

When a student first learns scales, they are learning the note names and the fingerings while using good left hand/arm technique to play them in tune. It is very much left hand focused. I decided to make my own scale book since I couldn't find one that was suitable for my beginner to intermediate students who are learning scales for the first time. I wanted something that would teach my students the scales that they should know depending on where they are in the first few books of the Suzuki repertoire and in other repertoire that I assign. I also wanted it to be fairly comprehensive.

I present new scales to each student by handing them a scale “packet” for each level. To begin Level 1 scales and arpeggios, the student should be about halfway through Suzuki vol. 1 with knowledge of D major scale – one octave. Each packet has a cover page (I use colored paper for the cover page and have a different color for each level). The cover page for level one says:

Scales Level 1

G, C, F : One octave

C : Two octaves

I usually assign one scale/week and then add some weeks for review/reinforcement.

In learning their scales, I ask the students to tell me the key signature in the correct order (from left to right) of sharps or flats, the note names and fingerings. I ask them to pluck and sing (or say) the note names. I ask them to tell me the 1st, 3rd and 5th notes of the scale so that they figure out the arpeggio before seeing the notated arpeggio. At each level, there is a new concept (under comments) that is fairly new to the student. They should be getting reinforcement of that concept by focusing on it in the scale and in their repertoire. Students like to progress to the next level. It's amazing how motivating these scale packets can be.

Here are the first 6 levels. Lower case implies melodic minor (c = C melodic minor scale)

Level	1 Octave	2 Octaves	3 Octaves	Comments
1	G, C, F	C		Use of 2 nd finger
2	Bb, Eb, A	D		Use of extensions
3	a, g	d		Intro to melodic minor
4		F, G		Shifting from 1 st to 4 th and 1 st to 3 rd
5		A, e, c		Using backward and forward extensions in 4 th position. Also, possibly 5 th position
6		Bb, g, Eb, Ab		Shifting to 6 th position and to 7 th on arpeggio

7		b	D, C	Beginning thumb position. Use thumb on D harmonic for D and b arpeggios. Do C arpeggio last and use 0142 -13 2- 13 2
8		Do 01-1234-4 first and then 0123-123	Use 0123-123 and keep going up A string with 123 up to high C	Developing chromatic intonation. Start on open C