

I personally hardly ever use this scale but the scales section of the site would not be complete without it. If you are setting out to learn it, please make sure you know why you need it or you might be wasting your time!

SCALE FORMULA

The scale formula for the major scale must be memorised, as you will use it often to work out the notes or chords in the key. The formula describes the interval distances between each note of the scale.

	T		S		T		T		S		TS		S
1		2		3		4		5		6		7	

T = Tone [whole step] • S = Semitone [half step] • TS = Tone + Semitone (minor 3rd interval)

COMPARISON WITH MAJOR SCALE

Scales are always compared to the Major Scale to find the intervals used.

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I
C Major Scale	C	D	E	F	G	A	B	C
C Harmonic Minor	C	D	E ^b	F	G	A ^b	B	C
Equation	1	2	b3	4	5	b6	7	1

It is derived from the Major scale with a flat 3rd and flat 6th but can also be thought of as a Natural Minor Scale with a raised 7th degree.

The Harmonic minor was derived by the need for a Dominant chord on the 5th degree (V) of the minor scale - enabling a Perfect Cadence (a Dominant 7th V chord resolving to a I minor chord). In the Natural minor scale the V (5) chord is a minor chord (Gmin7, G B^b D F, in the key of C). By changing the note B^b in the scale to the note B it changes the V chord to a Dominant 7th chord (G7, G B D F, in the key of C). This enables a correct V-I resolution. More on this in a future lesson.

CHORDS IN THE KEY

The chords in the "Key Of C Harmonic Minor", that is the chords that can be made using only notes of the C Harmonic Minor are:

	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	I
C Harmonic Minor Scale	C	D	E ^b	F	G	A ^b	B	C
Triad Chords	Cm	Ddim	E ^b Aug	Fm	G	A ^b	Bdim	Cm
Quadad Chords	C-/Δ7	Dm7 ^b 5	E ^b Δ7#5	Fm7	G7	A ^b Δ7	Bdim7	C-/Δ7

Shown are Triads (3 note chords) and Quadads (4 note chords), there are many hundreds more chords that can be built from this scale but these are by far the most commonly used.

You could use the C Harmonic Minor Scale to improvise over any or all of these chords but there are likely to be more melodic choices.

FURTHER READING

If you are studying this scale I would hope you are beyond the need for my Practical Music Theory course but if you're still struggling with chord construction and remembering the notes in your scales it might help!