

Scale Drills

Develops Finger Control, Accuracy and Coordination

Total Time: 3 to 5 Minutes per Day



Part 1: The Notes

See the Scales Fingering Sheet for This

Note: This is by FAR the most complicated drill - don't get overwhelmed, just take baby steps

Part 2: The Form/Motion

Rule #1 - As you're playing fingers 2 and 3, simultaneously move your thumb under

Rule #2 - Use a slight outward motion with your wrist to prepare the thumb transition

Rule #3 - Used naturally curved fingers (but NOT "STIFF curved" - let them flow)

Note: the thumb transitions happen on the way UP in the RH, and on the way DOWN in the LH

(make sure you watch the video to really understand how this should look - it's IMPORTANT)

Part 3: Accelerated Learning Techniques (lots of them!)

1. Quick Thumb Drill (beginner)

Step 1: Play fingers 1-2 focusing on the thumb under, Repeat 2 to 4x

Step 2: Play fingers 1-2-3 focusing on the thumb under, Repeat 2 to 4x

Step 3: Play fingers 1-2-3-1 focusing on the thumb under, Repeat 2 to 4x

FOCUS on moving your thumb at the SAME time you play fingers 2 and 3

This is always a hands separate drill - you'll never practice it hands together

Note: depending on the KEY, the thumb under transition might happen at a different part of the scale

2. Thumb Under Isolation Drill (beginner)

Step 1: Find the Thumb Under section of the scale

Step 2: Play the two notes that contain the thumb under transition, play 2 to 4x

Step 3: Add a note to the top, play 2 to 4x

Step 4: Add a note to the bottom, play 2 to 4x

Step 5: Add a note to the top, play 2 to 4x

Step 6: Add a note to the bottom, play 2 to 4x

Continue adding notes until you reach the full scale

This is always a hands separate drill - you'll never practice it hands together

Note: depending on the KEY, the thumb under transition might happen at a different part of the scale

Part 3: Accelerated Learning Techniques (continued...)

3. Added Note Drill (intermediate)

Step 1: Play the first TWO notes of the scale, 2 to 4x

Step 2: Play the first THREE notes of the scale, 2 to 4x

Step 3: Play the first FOUR notes of the scale, 2 to 4x

Step 4: Play the first FIVE notes of the scale, 2 to 4x

Continue this pattern until you've completed the full scale

Note: depending on the KEY, the thumb under transition might happen at a different part of the scale

4. Rhythmic Variation Drill (intermediate)

Play Normal: Straight Rhythm, 2 to 4x

Rhythm 1: Long, short long, short... 2 to 4x

Rhythm 2: Short long, short long... 2 to 4x

Rhythm 3: Long, short short short... 2 to 4x

Rhythm 4: Short short short long... 2 to 4x

Play Normal: Straight Rhythm, 2 to 4x

(like Finger Gauntlet except 2 to 4x each)

5. Metronome Ramp-Up Drill (advanced)

Step 1: Start at a very slow speed, play 2 to 4x

Step 2: Increase the tempo 8 to 12 BPM, play 2 to 4x

Step 3: Increase the tempo 8 to 12 BPM, play 2 to 4x

Step 4: Increase the tempo 8 to 12 BPM, play 2 to 4x

Step 5: Repeat until you hit your "Max Speed" for the day

Step 6: Go back to a very slow tempo, play 2 to 4x

You can use a metronome app/website, but I recommend getting a physical one!

Your "Max Speed" is the speed where you start making mistakes

It's VERY important you end with Step 6 at a slow tempo to drill good habits

6. The No-Look Drill (advanced)

Step 1: Play 4x focusing your eyes on your Right Hand

Step 2: Play 4x focusing your eyes on your Left Hand

Step 3: Play 4x looking up, NOT looking at the keys (or eyes closed)

You will have to slow it WAY down at first for Step 3: this is normal

Part 4: The Progression

Every day, you only need to pick a few scale drills - you don't have to do them all every day!

Over the course of the week, progress from the beginner drills to the advanced drills

Eventually you do want to get hands together - but not until hands separate is ROCK solid

You'll likely go the first couple weeks without getting hands together at all - that's normal

As you learn more and more scales, the next ones get easier to learn (Compound Interest Effect)

Make sure you're using the correct fingerings from the chart - this is huge for good habits

ACCURACY OVER SPEED ALWAYS!!!