

Understanding The Modes

If you know your major scales you know your modes. There are seven notes in the major scale. In the C Major Scale the notes are C,D,E,F,G,A,B and ending on C an octave higher. This scale is also known as the Ionian Mode. If you started on the second note of the C Major Scale the D note and ended on its octave this would be the Dorian Mode. The notes for the Dorian Mode are D,E,F,G,A,B,C and ending on D. The same notes starting and ending from a different degree of the scale. If you were to continue from each of the different notes of the major scale and ending on the octave of that note you would have 7 different scales also known as the modes.

Start by playing from C-C then D-D, E-E Etc.

The Ionian Mode is C-C (Major Scale) This scale corresponds to the I chord of the key, C and CMaj7.

T																
A																
B	3	5	2	3	5	2	4	5	3	5	6	3	5	7	8	

The Notes	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C
Scale Degree	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I
Step Pattern	W	W	H	W	W	W	H								

W-Whole Step: 2 frets H-Half Step: 1 Fret

The Dorian Mode is D-D This scale corresponds to the II chord of the key, Dm and Dm7.

One of the most commonly used modes. Great for Jazz and Rock. (Minor Tonality)

T																
A																
B	5	2	3	5	2	4	5	3								

D	E	F	G	A	B	C	D
W	H	W	W	W	H	W	

D Natural Minor scale with a raised 6th the B note is another way to think of the Dorian Mode.

The Phrygian Mode is E-E This scale corresponds to the III chord of the key, Em and Em7.

Very common in Middle Eastern and Spanish music. (Minor Tonality)

T																
A	2	3	5	2	4	5	3	5								
B																

E	F	G	A	B	C	D	E
H	W	W	W	H	W	W	

E Natural Minor Scale with a Flattened 2nd the F note is the Phrygian Mode.

The Lydian Mode is F-F This scale corresponds to the IV chord of the key, F and FMaj7.

Play a F Major Scale and sharp the 4th and you have the Lydian mode. (Major Tonality)

T																
A	3	5	2	4	5	3	5	6								
B																

F	G	A	B	C	D	E	F
W	W	W	H	W	W	H	

The Mixolydian Mode is G-G This scale corresponds to the V chord of the key, G and G7.

Play a G Major Scale, flatten the 7th the F note and you have the Mixolydian Mode. One of the most commonly used modes. Great for Jazz, Blues and Rock. (Major Tonality)

T					3	5	6	3
A	5	2	4	5				
B								
	G	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
	W	W	H	W	W	H	W	

The Aeolian Mode is A-A This scale corresponds to the VI chord of the key (Relative Minor) Am and Am7.

The Aeolian Mode is the Natural Minor Scale in the key. (Minor Tonality)

T						3	5
A	2	4	5	3	5	6	
B							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
	W	H	W	W	H	W	W

The Locrian Mode is B-B This scale corresponds to the VII chord of the key, Bdim and Bm7b5.

The least used mode in Western music but prevalent in Japanese and Hindu music. B Major scale all notes flat except I and IV.

T						3	5	7
A	4	5	3	5	6			
B								
	B	C	D	E	F	G	A	B
	H	W	W	H	W	W	W	

The Ionian Mode is C-C (Major Scale)

T					3	5	7	8
A	5	3	5	6				
B								
	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C