

HALF WHOLE AND WHOLE HALF DIMINISHED SCALES

BEN PORTNER

The Half Whole and Whole Half diminished scales are scales where the notes alternate between half and whole steps. It is an octatonic scale (eight note scale.) The difference between the two is that the Half Whole starts with a half step. The Whole Half starts with a whole step. The Half Whole diminished scale is used to improvise over a dominant 7th chord, (or the five in a major or minor 2-5-1,) covering powerful tensions such as b9, #9, and #11.

The Whole Half (or Fully Diminished Scale) Is used to improvise over a diminished 7th chord.

It should also be noted that in theory there are really only 3 diminished scales. Every scale that's a minor third a tritone, or a 6th above the last scale will have the same notes as the scale a minor third tritone, or 6th below (or the notes in a diminished chord.) The only difference is that the scale will start on a different note. So for example; C half whole diminished will have the same notes as an Eb, Gb and A half whole diminished scales. The same goes for Db, E G, Bb and D, F, Ab and B. While practicing these scales look for this pattern.

C HALFWHOLE

C7

HALF WHOLE DIMINISHED SCALES

1 2 3 1 2 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 1 2 3

C C# Eb E F# G A Bb C C# Eb E F# G A Bb

4 3 2 1 2 1 3 2 1 3 2 1 2 1 3 2 1

5 C Bb A G F# E Eb C# C Bb A G F# E Eb C# C

C# HALF WHOLE (Db HALF WHOLE)

C#7

Db7

2 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 1 2 3 1 2 3 1

10 C# D E F G G# Bb B C# D E F G G# Bb B

2 1 3 2 1 3 2 1 2 1 3 2 1 3 2 1 2

14 C# B Bb G# G F E D C# B Bb G# G F E D C#

D HALF WHOLE

D7

19 1 2 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 1 2 3 1 2 3 4 3 2 1
 D Eb F F# G# A B C D Eb F F# G# A B C D C B A

24 3 2 1 2 1 3 2 1 3 2 1 2 1
 G# F# F Eb D C B A G# F# F Eb D

Eb HALF WHOLE

Eb7

29 2 1 2 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 1 2 3 1 2 3 2 1 3
 Eb E F# G A Bb C C# Eb E F# G A Bb C C# Eb C# C Bb

34 2 1 2 1 3 2 1 3 2 1 2 1 3
 A G F# E Eb C# C Bb A G F# E Eb

E HALF WHOLE

E7

39 1 2 1 2 3 1 2 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3
 E F G G# Bb B C# D E F G G# Bb B C# D

43 4 3 2 1 3 2 1 3 2 1 2 1 3 2 1 2 1
 E D C# B Bb G# G F E D C# B Bb G# G F E

F HALF WHOLE

F7

49 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2
 F F# G# A B C D Eb F F# G# A B C D Eb

53 3 2 1 3 2 1 3 1 2 1 3 2 1 3 2 1
 F Eb D C B A G# F# F Eb D C B A G# F# F

F# HALF WHOLE

F#7

59 2 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3

 F# G A Bb C C# Eb E F# G A Bb C C# Eb E

64 1 3 2 1 2 1 3 2 1 3 2 1 2

 C Bb A G F# E Eb C# C Bb A G F#

G HALF WHOLE

70 1 2 3 1 2 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 1 2 3 4 3 2 1

 G G# Bb B C# D E F G G# Bb B C# D E F G F E D

75 2 1 3 2 1 3 2 1 2 1 3 2 1

 C# B Bb G# G F E D C# B Bb G# G

G# OR Ab HALF WHOLE

G#7 Ab7

81 2 1 2 3 1 2 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 1 2 3 2 1 2

 G# A B C D Eb F F# G# A B C D Eb F F# G# F# F Eb

86 1 3 2 1 3 2 1 2 1 3 2 1 2

 D C B A G# F# F Eb D C B A G#

A HALF WHOLE A⁷

BEN PORTNER

92 1 2 1 2 3 1 2 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3

A B \flat C C \sharp E \flat E F \sharp G A B \flat C C \sharp E \flat E F \sharp G

96 4 3 2 1 3 2 1 3 2 1 2 1 3 2 1 3 2

A G F \sharp E E \flat C \sharp C B \flat A G F \sharp E E \flat C \sharp C B \flat A

B \flat HALF WHOLE B \flat ⁷

101 2 1 2 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 1 2 3 1 2 3 2 1 3

B \flat B C \sharp D E F G G \sharp B \flat B C \sharp D E F G G \sharp B \flat G \sharp G F

106 2 1 2 1 3 2 1 3 2 1 2 1 2

E D C \sharp B B \flat G \sharp G F E D C \sharp B B \flat

B HALF WHOLE

B⁷

112 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 1 2 3 1 2 1 3 2

B C D E \flat F F \sharp G \sharp A B C D E \flat F F \sharp G \sharp A B A G \sharp F \sharp

117 1 2 1 3 2 1 3 2 1 2 1 3 2

F E \flat D C B A G \sharp F \sharp F E \flat D C B

WHOLE HALF DIMINISHED SCALES

BEN PORTNER

C WHOLE HALF

C^{o7}

126 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 2 1 3
 C D Eb F F# G# A B C D Eb F F# G# A B C B A G#

131 2 1 3 2 1 2 1 3 2 1 3 2 1
 F# F Eb D C B A G# F# F Eb D C

C# WHOLE HALF (Db WHOLE HALF)

C#^{o7} Db^{o7}

137 2 3 1 2 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 1 2 3 1 2 1 3 2
 C# Eb E F# G A Bb C C# Eb E F# G A Bb C C# C Bb A

142 1 2 1 3 2 1 3 2 1 2 1 3 2
 G F# E Eb C# C Bb A G F# E Eb C

D WHOLE HALF

D^{o7}

148 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 2 1 3
 D E F G G# Bb B C# D E F G G# Bb B C# D C# B Bb

153 2 1 3 2 1 2 1 3 2 1 3 2 1
 G# G F E D C# B Bb G# G F E D

E_b WHOLE HALF E_b^{o7}

2 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 1 3 2

160 E_b F F# G# A B C D E_b F F# G# A B C D E_b D C B

1 3 2 1 2 1 3 2 1 3 2 1 2

165 A G# F# F E_b D C B A G# F# F E_b

E WHOLE HALF

1 2 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 1 2 3 1 2 3

171 E F# G A B_b C C# E_b E F# G A B_b C C# E_b

4 3 2 1 3 2 1 2 1 3 2 1 3 2 1 2 1

175 E E_b C# C B_b A G F# E E_b C# C B_b A G F# E

F WHOLE HALF F^{o7}

1 2 3 4 1 2 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 1 2 3 1 2 3 2 1 2

180 F G G# B_b B C# D E F G G# B_b B C# D E F E D C#

1 3 2 1 3 2 1 2 1 4 3 2 1

185 B B_b G# G F E D C# B B_b G# G F

BEN PORTNER

F# WHOLE HALF

F#^{o7}

2 3 1 2 3 1 2 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3

191 F# G# A B C D Eb F F# G# A B C D Eb F

4 3 2 1 3 2 1 3 2 1 2 1 3 2 1 3 2

195 F# F Eb D C B A G# F# F Eb D C B A G# F#

G WHOLE HALF

G^{o7}

1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2

201 G A Bb C C# Eb E F# G A Bb C C# Eb E F#

3 2 1 3 2 1 3 2 1 2 1 3 2 1 3 2 1

205 G F# E Eb C# C Bb A G F# E Eb C# C Bb A G

G# WHOLE HALF (Ab)

G#^{o7}Ab^{o7}

2 3 1 2 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 1 2 3 1

211 G# Bb B C# D E F G G# Bb B C# D E F G

2 1 3 2 1 2 1 3 2 1 3 2 1 2 1 3 2

215 G# G F E D C# B Bb G# G F E D C# B Bb G#

A WHOLE HALF

A^{o7}

221 1 2 3 1 2 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 1 2 3

A B C D Eb F F# G# A B C D Eb F F# G#

225 4 3 2 1 2 1 3 2 1 3 2 1 2 1 3 2 1

A G# F# F Eb D C B A G# F# F Eb D C B A

Bb WHOLE HALF (A#)

Bb^{o7}A#^{o7}

231 2 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 1 3 2

Bb C C# Eb E F# G A Bb C C# Eb E F# G A Bb A G F#

236 1 3 2 1 2 1 3 2 1 3 2 1 2

E Eb C# C Bb A G F# E Eb C# C Bb

B WHOLE HALF

B^{o7}

242 1 2 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 1 2 3 1 2 3

B C# D E F G G# Bb B C# D E F G G# Bb

246 4 3 2 1 3 2 1 2 1 3 2 1 3 2 1 2 1

B Bb G# G F E D C# B Bb G# G F E D C# B