

Melodic Minor Scale

The **melodic minor** scale contains the following intervals:

R 2 b3 4 5 6 7 R

(You could think of it as a major scale with a b3).

The intervals between the notes are:

T S T T T T S

To understand the origins of the melodic minor scale, we need to look at the natural and harmonic minor scales.

Natural Minor	R	2	b3	4	5	b6	b7
Harmonic Minor	R	2	b3	4	5	b6	7
Melodic Minor	R	2	b3	4	5	6	7

The Natural minor scale has a minor chord on the 5th degree of the scale (in Cm, it's a Gm7 chord).

For **harmonic** reasons, the scale was altered to create a dominant 7th chord on the 5th degree (Harmonic minor scale). The 7th note of the scale (Bb) was raised to a major 7th (B), thus making the Gm7 into a G7 chord.

However, this then created an interval of an augmented 2nd (3 semi-tones) between the 6th and 7th notes, which was awkward to sing. For **melodic** reasons, the 6th note was raised to a major 6th (A instead of Ab), thus creating the Melodic minor scale.

C MELODIC MINOR

4/4

C D Eb F G A B C

8 10 11 8 10 7 9 10

Here are a couple of shapes for the scale, in the key of C:

C Melodic Minor (Position 1 - 6th string root)

3 5 7 9 12

C Melodic Minor (Position 4 - 5th string root)

3 5 7 9 12

Melodic Minor Harmony

The Melodic Minor scale contains some interesting chords when harmonised:

Triads	Cm	Dm	Eb+	F	G	Adim	Bdim
7ths	Cm/maj7	Dm7	Eb+maj7	F7	G7	Am7b5	Bm7b5

Triads – notice the scale contains two minor triads a tone apart, two major triads a tone apart and two diminished chords a tone apart.

7ths -

1st chord – “C minor major 7” is a dense-sounding tonic minor chord.

2nd chord – Dm7 – when extended has a b9.

3rd chord – “Eb augmented major 7” or “major 7#5” is a dense-sounding major 7th chord, popular in contemporary jazz (John Scofield etc).

4th chord – F7 – when extended has a #11.

5th chord – G7 – when extended has a b13 (Eb).

6th chord is a minor7b5 with a 9th (unlike the b9 which this chord has in the major scale). It’s a prettier sound.

7th chord – Bm7b5 – when extended becomes a B7 chord with b5, #5, b9, #9.

Chord Scales

There are some important chord scales within the Melodic Minor scale. Each is named according to the Major Scale modes, with the addition of any alterations:

Chord scale	Fits Chord
(C melodic minor)	Minor or Min/maj7
D Dorian b2	Min7
Eb Lydian augmented	Maj7#5
F Lydian dominant	Dom 7 th (9, #11)
G Mixolydian b6	Dom 7 th (b13)
A Locrian nat2	Min7b5 (9)
B Altered/Super Locrian	Altered dom 7 th