



Scales 1. What is a Scale?

A **SCALE** is simply a way of dividing the distance between a note and the same note repeated an octave higher. There are lots of different ways of doing this, and the first way is with twelve equal steps, which is called

a **chromatic scale**. On the mandolin, you would be playing every fret within an octave. The intervals between the notes are called **semitones**, (or **half tones**), so there are twelve semitones between a note and its octave.

The D Chromatic Scale

THE MOST COMMON scale is called the **major scale**, and it really is the foundation of our musical history. For 200 years after Bach, almost all classical music was based on the major scale (and to a lesser extent the *minor*

scale). The “formula” for the major scale is a mixture of intervals of two semitones (also called **a tone**) and one semitone: **2-2-1-2-2-2-1**. That sequence gives us what we know as the major scale.

The D Major Scale

We’re going to use the D major scale to explore various aspects of scales in music. It’s a good idea to use scales in your practice routine, and to be able to play them without looking at the music.