

Harmonic and Melodic Minor Scales

Natural minor scales have no leading tone. A Leading Tone is when scale degree 7 is a half step (minor 2nd or m2) below scale degree 8. In natural minor scales, scale degree 7 is a whole step (Major 2nd or M2) below scale degree 8.

Harmonic Minor Scales raise the 7th scale degree a half step to create a leading tone. As a result, the interval from scale degree 6 to scale degree 7 is now $1\frac{1}{2}$ steps (Augmented 2nd or A2), which is an awkward interval.

Melodic Minor Scales raise both the 6th and 7th scale degrees a half step (when ascending the scale, but revert to natural minor when descending). Raising the 7th scale degree creates a leading tone (just like in harmonic minor) and raising the 6th scale degree creates a whole step (Major 2nd or M2) between the 6th scale degree and 7th scale degree, eliminating the awkward A2.

The Chords in harmonic minor and melodic minor are also altered because of the raised notes. In harmonic minor the raised 7th scale degree (leading tone) turns v into V, VII into vii[°], and III into III+. Melodic minor has the same altered chords as harmonic minor and additionally the raised 6th scale degree turns iv into IV, ii[°] into ii, and VI into vi[°].

Relative Harmonic Minor Scales

The Natural Minor Scale with a raised 7th scale degree

A Harmonic Minor: A B C D E F G# A

A# Harmonic Minor:

Bb Harmonic Minor:

B Harmonic Minor:

B# Harmonic Minor:

C Harmonic Minor:

C# Harmonic Minor:

D Harmonic Minor:

D# Harmonic Minor:

Eb Harmonic Minor:

E Harmonic Minor:

E# Harmonic Minor:

F Harmonic Minor:

F# Harmonic Minor:

~~Fx Harmonic Minor:~~

G Harmonic Minor:

G# Harmonic Minor:

Ab Harmonic Minor:

Relative Melodic Minor Scales

The Natural Minor Scale with a raised 6th and 7th scale degrees when ascending, return to Natural Minor when descending

A Melodic Minor: A B C D E F# G# A G F E etc.

A# Melodic Minor:

Bb Melodic Minor:

B Melodic Minor:

B# Melodic Minor:

C Melodic Minor:

C# Melodic Minor:

D Melodic Minor:

D# Melodic Minor:

Eb Melodic Minor:

E Melodic Minor:

E# Melodic Minor:

F Melodic Minor:

F# Melodic Minor:

G Melodic Minor:

G# Melodic Minor:

Ab Melodic Minor: