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Hirajōshi (Japanese) Scale - L12



The Hirajōshi scale is the 'Eastern' equivalent to our pentatonic. It was a scale developed around the Japanese Koto instrument and is a 5 note scale, but very different in sounding than our typical pentatonic. You will also need to learn how to do a quick bend on some of the notes to give it a Japanese sound. The notes in E are E, F, A, B & C and this repeats as per this scale;

```
E|-----5-7-8-|
B|-----5-6-----|
G|-----2-4-5-----|
D|-----2-3-----|
A|---0-2-3-----|
E|0-1-----|
```

Here we are using a drone note to help give a foundation or root note to the scale. Use the open E where possible to help the scale sound correct or if you have someone else that can play along get them to play an E note.

```
E|-----5-7-8-|
B|-----5-6-----|
G|-----2-4-5-----|
D|-----2-3-----|
A|-----0-2-3-----|
E|0 (let ring)-----|
```

Lets move the scale up the neck and if you wish to carry on using the drone note then that's great;

```
E|-----12-13-|
B|-----10-12-13-----|
G|-----9-10-----|
D|-----7-9-10-----|
A|-----7-8-----|
E|0-1-5-7-8-----|
```

Continued....

So we have the scale, but to give it a real flavour of Japanese music we need to add the bend. The way to do this is a 'VERY QUICK' singular release and bend. You don't need to bend to another note, its just the sound you want, so make sure you come back to the same pitch on note you started on. Make sure you release the note as soon as possible. With this in mind try this exercise;

```
E|-----|
B|-----|
G|----9-9-9-9>10-9-----|
D|-----|
A|-----|
E|0-(let this note ring as a drone)-|
```

Once you have the hang of the bend try adding it to some of the notes in the scale. If you do it all of the time it sounds mundane to around every 3rd note should suffice.

Homework;

Practice the scale and add the bend occasionally.