

The Pentatonic Scale: A Gateway To The Higher Self

Or

Five Big Steps To Reuniting With Your Inner Child

The pentatonic scale is found in many different cultures all over the world. It can be found as the basis in [Celtic folk music](#), [Hungarian folk music](#), West African music, African-American [spirituals](#), Jazz, American [blues](#) music and [rock music](#), [Sami joik](#) singing, children's songs, the [Greek traditional music](#) and [songs](#) from [Epirus](#), [Northwest Greece](#) and the music of [Southern Albania](#), the tuning of the Ethiopian [krar](#) and the Indonesian [gamelan](#), Philippine [Kulintang](#), melodies of [Korea](#), [Malaysia](#), [Japan](#), [China](#), [India](#) and [Vietnam](#) (including the [folk music](#) of these countries), the [Andean music](#), the Afro-Caribbean tradition, Polish highlanders from the [Tatra Mountains](#), etc.(wikipedia). The use of the pentatonic scale can be traced back to ancient times. The most common pentatonic scales in use are the major and the minor pentatonic scales. The word pentatonic comes from the Greek words “pente”, meaning 5 and ‘tonic’ meaning tone, hence pentatonic scales consist of 5 tones. The major pentatonic scale consists of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 5th, and 6th notes of the major scale, omitting the half steps. The minor pentatonic scale consists of the same notes of it’s relative major pentatonic scale, but the tonic changes to 3 semitones below the major’s tonic.

I believe that the pentatonic scale can be used as a gateway to self-discovery and healing through music. I believe the greatest task of the healer is to hand people the tools to heal themselves and the pentatonic scale is a gentle and simple way to give that gift. The pentatonic scale can be taught as a simple pattern to those who have never picked up an instrument. The pentatonic scale is special in that it has no semitones, meaning that it has very little dissonance and therefore “naturally” sounds good. In playing with these 5 tones there can be no harmonic “mistakes”. Many of us humans have an immense fear of making a mistake, which prevents us from trying many things. The pentatonic scale offers a cradle of sorts, a gentle introduction into the world of music. Although the pentatonic scale only uses 5 notes and is seemingly simple in that one cannot make a harmonic “mistake”, it is also a very powerful scale with an immense amount of creative potential. In fact some of the most powerful and healing songs use the pentatonic scale, such as “Amazing Grace” and “Swing Low”. Therefore, in the healing modality, the pentatonic scale can be used as a tool for confidence building and as a creative outlet.

Along with confidence and creativity, the introduction of music playing into someone’s world also allows for sound to directly enter their physical and emotional space. The pentatonic scale is known to be used in Shamanic healing and Chinese medicine for physical, emotional, and spiritual healings. In my experience giving someone the means to make music with an instrument, has also led to them making song with their voice. Making sounds with one’s voice has many benefits, such as in toning. Many of us have an immense fear of speaking let alone singing. Through traumatic childhoods and social programming, many of us have “lost our voices”. I have found that introducing an instrument first slowly gives people the confidence to use their voices, which can be a very empowering and emotional experience.

It can be concluded then that using the pentatonic scale as an introduction into sound and music has the potential for invaluable healing, such as confidence building, creativity, physical,

emotional, and spiritual healing, and can lead to one finding their own voice. The pentatonic scale was gifted to me from a friend and opened up many doors for me. I in turn have been gifting it ever since and have seen amazing transformations in people.