

Melodic Minor Scale

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i	ii	III ⁺	IV	V	vi [°]	vii [°]	
R	M2	m3	P4	P5	M6	M7	

A Melodic Minor Scale

Am	Bm	C ⁺	D	E	F [°]	G [°]
AmΔ	Bm7	CΔ#5	D7	E7	Fm7b5	Gm7b5
Melodic Minor	Dorian b2	Lydian #5	Lydian Dominant	Mixolydian b6	Aeolian b5	Superlocrian
Jazz Minor	Phrygian Natural 6		Overtone Scale	Melodic Major	Locrian Natural 2	Altered Scale
			Lydian b7	Hindu Scale		Alt. Dominant
			Mixolydian #4	Spanish Phrygian		
			Acoustic Scale			

How to read the Melodic Minor Scale sheet

This document contains a lot of information ! However at first sight it might seem confusing, let's explain everything.

The first thing to notice is the second line, it is written : R, M2, m3, P4, P5, M6 and M7. They represent the **intervals contained within the Melodic Minor Scale** from the root. They inform how to build the Melodic Minor Scale from any note.

The first line gives the **scale degrees**. Capital letters represent major chords whereas minuscule letters represent minor chords. For example, in the Melodic Minor Scale, the chord built based on the second note will always be a minor chord. The chord built based on the fifth note will always be a major chord. The 6th and 7th chord are diminished chords. The 3rd chord is an augmented chord.

The second part of the sheet provides an example of a given Melodic Minor Scale for a particular root note predefined, here A. It shows the notes in the **A Melodic Minor Scale**.

The last line shows the chords material for the given A Melodic Minor Scale.

Why does the Melodic Minor Scale matter ?

To put it shortly for three reasons :

- To **create your first own minor songs** with more interesting sounds you would not be able to produce if you only used the Natural Minor Scale chords.
- **The Melodic Minor Scale is not that used in Western harmony on its own.** However it is a great complement to the natural minor scale that composers use to make great songs.
- Create great **jazzy or classical sounding music**

About the Melodic Minor Scale

The Melodic Minor Scale is named this way because it is used a lot for melodic construction as a complement to the Natural Minor Scale.

In music theory, there are three minor scales :

- **Natural Minor Scale** – or Minor Scale for short as this is the most common. It is overused everywhere and you can hear it in most of the Western songs.
- **Harmonic Minor Scale** – it provides great harmonic or chord materials to support the Natural Minor Scale.
- **Melodic Minor Scale** – it provides great melodic extensions and it typically used in jazz because of its jazzy sound. This is the one we are interested in here.

Remember that the **Harmonic Minor Scale was created to remove a flaw** of the Natural Minor Scale : this last scale does not have a leading tone compared to the Major Scale. Thus, the Natural Minor Scale lacks a leading tone and a dominant chord : the Harmonic Minor Scale corrects these flaws. This is why a Harmonic Minor Scale is a Natural Minor Scale with a raised 7th degree.

However, introducing the leading tone this way in the Natural Minor Scale creates a new flaw : we create a weird interval, a 1.5 tone interval between the 6th and 7th notes. This gives the Harmonic Minor Scale a strong oriental flavour that you do not always want.

We construct the Melodic Minor Scale by using the Harmonic Minor Scale and by raising the 6th degree. This way we dilute the strong oriental sound created by the 1.5 tone interval. We make the scale more like a Minor or Major Scale with only single and semi tone intervals.

Another way of seeing this scale, is by considering it as a **Major Scale with a minor third**. This vision is really helpful.

It is good to have both ideas in mind. Knowing from where a scale comes from is useful to get some insights of how musicians use it and why it exists in the first place. Plus, it makes it easier to compare with scales you are already familiar with.