

9 ways to play your scales

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I don't like to have a set scale routine—yes, I practice scales every day, but I hate to play them the exact same way every time. That's not fun. My way around this is to find as many different ways to practice these scales as possible. This forces me to focus on my technique and it usually exposes some flaw in my playing. It's usually technical, but it can also be a subdivision or breathing issue. These exercises can be played all slurred, or combined with an articulation pattern for an extra challenge. I don't do every one of these every day, but I'll usually choose a different way to play to play my scales every day. Here is an explanation of the various ways I'll practice my C major scale:

#1-3 Start on tonic, in every octave.

#4-6 Start on each part of the sixteenth note (practice breathing in the full beat before you enter).

#7&8 Start on the lowest/highest note in the full-range scale.

#10 Play it in triplets.

The image displays six musical staves, each representing a different technique for playing the C major scale. Each staff is numbered in a box on the left:

- Staff 1:** Standard C major scale in 4/4 time, starting on C4.
- Staff 2:** Standard C major scale in 4/4 time, starting on G4.
- Staff 3:** Standard C major scale in 4/4 time, starting on C5.
- Staff 4:** Standard C major scale in 7/8 time, starting on C4.
- Staff 5:** Standard C major scale in 7/8 time, starting on G4.
- Staff 6:** Standard C major scale in 7/8 time, starting on C5.

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Musical staff 7: Treble clef, 8 measures of eighth-note runs. The first measure starts on G4 and ascends to D5. The second measure starts on D5 and descends to G4. The third measure starts on G4 and ascends to D5. The fourth measure starts on D5 and descends to G4. The fifth measure starts on G4 and ascends to D5. The sixth measure starts on D5 and descends to G4. The seventh measure starts on G4 and ascends to D5. The eighth measure starts on D5 and descends to G4.

8

Musical staff 8: Treble clef, 8 measures of eighth-note runs. The first measure starts on G4 and ascends to D5. The second measure starts on D5 and descends to G4. The third measure starts on G4 and ascends to D5. The fourth measure starts on D5 and descends to G4. The fifth measure starts on G4 and ascends to D5. The sixth measure starts on D5 and descends to G4. The seventh measure starts on G4 and ascends to D5. The eighth measure starts on D5 and descends to G4.

9

Musical staff 9: Treble clef, 8 measures of eighth-note runs with triplets. The first measure starts on G4 and ascends to D5. The second measure starts on D5 and descends to G4. The third measure starts on G4 and ascends to D5. The fourth measure starts on D5 and descends to G4. The fifth measure starts on G4 and ascends to D5. The sixth measure starts on D5 and descends to G4. The seventh measure starts on G4 and ascends to D5. The eighth measure starts on D5 and descends to G4.