

SCALE FINGERING RULES

Arthur Houle (with a lot of help from CSMTA colleagues!)
Mesa State College

1. “3” and “4” patterns alternate.
2. Never use thumb and 5th fingers on black keys.
3. Notes are step-wise; never play same note twice or play leaps beyond some kind of 2nd.
4. White keys C/Cm, G/Gm, D/Dm, A/Am, & E/Em:
 - a. Thumbs together *only* on home key note (tonic) at mid-points (not at the top & bottom).
 - b. 3rd fingers *always* play together.
5. Enharmonic (think “homonym”) major keys (B/Cb, F#/Gb & C#/Db) use all 5 black keys:
 - a. Two blacks: always 2nd & 3rd fingers (both hands).
 - b. Three blacks: always 2nd, 3rd and 4th fingers (both hands).
 - c. Thumbs play on remaining two white keys (*always* in Db; at mid-points for other two keys).
6. Flat major keys (Ab, Eb, & Bb):
 - a. R.H.: 4th finger always plays B-flat.
 - b. L.H.: 4th note of the scale is always played with the 4th finger.
7. Keys of F & Fm: thumbs on “C” (always) & “F” (mid-points).

POSTURE

1. Fingers should be rounded (curved), not flat (clip nails!).
2. Knuckles also should be rounded (not collapsed).
3. Wrists and elbows should be about level with each other generally; adjust chair to help facilitate this.
4. Sit at true center of piano (between “E” and “F” above middle C).
5. Don’t sit so close to the piano that you cannot do arpeggios comfortably (for most people this means knees should be just barely under the piano).
6. Don’t sit too far back either (shoulders will get sore).
7. Don’t slouch.

Questions? Contact:

Dr. Arthur Houle

Associate Professor of Music & Director of Keyboard Studies

Mesa State College Music Dept. MPAC #130

1100 North Ave.

Grand Junction, CO 81501-3122

Tel: 970.248.1069 wk

Tel: 970.812.5098 hm

Email: ahoule@mesastate.edu

Founder & director, Festival for Creative Pianists:

www.pianofestival.org

Dr. Houle's patented, home-grown, organically certified, pesticide & preservative free, all-natural (drum roll, please):

Schematic of "Choir warm-up" drill for Class Piano

	Pentascala	Triad	up 1/2 step
C:	□ □ □ □ □	□ □ □ ↗	■ → □ ■
Db:	■ ■ → □ ■ ■	■ → □ ■ ↗	□ ■ □
D:	□ □ ■ □ □	□ ■ □ ↗	■ □ ■
Eb:	■ □ □ ■ ■	■ □ ■ ↗	□ ■ □
E:	□ ■ ■ □ □	□ ■ □ ↗	□ □ □
F:	□ □ □ ■ □	□ □ □ ↗	■ ■ ■
F#:	■ ■ ■ □ ■	■ ■ ■ ↗	□ □ □
G:	□ □ □ □ □	□ □ □ ↗	■ → □ ■
Ab:	■ ■ → □ ■ ■	■ → □ ■ ↗	□ ■ □
A:	□ □ ■ □ □	□ ■ □ ↗	■ □ □
Bb:	■ □ □ ■ □	■ □ □ ↗	□ ■ ■
B:	□ ■ ■ □ ■	□ ■ ■ ↗	□ □ □