

Cambridge Saxophone - Dan Forshaw

Nail Your Scales



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'Nail Your Scales'

15 essential scale exercises
for any saxophonist, by
Dan Forshaw'



Why practice your scales?



Speak to many adults who played an instrument as a child and then stopped playing and I assure you, one reason given will often be, 'I hated scales.'

I would argue that you can't play an instrument well without knowing your scales and rather like Nike you need to 'Just do it' and have ZERO emotional feeling about scales - don't hate them, don't love them JUST DO THEM!

But for many people it's the HOW to practice scales effectively that is the real issue. In this book I have 15 different scale exercises for you to play. You should set your metronome to 60 BPM and work

accordingly. Being able to play scales well is the key that unlocks the door to better sight reading, a wider vocabulary when improvising and most importantly - better 'time' when you play.

Each scale exercise is demonstrated in D - purely for its range on the sax. YOU MUST do all 12 keys, not just the ones in the book, & don't move on to the next exercise until the other one is 'nailed.'

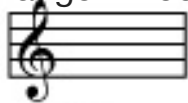
Make sure you're subscribing to my YouTube channel (youtube.com/danforshaw) as I'm going to make several videos about this book!

Circle of 5ths

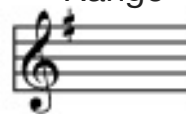
Range - 2 octaves



Range - 2 octaves



Range - a 12th (to top D)



Range - 2 octaves



Range - 2 octaves



Range - 2 octaves



Range - a 12th (top E)



Range - a 12th (to top Eb)



Range - 2 octaves



Range - 2 octaves



Range - 2 octaves

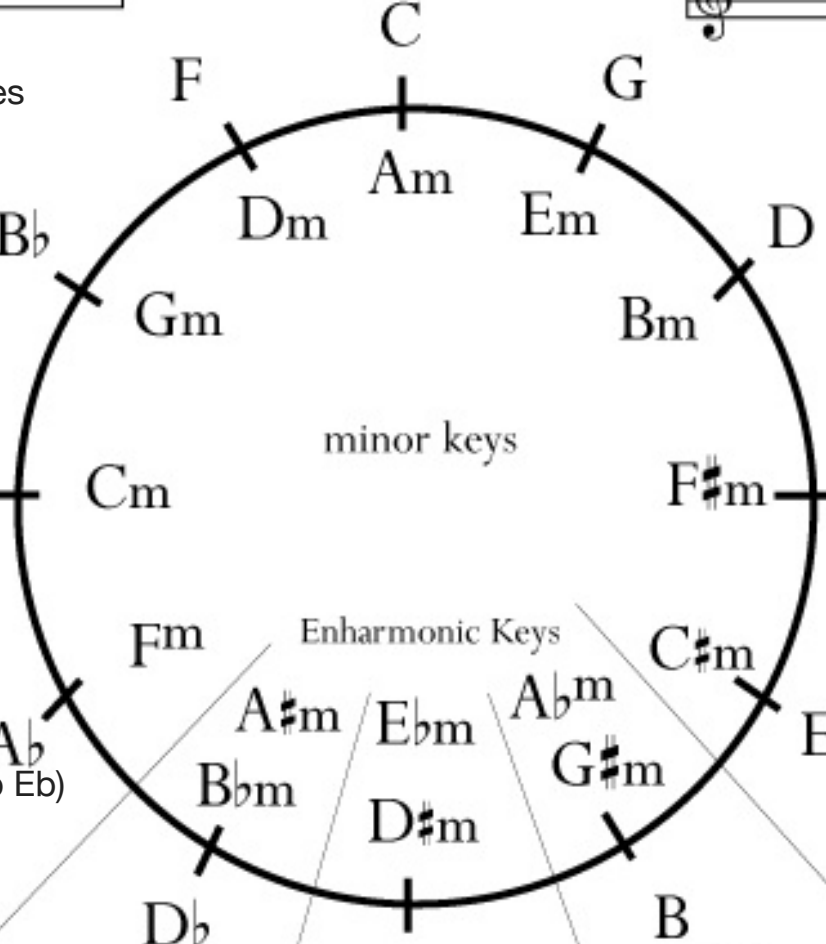


Range - 2 octaves



The order for the placement of sharps and flats:

#	F	C	G	D	A	E	B
b	B	E	A	D	G	C	F



The Scale Primer (Part 1)

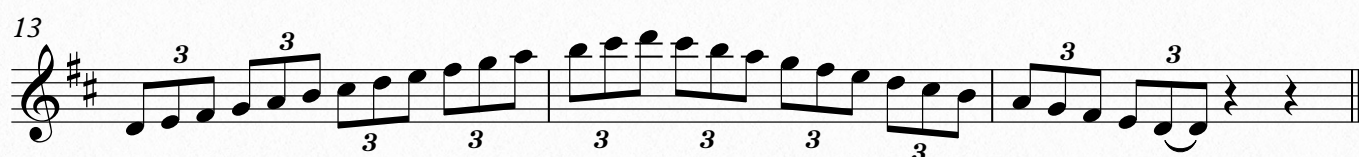
First off, set your metronome to 60 and play the D Major Scale in 1/4 notes / crotchet
SLUR everything - don't tongue a single note!



Keep the metronome at 60 and play the D Major Scale in 1/8th notes / quavers



Again, keep the metronome at 60 & think di-der-ly for 1/8th note / quaver triplet



Finally, keeping the metronome at 60, play the scale in 1/16th notes / semiquavers
think Pi-ca-dil-ly in one click.



Once you've got this down in D major, then make sure you get it down in the other 11 Major keys. I advise you to spend most of your time moving around the Circle of 5ths / 4ths in an anti-clockwise direction. I've noted the ranges on the Circle of 5ths at the start of this book, but it is REALLY important that you don't skip the other keys and don't write them out - you need your fingers and ears to work together to help you to memorise the scales.

I promise all my students that if you master your major scales - I will teach you all the rest!

The Scale Primer (Part 2)

As in Scale Primer Part 1, set the metronome to 60 and slur everything, (for now) get it right in D major then move to the 11 other keys!

5

9

13

16

20

24

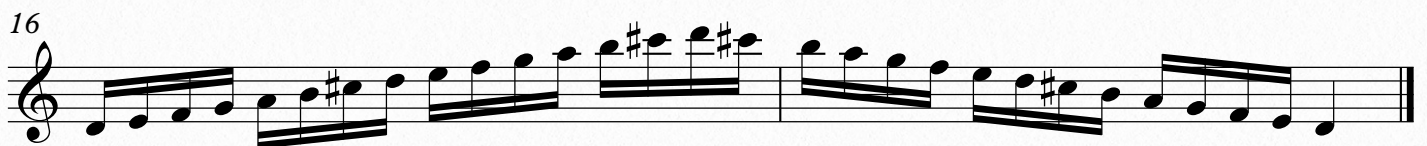
26

29

31

Melodic Minor Primer

The Melodic Minor Scale is best thought of as a Major Scale with a flat third.



Once you have D Melodic Minor nailed down, on to the next 11 Melodic Minors!

Harmonic Minor Primer

The Harmonic Minor Scale is best thought of as a Major Scale with a flat third & sixth



Once you have D Harmonic Minor nailed down, on to the next 11 Harmonic Minors!

Triads (Up & Up) Major Scale

(note this takes you into the altissimo range of the saxophone)

5

9

13

16

19

22

24

27

29

32

2

34

36

Next Exercise - take the shape and play 'up & down' each triad

38

Next Exercise - take the shape and play 'down & up' each triad

39

Finally, play 'down & down' each triad

40

Modes

The word 'mode' comes from the Latin for 'manner, or method' but musical modes all originated in ancient Greece, so they have Greek names. The major scale is a mode!

Ionian Mode (Major Scale)



3 Dorian Mode (2nd Mode of Major scale or Major Scale b3 b7)



5 Phrygian Mode (3rd Mode of Major Scale)



7 Lydian Mode (4th Mode of Major Scale)



9 Mixolydian Mode



11 Aeloian Mode (Natural Minor Scale)



13 Lydian Mode



Practice each mode with both the Scale Primers. It will sound unusual at first, but as you grown in confidence you will find that the modes start to sit as part of your vocabulary. You will find that the Ionian & Aeloian Modes sit better to your ear at first, but with careful and dilligent practice, you will start to 'hear' the other modes with just as much potency. ALL these modes can be found in both 'Classical', 'Jazz' and 'Folk' music, so pay close attention and give them your all - especially into the altissimo register if you can!

Modes of the Melodic Minor

Each Minor Scale that we covered earlier in the book, also has a mode!

Ascending Melodic Minor Scale



3 Dorian b2 or Assyrian



5 Lydian Augmented



7 Lydian Dominant



9 Mixolydian b6 or Hindu



11 Half - Diminished



13 Super Locrian or Altered Scale



So how do you practice these?

1. Again, go back to the scale primer parts 1 & 2 and run the other seven modes in the same way, (remember, you've already done the Melodic mode as the major scale!)
2. More importantly I would focus on the triad explorations (on the previous pages) on the Lydian Augmented, Half-Diminished and Altered Scales
3. After completing point 2 - take the Altered Scale and find some of your own ideas

Modes on the Harmonic Minor Scale

The Harmonic Minor Modes are great on Minor Blues & standards such as A Night in Tunisia

The image displays seven musical staves, each representing a mode on the Harmonic Minor Scale. The scales are written in treble clef with a 4/4 time signature. The notes are as follows:

- Harmonic Minor Scale:** C, D, E, F, G, A, B \flat , A \sharp , G
- Locrian 13:** C, D \flat , E \flat , F, G, A, B \flat , A \sharp , G
- Ionian #5 (Major Augmented):** C, D, E, F \flat , G, A, B \flat , A \sharp , G
- Dorian #11:** C, D, E, F, G, A, B \flat , A \sharp , B \sharp , C
- Phrygian Dominant:** C, D \flat , E, F, G, A, B \flat , A \sharp , B \sharp , C
- Lydian #2:** C, D \flat , E \flat , F, G, A, B \flat , A \sharp , B \sharp , C
- Super Locrian Mode bb7:** C, D \flat , E \flat , F, G, A, B \flat , A \sharp , B \flat , C

How to Practice

1. As with all of these exercises- go to the other 11 keys first
2. As per the two Scale Primers
3. Work the modes on the triad exercise, (focus on Dorian #11 and Phrygian Dominant)

Dominant Bebop Scale

The Dominant Bebop Scale is a Major Scale with an added $b7^{\text{th}}$ it is usually played descending, and it fits over its Dominant 7th

D Dominant Bebop Scale



Here's a fantastic Dominant 7th Bebop Scale Exercise - transpose it into all 12 keys!



Here are all 12 Dominant Bebop Around the Circle of 4ths - try getting this as fast as you can!



Major Bebop Scales

The Major Bebop Scale is a Major Scale with an added #5th

D Major Bebop Scale



From the 3rd



From the 5th



Again, practice this in all 12 keys with the Scale Primer rhythmic ideas

The Ultimate Saxophone Warmup parts 1, 2 & 3

Play this everyday if you can... work on getting it faster!

1 Dmaj7 Em7

3 F#m7 Gmaj7

5 A7 Bm7

7 C#m7(b5)

Same Exercise on the Melodic Minor

9 Dm7 Em7

11 F+ G7

13 A7 Bm7(b5)

15 C#m7(b5)

Same Exercise on the Harmonic Minor

17 Dm⁷ Em^{7(b5)}



19 F⁺ Gm⁷



21 A⁷ Bbmaj⁷



23 C#m^{7(b5)}



Michael Brecker's Scale Exercise

This is an exercise I took from one of Brecker's handwritten practice books

Whole Tone Scale (1 2 3 in tritones) D major and Ab Major



Minor 3rds in Whole Steps



Descending



Whilst there are only two Whole Tone Scales - work this off every note, going into the altissimo register if you dare!

Chris Potter's Digital Patterns

Chris gave me this idea back in 2005 - I'm STILL coming up with new ideas!

Take a 4 note cell - you can use any combination, this is just an example

8 4 5 3

Descending in 1/2 Steps

2
6
9

Descending in Whole Steps

12
15

Descending in Tritones

18

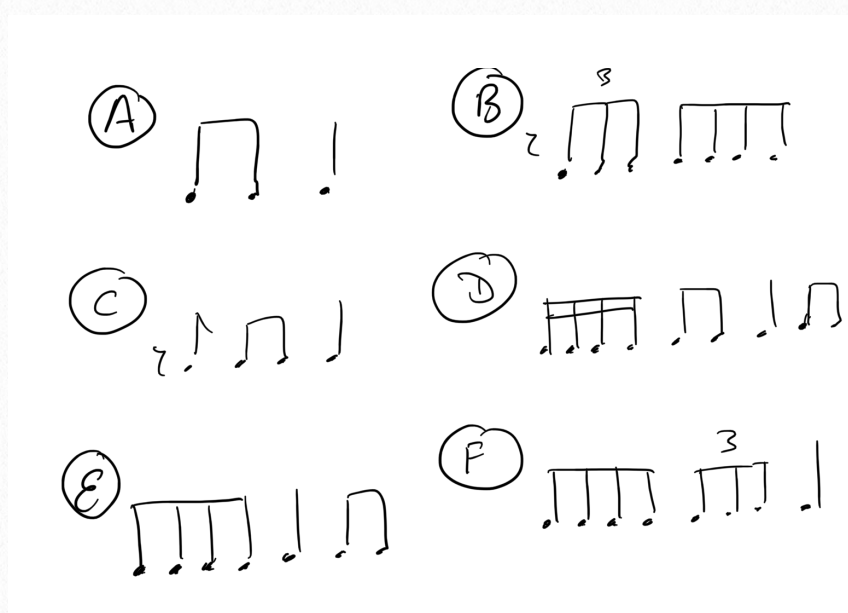
20 Ascending in 4ths

Ascending in Tritones

etc...

Well Done!

You've worked your way to the end of the book, but this is just the start. The beauty of these exercises is that they are almost limitless in what you can do with them. Once you're really confident on the scale primer ideas, try changing the rhythmic ideas around, I've listed some rhythmic patterns, but you should try and create your own.



Finally, post some videos of your playing to YouTube, or tag me on Instagram or Facebook. Use the #DansScaleChallenge and I will keep an eye out for your work. Keep going with scales and arpeggios, they are the bedrock on which great playing, (in whatever genre) is built.

If you want to learn more then head over to the award-winning Cambridge Saxophone website and 'book a lesson' with me. I work with you on an individual basis via Skype etc to give you a personalised action plan if you're hitting any difficulties with these exercises.

Keep on blowin'

