



### How Does the Circle of Fifths Work?

First, everything starts from C, since C is the key in which there are NO sharps or flats.

As we move **clockwise** from C, each note is a fifth **above** the last. So G is the fifth of the C scale, D is the fifth of the G scale, and so on.

Starting with G, each new key going clockwise has one more sharp note in its major scale.

If we move **counterclockwise** from C, each note is a fifth **below** the prior note. And, just as with sharps, each scale to the left of C adds a flat note.

### What Does the Circle of Fifths Do for a Musician?

First and foremost, it gives us a quick visual reference to a lot of information about all 12 keys in music.

Again, C is the reference point, but these concepts will apply for any key. We already know that G is the fifth of the C scale. In the Circle of Fifths, the fifth note of the scale always sits just to the **right** of the root note.

And we already know that F is a fifth **below** C. But we should also note that the fifth note below any root note is the same named note as the **fourth** note of the key scale.

OK, sounds confusing, so let's break it down. Here's the C scale in two octaves: **C D E F G A B C D E F G A B C**

Using the middle C as number 1, count down (left) to the fifth note. Is it F? Should be. Now count up (right) to the F note. Is it the fourth note? If not, you miscounted. So now we know the following is true: **5th below Root = 4th above Root**