



ULTIMATE GUITAR SOLOING CHEAT SHEET

- WRITTEN MANUAL -

INTRODUCTION:

This book of written lessons is an excellent tool and reference manual to develop and enhance your guitar skills. Use these instructional materials to help open up guitar avenues and to examine different chords and rhythms, lead guitar techniques, learning the fretboard, music theory, scales, and the world of playing over chord changes.

If you don't keep a practice log you want to start one for sure. A three ring binder with filler paper works best. Print out this booklet of written lessons and keep it with all other music reference materials in the three ring binder. Keep these items handy so you can refer to them when studying and practicing.

Add filler paper to your binder and keep accurate records in your practice log of the items you are working on, what needs work, chord changes, progressions, songs, original material, scales, etc. Date the entries and keep track of your progress as you move forward in your guitar journey. Just like settings goals in life you want to set musical goals.....and then go out there and achieve them.

Remember to follow my structured curriculum, keep on practicing the right things, and keep developing your ear. Don't overwhelm yourself by trying to take on too many new things at once. Take these lessons and techniques in stages and slow and steady wins the race. Some of the more advanced lead guitar avenues will take time to digest.

One of the keys is consistency. Keep trying to put those guitars in your hands every day, even if its only for 10-15 minutes. You don't necessarily need an hour block of time each day to learn guitar. Those little pockets of time where you have a spare ten minutes that you can practice really add up.

Also make it easy for yourself to practice. Buy a guitar stand and keep your guitar out on the stand so it is accessible to you at all times. Keep the guitar on the stand in a room you are in the most. This way you will be much more likely to grab it and practice when you have that free ten minute pocket of time. Don't keep your guitar packed up in its case under your bed or packed away in the closet. Leave it out and make it accessible.

Like with anything new and different on the instrument dive into these materials with an open mind. Know that if you practice these techniques, work hard, keep honing your skills and refining your art that these methods will bring you results.

Stay positive and remember that your guitar playing is an evolution.

.....now let's get to it!

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

<u>Written Lesson</u>	<u>Page</u>
Introduction	2
Table of contents.....	3
Getting started.....	4
Chords – Dominant 7 th chords	5
Notes on the fretboard	6
Lead Guitar – rhythm, the ride, note choice, & phrasing.....	7
Lead Guitar – the big Four	8
The choices when soloing	9
Key Signature and chord analyzing.....	10
Example progressions and soloing options – Major Key	11-12
Example progressions and soloing options – Minor Key	13
The Minor Pentatonic scale	13
The Minor Pentatonic Expanded I Scale	14
The Minor Pentatonic Expanded II Scale	15
The Minor Pentatonic scale – five box scales.....	16
The Major Pentatonic scale	17
Major Pentatonic Sus4 scale.....	18
Major Pentatonic Sus4 scale links.....	19
Top ten key hints to get your playing to the next level.....	20-22
Chord construction	23-24
Circle of fifths	25
Blank tablature staff paper (document your favorite licks & riffs).....	27-29

GETTING STARTED

Keep in mind that I want to give you the most complete guitar curriculum possible. This does not mean you have to master every lead guitar avenue or scale before moving on to the next. In these materials I teach many lead guitar avenues. Some will be more challenging than others and of course take more time to learn and apply. But over time you will find the principles and techniques start to sink in and eventually will become automatic.

With all the materials out there today and with the ease of locating materials online it sure can be overwhelming. So remember not to take on too much at once or you will become overwhelmed and frustrated. Slow and steady wins the race. You don't want to rush things and then end up skimming over important topics leaving voids in your playing.

It's important to take the extra time to learn about the "why" things work as I write out in the lessons throughout this book. Learning the "why things work" will give you the musical knowledge to blast these principles and techniques across all your playing. It will give you the lead guitar confidence to be able to instantly know what avenues are possible when soloing and improvising.

That's the trick, to use these lessons as "templates" or "vehicles" to learn the why things work, and then develop them into your guitar arsenal through practical application. Then you have the tools to blast these playing techniques across all your playing at any given time, in any given jam, and in any given song.

Don't forget that as you further develop your lead guitar skills you also want to keep practicing and developing your rhythm skills. Your rhythm and timing are critical elements to your overall abilities on the guitar. Never forget that your lead playing will really only ever be as good as your rhythm playing.

As I dive further and further into lead guitar techniques and concepts in this book, keep in mind that these very systematic and methodical techniques will seem a bit daunting at first. However, these will soon become second nature and automatic, they will become engrained in your playing style. You won't have to think about what to play so much as it will eventually become second nature. Then you will be letting your ear take you to all the right notes and chords and not having to think about techniques and application so much but rather focus on emotion and feel in your playing. The more you practice and apply these materials the faster you will be on "autopilot".

That said, throughout my teaching career I have found that first learning things systematically will get your playing to the next level the fastest. Remember we are building your guitar chops and you need to have that solid foundation to build upon as you move along in your guitar journey.

Because many blues progressions utilize I-IV-V chord changes you will often be utilizing Minor Pentatonic & Blues and/or Major Pentatonic as potential lead playing avenues. Pentatonic scales are killer scales to play over blues and over I-IV-V changes. They just ooze that minor bluesy vibe or sweet major vibe.

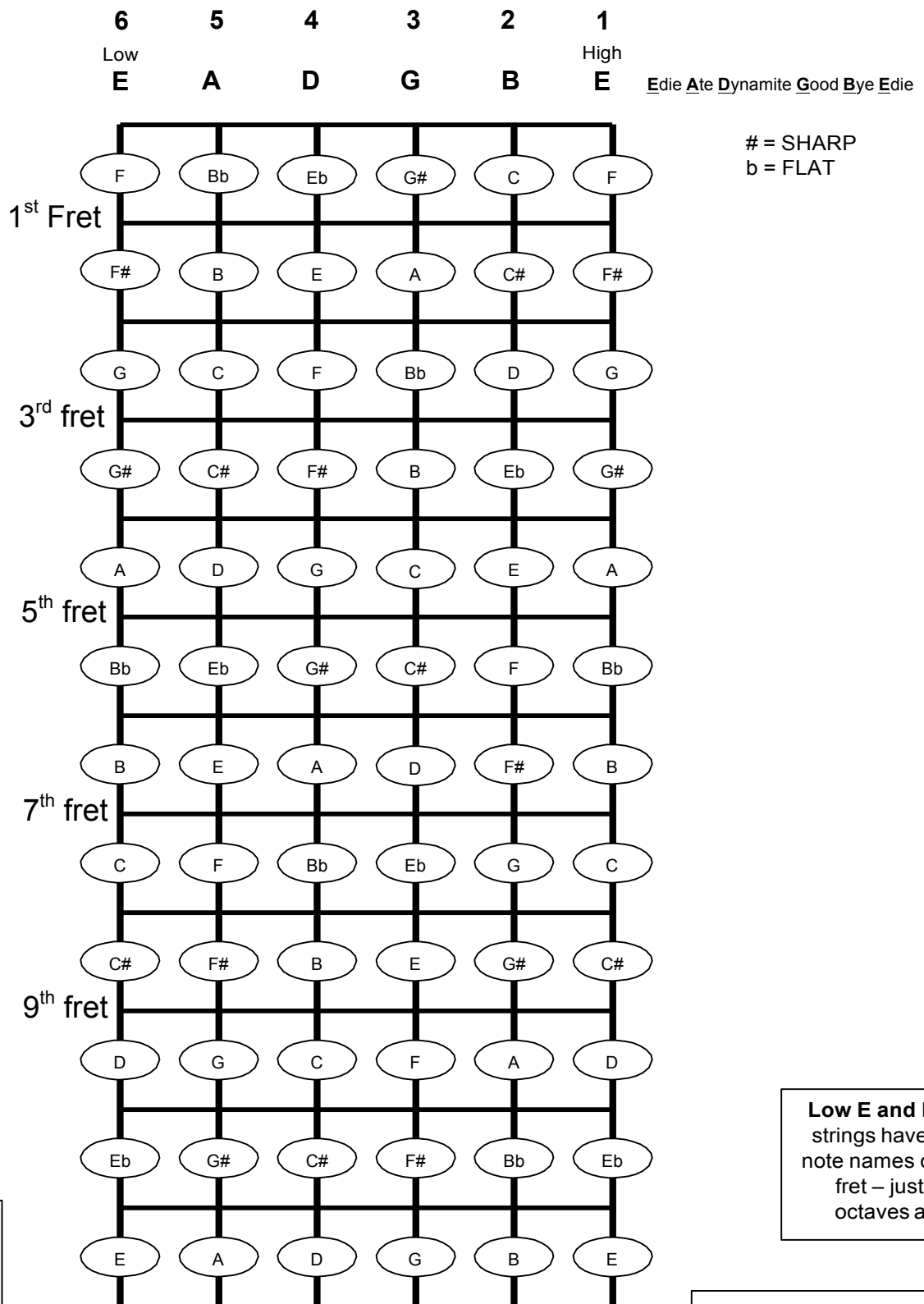
Many big name players and rock bands have made careers using pentatonic scales. However, I urge you to try some of the other suggestions that I list, don't limit yourself. You will also want to eventually learn the modes of the major scale. Modes like Dorian, Aeolian, and Mixolydian can sound awesome over Blues progressions when utilized properly.

KEY POINT: Keep in mind that at this stage of your lead guitar playing journey there is just no substitute for practicing the right things, learning scales, studying the sounds and relationships between chords and scales, developing your ear, practicing and honing your skills using jam tracks, and continually pushing yourself and refining your art.

Remember that your guitar playing is an evolution. Stay positive, keep with it, swing for the fences, and also give yourself plenty of fun time on the guitar to go along with all the hard work and studying.

YOU CAN DO IT!

NOTES ON THE FRETBOARD



= SHARP
b = FLAT

E and D strings
any note on the E
down and 2 frets
over and you have
the same note an
octave higher on
the D string

Low E and High E
strings have same
note names on each
fret – just two
octaves apart

A and G strings are related –
from any note on the A string
go 2 strings down and 2 frets
over and you have the same
note an octave higher on the
G string

The twelve-note scale consists of:
A, Bb, B, C, C#, D, Eb, E, F, F#, G, G#

LEAD GUITAR - Rhythm, The Ride, Note Choice, & Phrasing

Lead playing is something that can identify a player like a signature or fingerprint. Players like Stevie Ray Vaughan, Eddie Van Halen, BB King, Eric Clapton, Eric Johnson, Steve Vai, and Carlos Santana can be identified with a single note. They have a very signature sound and identifiable guitar tone.

As you continue your lead guitar studies and keep up with your practicing, you will find your playing will evolve over time – your playing is an evolution. An element of lead playing which may seem simple, like vibrato or string bending, can take months and months to develop into a signature statement in your lead guitar bag of tricks.

GEAR/EQUIPMENT – Sometimes guitarists think that if they purchase the same guitar, amp, and effects of their favorite guitarist that they will cop their signature sound and replicate their tone. You will find that this is not the case.

Here is a quick story to illustrate this point. When Van Halen was first starting out they opened for some name acts of the time. Eddie Van Halen was so revolutionary with his guitar playing that he virtually floored the guitar community. One show Van Halen was opening for Ted Nugent and Ted watched in amazement as Eddie played during sound check. Ted couldn't believe the sounds he was hearing. After Eddie left the stage Ted then talked Eddie's guitar tech into letting him plug into Eddie's rig. Ted Nugent started playing through Eddie's gear and guess what - he sounded like Ted Nugent.

The point is that your tone comes mainly from your fingers and your technique, not the amp or effect. Tone is truly in your hands and in your heart. Gear can surely be motivating and empowering and point you in a certain direction, but ultimately your tone is in your hands.

Eddie Van Halen can play any guitar through any amp or effect and will still sound like Eddie Van Halen. You want to play through the best gear that you can afford, but spend time developing your own technique and sound and not someone else's.

What you want to accomplish with your lead guitar playing and improvisation is two-fold:

- 1. Complement the song** – it all comes back to the song and how the guitar lines complement it and help to get its musical statement and emotions across.
- 2. Draw people in to your solo** – you want the listener to latch onto what you are playing. You want to keep the listener on the edge of their seat wondering, “what is he going to play next”? You want to have the power to take the listener on a musical journey with ups and downs and great emotion and passion. You want your leads to tell a story. And of course you always want to be aware of melody happening in your guitar lines.

At times many guitarists forget the above two items and are off soloing in their own “little world”. They forget about the song, the chord changes, and what the other musicians behind them are doing. What happens then is the song suffers, or the band has to “reel” the guitarist back into the groove.

Below are four critical parts to great lead playing. Work on all four of these aspects by studying each individually, and then apply them in a musical context.

LEAD GUITAR - Rhythm, The Ride, Note Choice, & Phrasing – THE BIG FOUR

1. Rhythm – the rhythm of your notes and licks. It's the way we take the notes we choose to play and do things musically with them. This quite possibly could be the most important element of lead guitar, taking the notes and doing musically interesting things with them. Repetition is one key component and melody is another.

Repetition is a key to good melody and phrasing. You don't have to play your licks verbatim every time in a lead line, but rather the same in concept. Noodle around on the guitar till you find a killer sounding riff, find the magic. Then dig into that idea that you like and keep repeating it. Repeat it but try playing it a little different rhythmically each time or maybe hit the same note two or three times one time, or do a bend one time, vary it. These little variations of the same lick or idea are critical.

Learn to vary your magical licks both note wise and rhythm wise. Learn a rhythm or rhythmic phrase and then apply it to some of your favorite licks across all the strings. So when you noodle around and get into a little cool idea – keep it – keep playing it – turn the rhythm around and exploit it. Remember rhythm and melody are key!

2. The Ride – I am talking about the ups and downs, the peaks and valleys, the highs and lows in your lead playing. It's the way your lines move up and down the neck and loud and soft dynamically. It is critical to have these peaks and valleys in your lead lines. You just don't want to be rambling on and on with straight across the board flat line playing – blah, blah, blah – no good.

You want to move your listeners and draw them into your solo. Your solo should have ups and downs and twists and turns. You don't want only flat straight lines with no emphasis, connections, different rhythms, no dynamics, or sans any musical events or melody.

3. Note choice – this may seem pretty obvious but which notes you play are equally important as which notes you don't play. Note choice is what most musicians focus on but actually most players can benefit from building their rhythm and ride vocabularies and chops.

For example, if you are playing the blues you have only have five or six main notes to choose from so note choices are limited. So you better have a very big rhythm and ride bag of tricks because that is what is going to make your lead lines sound interesting and not boring.

4. Phrasing – Basically a phrase is a group of notes that compose a musical thought. Phrasing is all about how you connect your notes, scales, ideas, and licks. You want to connect your groups of phrases in a manner that makes good musical sense.

When you don't have a lot of note choices then you really have to concentrate on your phrasing to keep things interesting and different. Some players really excel at phrasing and it's very clear when someone is good at it.

Listen to the playing of Stevie Ray Vaughan. The music just flows out of him. His playing is smooth and effortless with his musical thoughts and ideas phrasing effortlessly into one another. Almost like he had a direct channel between his brain, heart, and fingers. Work on your own personal channel and musical connections, its invaluable.

THE CHOICES WHEN SOLOING

Remember when you are soloing or improvising, you have **TWO CHOICES** – you can:

1. Play “**what relates to all**” – this means you solo with the same scale or same mode over **all the chords**. No matter what chord is being played in the progression you play the same scale or mode over each chord – you are playing what works over **ALL the chords and chord changes**. You play the same scale or the same mode no matter what chord is going by in the rhythm – you play **what relates to all** the chords.

This is probably the most common choice among guitarists and definitely what most players do when first learning or developing their soloing skills and chops. **So start with what relates to all**. You want to get good at this first before moving on to the next choice.

OR YOU CAN:

2. “**Treat each chord like a separate event**” - this choice is much more challenging but will give you a more sophisticated sound. By treating each chord as a separate event you solo with a different scale, mode, or arpeggio **over each chord**. So you can change your scale, mode, and/or arpeggio with each chord change. You don't stay within the confines of the same scale as with what relates to all.

This technique gives you a more sophisticated sound and is much more challenging to apply than playing what relates to all. You have to listen to what is going on underneath your soloing. You have to listen to what chords are going by and you have to listen for the changes. You then have to time your playing and change your scales and notes depending on what chord you are soloing over. More challenging but well worth the efforts as you can make HUGE soloing statements employing this technique.

You want to employ this technique when you have enough time on a given chord. Obviously if the chords are flying by fast you won't have enough time to treat each one as a separate event. So remember to listen to the chords and the amount of time on each chord to determine if this technique can be utilized. This technique takes practice getting used to but it will skyrocket your playing to the next level. Practice this technique at first with slow tempo progressions, like slows blues jam tracks, where there is lots of time on each chord before they change to the next chord.

KEY POINT: Keep in mind **the above two choices are NOT mutually exclusive to one another**. You can mix them both. In fact I do that often when soloing. I treat each chord as a separate event for a while, then switch it up and play what relates to all or vice versa. It's a great combination to do both and you get some great effects from mixing them both together. Many big name blues players like BB King and Eric Clapton employ these techniques.

Sometimes you can even use both major and minor scale elements in certain jams as well as modal playing. In those type examples you can throw a bunch of different soloing applications into the soup. It all depends on the chords you are playing over. And again, this technique is very common in the blues.

KEY POINT: When soloing and improvising in the blues you will often be soloing over I-IV-V progressions. In these scenarios you will have three chord changes that keep repeating throughout the progression – the I chord, the IV chord, and the V chord - just three chords to zone in on.

After rhythmically playing through I-IV-V progressions for a while you will start to memorize the patterns, feel the changes, and musically know when they are coming around. Knowing when the changes happen is critical for soloing options over each chord and/or landing on the hip chord tones when the chord changes.

As stated above, treating each chord separately, as an independent event will give your soloing more complex sounds and infinite possibilities. And with many blues progressions its mainly just three chords to hone into. On the following page we will study a few musical examples.

KEY SIGNATURE & CHORD ANALYZING

Often in the Blues you will be soloing over progressions that are in either major key or minor key. Most often it will be major key and often using dominant chords. But you want to have the tools to be able to solo over both major and minor key.

Knowing the key is important, and a good place to start. But to go deeper you have to **analyze the chords that make up the progression to get the complete roadmap for soloing options.**

In the examples below we shall study a major key and minor key example of I-IV-V blues progressions and how to systematically analyze the chords and determine various soloing options. Use these examples as templates when examining chords and progressions to determine soloing options. Always start with what are the chords and what is the key.

Like I mentioned previously to treat each chord as a separate event you have to have enough musical time on each chord. If the chords are rolling by very fast then you will probably play more of what relates to all.

After a while practicing these techniques, this procedure will become more automatic, but at first doing it in a very systematic and methodical way will get you used to these principles.

Remember there are usually many lead avenues to choose from, so why not explore them all and get creative and see what sounds best to your ears.

KEY POINT: Analyze the chords to determine what solo avenues to take – it's the chords that give the roadmap to the various soloing avenues – the key signature is only part of the equation.

It's important to understand why these principles and techniques work so that you can solo over any progression on your own. Armed with this knowledge and practicing in a musical context will give you the lead guitar confidence to solo over any progression, song, or jam. So take the time to learn the whys – its critical.

KEY POINT: Remember that as soon as you hear that very identifiable I-IV-V blues, swing, or shuffle, it is wide open as there will be many different soloing avenues to try.

Key Points To Determine Soloing Avenues:

1. **Determine the key signature** - most of the time you will be soloing in minor key or major key. Knowing the key is the first step. Even when you are just noodleing around on the guitar, always know what key you are playing in.
2. **Analyze the chord progression** – it's the chords that will give you the complete roadmap to what you can utilize for soloing and improvisation. Analyzing the chords is critical to get the full lead guitar picture.

Remember the points I list throughout these materials are guidelines to get you started off. They are not necessarily rules forged in stone. Often in jams you have to use your discretion. You want to learn the principles and techniques so you have a solid jump off point to get creative and then start bending the rules a bit.

Be creative and keep in mind that there is just no substitute for practicing the right things, learning scales, studying the sounds and relationships between chords and scales, developing your ear, practicing and honing your skills using jam tracks, and continually pushing yourself while honing you skills and refining your art.

EXAMPLE PROGRESSIONS AND SOLOING OPTIONS – Major Key

-If a progression is in major key you can almost always solo using **Major Pentatonic** over **ALL** the chords. So that should be a default setting. As soon as you hear major key, you know one option is to solo over all the chords with Major Pentatonic, as it relates to all the chords.

-MAJOR KEY I-IV-V blues, shuffles, and swings:

If a progression is a major key I-IV-V blues, swing, or shuffle there are **MANY** avenues to utilize when soloing and improvising. It's wide open and these I-IV-V progressions are extremely common in the blues. And you can solo over what relates to all and also try treating each chord as a separate event.

-Try **Minor Pentatonic & Blues** scales over all the chords in the key of the progression for that bluesy minor sound. (Minor Pentatonic & Blues – 1,b3,4,b5,5,b7)

-Try **Major Pentatonic** scales over all the chords in the key of the progression for that sweet major sound ala BB King/Allman Brothers. This will be a totally different sound than Minor Pentatonic. (Major Pentatonic – 1,2,3,5,6)

-Try **mixing both Minor Pentatonic & Blues and Major Pentatonic**. You will hear this a lot in the lead playing of Eric Clapton and BB King. The switching, combining, and mixing of Minor and Major Pentatonic is an awesome sound. (Minor & Major Pentatonic 1,2,b3,3,4,5,6,b7)

-Try the **Dorian Mode** over all the chords in the key of the progression. Dorian is the 2nd mode of the major scale and is considered more of a minor mode but it's intervals have elements of both minor, (b3, b7), and major (2nd, 6th). So Dorian works great in any situation where you know both Minor Pentatonic and Major Pentatonic will work. Give it a try over these I-IV-V blues progressions and you will be surprised how killer it can sound. (Dorian Mode – 1,2,b3,4,5,6,b7)

-Try the **Mixolydian Mode** as it works great over dominant chords like 7ths and 9th chords. Try to play this mode over each chord independently in the key of the chord. (Mixolydian Mode – 1,2,3,4,5,6,b7)

1. EXAMPLE PROGRESSION I: E7-A7-B7 - Key of E Major I-IV-V progression - major key blues

***What Relates to all the chords:** There are many avenues here, totally wide open, so a lot will depend on your playing style and what type of mood or sound you want to create. Try some of these:

-Try **E Minor Pentatonic & Blues** scales over all the chords for that bluesy minor sound (E,G,A,Bb,B,D)

-Try **E Major Pentatonic** scales over all the chords for that sweet major sound (E,F#,G#,B,C#)

Note: Remember that for any major key jam you can use Major Pentatonic over all the chords. Major Pentatonic relates to all in this jam. E Major Pentatonic is the same as C# Minor Pentatonic. E Major and C# Minor are relative major and minor. If you think more in terms of Minor Pentatonic or just know those shapes then play all your C# Minor Pentatonic scales, but start on and emphasize the E notes and it will be E Major Pentatonic and have that real major happy sweet sound.

-Try **mixing both E Minor Pentatonic and E Major Pentatonic** over all the chords (E,F#,G,G#,A,B,C#,D)

-Try the **E Dorian** over all the chords (E,F#,G,A,B,C#,D)

Note: Because we know that both Major Pentatonic & Minor Pentatonic & Blues will work we then know that **the Dorian mode** will also work. Dorian is considered more of a minor mode, (1,2,b3,4,5,6,b7), but works great over major key I-IV-V blues, swing, and shuffle progressions.

Dorian has the minor elements in it (b3, b7) but also has some major elements, (2nd, 6th). So the Dorian mode will give you that hybrid kind of minor/major sounds as it combines the elements of both minor and major. So try **E Dorian** over all the chords.

Dorian is the 2nd mode in any major key and E Dorian is the same as D major, (E Dorian=D major). So play all your D major scales but emphasize and start on the E notes – really resolve to and focus on those D notes.

***Treat each chord like a separate event:** Remember to always listen to the rhythm going on under your soloing and time your changes so you change your scale or landing notes as the chords change. Here are a few avenues to try treating each chord as a separate event:

-Try **moving Minor Pentatonic & Blues** over each chord:

- Play E Minor Pentatonic & Blues over the E7 chord
- Play A Minor Pentatonic & Blues over the A7 chord
- Play B Minor Pentatonic & Blues over the B7 chord

-Try **moving Major Pentatonic** over each chord

- Play E Major Pentatonic over the E7 chord
- Play A Major Pentatonic over the A7 chord
- Play B Major Pentatonic over the B7 chord

-Try **mixing up the above Minor Pentatonic and Major Pentatonic over each chord** – this is a very cool technique that many blues players often utilize.

- Play E Major Pentatonic over the E7 chord. Then switch to E Minor Pentatonic over the A7 chord. Then try E Major Pentatonic over the B7 chord. Listen to how well this technique outlines and implies the chord changes. Mix this up a bit, maybe the next time around the progression try E Minor Pentatonic over the B7 chord.

-Try **Mixolydian mode over each chord:** Mixolydian works great over 7th chords as there is that b7 in the 7th chords, (1,3,5,b7), as well as in the Mixolydian mode (1,2,3,4,5,6,b7). Mixolydian mode is the 5th mode of the major scale.

- Over the E7 chord try E Mixolydian (=A Major, start on and emphasize the E notes)
- Over the A7 chord try A Mixolydian (=D Major, start on and emphasize the A notes)
- Over the B7 chord try B Mixolydian (=E Major, start on and emphasize the B notes)

EXAMPLE PROGRESSIONS AND SOLOING OPTIONS – Minor Key

-In most instances if a song or jam is in minor key you can solo using Minor Pentatonic & Blues over all the chords. So that should be a default setting for minor key. As soon as you determine you are in minor key, or it's a major key bluesy I-IV-V, you know one option is to solo over all the chords with Minor Pentatonic & Blues scales. (An exception to this rule is if it's a minor key progression with a major V chord – you have to be careful over that major V chord - one option is to use Harmonic Minor over just that V chord).

-Usually a minor mode will work over all the chords in a minor key jam. Usually it's either Aeolian or Dorian. To determine which one you have to analyze the chords and look for certain things. For now just memorize this critical point for soloing in minor key **over all the chords**:

KEY POINT: When playing over all the chords in a minor key progression you can always use the **AEOLIAN** mode, UNLESS there is a **IV major chord or II minor chord**, then use the **DORIAN mode**. (Exception - If there is a V major chord then use Harmonic Minor over just that V chord)

Aeolian mode is the same thing as Natural Minor or Pure Minor.

Aeolian mode = Natural Minor = Pure Minor

When to use Minor Pentatonic & Blues Scales (4 great applications):

1. **Over all the chords** in a minor key song, jam, or progression, (in most instances, few exceptions).
2. **Over all the chords** in major key I-IV-V blues, shuffles, and swings.
3. **Over any minor type chord** when treating each chord as a separate event.
4. **Over all the chords** in rock type jams, or jams using power or 5th chords, (as long as the jam is not real ballad/major sounding, if so then use major pentatonic or possibly full major scales).

2. EXAMPLE PROGRESSION II: Bm-Em-F#m Key of B minor I-IV-V progression minor key blues

This example is in the key of B minor. We instantly know since we are in minor key, with no major V chord, we can solo with Minor Pentatonic & Blues scales over all the chords.

***What Relates to all the chords:**

-Try **B Minor Pentatonic & Blues** over all the chords. We instantly know since we are in minor key, with no major V chord, we can solo with Minor Pentatonic & Blues scales over all the chords as those scales relates to all. So whether we are playing over the Bm chord, the Em chord, or the F#m chord one option is we can play B minor Pentatonic & Blues scales all day long over all the chords.

-Try **B Aeolian** over all the chords. Usually in minor key we can play a minor mode over all the chords. In minor key a minor mode usually relates to all. We are in minor key and when analyzing the chords the IV chord is minor, (Em), this tells us we can also play B Aeolian mode, (B Natural Minor), over all the chords. So again whether we are playing over the Bm chord, the Em chord, or the F#m chord we can play B Aeolian scales over all the chords– it relates to all. B minor is the relative minor of D major. So play all your D major scales but start on and emphasize the B notes making it B Aeolian (B Aeolian = D major).

-Try mixing both **B Aeolian** and **B Minor Pentatonic & Blues** over all the chords for some killer sounds.

***Treat each chord like a separate event:**

We can also try choice number two and treat each chord as a separate event. What this means is you play what relates to each chord separately and treat each chord independently. With this 12-bar progression you have a lot of time on each chord. This is perfect for treating each chord as a separate event

-Over the Bm chord try B Minor Pentatonic & Blues, B Aeolian, B Dorian, or B minor arpeggios.

(But then when the chords change to Em you then abandon all the B minor lead work and switch to scales, modes, or arpeggios that relate to the Em chord.)

-Over the Em chord try E Minor Pentatonic & Blues, E Aeolian, E Dorian, or E Minor arpeggios.

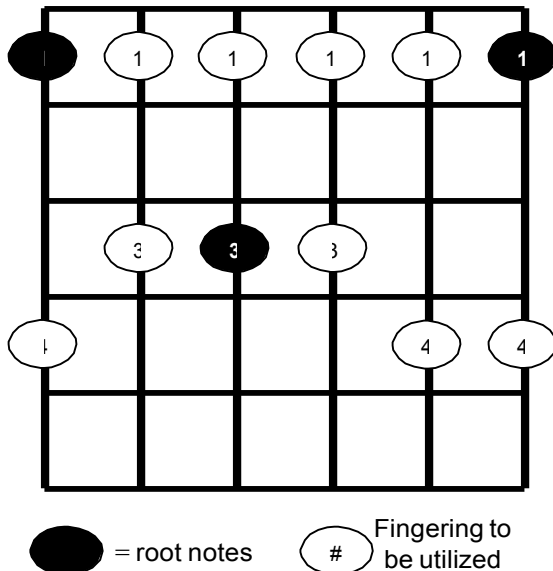
(Then when the chord changes again to F#m you abandon all the Em work and switch to what relates to the F#m chord.)

-Over the F#m chord try F# Minor Pentatonic & Blues, F# Aeolian, F# Dorian, or F# minor arpeggios.

THE MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE

The Pentatonic scale is one of the most commonly utilized scales in just about all genres of music. Penta, is Latin for five, much like a penta-gram has five sides, Pentatonic scales are constructed from five notes. The Minor Pentatonic scale is constructed from five notes from the Natural Minor Scale, also called the Aeolian mode. The Minor Pentatonic scale is built from the five scale degrees of root, b3rd, 4th, 5th, and b7th. The scale illustrated below is what many call the basic “box” position and has its low root played with the first finger on the low E string. The root notes are illustrated with black circles and the numbers inside the circles indicate the fingering to be utilized when playing this scale. It’s important to learn this basic scale first, as we are going to build upon this scale in coming lessons and eventually you will need to learn this scale in all positions all over the neck and in all keys. Many other scale shapes and scale connecting links are diagrammed out in the coming pages.

Minor Pentatonic Scale Basic Box



Take your time and play the scale slow and in time, speed will come. Practice the scale utilizing the fingerings illustrated. Sound each note clean, with no string buzzes or overtones. As you move through the scale make a mental note of when you hit the three root notes, (illustrated with the black circles).

The key signature is determined by which root note is played. For example if you play this scale starting at the fifth fret on the low E string it is an A Minor Pentatonic scale consisting of the five notes A, C, D, E, and G. If you were to play this scale on the 8th fret it would be a C Minor Pentatonic scale consisting of the five notes C, Eb, F, G, and Bb.

Much like moveable bar chords this scale can be moved up and down the guitar neck and the root note will determine the key you are playing. Practice the scale in all keys.

This scale will form the building block of many concepts to come. You want to be very familiar with this scale pattern, but do not rely on it exclusively. We are going to build on this scale extensively. Soon we will be spicing it up and expanding it, making it a more fluid sounding scale that you can move laterally across the neck and not limited to box to box type lead playing.

Hip string bends when utilizing the above Minor Pentatonic scale: – bending strings is one of the most expressive things you can do on the guitar. You will want to get very proficient and exact with string bending, it’s an art. Always bend to a target note. When bending strings it is imperative that you are bending the notes in pitch. You don’t want to over bend or under bend notes, as they will then sound sharp or flat. Practice bending strings and then check the pitch by sounding the note you are attempting to bend to, your target note. This is a good self-check to ensure you are bending in pitch. Also practice string bending by plugging directly into an electronic tuner and watch the needle as you bend a note. See the progress as you bend the note and ultimately hit pitch. Keep doing it over and over till you feel the bend strength wise, and hear the bend in pitch.

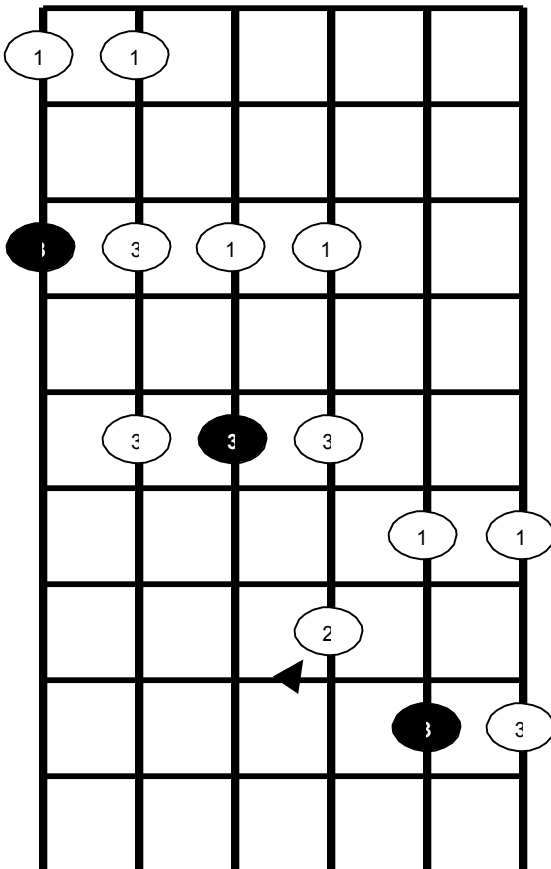
For purposes of this string bending exercise play the scale with a fifth fret root or A Minor Pentatonic scale, but once learned, practice the bends and scale in all keys.

1. Bend the b7th a whole step up to the root. Bend the G note at the 8th fret of the B string up one whole step to the A root note. You can also bend the same note an octave lower at the G note at the 5th fret on the D string up one whole step.
2. Bend the 4th a half step to the blue note - bend the D note on the 7th fret of the G string up one half step to the Eb note.
3. Bend the 4th degree a whole step to the fifth - bend the D note on the 7th fret of the G string up one whole step to the E note. The 4th or D note can be bent either a whole or a half step, try both.
4. Bend the b3rd a full step to the 4th – bend the C note at the 8th fret of the high E string one whole step to the D note.
5. Try a unison bend. Utilize your 4th finger to bend the G note on the 8th fret of the B string a whole step to an A note while playing the A note at the 5th fret of the high E string with your 1st finger.
6. Unison bend – Utilize your 3rd finger to bend the D note on the 7th fret of the G string a whole step to an E note while playing the E note at the 5th fret of the B string with your 1st finger.
7. Double stop bend – bend two strings a half step each with your 3rd finger. Bend the D note at the 7th fret of the G string one half step while also bending the F# note at the 7th fret of the B string one half step.
8. Double stop bend – with your 3rd finger bend the D note at the 7th fret of the G string a whole step while playing the G note on the B string with your 4th finger.
9. b3rd to major 3rd bend – bend the b3rd or C notes a quarter to a half step to the major 3rd. This is a very cool bend as the b3rd is a very ambiguous note in this scale. It sometimes will sound great as the b3rd but also as a major 3rd like when playing over a 7th chord. So this note has some play in it and you don’t have to be exact with the bend – play with it and you will soon be utilizing it all the time. Bend the note slow and put a hook on the end of it.

THE MINOR PENTATONIC EXPANDED I SCALE

Let's build on the minor pentatonic basic box shape scale that you learned in the previous page. We are now going to expand the scale two frets in each direction combining three of the box shapes, (all five box shapes are diagrammed out on page 12). We are still going to play the same five-note scale. However, the expanded scale exudes a much more fluid sound and sets up many additional and different combination runs and licks than just staying solely in the basic "box" shape. You certainly want to have all the pentatonic scales in the box patterns in your arsenal, but this expanded scale you will find really opens the pathways and lead guitar avenues a lot further. Commit it to memory and practice it in all keys. You will find yourself using these expanded scales all the time when playing in the pentatonics – they are invaluable.

Expanded I Minor Pentatonic Scale



Analyzing this expanded scale you can see part of the basic box pattern you learned in the previous page encapsulated in the middle of the shape. The shape is expanded two frets in each direction using the neighboring two boxes. Now you have a Pentatonic shape that **doubles** the fret span of the basic box pattern.

As always when learning a new scale, take your time and play the scale slow and in time. Sound each note clean, with no string buzzes or overtones. As you move through the scale make a mental note of when you hit the three root notes, (illustrated with the black circles). Practice the scale utilizing the fingerings illustrated. Notice the shift in fingering when you get to the G-string. There is a one – three – two finger combination. Utilize your second finger when playing the third note on the G-string as that will set you up for the two and three note combinations and licks to be played with the G, B, and high E strings. As always, you want to utilize the proper fingerings that set you up for the next lick, run, or chord.

Much like the first pentatonic scale in the basic box pattern the key signature for the expanded scale is determined by which root note is played on the 6th string. Play that note with your third finger. For example if you play this shape starting at the fifth fret on the low E string it is the Expanded I **A** minor pentatonic scale consisting of the five notes A, C, D, E, and G. If you were to play this scale starting with your 3rd finger on the 10th fret it would be the Expanded I **D** minor pentatonic scale consisting of the five notes D, F, G, A, and C. Practice this scale in all keys up and down the fret board.

For the G string pivot with your **second finger** for the 1,3,2 fingering combination

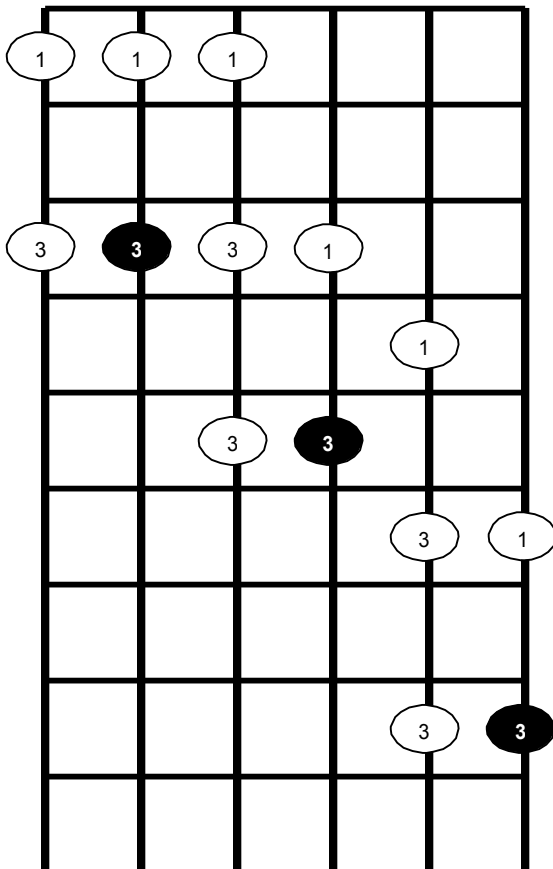
KEY POINT: You can grab these above two scales fast if you memorize the two above scales as:

1. Basic Box Position Minor Pentatonic Scale – 1st finger root on the low E string
2. Expanded I Minor Pentatonic Scale – 3rd finger root on the low E string

THE MINOR PENTATONIC EXPANDED II SCALE

Now that you are familiar with the Minor Pentatonic scale in the basic box position and in Expanded I form, lets learn the Minor Pentatonic Expanded II scale. This scale will have its root note on the 5th or A string and you can start with your 3rd finger. Illustrated below is the Expanded II Minor Pentatonic scale. With both Expanded scales and the basic “box” shape you can cover just about the entire fretboard. Practice these scales in all keys up and down the fret board. Commit them to memory, as you will find yourself grabbing them all the time.

Expanded II Minor Pentatonic Scale



Take your time when first learning this scale pattern, and play the scale slow and in time. Sound each note clean, with no string buzzes or overtones. As you move through the scale make a mental note of when you hit the three root notes, (illustrated with the three black circles). Practice the scale utilizing the fingerings illustrated and work up this expanded scale in all keys. Just use the first and third fingers to play the entire scale.

In this Expanded 2 scale the key signature is determined by which root note is played with the third finger on the on the 5th or A string. That is how you can find all the different scales quickly, by identifying the root notes. For example if you play this shape starting at the tenth fret on the low E string it is the Expanded II **A** Minor Pentatonic scale consisting of the five notes A, C, D, E, and G. This is due to the root note being played on the 12th fret of the A string – an “A” note. If you were to start this scale on the 12th fret of the low E string it would be the Expanded II **B** Minor Pentatonic scale.

KEY POINT: You can grab the above scales fast if you memorize the three above scales as:

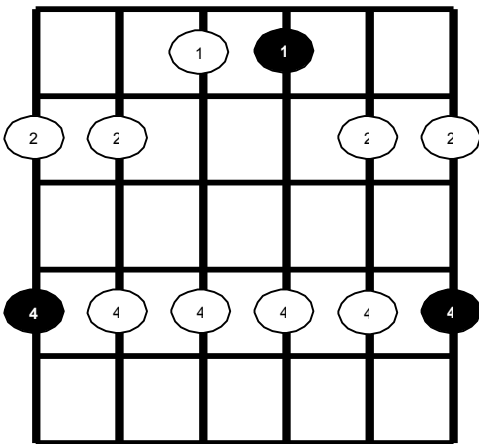
1. Box Position Minor Pentatonic Scale – 1st finger root on the low E string
2. Expanded I Minor Pentatonic Scale – 3rd finger root on the low E string
3. Expanded II Minor Pentatonic Scale – 3rd finger root on the A string

THE MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE – the 5 box scales

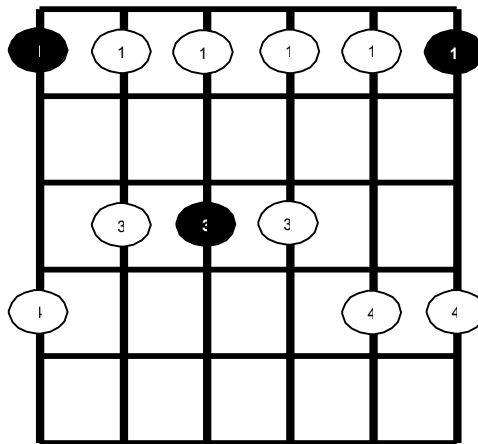
Illustrated below are five common box shapes for the Minor Pentatonic scale. I usually find myself playing the expanded I and expanded II scales more often, but you should know all 5 box positions so you can utilize the entire neck. Practice these in all keys and remember to make mental notes where the root notes lie. Start learning the scales below in the key of Am as they line up across the fretboard nicely and you can start the number 1 box with your 4th finger on the 5th fret of the Low E string on the A note.

Commit all the shapes and notes to memory and you will soon be gliding across the neck in Pentatonic heaven. Remember, it is critical to memorize what notes you are playing, not just the shapes. You want to be able to pick out and land on any given note depending on what chord changes you are playing over. Too many times guitarists just memorize shapes and forget what notes they are actually playing. So spend time learning the notes in all keys and you will benefit greatly with this extra work. These box shapes will give you many different riff ideas and runs. You will find them to be quite useful. Remember to practice and learn these scales in all keys and practice linking them together. Soon you will be able to see the entire fretboard mapped out as one large scale that travels up and down the entire neck.

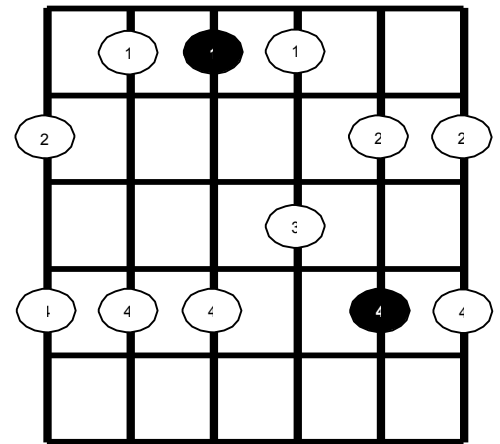
#1 box – in Am start with 4th finger on the 5th fret, low E string on the A note.



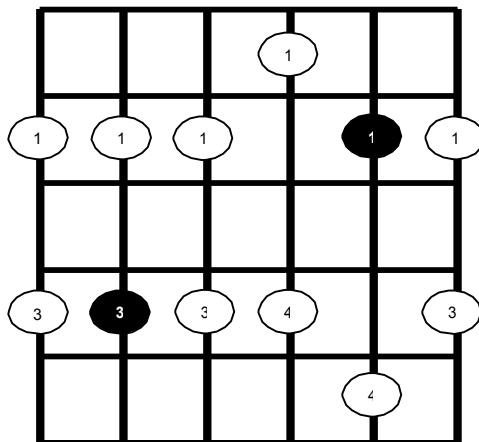
#2 box – in Am start with 1st finger on the 5th fret, low E string on the A note. (the basic box shape)



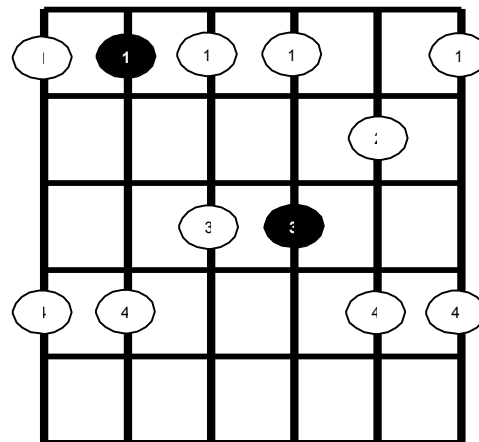
#3 box – in Am start with 2nd finger on the 8th fret, low E string on the C note. (these first three boxes make the Expanded 1)



#4 box – in Am start with 1st finger on the 10th fret, low E string on the D note.



#5 box – in Am start with 1st finger on the 12th fret, low E string on the E note. (these last two boxes and the first one combine to form the Expanded 2 shape)



THE MAJOR PENTATONIC SCALE

The Major Pentatonic scale is a five-note scale consisting of five notes from the Major scale. It is an extremely useful scale that has a very sweet major sound. At times full major scales may be inappropriate to play over a given progression, as they may sound a bit stiff. The major seventh note is a very "ify" note, especially in rock music as sometimes it works and many times it doesn't. Defaulting to the Major Pentatonic scale for that major sound in many of these instances is a great idea and will give you a killer sound. You hear the major pentatonic scale used often in blues music.

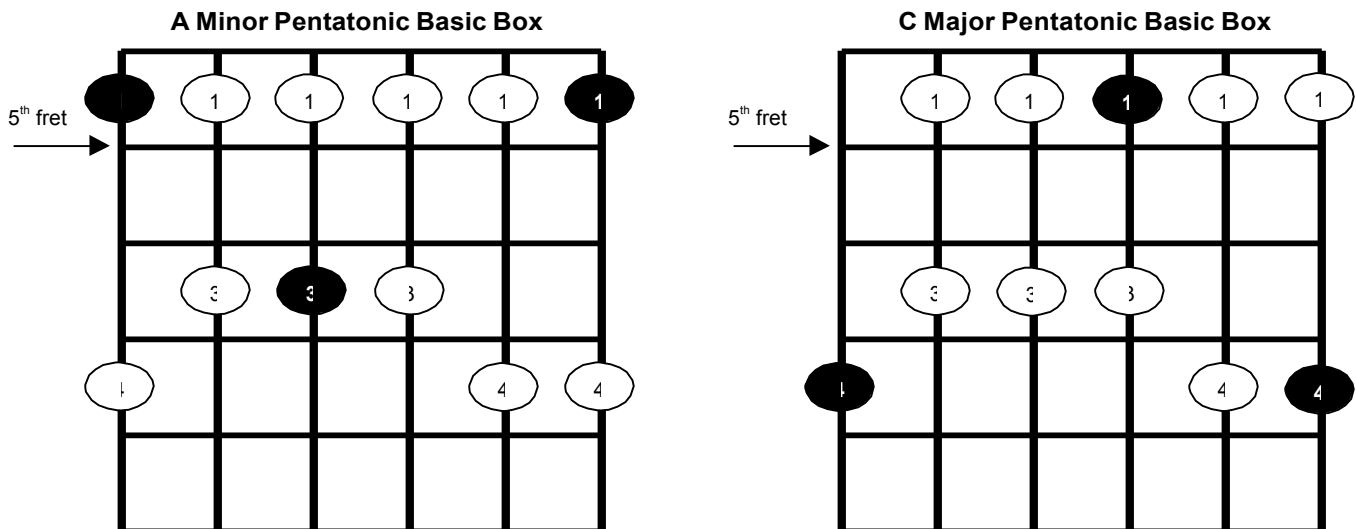
The five-note Major Pentatonic scale is derived from five notes from the Major scale similar to how the Minor Pentatonic scale is derived from five notes from the Natural Minor scale. The intervals of the Major Pentatonic are 1,2,3,5,6. You do not play the 4th and 7th degrees of the Major scale.

For many guitarists there's confusion surrounding the Major Pentatonic and it's relative minor, the Minor Pentatonic scale. The Minor Pentatonic is the relative minor of the Major Pentatonic and lives a minor 3rd, or three frets away, below the Major Pentatonic. For every major key there is a relative minor key. Both keys will have exactly the same notes. Refer to the handout on the circle of fifths on page 31 for a complete listing of every major key and its relative minor key.

Illustrated below is the "basic box shape" C Major Pentatonic and its relative minor, A Minor Pentatonic. C Major Pentatonic scales can also be viewed as A Minor Pentatonic scales. Both scales consist of the same notes C, D, E, G, and A. Your starting and emphasis notes determine which scale will sound. The confusion often comes because of the multiple names. C Major Pentatonic and A Minor Pentatonic are the same scale, just different starting and emphasis notes. Just like when playing utilizing the modes, it all comes down to what notes you are emphasizing - emphasis is so important!

Play both scales starting and ending with the root and listen to how the Pentatonic Major sounds very sweet and major sounding when starting on and emphasizing the C notes. Play the same shape but start and end on the A notes. Now you get the darker bluesy Minor Pentatonic scale. Same notes, just different start and emphasis points. One scale gives you the happy, major, Allman Brothers/BB King type of sound while the other gives you a darker, bluesy, minor type sounds.

Remember that you can get to all the Major Pentatonics by going through the relative Minor Pentatonic scales. So you don't have to learn any new shapes for Major Pentatonic if you already know your Minor Pentatonic scales. Just flip them to their relative Major Pentatonic.



If you know your Minor Pentatonic scales across the entire fretboard there is no need to learn any new shapes to play Major Pentatonic. You can get to those shapes from the relative minor Pentatonics. Learning more shapes would be redundant.

The blue note does not always apply to Major Pentatonic and often will not sound very good. So use the straight Minor Pentatonic scales and Expanded scales without the blue notes. There is not as much room for error soloing in major key either - bad notes really stick out. You also can't slur all those passing notes like we discussed when using Minor Pentatonic. So be careful with your note choices and let your ear help to guide you. So think of it like you have a bit more leeway in Minor Pentatonic than you have in Major Pentatonic.

For that sweet Major Pentatonic sound utilize all of your Minor Pentatonic shapes focused on emphasizing the root of the mode – the major. For example, when playing in C Major Pentatonic think of the relative minor, A Minor Pentatonic shapes that you have learned previously. Just start and emphasize on the C notes, not the A notes. You want to sound major so you have to emphasize the major root notes, not the minor ones. Practice in all keys and all positions up and down the neck.

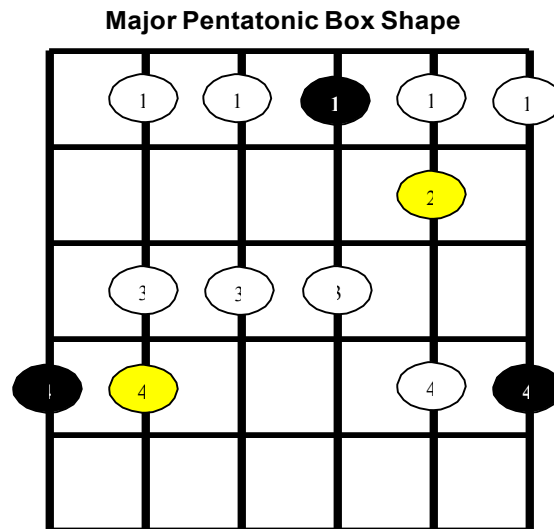
Major Pentatonic Sus4 Scales

A very cool way to spice up the Major Pentatonic scale is to add the fourth degree to the scale. Instead of it being a five-note scale it will now be a six-note scale. Adding the fourth degree makes it a **Major Pentatonic Sus4 scale**. The intervals of the scale are now 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6. Basically it's a major scale with the 7th degree left out. This scale works just about every time so try using it when playing in Major Pentatonic.

In the past lesson we discussed that the major 7th is a very "ifly" note. This is true especially in rock music as sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't depending on the underlying chords. What is great about the Major Pentatonic Sus4 scale is that it leaves that major 7th note out all together. This way you don't have to worry about it at all and you get the added bonus of a real sweet sounding Sus4 note added into the scale. Try this scale over simple major key jams and ballads at first to get the fingerings down and make sure make a mental note each time you pass through the root AND the Sus4 notes.

In the illustration below the root notes are in the black and the Sus4 notes are highlighted in yellow. This is the basic "box" shape that you have seen in previous lessons. As discussed above this Major Pentatonic shape can be viewed as the same notes as its relative Minor Pentatonic.

This scale gives you many additional lick ideas as you have three notes per string with the half step on the A and B strings in the shape below. A great bend is on the B string bending up to the Sus4 note with a nice half step bend with the first finger. Very sweet sounding bend.



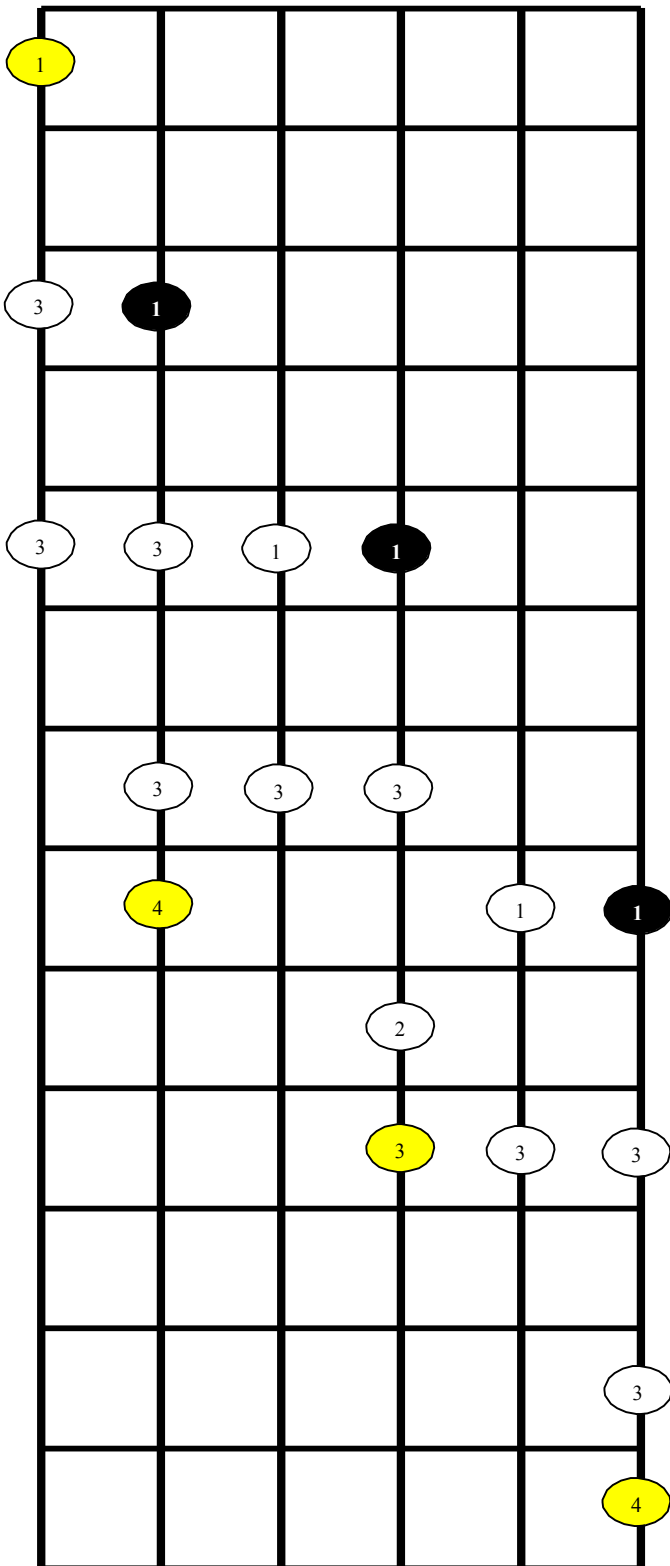
Example: Try playing a simple progression of C to F, two measures on each chord. That is a I major to a IV major change and its in the key of C major. Because we are in major key, instantly we know major pentatonic will work. So C Major Pentatonic would sound very good played over this progression. But for added spice play the C Major Pentatonic Sus4 scale.

If you analyze the chord changes in the key of C the 4th is an F. This change goes C to F. So the Major Pent Sus4 scale would be an awesome choice to play as it adds that F note.

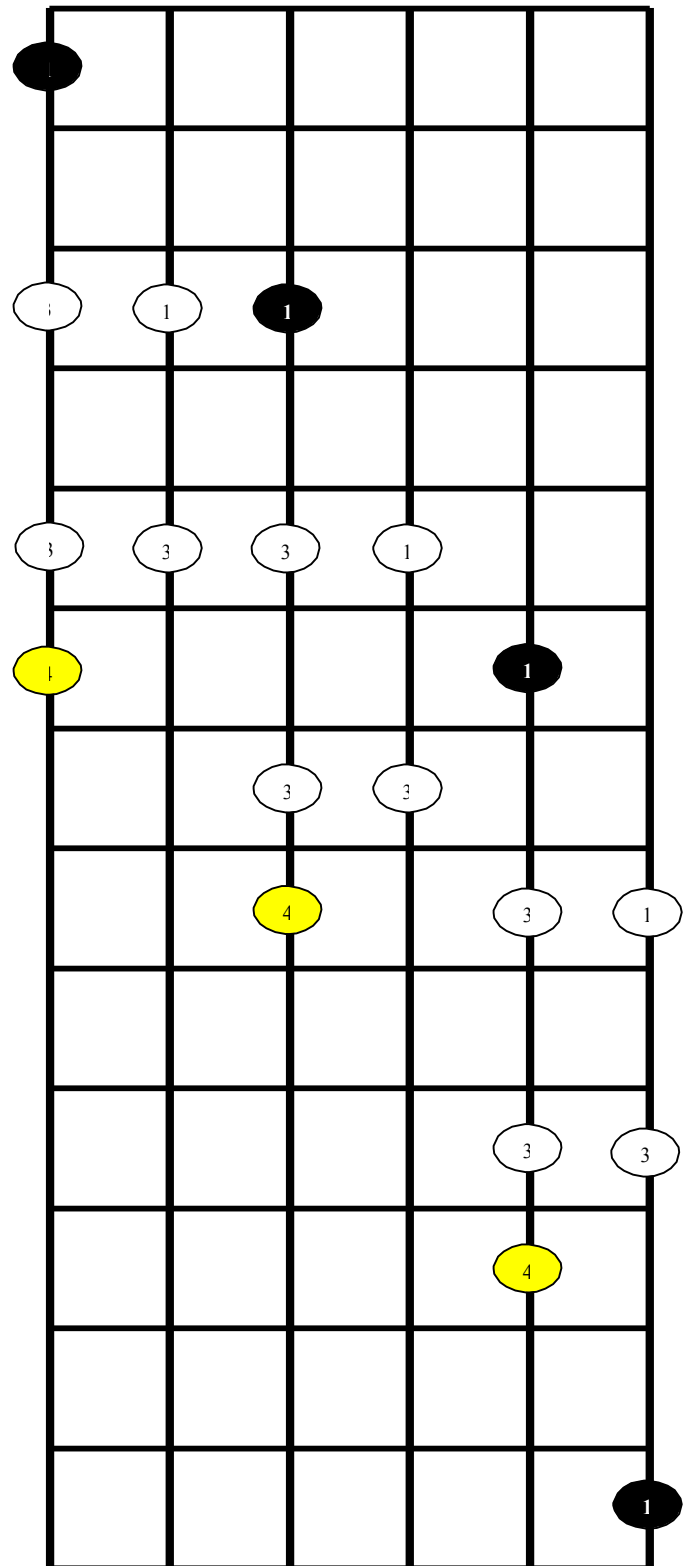
In fact you will often see I major to IV major changes, they are very common. That is why the sus4 scales are so useful. Try to feel when the change happens and land on the strong chord tones of the chord changes. The strongest landing notes on the C chord will be the notes in that chord, C, E, or G. The strongest landing tones on the F chord will be the notes making up an F chord, F, A, or C. Practice your timing landing on a different chord tone each time the change comes up. Learn the long form Sus4 scale links on the next page and work all the scales over the entire fretboard in all keys.

Major Pentatonic Sus4 scale links

Major Pentatonic Sus4 Expanded 1



Major Pentatonic Sus4 Expanded 2



Root notes in black



Sus4 notes in yellow

TOP TEN KEY HINTS TO GET YOUR PLAYING TO THE NEXT LEVEL

In my opinion there are certain principles that every guitar player should consider tackling to help evolve their playing to the next level. Some concepts and techniques are harder than others, and take quite a bit of work to get proficient. However, in the end you will be glad you took the extra time to learn the principles outlined below, as they will make you a better guitarist and a better musician. There are no real shortcuts here, it will be more work, and quite difficult at first, but in the end you will be a better musician if you take the time to nail these down. Go slowly at first and don't overwhelm yourself. These are processes that take time, remember that your playing is an evolution. Take stock in your playing and see if you are deficient in one or more of these areas and then really work hard on getting each up to speed. Keep honing your skills and refining your art and stay positive!

HINT 1: Use what you learn in lessons as templates – not isolated individual events

You want to be able to take what you are learning in lessons and apply it to real musical situations. Don't just learn a lick or an exercise and that is it – just that one isolated event. Use lessons as practical playing vehicles for you to practice and hone your lead guitar playing skills. Take what you learn in an individual lesson and try applying it to other jams, songs, and progressions in a musical context.

HINT 2: JUST DON'T LEARN LICKS.....LEARN FROM THE LICKS

I have seen it over and over and over. Too many guitarists spend way too much time on just learning licks and stopping there. If you just learn a lick here and a lick there then in the end you know a few licks – what good is that really? You want to LEARN FROM THE LICK – what scale is that lick from, how is it used, over what changes can it be played, over what chords can it be played, how can I vary that lick to turn that one lick into twenty licks, how can I use the lick in a musical context. That's what I mean – **LEARN FROM THE LICKS** - then you are arming yourself with the necessary tools to take your playing to the next level.

HINT 3: KNOW & ANALYZE THE CHORD PROGRESSION, knowing the key alone is not enough

I have seen this hold guitar players back time and time again. They focus solely on what key they are playing in and that is all they are tuned into. This can be very limiting as knowing just the key will only get you so far. Knowing what key you are playing in is important, but to fully develop your lead playing and improvisation skills you need to know more. You need to start examining the chords and progressions.

You want to know exactly what chords are in the progression and then analyze them to determine what scales, modes, and landing notes to utilize. In many instances you need to look at if there is a IV chord or V chord in a progression and are the chords major or minor. You need to know which notes make up the chords that you are playing over so you can use their respective chord tones as strong landing or emphasis notes. You will need to know the chords and their structure to fully understand and apply which mode you want to solo with.

KEY POINT: It's the chords that you are playing over that give you the full roadmap to what will work for soloing and improvisation purposes.

The key is only part of the equation – you want to start listening to and analyzing the chords underneath. At first, get in the habit of writing out the chord progression and thoroughly examining all the chords in the progression or song to get clear to all the soloing options. Consider this very methodical approach at first as training as it gets that solid musical muscle memory locked in. This way eventually your ear will be developed enough to take you to all the right notes – it just makes it easier and faster to get to that point following this structured plan. I have found that learning this methodical approach will get you there the fastest.

HINT 4: DEVELOP YOUR EAR

I always say, and will keep saying and repeating, one of the most important things that you can do as a musician is to **DEVELOP YOUR EAR**. This opens the door to amazing musical applications. Once your ear starts developing you will be able to hear strum patterns & rhythms and play them by ear without the worry of learning pattern ups and down strums. You will hear the color of chords and be able to discern major chords from minor chords from 7th chords and so on. You will be able to grab chords that give off a certain color or emotion that you may need for a given song when songwriting. You will be able to figure out and transcribe songs by ear. Your ear will also take you to those sweet sounding landing and emphasis notes and link the proper scale or mode to a given chord or set of chords. I can go on and on – develop that ear – its HUGE!

HINT 5: KNOW A LARGE CATALOGUE OF CHORDS

As a musician knowing a large vocabulary of chords is absolutely critical. Unless you want to be regulated to playing stock everyday A, D, and E all day long. Being able to play a lot of different chords proficiently and knowing how to embellish them is a difficult task, but so worthwhile. Knowing a large catalog of chords will open many doors and allow you to embellish and decorate your playing with all kinds of new musical melodies, rhythms, and endless song writing possibilities. Why play a stock, sterile, every day Aminor chord when you can play a much more interesting and harmonically rich Asus2, Am7, or Am9 chord. Embellishing chords is a great way to spark new ideas and infuse new life into old progressions and songs. Having chordal options makes it fun and exciting not only for the guitarist but also, and probably more importantly, for the listener.

HINT 6: KNOW HOW TO PLAY SOLID RHYTHM

Knowing a large catalog of chords is the first step. Next is being able to play solid rhythm. Music is more than just soloing, notes, and chords, it is also about rhythm and meter. As a guitarist you will be playing rhythm 90% of the time. So the misinformed players who thinks they can just concentrate solely on soloing and improvisation are in for a huge surprise first time they start playing with a band or jamming with other people. Your lead playing will pretty much only ever be as good as your rhythm playing. Your rhythm playing is huge so don't overlook it.

HINT 7: KNOW THE NOTES ON THE NECK

There is just no way around this one. Strive to learn the notes on the neck cold. You will always be a better musician and be able to speak the language of music if you take the extra time to learn the notes that make up each chord, scale, and the notes on the fretboard. This will also allow you to grab a needed note quickly at any time. Knowing the notes on the neck is a huge under taking, so make it a process to learn them over a period of time. Don't overwhelm yourself and try to get them all down in a week. Take things slow and learn one string at a time, then go to the next string. Utilize octaves to make the learning process a bit easier. Refer to the written lesson on page 7 illustrating the notes on the fretboard and the 12-note scale.

HINT 8: DON'T RELY SOLELY ON TABLATURE OR JUST LEARNING SHAPES

The problem with tablature and just learning scale shapes is that you don't learn the notes that make up the chords or the scales. Don't rely solely on tablature as then you are just learning finger position, fret numbers, and shapes. Try not to become too dependent on tablature. Tablature only tells you what fret number to play, it does not tell you the note that you are playing or the notes that make up the chords. Tablature is a fun way to learn songs if you don't read music so certainly use it and have fun with it, but don't fall into the trap of using it exclusively and not taking the time to develop your ear. Along with tablature learn the notes on the neck and what notes and what intervals make up each chord and keep developing your ear so you eventually wont need tabs.

HINT 9: JUST DON'T LEARN SCALES ALONE, ALSO LEARN HOW TO APPLY THEM

Too often players will learn dozens and dozens of scales, but they don't learn how to use them and when to apply them. Learning a scale by itself is not enough. Knowing when to utilize the scale and over which chords is just as important as knowing the scale itself. Knowing all the scales ever created in the history of music will do you absolutely no good unless you know how to utilize them and under which musical circumstances apply them into your playing. Learn the scale, but also learn how and when to apply it.

HINT 10: KNOW YOUR MAJOR SCALES COLD IN ADDITION TO THE PENTATONICS

This is invaluable for the lead guitar player. Knowing your major scales in all positions across the neck will help give you so many additional tools necessary for lead playing and improvisation. Too many players just stop learning scales after they learn the pentatonics. Again, why limit yourself? Knowing the major scales up and down the neck will be the springboard to knowing the modes of the major scale, relative major and minor, and many other important concepts. So learn those major scales in all positions. Don't stop after learning pentatonic scales, keep pushing into new territories and you will push yourself to that next level of lead guitar playing.

CHORD CONSTRUCTION

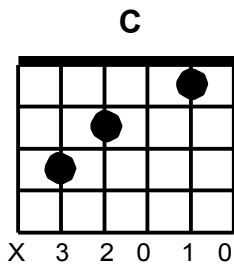
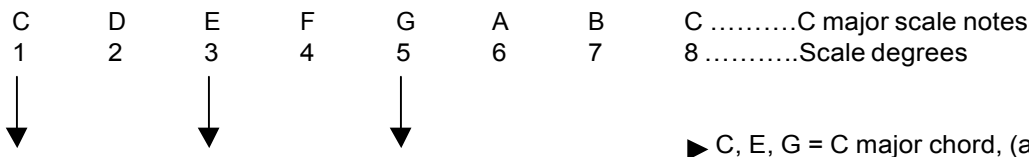
Understanding chord construction will give you the knowledge of why certain notes make up certain chords. Analyzing chord construction will also illustrate the relationships between notes, chords, and scales. It will tie many concepts together that we will discuss throughout these materials. Chord construction will help your lead playing as you will then know to land on the notes that make up the chords, or chord tones. You also will know what number each chord is referred to like what is the one chord (I), four (IV) chord, five chord (V), etc.

Chords are built from notes in certain scales. A scale is a series of sounds arranged by order of pitch, or alphabetically, from any given note to its octave. In order to analyze chord construction we need to look at scales and the notes that make them up. All major keys are constructed in the same fashion and all music theory is compared to the major scale. The major scale is the standard in music that all is compared. You have probably heard the major scale - doe, re, me, fa, so, la, ti, and then back to doe.

Lets examine the C major scale. The key of C major has no sharps or flats. In fact, C is the only major key with no accidentals, (a sharp or flat is also referred to as an accidental). So if you see a piece of sheet music and it has no sharp or flat symbols next to the clef you know it is probably in the key of C major.

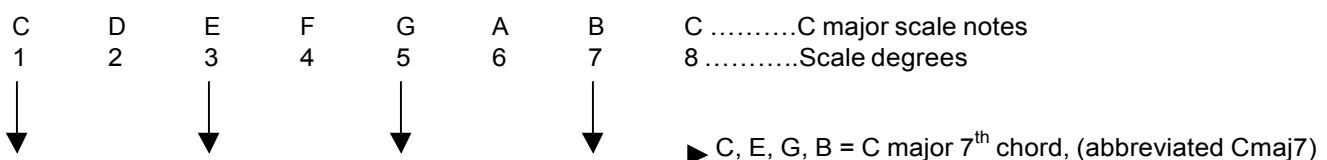
C major scale = C, D, E, F, G, A, B,

The three notes that construct a major chord are a root or 1st degree, 3rd, and 5th, (1,3,5). So to illustrate the relationship between the key signature, chords, and notes lets draw out the C major scale and start counting. Remember that the scale is always laid out in order and each successive note is assigned a number or degree, and always in order. Start on the C and count to the third degree and you have an E note. In the key of C major the third is the E. Now count to the 5th degree or 5th note starting from the C note and you have a G note. In the key of C major the 5th is a G. Now put the three notes together as shown in the illustration below and you have a C major chord – root, 3rd, and fifth or C, E, G.

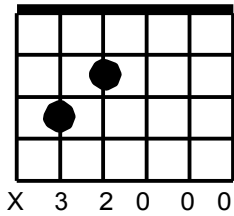


Lets look at an open C major chord illustrated on the left. Like all major chords it is constructed from the root, 3rd, and 5th degrees of the major scale. In the key of C major the notes would be C, E, and G as constructed from the C major scale illustrated above. Playing these notes on the guitar neck is a C major chord. So you can grab these three notes from anywhere on the guitar neck and play them together and you have a C major chord or some inversion of a C major chord. Now you can see from these three illustrations how the notes in a chord are constructed from a scale and their relationship degree chordal wise.

Expanding on this concept above lets build a C major 7th chord, (Cmaj7). Major 7th chords are constructed from the root, 3rd, 5th, and 7th, (1,3,5,7), degrees of the major scale. The major 7th chord is actually built off the major as it has the root, 3rd, and 5th degrees in it and then we add the 7th making it a major 7th chord. In the key of C major the root or 1st degree is a C, the 3rd is an E, and the 5th is a G. Let's draw out the C major scale again and begin counting degrees. The 7th degree in C major is a B. So put all the notes for a C major 7th chord together and we have the root, 3rd, 5th, and 7th and if we count degrees as illustrated below we have C, E, G, and B.



Cmaj7



Lets look at an open Cmaj7 chord illustrated on the left. Like all major 7th chords it is constructed from the root, 3rd, 5th, and 7th degrees of the major scale. In the key of C major the notes would be C, E, G, and B as constructed from the C major scale as illustrated above. Playing these notes on the guitar neck is a C major 7th chord. So you can grab these four notes from anywhere on the guitar neck and play them together and you have a Cmaj7 chord or some inversion of a Cmaj7 chord.

Lets try this same principle but this time we are going to change keys to G major. Remember, as discussed in the lesson above, all major keys are constructed in the same fashion. The G major scale has one sharp or accidental, (F#). The key of G major is the only major key with one sharp. Here are the notes of the G major scale:

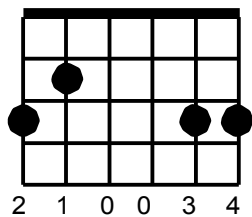
G major scale = G, A, B, C, D, E, F#

Let's draw out the G major scale and start counting. Starting on the root note G, count to the third degree and you have a B note. In the key of G major the third is the B. Now count to the 5th degree and you have a D note. In the key of G major the 5th is a D. Now put the three together as shown in the illustration below and you have a G major chord – root, 3rd, fifth or G, B, D.

G	A	B	C	D	E	F#	G	G major scale notes
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Scale degrees
↓		↓		↓				

► G, B, D = G major chord, (abbreviated Gmaj or just G)

G



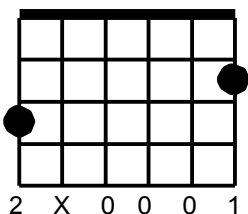
Lets look at an open G major guitar chord illustrated on the left. Like all major chords it is constructed from the root, 3rd, and 5th degrees of the major scale. In the key of G major the notes would be G, B, and D as constructed from the G major scale illustrated above. Playing these notes on the guitar neck is a G major chord. So you can grab these three notes from anywhere on the guitar neck and play them together and you have a G major chord or some inversion of a G major chord.

Expanding further with the G major scale let's build a G major 7th chord, (Gmaj7). Major 7th chords are constructed from the root, 3rd, 5th, and 7th degrees of the major scale as discussed above. In the key of G major the root or 1st degree is a G, the 3rd is a B, and the 5th a D. Let's draw out the G major scale again and begin counting degrees. The 7th degree in G major is an F#. So put all the notes for a G major 7th chord together and we have the root, 3rd, 5th, and 7th and if we count degrees as illustrated below we have G, B, D, and F#.

G	A	B	C	D	E	F#	G	G major scale notes
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Scale degrees
↓		↓		↓		↓		

► G, B, D, F# = G major 7th chord, (abbreviated Gmaj7)

Gmaj7

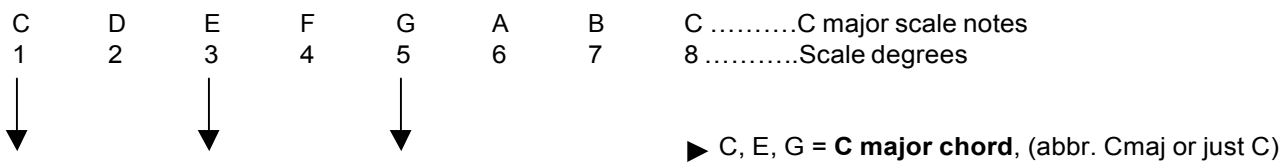


Lets look at an open Gmaj7 chord illustrated on the left. Like all major 7th chords it is constructed from the root, 3rd, 5th, and 7th degrees of the major scale. In the key of G major the notes would be G, B, D, and F# as constructed from the G major scale as illustrated above. Playing these notes on the guitar neck is a Gmaj7 chord or some inversion of a G major7 chord.

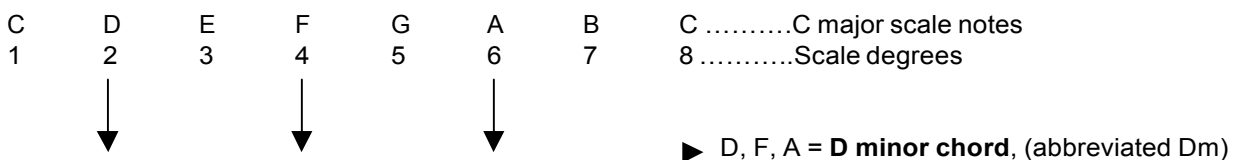
Building chords from the Major Scale

As per the previous lesson we have learned that all music theory falls back to the major scale. The major scale is the standard in music that all is compared. Now we will build chords from each degree of the major scale and you will easily be able to know which chords are in any given major key. To find the notes in any major key, (major scale), start at the root and go up following this pattern: **whole step, whole step, half step, whole step, whole step, whole step, half step**. This will take you to the root one octave higher than where you began, and will include all seven notes in the major key in that octave. Remember, any chord *might* show up in any given key, however, certain chords are much more likely to be in a given key than others. The most likely chords to show up in a given key are the chords made from combinations of the notes in that keys' major scale. You'll find that although the chords change from one key to the next, the *pattern* of major and minor type chords is always the same for any major key. Lets examine the C major scale and build the chords in that key right from the scale. Follow this template to build the chords in any key.

If you start on C and skip every other note in the scale, also called stacking 3rds, for a total of 3, you have built a C major chord. The major chord follows the formula 1,3,5. So a C major chord is constructed from the three notes C, E, and G, the root of the scale, the third note of the scale, and the fifth note of the scale.



Now do the exact same thing stacking thirds except this time start on the D note. The D is the second degree or 2nd note, II, of the C major scale – so just keep stacking thirds, we then have the three notes that construct a D chord and if we examine those 3 notes, D,F,A, we see it's a D minor chord, (as illustrated below).



The process of stacking 3rd notes up in the major scale continues until you have a total of 7 chords, one for each note of the scale. Each note of the scale refers to a chord, 7 notes in the scale so 7 chords. Each major key will have a total of seven chords.

C D E F G A B C – E,G,B = **Em (E minor chord)**

C D E F G A B C – F,A,C = **F (F major chord)**

C D E F G A B C D – G,B,D = **G (G major chord)**

C D E F G A B C D E – A,C,E = **Am (A minor chord)**

C D E F G A B C D E F – B,D,F = **B^o (B diminished chord)**

Because major scales are always built from stacking thirds, the pattern is always the same for every major key. The chords built on the first, fourth, and fifth degrees of the scale are major type chords (I, IV, and V). The chords built on the second, third, and sixth degrees of the scale are minor type chords (ii, iii, and vi). The chord built on the seventh degree of the scale is a diminished chord.

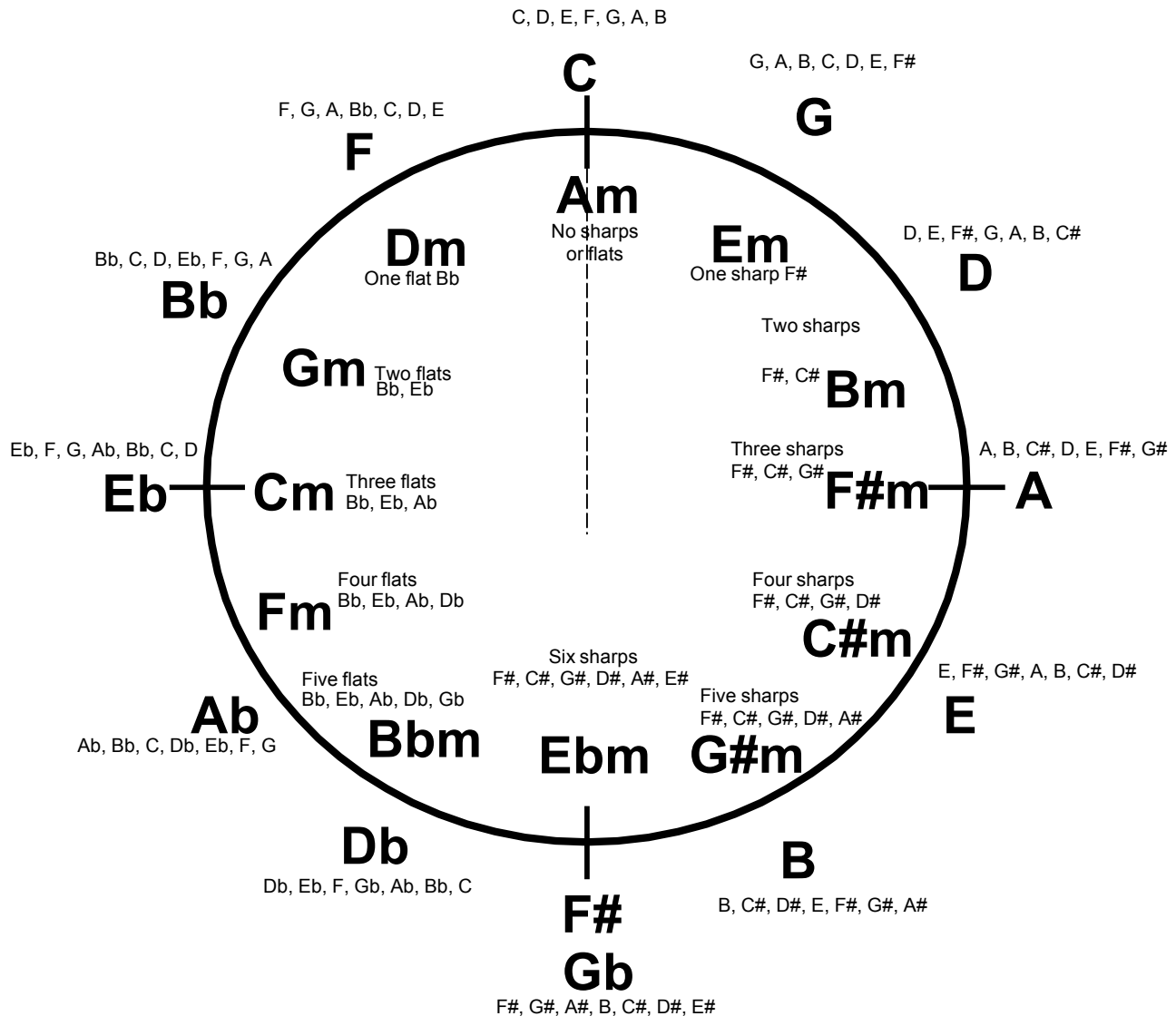
KEY POINT: Whichever major key you are building chords from the pattern will always be the same.
Major....Minor....Minor....Major....Major....Minor....Diminished - commit this pattern to memory!

THE CIRCLE OF FIFTHS

The circle of fifths is a great visualization and reference tool to illustrate the relationships between major and relative minor keys, chords, and sharps and flats. As per the circle illustration below, there are 12 notes corresponding to the 12 numbers on a clock. Perfect fifths separate each key – hence the name “CIRCLE OF FIFTHS”. The fifth note in a C major scale is G. The fifth note in a G major scale is D, and so on around the circle. Each time you move one step clockwise you go up a perfect fifth.

Along the outside of the circle are major keys and their corresponding RELATIVE MINOR keys are illustrated on the inside of the circle. As per the circle – C major has Am as its relative minor, G major has Em as its relative minor. This means the notes in C major - C,D,E,F,G,A,B are the same notes as in Am - A,B,C,D,E,F,G. And so on around the circle.

C major is at the 12 o'clock position and has no sharps or flats. G major is at the one o'clock position and has one sharp, F#. D major is in the 2 o'clock position and has two sharps, F# and C#. A major is in the three o'clock position and has the F#, C#, and now adds the G#. Notice the sharps and flats are added in a sequential order. This is the “order of sharps and flats” which will be discussed on the next page. Moving counterclockwise to the next neighboring key you go down a perfect fifth. Looking at each key you have the dominant chord to its right and its subdominant to its left. For example in the key of C major you have the subdominant F chord directly to the left of C, and the dominant G chord directly to the right – 1, 4, 5 or the C, F, and G chords in the key of C major. In other words, in the circle of fifths you always have the three primary chords next to one another – the tonic or root in the center, the subdominant on the left, and the dominant on the right. Moving clockwise you either add one sharp or deduct one flat as you move from key to key. Moving counter clockwise you either deduct one sharp or add one flat. This illustrates that there is only one note difference between a key and the next key a fifth away. Notice how the illustration displays only a one-note difference as you move from key to key on the circle. For example, going from C major with no sharps or flats, clockwise a fifth away to its neighbor G major, which has one sharp. The F note is raised a half step to an F# - one half step difference between the two keys. Going counterclockwise you would just flatten the B note – B to Bb. Follow this same formula around the circle.



Did you enjoy this book?

Well, I have even more to show you!

If you *really* want to develop your chops on lead guitar, then you gotta [check out the special package](#) I've put together for you. It's a complete 4-DVD set called "Guitar Soloing," and it's fastest way I know to get to that "next level" quickly.

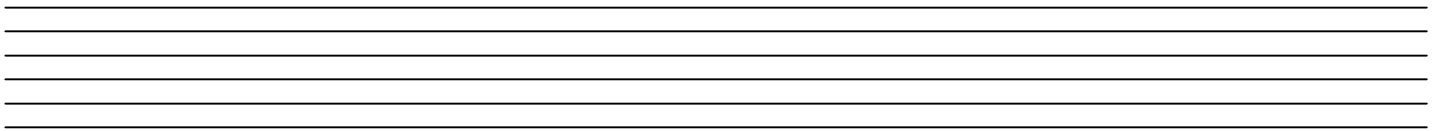
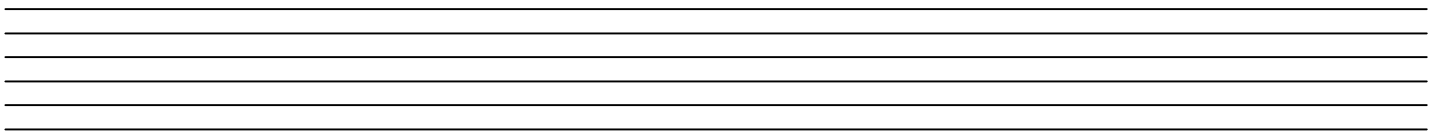
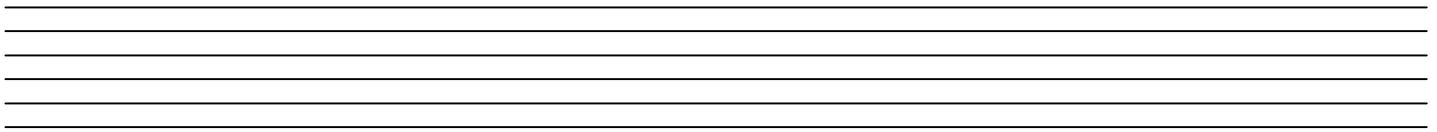
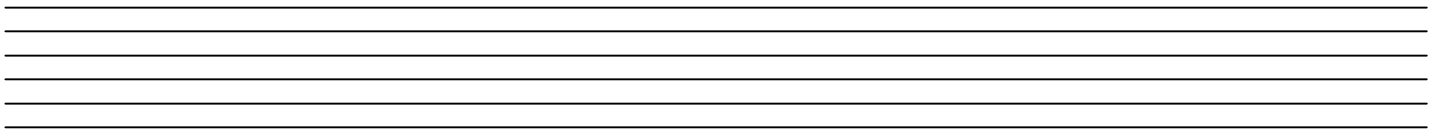
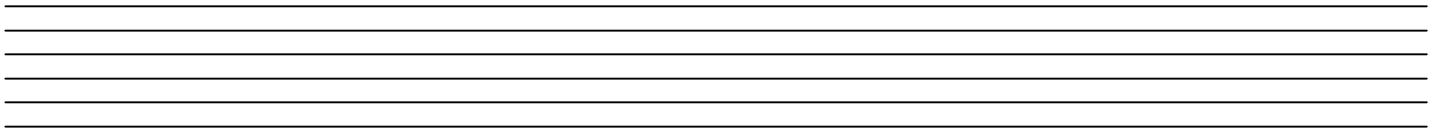
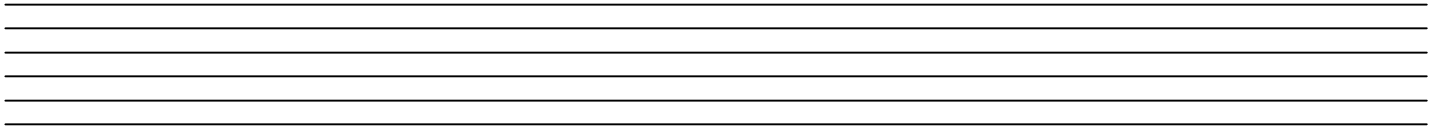
Read more about it here and even watch a short video trailer preview:
http://www.guitarjamz.com/guitar_soloing_special/index_ebook.html

[Click Here to Get a Massive Shortcut In the Time It Takes to Become an Amazing Lead Guitarist!](#)

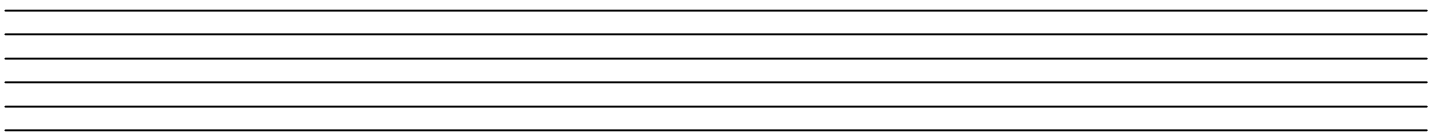
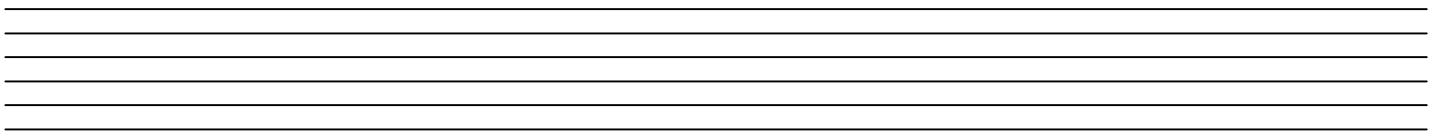
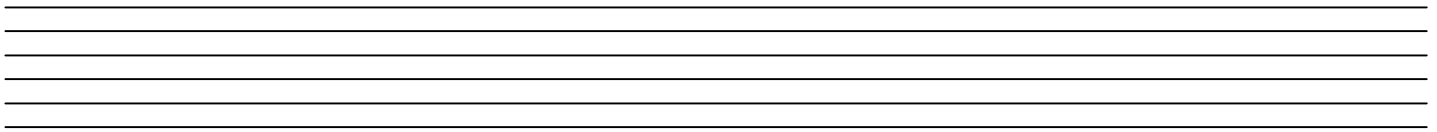
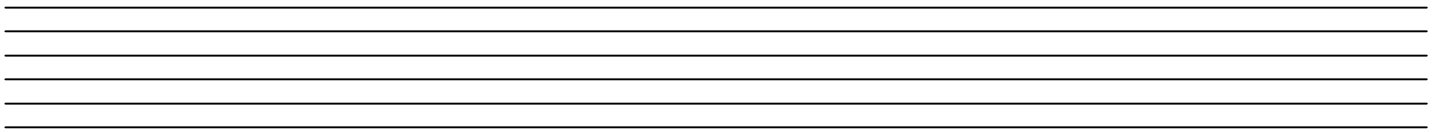
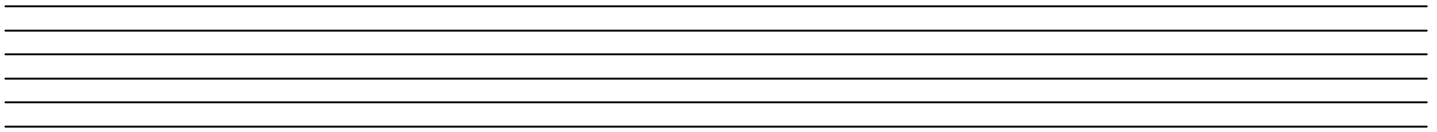
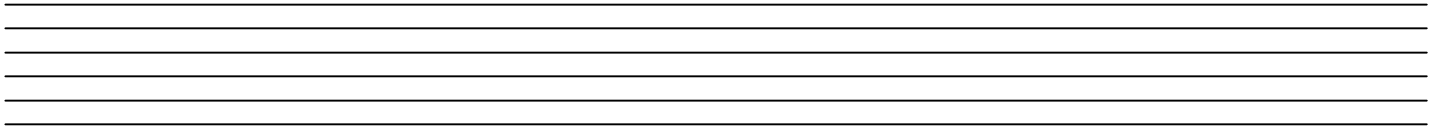
**Get My 4-DVD "Guitar Soloing" Course +
5 Bonuses For HALF-PRICE Plus
FREE, World-Wide Shipping!**



Blank tablature staves to write out your favorite licks



Blank tablature staves to write out your favorite licks



Blank tablature staves to write out your favorite licks

