

## ***Unit 5: Pitch Basics Ideas***

This unit presents basic concepts of pitch notation and performance to prepare for the exercises in pitch that follow in Unit 6. For teachers and intermediate and advanced level students most of the exercises in this chapter should be quite easy to read at sight. However, for some students the exercises might present some interesting teaching problems. The lessons below provide suggestions for solving these problems

### ***Lesson 1: Major Scales with Pitch Names and Fingerings in Third Position and First Position***

All of the exercises in this Lesson should be played in a relatively slow tempo in the beginning. Later they may be played in a faster tempo.

#### ***Ex. 1: C Major Scale in Third Position***

Ex. 1 presents the ascending version of the C major scale played with various rhythms. Below the notes are the Pitch Names and the Fingering Names. The Pitch Names indicate Pitch and Octave Numbers. Pitch C is used for the first note of ***Lesson 2*** together with the pitch number 4. The complete pitch name is C4. C4 is also referred to as ***middle C***.

On the piano, middle C appears in the middle of the piano keys. On the viola, middle C appears as the first finger in the third position on the G-string. Notice also that middle C is written on the staff line that, if moved to the left, leads to the exact middle of the ALTO CLEF sign at the beginning of the staff. For this reason the ALTO CLEF is also referred to as the C clef.

The pitch names and octave numbers for some of the most frequently used notes on the viola including notes with accidentals (sharps and flats) are given as they appear for the first time in the exercises that follow this exercise.

## Learning To Place Left Hand Fingers on the Correct Pitches

The student should listen and watch the teacher use left hand fingers in the chosen position and note. The first thing necessary is to find where to place the first finger. It is possible to find this note by first playing the low C on the open C string and then playing the note C on the G string in third position on the G string. Another way to find the note C on the G string in third position is to play “Here comes the Bride” beginning with G on the open G string followed by the notes C CC played with the first finger on the G string.

Now that the teacher has shown how to find the first finger in Third Position on the G String it is time for the student to play the four notes in Third Position on the G String. (W = Whole Step, H = Half Step)

G String Fingers in Third Position:	1	2	3	4
G String Notes:	C	D	E	F
Distance between fingers:	W	W	h	

The teacher explains that the space between fingers 1 and 2 and between fingers 2 and 3 is roughly similar to the width of a single finger. This space between fingers 1 to 2 and between fingers 2 to 3 is called a whole step, and this distance is indicated with the letter W below the staff.

The space between fingers 3 and 4 is small – the fingers touch each other. The space between fingers 3 and 4 is called a half step and this distance is indicated with the letter h below the staff. The teacher demonstrates this and then has the student work with these four fingers. Then the teacher demonstrates the fingering on the D string in third position, and calls attention to the fact that in the C major scale the fingers on the D string have the same spaces or intervals as the fingers on the G string.

D String Fingers in Third Position:	1	2	3	4
D String Notes:	G	A	B	C
Distance between fingers:	W	W	h	

Here are the diagrams for finger placement in five other frequently used scales.

### ***Ex. 2: C Major Scale in First Position***

C String Fingers in First Position: 0 1 2 3  
C String Notes: C D EF  
Distance between fingers: W W h

C String Fingers in First Position: 0 1 2 3  
C String Notes: G B C#D  
Distance between fingers: W W h

### ***Ex. 3: G Major Scale in First Position***

G String Fingers in First Position: 0 1 2 3  
G String Notes: G A BC  
Distance between fingers: W W h

D String Fingers in First Position: 0 1 2 3  
C String Notes: D E F#G  
Distance between fingers: W W h

### ***Ex. 4: D Major Scale in First Position***

D String Fingers in First Position: 0 1 2 3  
D String Notes: D A F#D  
Distance between fingers: W W h

A String Fingers in First Position: 0 1 2 3  
A String Notes: A C C#D  
Distance between fingers: W W h

### ***Ex. 5: F Major Scale in Third Position***

C String Fingers in Third Position: 1 2 3 4  
C String Notes: F G ABb  
Distance between fingers: W W h

G String Fingers in Third Position: 1 2 3 4  
C String Notes: C D EF  
Distance between fingers: W W h

***Ex. 6: G Major Scale in Third Position***

D String Fingers in Third Position:	0	1	2	3
D String Notes:	G	A	B	C
Distance between fingers:		W	W	h

A String Fingers in Third Position:	0	1	2	3
A String Notes:	D	E	F#	G
Distance between fingers:		W	W	h

***Lesson 7: Short Tune Phrases Written by the Teacher---Optional***

These may be short original compositions or examples from music literature. As far as possible the examples chosen should use the musical techniques studied in this Unit.

***Lesson 8: Short Tune Phrases Written by the Student—Optional***

If the student is ready to do this lesson it would follow the same procedures, but now the tunes would be written by the student under the guidance of the teacher, if needed.