

## Creating Minor Key Chord Progressions

In this quick tutorial we will take a look at how minor key chord progressions are created. If you don't have any prior knowledge of creating chord progressions I suggest you read the “Understanding And Writing Major Key Chord Progressions” lesson found at [www.GuitarLessons365.com](http://www.GuitarLessons365.com). That lesson not only shows you the chord types that work in a major key and how they are ordered, but also how each chord is individually created from the major scale. So if you don't have that basic knowledge I suggest going back and catching up because learning minor key chord progressions will be far more difficult to understand if you don't. Further more, in this lesson we aren't going to review how the individual chords are built like we did in the major key lesson. So if your ready to do some minor chord progressions, then lets get down to the good stuff.

### Why Are Minor Keys More Difficult To Understand?

Minor keys really aren't very difficult to understand, there is just a little bit more to it compared to dealing with major keys. The reason is this. When we create the chords that work within a major key we only have to figure out those chords by using one scale, ie. the major scale. However, we actually have 3 different types of minor scales to create chords with, so instead of figuring out just 7 basic chord types like we did in the major key progressions lesson, we now will be dealing with 7 basic chords for each of the minor scales giving us a total of twenty one basic chords. That is the reason that most chord progressions in minor keys sound much more sophisticated and less predictable than major chord progressions. We will still figure out the chords the same way we did in the major chord progressions lesson, except now we have to do it with 3 minor scale types.

### Spelling All Of Our Minor Scales

If you don't know how to spell all of your minor scales don't worry. As long as you have read the “Understand Major Keys Quickly And Easily” at [www.GuitarLessons365.com](http://www.GuitarLessons365.com) or already know your major keys well, you will be fine. We will use that knowledge to learn our minor scales.

### Getting To Know Your Minor Scales

Since we need to know the minor scales in order to create our chords from them, lets take a look at how to learn them. The first step you need to do is figure out what minor key you want to learn. So lets start with E Minor since it is the most popular key on the guitar and hey this is a guitar web site right? All you need to do is figure out in which key the note E is the six tone. Hopefully you are familiar enough with your major keys to know that E is the six tone of the G Major Scale.

## Getting To Know Your Relatives

Every major key in music shares the exact same notes and a minor key. Those two keys are called relative keys. So taking a look at E Minor, we will see that it has the exact same seven notes as G Major. The reason I had you figure out the sixth tone in a major key is because that is a quick way of figuring out any major keys relative minor key. But I won't make you suffer to much, here is a complete list of all the major keys with their relative minors.

### Relative Keys List

#### Sharp Keys

C Major/ A Minor  
G Major/ E Minor  
D Major/ B Minor  
A Major/ F# Minor  
E Major/ C# Minor  
B Major/ G# Minor  
F# Major/ D# Minor  
C# Major/ A# Minor

#### Flat keys

F Major/ D Minor  
Bb Major/ G Minor  
Eb Major/ C Minor  
Ab Major/ F Minor  
Db Major/ Bb Minor  
Gb Major/ Eb Minor  
Cb Major/ Ab Minor

### Natural Minor Scale

OK, so now that the heavy lifting is done, lets start spelling our minor scales. Going back to the key of E Minor we can see that it is the relative minor key of G Major. What that basically means is that it shares the exact same notes, the only difference is that you start the scale on E instead of G. Here is an example, if you have you G Major scale G A B C D E F#, all you have to do is use the exact same seven notes starting on E to get your E Natural Minor scale E F# G A B C D. There you have it. Now I used the term "Natural Minor Scale" to describe the minor scale built using the seven tones of the major key. This is considered an unaltered minor scale and makes up one of the 3 minor scales that we will use to figure out our chords.

### Altered Minor Scales

There are many ways to look at minor scales but probably the most used and easiest to understand is to consider the two other minor scales as just altereations of the original natural minor scale. The names of these two altered minor scales are Harmonic

Minor and Melodic Minor. To figure out these scales is extremely simple if you already know the notes of your natural minor scale. To get the notes of a harmonic minor scale you would just use the same notes as the natural minor scale except that you would raise the **SEVENTH SCALE DEGREE** one-half step. So if E Natural Minor is E F# G A B C D, then E Harmonic Minor is E F# G A B C D#. The formula for the melodic minor scale is just as simple except instead of raising just the seventh tone one-half step, you would raise the **SIX AND SEVENTH SCALE DEGREES** up one-half step. So comparing that to E Natural Minor as well we have E Natural Minor Spelled E F# G A B C D and E Melodic Minor Spelled E F# G A B C# D#.

### *Different Scales Equals Different Chords*

So as you can probably guess, when you begin to create the chord sequences off of each scale type, the varying scale degrees will give us different types of chords. We won't go into all the chord construction like we did in the Major Key Chord Progressions lesson. Instead I am going to go ahead and lay each one out for you, just remember that I am building these chords the exact same way we did in the Major Key Chord Progressions Lesson. On the next page you will find each E Minor scale type along with their corresponding chords. After studying this one key, it should be relatively easy to apply the exact same chord types to any minor key you want, because just like in the major keys, the order of the chords always stays the same.

## **E Minor Scales And Their Basic Chords**

### E Natural Minor

1. E Minor
2. F# Diminished
3. G Major
4. A Minor
5. B Minor
6. C Major
7. D Major

### E Harmonic Minor

1. E Minor
2. F# Diminished
3. G Augmented
4. A Minor
5. B Major
6. C Major

7. D# Diminished

E Melodic Minor

1. E Minor
2. F# Minor
3. G Augmented
4. A Major
5. B Major
6. C# Diminished
7. D# Diminished

Putting It All Together

So as you can see from the lists above, the i chord in E Minor will always be E Minor in order to establish the tonality. But from there you can see that the ii chord can be either F# Diminished or F# Minor. The III chord can be either G Major or G Augmented(augmented is rarely used here). The IV chord can be either A Minor or A Major. The V chord can be either B Minor or B Major. From the vi chord all the way to the root you actually have a choice of all the chromatic notes to use as the root of the chord. You can either have a C or C# and a D or D# along with their corresponding chords. So as you can see you have many more harmonic options to choose from when working within a minor key. Your job from here is to memorize the order of the chord types for each of the 3 minor scale types. Then all you need to do is lay out your scale tones beside their corresponding chord types like we did in the major keys lesson and you will have all of the harmonic options for whatever particular minor key you want, right in front of you. After that it is all about experimenting with different combinations of chords from all of the minor scale types together. So have fun and please let me know what you think at [www.GuitarLessons365.com](http://www.GuitarLessons365.com). Thanks for reading!!