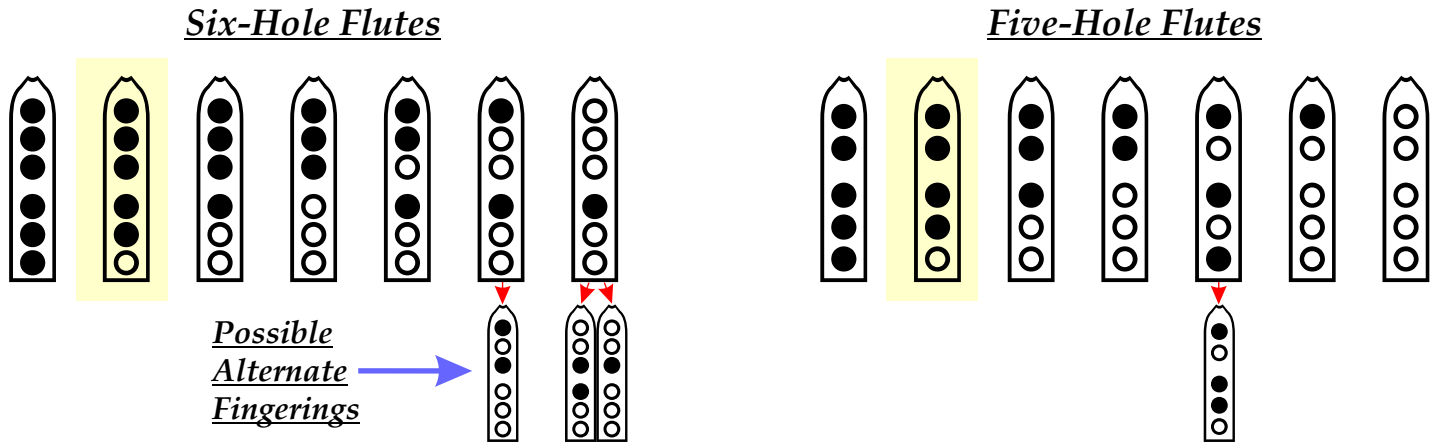
Scale Ladder Exercise



Major Scale for Native American Style Flutes

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To play in a major key, we can use the same notes as the 6-note minor scale, but move the tonal center of our melodies up one note.



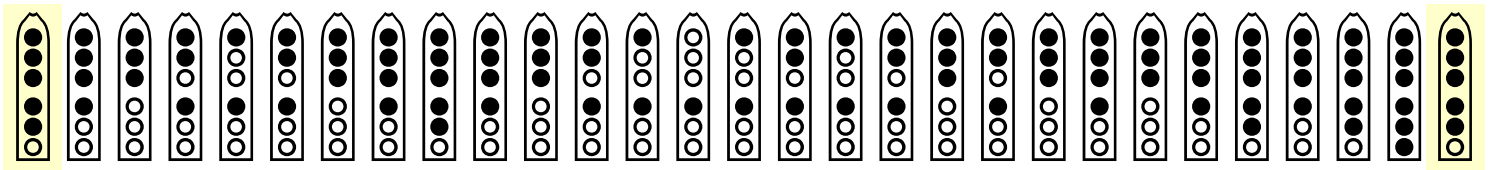
*Nakai Tablature with Notes
for All Flute Keys*

<p>F# ... A ... B ... C# ... D ... E ... F#</p> <p>G ... Bb ... C ... D ... Eb ... F ... G</p> <p>Ab ... B ... C# ... Eb ... E ... F# ... Ab</p> <p>A ... C ... D ... E ... F ... G ... A</p> <p>Bb ... C# ... Eb ... F ... F# ... Ab ... Bb</p> <p>B ... D ... E ... F# ... G ... A ... B</p> <p>C ... Eb ... F ... G ... Ab ... Bb ... C</p> <p>C# ... E ... F# ... Ab ... A ... B ... C#</p> <p>D ... F ... G ... A ... Bb ... C ... D</p> <p>Eb ... F# ... Ab ... Bb ... B ... C# ... Eb</p> <p>E ... G ... A ... B ... C ... D ... E</p> <p>F ... Ab ... Bb ... C ... C# ... Eb ... F</p>	<p>3 2 2 1 2 2</p>
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Key of flute →

→ Tonal Center of this scale

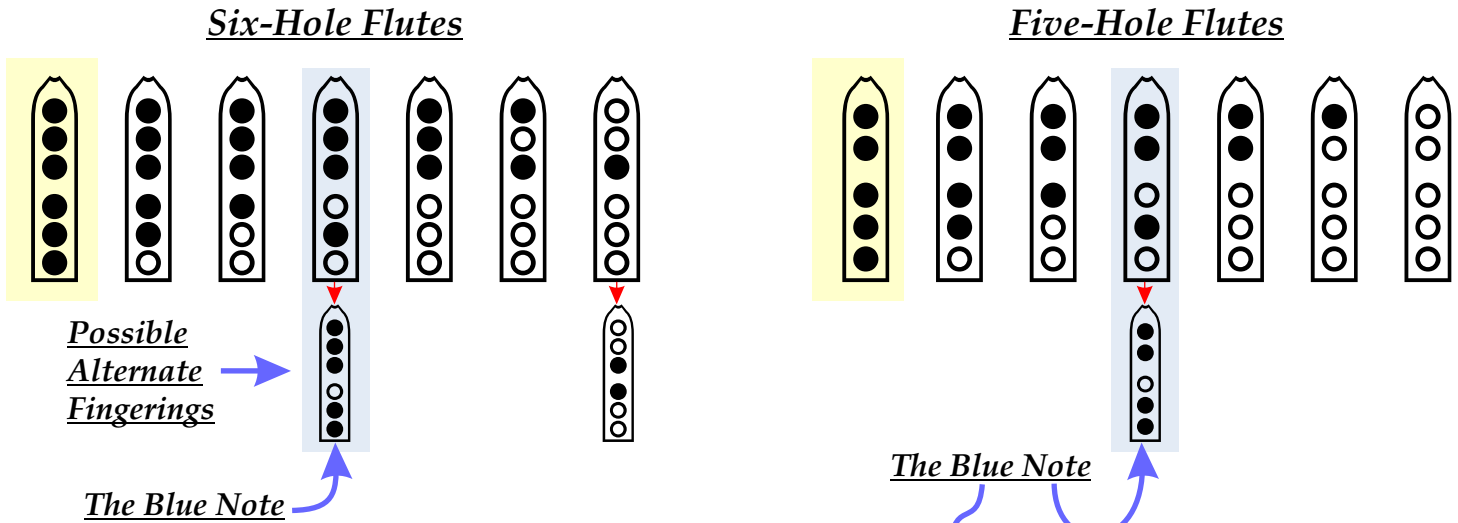
Scale Ladder Exercise



Blues Scale - Six Note for Native American Style Flutes

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This Hexatonic (6-note) scale adds the "Blue Note" to the Mode 1 Pentatonic Minor scale. There are two possible ways of fingering this new note ... use your ear to figure out which one you like best.

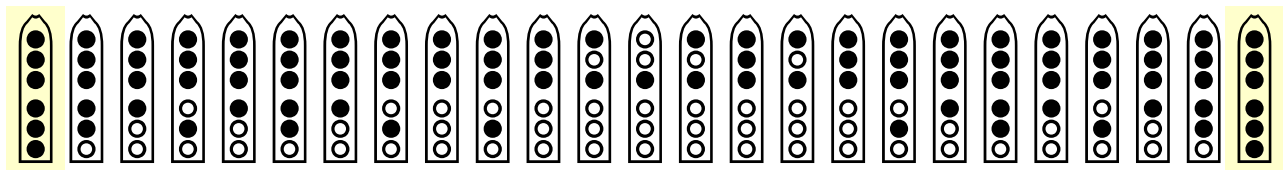


*Nakai Tablature with Notes
for All Flute Keys*

	F#	3	A	2	B	1	C	1	C#	3	E	2	F#
G	...	Bb	...	C	...	C#	...	D	...	F	...	G	
Ab	...	B	...	C#	...	D	...	Eb	...	F#	...	Ab	
A	...	C	...	D	...	Eb	...	E	...	G	...	A	
Bb	...	C#	...	Eb	...	E	...	F	...	Ab	...	Bb	
B	...	D	...	E	...	F	...	F#	...	A	...	B	
C	...	Eb	...	F	...	F#	...	G	...	Bb	...	C	
C#	...	E	...	F#	...	G	...	Ab	...	B	...	C#	
D	...	F	...	G	...	Ab	...	A	...	C	...	D	
Eb	...	F#	...	Ab	...	A	...	Bb	...	C#	...	Eb	
E	...	G	...	A	...	Bb	...	B	...	D	...	E	
F	...	Ab	...	Bb	...	B	...	C	...	Eb	...	F	

Key of flute →

Scale Ladder Exercise



Blues Scale - Seven Note for Native American Style Flutes

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This Septatonic (7-note) scale adds on additional "Blue Note" to the Blues scale. There are two possible ways of fingering this new note ... use your ear to figure out which one you like best.

Six-Hole Flutes

Five-Hole Flutes

Possible Alternate Fingerings →

The Blue Notes

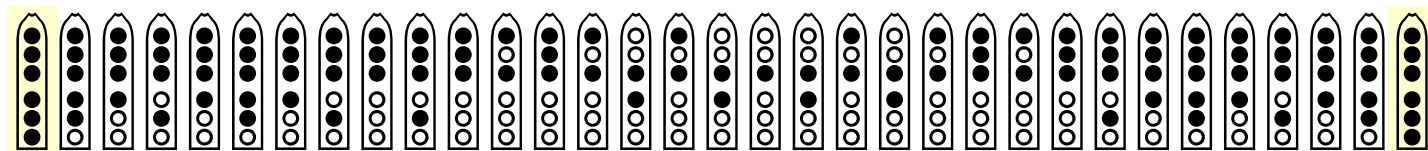
The Blue Notes

Nakai Tablature with Notes
for All Flute Keys

	F#	3	A	2	B	1	C	1	C#	3	E	1	F	1	F#
G	Bb	C	C#	D	Eb	F	F#	G	Ab	A	Bb	B	C	C#	D
Ab	B	C#	D	Eb	E	F	F#	G	Ab	A	Bb	B	C	C#	D
A	C	D	Eb	E	F	F#	G	Ab	A	Bb	B	C	C#	D	E
Bb	C#	Eb	E	F	F#	G	Ab	A	Bb	B	C	C#	D	E	F
B	D	E	F	F#	G	Ab	A	Bb	B	C	C#	D	E	F	F#
C	Eb	F	F#	G	Ab	A	Bb	B	C	C#	D	E	F	F#	G
C#	E	F#	G	Ab	A	Bb	B	C	C#	D	E	F	F#	G	Ab
D	F	G	Ab	A	Bb	B	C	C#	D	E	F	F#	G	Ab	A
Eb	F#	Ab	A	Bb	B	C	C#	D	E	F	F#	G	Ab	A	Bb
E	G	A	Bb	B	C	C#	D	E	F	F#	G	Ab	A	Bb	B
F	Ab	Bb	B	C	C#	D	E	F	F#	G	Ab	A	Bb	B	C

Key of flute →

Scale Ladder Exercise

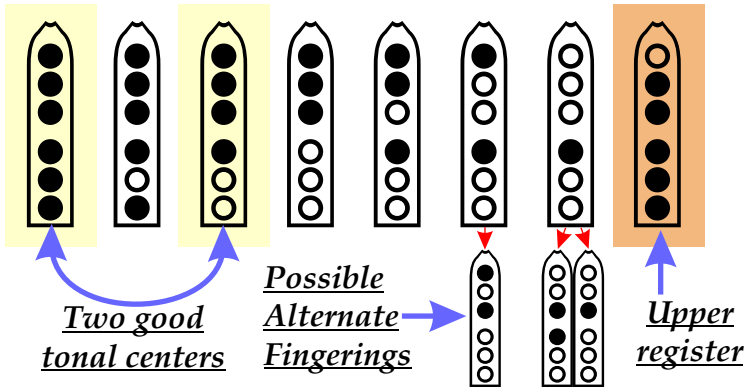


Spanish Gypsy Scale - Extended for Native American Style Flutes

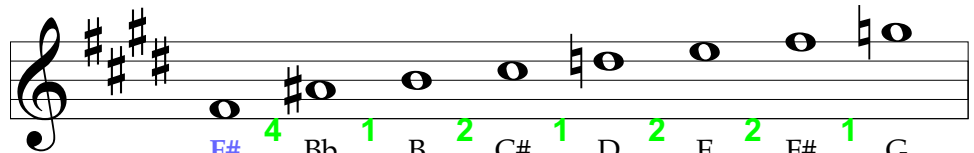
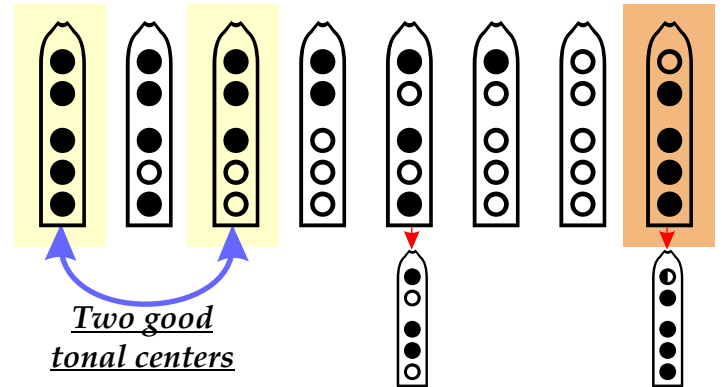
Clint Goss
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This scale invokes a Middle Eastern feel. It is an "extended" scale because it uses one note in the upper register - a note which is reliable on many Native Flutes. You can use either of two notes in this scale as the tonal center. This scale is also known as the Phrygian dominant scale, the Neopolitan minor scale, the Jewish (Freygish) scale, or the Ahaba Rabba scale, and is often used in Klezmer music.

Six-Hole Flutes



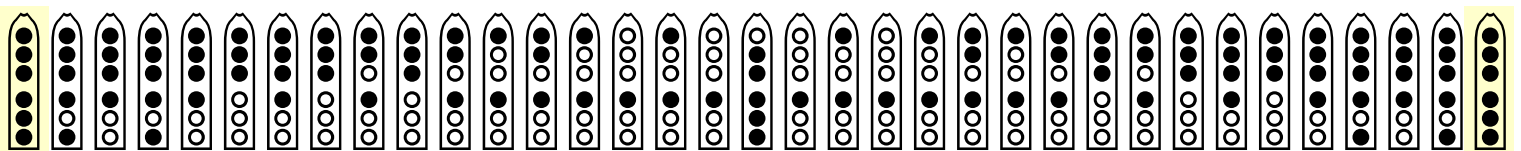
Five-Hole Flutes



Nakai Tablature with Notes for All Flute Keys

<p>F# ... 4 Bb ... 1 B ... 2 C# ... 1 D ... 2 E ... 2 F# ... 1 G</p> <p>G ... B ... C ... D ... Eb ... F ... G ... Ab</p> <p>Ab ... C ... C# ... Eb ... E ... F# ... Ab ... A</p> <p>A ... C# ... D ... E ... F ... G ... A ... Bb</p> <p>Bb ... D ... Eb ... F ... F# ... Ab ... Bb ... B</p> <p>B ... Eb ... E ... F# ... G ... A ... B ... C</p> <p>C ... E ... F ... G ... Ab ... Bb ... C ... C#</p> <p>C# ... F ... F# ... Ab ... A ... B ... C# ... D</p> <p>D ... F# ... G ... A ... Bb ... C ... D ... Eb</p> <p>Eb ... G ... Ab ... Bb ... B ... C# ... Eb ... E</p> <p>E ... Ab ... A ... B ... C ... D ... E ... F</p> <p>F ... A ... Bb ... C ... C# ... Eb ... F ... F#</p>	<p>Key of flute</p>
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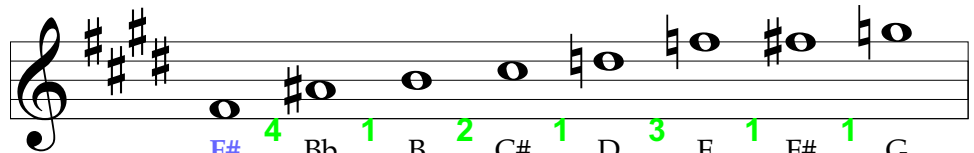
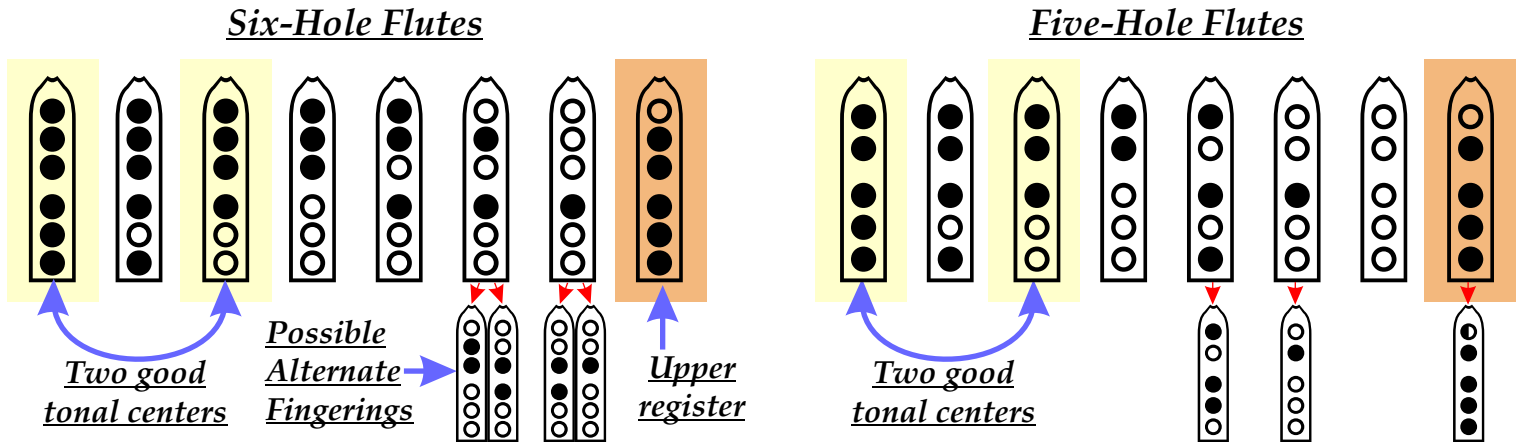
Scale Ladder Exercise



Byzantine Scale - Extended for Native American Style Flutes

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This scale extends the Middle Eastern feel of the Spanish Gypsy scale by changing one note. You can use either of two notes in this scale as the tonal center. This scale is also known as the Double Harmonic scale, the Arabic scale, and the Hungarian Gypsy Persian scale.

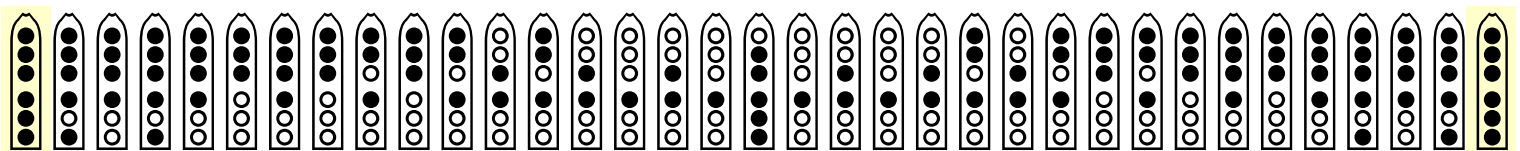


Nakai Tablature with Notes
for All Flute Keys

<p>F# ... 4</p> <p>G ... 1</p> <p>Ab ... 2</p> <p>A ... 1</p> <p>Bb ... 3</p> <p>B ... 1</p> <p>C ... 1</p> <p>C# ... 1</p> <p>D ... 1</p> <p>Eb ... 1</p> <p>E ... 1</p> <p>F ... 1</p>	<p>Bb ... B ... C# ... D ... F ... F# ... G</p> <p>B ... C ... C# ... Eb ... E ... G ... Ab ... A</p> <p>D ... Eb ... F ... F# ... A ... Bb ... B</p> <p>Eb ... E ... F# ... G ... Bb ... B ... C</p> <p>F ... F# ... Ab ... A ... C ... C# ... D</p> <p>G ... Ab ... Bb ... B ... D ... Eb ... E</p> <p>Ab ... A ... B ... C ... Eb ... E ... F</p> <p>A ... Bb ... C ... C# ... F ... F ... F#</p>
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Key of flute

Scale Ladder Exercise

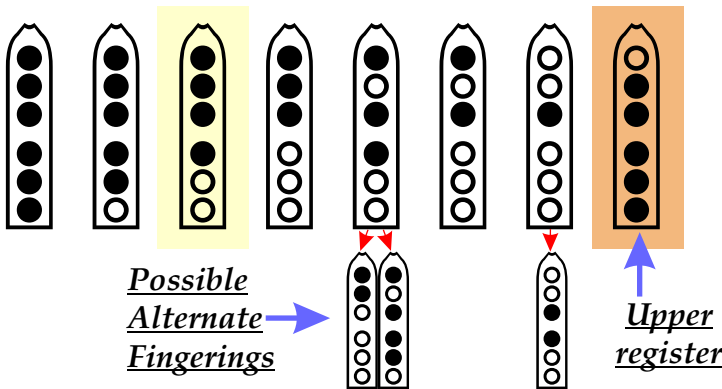


Hindu Scale - Extended for Native American Style Flutes

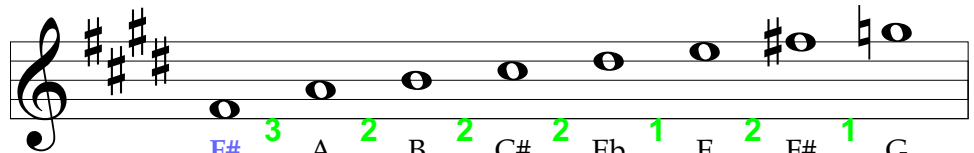
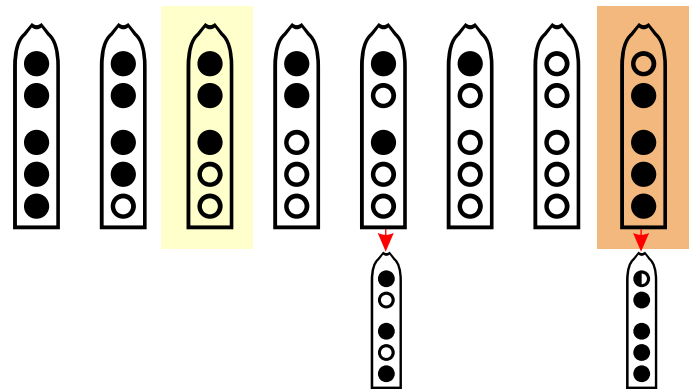
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This scale offers a second way to play in the style of a Major key. Starting from the tonal center of this scale (shown with yellow shading below), the five note proceeding up the scale are the same as the Major scale. Other notes in this scale form the Hindu scale, with a particular exotic feel. This scale is also called the Mela Charukesi scale.

Six-Hole Flutes



Five-Hole Flutes



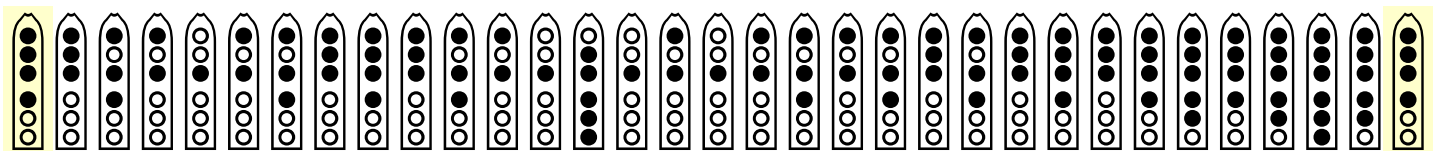
Nakai Tablature with Notes for All Flute Keys

Scale degrees
from tonal center: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, b6, b7
from root of flute: 1, b2 (upper register),
b3, 4, 5, 6, b7

Key of flute

F# ...	A ...	B ...	C# ...	Eb ...	E ...	F# ...	G
G ...	Bb ...	C ...	D ...	E ...	F ...	G ...	Ab
Ab ...	B ...	C# ...	Eb ...	F ...	F# ...	Ab ...	A
A ...	C ...	D ...	E ...	F# ...	G ...	A ...	Bb
Bb ...	C# ...	Eb ...	F ...	G ...	Ab ...	Bb ...	B
B ...	D ...	E ...	F# ...	Ab ...	A ...	B ...	C
C ...	Eb ...	F ...	G ...	A ...	Bb ...	C ...	C#
C# ...	E ...	F# ...	Ab ...	Bb ...	B ...	C# ...	D
D ...	F ...	G ...	A ...	B ...	C ...	D ...	Eb
Eb ...	F# ...	Ab ...	Bb ...	C ...	C# ...	Eb ...	E
E ...	G ...	A ...	B ...	C# ...	D ...	E ...	F
F ...	Ab ...	Bb ...	C ...	D ...	Eb ...	F ...	F#

Scale Ladder Exercise

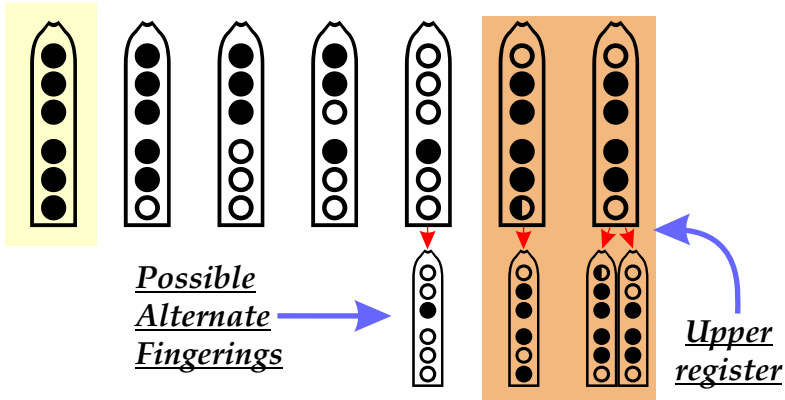


Hirajoshi Scale - Extended for Native American Style Flutes

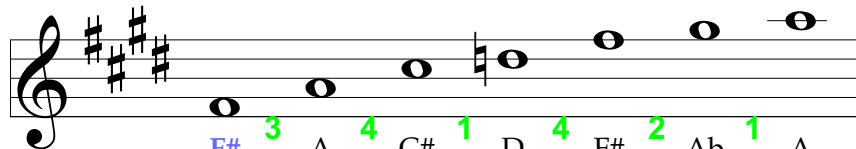
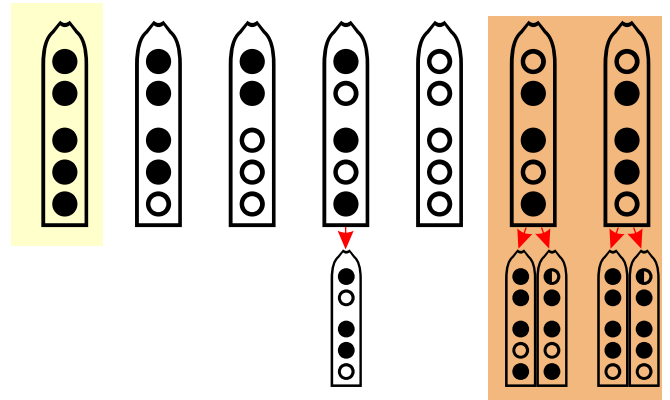
Clint Goss
[clint@goss.com]

Hirajoshi is a spacious Pentatonic (5-note) scale that evokes images of Japan. It is workable on some Native American Style flutes that are designed to play reliably and in-tune in the upper register. If your flute is not designed for extended range, try this scale without the upper register notes.

Six-Hole Flutes



Five-Hole Flutes



Nakai Tablature with Notes for All Flute Keys

Key of flute

F# ...	A ...	C# ...	D ...	F# ...	Ab ...	A
G ...	Bb ...	D ...	Eb ...	G ...	A ...	Bb
Ab ...	B ...	Eb ...	E ...	Ab ...	Bb ...	B
A ...	C ...	E ...	F ...	A ...	B ...	C
Bb ...	C# ...	F ...	F# ...	Bb ...	C ...	C#
B ...	D ...	F# ...	G ...	B ...	C# ...	D
C ...	Eb ...	G ...	Ab ...	C ...	D ...	Eb
C# ...	E ...	Ab ...	A ...	C# ...	Eb ...	E
D ...	F ...	A ...	Bb ...	D ...	E ...	F
Eb ...	F# ...	Bb ...	B ...	Eb ...	F ...	F#
E ...	G ...	B ...	C ...	E ...	F# ...	G
F ...	Ab ...	C ...	C# ...	F ...	G ...	G#

Scale Ladder Exercise

