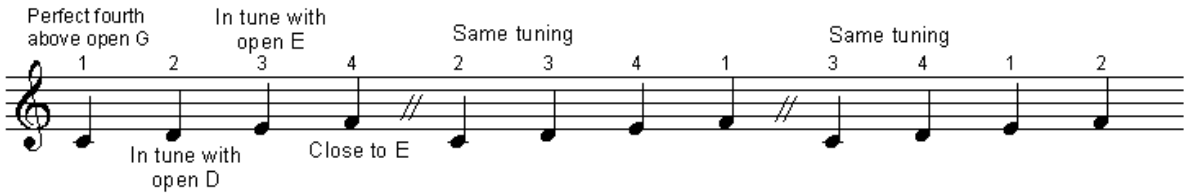
Two-octave scales

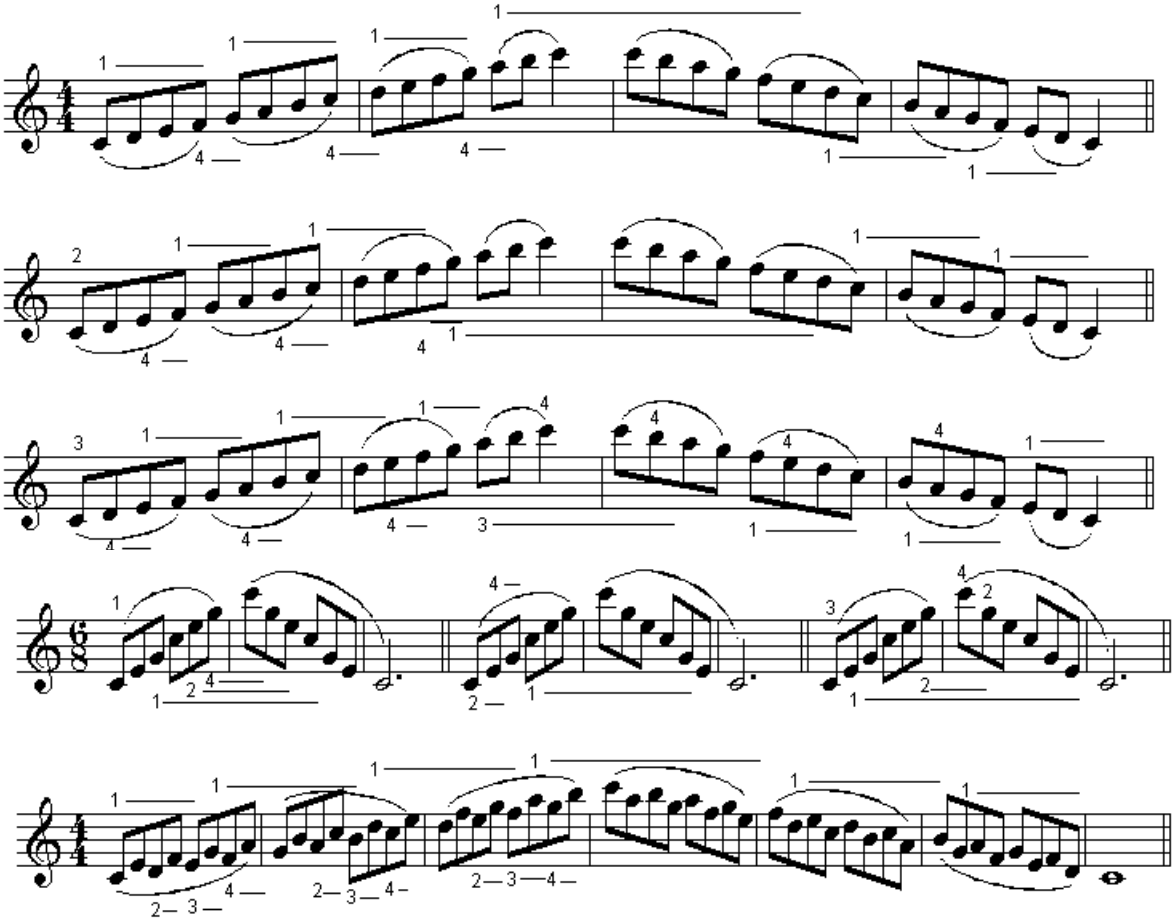
Two-octave scales are a great way to keep intonation in good shape, or to improve it. As well as forming the basis of the longer scale with shifts, they deepen your familiarity with the feel of the hand and fingers in each position. They are not simply scales that you play before you are good enough to play three-octave scales, and they are excellent as uniform-intonation exercises.

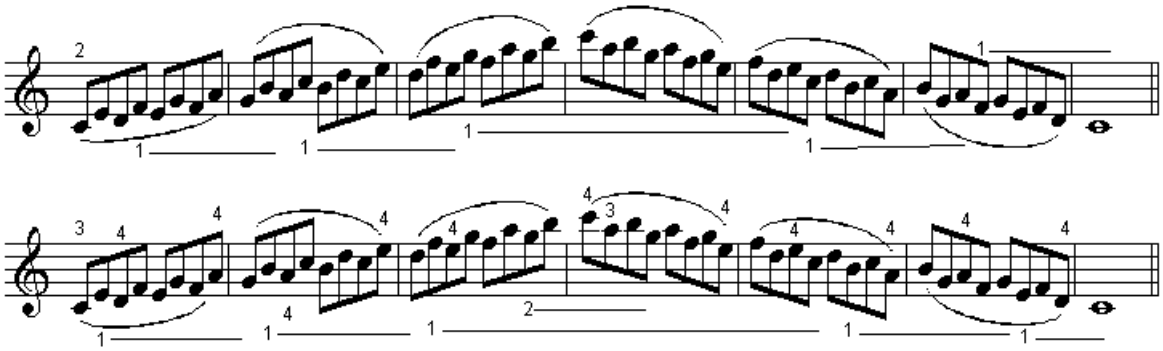
In uniform intonation exercises you repeat a group of notes several times, each time using a different fingering. The point is to be able to play them so exactly the same that unless a listener could see your left hand they would never guess you were changing the fingering with each repetition, e.g.:



The point of changing the fingering in the scales is therefore not just to learn a different fingering, but to learn how to play the notes with exactly the same tuning whatever the fingering.

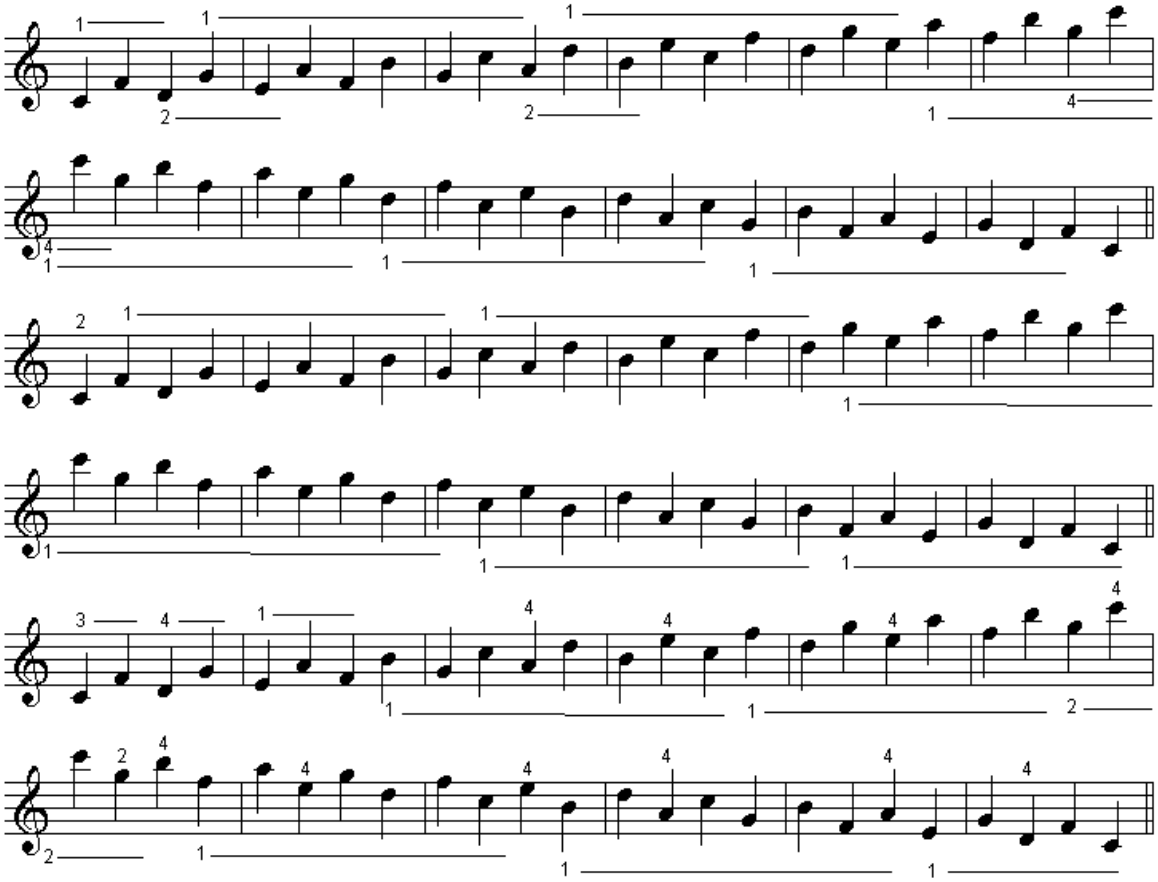
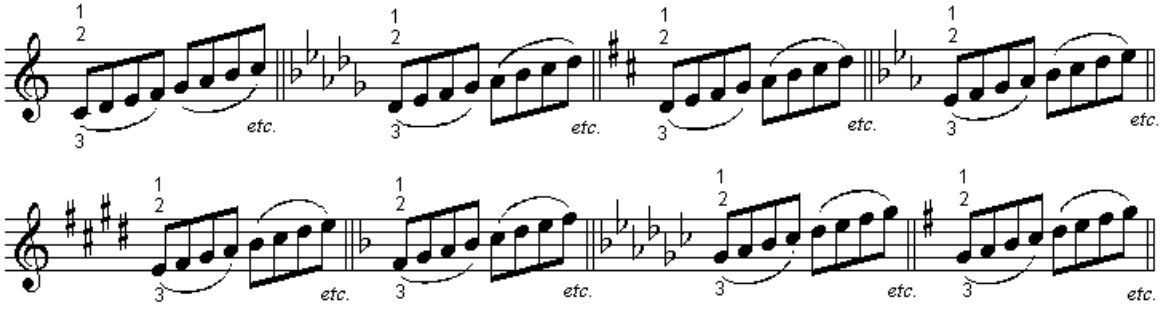
Holding fingers down greatly adds value to the exercise. Afterwards, when you might not leave fingers down so long, it feels as though the fingers know on their own exactly where to go to play each note in tune.





- Repeat in the melodic and harmonic minors.

Other broken intervals are also useful for practising in one position: begin on the first, the second and the third fingers:



- Repeat starting on D♭ – D – E♭– E – F – F♯ – G, beginning in each position on the third finger, then on the second finger, and then on the first: