



SONGS

by ear

MAJOR & MINOR SCALES

CHEATSHEET

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REFRESHER

This refresher is an excerpt taken from the *Super Basics* mini-course.

A scale is a set of notes that have been grouped together to create a mood or flavour and are the basis of melody and harmony within songs. From the Latin word meaning "stairs", the scale is played one step at a time going up (ascending), or down (descending) the keyboard. A scale is designed over the distance of one octave (between the starting note and its next repetition).

The major scale is the most common of scales and consists of the following interval pattern over an octave:

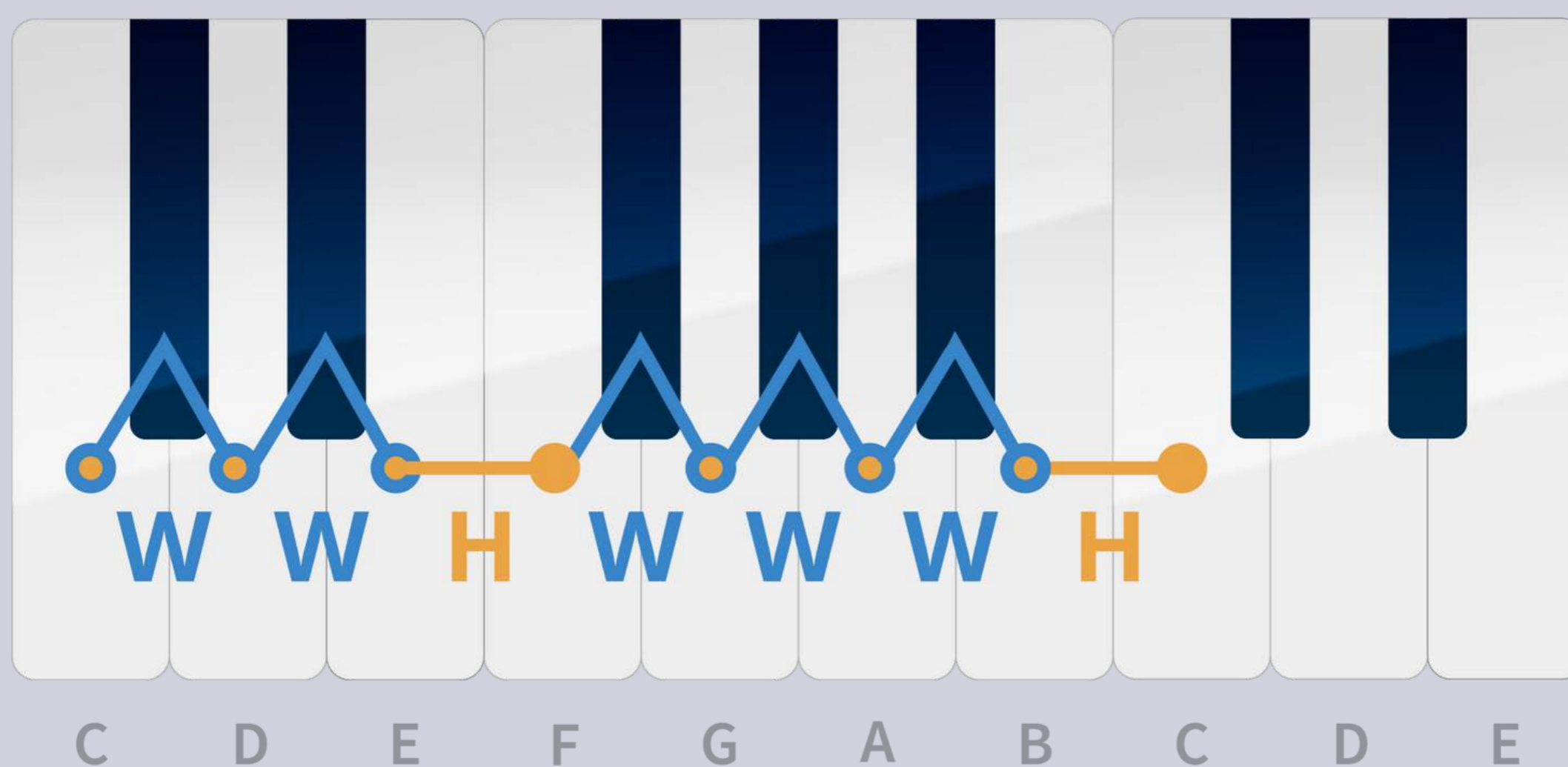
Whole-step - whole-step - half-step - whole-step - whole-step - whole-step - half-step.

We can simplify the whole-step and half-step into one letter each: W and H.

W - W - H - W - W - W - H

SCALE STEPS

Remembering that a whole-step is equal to two half-steps we can begin on C and play the C major scale like this:



In the image above, the movement of counting the whole-step is indicated in blue and the half-step is in orange.

Each dot indicates the notes of the scale we play, 8 notes in total.

FINGER TECHNIQUES

You will have found it impossible to play the scale without moving your hands position at least once. Each time you move to a new position it creates a break in the sound no matter how quick you are. So in order to play the scale as smoothly as possible we use a few techniques: the thumb tuck and the finger toss.

The **thumb tuck** is great for ascending in the RH or descending in the LH:

1 2 3 **thumbtuck** 1 2 3 4 5

The **finger toss** is great for descending in the RH or ascending in the LH:

5 4 3 2 1 **finger toss** 3 2 1

QUICK REFERENCE

In the following pages are the patterns laid out on the keyboard for all of the major scales. There are 12 in total, one beginning on each note of the octave.

Work through each one slowly and have a go at playing them ascending and descending, in the RH then the LH.

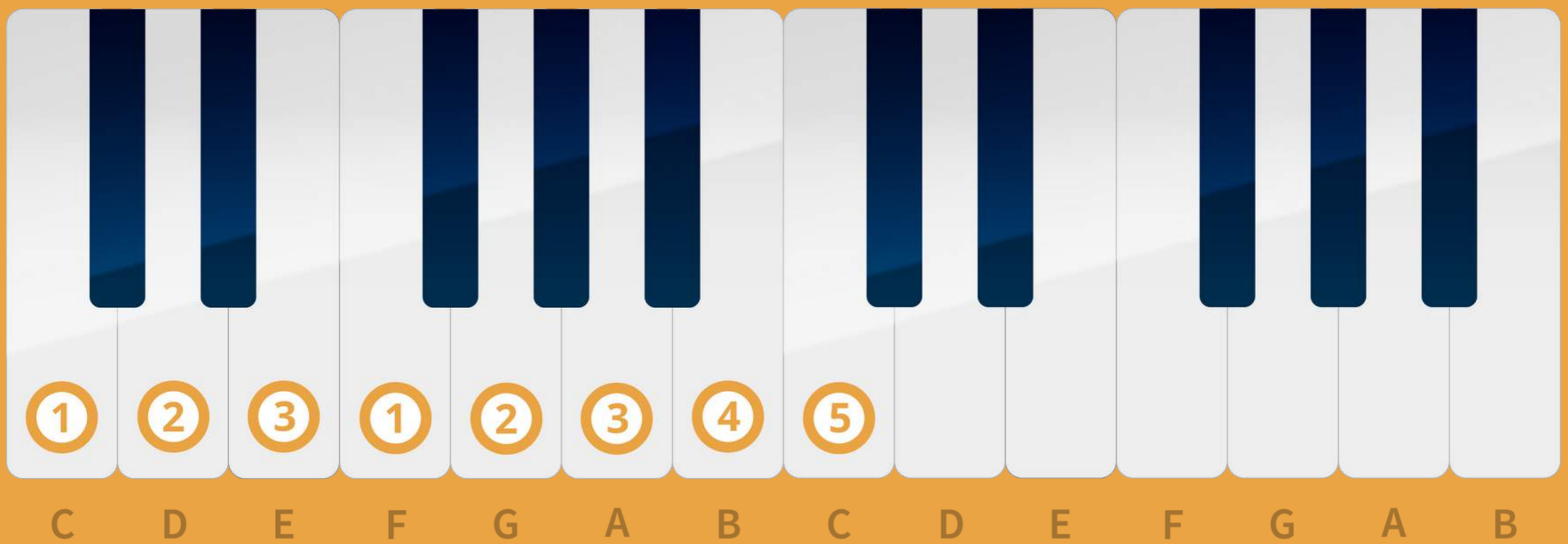
A few of the scales have slightly different finger numbers to the usual, if so this will be indicated.

Once you have tried each of the scales hands separately, then, if you're feeling very brave try hands together!

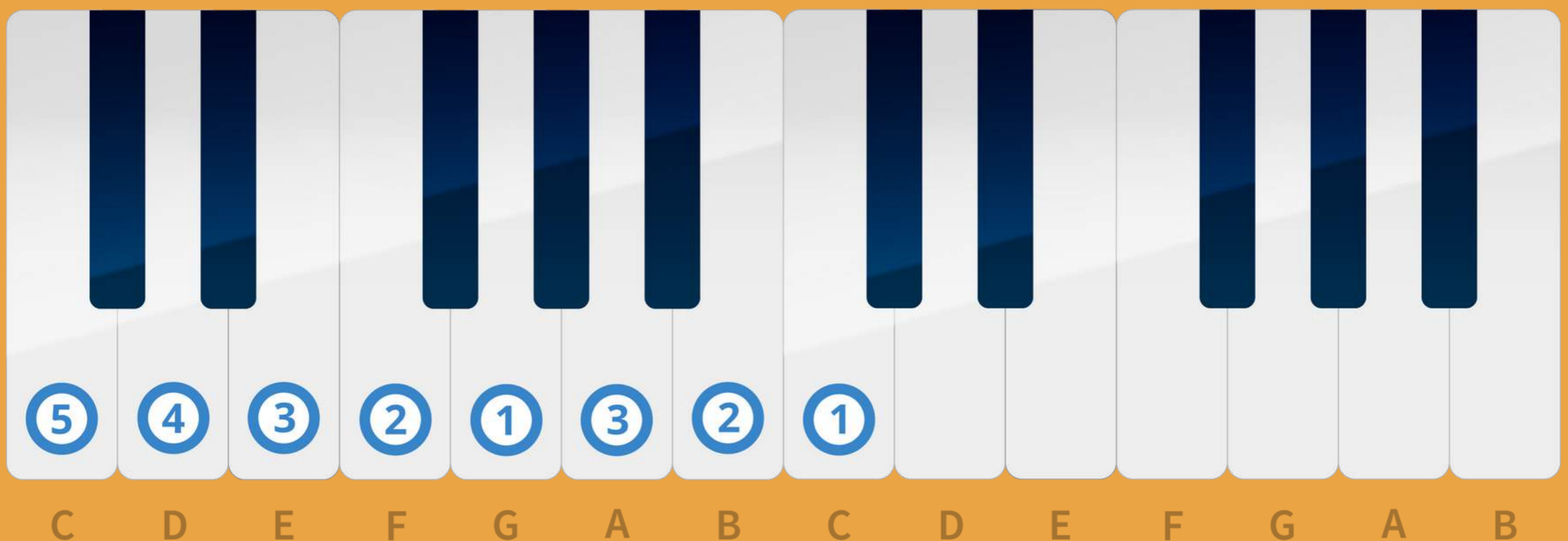
C major

SCALE

Fingering for the Right Hand.



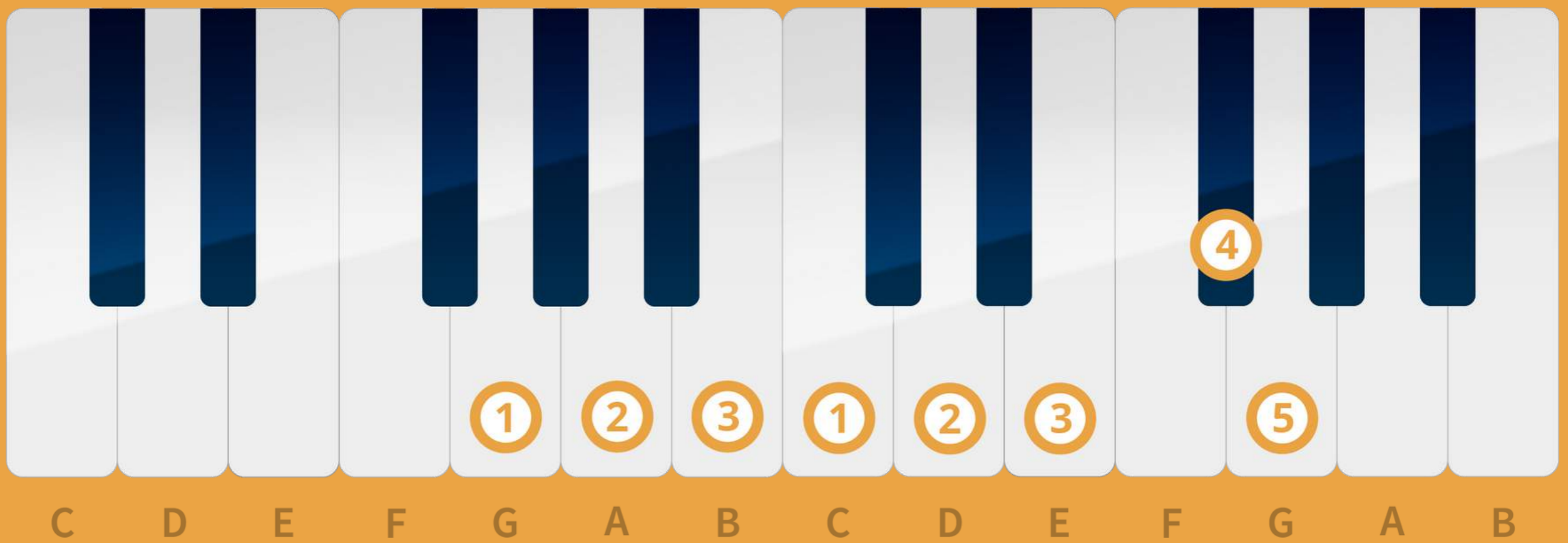
Fingering for the Left Hand.



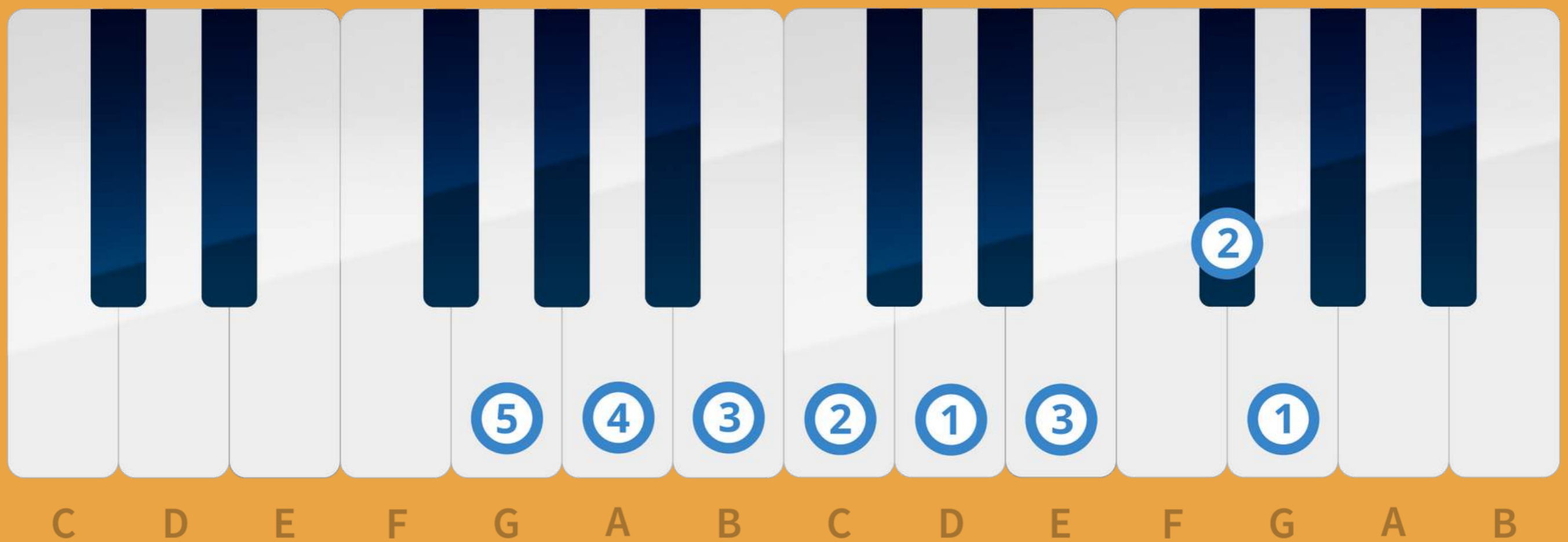
G major

SCALE

Fingering for the Right Hand.



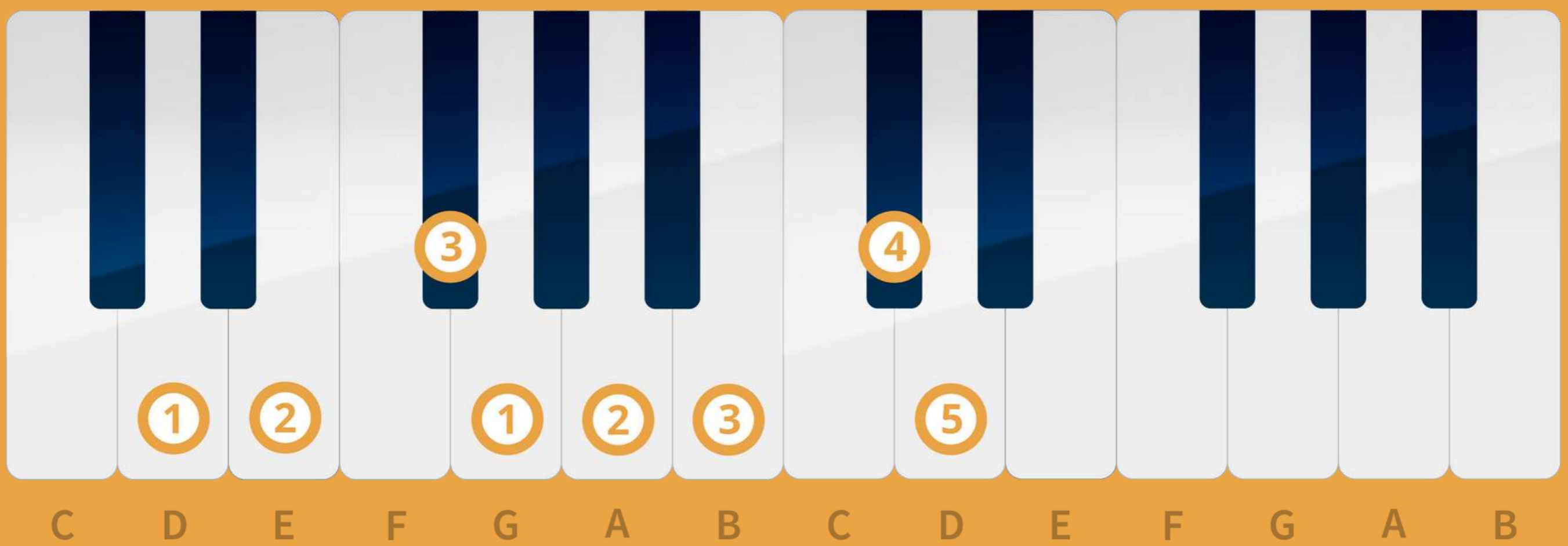
Fingering for the Left Hand.



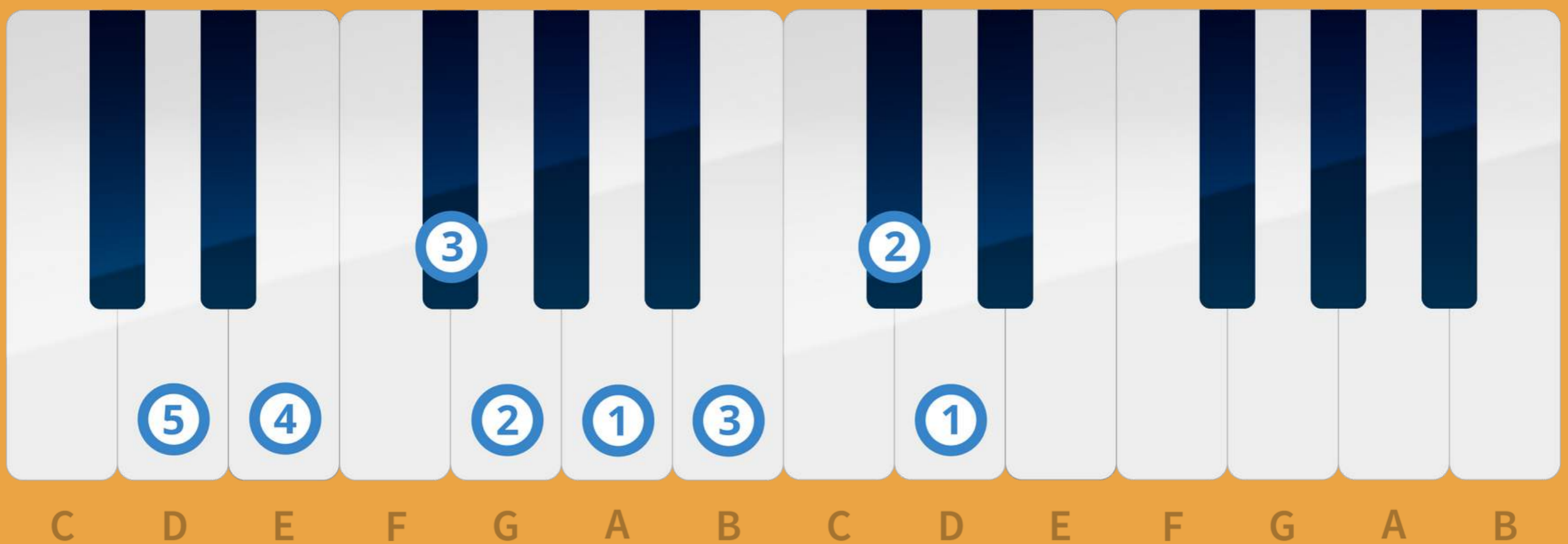
D major

SCALE

Fingering for the Right Hand.



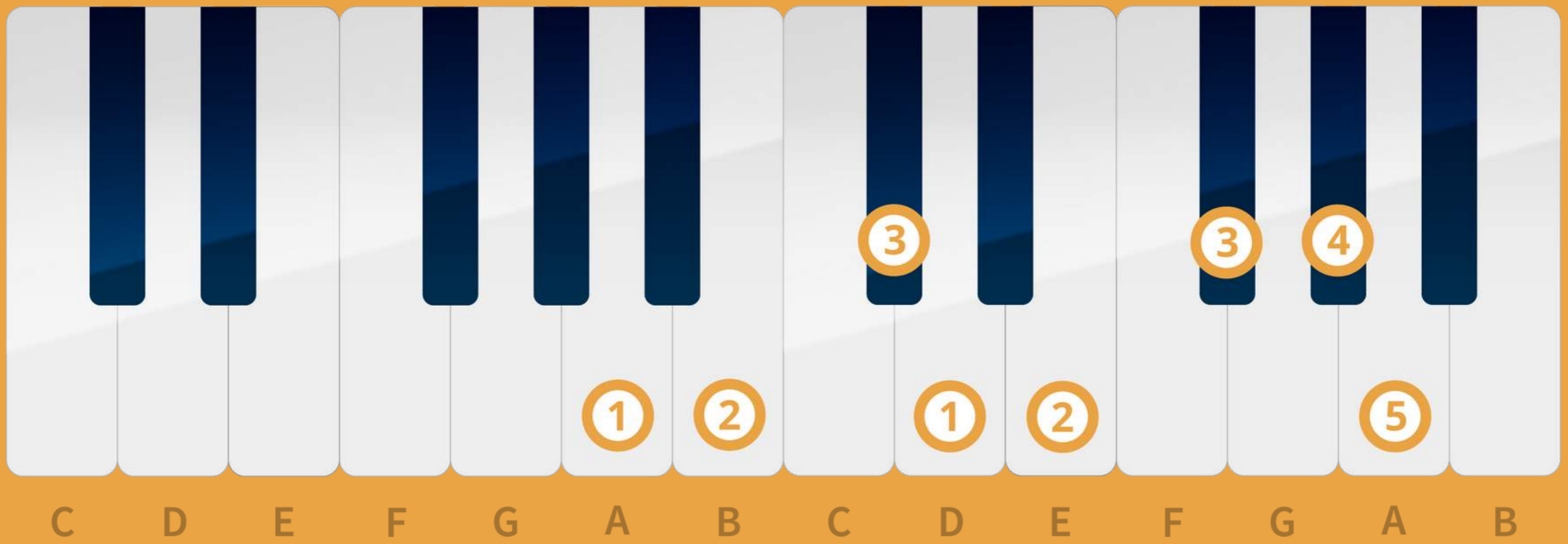
Fingering for the Left Hand.



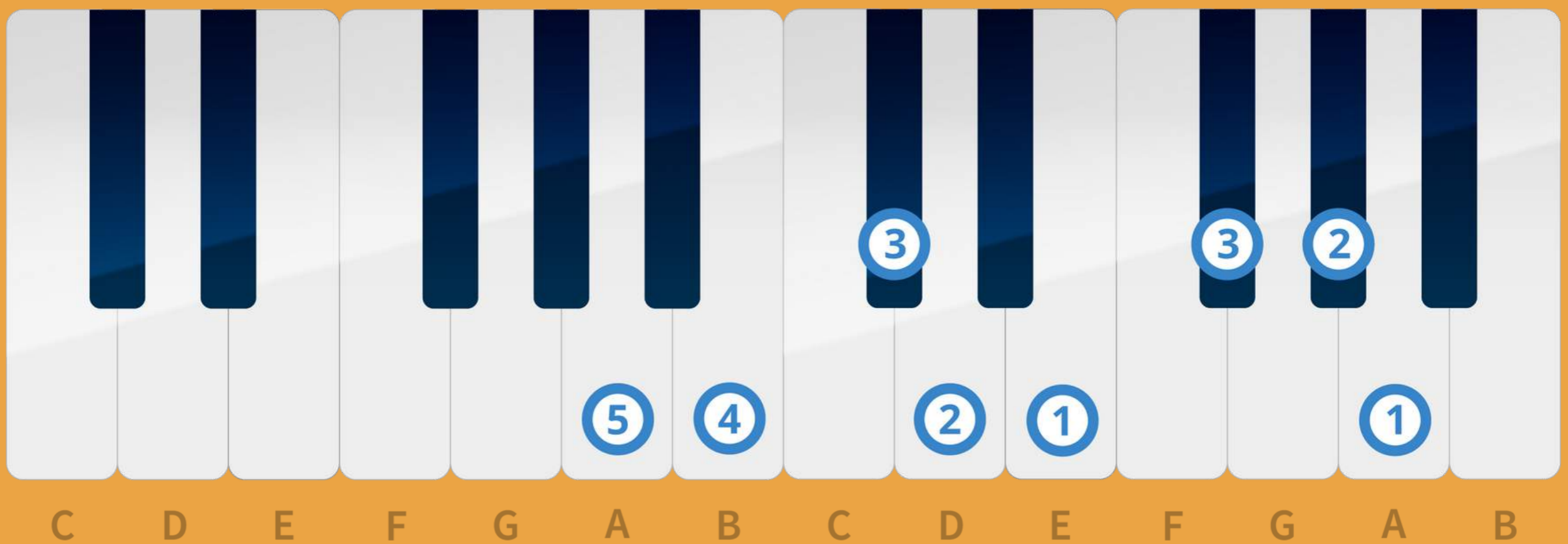
A major

SCALE

Fingering for the Right Hand.



Fingering for the Left Hand.

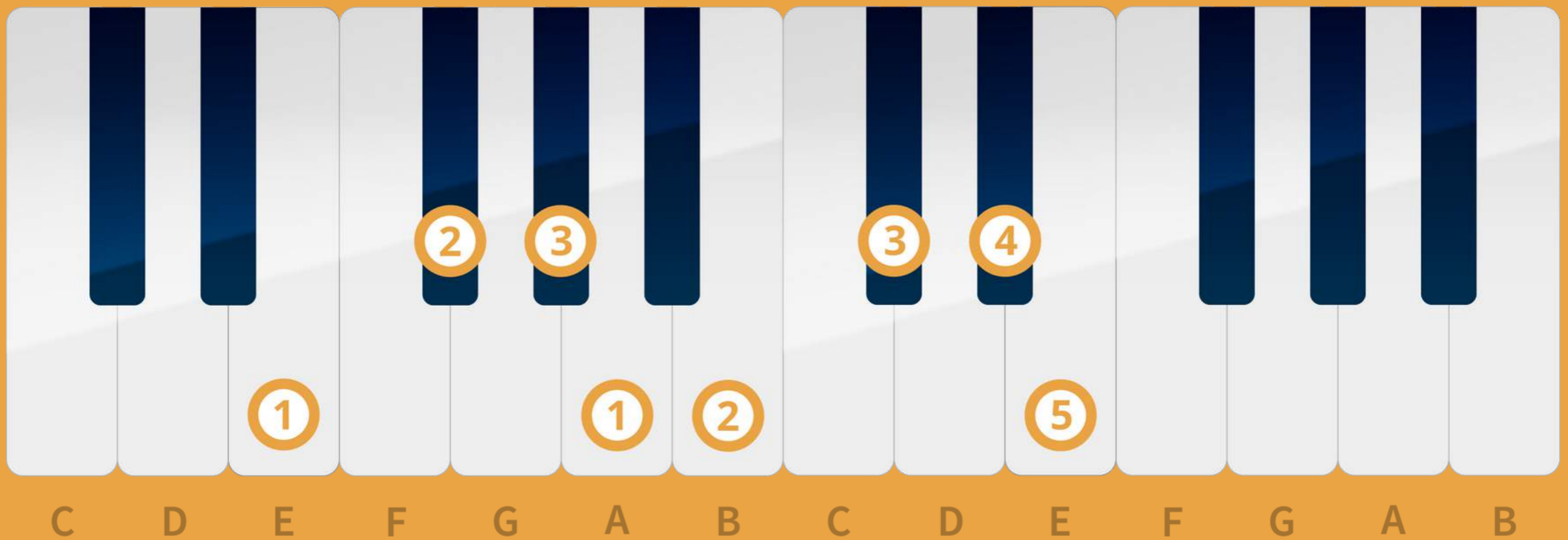


E major

SCALE

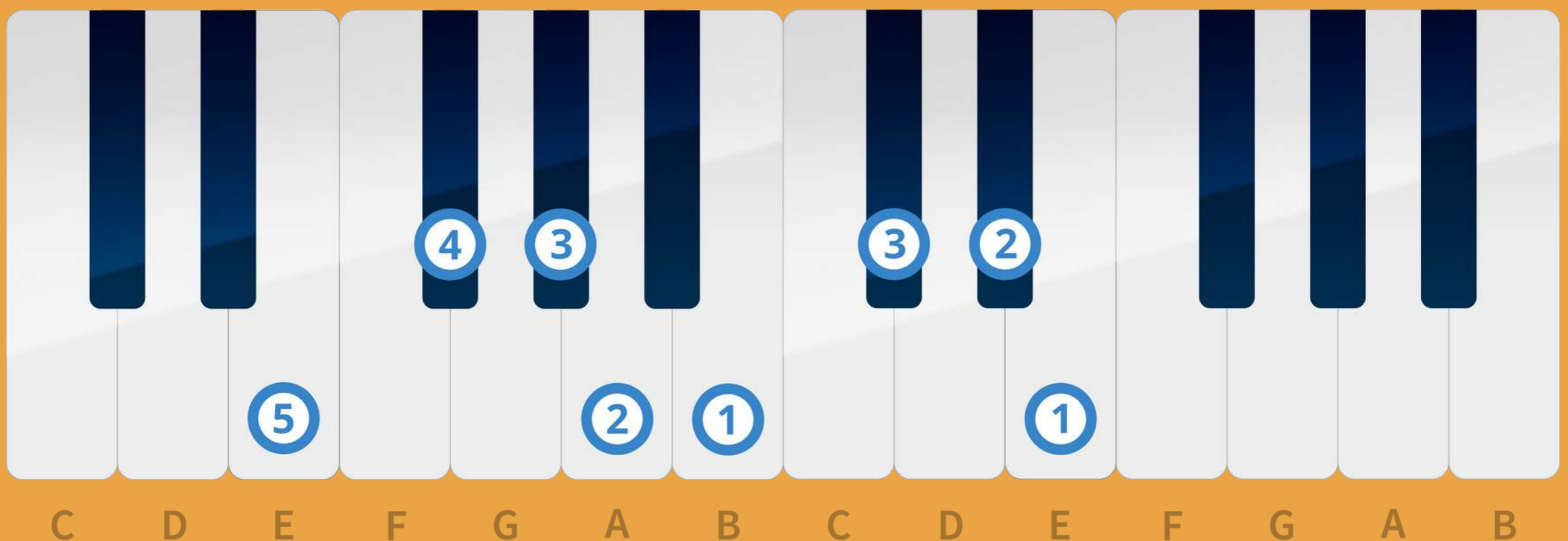
Fingering for the Right Hand.

new fingers



Fingering for the Left Hand.

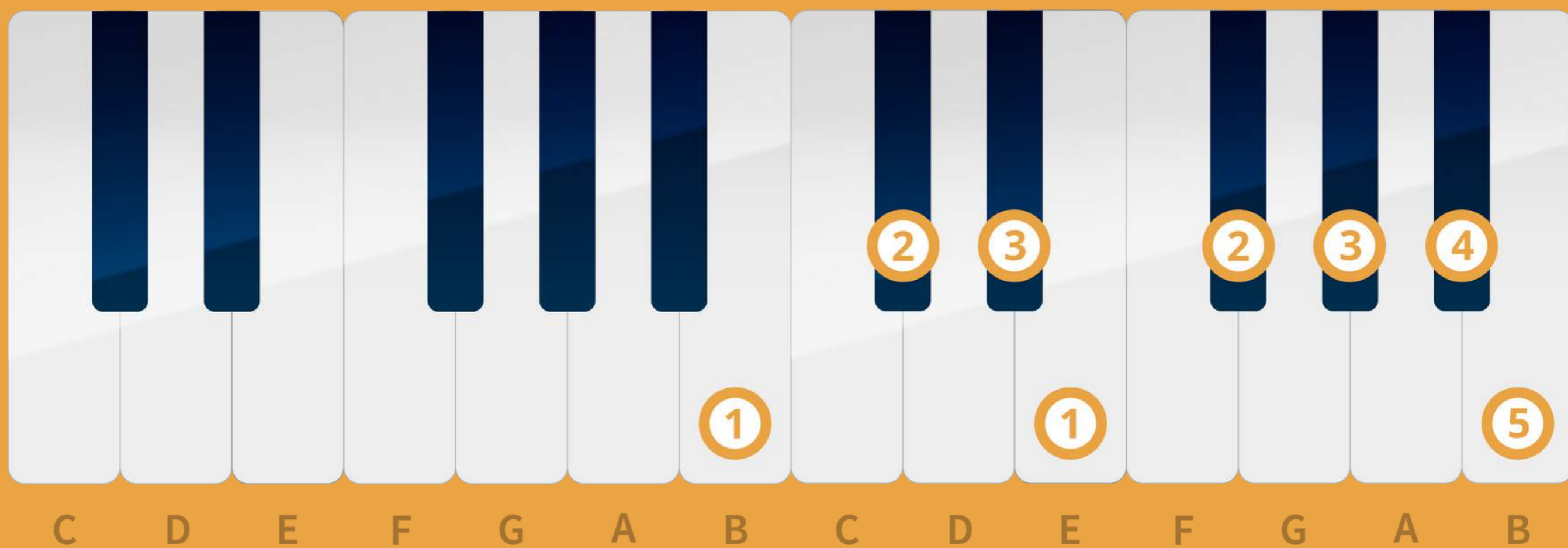
new fingers



B major

SCALE

Fingering for the Right Hand.



Fingering for the Left Hand.

new fingers

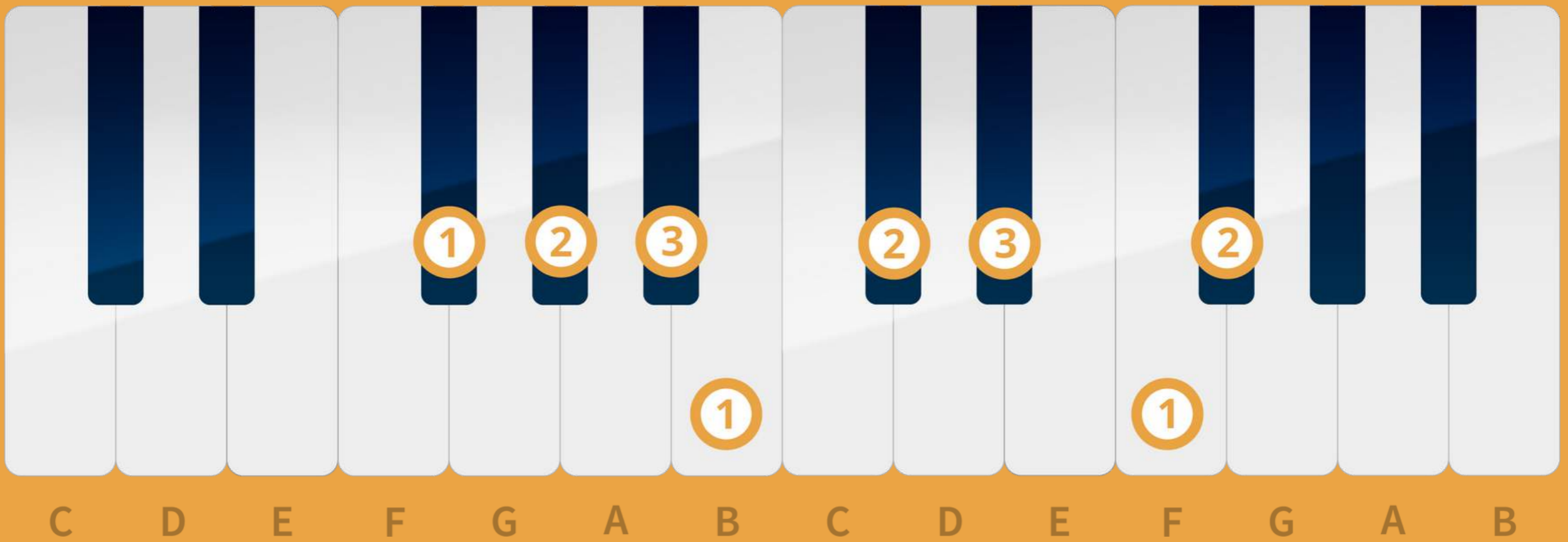


G^b major

/ F# SCALE

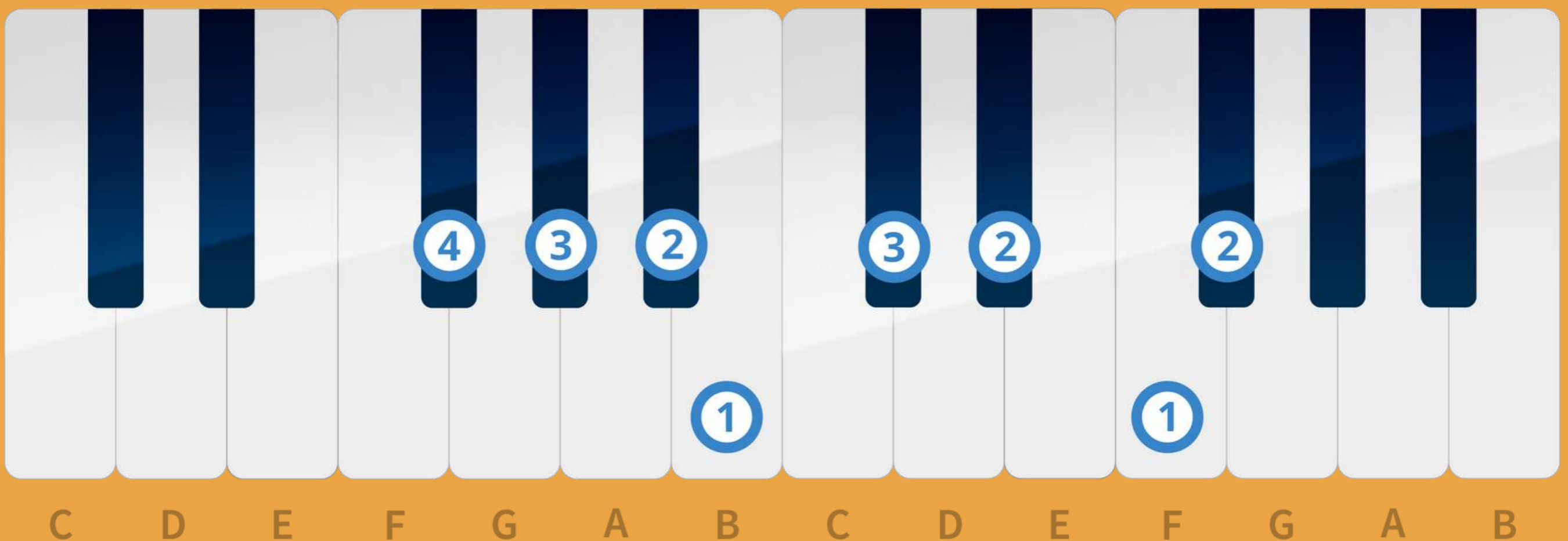
Fingering for the Right Hand.

new fingers



Fingering for the Left Hand.

new fingers

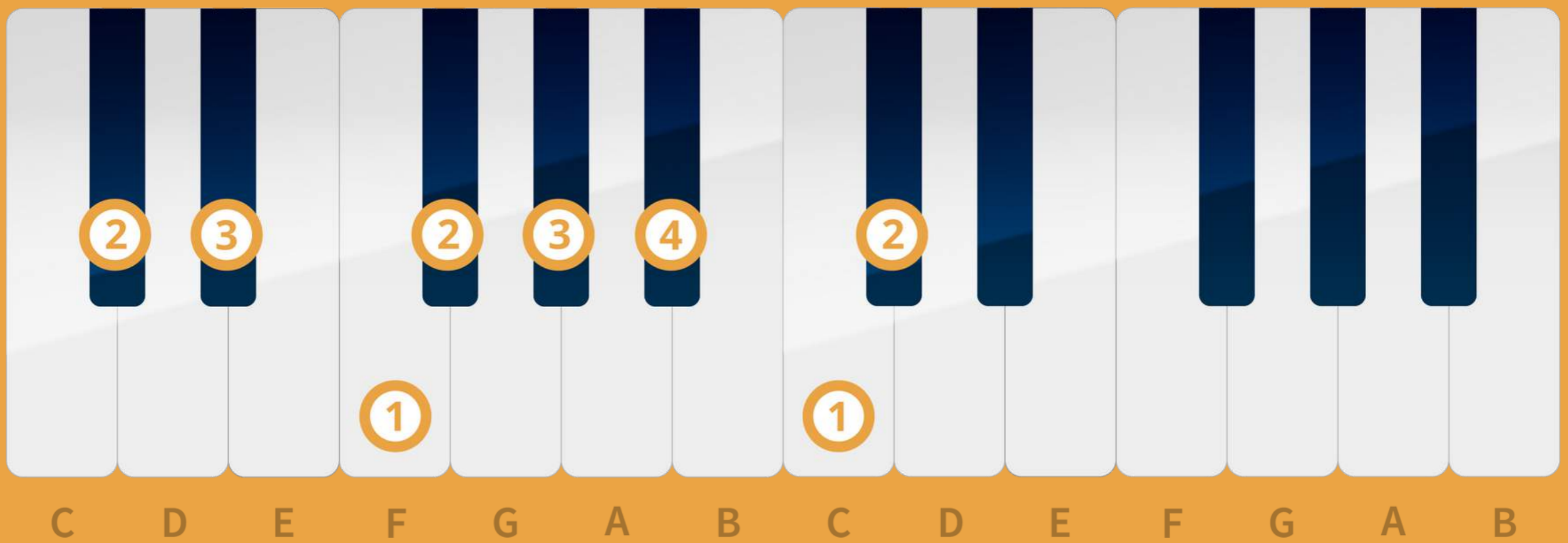


D^b major

/ C# SCALE

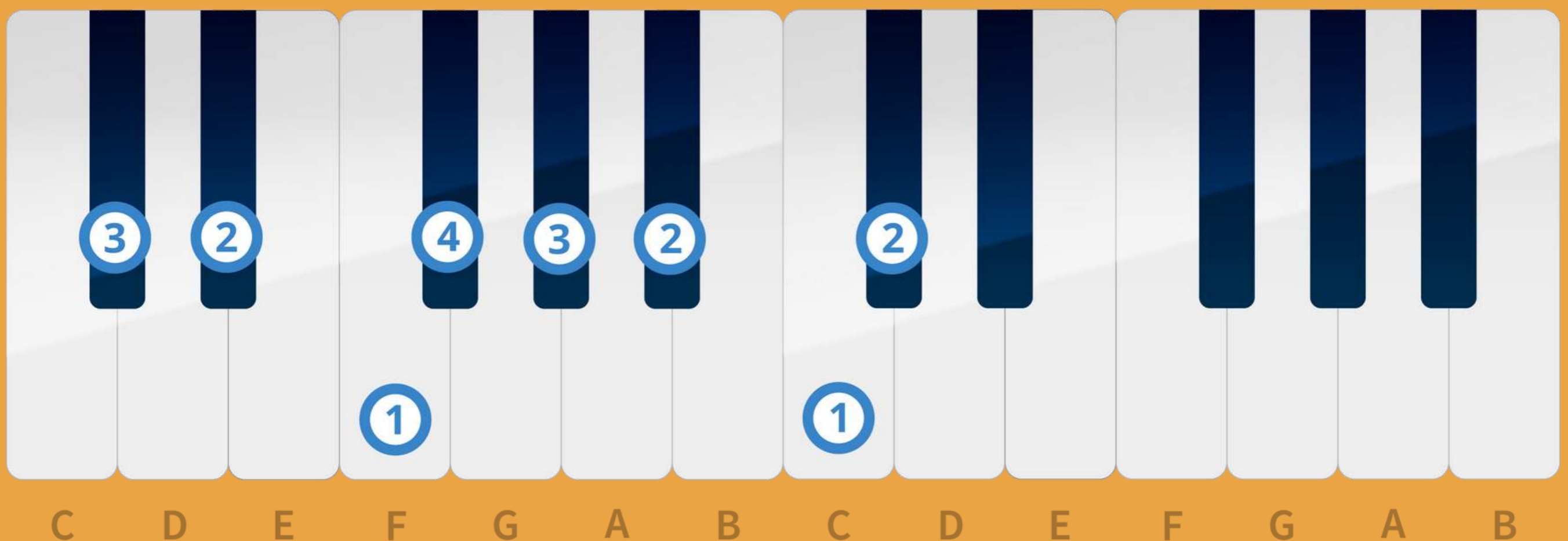
Fingering for the Right Hand.

new fingers



Fingering for the Left Hand.

new fingers

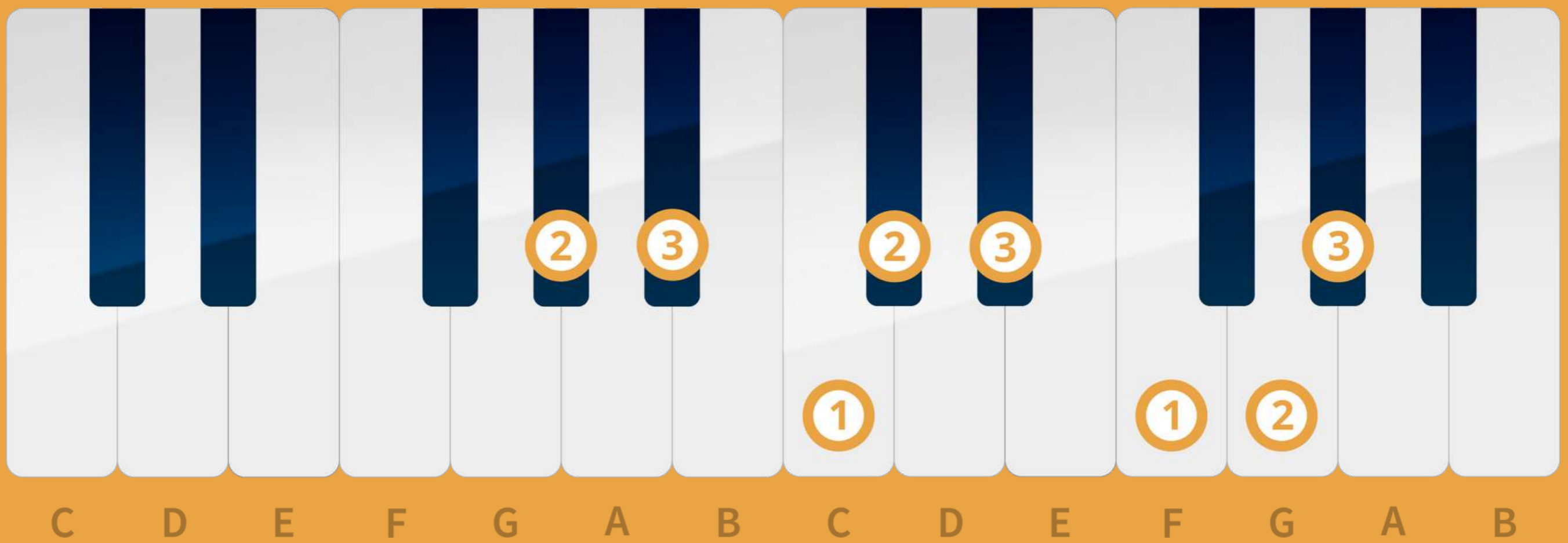


A^b major

/ G[#] SCALE

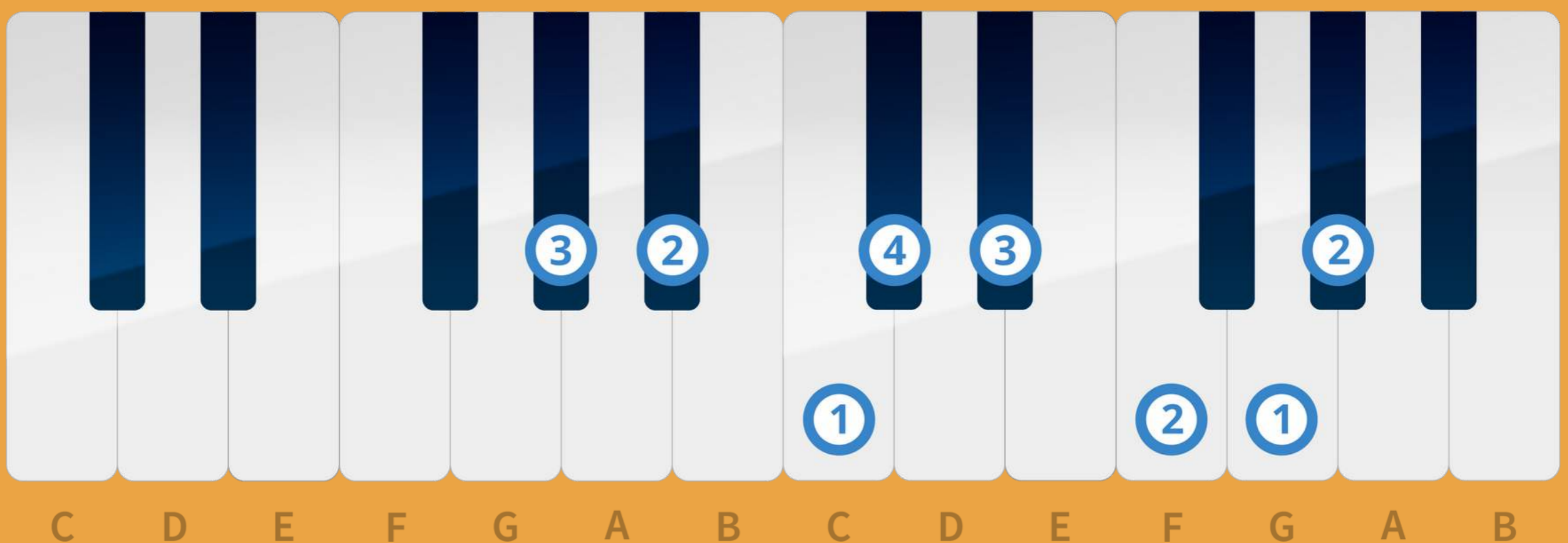
Fingering for the Right Hand.

new fingers



Fingering for the Left Hand.

new fingers



E^b major

/ D[#] SCALE

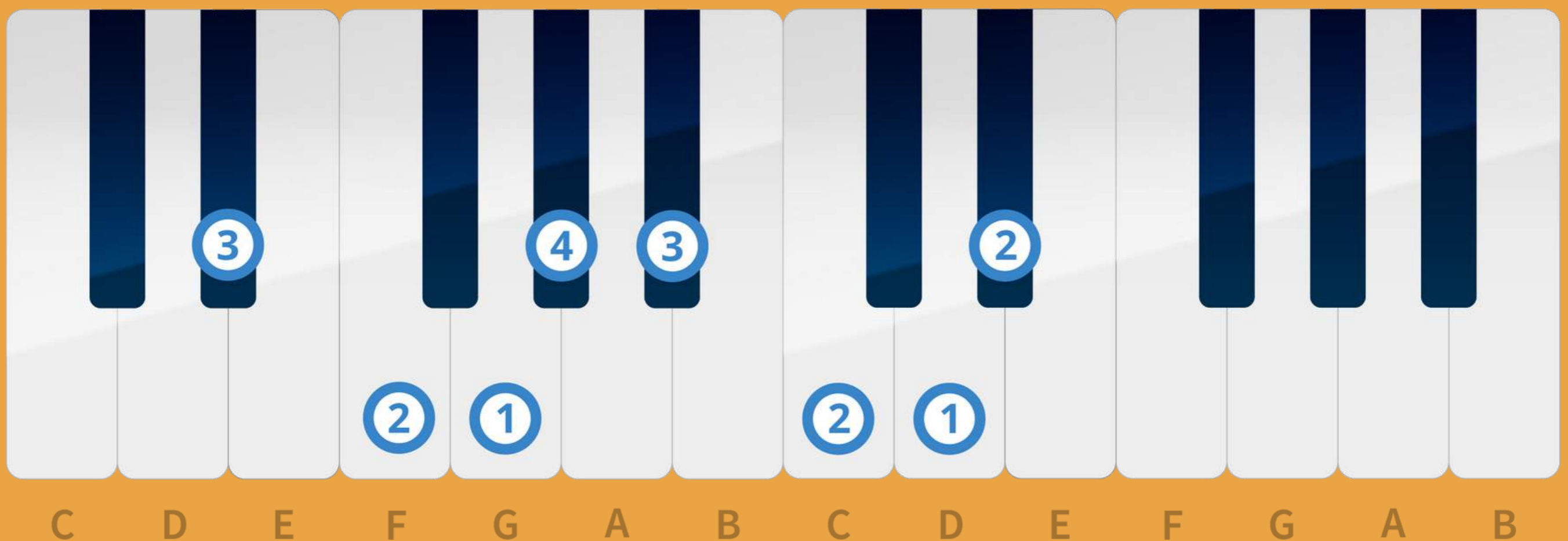
Fingering for the Right Hand.

new fingers



Fingering for the Left Hand.

new fingers

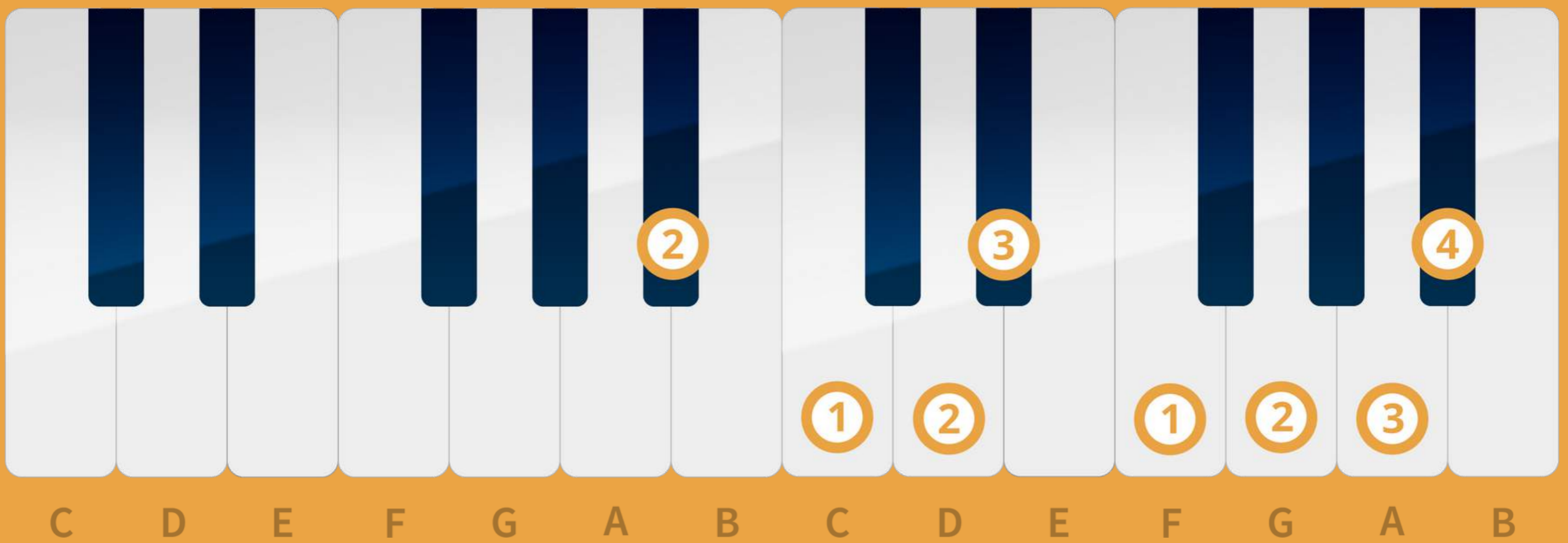


B^b major

/ A[#] SCALE

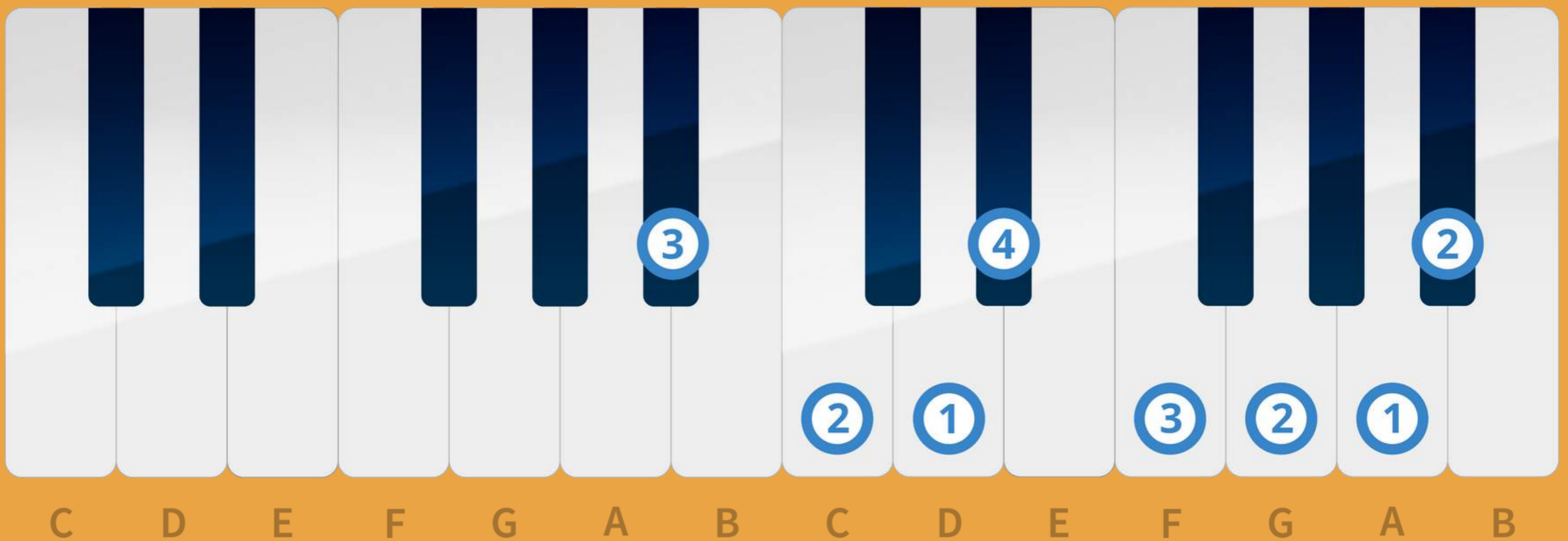
Fingering for the Right Hand.

new fingers



Fingering for the Left Hand.

new fingers

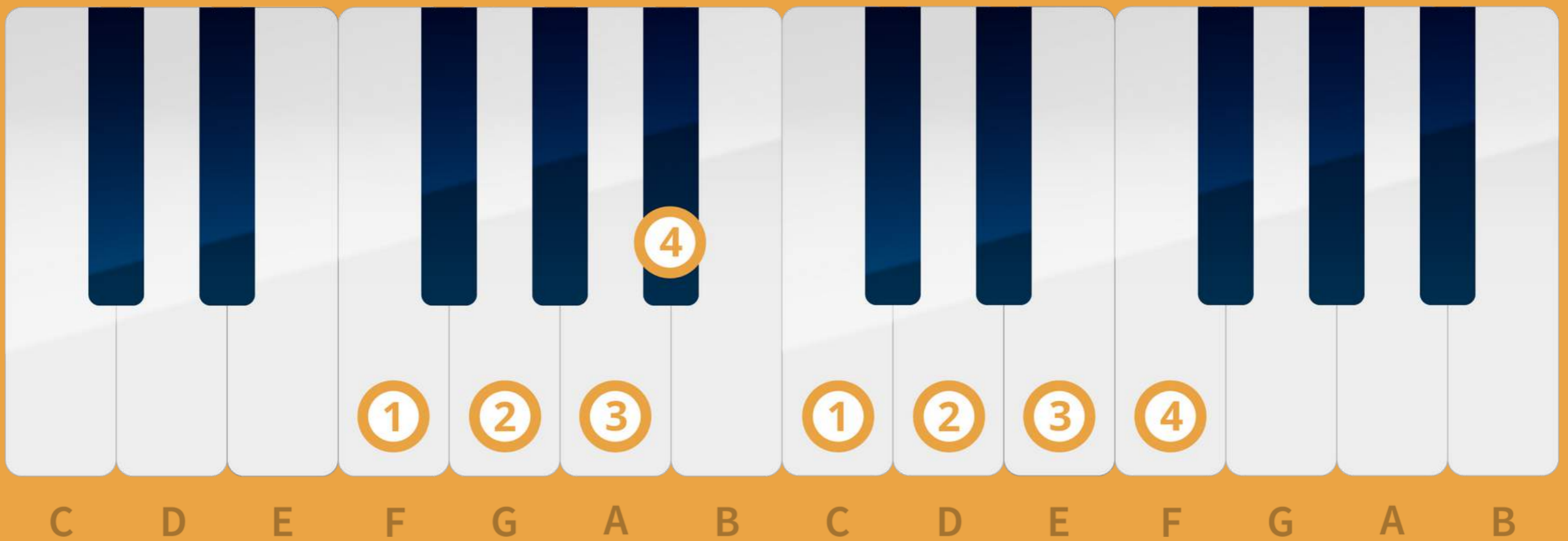


F major

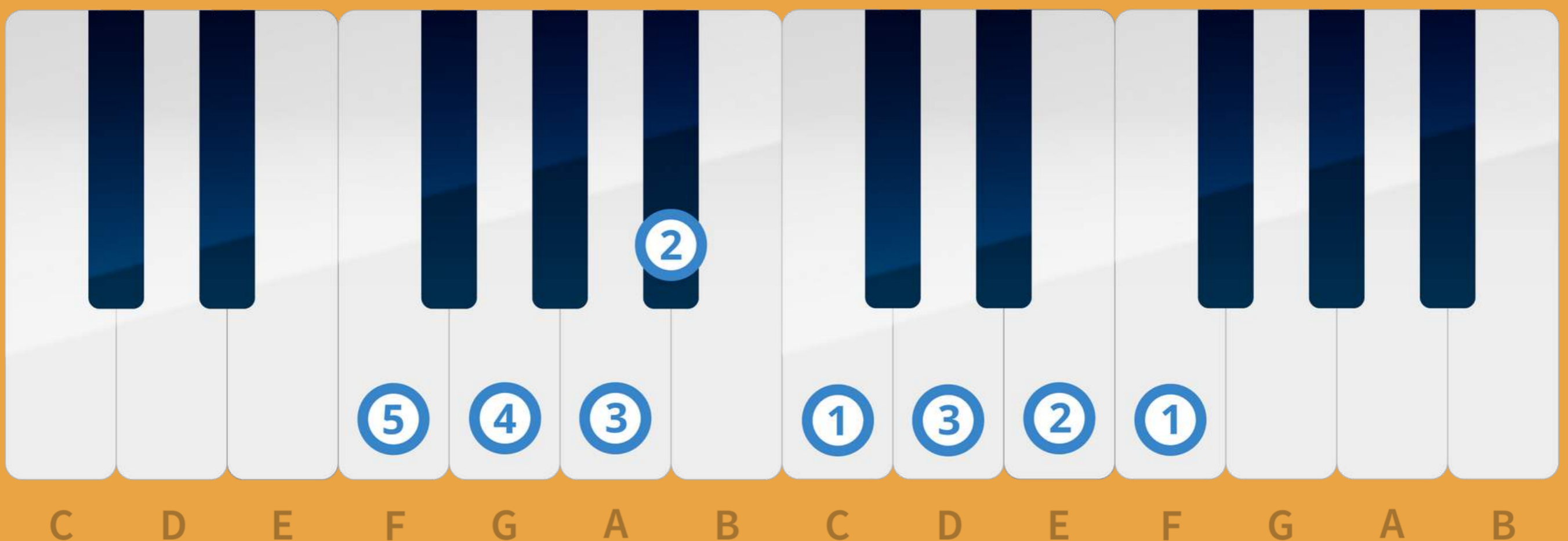
SCALE

Fingering for the Right Hand.

new fingers



Fingering for the Left Hand.





SONGS

by ear

MINOR SCALES

CHEATSHEET

REFRESHER

The following pages are an excerpt taken from the *Super Basics* mini-course. If you've seen this text before, think of it as a refresher.

The natural minor scale is similar to the major scale but you will notice that it has a different feel to it, it sounds sad. The interval pattern is:
Whole-step - Half-step - Whole-step - Whole-step - Half-step - Whole-step - Whole-step

So shortened to one letter we have:

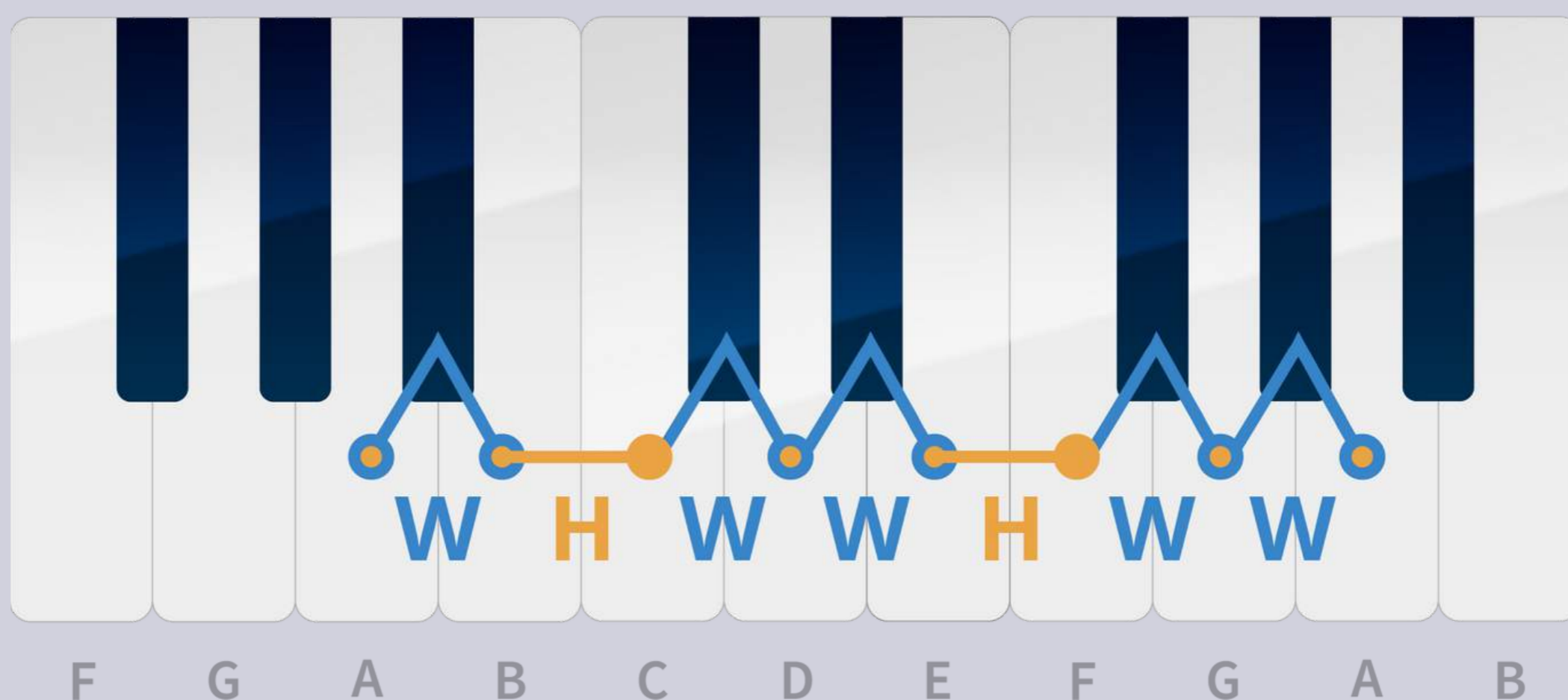
W - H - W - W - H - W - W.

With this pattern you can work out the natural minor scale starting on any note of the piano.

The scales featured in this cheatsheet are all **natural minor scales**, but there are other derivatives of the minor scale with different names. Once you've mastered these natural minor scales take a look at the final pages to learn how to build the **harmonic minor** and **melodic minor** scales.

SCALE STEPS

Remembering that a whole-step is equal to two half-steps we can begin on A and play the **A natural minor scale** like this:



In the image above, the movement of counting the whole-step is indicated in blue and the half-step is in orange.

Each dot indicates the notes of the scale we play, 8 notes in total.

QUICK REFERENCE

In the following pages are the patterns laid out on the keyboard for all of the minor scales. There are 12 in total, one beginning on each note of the octave.

Work through each one slowly and have a go at playing them ascending and descending, in the RH then the LH.

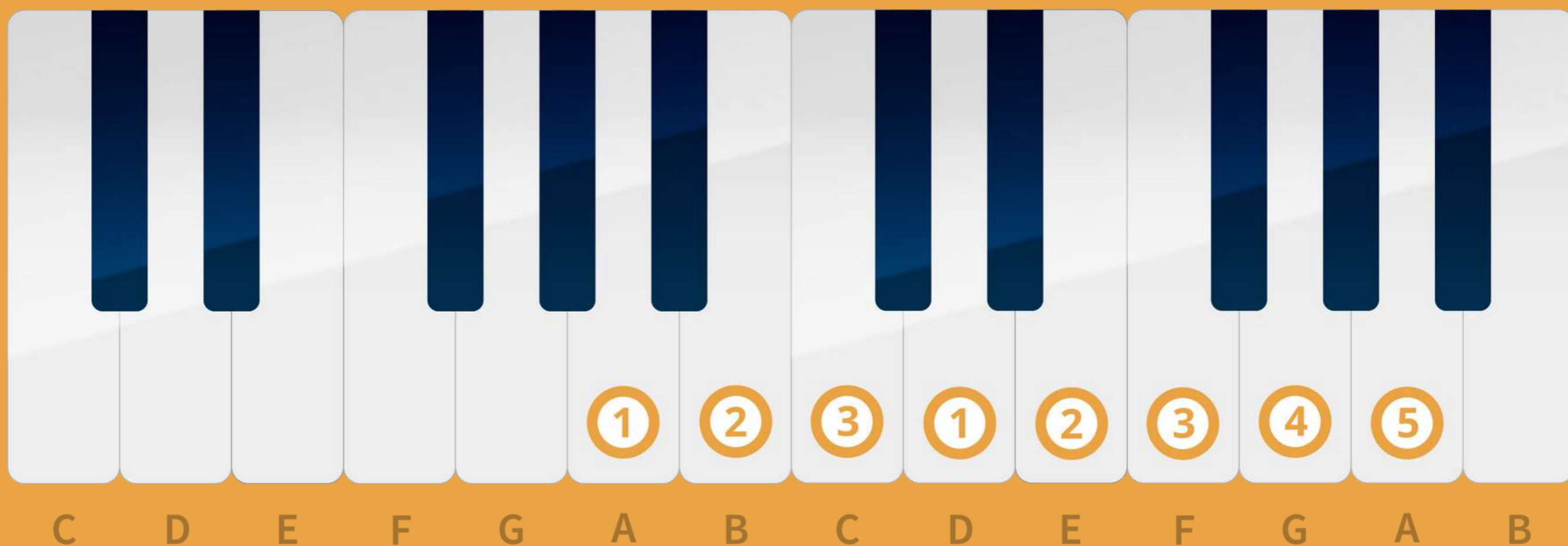
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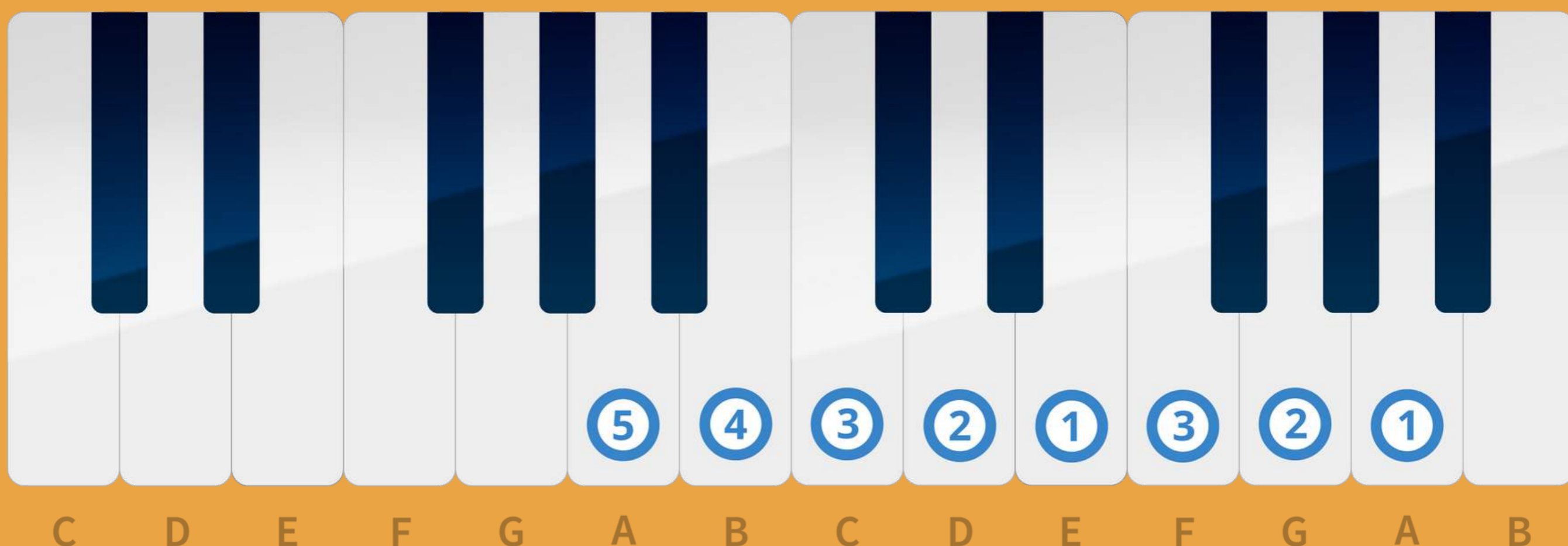
A minor

SCALE

Fingering for the Right Hand.



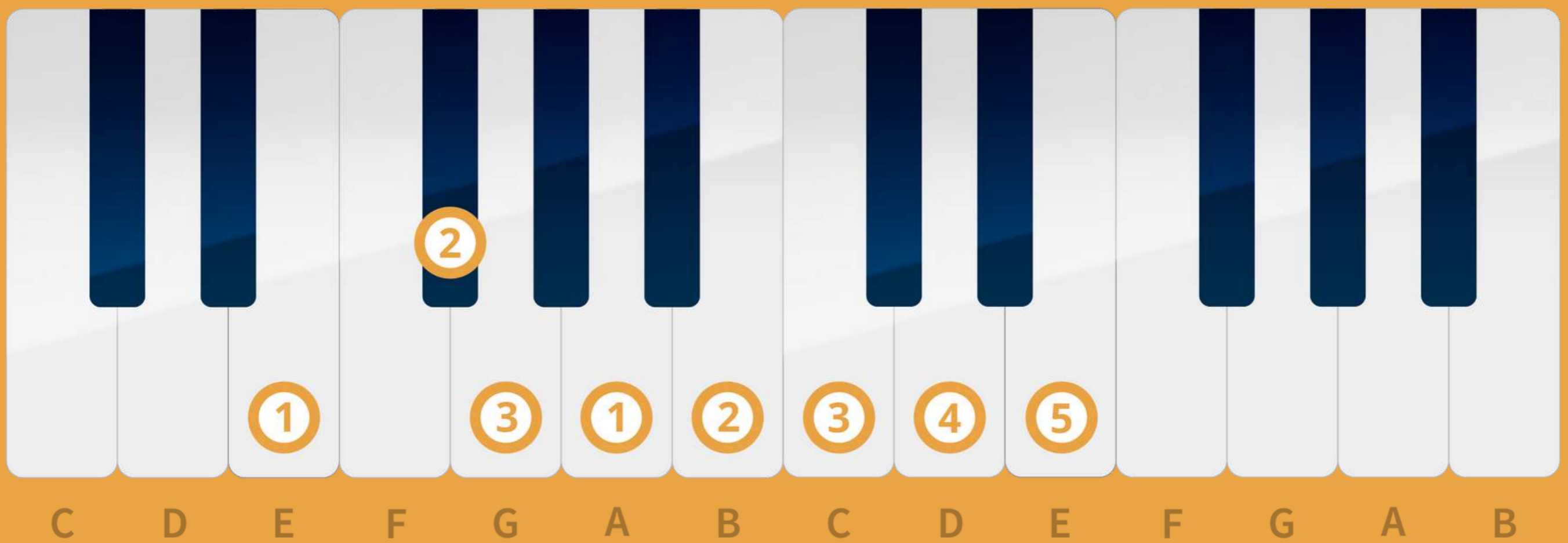
Fingering for the Left Hand.



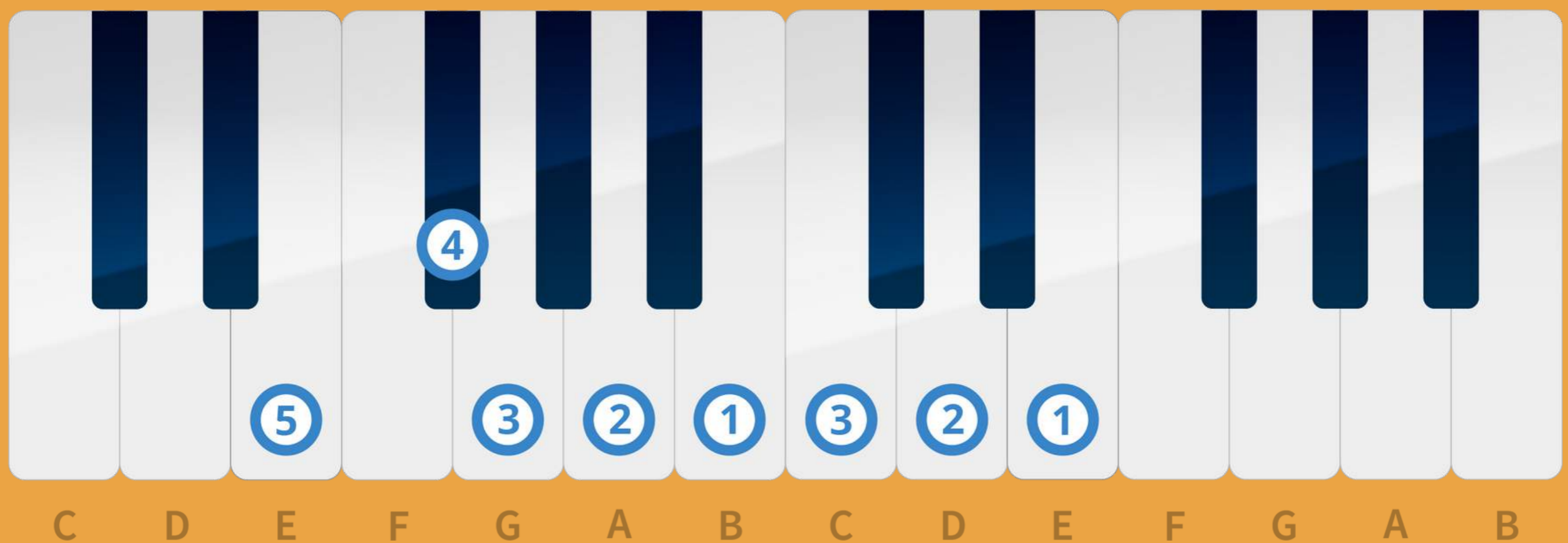
E minor

SCALE

Fingering for the Right Hand.



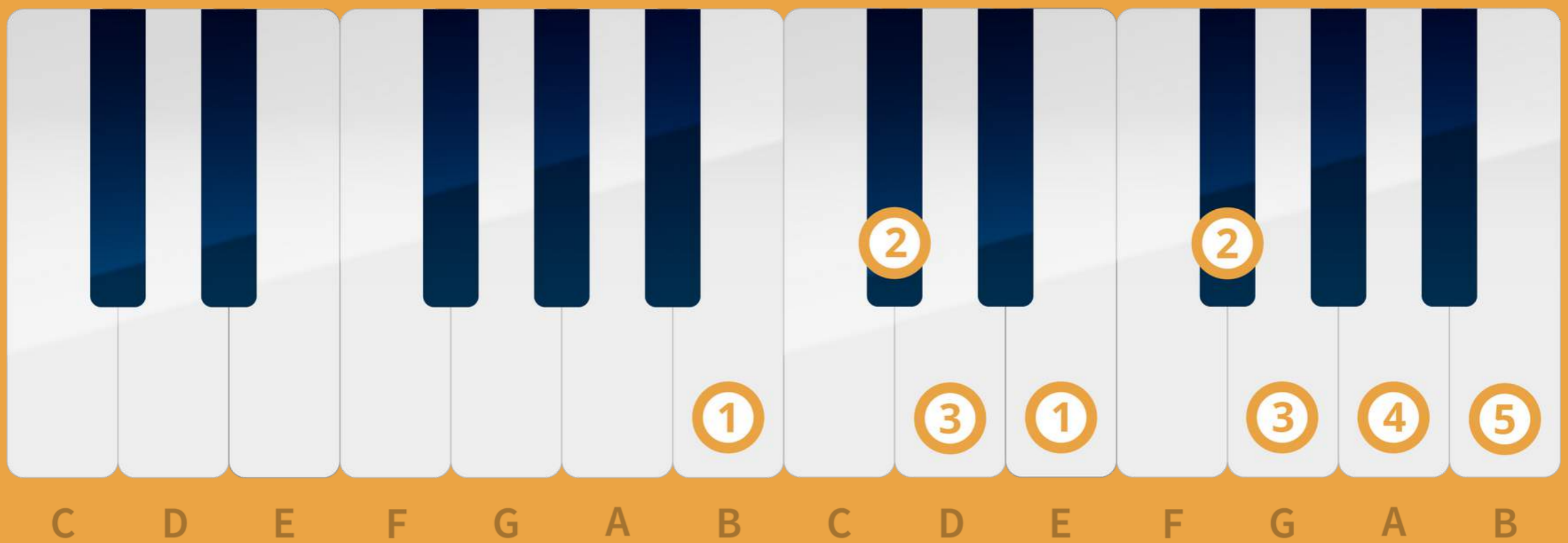
Fingering for the Left Hand.



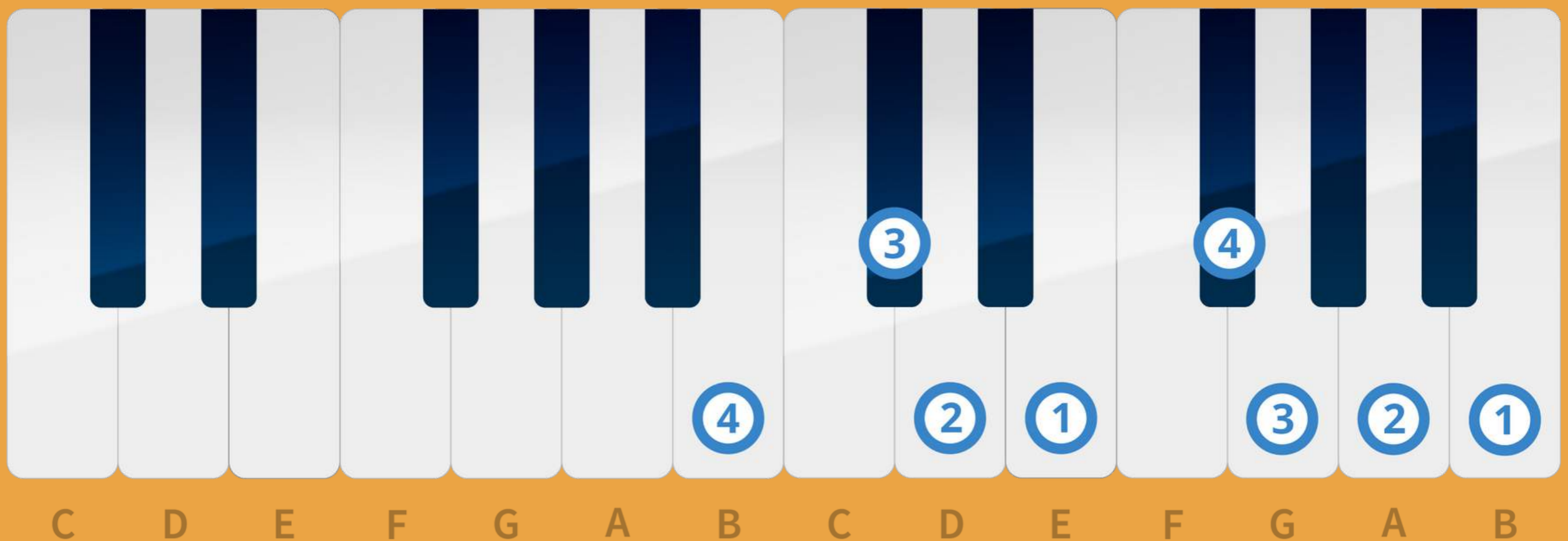
B minor

SCALE

Fingering for the Right Hand.



Fingering for the Left Hand.



F# minor

/ G^b SCALE

Fingering for the Right Hand.

new fingers



Fingering for the Left Hand.

new fingers

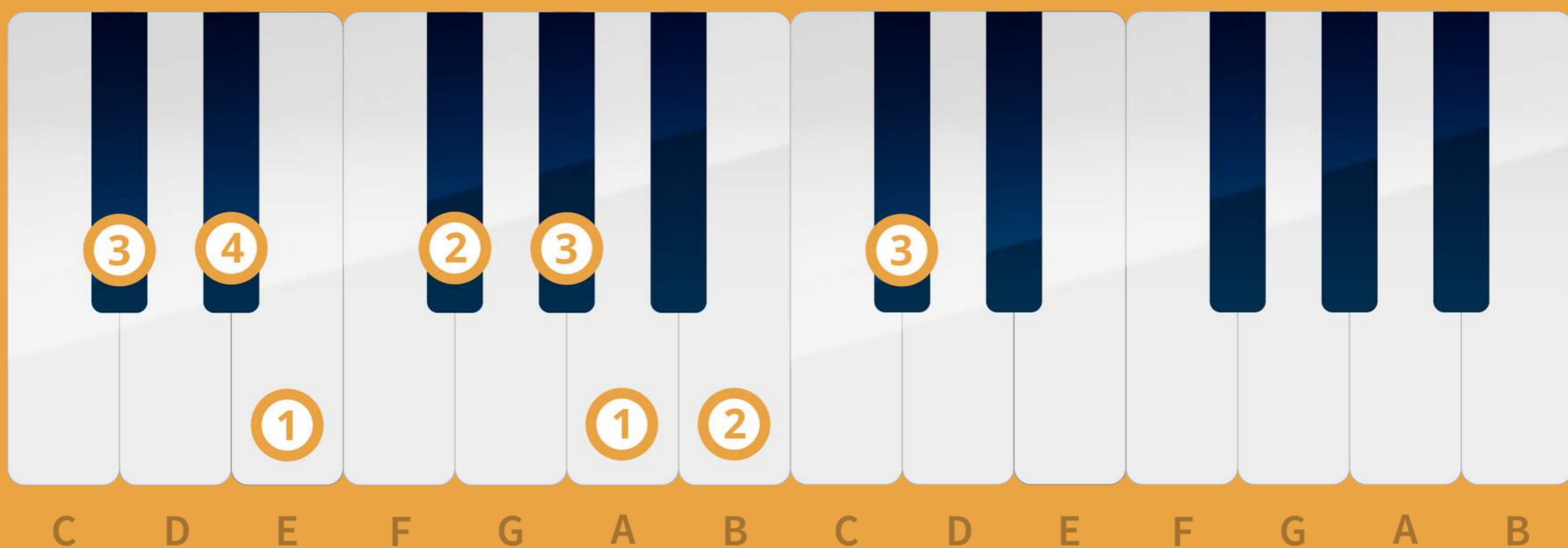


C[#] minor

/ D^b SCALE

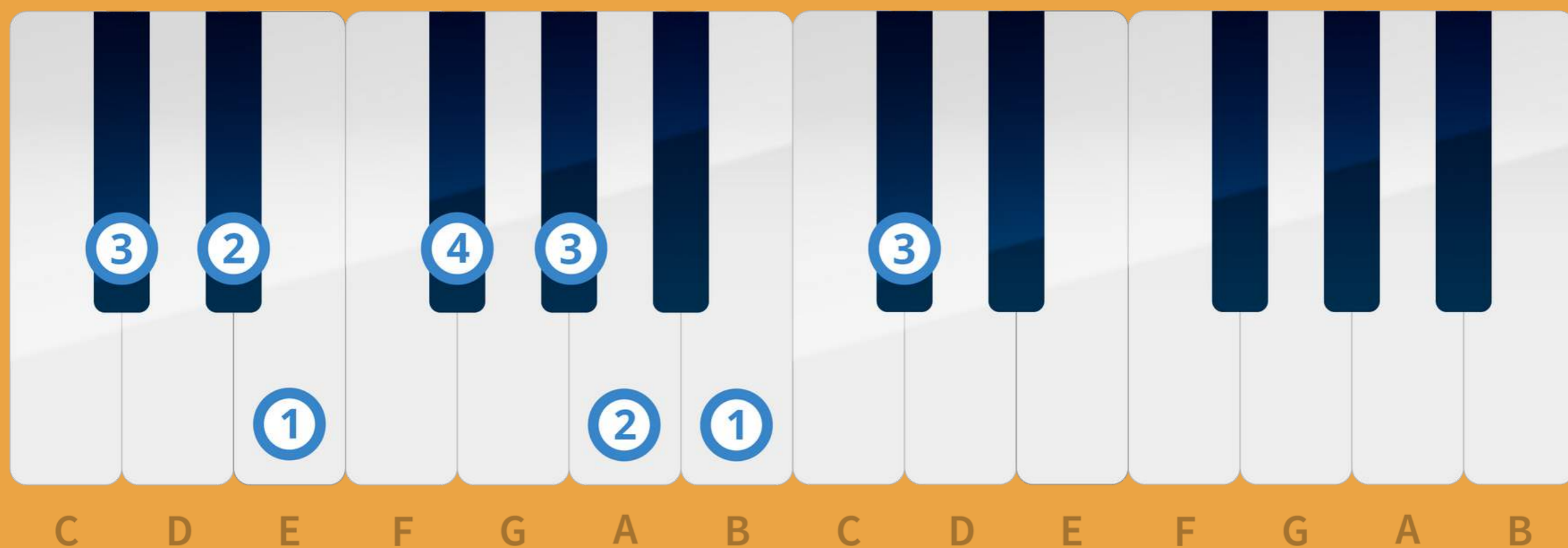
Fingering for the Right Hand.

new fingers



Fingering for the Left Hand.

new fingers

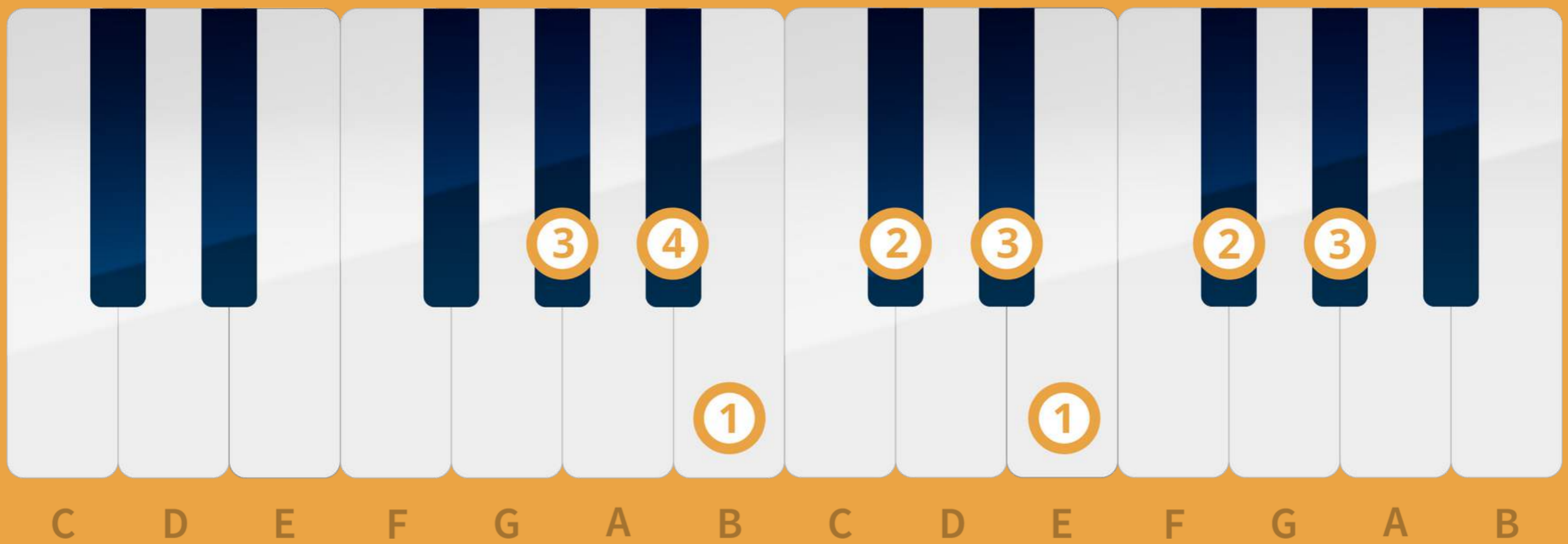


G[#] minor

/ A^b SCALE

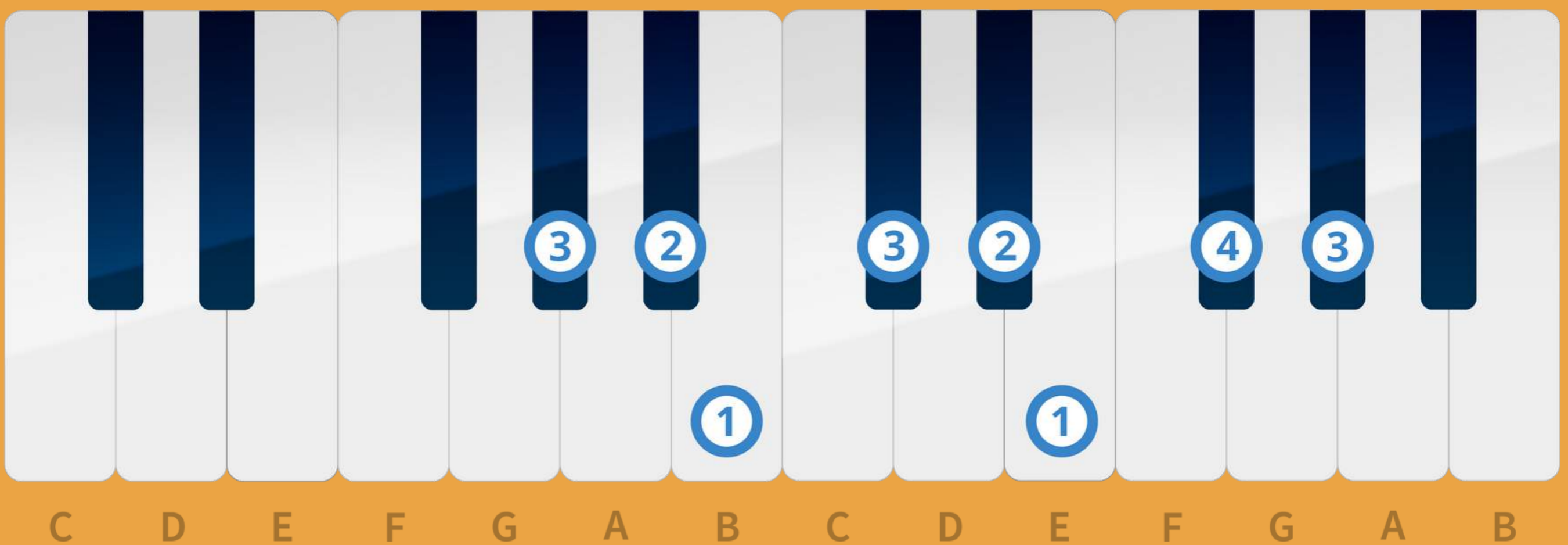
Fingering for the Right Hand.

new fingers



Fingering for the Left Hand.

new fingers

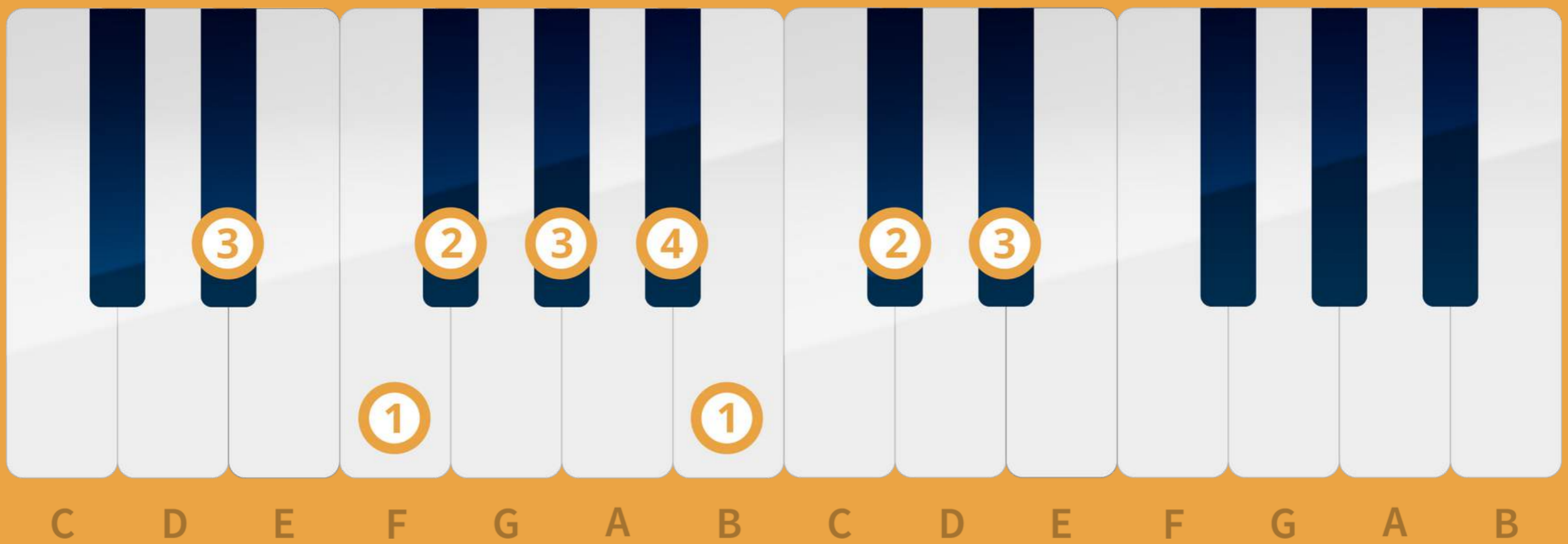


D[#] minor

/ E^b SCALE

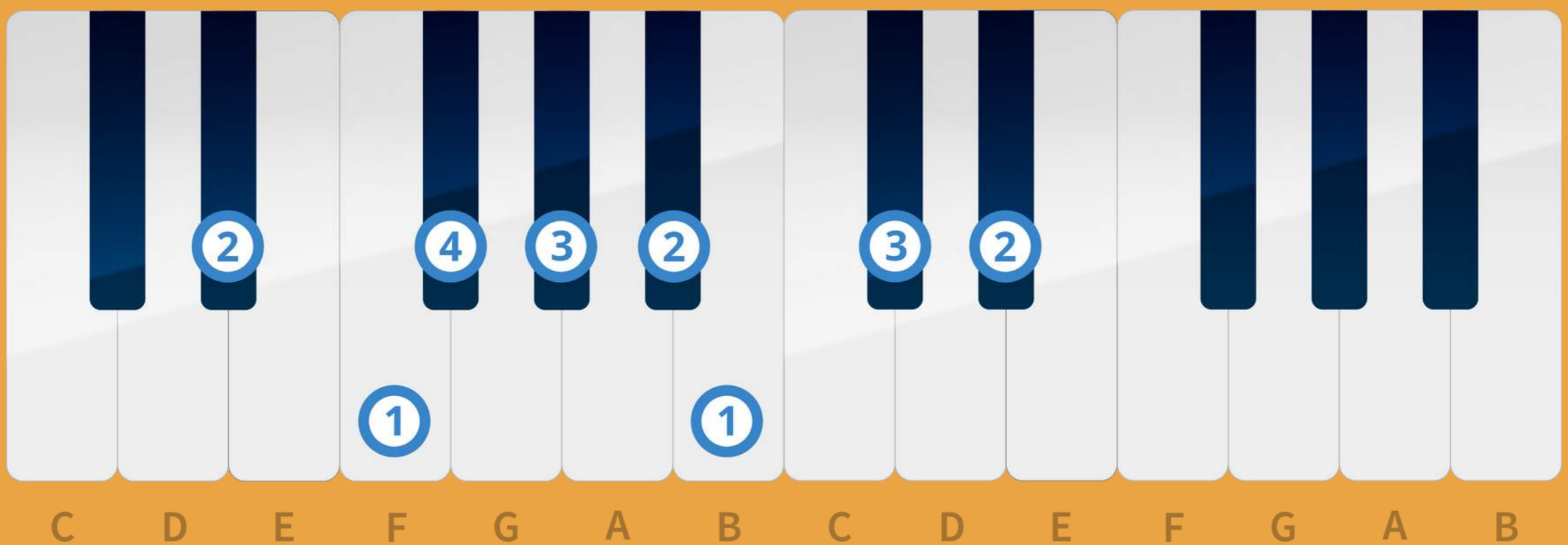
Fingering for the Right Hand.

new fingers



Fingering for the Left Hand.

new fingers

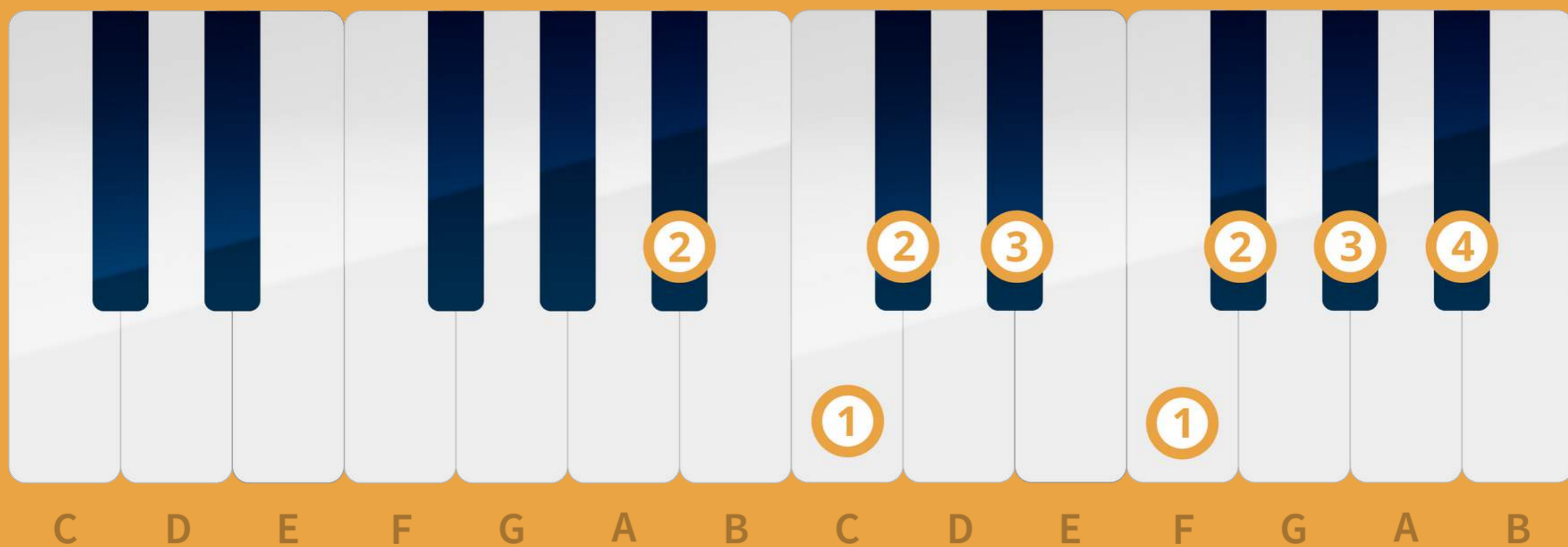


B^b minor

/ A[#] SCALE

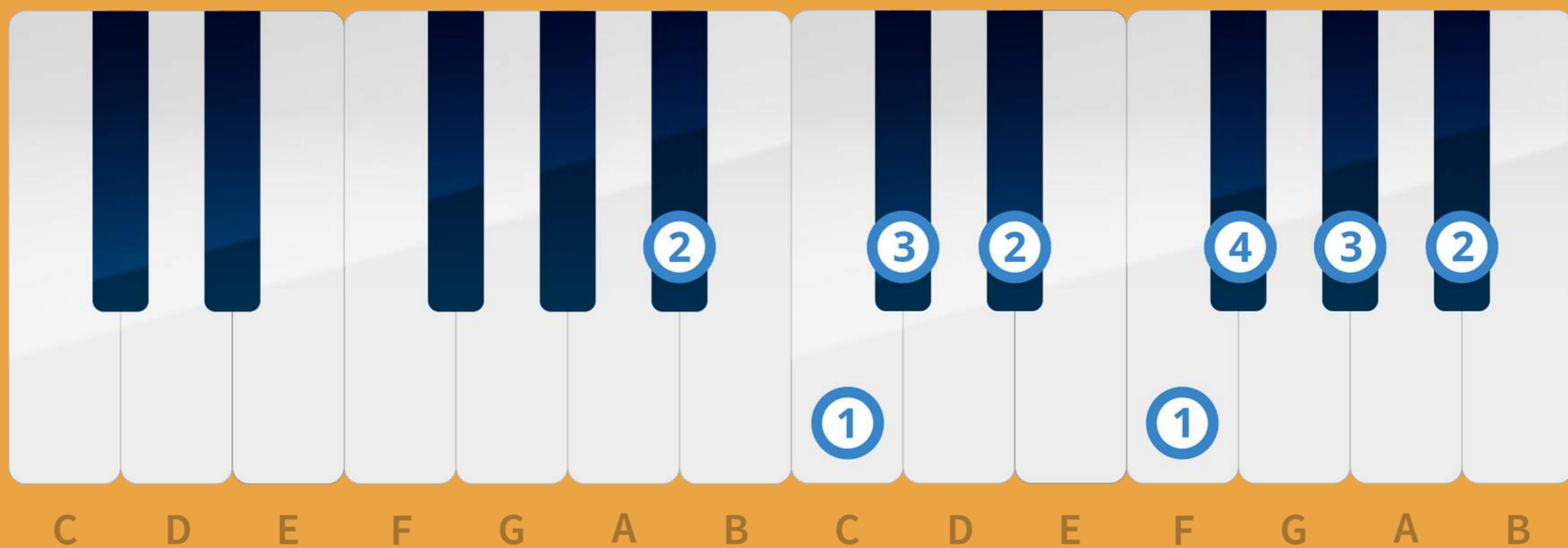
Fingering for the Right Hand.

new fingers



Fingering for the Left Hand.

new fingers

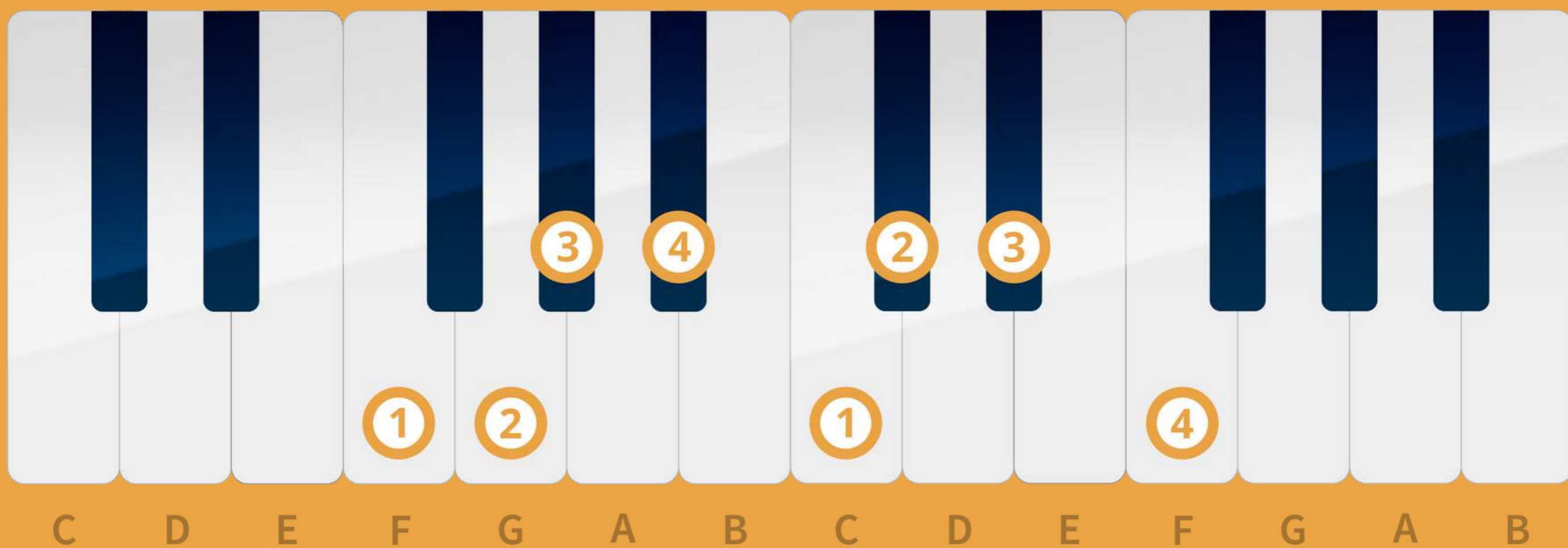


F minor

SCALE

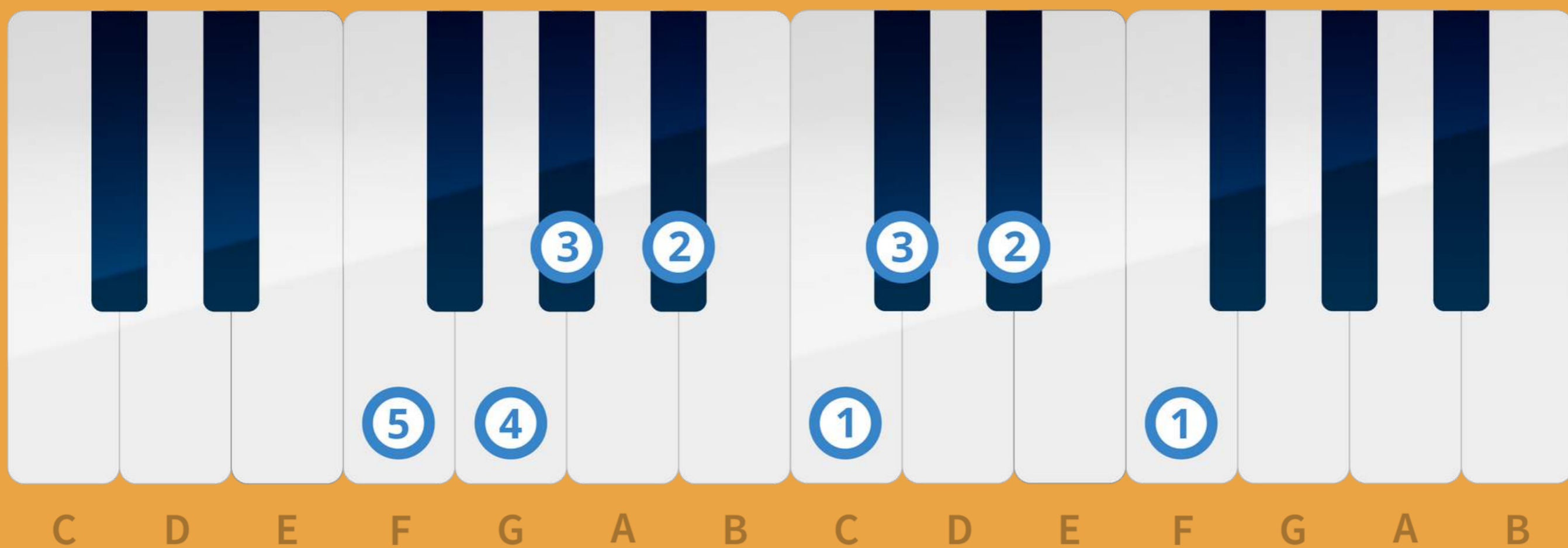
Fingering for the Right Hand.

new fingers



Fingering for the Left Hand.

new fingers



C minor

SCALE

Fingering for the Right Hand.



Fingering for the Left Hand.



G minor

SCALE

Fingering for the Right Hand.



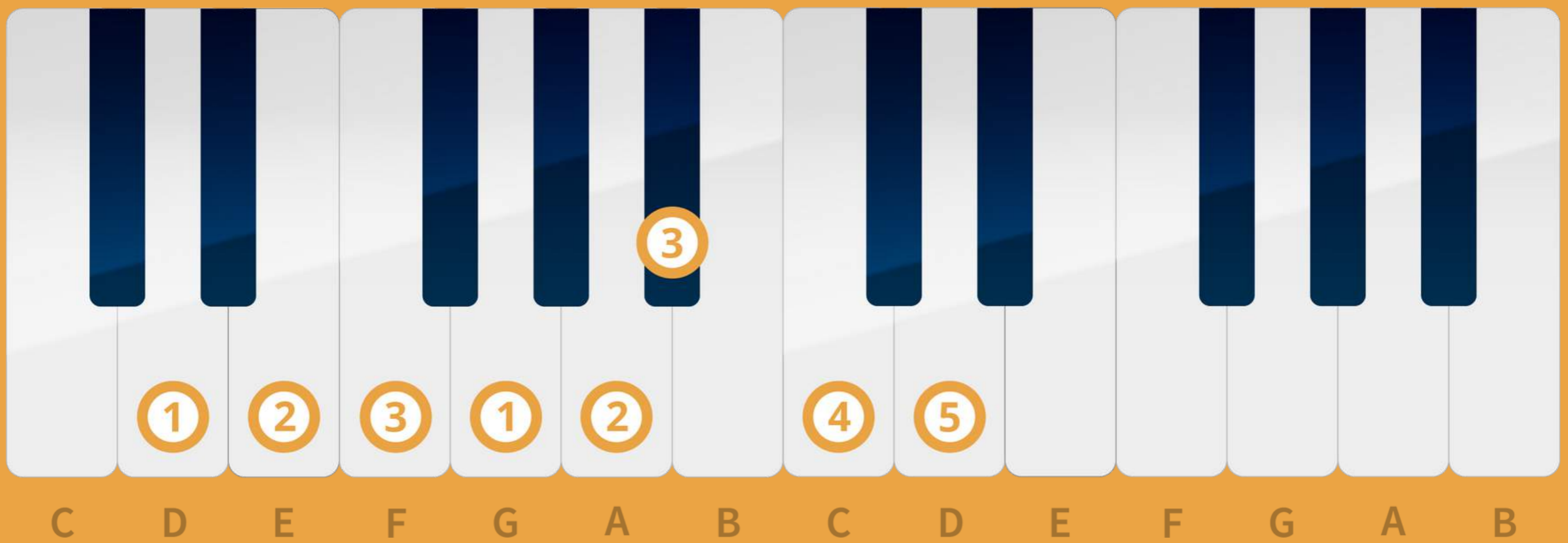
Fingering for the Left Hand.



D minor

SCALE

Fingering for the Right Hand.



Fingering for the Left Hand.



HARMONIC MINOR

The **harmonic minor scale** is very similar to the natural minor scale but for one note. The seventh note in the scale is raised up 1 half-step.

It consists of the following interval pattern over an octave:

Whole-step - Half-step - Whole-step - Whole-step - Half-step - Whole+half-step - Half-step

So shortened to one letter we have:

W - H - W - W - H - W+H - H.

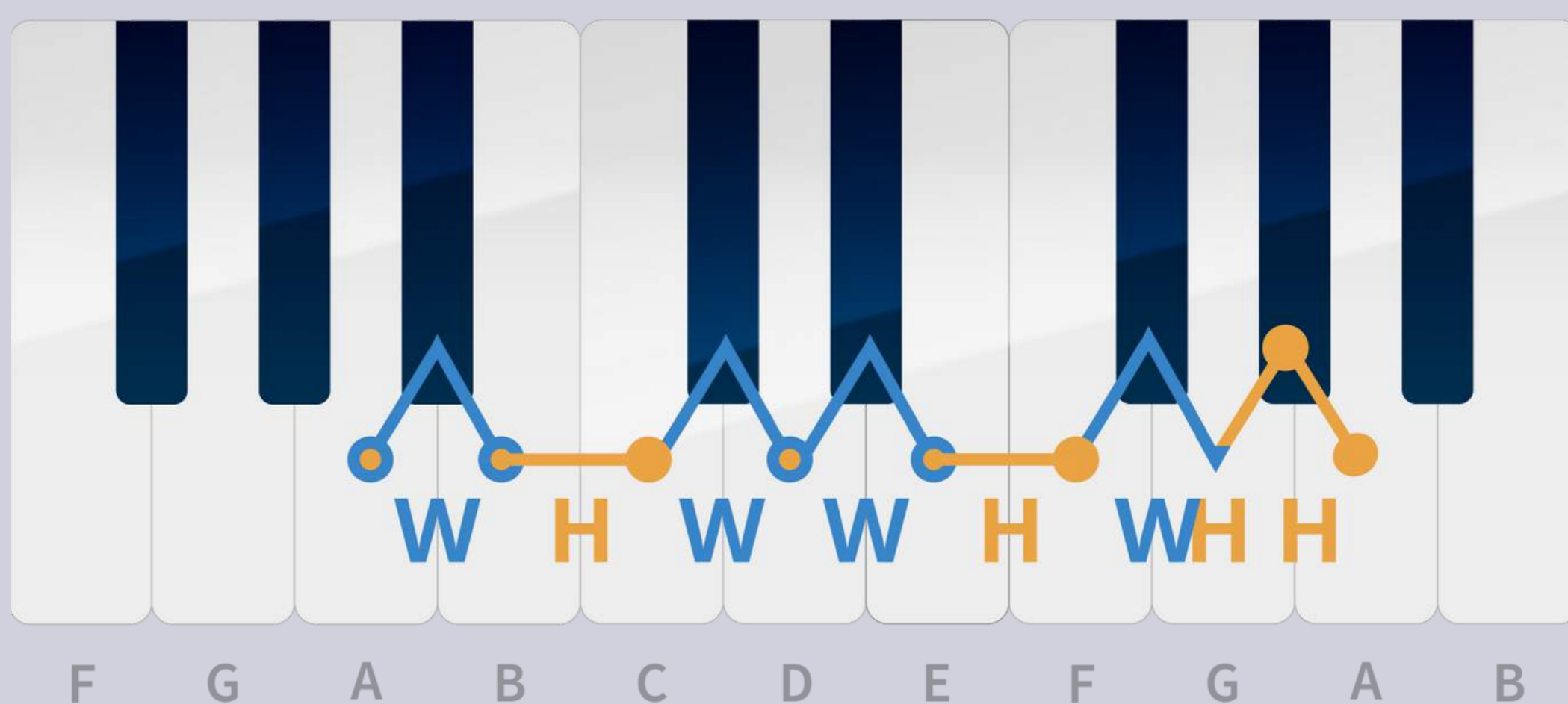
For example, the **A harmonic minor scale** consists of these notes:

A - B - C - D - E - F - G# - A

1 2 3^b 4 5 6 7# 8/1

To build a harmonic minor scale from any starting note, simply play a natural minor scale and 'raise' (*sharpen*) the 7th note.

To build a harmonic minor scale from any starting note, simply play a natural minor scale and 'raise' (*sharpen*) the 7th note.



Study the above image to see how this scale looks on the keyboard **beginning on A**.

Each counting movement is shown: the whole-step is blue, the half-step is in orange. Each dot indicates the notes to play.

The interval between the 6th and 7th note (in this case between F and G#) is a **Whole + Half-step**.

MELODIC MINOR

The **melodic minor scale** is a bit more complicated. Like the harmonic minor scale it has a raised 7th note, but in addition it has a raised 6th note as well.

It consists of the following interval pattern over an octave:

Whole-step - Half-step - Whole-step - Whole-step - Whole-step - Whole-step - Half-step

So shortened to one letter we have:

W - H - W - W - W - W - H.

For example, the **A melodic minor scale** consists of these notes:

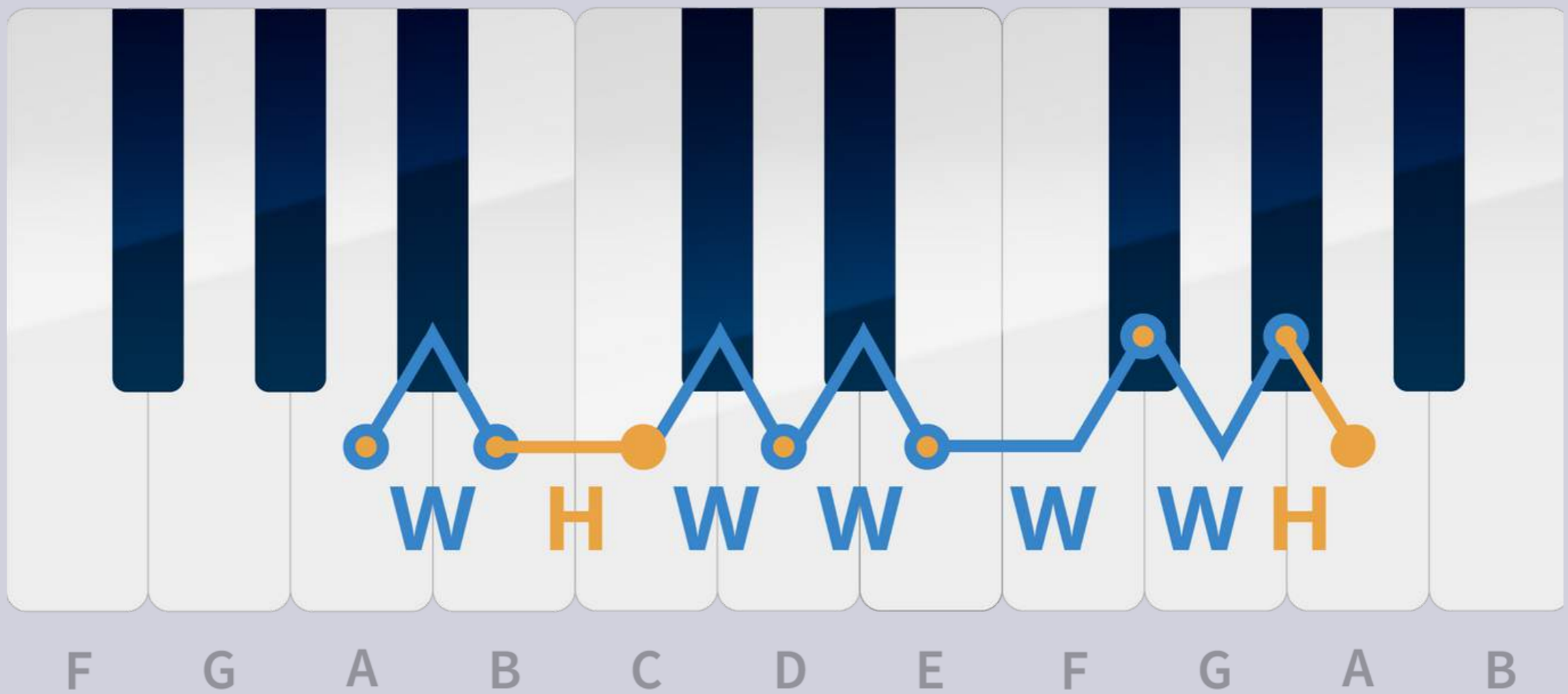
A - B - C - D - E - F# - G# - A

1 2 3^b 4 5 6# 7# 8/1

This is where it gets tricky! This is how we play the scale **ascending only**. When we descend, the scale reverts to the natural minor:

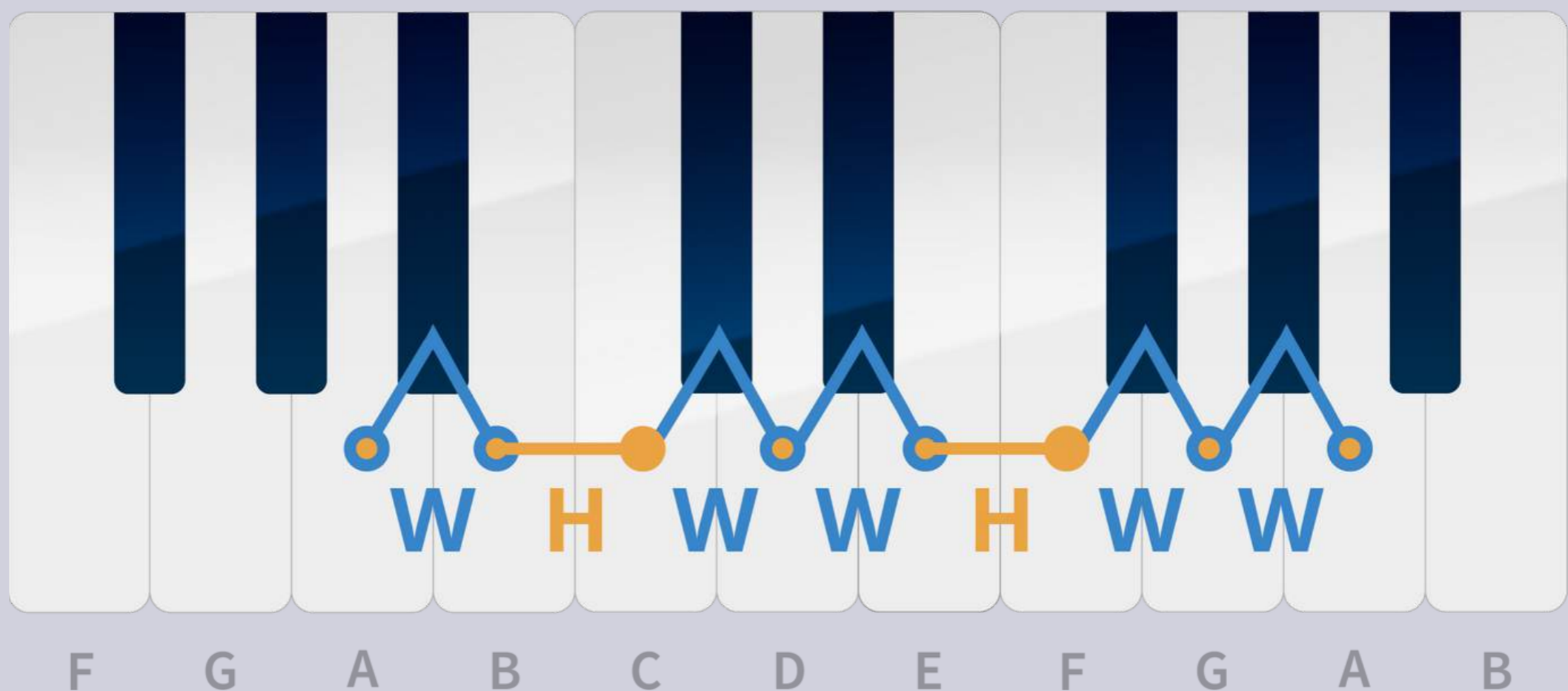
8/1 7 6 5 4 3^b 2 1

Below is an image of the **ascending** melodic minor scale beginning on A:



Again, each counting movement is shown: the whole-step is blue, the half-step is in orange. Each dot indicates the notes to play.

The **descending** melodic minor scale in A is shown below (it's the same as the *natural* minor):



“

The practice of scales solves the greatest number of technical problems in the shortest amount of time.

–Andres Segovia.

“

Rock & Roll is the physical thing that just comes out of you .. the other stuff you have to sit down and learn .. once you learn scales and chord progressions, you can make up your own versions.

–Brian Setzer.



Got questions about scales?

Come and join the discussion at:

[FACEBOOK.COM/GROUPS/PIANOPICNICVIPS](https://www.facebook.com/groups/pianopicnicvips)