

THE CIRCLE OF FIFTHS EXERCISE

Start by playing a major scale for the full range of the instrument, up and down. You can start in any key, but for ease we will begin in the key of C, which has no sharps or flats in its key signature. 'Full Range' means that you play the scale from the lowest possible root note to the highest possible root note on your particular mallet instrument and back down again.

If you are uncertain of how to perform a major scale you can do so by checking the key signature and then play one of each note ascending in pitch while making sure to change any notes affected by the key signature. If you don't know the key signature you can follow this formula, wherein R = the Root note, W = a Whole Step (2 bars) above the last performed note, and H = a Half Step (1 bar) above the last performed note.

MAJOR SCALE FORMULA:

R	W	W	H	W	W	W	H
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C

Notice we've numbered the notes. This is labeling their 'scale degrees'.
1 and 8 are the same pitch an octave apart,
sometimes both are referred to as 1.

The next step is to play the major chord, scale degrees 1, 3, 5 (C E G) for the range of the instrument. Make sure to play the final 1 at the top of the instrument.
The perform this series of chords:

MAJOR: 1 3 5 (C E G)

MINOR: 1 b3 5 (C Eb G)

AUGMENTED: 1 3 #5 (C E G#)

DIMINISHED 6th: 1 b3 b5 6 (C Eb Gb A)

MAJOR 7th: 1 3 5 7 (C E G B)

DOMINANT 7TH: 1 3 5 b7 (C E G Bb)

When performing the final descending dominant 7th chord, after striking the final '3', play one half step up from there. This is the next key you will perform in.

For instance, in the key of C the descending dominant 7th chord is

C Bb G E, then go one half step up to> F

Notice how C7 has a Bb in it and the key of F also has a Bb in it.

This pattern will continue throughout.

As you repeat the exercise you will cycle counter-clockwise around the circle of 5ths. By the end you will have a deeper understanding of key signatures and the chords that go along with them, as well as the important V-I chord relationship that happens when transitioning from one key to the next.

The next step is to perform this exercise with four mallets going through all of the chords in block form.

