APPLIED THEORY + GUIDED PRACTICE

# Guitar

## Notes, scales, and improvisation

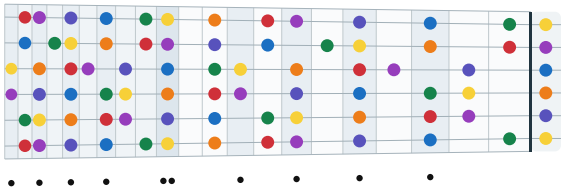
For experienced TAB players who want to understand the notes and create their own phrases.

**STANDARD TUNING**

**E - A - D - G - B - E**

lowest-pitched string to highest

**LEFT-HANDED FRETBOARD**



**NOTES / CHORDS / RHYTHM / PHRASING**

Eight applied-theory studies and six lessons with backing tracks.

**LEFT-HANDED / AMERICAN ENGLISH**

FOR PLAYERS WHO WANT TO UNDERSTAND

# Inside this guide

Look up notes, practice scales, and work through the lessons.

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**START WITH STUDY 1** **PAGES 29-42**

Play a phrase, understand its notes, and make your own choices.




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Marques & Co.

# Your improvisation roadmap

You already play from TAB. Now connect your ears, note names, and musical choices.

## 01 From reading to choosing

**STUDIES 1 AND 6 / PAGES 29 AND 34**

Play the written phrase, identify its notes, and change the rhythm. In Study 6, remove the cues until you can invent an answer without TAB.

## 02 Understand what notes do

**STUDIES 2-3 / PAGES 30-31**

Learn half steps, whole steps, intervals, degrees, and triads. Play each idea before moving on. Connect the theory to skills your hands already have.

## 03 Separate three important ideas

**STUDY 4 / PAGE 32**

Tuning gives the open-string pitches; key gives the tonal center; the chord gives the current harmony. Familiar shapes do not replace listening.

## 04 Choose a scale from the harmony

**STUDY 5 / PAGE 33**

Check the key and chord symbols, start with a few notes, and target chord tones. A chord change does not always require a scale change.

## 05 Connect the neck

**STUDY 7 / PAGE 35**

Find the same note in different places and use shared notes to connect areas. A new shape does not mean a new scale.

## 06 Practice with fewer cues

**STUDY 8 + PRACTICE / PAGES 36-42**

Read a phrase, name its notes, vary it, and cover the TAB. Then follow the six backing-track lessons and record eight measures.

### THE MAPS ARE REFERENCES, NOT A MEMORIZATION CHECKLIST

Start with Study 1. Look up notes on p. 4 and scale maps as needed. To go straight to a backing track, turn to p. 37. The keys are teaching examples, not a preferred style.



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# How to read the diagrams

One consistent system of note names, colors, and degrees throughout the guide.

STANDARD TUNING

**E - A - D - G - B - E**

lowest-pitched string to highest

## 01 Read the neck

The nut is on the right. Frets increase from 0 to 21 toward the left, closer to the body. Fret 0 means an open string.

Top to bottom: E, B, G, D, A, E. The top line is string 1, the thinnest and highest-pitched string. The bottom line is the thickest and lowest.

One fret raises pitch a half step. Open-string notes return at fret 12, one octave higher. The double dot marks fret 12.

## 02 Read the symbols

Each natural note keeps its original color. Sharp and flat spellings share one white circle: one fret and one sound.

A black ring marks the scale tonic or chord root. R identifies it on small diagrams. Degrees such as 1, 2, and ♭3 describe intervals, not fingers.

♯ means sharp and ♭ means flat. The footer spells the notes of the scale. Chord roots follow the current chord; the tonic is the tonal center.

## 03 Use each diagram

The full map shows all scale tones. The small diagrams show five complete patterns organized by their positions on the neck.

P1-P5 are pattern numbers, not fret numbers. Labels such as Em or C name chord-shape families; the page title gives the actual scale and key.

TAB still reads left to right in time. These neck maps have higher frets to the left. To transpose a fretted shape, move every note by the same number of frets.

**NATURAL-NOTE COLORS**

C D E F G A B

**LEFT-HANDED PLAYING / CLEAN SOUND**

Your right hand frets the notes; your left hand picks or plucks. Stay relaxed, fret just behind the appropriate fret wire, and mute strings you are not playing. Shift position instead of forcing a wide stretch.

Every diagram and TAB example uses the standard tuning shown in the header.



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# Every note on the fretboard

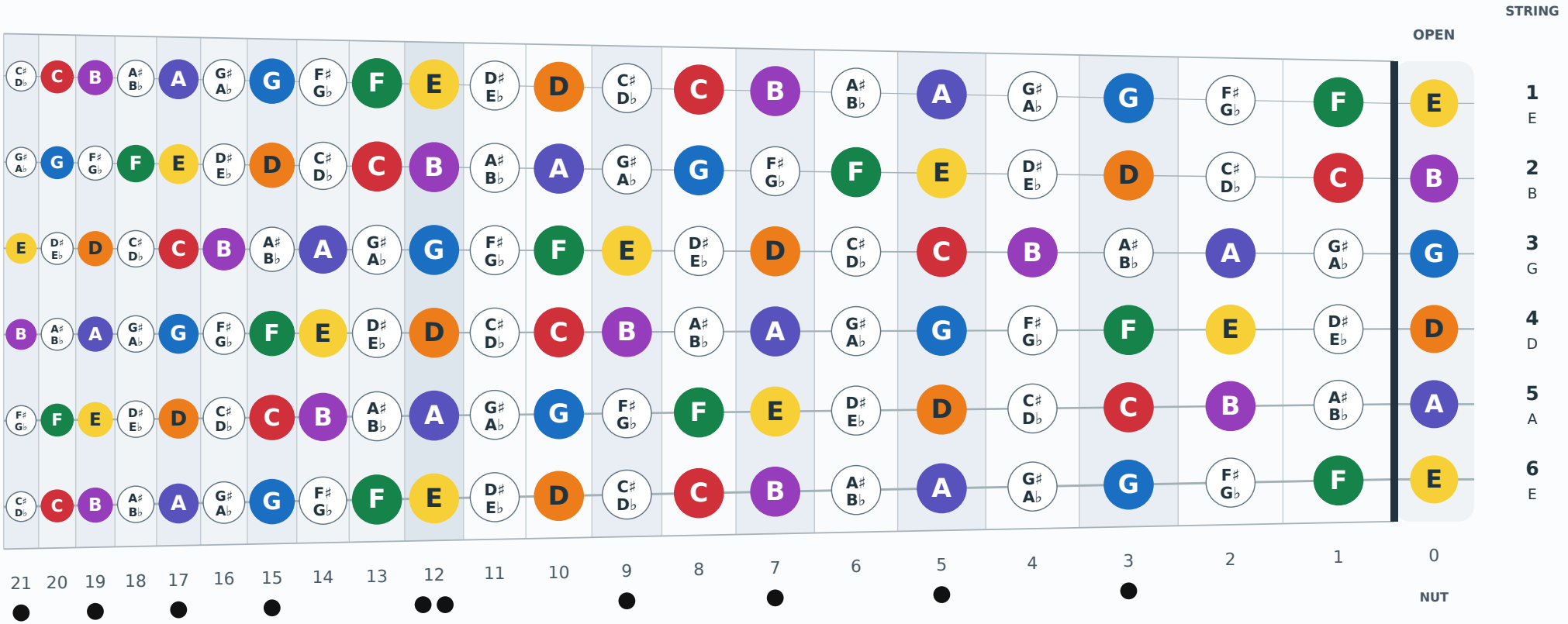
Complete reference · sharp and flat spellings share a fret

Higher frets and pitches ← toward the body

STANDARD TUNING

**E - A - D - G - B - E**

lowest-pitched string to highest




**FOLLOW ONE NATURAL NOTE**

C Red · D Orange · E Yellow · F Green · G Blue · A Indigo · B Violet

**TWO NAMES, ONE PITCH**

C♯/D♭, D♯/E♭, F♯/G♭, G♯/A♭, and A♯/B♭ share frets. Play each circle once.

**12 FRETS = ONE OCTAVE**

The shaded octave repeats the note names at a higher pitch. E-F and B-C are one fret apart.

Open strings, sounding pitch: E2 A2 D3 G3 B3 E4. Middle C = C4.



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# A minor pentatonic

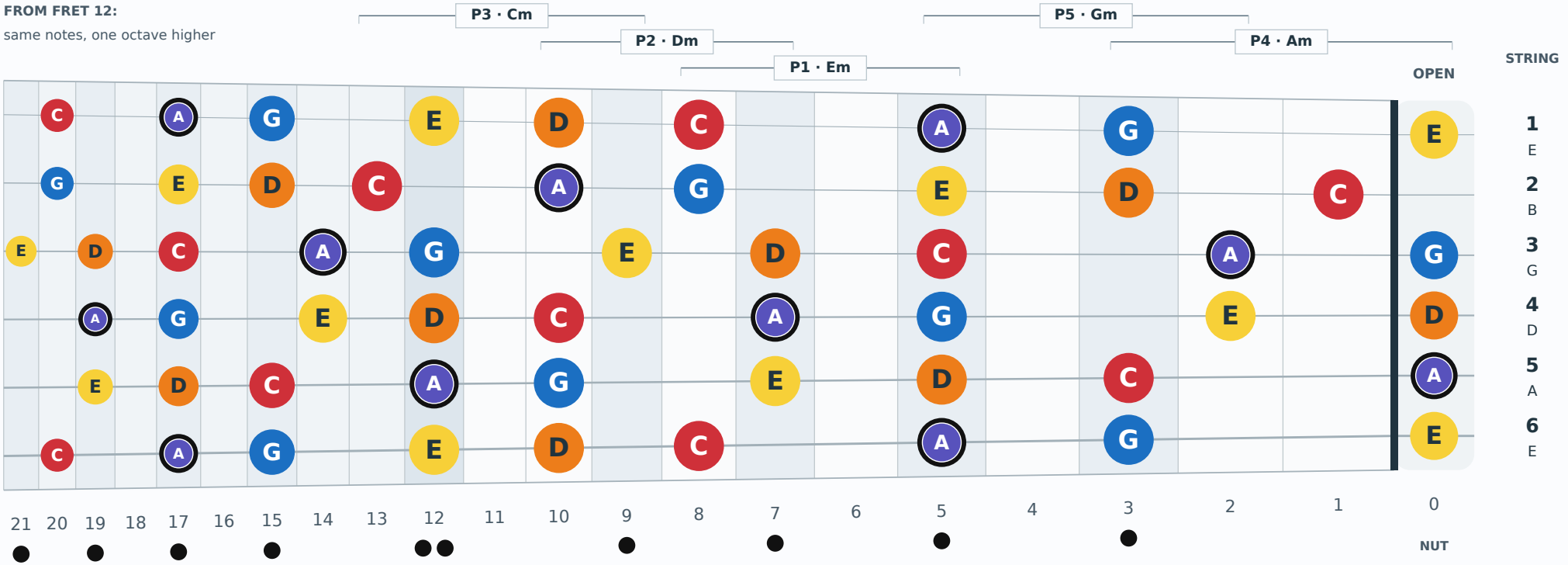
Five-note minor pentatonic scale

**STANDARD TUNING**

**E - A - D - G - B - E**

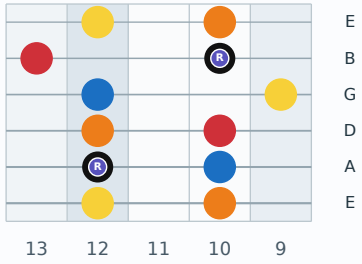
lowest-pitched string to highest

**FROM FRET 12:**
same notes, one octave higher

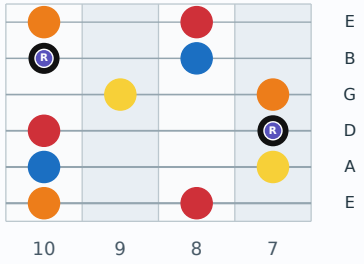



**COMPLETE PATTERNS / LOWEST COMPLETE POSITIONS**

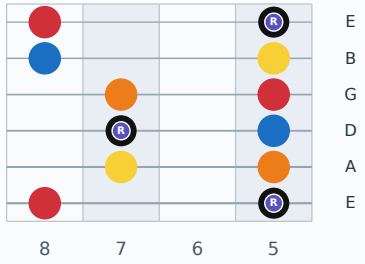
### Pattern 3 · Cm



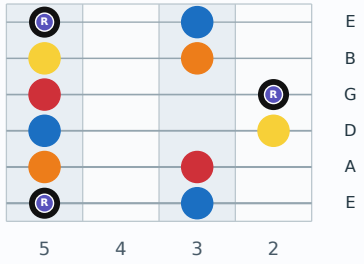

### Pattern 2 · Dm



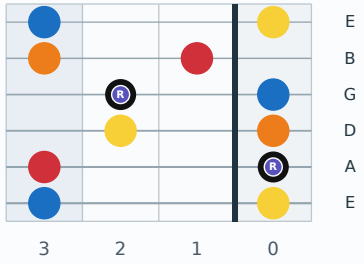

### Pattern 1 · Em




### Pattern 5 · Gm




### Pattern 4 · Am




**SCALE NOTES + DEGREES**

| A | C | D | E | G |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | ♭3 | 4 | 5 | ♭7 |

**Root / tonic**
Black ring; R on small diagrams.

**NUT ON THE RIGHT**
Frets increase to the left. Degrees are not fingers.

One fret = one half step · 12 frets = one octave.



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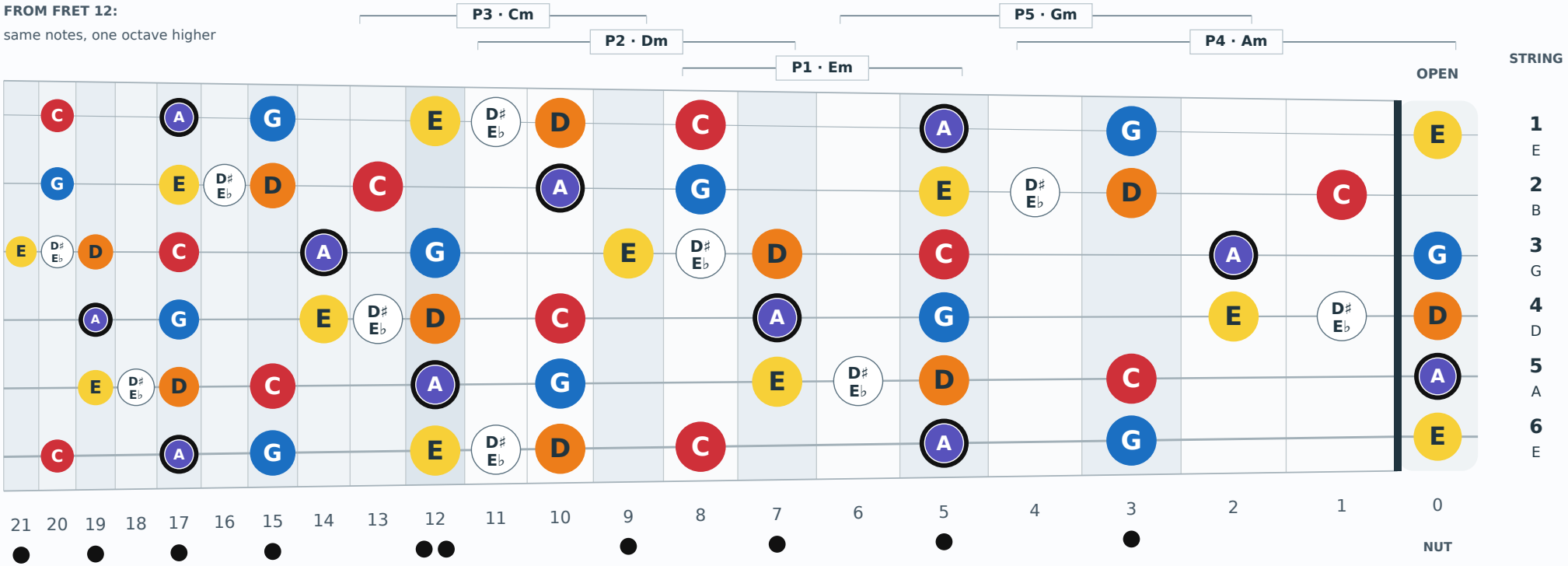
# A minor blues

**E - A - D - G - B - E**

lowest-pitched string to highest

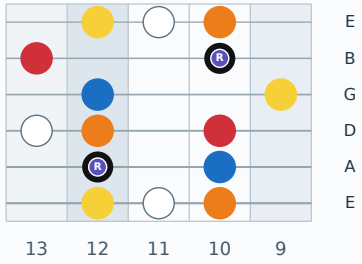
Minor pentatonic plus the blue note

**FROM FRET 12:**
same notes, one octave higher

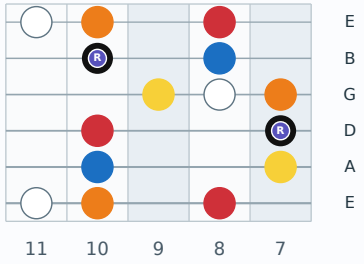



## COMPLETE PATTERNS / LOWEST COMPLETE POSITIONS

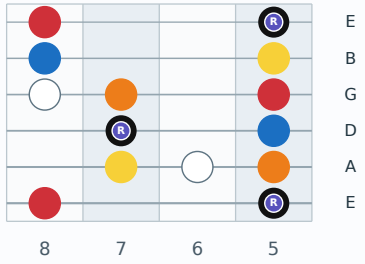
### Pattern 3 · Cm



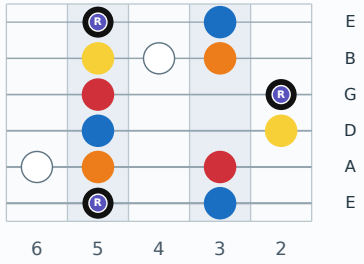

### Pattern 2 · Dm



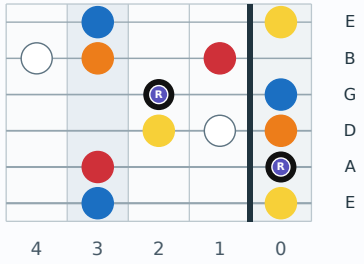

### Pattern 1 · Em




### Pattern 5 · Gm




### Pattern 4 · Am




**SCALE NOTES + DEGREES**

| A | C | D | E♭ | E | G |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | ♭3 | 4 | ♭5 | 5 | ♭7 |

**R — Root / tonic**
Black ring; R on small diagrams.

**NUT ON THE RIGHT**
Frets increase to the left. Degrees are not fingers.

One fret = one half step · 12 frets = one octave.



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GUITAR / 21 FRETS / LEFT-HANDED

STANDARD TUNING

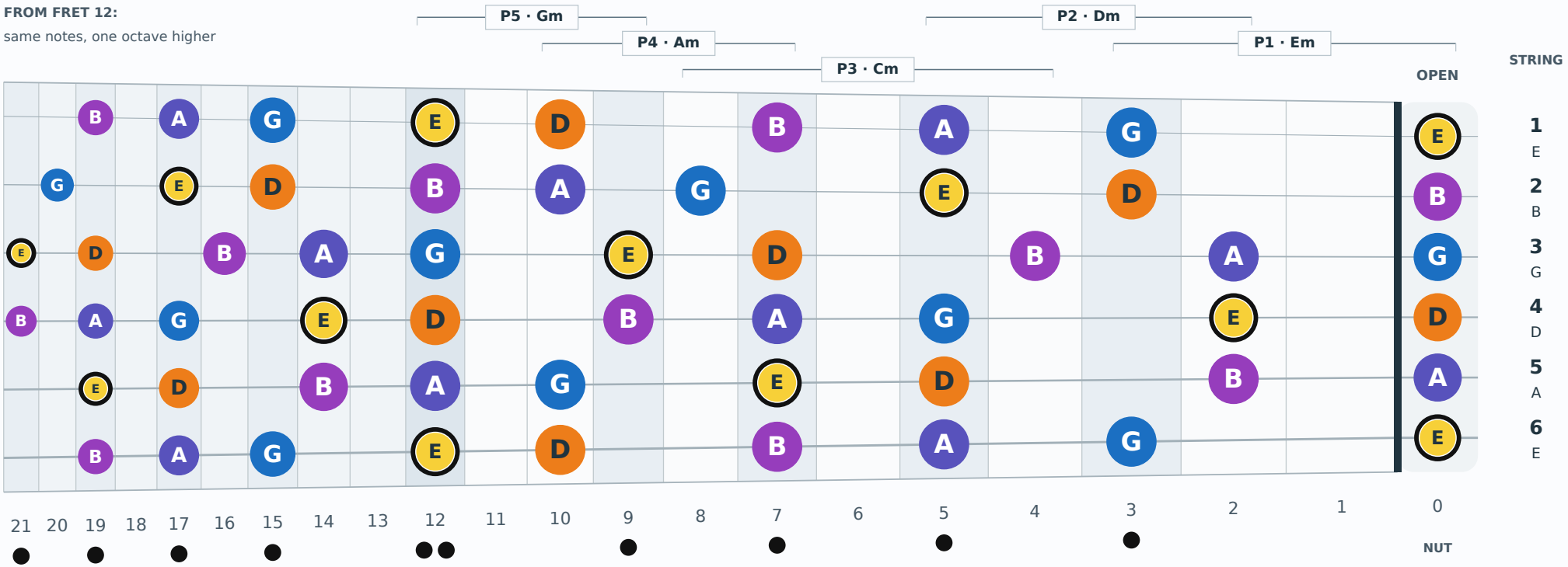
# E minor pentatonic

**E - A - D - G - B - E**

lowest-pitched string to highest

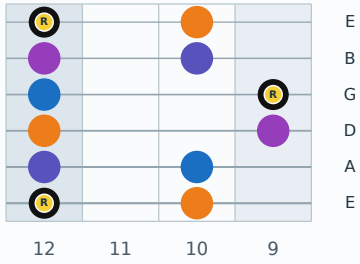
Five-note minor pentatonic scale

**FROM FRET 12:**
same notes, one octave higher

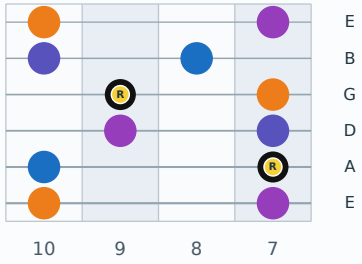



**COMPLETE PATTERNS / LOWEST COMPLETE POSITIONS**

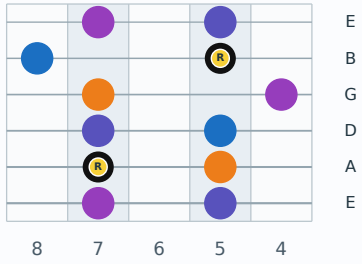
### Pattern 5 · Gm



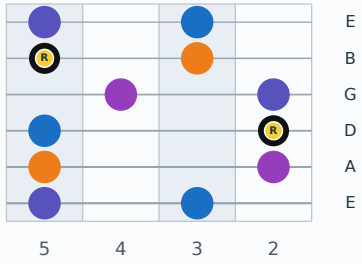

### Pattern 4 · Am



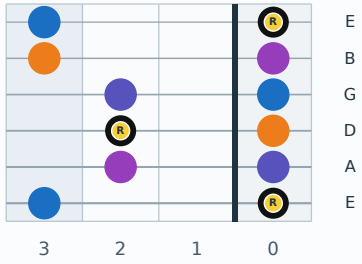

### Pattern 3 · Cm




### Pattern 2 · Dm




### Pattern 1 · Em




**SCALE NOTES + DEGREES**

| E | G | A | B | D |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | ♭3 | 4 | 5 | ♭7 |

**Root / tonic**
Black ring; R on small diagrams.

**NUT ON THE RIGHT**
Frets increase to the left. Degrees are not fingers.

One fret = one half step · 12 frets = one octave.



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# E minor blues

Minor pentatonic plus the blue note

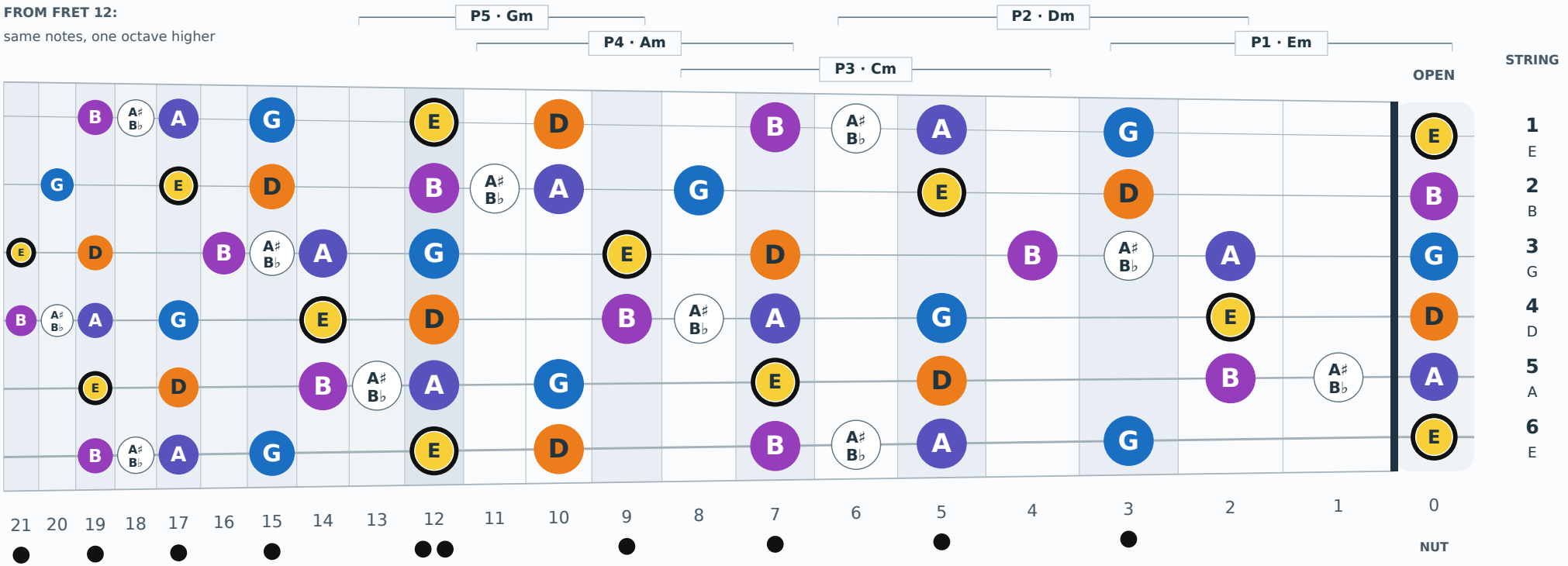
**STANDARD TUNING**

**E - A - D - G - B - E**

lowest-pitched string to highest

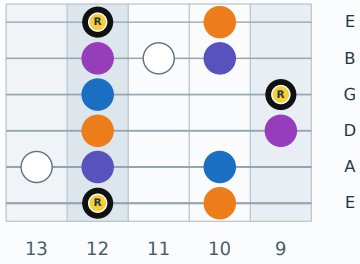
**FROM FRET 12:**

same notes, one octave higher

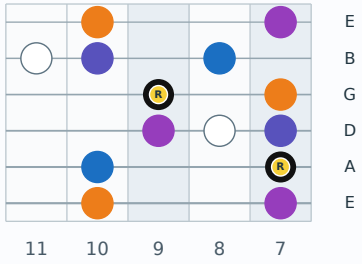



**COMPLETE PATTERNS / LOWEST COMPLETE POSITIONS**

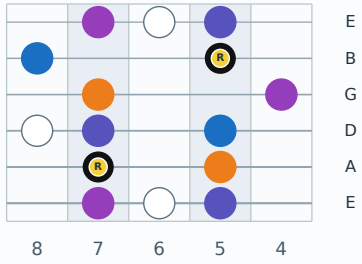
### Pattern 5 · Gm



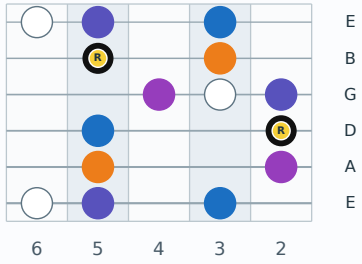

### Pattern 4 · Am



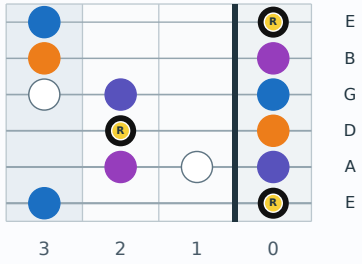

### Pattern 3 · Cm




### Pattern 2 · Dm




### Pattern 1 · Em




**SCALE NOTES + DEGREES**

| E | G | A | B♭ | B | D |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | ♭3 | 4 | ♭5 | 5 | ♭7 |

**Root / tonic**

Black ring; R on small diagrams.

**NUT ON THE RIGHT**

Frets increase to the left. Degrees are not fingers.

One fret = one half step · 12 frets = one octave.



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# C major pentatonic

Five-note major pentatonic scale

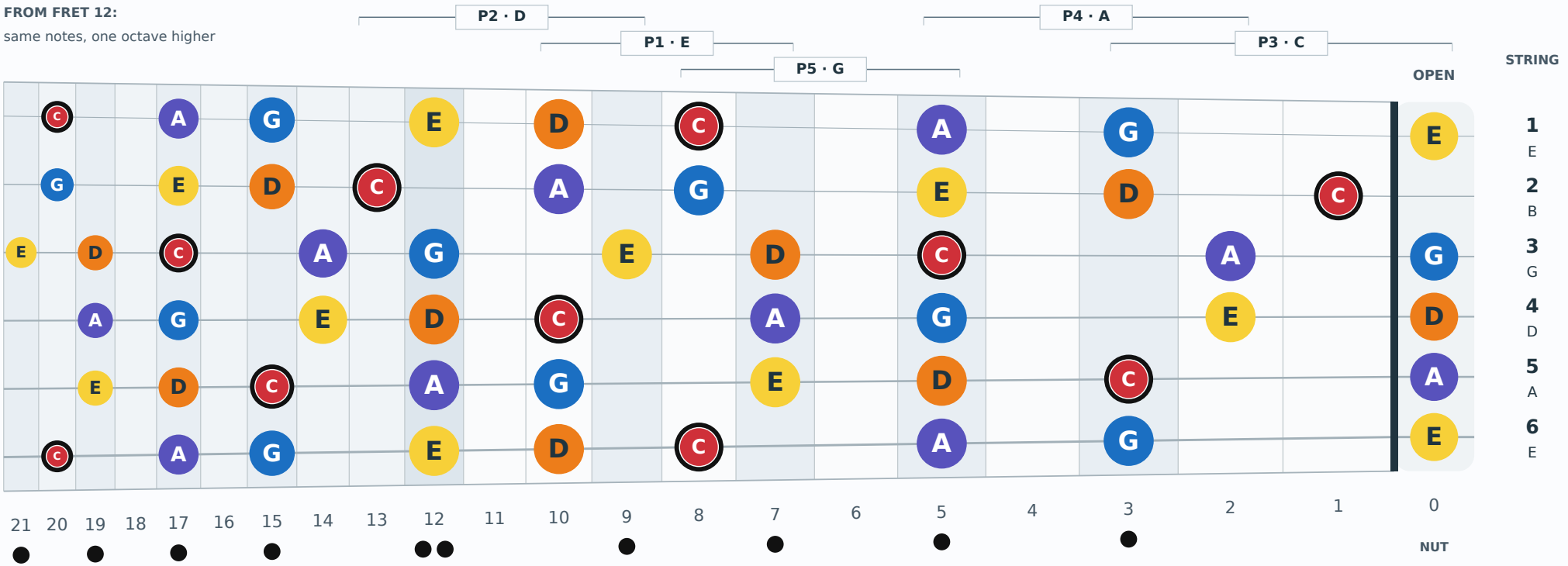
**STANDARD TUNING**

**E - A - D - G - B - E**

lowest-pitched string to highest

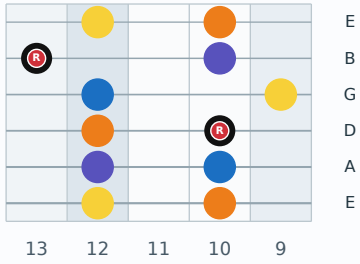
**FROM FRET 12:**

same notes, one octave higher

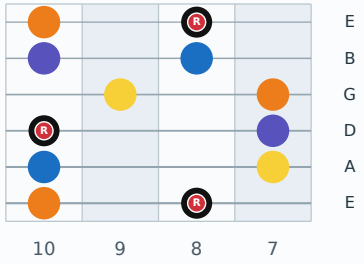



**COMPLETE PATTERNS / LOWEST COMPLETE POSITIONS**

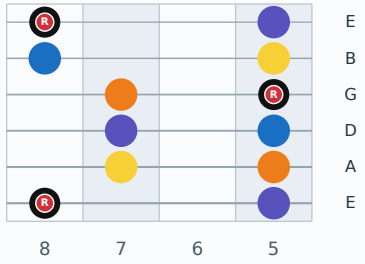
### Pattern 2 · D



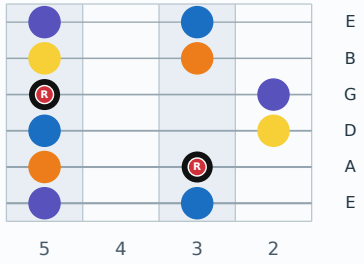

### Pattern 1 · E



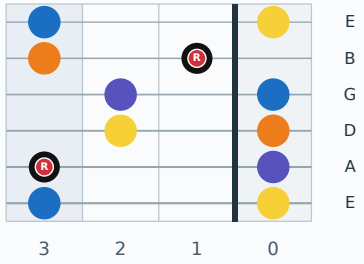

### Pattern 5 · G




### Pattern 4 · A




### Pattern 3 · C




**SCALE NOTES + DEGREES**

| C | D | E | G | A |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 6 |

**Root / tonic**

Black ring; R on small diagrams.

**NUT ON THE RIGHT**

Frets increase to the left. Degrees are not fingers.

One fret = one half step · 12 frets = one octave.



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# G major pentatonic

Five-note major pentatonic scale

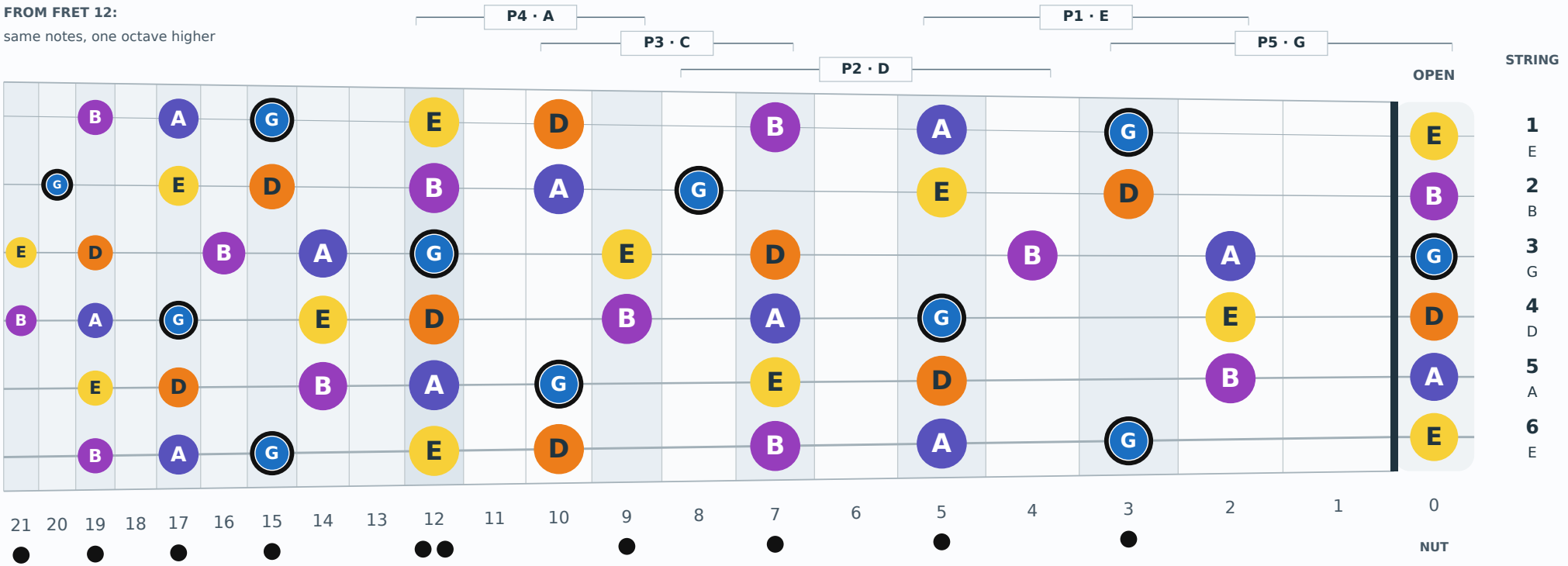
**STANDARD TUNING**

**E - A - D - G - B - E**

lowest-pitched string to highest

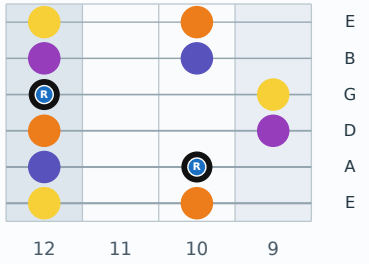
**FROM FRET 12:**

same notes, one octave higher

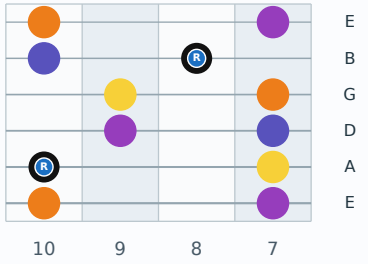



**COMPLETE PATTERNS / LOWEST COMPLETE POSITIONS**

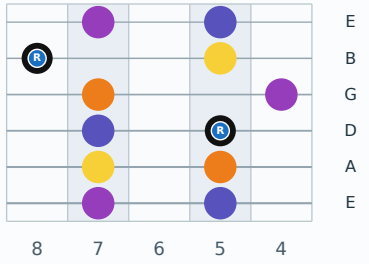
### Pattern 4 · A



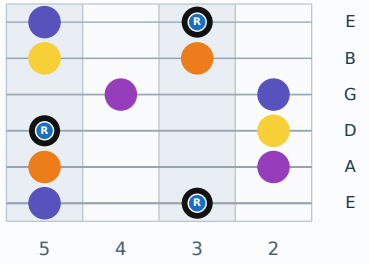

### Pattern 3 · C



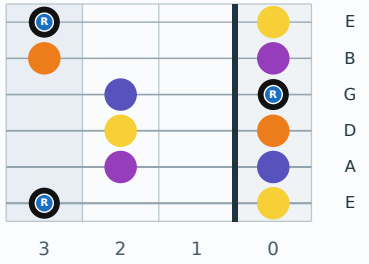

### Pattern 2 · D




### Pattern 1 · E




### Pattern 5 · G




**SCALE NOTES + DEGREES**

| G | A | B | D | E |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 6 |

**Root / tonic**

Black ring; R on small diagrams.

**NUT ON THE RIGHT**

Frets increase to the left. Degrees are not fingers.

One fret = one half step · 12 frets = one octave.



Tukany / Lucas Marques / CC BY 4.0

GUITAR / 21 FRETS / LEFT-HANDED

# C major

Seven-note major scale

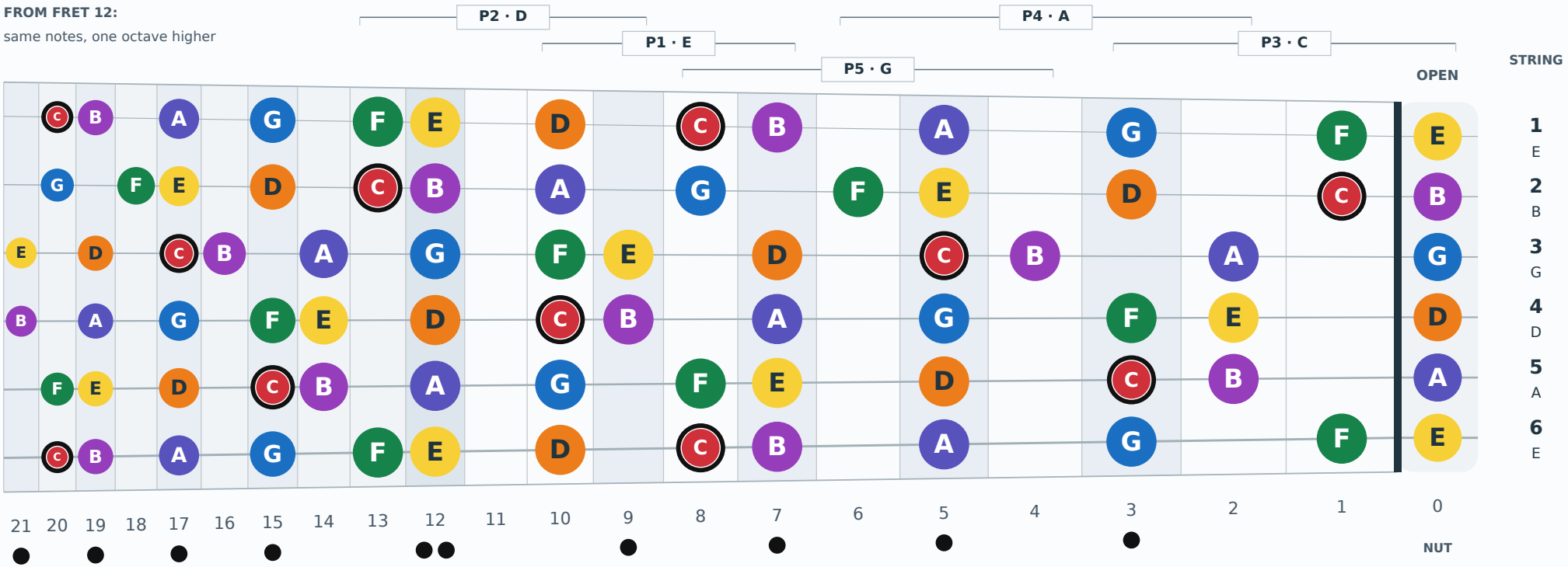
STANDARD TUNING

**E - A - D - G - B - E**

lowest-pitched string to highest

**FROM FRET 12:**

same notes, one octave higher

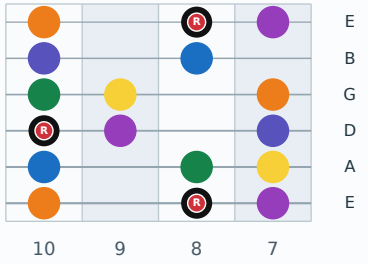



**COMPLETE PATTERNS / LOWEST COMPLETE POSITIONS**

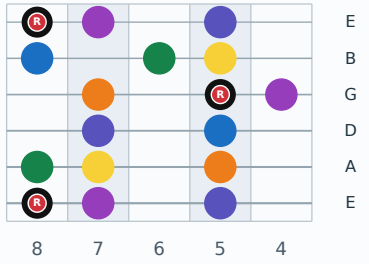
### Pattern 2 · D



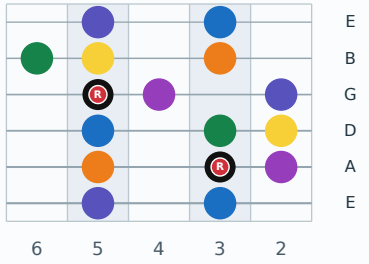

### Pattern 1 · E



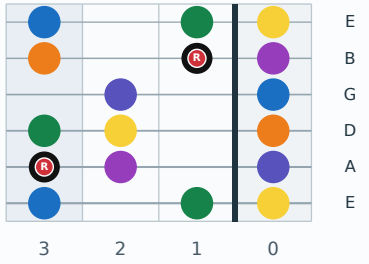

### Pattern 5 · G




### Pattern 4 · A




### Pattern 3 · C




**SCALE NOTES + DEGREES**

| C | D | E | F | G | A | B |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

**Root / tonic**

Black ring; R on small diagrams.

**NUT ON THE RIGHT**

Frets increase to the left. Degrees are not fingers.

One fret = one half step · 12 frets = one octave.



Tukany / Lucas Marques / CC BY 4.0

Marques & Co.

# A natural minor

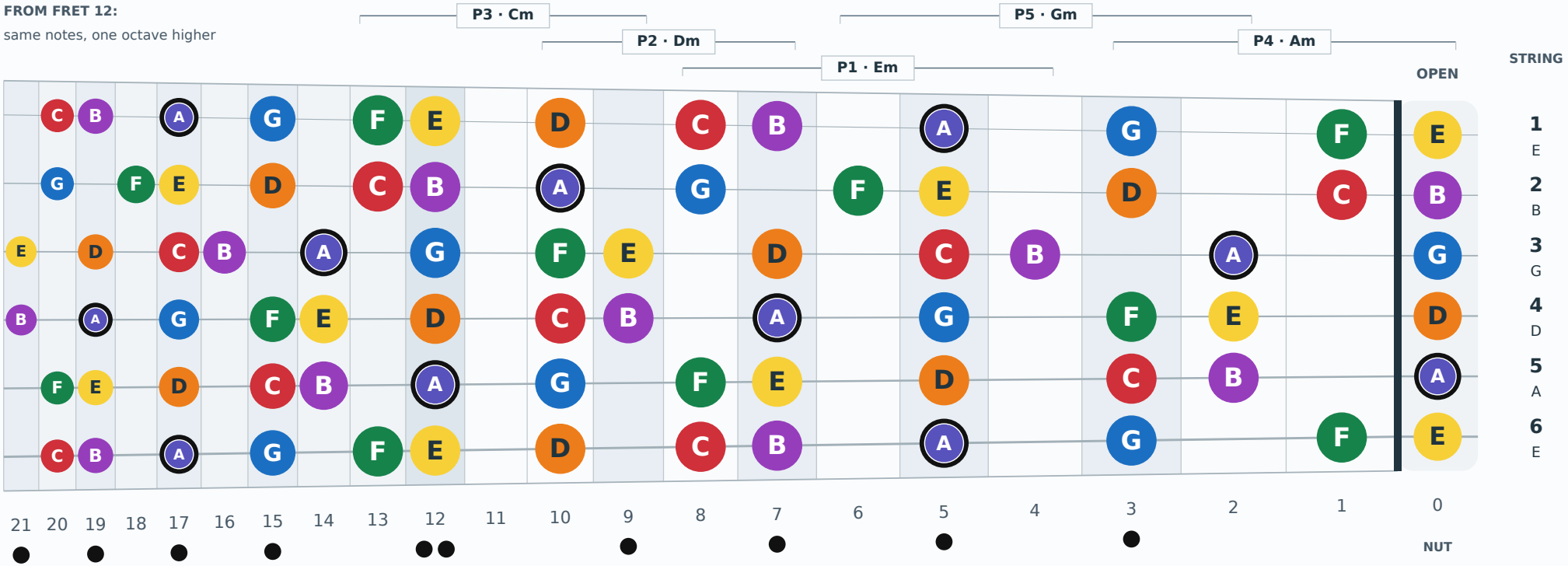
Seven-note natural minor scale

**STANDARD TUNING**

**E - A - D - G - B - E**

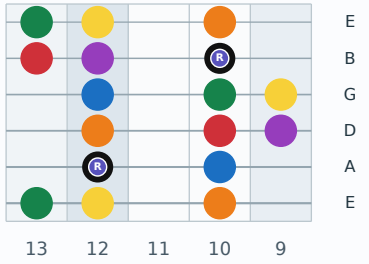
lowest-pitched string to highest

**FROM FRET 12:**
same notes, one octave higher

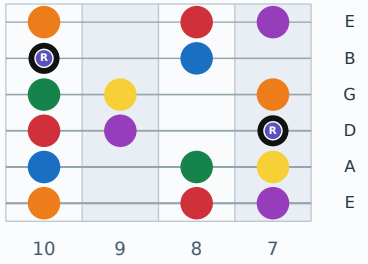



**COMPLETE PATTERNS / LOWEST COMPLETE POSITIONS**

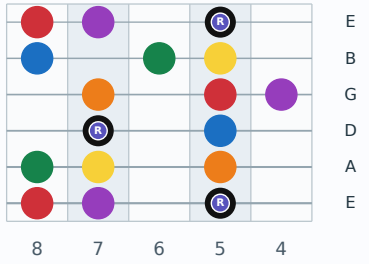
### Pattern 3 · Cm



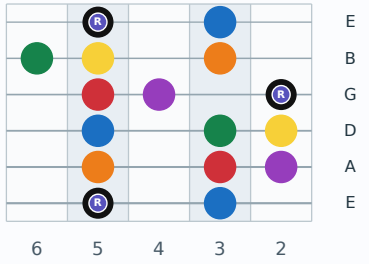

### Pattern 2 · Dm



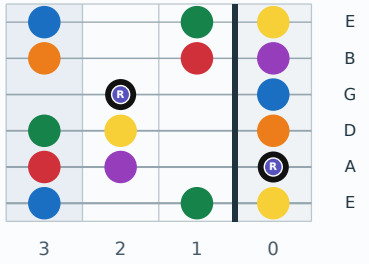

### Pattern 1 · Em




### Pattern 5 · Gm




### Pattern 4 · Am




**SCALE NOTES + DEGREES**

| A | B | C | D | E | F | G |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | ♭3 | 4 | 5 | ♭6 | ♭7 |

**Root / tonic**
Black ring; R on small diagrams.

**NUT ON THE RIGHT**
Frets increase to the left. Degrees are not fingers.

One fret = one half step · 12 frets = one octave.



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# G major

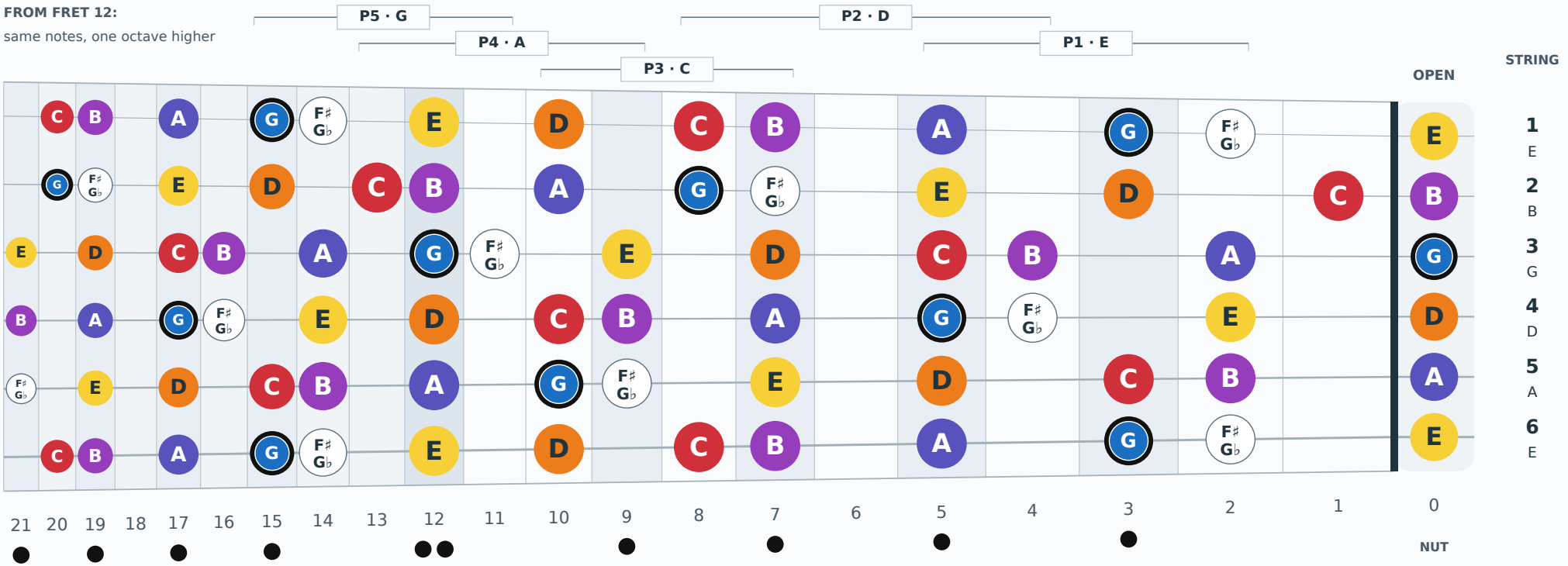
Seven-note major scale

**STANDARD TUNING**

**E - A - D - G - B - E**

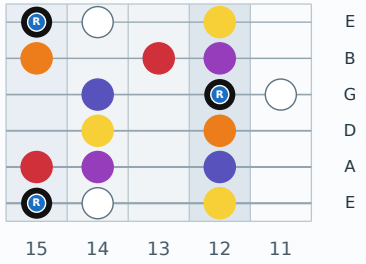
lowest-pitched string to highest

**FROM FRET 12:**
same notes, one octave higher

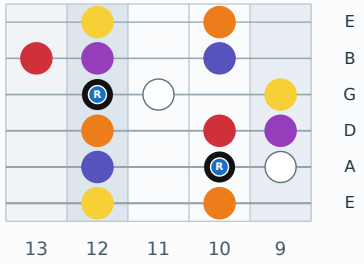



## COMPLETE PATTERNS / LOWEST COMPLETE POSITIONS

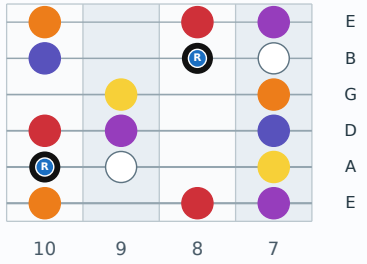
### Pattern 5 · G



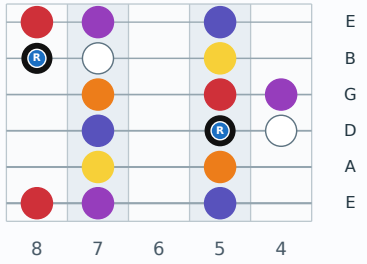

### Pattern 4 · A



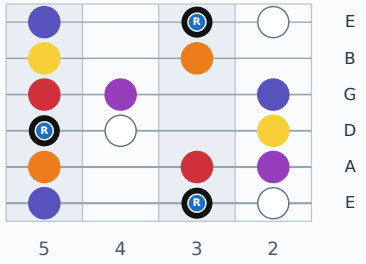

### Pattern 3 · C




### Pattern 2 · D




### Pattern 1 · E




**SCALE NOTES + DEGREES**

| G | A | B | C | D | E | F♯ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

**Root / tonic**
Black ring; R on small diagrams.

**NUT ON THE RIGHT**
Frets increase to the left. Degrees are not fingers.

One fret = one half step · 12 frets = one octave.



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# E natural minor

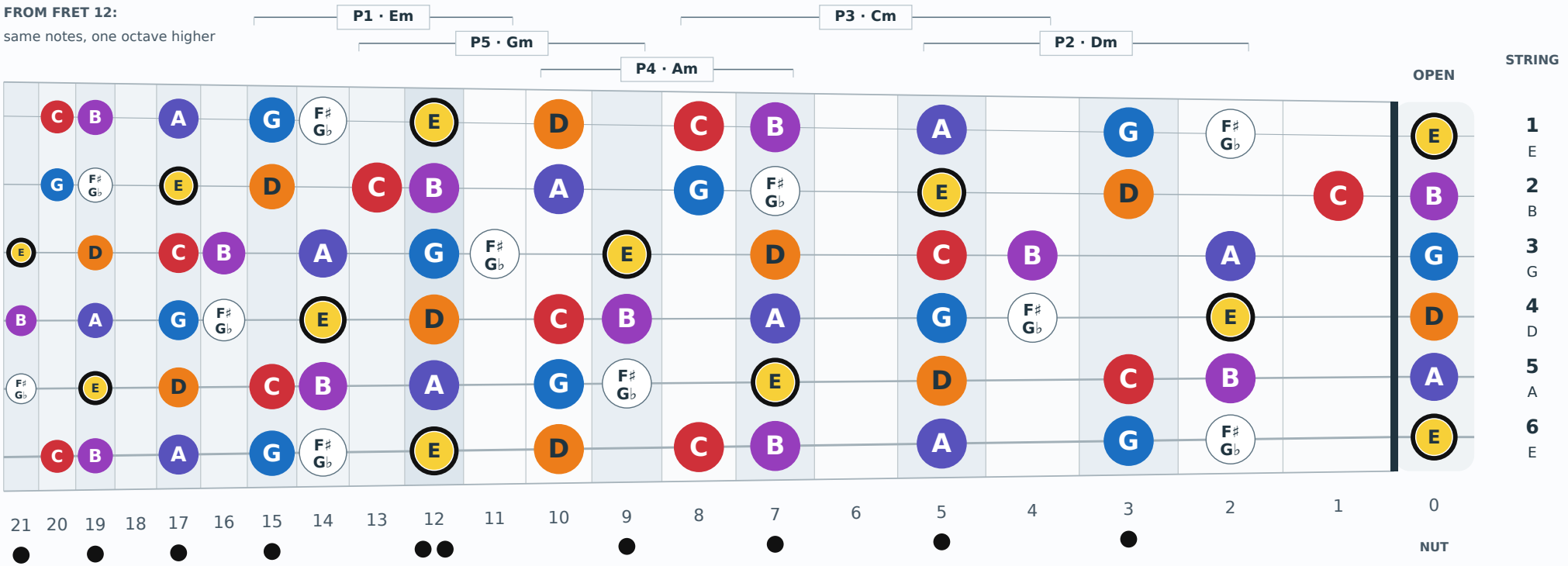
Seven-note natural minor scale

**STANDARD TUNING**

**E - A - D - G - B - E**

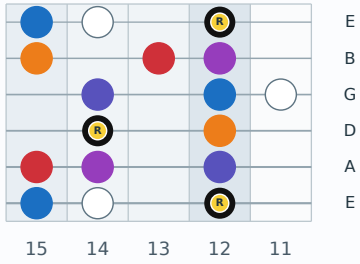
lowest-pitched string to highest

**FROM FRET 12:**
same notes, one octave higher

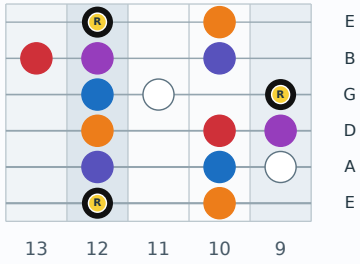



**COMPLETE PATTERNS / LOWEST COMPLETE POSITIONS**

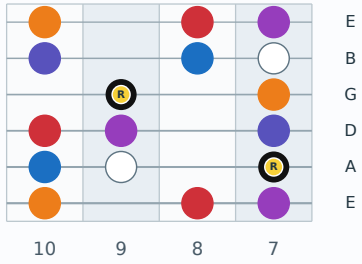
### Pattern 1 · Em



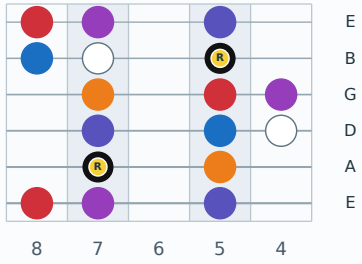

### Pattern 5 · Gm



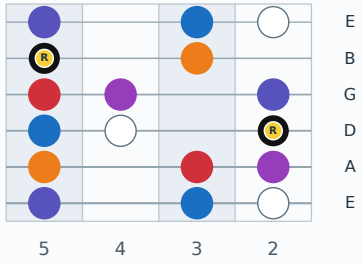

### Pattern 4 · Am




### Pattern 3 · Cm




### Pattern 2 · Dm




**SCALE NOTES + DEGREES**

| E | F♯ | G | A | B | C | D |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | ♭3 | 4 | 5 | ♭6 | ♭7 |

(R) **Root / tonic**
Black ring; R on small diagrams.

**NUT ON THE RIGHT**
Frets increase to the left. Degrees are not fingers.

One fret = one half step · 12 frets = one octave.



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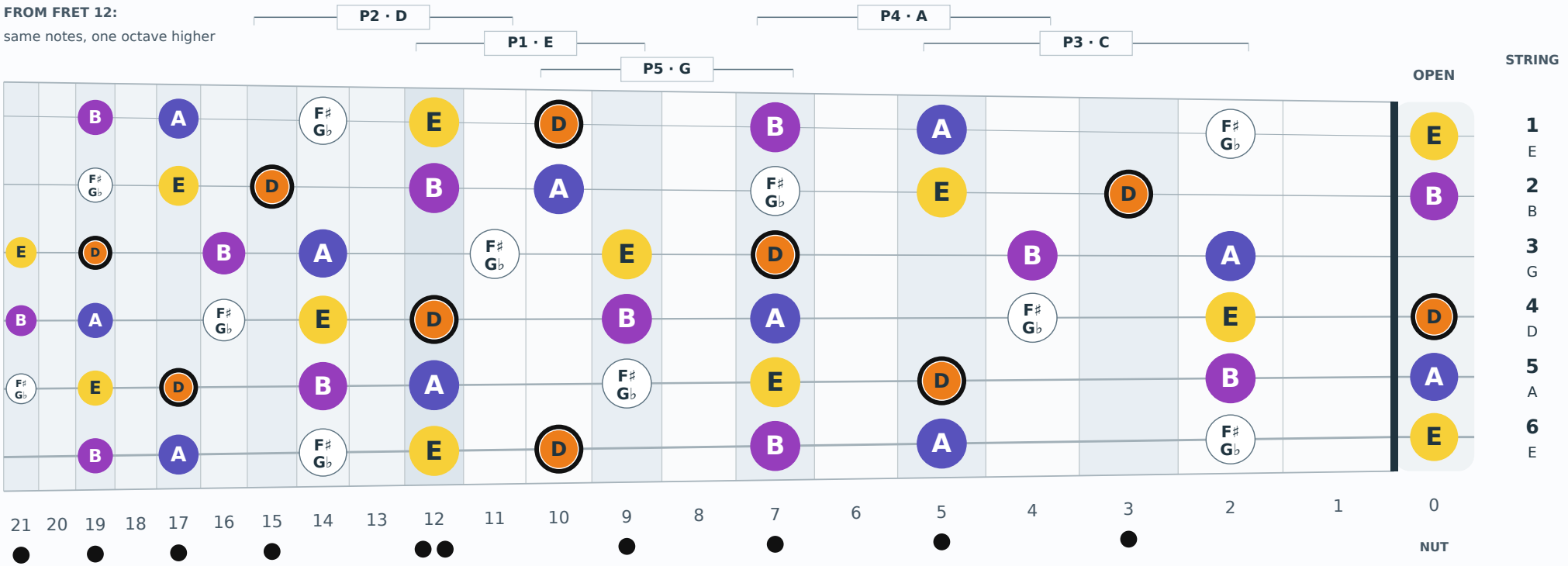
# D major pentatonic

Five-note major pentatonic scale

**E - A - D - G - B - E**

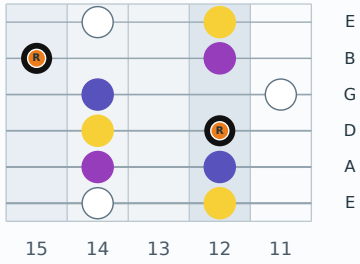
lowest-pitched string to highest

**FROM FRET 12:**
same notes, one octave higher

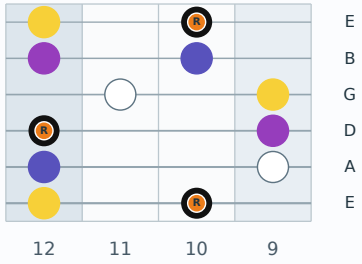



## COMPLETE PATTERNS / LOWEST COMPLETE POSITIONS

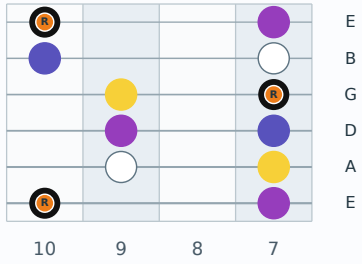
### Pattern 2 · D



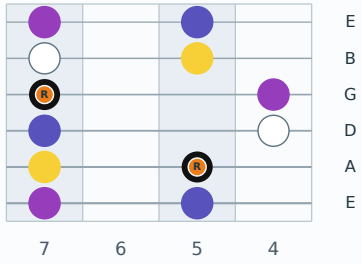

### Pattern 1 · E



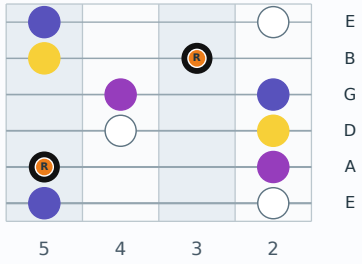

### Pattern 5 · G




### Pattern 4 · A




### Pattern 3 · C




**SCALE NOTES + DEGREES**

| D | E | F♯ | A | B |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 6 |

**Root / tonic**
Black ring; R on small diagrams.

**NUT ON THE RIGHT**
Frets increase to the left. Degrees are not fingers.

One fret = one half step · 12 frets = one octave.



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# A major pentatonic

Five-note major pentatonic scale

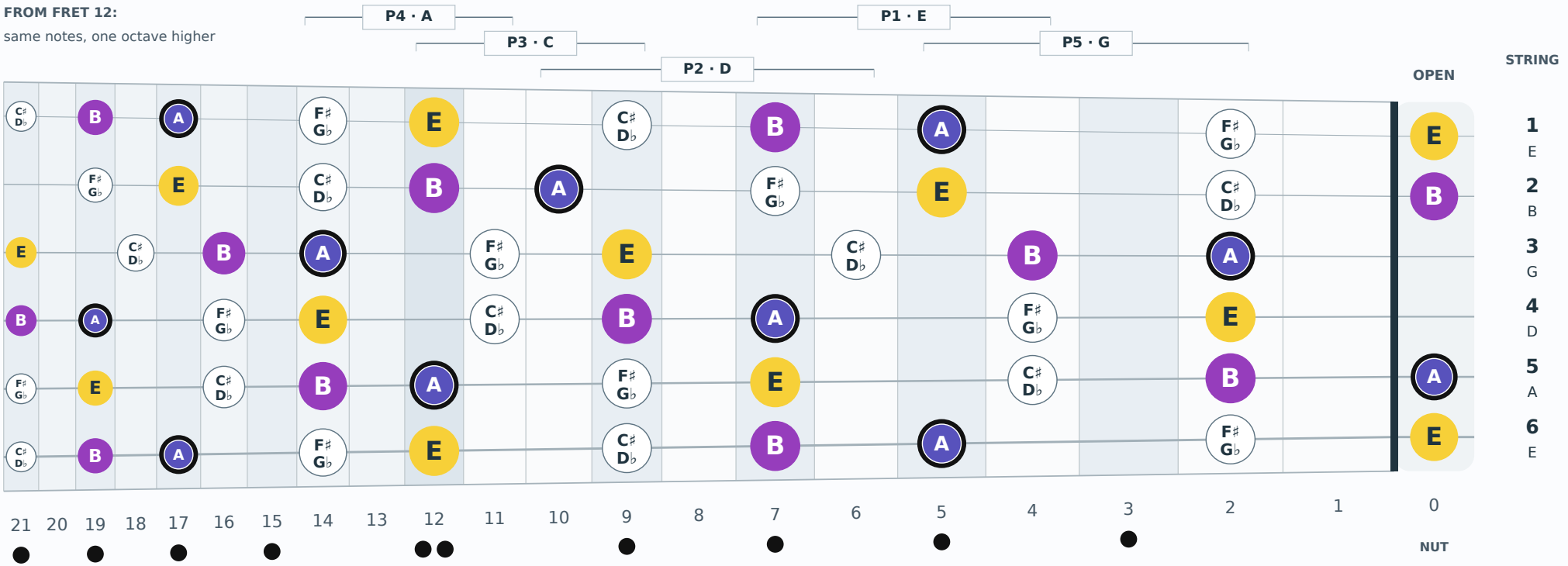
**STANDARD TUNING**

**E - A - D - G - B - E**

lowest-pitched string to highest

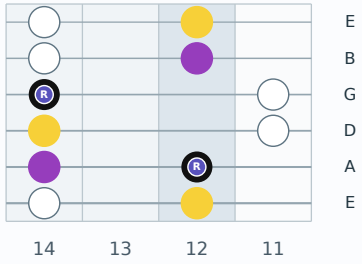
**FROM FRET 12:**

same notes, one octave higher

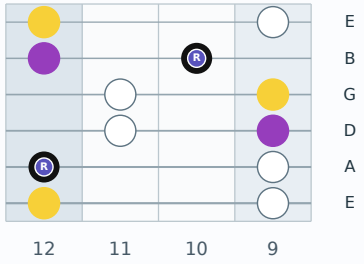



**COMPLETE PATTERNS / LOWEST COMPLETE POSITIONS**

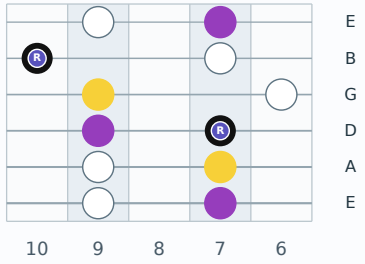
### Pattern 4 · A



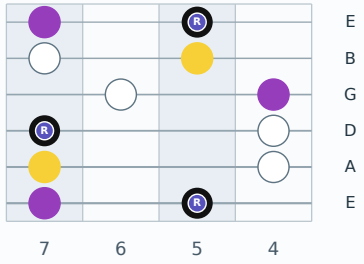

### Pattern 3 · C



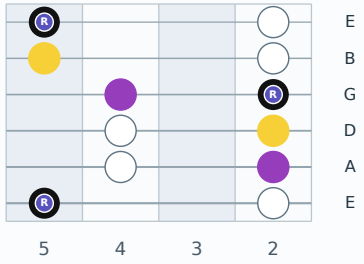

### Pattern 2 · D




### Pattern 1 · E




### Pattern 5 · G




**SCALE NOTES + DEGREES**

| A | B | C♯ | E | F♯ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 6 |

**R** — **Root / tonic**

Black ring; R on small diagrams.

**NUT ON THE RIGHT**

Frets increase to the left. Degrees are not fingers.

One fret = one half step · 12 frets = one octave.



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# D major

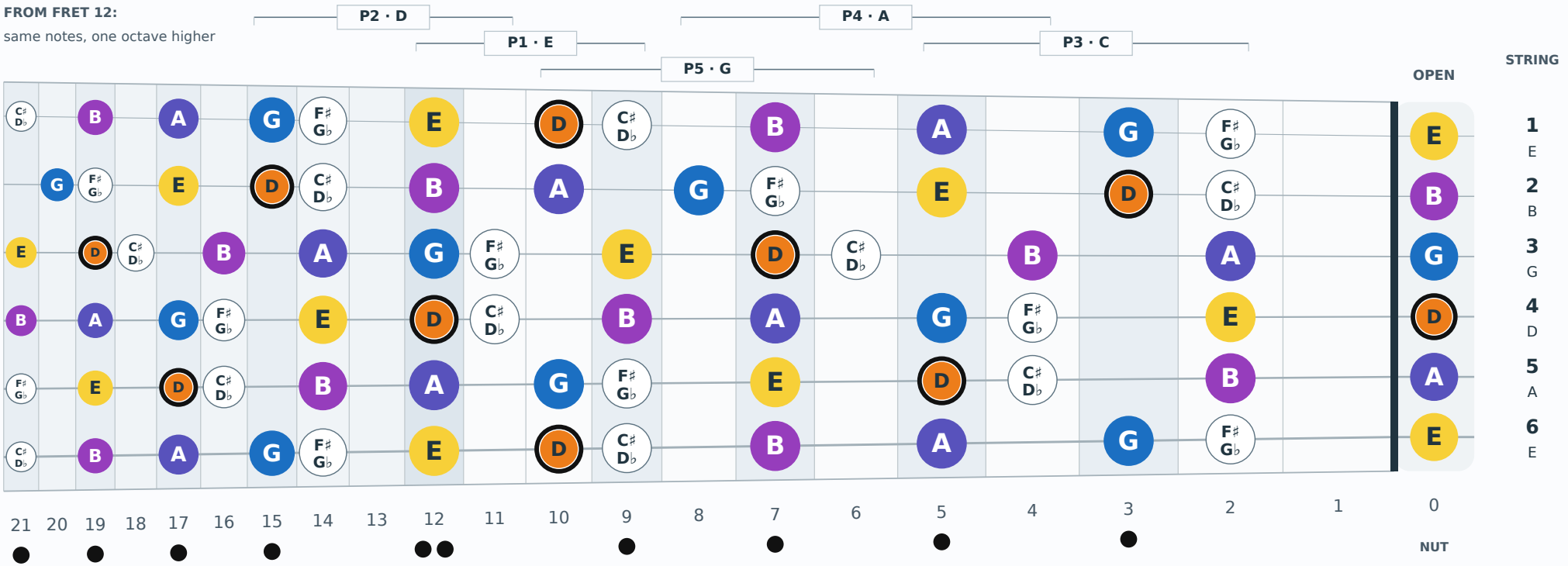
Seven-note major scale

**FROM FRET 12:**
same notes, one octave higher

**STANDARD TUNING**

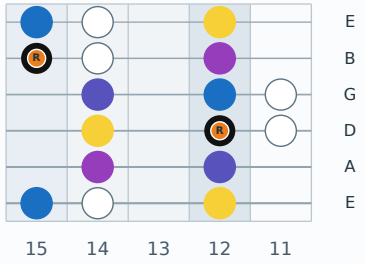
**E - A - D - G - B - E**

lowest-pitched string to highest

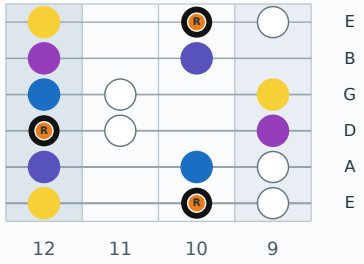



**COMPLETE PATTERNS / LOWEST COMPLETE POSITIONS**

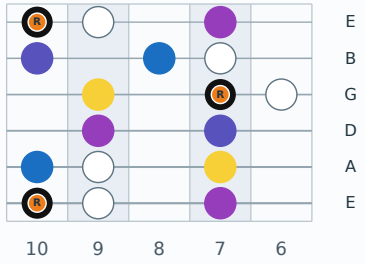
### Pattern 2 · D



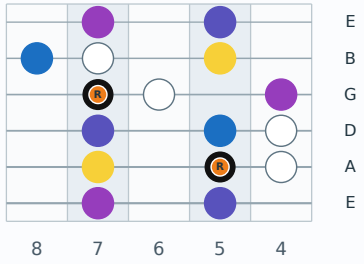

### Pattern 1 · E



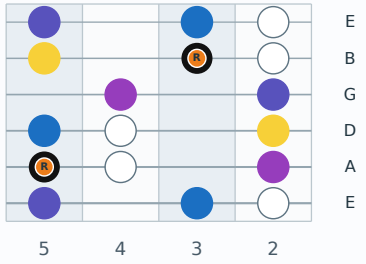

### Pattern 5 · G




### Pattern 4 · A




### Pattern 3 · C




**SCALE NOTES + DEGREES**

| D | E | F♯ | G | A | B | C♯ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

**Root / tonic**
Black ring; R on small diagrams.

**NUT ON THE RIGHT**
Frets increase to the left. Degrees are not fingers.

One fret = one half step · 12 frets = one octave.



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Marques & Co.

# B natural minor

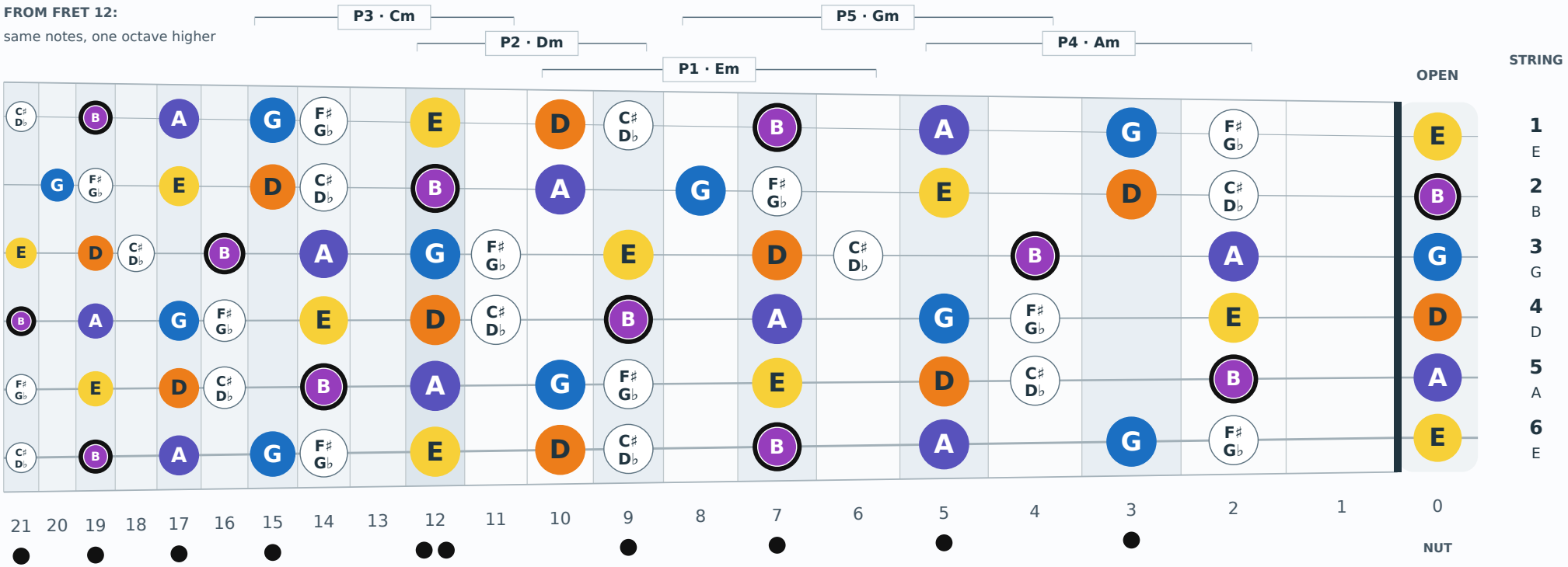
Seven-note natural minor scale

**STANDARD TUNING**

**E - A - D - G - B - E**

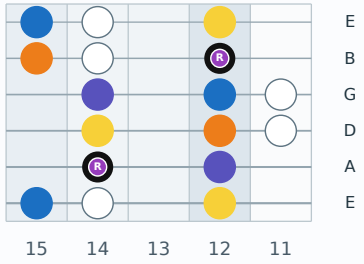
lowest-pitched string to highest

**FROM FRET 12:**
same notes, one octave higher

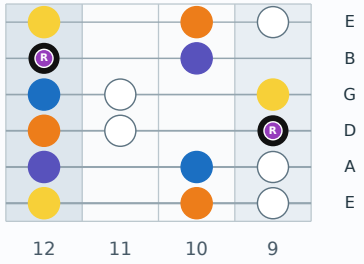



**COMPLETE PATTERNS / LOWEST COMPLETE POSITIONS**

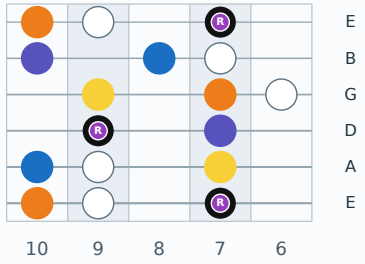
### Pattern 3 · Cm



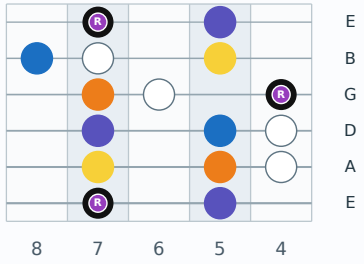

### Pattern 2 · Dm



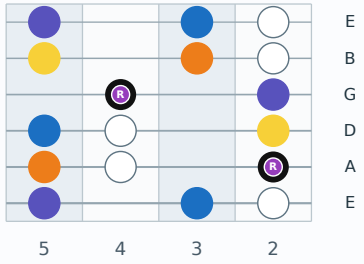

### Pattern 1 · Em




### Pattern 5 · Gm




### Pattern 4 · Am




**SCALE NOTES + DEGREES**

| B | C♯ | D | E | F♯ | G | A |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | ♭3 | 4 | 5 | ♭6 | ♭7 |

**R** — **Root / tonic**
Black ring; R on small diagrams.

**NUT ON THE RIGHT**
Frets increase to the left. Degrees are not fingers.

One fret = one half step · 12 frets = one octave.



Tukany / Lucas Marques / CC BY 4.0

Marques & Co.

# A major

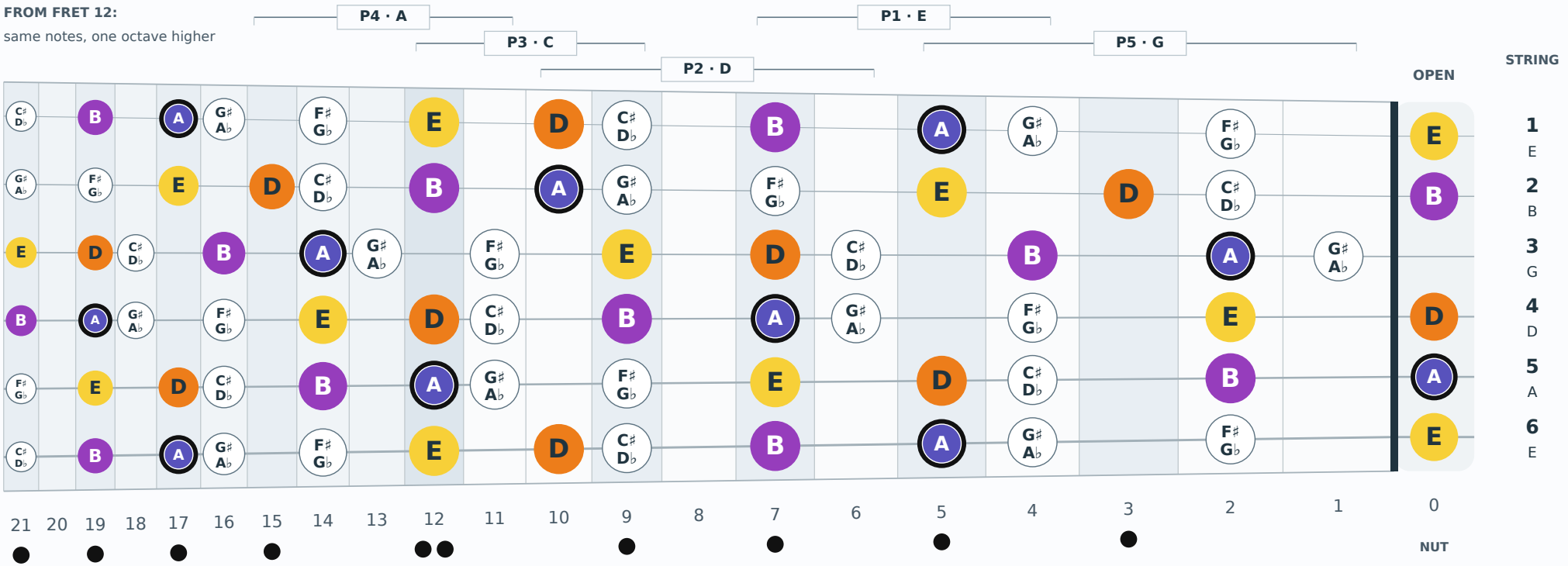
Seven-note major scale

**FROM FRET 12:**
same notes, one octave higher

**STANDARD TUNING**

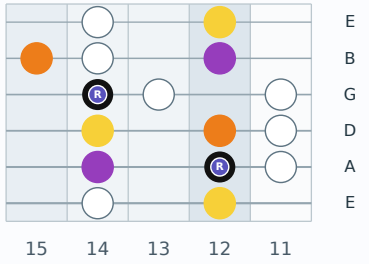
**E - A - D - G - B - E**

lowest-pitched string to highest

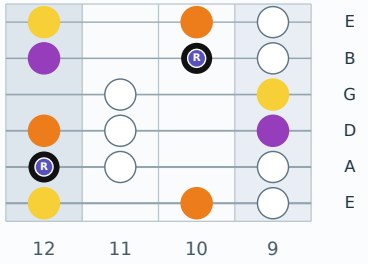



## COMPLETE PATTERNS / LOWEST COMPLETE POSITIONS

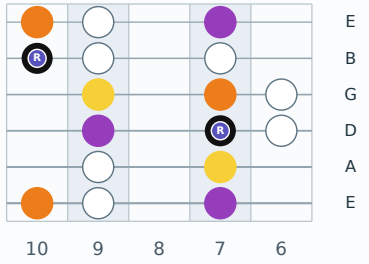
### Pattern 4 · A



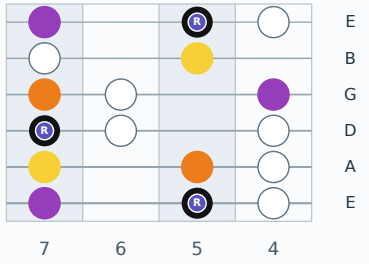

### Pattern 3 · C



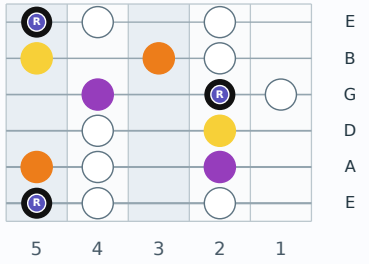

### Pattern 2 · D




### Pattern 1 · E




### Pattern 5 · G




**SCALE NOTES + DEGREES**

| A | B | C♯ | D | E | F♯ | G♯ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

**R — Root / tonic**
Black ring; R on small diagrams.

**NUT ON THE RIGHT**
Frets increase to the left. Degrees are not fingers.

One fret = one half step · 12 frets = one octave.



Tukany / Lucas Marques / CC BY 4.0

# F-sharp natural minor

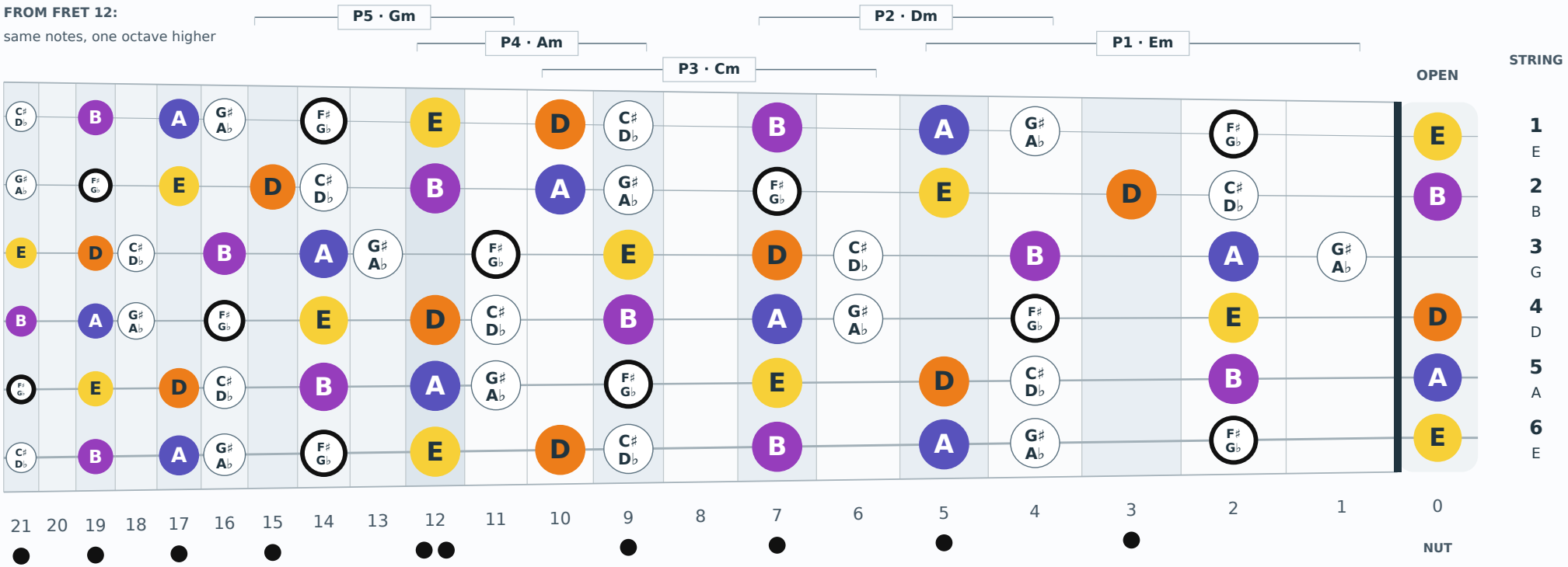
Seven-note natural minor scale

**E - A - D - G - B - E**

lowest-pitched string to highest

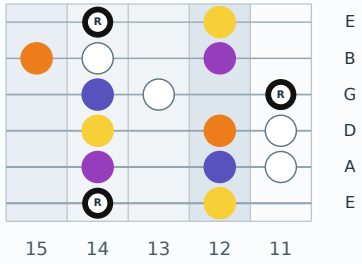
**FROM FRET 12:**

same notes, one octave higher

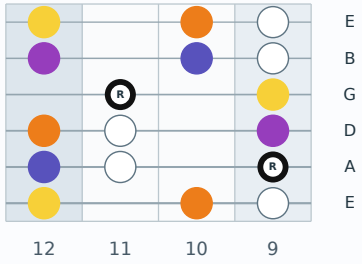



**COMPLETE PATTERNS / LOWEST COMPLETE POSITIONS**

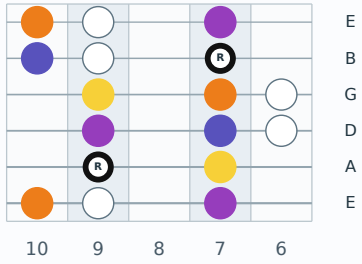
### Pattern 5 · Gm



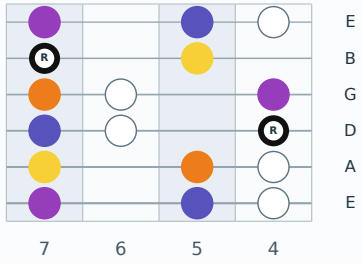

### Pattern 4 · Am



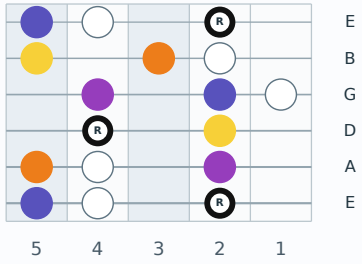

### Pattern 3 · Cm




### Pattern 2 · Dm




### Pattern 1 · Em




**SCALE NOTES + DEGREES**

| F♯ | G♯ | A | B | C♯ | D | E |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | ♭3 | 4 | 5 | ♭6 | ♭7 |

**Root / tonic**

Black ring; R on small diagrams.

**NUT ON THE RIGHT**

Frets increase to the left. Degrees are not fingers.

One fret = one half step · 12 frets = one octave.



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Marques & Co.

# E major pentatonic

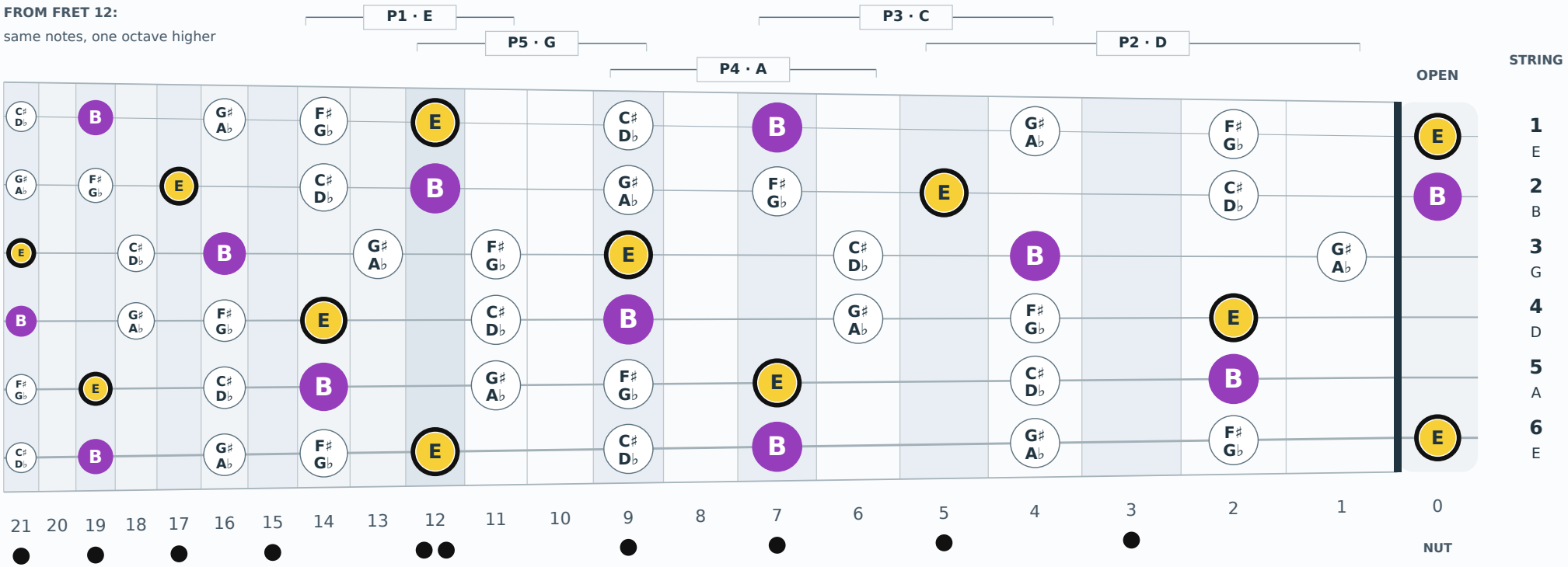
Five-note major pentatonic scale

**E - A - D - G - B - E**

lowest-pitched string to highest

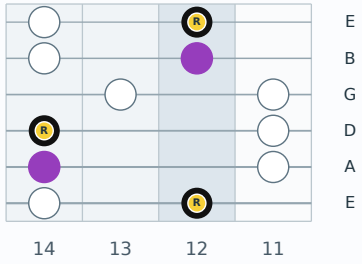
**FROM FRET 12:**

same notes, one octave higher

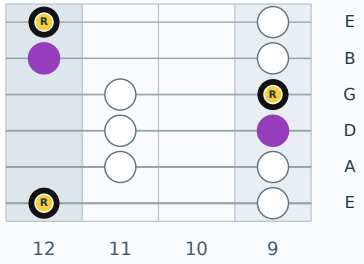



**COMPLETE PATTERNS / LOWEST COMPLETE POSITIONS**

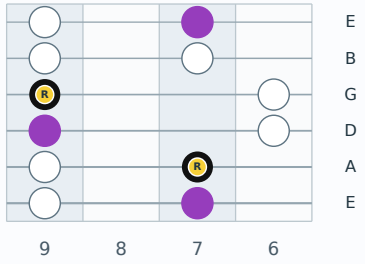
### Pattern 1 · E



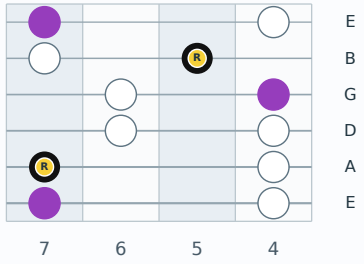

### Pattern 5 · G



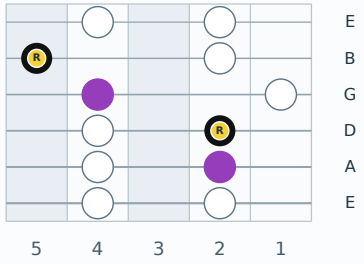

### Pattern 4 · A




### Pattern 3 · C




### Pattern 2 · D




**SCALE NOTES + DEGREES**

| E | F♯ | G♯ | B | C♯ |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 6 |

**Root / tonic**

Black ring; R on small diagrams.

**NUT ON THE RIGHT**

Frets increase to the left. Degrees are not fingers.

One fret = one half step · 12 frets = one octave.



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# F major pentatonic

Five-note major pentatonic scale

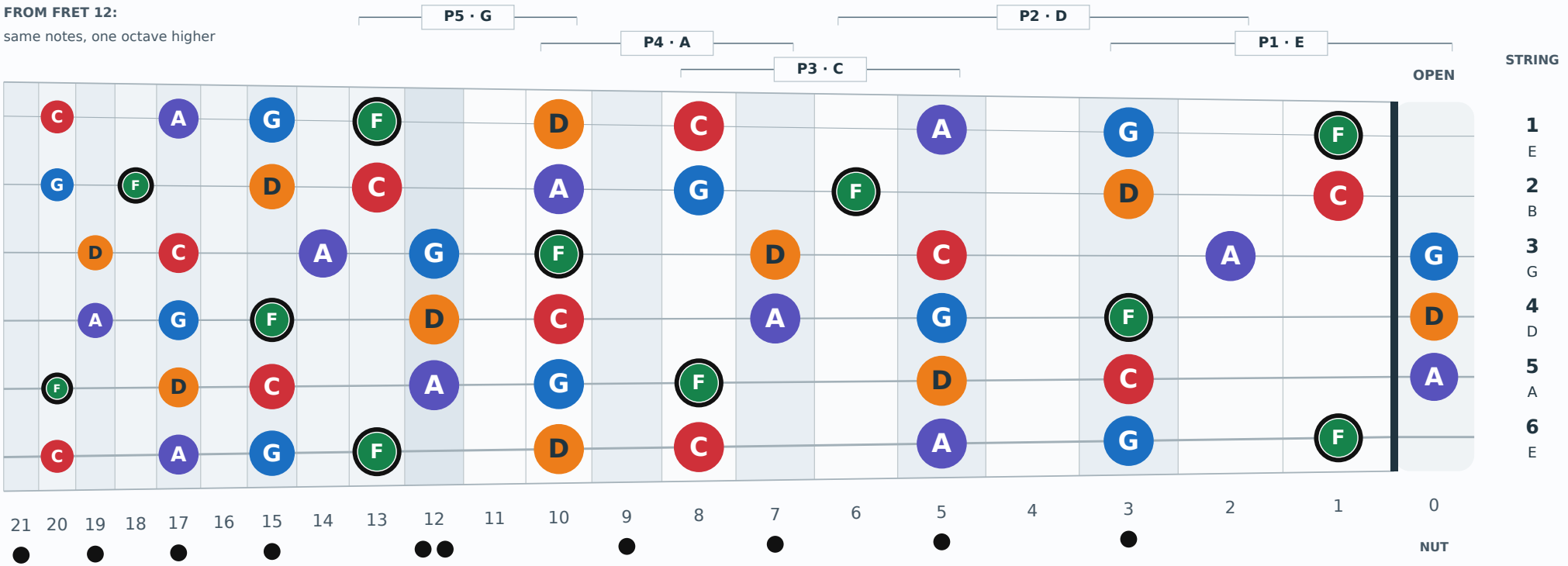
**STANDARD TUNING**

**E - A - D - G - B - E**

lowest-pitched string to highest

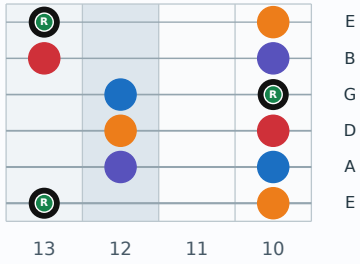
**FROM FRET 12:**

same notes, one octave higher

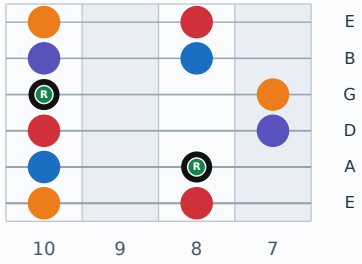



**COMPLETE PATTERNS / LOWEST COMPLETE POSITIONS**

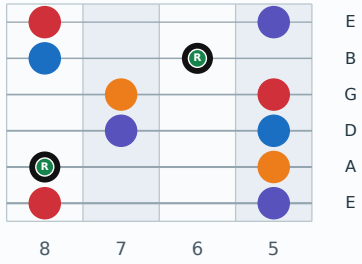
### Pattern 5 · G



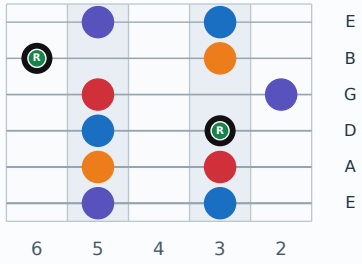

### Pattern 4 · A



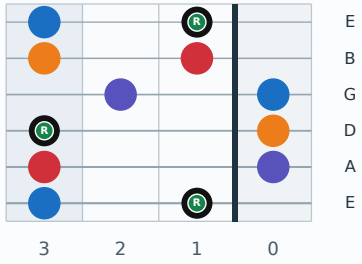

### Pattern 3 · C




### Pattern 2 · D




### Pattern 1 · E




**SCALE NOTES + DEGREES**

| F | G | A | C | D |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 6 |

**Root / tonic**

Black ring; R on small diagrams.

**NUT ON THE RIGHT**

Frets increase to the left. Degrees are not fingers.

One fret = one half step · 12 frets = one octave.



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# E major

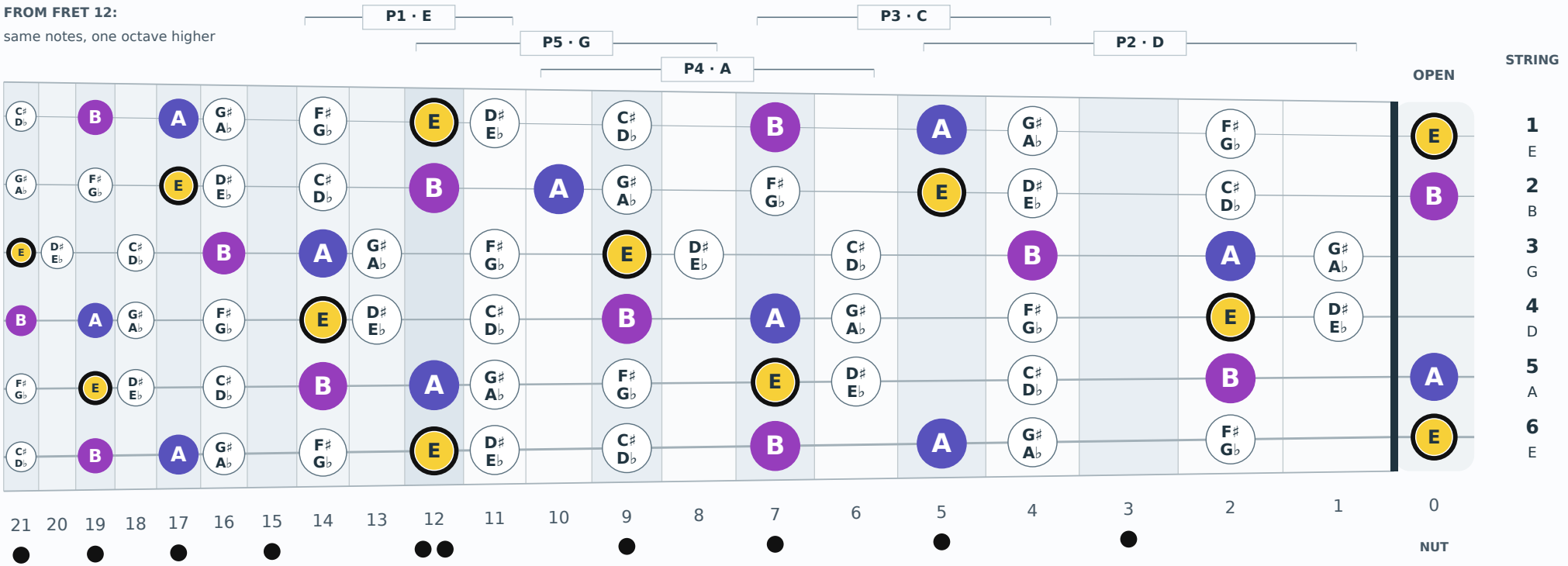
Seven-note major scale

**FROM FRET 12:**
same notes, one octave higher

**STANDARD TUNING**

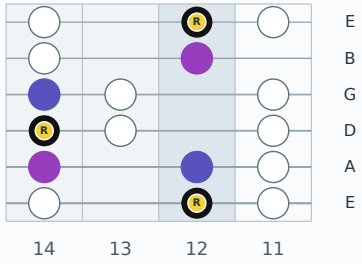
**E - A - D - G - B - E**

lowest-pitched string to highest

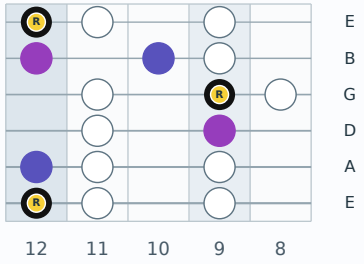



**COMPLETE PATTERNS / LOWEST COMPLETE POSITIONS**

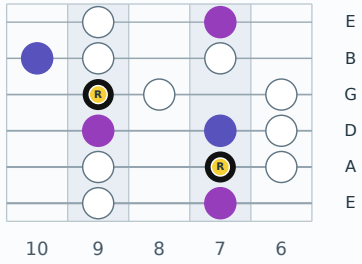
### Pattern 1 · E



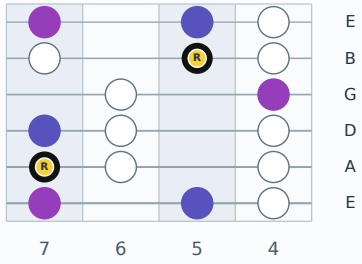

### Pattern 5 · G



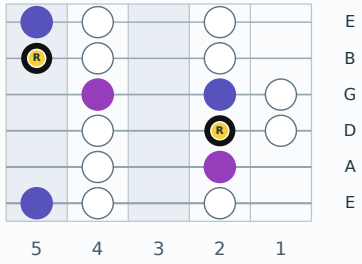

### Pattern 4 · A




### Pattern 3 · C




### Pattern 2 · D




**SCALE NOTES + DEGREES**

| E | F♯ | G♯ | A | B | C♯ | D♯ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

**R** — **Root / tonic**
Black ring; R on small diagrams.

**NUT ON THE RIGHT**
Frets increase to the left. Degrees are not fingers.

One fret = one half step · 12 frets = one octave.



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# C-sharp natural minor

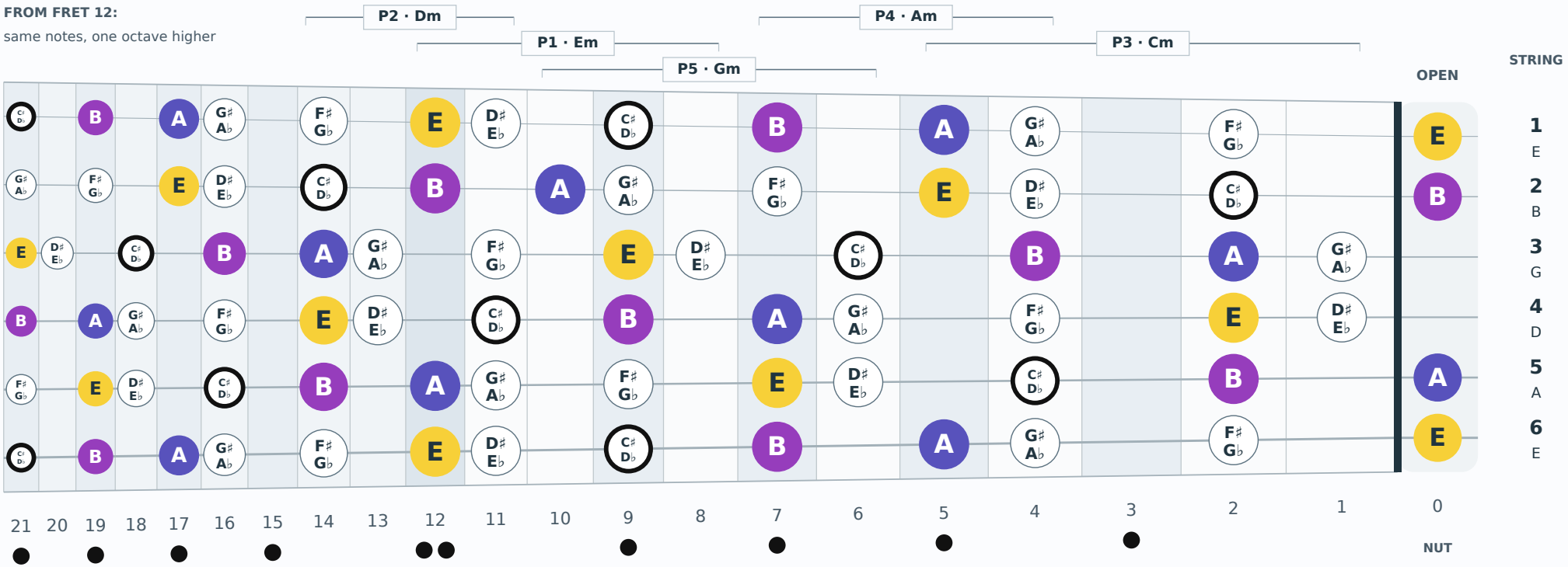
Seven-note natural minor scale

**E - A - D - G - B - E**

lowest-pitched string to highest

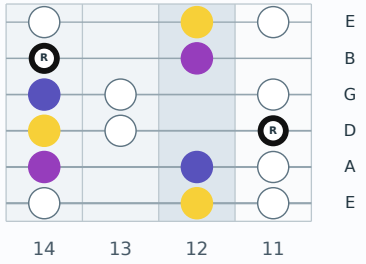
**FROM FRET 12:**

same notes, one octave higher

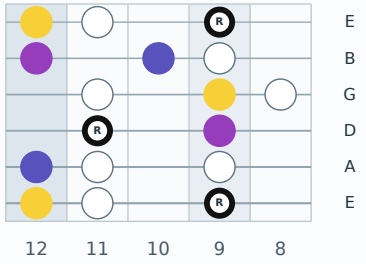



**COMPLETE PATTERNS / LOWEST COMPLETE POSITIONS**

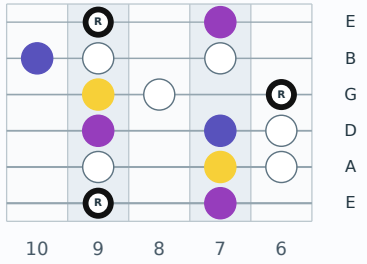
### Pattern 2 · Dm



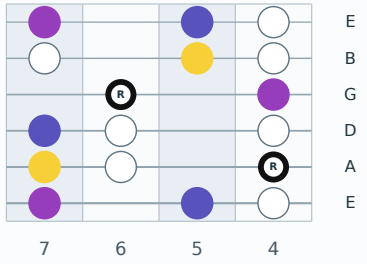

### Pattern 1 · Em



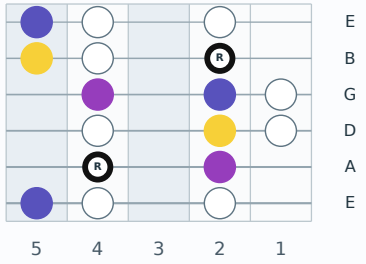

### Pattern 5 · Gm




### Pattern 4 · Am




### Pattern 3 · Cm




**SCALE NOTES + DEGREES**

| C♯ | D♯ | E | F♯ | G♯ | A | B |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | ♭3 | 4 | 5 | ♭6 | ♭7 |

**R** — **Root / tonic**
Black ring; R on small diagrams.

**NUT ON THE RIGHT**
Frets increase to the left. Degrees are not fingers.

One fret = one half step · 12 frets = one octave.



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GUITAR / 21 FRETS / LEFT-HANDED

# F major

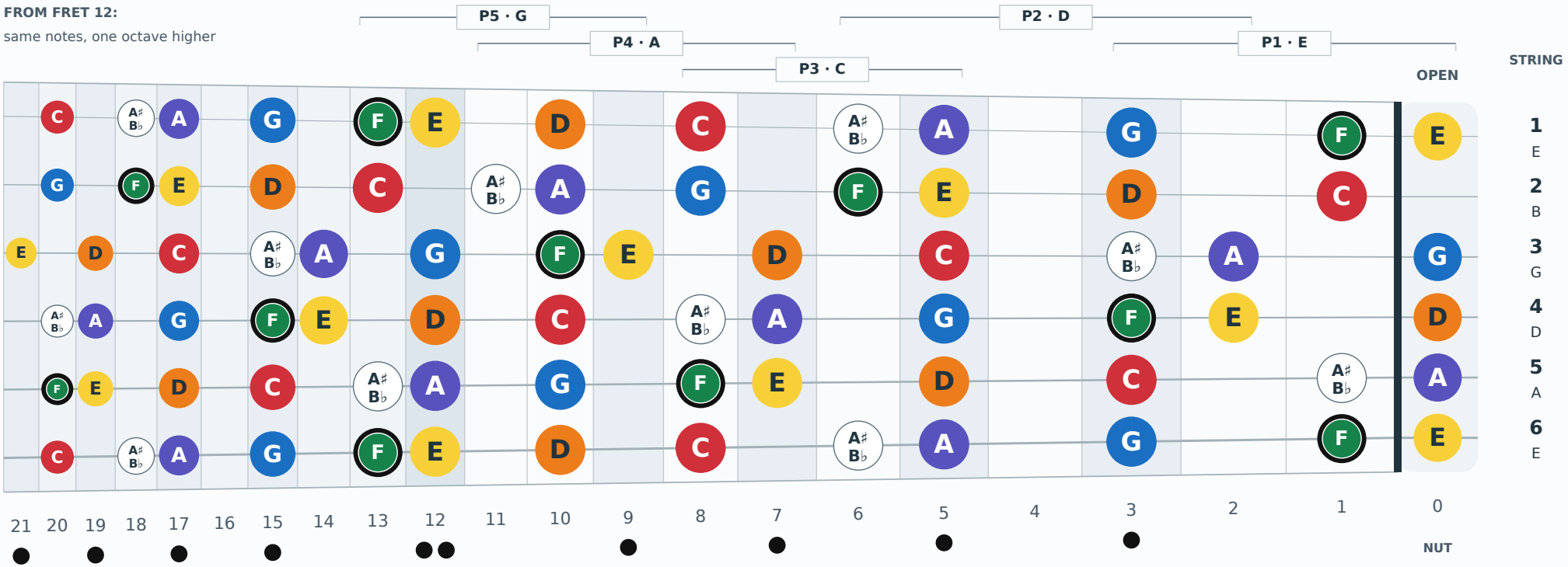
Seven-note major scale

**FROM FRET 12:**
same notes, one octave higher

STANDARD TUNING

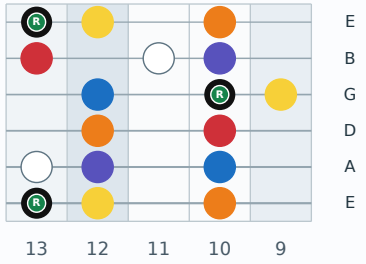
**E - A - D - G - B - E**

lowest-pitched string to highest

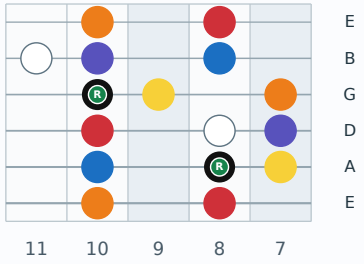



## COMPLETE PATTERNS / LOWEST COMPLETE POSITIONS

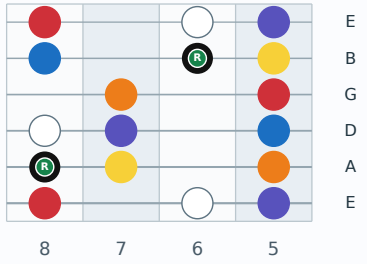
### Pattern 5 · G



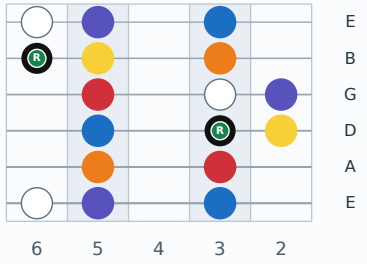

### Pattern 4 · A



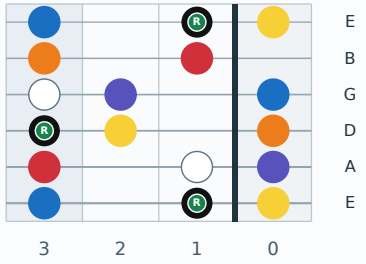

### Pattern 3 · C




### Pattern 2 · D




### Pattern 1 · E




**SCALE NOTES + DEGREES**

| F | G | A | B♭ | C | D | E |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

**Root / tonic**
Black ring; R on small diagrams.

**NUT ON THE RIGHT**
Frets increase to the left. Degrees are not fingers.

One fret = one half step · 12 frets = one octave.



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Marques & Co.

# D natural minor

Seven-note natural minor scale

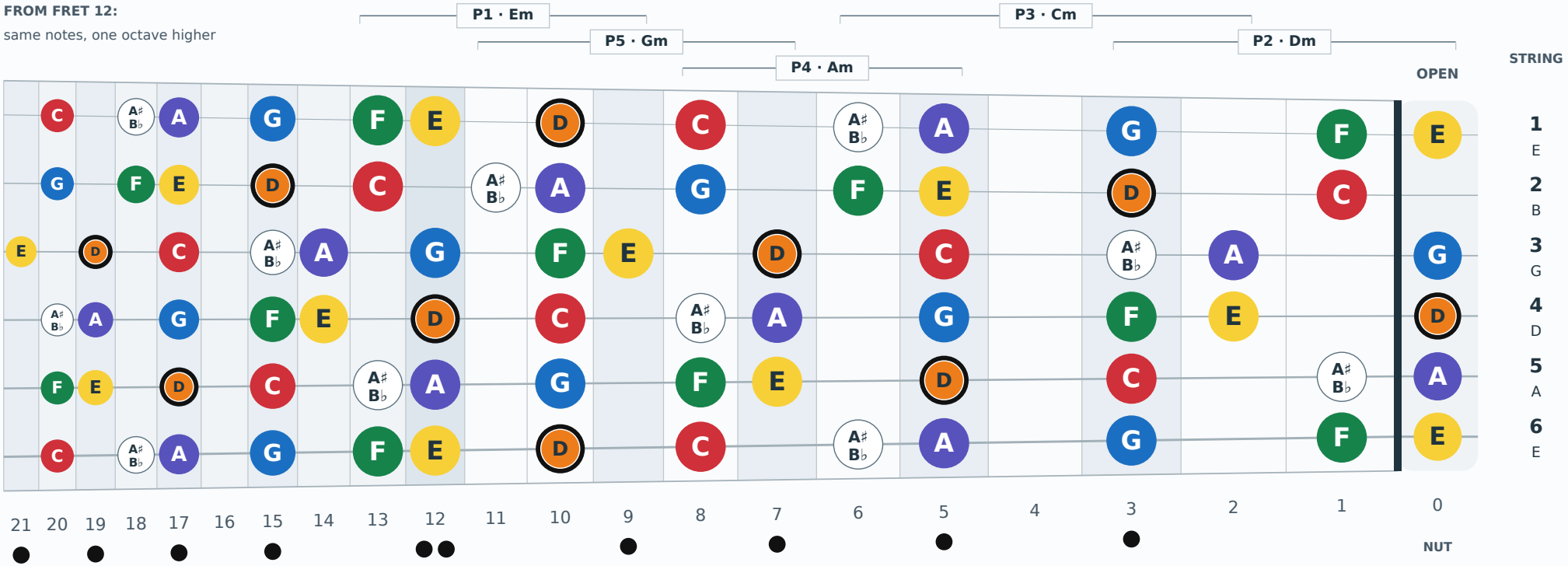
**STANDARD TUNING**

**E - A - D - G - B - E**

lowest-pitched string to highest

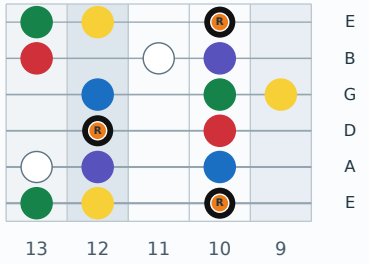
**FROM FRET 12:**

same notes, one octave higher

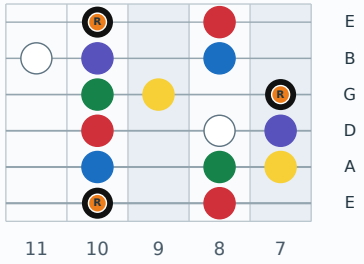



**COMPLETE PATTERNS / LOWEST COMPLETE POSITIONS**

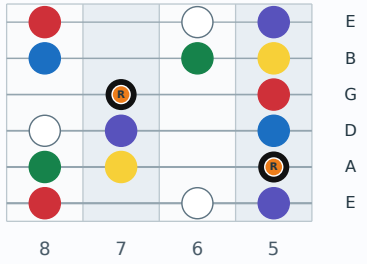
### Pattern 1 · Em



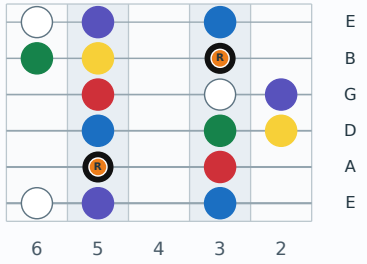

### Pattern 5 · Gm



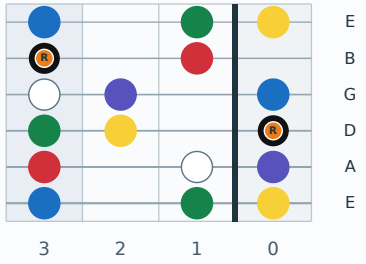

### Pattern 4 · Am




### Pattern 3 · Cm




### Pattern 2 · Dm




**SCALE NOTES + DEGREES**

| D | E | F | G | A | B♭ | C |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | ♭3 | 4 | 5 | ♭6 | ♭7 |

**Root / tonic**

Black ring; R on small diagrams.

**NUT ON THE RIGHT**

Frets increase to the left. Degrees are not fingers.

One fret = one half step · 12 frets = one octave.



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# A harmonic minor

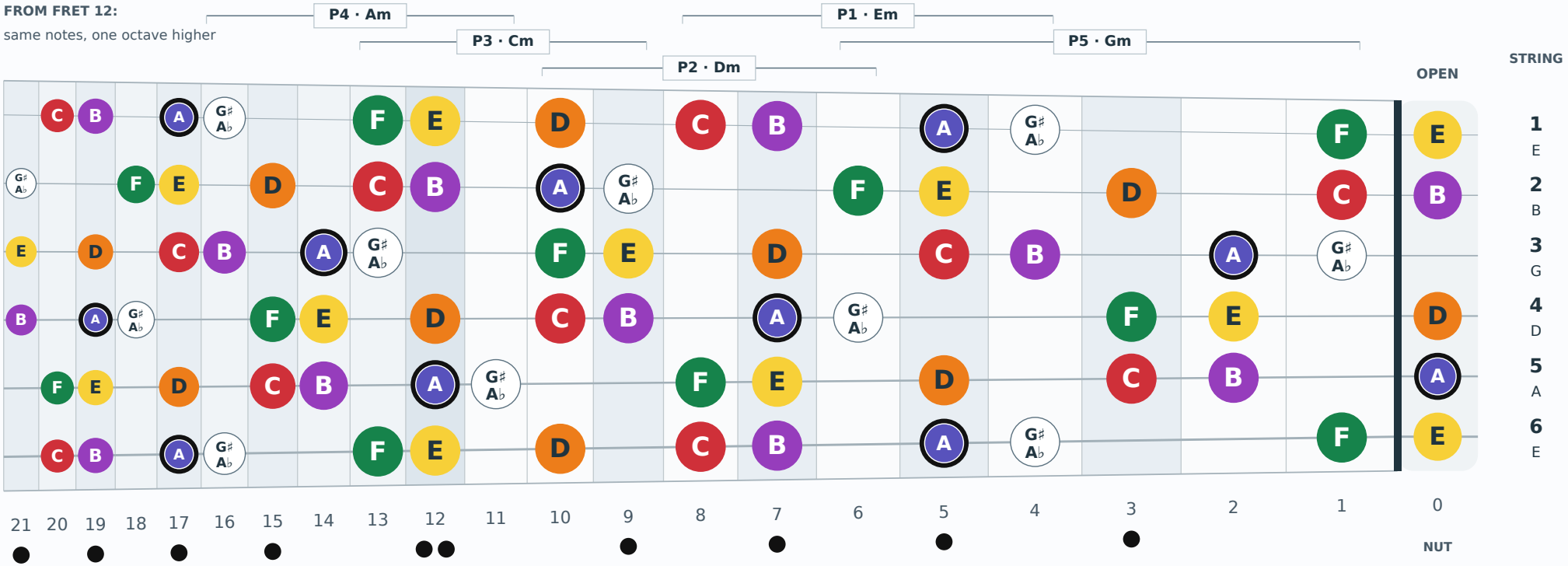
Minor scale with a raised seventh

**E - A - D - G - B - E**

lowest-pitched string to highest

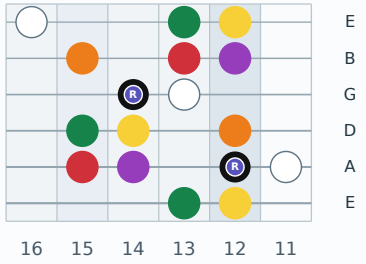
**FROM FRET 12:**

same notes, one octave higher

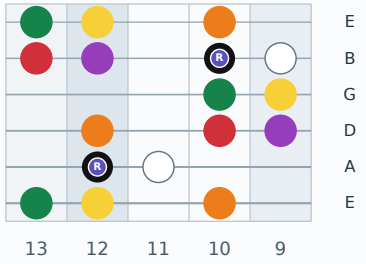



**COMPLETE PATTERNS / LOWEST COMPLETE POSITIONS**

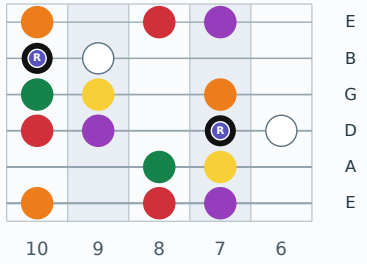
### Pattern 4 · Am



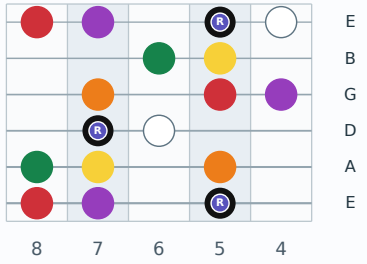

### Pattern 3 · Cm



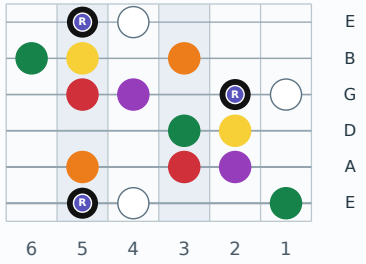

### Pattern 2 · Dm




### Pattern 1 · Em




### Pattern 5 · Gm




**SCALE NOTES + DEGREES**

| A | B | C | D | E | F | G♯ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | ♭3 | 4 | 5 | ♭6 | 7 |

**Root / tonic**

Black ring; R on small diagrams.

**NUT ON THE RIGHT**

Frets increase to the left. Degrees are not fingers.

One fret = one half step · 12 frets = one octave.



Tukany / Lucas Marques / CC BY 4.0

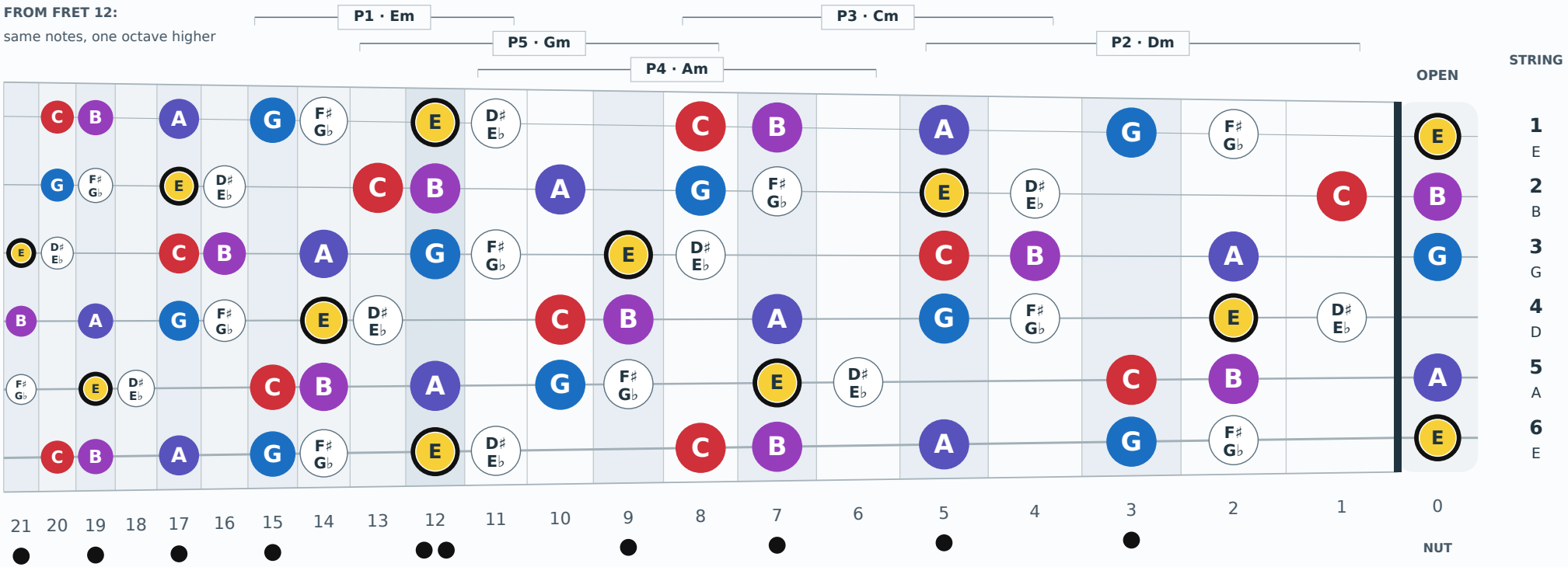
# E harmonic minor

Minor scale with a raised seventh

**E - A - D - G - B - E**

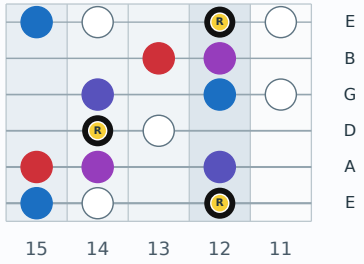
lowest-pitched string to highest

**FROM FRET 12:**
same notes, one octave higher

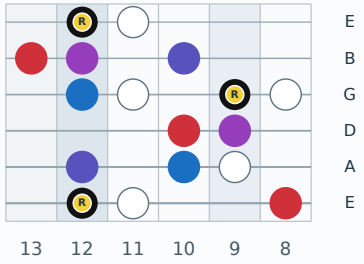



**COMPLETE PATTERNS / LOWEST COMPLETE POSITIONS**

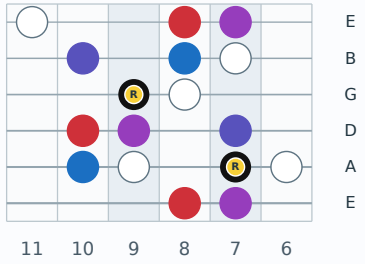
### Pattern 1 · Em



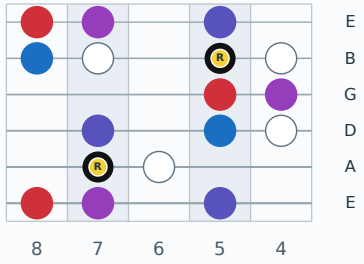

### Pattern 5 · Gm



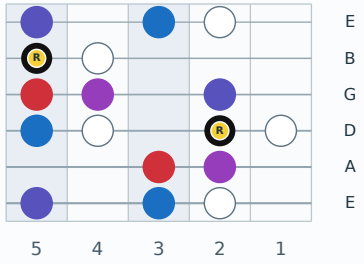

### Pattern 4 · Am




### Pattern 3 · Cm




### Pattern 2 · Dm




**SCALE NOTES + DEGREES**

| E | F♯ | G | A | B | C | D♯ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | ♭3 | 4 | 5 | ♭6 | 7 |

**R** — **Root / tonic**
Black ring; R on small diagrams.

**NUT ON THE RIGHT**
Frets increase to the left. Degrees are not fingers.

One fret = one half step · 12 frets = one octave.



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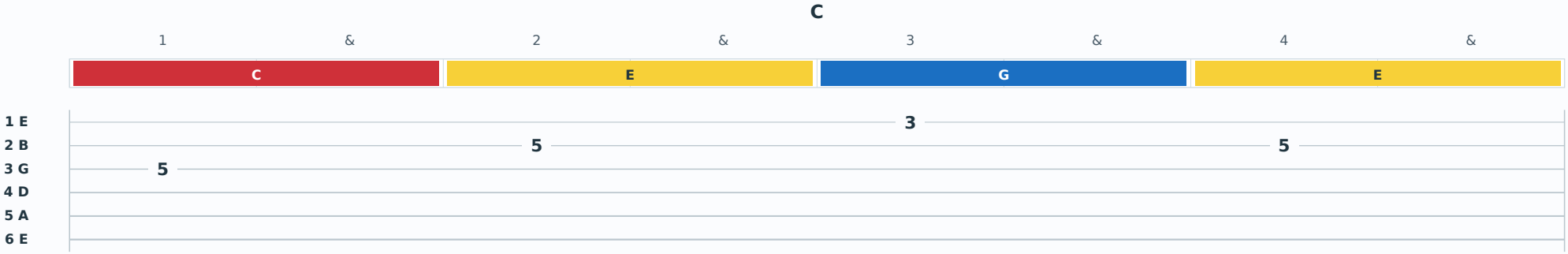
# From TAB to improvisation

Applied theory for experienced TAB players who want to create their own phrases.



You already know how to learn songs from tablature. Now connect what you play to the notes you hear and choose what comes next. You do not need to memorize every scale. Use the maps when a musical question comes up.

### PLAY THIS PHRASE OVER C / ONE NOTE PER BEAT




Bars show note length; white gaps are rests. Numbers on the strings are frets.

## LOOK BEYOND THE FRET NUMBERS

The notes are C - E - G - E. Over C, their roles are 1 - 3 - 5 - 3: root, major third, and perfect fifth. These are the notes of a C major chord.

## MAKE ONE SMALL CHOICE

Repeat twice. Keep the notes and change only the rhythm. On the fourth pass, try a different note order and end on C. Listen to the effect of each change.

### YOUR LEARNING PATH

1. Read the TAB. 2. Name the notes and degrees. 3. Change one choice. 4. Cover the TAB and play an answer. The six practice lessons begin on p. 37.



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Marques & Co.

# Notes, intervals, and degrees

Applied theory for experienced TAB players who want to create their own phrases.

**E - A - D - G - B - E**

lowest-pitched string to highest



## NOTES NAME PITCHES; INTERVALS MEASURE DISTANCE

The natural notes are A, B, C, D, E, F, and G. On one string, one fret is a half step; two frets make a whole step. After 12 half steps, the letter name repeats one octave higher.

| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **C** | **C♯ / D♭** | **D** | **D♯ / E♭** | **E** | **F** | **F♯ / G♭** | **G** | **G♯ / A♭** | **A** | **A♯ / B♭** | **B** | **C** |

Read this pitch chart from left to right: each step rises by a half step. E-F and B-C are already neighbors. A sharp (♯) raises a note a half step; a flat (♭) lowers it. Each paired name shares one fret.

## A DEGREE DESCRIBES A NOTE RELATIVE TO A REFERENCE

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **1 / root** | C → C | 0 half steps |
| **3 / major third** | C → E | 4 half steps |
| **♭3 / minor third** | C → E♭ | 3 half steps |
| **5 / perfect fifth** | C → G | 7 half steps |
| **8 / octave** | C → higher C | 12 half steps |

Play C - E - G and say 1 - 3 - 5. Replace E with E♭: you get 1 - ♭3 - 5, the sound of C minor. Count frets on one string to check the distances.



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# Scales, chords, and target notes

Applied theory for experienced TAB players who want to create their own phrases.



## SCALE: AN ORGANIZED COLLECTION OF NOTES

### C major: C - D - E - F - G - A - B

C (1)  D (2)  E (3)  F (4)  G (5)  A (6)  B (7)

The major scale has degrees 1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7. Its steps are whole, whole, half, whole, whole, whole, half. Starting on C gives the seven notes above.

## CHORD: NOTES THAT DEFINE THE HARMONY

A triad has a root, third, and fifth. Major: 1 - 3 - 5. Minor: 1 - ♭3 - 5. Diminished: 1 - ♭3 - ♭5. Playing chord tones one at a time makes an arpeggio.

In C major, take every other scale note: C, E, G. Repeat from each scale degree to get the diatonic chords shown below.

### DIATONIC CHORDS IN C MAJOR / TRIADS

| I | ii | iii | IV | V | vi | vii° |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **C** | **Dm** | **Em** | **F** | **G** | **Am** | **B°** |
| C E G | D F A | E G B | F A C | G B D | A C E | B D F |

In chord symbols, m means minor; a plain letter means major; ° means diminished. Uppercase Roman numerals indicate major chords and lowercase numerals indicate minor chords within a key. A chord's 1, 3, and 5 are measured from that chord's own root.

## ONE SCALE, DIFFERENT TARGET NOTES

C - F - Dm - G shares the notes of C major. Try to aim for a third or root at the end of a phrase. F is degree 4 of C major, but the root of an F chord. A note's role depends on the reference.

**Reference: diatonic chords**



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# Tuning, key, and chord

Applied theory for experienced TAB players who want to create their own phrases.

**E - A - D - G - B - E**

lowest-pitched string to highest





### TUNING

The pitches of the open strings. It determines where notes lie on the neck.

### KEY / TONALITY

The musical organization around a tonic: the tonal center or point of rest.

### CURRENT CHORD

The harmony at this moment. Its root may differ from the tonic.

## APPLY IT TO YOUR INSTRUMENT

Your guitar uses E2 - A2 - D3 - G3 - B3 - E4. An ordinary open C shape sounds as C major. The G-B pair is a major third; the other adjacent pairs are perfect fourths. A shape may need adjustment when it crosses the B string.

## A LISTENING EXPERIMENT

Play C - D - E - F - G - A - B. Listen to a track in C, then one in Am. Use the same notes, but end on C over the first and A over the second. Compare the feeling of rest.

## EXAMPLE: C - Am - F - G

If the music resolves to C and uses these diatonic chords, the tonal center is C major. When Am arrives, the chord changes; a new scale is not required. Target A, C, and E over Am.

The first chord in a video does not prove its key. Check the key label, the chords, and where the music feels at rest. Relative major and minor share notes but have different tonal centers.

### KEEP THESE IDEAS SEPARATE

Tuning locates pitches. Key establishes a center. The current chord guides your targets. Read chord symbols as sounding pitches unless transposition is explicitly stated.





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# Which scale fits the backing track?

Applied theory for experienced TAB players who want to create their own phrases.



First check the key, whether it is major or minor, and the chord symbols. Use a small area of the neck. These choices are starting points for compatible harmony; a video title alone does not establish that.

| | |
|---|---|
| **MAJOR-KEY TRACK** | Start with the major pentatonic on the tonic (1, 2, 3, 5, 6). Add 4 and 7 for the major scale. Example: G major = G A B C D E F♯. |
| **MINOR-KEY TRACK** | Start with the minor pentatonic on the tonic (1, ♭3, 4, 5, ♭7). Add 2 and ♭6 for natural minor. Example: E minor = E F♯ G A B C D. |
| **CHORDS SHARE A SCALE** | Keep the note collection and change your targets with the chord. Example: Em - C - Am - Bm fits E natural minor. Aim for the tones of each triad. |
| **A NOTE OUTSIDE THE SCALE?** | In Em - C - Am - B7, the symbol 7 adds a minor seventh: B7 = B D♯ F♯ A. Target D♯ over B7 and hear D♯ resolve to E. E harmonic minor includes this raised seventh. |

## IF YOU ARE STILL UNSURE

Play a few chord tones and listen. Resolve a tense scale note to a chord tone; do not assume each chord needs a new scale. Modal tracks and blues need choices that reflect their particular harmony.

**Reference: harmonic minor**



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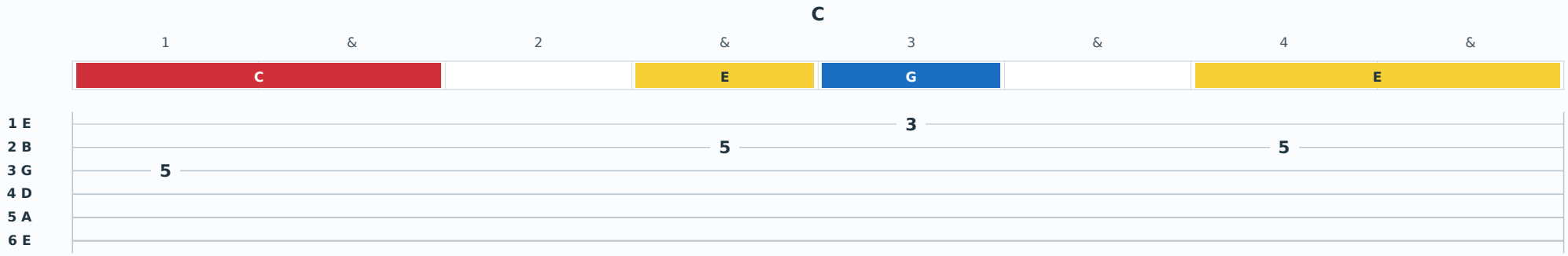
# Turn a written phrase into improvisation

Applied theory for experienced TAB players who want to create their own phrases.



Use a track with only C. Gradually remove the written cues. Repeat each level for four measures before moving on. Start with the phrase from Study 1.

## LEVEL 1 / SAME NOTES, DIFFERENT RHYTHM




Bars show note length; white gaps are rests. Numbers on the strings are frets.

## LEVEL 2 / NO FRET NUMBERS

Cover the TAB. Use C - E - G - E (1 - 3 - 5 - 3). Choose your strings and frets. Keep the rhythm you just played; use only the note names as cues.

## LEVEL 3 / JUST A CHORD AND A TARGET

Look only at the C chord symbol. Your task: end every two measures on E, choose your own route, and leave a rest. There is no required note sequence.

## LEVEL 4 / CREATE AND ANSWER

Cover the note names, too. Sing an idea, play it, repeat it, and answer with a small change. Record eight measures. Identify your note choices and explain why the ending feels settled.



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# Connect areas of the fretboard

Applied theory for experienced TAB players who want to create their own phrases.

**E - A - D - G - B - E**

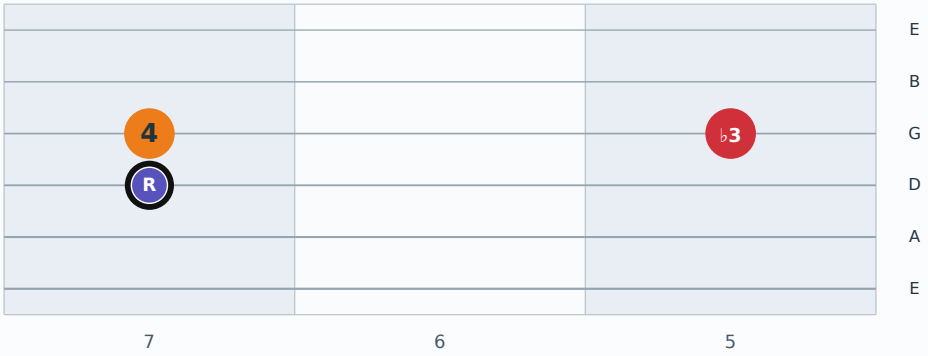
lowest-pitched string to highest



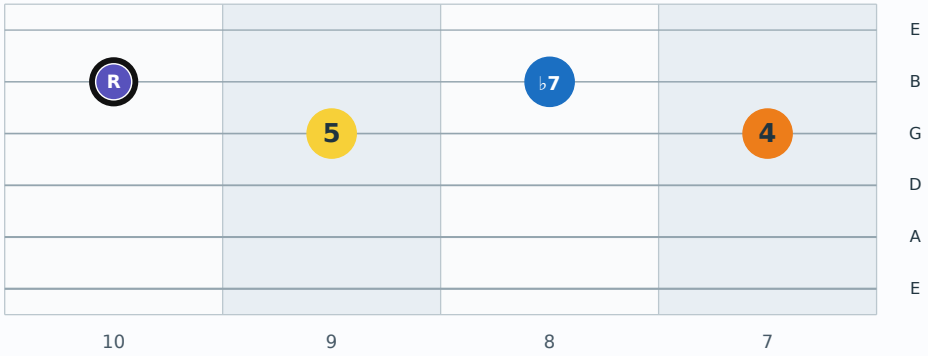


A pattern locates notes; changing areas does not change the scale. Play one octave of A minor pentatonic: A - C - D - E - G - A (1 - ♭3 - 4 - 5 - ♭7 - 8).

## AREA 1 / A - C - D




## AREA 2 / D - E - G - A




Areas 5-7 and 7-10 share D on string 3, fret 7. Use D as a connection point. These are fragments of one scale, not different scales. All notes here are fretted, so you can transpose the complete route.

## FIND THE SAME NOTE SOMEWHERE ELSE

E4 can sound on string 2, fret 5, or string 3, fret 9: the same note in the same octave. Find both and compare. You can change the fingering without changing the phrase.

## TURN THE SCALE INTO A PHRASE

Play the route upward once. Then use only three notes, repeat a motif, and leave rests. Connect the areas without interrupting the pulse. On the neck maps, higher frets are toward the left.





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# Practice without relying on TAB

Applied theory for experienced TAB players who want to create their own phrases.



## A 20-MINUTE PRACTICE SESSION

**3 min** Listen to the loop, name the chords, and locate their roots.

**5 min** Play a written phrase; name its notes and degrees.

**5 min** Cover the TAB, change the rhythm or ending, and repeat your version.

**5 min** Play eight measures using only the chord symbols.

**2 min** Listen to your recording and choose one thing to improve.

## WHEN YOU GET STUCK, SIMPLIFY THE TASK

| | |
|---|---|
| **It sounds like a scale exercise** | Use three notes. Repeat a rhythm and change only the ending. |
| **I lose the chord changes** | Say the chords and play only the root at each change. |
| **The notes do not seem to fit** | Check tuning, key, and chords. Use only the current triad. |
| **I know the shape, not the notes** | Name one note at a time and sing before playing. |
| **I need the TAB to keep playing** | Keep the rhythm and remove the fret numbers first. |

Ready to move on: play eight measures with a steady pulse, follow the changes, repeat an idea, and vary it. Then explain one target note. Begin the six practice lessons on p. 37.



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# Set up a backing track

Improvisation practice for experienced TAB players · examples in different keys



## 1 / Choose a simple backing track

Look for a track with accompaniment and room for a lead melody. Start in C major with just a C chord. Check the chords in the description and choose a comfortable tempo, such as 70 bpm.

**Find a C major backing track on YouTube**

The QR code opens search results. Confirm the key and chords in the track you choose.

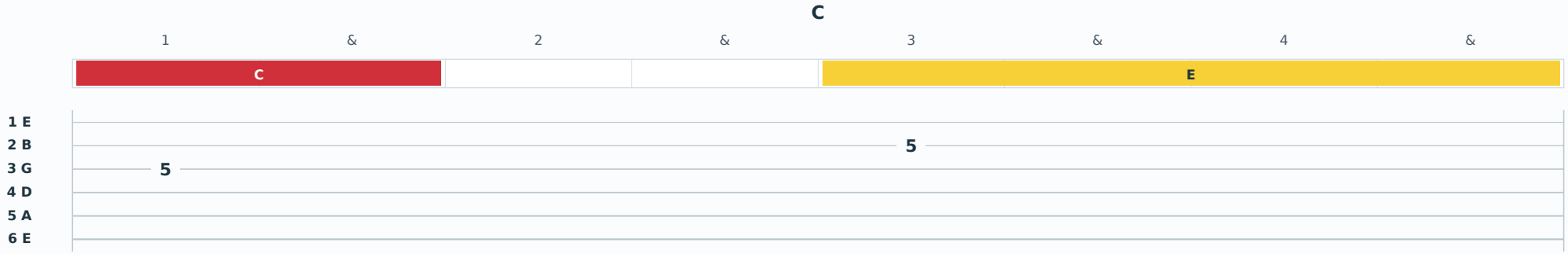
## 2 / Listen, count, and find C

Listen to two loops before playing. In 4/4, count 1, 2, 3, 4. Locate the beginning of each measure and keep counting through the rests.

## 3 / Use the sounding pitch

C is on string 3 (G), fret 5. Tuning does not determine the key of the music. Every position below uses standard tuning. TAB reads left to right, even in a left-handed guide.

### YOUR FIRST MEASURE / KEEP COUNTING




Bars show note length; white gaps are rests. Numbers on the strings are frets.

## YOUR TASK

Repeat for four measures. Make two new rhythms with the same notes. If the tempo is difficult, slow down the YouTube player and reestablish your count.



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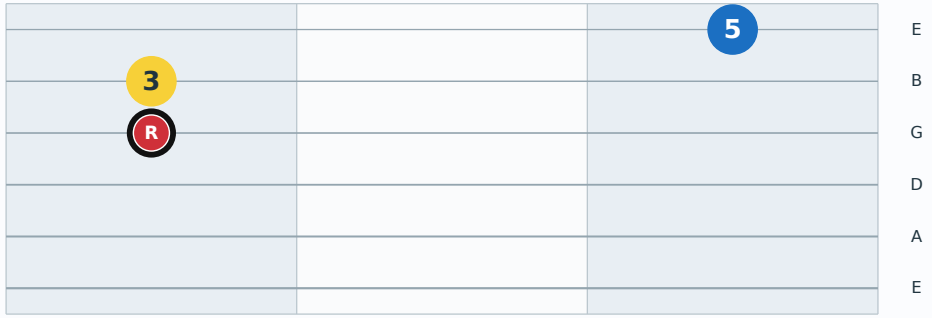
# Choose notes that fit

Improvisation practice for experienced TAB players · examples in different keys



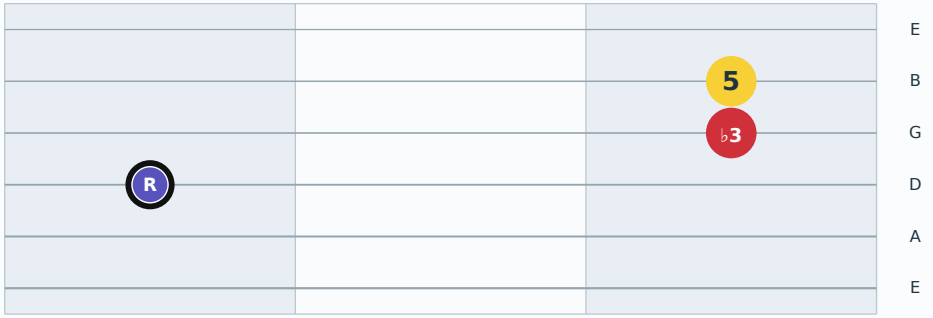
## C / C major

**C - E - G**




## Am / A minor

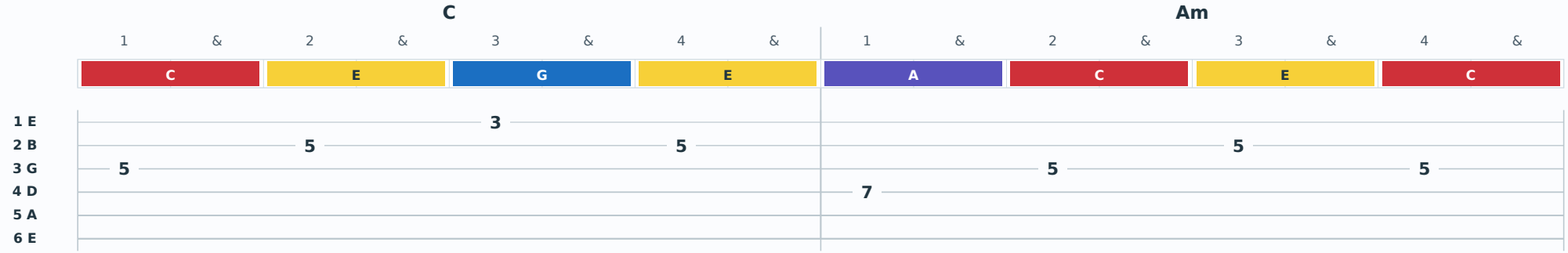
**A - C - E**




R = root; 3 = major third; ♭3 = minor third; 5 = perfect fifth.

C major and A natural minor share seven notes: C - D - E - F - G - A - B. Change your target notes with each chord.

### TWO CHORDS / ONE MEASURE EACH




Bars show note length; white gaps are rests. Numbers on the strings are frets.

Start with C and A at the beginning of the measures. Then target E over C and C over Am to hear the thirds.



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# Create phrases with rhythm and rests

Improvisation practice for experienced TAB players · examples in different keys

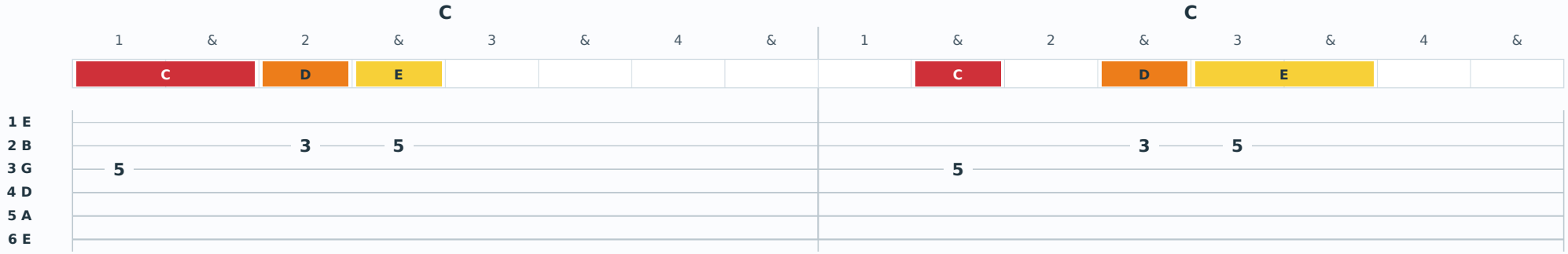
**E - A - D - G - B - E**

lowest-pitched string to highest



Over C, use only C, D, and E. Both measures keep the note order and change the rhythm. Count eighth notes as 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and.

### SAME THREE NOTES / TWO DIFFERENT PHRASES




Bars show note length; white gaps are rests. Numbers on the strings are frets.

### REPEAT AN IDEA AND CHANGE ONE DETAIL

Play the first measure twice. On the third pass, use the second rhythm. Then create a variation: a different rest, a longer note, or an accent.

### RESTS HAVE DURATION, TOO

In the first measure, rest on beats 3 and 4. In the second, wait half a beat before starting and stop on beat 4. Keep counting and mute the strings when each note ends.

### CALL AND RESPONSE

Make a two-beat phrase and leave two beats of space. On the next pass, answer with a small variation. Repeat for four passes and resist filling every rest.



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# Follow the chord changes

Improvisation practice for experienced TAB players · examples in different keys





A practice progression in G major: G - D - Em - C. Each chord lasts one measure in 4/4. Use G - A - B - C - D - E - F♯ and adjust your targets to the current chord.

**G**

G - B - D

**D**

D - F♯ - A

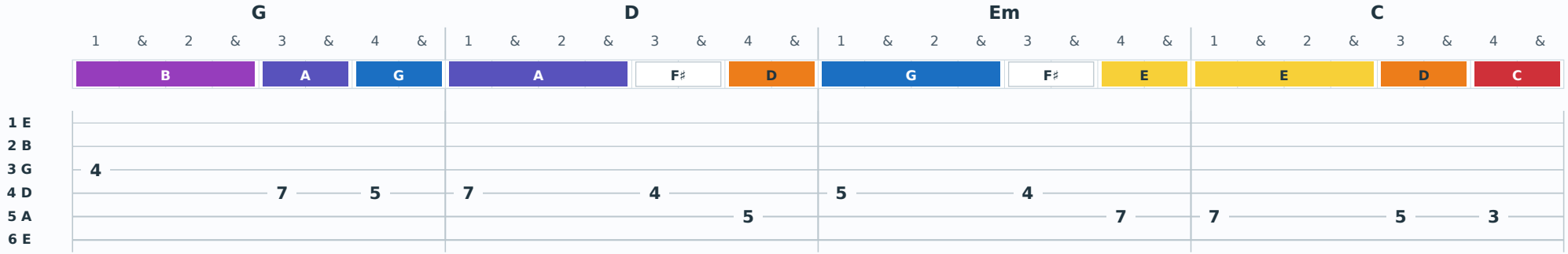
**Em**

E - G - B

**C**

C - E - G

## FOLLOW THE FORM / FOUR MEASURES




Bars show note length; white gaps are rests. Numbers on the strings are frets.

## FIRST PASS: RECOGNIZE THE CHANGES

Count four beats per chord. Play G, D, E, and C as their measures begin. Say the next chord before the change and hear the loop return to its start.

## NEXT: MAKE YOUR OWN VERSION

The TAB begins each measure on B, A, G, and E: tones of the current chords. On the next pass, choose another target and vary the rhythm. Leave space between phrases.

**Find G - D - Em - C with displayed chords**



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# Play what you can sing

Improvisation practice for experienced TAB players · examples in different keys



## 1 / Give your ear a reference

Play C, let it ring, and sing the same note in a comfortable octave. Then sing your own three-note phrase.

## 2 / Find the phrase you sang

Find the first note, then search slowly for the next ones. Start on one string. Compare each attempt with the phrase you sang.

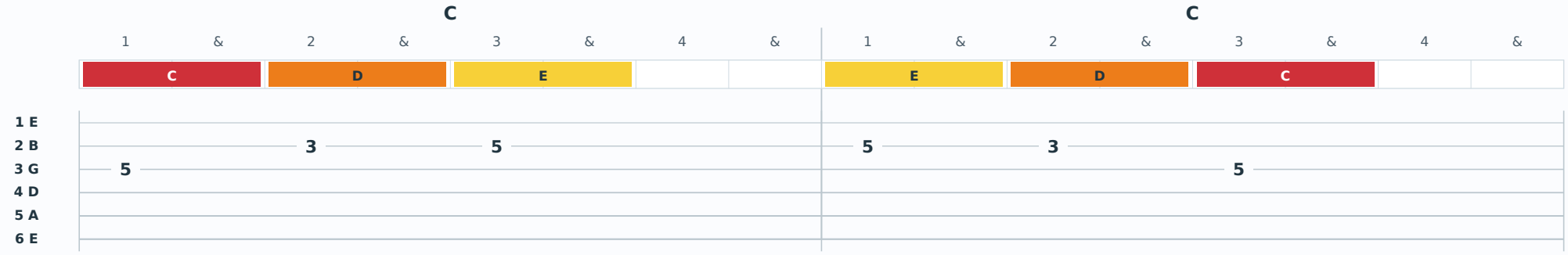
## 3 / Check after you try

Cover the TAB below. Sing C - D - E and find the notes. Then answer E - D - C. Find the pitches first, then add the rhythm.

## 4 / Listen within the track

Listen to one loop without playing. Sing the roots at the chord changes and find them on the neck. Check against a track that displays its chords.

### CHECK YOUR ANSWER / REST ON BEAT 4




Bars show note length; white gaps are rests. Numbers on the strings are frets.

Record your voice and your attempt on the instrument. Do the notes match what you sang? Choose a short section, correct it, and repeat. Then invent another answer.



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# Transpose and review your progress

Improvisation practice for experienced TAB players · examples in different keys

**E - A - D - G - B - E**

lowest-pitched string to highest



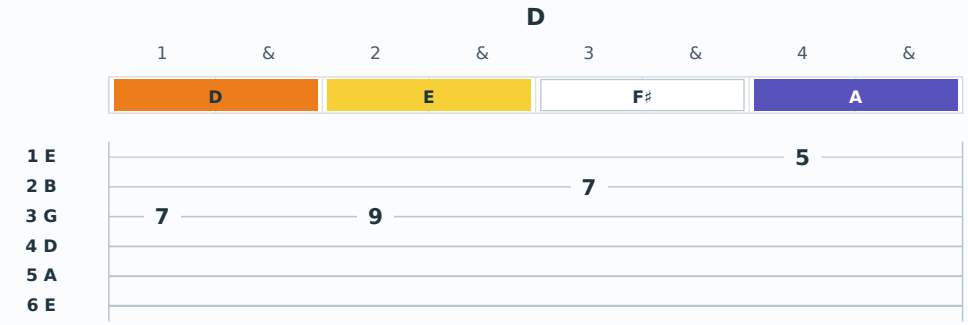
Separate examples: play the original motif over C major and the second over D major. The intervals stay the same because every fretted note moves up two frets.

### ORIGINAL / C - D - E - G




Bars show note length; white gaps are rests. Numbers on the strings are frets.

### TWO FRETS HIGHER / D - E - F♯ - A




Bars show note length; white gaps are rests. Numbers on the strings are frets.

All notes here are fretted: keep the same strings and add 2 to each fret number. On these left-handed neck maps that means moving left; TAB itself still reads left to right. Open strings need a new fingering when transposed.

## RECORD 30 SECONDS AND LISTEN WITH A PURPOSE

- ☐ Did I keep the pulse?
- ☐ Did I leave space and listen?
- ☐ Did I follow the changes?
- ☐ Was the sound clean and controlled?

Track / key: _____ Section: _____ Next improvement: _____

**SOURCES:** **Chord tones** **Rhythm and note choice** **Ear and patterns** **YouTube playback speed**



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