



Mastering Keys Checklist

Level 1 Players



If you're a Level 1 Player, you may just be getting started, or you may have played for a long time but want to **understand music more deeply** so you can figure out chords, melodies, and solos "on the fly". You've likely been learning songs from lessons, TAB, or sheet music, but you're not sure **why** certain chords and scales fit together. This Mastering Keys Checklist is designed to help you **start thinking of songs in keys** and to track your progress on what I call the **3 Big Ideas** in some of the most common keys you'll encounter at jam sessions: **C, G, D, A, & E Major**, and **A & E minor**.

Practice these 3 Big Ideas until they're *automatic* in the keys you want to play in!

3 Big Ideas for Mastering Keys:

1. The **chords** that make up each key (**and their Roman numerals**)
2. Common **chord progressions** in each key (**and their Roman numerals**)
3. The **scales** that make up solos, melodies, licks, basslines, etc. in each key

Eventually you'll begin automatically thinking of songs, melodies, solos, etc. as being **part of a specific key, and then you'll start predicting chords, melodies, & solos!** These ideas can transform the way you hear and play music- *they certainly did for me!*

Start with the Key of C Major, and **don't worry if there are chords, progressions, or scales you can't do yet**. Just use the checkboxes to record your progress with each one- from "Noper" (you can't do it all yet) to "Yepper!" (it's easy and smooth). Next try the Key of G Major, and so on. Keep coming back to previous keys and working on moving towards "Yepper!" for all these common keys. As you listen to songs, whether at jam sessions or on your stereo, work on figuring out what key a song is in. Be sure to practice these keys with my [free jam tracks](#)- they will do wonders for training your ear!

For a recommended order for learning keys, and the Big Ideas in each, try the free [Learning the Major Keys](#) and [Learning the Minor Keys](#) downloads!

To **see** these big ideas and more on your instrument, check out my [Fretboard Toolbox Essential and Complete Edition](#) books, with identical editions for guitar, mandolin, 5-string banjo, 4-string bass, all the ukuleles, tenor guitar, resonator guitar, and piano.

Happy playing!

-Scott Sharp



Key of C Major

Major Key Checklist: Level 1 Players



Big Idea 1: Chords	Roman Numerals	Noper	Kinda	Mostly	Yepper!	These are 6 main chords that make up the Key of C Major, so they're found in countless songs! Try each one and mark your current ability level for each chord.
C MAJOR	I					
D minor	ii					
E minor	iii					
F MAJOR	IV					
G MAJOR	V					
A minor	vi					

Big Idea 2: Chord Progressions	Roman Numerals	Click here to access free jam tracks to practice playing along with these chord progressions!				Chord progressions are just groups of chords played in order. Practice each one with the free jam tracks and record your progress!
C-G-C	I-V-I					
C-F-G	I-IV-V					
C-G-F	I-V-IV					
C-Am-F-G	I-vi-IV-V					
C-Am-Dm-G	I-vi-ii-V					
C-Dm-F-G	I-ii-IV-V					
G-F-C	V-IV-I					

Big Idea 3: Beginner Scales	Learn and practice these scales near your headstock (first position). The best way to practice these scales, and to train your ear , is by playing with the scales with the free jam tracks - <i>it makes a HUGE difference!</i>				
C Major scale	Major scale notes are shown in bold font in all Fretboard Toolbox Editions				
					C D E F G A B
C Major pentatonic scale	Major pentatonic scale notes are <u>underlined</u> in all Fretboard Toolbox Editions				
					<u>C</u> <u>D</u> <u>E</u> <u>G</u> <u>A</u>

To see Key of C Major chords, progressions, & scales, try these books:

Fretboard Toolbox "Essential Editions": pages 11-14

Fretboard Toolbox "Complete Editions": page 19



Key of G Major

Major Key Checklist: Level 1 Players



Big Idea 1: Chords	Roman Numerals	Noper	Kinda	Mostly	Yepper!	Mark your progress on the chords of this key, and memorize the names & Roman numerals of each. You'll find knowing Roman numerals in common keys will be a game changer!
G MAJOR	I					
A minor	ii					
B minor	iii					
C MAJOR	IV					
D MAJOR	V					
E minor	vi					

Big Idea 2: Chord Progressions	Roman Numerals	The free jam tracks are at www.fretboard-toolbox.com > Tracks and Tab > 200 Free Jam Tracks				Play along with the jam tracks and check boxes when you reach each level. Focus on smooth , not fast chord changes . Speed will come!
G-D-G	I-V-I					
G-C-D	I-IV-V					
G-D-C	I-V-IV					
G-Em-C-D	I-vi-IV-V					
G-Em-Am-D	I-vi-ii-V					
G-Am-C-D	I-ii-IV-V					
D-C-G	V-IV-I					

Big Idea 3: Beginner Scales	Knowing the scales that belong in each key gives you the tools to play melodies, solos, walking basslines, and more. Start by playing the notes in order, and then try mixing them up- <i>cool things will happen!</i>				
G Major scale	Major scale notes are shown in bold font in all Fretboard Toolbox Editions				
					G A B C D E F#
G Major pentatonic scale	Major pentatonic scale notes are <u>underlined</u> in all Fretboard Toolbox Editions				
					<u>G</u> <u>A</u> <u>B</u> <u>D</u> <u>E</u>

To see Key of G Major chords, progressions, & scales, try these books:

Fretboard Toolbox "Essential Editions": pages 3-6

Fretboard Toolbox "Complete Editions": page 9



Key of D Major

Major Key Checklist: Level 1 Players



Big Idea 1: Chords	Roman Numerals	Noper	Kinda	Mostly	Yepper!	These chords are called "diatonic chords". Diatonic chords are simply the chords that make up each key.
D MAJOR	I					
E minor	ii					
F# minor	iii					
G MAJOR	IV					
A MAJOR	V					
B minor	vi					

Big Idea 2: Chord Progressions	Roman Numerals	Start with the slowest speed on these free jam tracks , and then work your way up to faster speeds!				All of these chord progressions are diatonic progressions, because they're made with only diatonic chords.
D-A-D	I-V-I					
D-G-A	I-IV-V					
D-A-G	I-V-IV					
D-Bm-G-A	I-vi-IV-V					
D-Bm-Em-A	I-vi-ii-V					
D-Em-G-A	I-ii-IV-V					
A-G-D	V-IV-I					

Big Idea 3: Beginner Scales	When you play these scales over chord progressions, you will find times where a note sounds extra cool- likely when you're playing a note that is a part of the chord being played! #reasonstolearnchordnotes				
D Major scale	Major scale notes are shown in bold font in all Fretboard Toolbox Editions				
					D E F# G A B C#
D Major pentatonic scale	Major pentatonic scale notes are <u>underlined</u> in all Fretboard Toolbox Editions				
					<u>D</u> <u>E</u> <u>F#</u> <u>A</u> <u>B</u>

To see Key of D Major chords, progressions, & scales, try these books:

Fretboard Toolbox "Essential Editions": pages 15-18

Fretboard Toolbox "Complete Editions": page 25



Key of A Major

Major Key Checklist: Level 1 Players



Big Idea 1: Chords	Roman Numerals	Noper	Kinda	Mostly	Yepper!	Once you start learning the diatonic chords in each key, you'll hear just how beautifully they all fit together!
A MAJOR	I					
B minor	ii					
C# minor	iii					
D MAJOR	IV					
E MAJOR	V					
F# minor	vi					

Big Idea 2: Chord Progressions	Roman Numerals	If these jam tracks are hard, and you have a capo, pretend you're in G Major and capo the 2nd fret!				As you play these progressions in each key, they'll likely start reminding you of songs you know because these progressions are SUPER COMMON!
A-E-A	I-V-I					
A-D-E	I-IV-V					
A-E-D	I-V-IV					
A-F#m-D-E	I-vi-IV-V					
A-F#m-Bm-E	I-vi-ii-V					
A-Bm-D-E	I-ii-IV-V					
E-D-A	V-IV-I					

Big Idea 3: Beginner Scales	Once you can play a Major scale in order, then try mixing up the order of notes and see if you can figure out some basic melodies on your own. (Try this idea in all they keys that you can play Major scales in!)				
A Major scale	Major scale notes are shown in bold font in all Fretboard Toolbox Editions				
					A B C# D E F# G#
A Major pentatonic scale	Major pentatonic scale notes are <u>underlined</u> in all Fretboard Toolbox Editions				
					<u>A B C# E F#</u>

To see Key of A Major chords, progressions, & scales, try these books:

Fretboard Toolbox "Essential Editions": pages 7-10

Fretboard Toolbox "Complete Editions": page 13



Key of E Major

Major Key Checklist: Level 1 Players



Big Idea 1: Chords	Roman Numerals	Noper	Kinda	Mostly	Yepper!	There is a seventh diatonic chord, called a "diminished chord". I don't include it in my books because it is so rarely played.
E MAJOR	I					
F# minor	ii					
G# minor	iii					
A MAJOR	IV					
B MAJOR	V					
C# minor	vi					

Big Idea 2: Chord Progressions	Roman Numerals	If these jam tracks are hard, and you have a capo, pretend you're in D Major and capo the 2nd fret!				When you've mastered these progression in several keys, figuring out songs "on the fly" becomes SO MUCH EASIER!
E-B-E	I-V-I					
E-A-B	I-IV-V					
E-B-A	I-V-IV					
E-C#m-A-B	I-vi-IV-V					
E-C#m-F#m-B	I-vi-ii-V					
E-F#m-A-B	I-ii-IV-V					
B-A-E	V-IV-I					

Big Idea 3: Beginner Scales	When the Major scale notes become easy, if you're a bluegrass or country player, you're ready to start breaking rules by learning the flat-3 (<i>b3</i>) and flat-7 (<i>b7</i>) notes (the italicized notes in Fretboard Toolboxes)!				
E Major scale	Major scale notes are shown in bold font in all Fretboard Toolbox Editions				
					E F# G# A B C# D#
E Major pentatonic scale	Major pentatonic scale notes are <u>underlined</u> in all Fretboard Toolbox Editions				
					<u>E</u> F# <u>G#</u> B <u>C#</u>

To see Key of E Major chords, progressions, & scales, try these books:

Fretboard Toolbox "Essential Editions": pages 19-22

Fretboard Toolbox "Complete Editions": page 29



Key of A minor

Minor Key Checklist: Level 1 Players



Big Idea 1: Chords	Roman Numerals	Noper	Kinda	Mostly	Yepper!	Each Major key has a "relative minor key" that uses the same chords and soloing notes, with a different root note. The "Relative Major Key" of the Key of A minor is C Major.
A minor	i					
C MAJOR	III					
D minor	iv					
E minor	v					
F MAJOR	VI					
G MAJOR	VII					

Big Idea 2: Chord Progressions	Roman Numerals	Play with these jam tracks and notice how much sadder minor key chord progressions sound!				Minor keys are all based around the "i" chord. The "v" chord is often played as a minor (v), OR a Major (V) chord.
Am-Em-Am	i-v-i					
Am-G-Em	i-VII-v					
Am-G-Am	i-VII-i					
Am-E-Am	i-V-i					
Am-Dm-E	i-iv-V					
Am-G-F-E	i-VII-VI-V					
Am-Dm-F-E	i-iv-VI-V					

Big Idea 3: Beginner Scales	Minor scale notes are the exact same as their relative Major scales, they're just played in a different order. (With a different root note.) Notice how beautifully minor scales fit with minor key chord progressions!				
A natural minor scale	Relative minor scale notes are shown in bold font in all Fretboard Toolbox Editions				
					A B C D E F G
A minor pentatonic scale	Minor pentatonic scale notes are <u>underlined</u> in all Fretboard Toolbox Editions				
					<u>A</u> <u>C</u> <u>D</u> <u>E</u> <u>G</u>

To see Key of A minor chords, progressions, & scales, try this book:

Fretboard Toolbox "Complete Editions": page 19



Key of E minor

Minor Key Checklist: Level 1 Players



Big Idea 1: Chords	Roman Numerals	Noper	Kinda	Mostly	Yepper!	The Key of G Major is the Relative Major Key of E minor. Compare these chords with those on the Key of G Major page and you'll see they're the same!
E minor	i					
G MAJOR	III					
A minor	iv					
B minor	v					
C MAJOR	VI					
D MAJOR	VII					

Big Idea 2: Chord Progressions	Roman Numerals	Tons of really cool songs are played in E minor. Try these jam tracks and make up your own sad song! :-)				Relative Major and minor keys are made of the same chords & notes, but by using a different chord/note as the root, they get VERY different sounds!
Em-Bm-Em	i-v-i					
Em-D-Bm	i-VII-v					
Em-D-Em	i-VII-i					
Em-B-Em	i-V-i					
Em-Am-B	i-iv-V					
Em-D-C-B	i-VII-VI-V					
Em-Am-C-B	i-iv-VI-V					

Big Idea 3: Beginner Scales	Minor key songs with a Major "V" chord have an extra dark, haunting sound! A scale called the harmonic minor sounds beautiful over that chord! Look up the E harmonic minor scale and see what's different!				
E natural minor scale	Relative minor scale notes are shown in bold font in all Fretboard Toolbox Editions				
					E F# G A B C D
E minor pentatonic scale	Minor pentatonic scale notes are <u>underlined</u> in all Fretboard Toolbox Editions				
					<u>E</u> <u>G</u> <u>A</u> <u>B</u> <u>D</u>

To see Key of E minor chords, progressions, & scales, try this book:
Fretboard Toolbox "Complete Editions": page 9