

Practicing Scales

With each of the following ways to practice scales, set a metronome to a slow tempo (55-60bpm) and work through the following subdivisions through each exercise. Try not to move on to a faster subdivision until the slower one feels comfortable.



Running the scale



Intervals



- Descending interval, ascending scale - ascending interval, descending scale



- Alternating descending/ascending interval



The previous examples used 3^{rds}, but they could be done with 4^{ths}, 5^{ths}, 6^{ths}, 7^{ths}, and octaves.



Diatonic Triads



- “Open” triads (1-5-3) – try different inversions as well (5-3-1, 3-1-5)



- Approach each triad by half-step



Diatonic Seventh Chords



Other Shapes

- Quartal



Patterns

- 1-2-3-5



- 1-3-2-1



Drones

Improvising using particular scales and modes is extremely helpful in being able to hear and play them with ease. Try improvising with a cello drone using a particular scale or mode. Explore the sound, identify which notes of the scale or mode make it unique, the intervals, shapes, and melodies within that sound. Each of the previous exercises could also be practiced using a drone, and could inspire improvisation. For example, try improvising using only 4^{ths} or 5^{ths}, or only using notes in groups of 3, or other creative limitations.

Example Practice Sessions

A Major

Metronome – 55bpm

Running the scale

Intervals, 3rds (3 variations)

Diatonic triads (2 variations)

Patterns (2 variations)

Improvise with cello drone A

C Natural Minor

Metronome – 60bpm

Running the scale

Intervals, 4ths (3 variations)

Open Triads (2 variations)

Patterns (2 variations)

Improvise with cello drone C

