Harmonic Minor Scales
Dr. Mark Watkins, BYU–Idaho

The following scales are included for reference only. They are not intended as part of the exercise routine. The same applies to the arpeggios. Work begins with the “Five-note Patterns.”

The Harmonic Minor scale gets its name from function. Often the 3rd of the dominant chord is raised in minor keys to provide the leading tone. This creates a greater pull towards tonic than would otherwise exist. When the collection of pitches used harmonically in minor, including the leading tone from the dominant chord, is ordered alphabetically (step-wise) the resultant scale is the Harmonic Minor.

A Harmonic Minor

D Harmonic Minor

E Harmonic Minor

G Harmonic Minor

B Harmonic Minor

C Harmonic Minor

F-sharp Harmonic Minor

F Harmonic Minor

C-sharp Harmonic Minor

B-flat Harmonic Minor

G-sharp Harmonic Minor

E-flat Harmonic Minor

D-sharp Harmonic Minor

A-flat Harmonic Minor

A-sharp Harmonic Minor

Practice Sequence

Do the following in a selected key then move to next key.
1. 5-note pattern
2. 9-note pattern
3. Full range scale

5-Note Pattern

Follow the same guidelines as indicated for major.
Example: F Harmonic Minor. Each key is not included herein. Students should internalize the concept and play all scale degree patterns and keys from memory.

9-Note Pattern

Follow the same considerations as outlined above. Nine-note scale patterns will extend ones concentration and physical demands intermediary to full-range scales. As above, each scale degree requires a slightly different fingering consideration.

Example: F Harmonic Minor

Full-range Scales

Use a different articulation each time a scale is practiced. Eventually, through work on numerous keys, all the patterns below should be mastered.

Play ranges as in the Major Full-range Scales. Key signatures are the same as Natural Minor. Change the 7th scale degree by raising the pitch ½ step.
Example 1: C Harmonic Minor

Example 2: F Harmonic Minor

Continue through all keys.