#### **Reading and Playing Guitar Out of Open Position**

By Christopher Perez

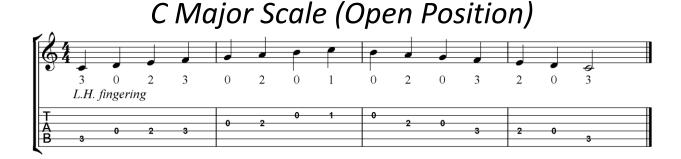
Regardless of style, one challenge young guitarists face is making the jump from playing in open position (also called 1<sup>st</sup> position using open strings through the first four frets) to playing in alternate positions. Once a student has proficiency in reading/performing in open position points below, they are ready to tackle reading in different positions on the guitar.

- first position scales in C, F (two octaves), Bb, G (two octaves), D, A (two octaves), and in E (two octaves)
- performing simple melodies using the natural and enharmonic notes in 1<sup>st</sup> (Open Position)

Below are several exercises and resources to aide in developing reading and technical proficiency in playing out of open position.

<u>C Major Scale</u> – This scale is one that can be practiced in a variety of positions (fixed and moveable) on the guitar. Through practice, the student will develop better reading ability in different guitar positions.

For the one octave C major scale, *Example 1* below shows the open/1<sup>st</sup> position form, beginning on the A string, third fret along with proper L.H. finger use.



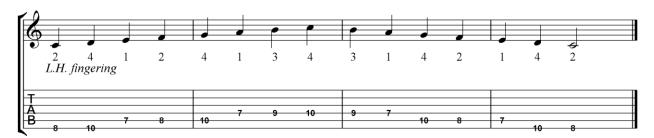
**Example 2** uses the same notes of the C scale but using a different finger, fret combination and using only three strings.

# C Major Scale (2<sup>nd</sup> Position)



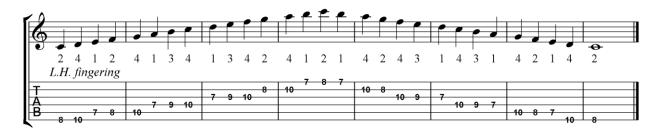
**Example 3** begins on the E string, eighth fret, yet uses the same fingerings as **Example 2** with only the bass strings.

## C Major Scale (7<sup>th</sup>Position)

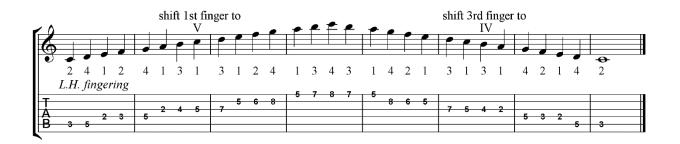


**Example 4** begins on the low E string (7<sup>th</sup> position); the next uses the Segovia Style finger shift.

### 2 octave C Major Scale (7<sup>th</sup>Position)



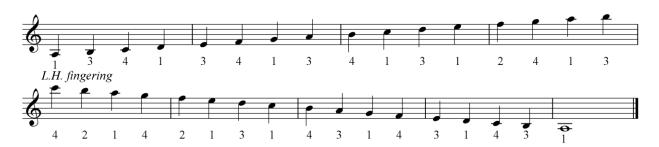
### 2 octave Segovia Scale (finger shifts)



These forms of alternate positions can be applied to other scales including the keys of G, D, and A.

<u>Example 5</u> The A Natural Notes Scale (5<sup>th</sup> position) – Practicing this scale will help facilitate learning all natural notes in 5<sup>th</sup> position.

### A Natural Notes Scale (5th Position)



I have found that using the resources below will aide in students reading and technical development in open positions and beyond.

**Sight Reading for Guitarists** by Steve Marsh, Mel Bay – <a href="www.melbay.com">www.melbay.com</a>
Aside from reading in 1<sup>st</sup> position, most exercises may be practiced and played in alternate positions.

**20 Favorite Exercises for Classical Guitar** by Branford Werner - <a href="mailto:thissis: classicalguitar.com">thissis: classicalguitar.com</a></a> This is a great manual in developing reading and technique for beginner to intermediate guitar students!

**FJH Guitar Skill Sheets** by Phillip Groeber / Ed. by Leo Welch, David Hoge, and Hugh Chandler (set of 5 sold separately) FJH Music Publications - <a href="https://www.fjhmusic.com/guitar.htm">www.fjhmusic.com/guitar.htm</a>

- No. 1 First Position Major Scales
- No. 2 First Position Minor Scales
- No. 3 Movable Position Major Scales
- No. 4 Movable Position Minor Scales
- No. 5 Chords and Arpeggios

Ultimately, the only way one gets better in reading music is to practice it every day! Sight-read every day. Continually read new music. By working on this skill and learning to use more of the fret board, more music will be available for you and your students to enjoy!