

# Minor Scales

## The Minor Scales

- Unlike major scales, there are two types of minor scales, which produce very different patterns of **tones** and **semitones**
- The **harmonic minor scale has a raised 7<sup>th</sup> note** and (like major scales) it is the *same ascending and descending* (with the tone-semitone pattern reversed when descending). For example, the A harmonic minor scale has G<sup>#</sup> (a raised 7<sup>th</sup> note) going up and down:

A - B - C - D - E - F - G<sup>#</sup> - A | A - G<sup>#</sup> - F - E - D - C - B - A

The diagram illustrates the A harmonic minor scale. On the left, the ascending scale is shown on a piano keyboard and a musical staff. The notes are A, B, C, D, E, F, G<sup>#</sup>, and A. The G<sup>#</sup> is circled in green. Arrows show the path from A to G<sup>#</sup>. On the right, the descending scale is shown. The notes are A, G<sup>#</sup>, F, E, D, C, B, and A. The G<sup>#</sup> is circled in green. Arrows show the path from A to G<sup>#</sup> and then down to A. Below the staff, brackets indicate the intervals: T (Tone), ST (Semitone), T, T, ST, T 1/2 (Tone and a half), and ST.

- The **melodic minor scale has raised 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> notes ascending only**. For example, the A melodic minor scale has F<sup>#</sup> and G<sup>#</sup> (raised 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> notes) going up, but F<sup>n</sup> and G<sup>n</sup> (lowered/normal 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> notes) going down:

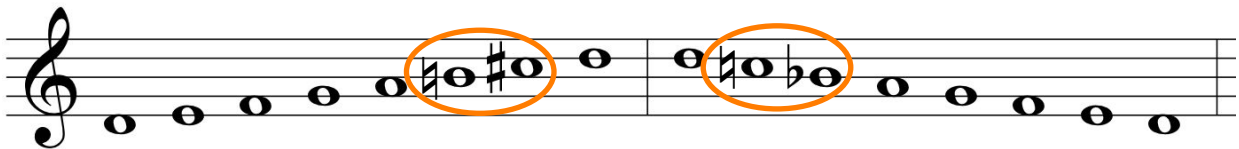
A - B - C - D - E - F<sup>#</sup> - G<sup>#</sup> - A | A - G - F - E - D - C - B - A

The diagram illustrates the A melodic minor scale. On the left, the ascending scale is shown on a piano keyboard and a musical staff. The notes are A, B, C, D, E, F<sup>#</sup>, G<sup>#</sup>, and A. The F<sup>#</sup> and G<sup>#</sup> are circled in orange. Arrows show the path from A to G<sup>#</sup>. On the right, the descending scale is shown. The notes are A, G, F, E, D, C, B, and A. The G and F are circled in orange. Arrows show the path from A to G and then down to A. Below the staff, brackets indicate the intervals: T, ST, T, T, T, T, ST, T, T, ST, T, T, ST, T.

- You have to *be very careful when raising and lowering notes* in minor scales, because it doesn't always produce the same accidentals going up and coming down,

a) Take the D melodic minor scale as an example.

- It shares its key signature with F major, which has a B $\flat$ .
- When ascending, D melodic minor raises the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> notes. This creates **B $\natural$  and C $\sharp$** , because B is raised from a flat to a natural and C is raised from a natural to a sharp.
- When D melodic minor descends the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> return to normal, with **C $\natural$  and B $\flat$** , because C returns from a sharp to a natural and B returns from a natural to a flat.



a) Take another example: G $\sharp$  minor.

- It shares its key signature with B major, which has five sharps (F $\sharp$ , C $\sharp$ , G $\sharp$ , D $\sharp$  and A $\sharp$ ).
- When ascending, G $\sharp$  melodic minor raises the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> notes. This creates **E $\sharp$  and F $\times$** , because E is raised from a natural to a sharp and F is raised from a sharp to a double sharp (x).
- When G $\sharp$  melodic minor descends the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> return to normal, with **F $\sharp$  and E $\natural$** , because F returns from a double sharp to a sharp, and E returns from a sharp to a natural.

