

# Pentatonic Scale Fret Positions for Common Keys

This is a handy chart to use when you want to quickly find out where to play a pattern in a common key. In the “Key of” column, both the major key and it’s relative minor key are listed because they both share the same key signature and the same notes. As you start improvising in common keys start memorizing where the five pentatonic patterns are positioned for each key. Memorizing where the minor and major roots are for each pattern and knowing how many frets are between each pattern is imperative for advanced improvisation and “jamming.”

## An Example of How to Read the Chart

Let’s say that a song is played in the key of E minor. E minor is relative to G major. Of the five pentatonic scales in E minor, pattern #3 is the lowest position on the neck in the 2<sup>nd</sup> fret position. Pattern #2 is the highest position on the neck in the 12<sup>th</sup> fret position. If you are playing an electric guitar where it is possible to easily access the 12<sup>th</sup> fret and higher use this simple rule. Just add 12 frets to a suggested fret position to play the same pattern one octave higher. For example, pattern #3 can be played in the 2<sup>nd</sup> fret position or 12 frets higher in the 14<sup>th</sup> fret position. Also, any pattern that is played in the 12<sup>th</sup> fret position can be played 12 frets lower in the open position. An example of this is pattern #2 in the 12<sup>th</sup> fret position in the key of E minor. If you go 12 frets lower and play pattern #2 in the open position you are still in the key of E minor.

To figure out where a pattern is to be played for a particular fret position use the following criteria. Fret position refers to what fret the first finger plays within the pentatonic scale. This principle is easily seen when you are in the key of E minor using pattern #2 in the 12<sup>th</sup> fret position. The first finger is in the 12<sup>th</sup> fret and the second finger is in the 13<sup>th</sup> fret, and so on. Now look at pattern #3 in the key of E minor. It is played in the 2<sup>nd</sup> fret position. Notice that if you play the pattern from it’s lowest note to the highest note that the first note played is the 6<sup>th</sup> string 3<sup>rd</sup> fret with the second finger. This is still considered 2<sup>nd</sup> fret position because the first finger is over the second fret and you will use the first finger in the 2<sup>nd</sup> fret several times in the scale pattern.

Key of	Pattern #1 fret position	Pattern #2 fret position	Pattern #3 fret position	Pattern #4 fret position	Pattern #5 fret position
C & Am	2	5	7	9	12
G & Em	9	12	2	4	7
D & Bm	4	7	9	11	2
A & F#m	11	2	4	6	9
E & C#m	6	9	11	1	4
F & Dm	7	10	12	2	5