

# **BLUES THEORY REVOLUTION**

**Overthrow the piano paradigm**

**Part II of the Guitar Theory Revolution Method**

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## Introduction

Welcome to the second part of the Guitar Theory Revolution method. In this book I'll be focusing on how to apply what I consider intermediate level theory.

While you don't need to have mastered everything in the first course, it is necessary to have gone through it at least once so that you understand the basics of how I describe scales, triads and chords.

Many of the lessons in this course revolve around Blues and Blues-Rock music, but the principles apply to all genres and also provide a foundation for other styles such as Jazz which I'll teach in a future course.

As I have mentioned many times before I believe that music theory is like the grammar that underpins our everyday language. It is descriptive rather than prescriptive. That means that it describes how music is actually played rather than how it should be played if you were strictly following rules. At the end of the day the most important thing is whether the music sounds good to your ears. If it does then it's correct. In a sense there really aren't any bad notes.

As in my first course the focus of my method is on covering how music fits together and explaining it in a way that allows you to make practical use of the knowledge. I won't be showing you riffs and licks but rather the tools that will enable you to come up with your own.

But if you need inspiration perhaps you could study your favourite guitar players and see how they play through the lens of the music theory taught here. By going through my method you'll be able to understand what they are doing and why it sounds the way it does.

Thanks again for supporting my research and work.

Neill

## 1. Blues Chord Progressions

The first thing to take a look at is the most common Blues progressions. By knowing these you'll be able to more easily jam with your friends or play along with blues standards or jam tracks.

In the examples below everything between the two square brackets like this: [ I IV ] is considered to be a four beat bar unless otherwise stated. The convention is to note down a single chord symbol between brackets to indicate that it is played for the whole bar. So instead of writing [ V V V V ] we can just write [ V ].

If there are two symbols like this: [ I IV ] it means the bar is divided evenly, the I chord for two beats and then the IV chord for two beats. If you want to write down a bar with three different chords you'd have to write it as follows so it's clear which chord is held for two beats and which for only one: [ I I IV V ].

Of course the chords do not necessarily have to be played, they can be implied with the bass and lead playing. They describe the underlying structure that the music follows.

The examples below are in the key of D Major. You'll notice that in some cases I've noted **V7** chords (for example A7, A Dominant 7<sup>th</sup>) instead of a simple **V**. The reason is that it's a popular choice in Blues and Rock and gives a stronger sense of tension and release as it moves back to the **I**.

Note also that sometimes the key would indicate that a minor triad should be played when in practice it sounds good to play a Major triad / chord.

I	ii	iii	IV	V	vi	vii
D	Em	Fm	G	A7	Bm	C#m7b5

### 12 Bar Blues

[ I ]	[ I ]	[ I ]	[ I ]
D	D	D	D
[ IV ]	[ IV ]	[ I ]	[ I ]
G	G	D	D
[ V ]	[ IV ]	[ I ]	[ V7 ]
A7	G	D	A7

### 12 Bar Quick Change

[ I ]	[ IV ]	[ I ]	[ I ]
D	G	D	D
[ IV ]	[ IV ]	[ I ]	[ I ]
G	G	D	D
[ V7 ]	[ IV ]	[ I ]	[ V7 ]
A7	G	D	A7

## Long I

[ I ]	[ IV ]	[ I ]	[ I ]
D	G	D	D

[ IV ]	[ IV ]	[ I ]	[ I ]
G	G	D	D

[ V7 ]	[ IV ]	[ I ]	[ I ] ← Long I
A7	G	D	D

## Long V

[ I ]	[ IV ]	[ I ]	[ I ]
D	G	D	D

[ IV ]	[ IV ]	[ I ]	[ I ]
G	G	D	D

[ V7 ]	[ V7 ]	[ IV ]	[ I ]
A7	A7	G	D

## 8 Bar Blues

This is a less common progression. Examples include: Sitting on Top of the World, Key to the Highway, Trouble in Mind, Heartbreak Hotel, How Long Blues and Ain't Nobody's Business.

[ I ]	[ V ]	[ IV ]	[ V ]
D	A7	G	A7

[ I ]	[ IV or V7 ]	[ I ]	[ V7 ]
D	G or A7	D	A7

As you can tell from the chord progressions described, the important thing about the Blues is that it is based around the **I - IV - V** pattern also known as the Tonic, Subdominant and Dominant.

In my first book you learned that the way the guitar is tuned in standard tuning leads to all kinds of useful patterns that give you insight into how music theory works. And it also allows you to improvise freely all over the fretboard.

There are two very simple patterns that can be learned that will allow you to quickly find the **I**, **IV** and **V** chords in any key. This is useful not only in playing the full chord any one time but also for implying chord changes with arpeggios.

In the first the **I** is a normal Major bar chord on the low E string (E-shape), the **IV** is also a Major bar chord on the same fret but on the A string (A-shape), finally the **V** is on the A string but two frets towards the bridge of the guitar (A-shape).

You can find the second pattern by playing the **I** as the Major bar chord on the A string (A-shape), the **IV** as Major Bar chord on the low E string but two frets up towards the head of the guitar (A-shape) and the **V** chord back at the same fret as the **I** chord but on the low E (E-shape).

These are quite common ways to play the **I – IV – V** and you may know them already, but there are more ways to play this progression that can provide a good foundation for improvising.

## 2. I - IV - V All Over the Fretboard

With our knowledge of the CAGED Chord Pattern we can play the I – IV – V progression in a variety of different ways.

Something that will help with this concept is knowing the Cycle of 4<sup>ths</sup> in chord form on the fretboard. Start with the open E, A, D, G, C, etc. then shift into the bar-chord forms using the CAGED chord pattern.

Follow the cycle around as you move up the fretboard as far as you can go. When you've reached the top you should turn around and follow the chords back down again. Going down towards the head of the guitar you'll be playing the Cycle of 5<sup>ths</sup>.

- |                                    |           |
|------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. A shape D shape E shape D shape | I IV V IV |
| 2. D shape G shape A shape G shape | I IV V IV |
| 3. G shape C shape D shape C shape | I IV V IV |
| 4. C shape E shape G shape E shape | I IV V IV |
| 5. E shape A shape C shape A shape | I IV V IV |

Before we get into improvisation properly you can already use this knowledge for very basic lead playing. All you have to do is arpeggiate or pick out the individual notes of the chords on different parts of the fretboard.. A good song to try this out with is Jimi Hendrix's version of Hey Joe which follows the chord progression: C, G, D, A, E. It follows a portion of the Cycle of 5<sup>ths</sup>.

It's always a good idea to practice this form of improvisation because it helps your soloing sound very melodic since what you play moves along with the chord progressions and avoids that stale feeling you get after using a single scale for more than a few minutes.

This style of improvisation is actually the foundation for many Jazz players. You may have heard them reference 'playing the changes' which means they are emphasising the notes that let you hear the underlying chord changes.



### 3. Turnarounds

Turnarounds are a way for a chord progression to get back to the first chord in a musically satisfying way. So in the 12 bar blues examples we've been looking at it's a way to get from the V chord to the I chord during the last two bars. Many Blues standards will have a set turnaround. But there are countless ways to play one, and a lot of the fun of playing Blues music is exploring ways to perform them. Even if Blues isn't the genre you usually play it's useful to learn to recognise certain chord progressions.

Below I've written out the chords for the progressions, one bar (of four beats each) for each chord with the final two bars where the turnarounds happen in **bold**. Underneath the chord numbers I'll give you examples in the key of D so it's easier to play along.

I haven't written down any particular rhythm that you should play these in so I suggest you play one down strum per beat to get a feel for when the changes happen. Then you can incorporate it into your own playing. And remember just because these are chord changes does not mean you always have to strum the complete chords. You can play parts of the chord, play arpeggios or play lead in a way that outlines the changes.

I	ii	iii	IV	V	vi	vii
D	Em	Fm	G	A7	Bm	C#m7b5

First, here's a standard 12 bar blues in the key of D Major:

[ I ]	[ I ]	[ I ]	[ I ]
D	D	D	D
[ IV ]	[ IV ]	[ I ]	[ I ]
G	G	D	D
[ V ]	[ IV ]	[ I ]	[ V7 ]
A7	G	D	A7

The turnaround happens in stead of these two last bars

1. Extend the I into the final bar for 3 more beats and play the V on the final beat before going back to the I.

[ V ]	[ IV ]	[ I ]	[ I I I V7 ]
A7	G	D	D D D A7

2. A quick slide from the IV to the V using a passing chord ( bV).

[ V ]	[ IV ]	[ I ]	[ IV bV V7 V7 ]
A7	G	D	G Ab A7 A7

3. In this turnaround we play something a bit out of the ordinary.

[ V ]	[ VI ]	[ II ]	[ V7 ]
A7	B7	E7	A7

4. In this turnaround we make more explicit use of chord substitutions. This was covered in my first book, but in brief it means that when two triads / chords share enough notes you can substitute them with each other to keep the same chord function but give the progression an interesting feel. The **I**, **ii** and **vi** chords can be substituted for each other, the same goes for the **ii** and **IV** and the **V** and **vii**. As mentioned earlier, sometimes while the key indicates a Minor chord should be played, a Major chord will sound good.

[ V ]	[ III ]	[ II ]	[ bII ]
A7	F7	E7	Eb7

5. Moving from #V to the V in the last bar. This is a quick passing chord which normally doesn't fit in the the key but it sounds good since you're leading up to a strong chord, the V.

[ V ]	[ IV ]	[ I ]	[ I #V V7 V7 ]
A7	G	D	D A#7 A7 A7

Now in these examples I've shown you the chords that make up the turnarounds but the point is for you to learn the progression so you can then play them in different keys, whether by strumming the chords, playing them as arpeggios or by hitting the important notes of the progression while playing lead.

## 4. Dominant 7<sup>th</sup> Chord Patterns

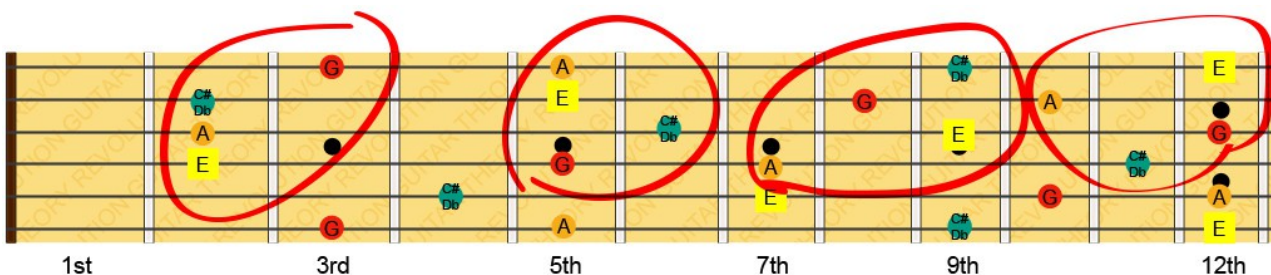
I've shown that Dominant 7<sup>th</sup> chords are often used in blues and rock music, but it's a chord that not many people will be familiar with. Below I've mapped out the notes of the A Major triad which results in the familiar CAGED pattern. Then I added the 0 - 10 interval, in this case G to show all the notes of the A7 chord.

Fret Formula:     0 - 4 - 7 - 10  
Notes:            A - C# - E - G

As you can see below this gives you several different ways to play this chord. In fact each of the 4 inversions are shown. An inversion is a way to play a chord with a note other than the root note as the lowest note. The Root position is with the A as the lowest note, the 1<sup>st</sup> inversion is with the C# as the lowest note, the 2<sup>nd</sup> inversion is with E as the lowest note and the 3<sup>rd</sup> inversion is with the G as the lowest note in the chord voicing.

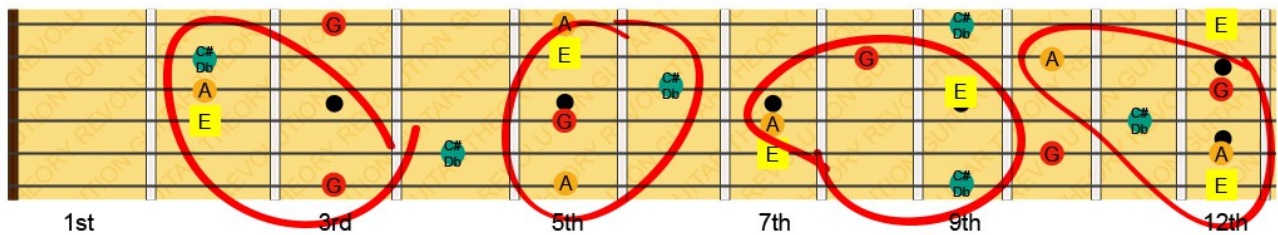
In the first diagram I've circled four ways to play the A7 on the top five strings. The first two between the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> fret can be played easily by holding down the top four strings with your index finger. In the first pattern you can fret the G with your ring finger and in the second you fret the C# with your ring finger as well. You can easily transition between the two by sliding your index finger up and down.

The next two patterns are between the 7<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> frets. You play the A with your index finger, the G with your middle finger and the C# and E with your pinky and ring finger. Just slide up 3 frets with your pinky and ring finger and swap the positions of the middle and index finger to quickly transition to the next shape.



Next I've circled the notes that can make up the A7 on the bottom five strings. You can quickly change between the two shapes by sliding your index finger up and down the neck. This time fretting the G on the lowest string with your middle finger and the C# with your ring finger.

Although the open A string can be played in this particular instance, if you decide to play these chords in different keys you will have to mute it.



With the last two patterns you can keep your pinky and ring finger on the fretboard as you slide from the C# to the E and from the E to the G. Your index and middle finger will have to switch positions. In the last pattern I would mute the A on 2<sup>nd</sup> from bottom string with the inside of your ring finger so there is only one of each note.

## 5. Minor Blues Progressions

Minor Blues progressions are less common than standard Blues progressions but still serve as the basis for many great songs like The Thrill Is Gone, made famous by B.B. King, Tin Pan Alley by Stevie Ray Vaughan, If Heartaches Were Nickels by Joe Bonamassa and Midnight Blues by Gary Moore.

The chords in a minor Blues progression are built using the Harmonic Minor scale which has the fret formula: 0 - 2 - 3 - 5 - 7 - 8 - 11 - 12

For example: A - B - C - D - E - F - G# - A

You might wonder why the Harmonic minor scale is used instead of the Natural minor scale (the one most closely related to the Major Scale). The reason is that triads and chords built using the Natural minor scale are not so easy to work with (augmented and diminished triads) and this book focusses on theory that will help you play Blues and Blues Rock.

Minor Blues progressions feature 4 chords built on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> notes of the scale. Those notes serve as the root notes of each triad and to find the other notes that make up each triad we need to pick every other note in the scale in the same way we learned to do for other triads in my previous book.

Doing this gives us the following triads to play (and build on top of):

A minor: A - C - E  
D minor: D - F - A  
E Major: E - G# - B  
F Major: F - A - C

So using the Harmonic minor scale formula above you can easily find the 1<sup>st</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> root notes and then the triads: minor, minor, Major, Major.

Here's an example of a minor Blues Progression in the key of A minor.

[ i ]            [ i ]            [ i ]            [ i ]  
[ Am ]        [ Am ]        [ Am ]        [ Am ]

[ iv ]           [ iv ]           [ i ]            [ i ]  
[ Dm ]        [ Dm ]        [ Am ]        [ Am ]

[ VI ]           [ V ]            [ i ]            [ i ]  
[ F ]           [ E ]            [ Am ]        [ Am ]

Often the **i** is played as a **i7**, adding the 0 - 10 interval, and instead of a **V** you can play a **V7#9** (often referred to as the Hendrix chord), which means add a 0 - 10 interval and a 0 - 15 to the basic triad. I'll show you more about that chord later.

Here's a list of well known songs using minor Blues progressions.

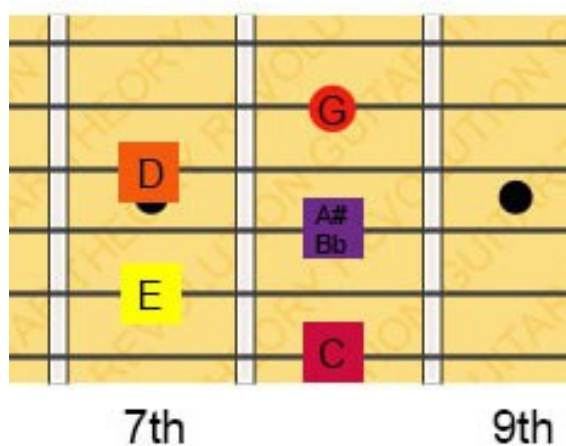
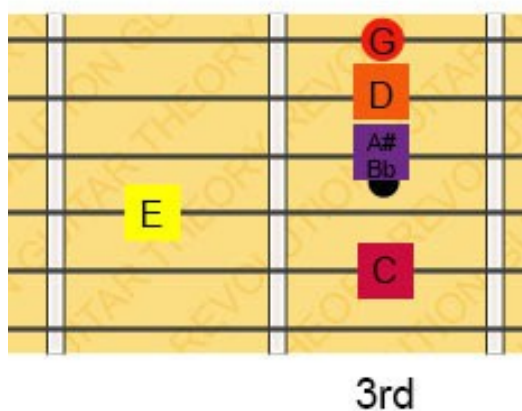
The Thrill Is Gone - B.B. King  
Black Magic Woman - Fleetwood Mac  
Midnight Blues - Gary Moore  
Blue Jean Blues - Jeff Healey  
Mr P. C. - John Coltrane  
If Heartaches Were Nickels - Joe Bonamassa  
Since I've Been Loving You - Led Zeppelin  
Double Trouble - Otis Rush  
I Put A Spell On You - Screamin' Jay Hawkins  
Tin Pan Alley - Stevie Ray Vaughan

## 6. 9<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Chords

9<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Chords are popular in a Blues and Jazz context (11<sup>th</sup>s not so much because it clashes with the the 3<sup>rd</sup> ).

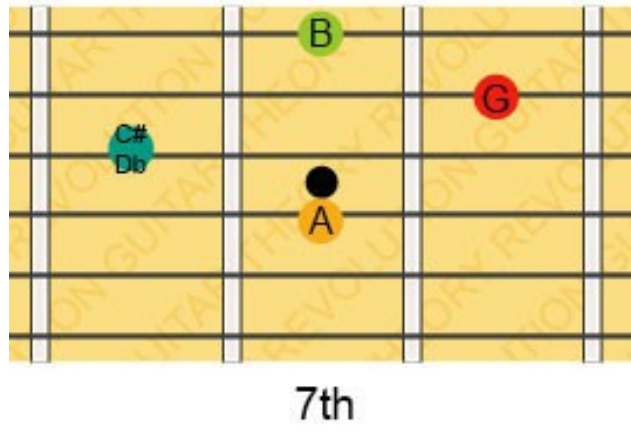
As with the Dominant 7<sup>th</sup>s you can follow standard Blues and Jazz progressions and simply play the extended chord instead of a standard triad. Below are some examples of 9<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> chords.

### C9: Two variations

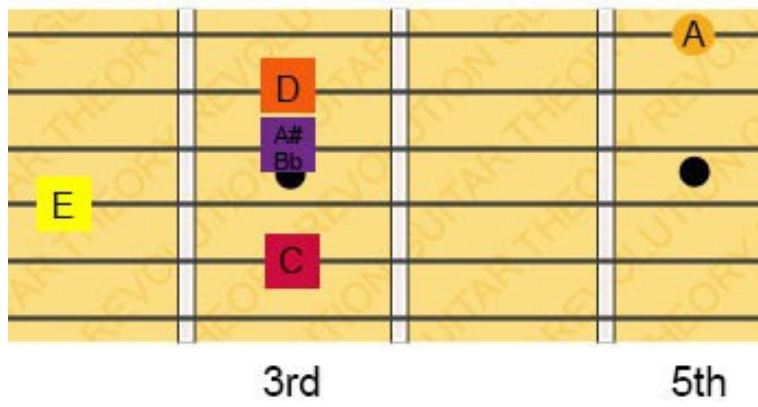




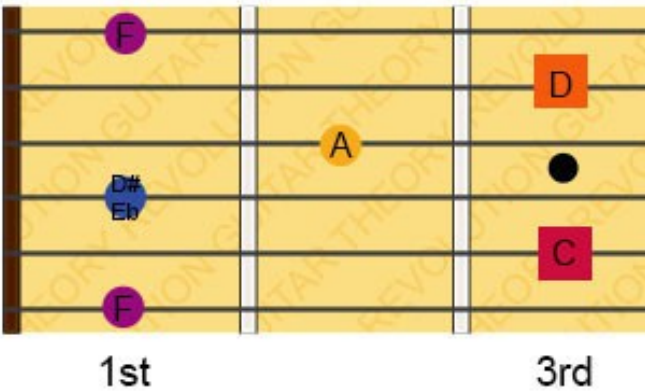
A9



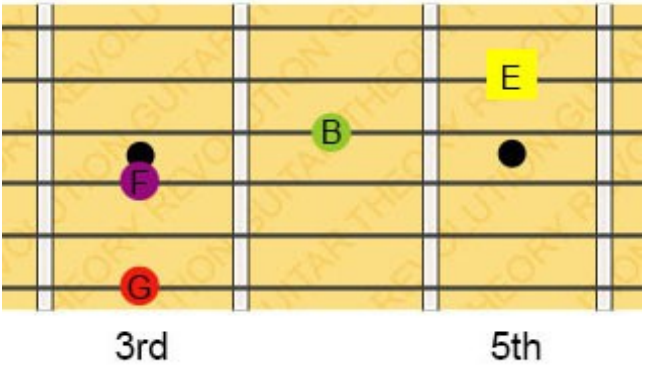
C13



F13



G13



## 7. The Dominant 7 #9 Chord

The Dominant 7 #9 is chord that is quite common in Blues and Blues Rock. Also named the Hendrix chord, because Jimi famously used it in Purple Haze, it can substitute for the V7.

The chord consists of the following intervals.

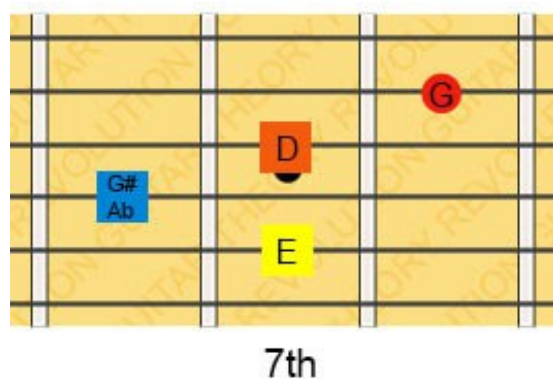
Conventional: 1 - 3 - 5 - b7 - #9

Fret Formula: 0 - 4 - 7 - 10 - 15

However in practice you don't need to play the Perfect 5<sup>th</sup>, 0 - 7 interval since the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 0 - 4 is enough to imply the overall Major sound of the chord.

You'll find that with many extended chords you'll need to drop certain notes, first of all because you wouldn't be able to physically play them and second because it opens up some ambiguity and allows you to imply different chords depending on what the other instruments are doing or how you're playing around that particular chord.

The easiest and most popular way to play this chord is shown below and you'll notice that the 0 - 7 (B) is omitted. So 0 - 4 - 10 - 15 in E gives us: E - G# - D - G.



This is a perfect example of dissonance sounding good in the right context. In this case the G and G# form the most dissonant interval, the Minor 2<sup>nd</sup>, 0 - 1.

## 8. Alternate Blues Progressions

Now it's time to use some of these interesting new chords in different kinds of progressions, rather than just simple substitutions as we've discussed up until now.

Chord charts for Diminished, Minor 7<sup>th</sup> and Minor 9<sup>th</sup> chords are shown in my first book.

### Major Blues

[ A7 ]      [ A7 ]      [ D9 ]      [ D9 ]      [ A7 ]      [ A7 ]  
[ E9 ]      [ D9 ]      [ A7 A#dim7 ]      [ Bm7 E7#9 ]

### Minor Blues

[ Gm7 ]              [ Cm7 ]              [ Gm7 ]              [ Gm7 G#dim7 ]  
[ Cm7 ]              [ Cm7 ]              [ Gm7 ]              [ Gm7 ]  
[ Eb9 ]              [ D7#9 ]              [ Gm7 Cm7 ]              [ Gm7 D7#9 ]

### Blues Jazz

[ B7 ]      [ E9 ]      [ B7 ]      [ D#m7b5 ]      [ E9 ]      [ E9 ]  
[ B7 ]      [ D#m7b5 ]      [ C#m7 ]      [ F#9 ]      [ B7 ]      [ F#9 ]

## 9. Improvisation: Playing Scales vs Outlining Chord Changes

As I hinted at in previous chapters there are broadly speaking two main approaches to improvisation. Playing scales, is the one most guitar players are familiar with. You find the key of the piece of music you want to play over and then choose a scale or scales to improvise with.

The types of scales that will work over a piece of music will depend on the underlying chord progression that is being played, or implied. The simpler the triads and chords used in the progression the more room there is to use different scales that will work across the whole piece of music.

Playing scales is considered by most people to be the easiest way to get into improvising. You can learn a set of scale patterns and shift them around the neck to play in different keys. Once you have locked on to the correct key you don't have to think about the underlying chord at any given time and can use your muscle memory and your ear to pick out a melody.

The downside of this type of improvisation is that your melodies can feel static unless you intelligently use particular notes against particular chords. Also since most people only learn a couple of scale patterns they'll feel stuck in certain ways of doing things.

You might have heard about guitar players feeling like they are 'stuck in the boxes', by which they mean they are relying on particular scale shapes instead of being able to move around the fretboard freely.

As you introduce more complicated progressions and chords you'll have less room to manoeuvre and will be limited to fewer notes at any given point in the music. At the extreme end you'll have to play arpeggios of each chord in the progression (although you can free yourself up with chord substitutions). This is what's commonly referred to as playing the changes and is something very common in Jazz, but it's applicable to any kind of music.

For example in its simplest form you could pick out some individual notes of the open G chord, then some notes from C chord and finally do the same from the D chord. Taken to its logical conclusion you will have access to the arpeggios of a particular chord across the whole fretboard.

Hopefully by now you've realised that these different ways of improvising are just two sides to the same coin. At the end of the day there are sets of notes that sound good to you at a given time and others that don't. The process of learning to find the notes that sound good is where the challenge lies.

The way to get past this is to understand that there is no one best way to learn improvisation and that you need to adopt different perspectives at different times and ultimately reach the ideal situation where you can switch between all perspectives at will to create the music you want.

The following chapters are about showing you the same or similar information from different perspectives. Pick one that appeals to you and have that as your main focus of practice for a couple of weeks, dabble in others but come back to it often until it's ingrained.

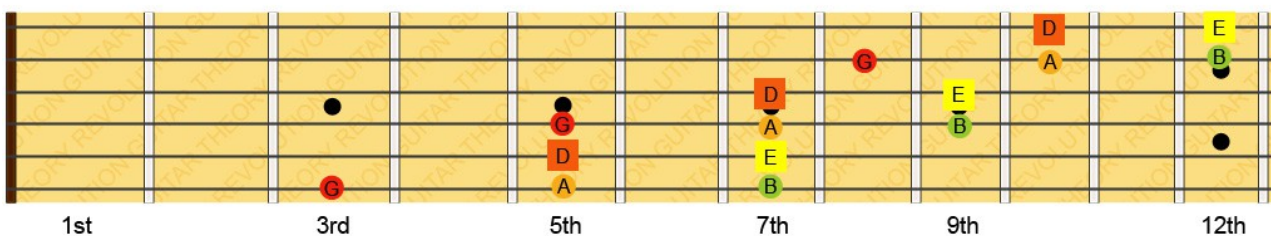
## 10. Major and Minor Pentatonic Scales Across The Fretboard

A complaint many guitar players have about their improvisational skills is that they often feel like they are trapped in the dreaded 'box'. This means that they find themselves using the same scale patterns over and over again, finding it hard to play across the whole fretboard.

The reasons for this is simple, if you only practice one kind of pattern then you'll never know other ways in which to play. That's why it's important to practice scales in as many different ways as possible.

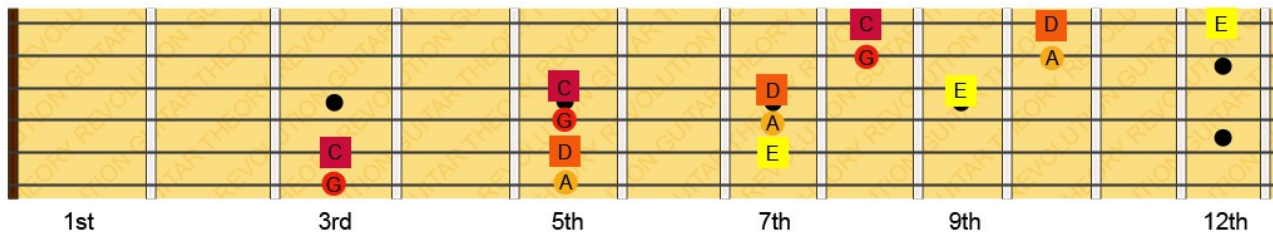
Below you'll see a diagram of the G Major Pentatonic Scale (0 - 2 - 4 - 7 - 9 - 12). Notice how in the diagrams there is a pattern in how many notes you play on each subsequent string. Starting on the low E string you play three notes, then play two notes on the A string, three notes on the D string, alternating on each string. Playing a scale pattern like this, with more than two notes on each string will go a long way to preventing you from falling into familiar boxes.

### G Major Pentatonic / E minor Pentatonic Scale



Now have a look at this C Major Pentatonic scale. It shows the exact same pattern except it's shifted upwards one string. So it starts with three notes on the A string, two notes on the D string etc. I've also shown two notes on the E string so you can see how the pattern wraps around in the other direction as well.

### C Major Pentatonic / A minor Pentatonic



Now as you can see from the labels I've put above each diagram each Major Pentatonic scale has a corresponding Minor Pentatonic scale. This is something I have already covered in my previous book but it's always good to have multiple ways of understanding the same topic.

To help here's both scale formulas again. I've put the 0 behind the 12 to make it clear that it's the octave above the root note showing how the circle connects as it were.

Major Pentatonic: 0 - 2 - 4 - 7 - 9 - 12 (0)

Minor Pentatonic 0 - 3 - 5 - 7 - 10 - 12 (0)

Now counting the intervals or fret distance between each note of the Major scale you'll get the following 2, 2, 3, 2, 3. So From 0 to 2 is 2 frets, from 2 to 4 is another 2 frets, from 4 to 7 is three frets, from 7 to 9 is 2 frets and from 9 to the root note but an octave higher 12 (0) is another 3.

Now if we count the same fret distances between each note of the Minor Pentatonic scale we get 3, 2, 2, 3, 2. It's the same pattern just with different starting points. If you strung together an infinite length of these intervals you would see the two patterns appearing, depending on where you pick your starting point: 2, 2, 3, 2, 3, 2, 2, 3, 2, 3, 2, 2, 3, 2, 2, 3, 2, 3 etc.



The Minor 3<sup>rd</sup> interval (a 3 fret distance) will always be surrounded by either one or two Major 2<sup>nds</sup> (2 fret distance).

So even though this pattern is quite easy to learn it allows you to switch between the Major Pentatonic scales for the I (G Major) and IV chord (C Major) in the key of G Major. To get the scale for the V chord (D Major) just move the 2nd pattern two frets to the right.

Another handy thing is that with this pattern it's really easy to do bends because you always know that on each string you can bend the last note up three frets to get the next note in the scale.

## 11. Diagonal Major Scale Patterns

In this chapter we'll look at another way to break out of the boxes by playing Major scale patterns diagonally across the fretboard.

To do this we'll take the Major scale and break it into smaller patterns of three notes per string. If we number the scale from 1 to 7 (not following the usual fret formula starting at 0) then the each string has three note parts:

1 - 2 - 3, 2 - 3 - 4, 3 - 4 - 5, 4 - 5 - 6, 5 - 6 - 7, 6 - 7 - 1, 7 - 1 - 2

The interval distances between the notes using the fret formula is 0 - 2 - 4 - 5 - 7 - 9 - 11 - 12. This means that the three segments that start 1, 4 and 5 consist of two, two fret distances, those that start with 2 and 6 consist of a two fret distance followed by a one fret distance and those starting with a 3 and a 7 start with one fret distance and then a two fret distance. This will become clear when you look at the diagrams below.

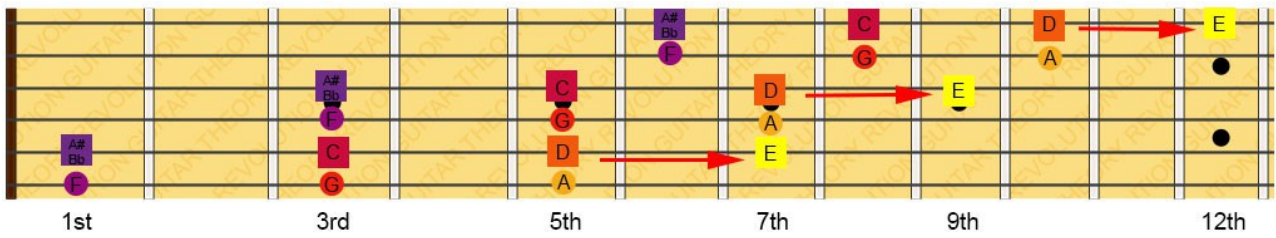
In the diagrams you'll be shown how to play ascending (from the low strings to the high strings) and descending patterns (from the high strings to the low strings) each starting at F on the low E string but in each case the F represents the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 7<sup>th</sup> note of that particular scale. The red arrows indicate that you should slide with the last finger you use to set yourself up for the pattern on the next string.

In effect we're playing all the modes in F. So once you've reminded yourself how they work and learned more about modes in the later chapters come back to this lesson to get a deeper understanding of what is happening.

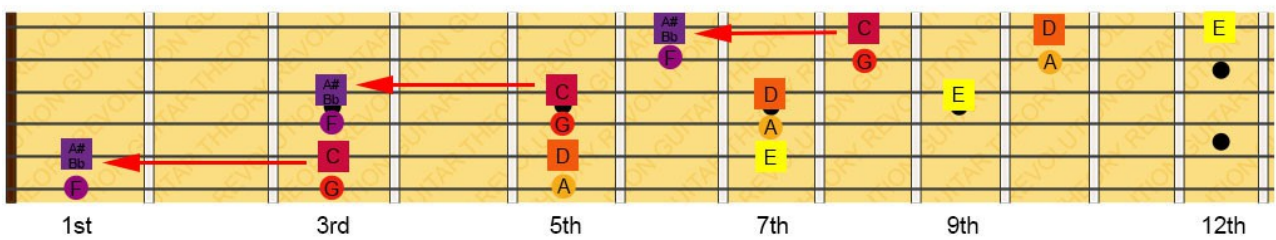
The modes show in the diagrams below are: F Ionian, F Dorian, F Phrygian, F Lydian, F Mixolydian, F Aeolian and F Locrian.

In some cases the the pattern ascending and descending is the same, in some cases it is different, depending on which is the most efficient in terms of movement. The less you have to move your hand around the better.

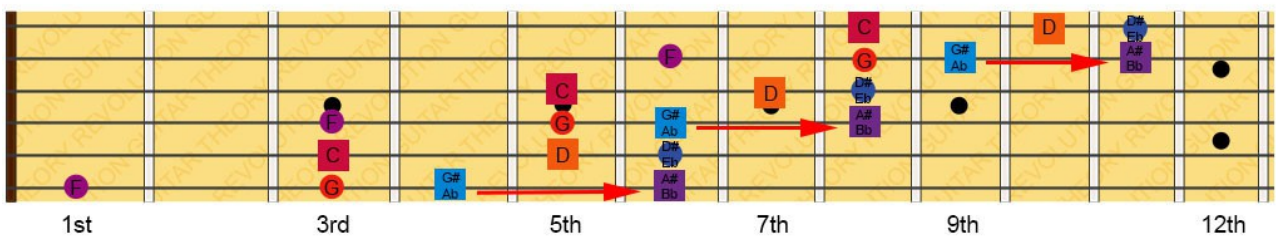
Ascending Pattern 1, F is the 1<sup>st</sup> note of the scale.



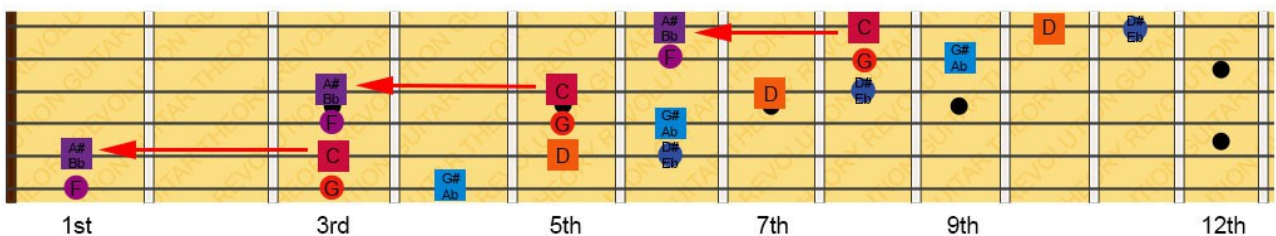
Descending Pattern 1, F is the 1<sup>st</sup> note of the scale.



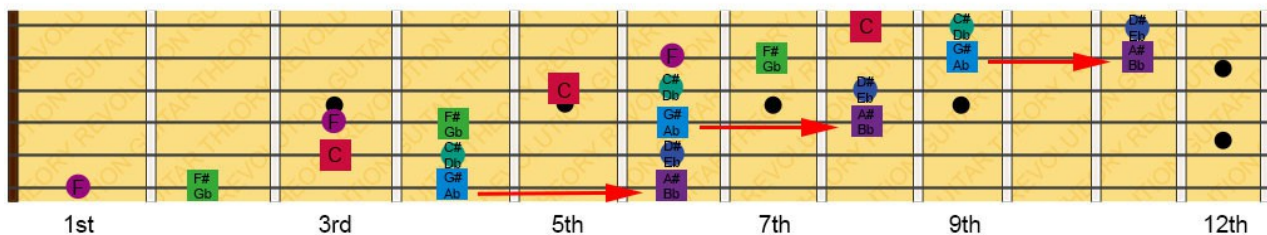
Ascending Pattern 2, F is the 2<sup>nd</sup> note of the scale.



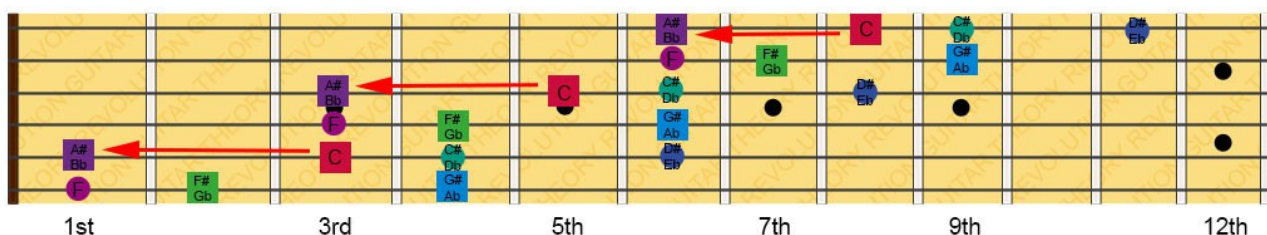
Descending Pattern 2, F is the 2<sup>nd</sup> note of the scale.



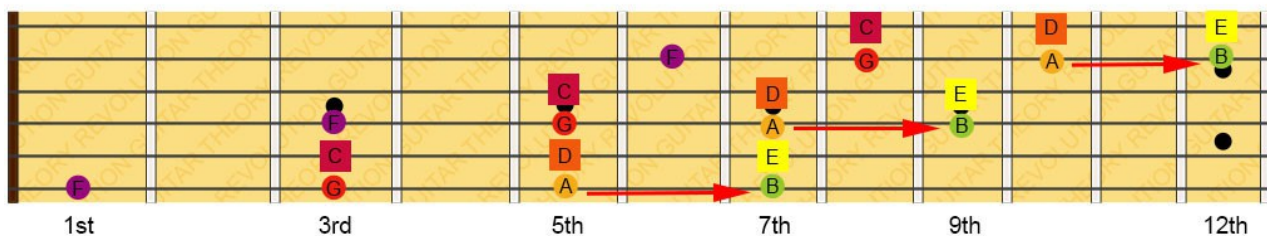
Ascending Pattern 3, F is the 3<sup>rd</sup> note of the scale.



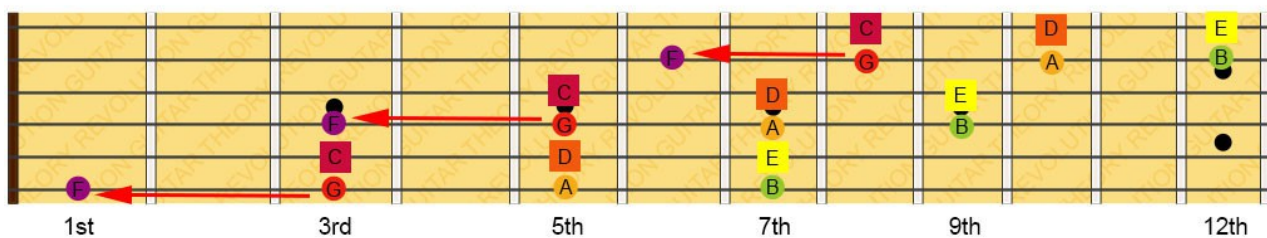
Descending Pattern 3, F is the 3<sup>rd</sup> note of the scale.



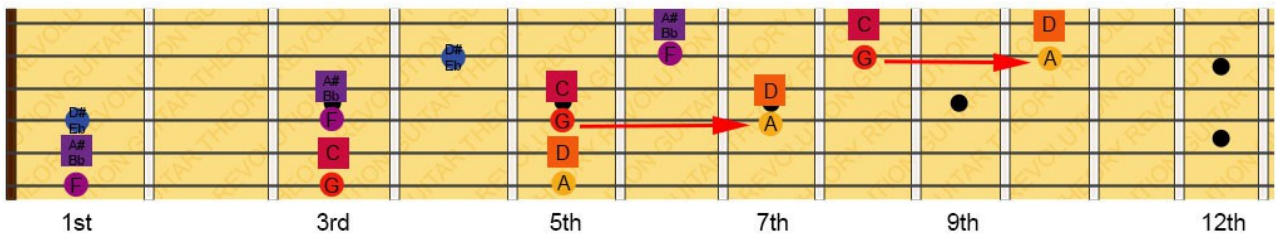
Ascending Pattern 4, F is the 4<sup>th</sup> note of the scale.



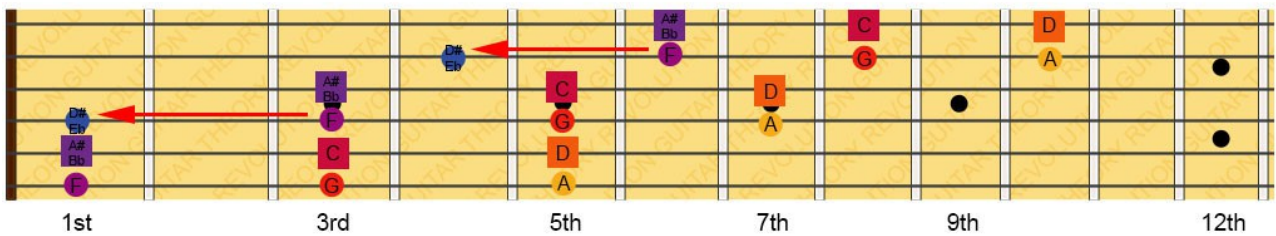
Descending Pattern 4, F is the 4<sup>th</sup> note of the scale.



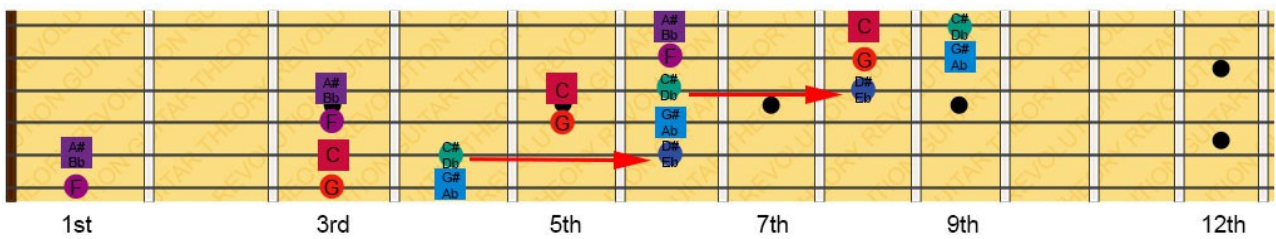
Ascending Pattern 5, F is the 5<sup>th</sup> note of the scale.



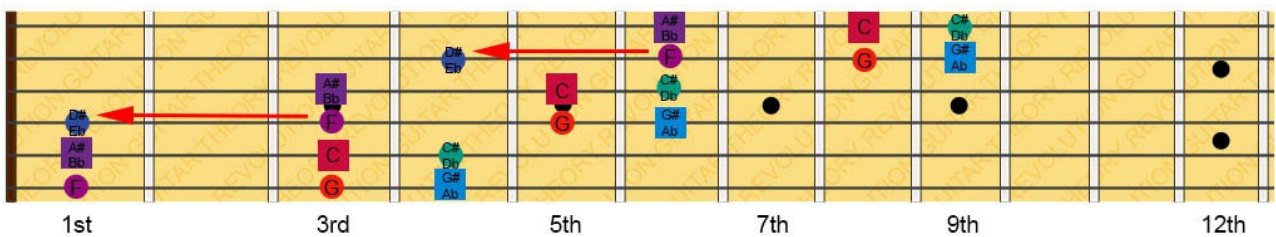
Descending Pattern 5, F is the 5<sup>th</sup> note of the scale.



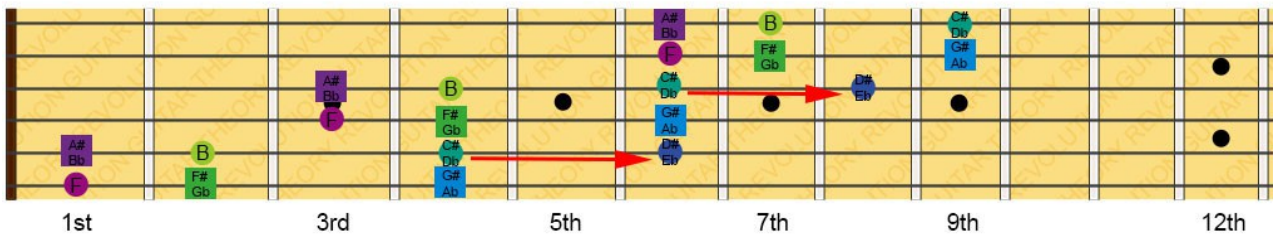
Ascending Pattern 6, F is the 6<sup>th</sup> note of the scale.



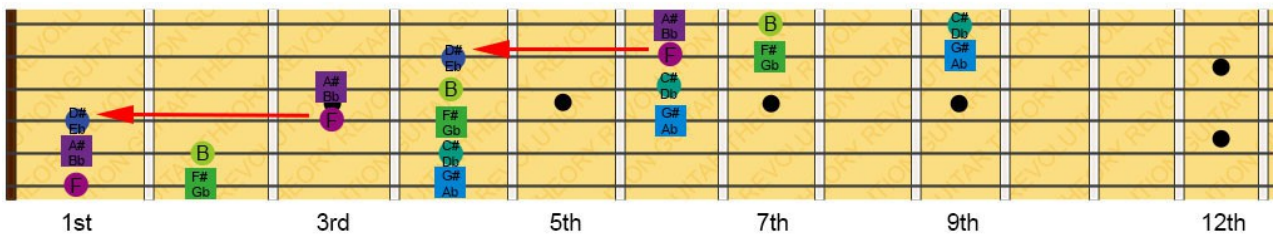
Descending Pattern 6, F is the 6<sup>th</sup> note of the scale.



Ascending Pattern 7, F is the 7<sup>th</sup> note of the scale.



Descending Pattern 7, F is the 7<sup>th</sup> note of the scale.

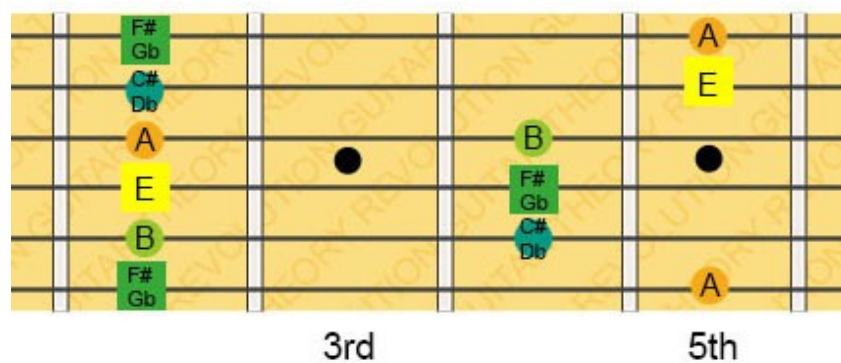


## 12. Playing With Box Patterns

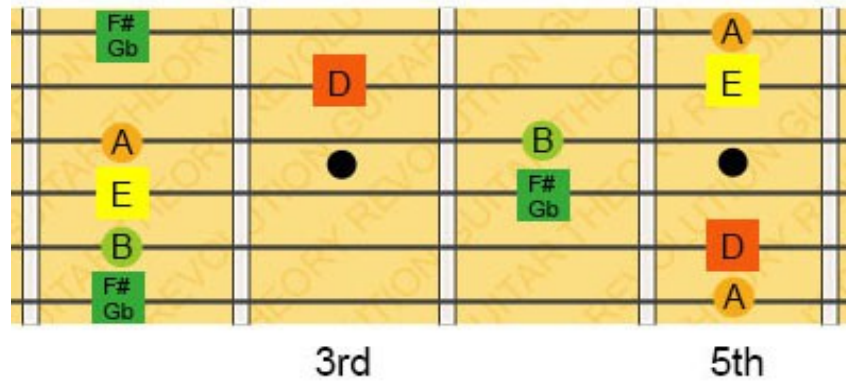
You will have already encountered the five pentatonic scale patterns based on the CAGED chord pattern in my previous book. But here's a good way to practice them, up and down the neck following the Cycle of 4<sup>th</sup>s and 5<sup>th</sup>s. Practising scales and licks following this cycle is very important because so many chord progressions are based on parts of the cycle.

With all these patterns start with the finger indicated and play the pattern up to the high E string then back down again, then follow the instructions for which finger to start the next pattern with.

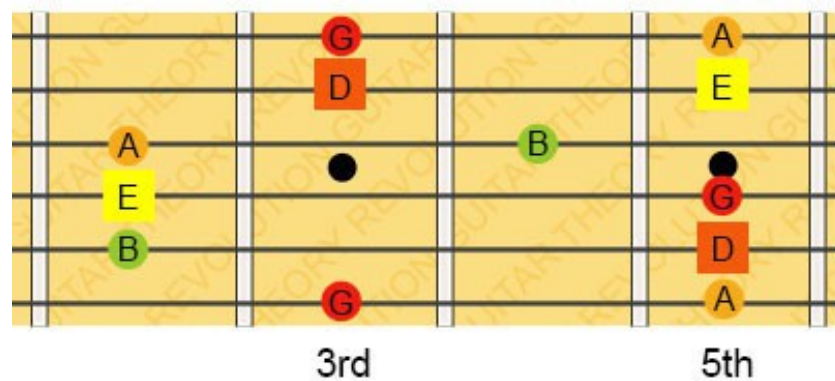
Play this pattern by starting with your first finger on the root note. Here it is the A Major Pentatonic / F# minor Pentatonic but you can start anywhere. It includes the A and G shapes of the the CAGED pattern.



Next play this pattern by starting with your first finger on the root note. It is a D Major Pentatonic / B minor Pentatonic, it contains the D and C shapes of the CAGED pattern.

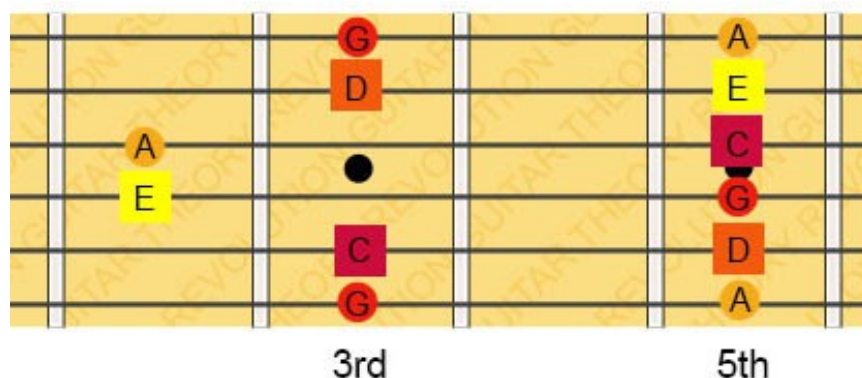


For the next shape you move up one fret by starting the pattern with your middle finger. It is a G Major Pentatonic / E minor Pentatonic and includes the G and E shapes.



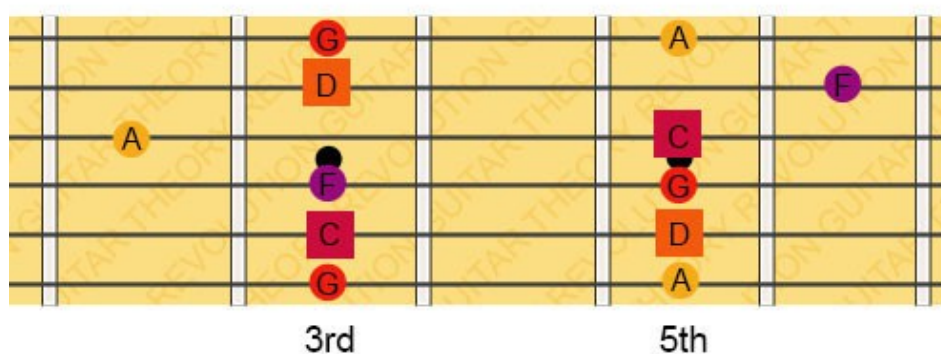


Again start this pattern with your middle finger at the 3<sup>rd</sup> fret. It is the C Major Pentatonic / A minor Pentatonic and includes the C and A shapes.



Start this final pattern with the middle finger, however when you come back down again instead of ending on the G with your middle finger you should use your index finger to play the last note.

This sets you up to begin with the first pattern in this series but one fret along the neck. It is the F Major Pentatonic / D minor Pentatonic scale and contains the E and D shapes.



Notice how each new Major and minor Pentatonic pattern follows the Cycle of 4<sup>th</sup>s and 5<sup>th</sup>s. In this case:

Major: A - D - G - C - F etc.

minor: F# - B - E - A - D etc.

Continue following these patterns all the way up the neck as far as you can go and then back down again. Take note of the root notes in each pattern and how they follow the cycle.

Think back to the chapter where you were told how to find the **I - IV - V** chord progression as it spirals up the fretboard. This is just another way of seeing that pattern but focussing on the underlying scales.

### 13. More Minor Pentatonic Scale Patterns

As you've noticed by now, paradoxically one of the best ways to give yourself the freedom to move across the fretboard is by restricting yourself and practising set patterns. I could map out all the notes of the minor Pentatonic scale on the fretboard and leave it up to you as to how you want memorise it and how to integrate it into your playing.

But the advantage in restricting yourself is that you learn to direct your focus to particular aspects of the scale and how it works. For example in the diagrams below I show a particular pattern for the A minor and D minor Pentatonic scales.

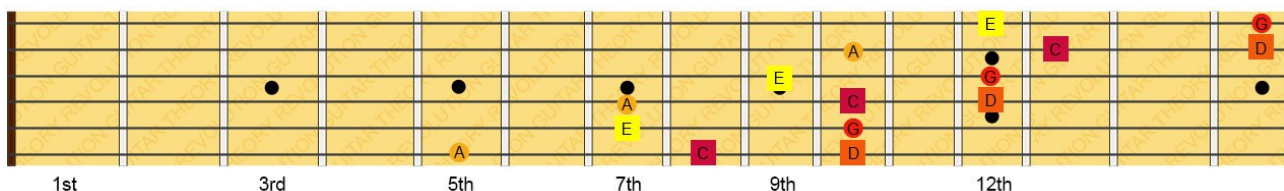
The logic behind these particular patterns is to show you the smaller patterns within the bigger picture. In this case you can see that whenever there is a 0 - 3 interval, for example the A - C on the low E string there is a 0 - 2 interval either side of it. In this case I'm only showing the 0 - 2 interval on the right side so that you play the pattern from start to finish up the fretboard. Knowing this pattern you could for example practice bending up from the C note to the D on each alternating string.

Minor Pentatonic Scale: 0 - 3 - 5 - 7 - 10 - 12

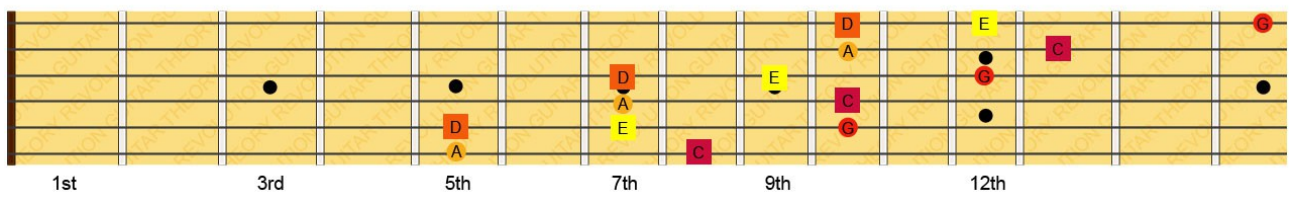
A minor Pentatonic: A - C - D - E - G - A

D minor Pentatonic: D - F - G - A - C - D

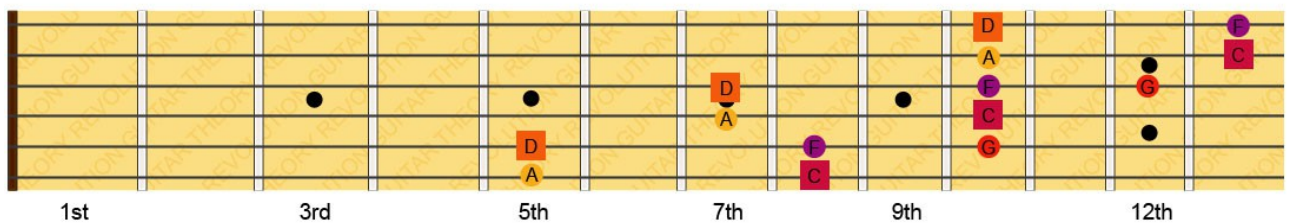
Below you'll see a variation of the A minor / C Major Pentatonic scale. This time we'll play a minor 3<sup>rd</sup> (0 - 3) with a Major 2<sup>nd</sup> (0 - 2) on the right hand side (towards the bridge of the guitar) going up the strings.



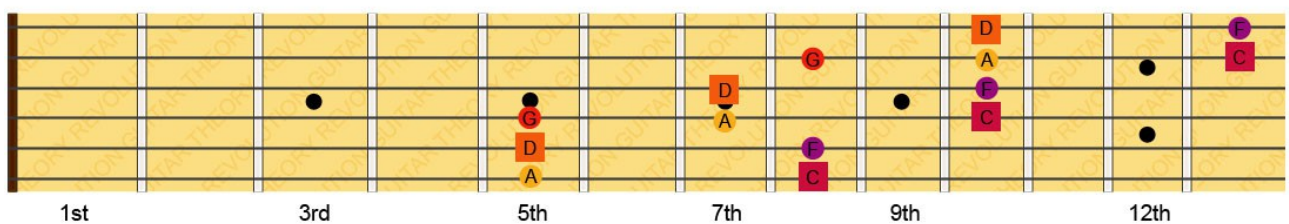
And then on the way down you play the Major 2<sup>nd</sup> on the left side (towards the head of the neck) going back down again.



Here's a D minor / F Major Pentatonic scale. Again there's a variation with the minor 2<sup>nd</sup> on the right hand side of the minor 3<sup>rd</sup> which you play as you go up the strings from the low E.



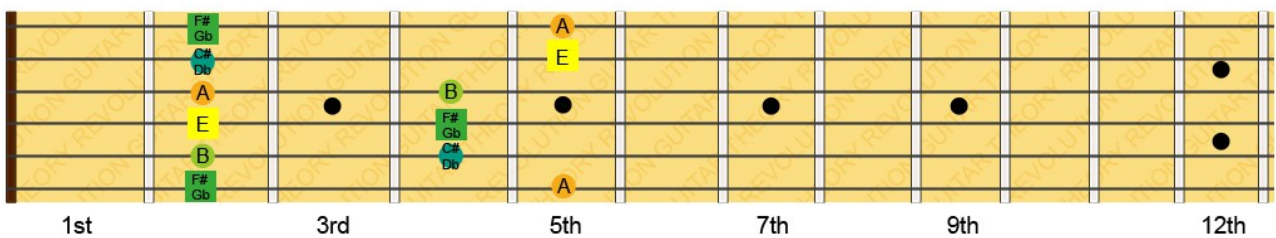
And here's the descending pattern when you come back down from the high E string, this time with the Major 2<sup>nd</sup> on the left hand side of the minor 3<sup>rd</sup>.



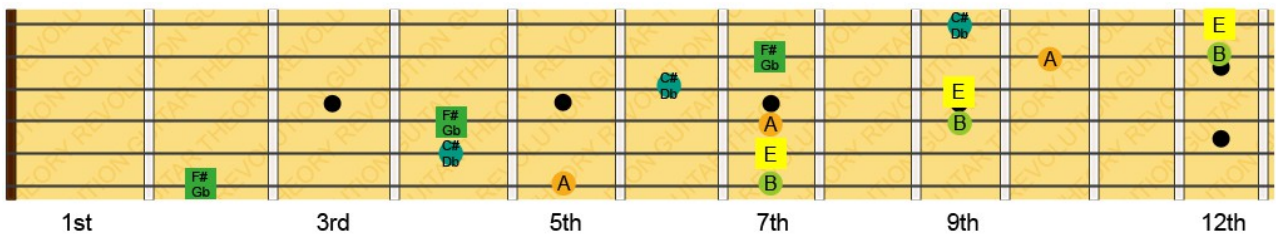
## 14. Combining Pentatonic Patterns

So now that I've shown you several different ways to play Pentatonic scales on the guitar it's time to put some of them together. Practicing moving between the different patterns will help you reach your aim of being able to play with freedom on the guitar and not get stuck following the same old patterns.

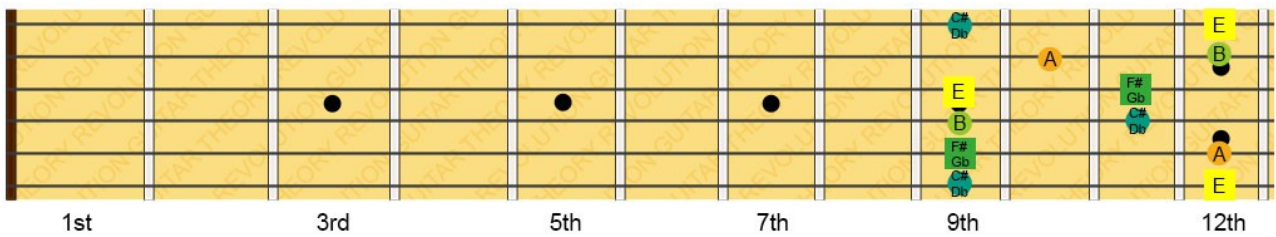
Here's an example of how to do this. First we'll start with an F# minor / A Major Pentatonic scale in the familiar 'box' pattern.



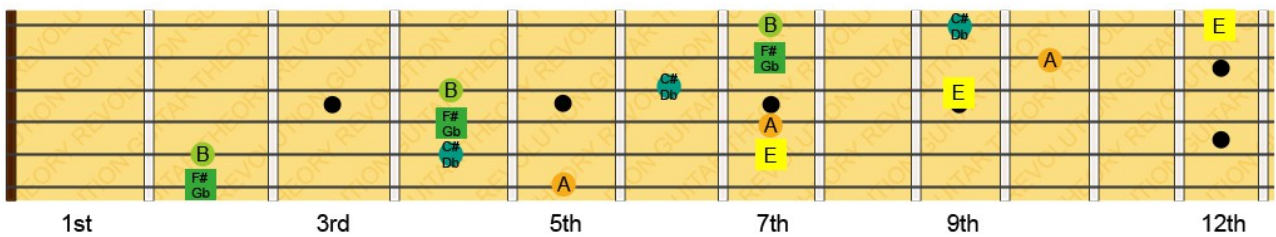
Run up and down the scale a few times and then use one of the other patterns to move along the fretboard.



Try improvising up to the top E and then transition into one of the other pentatonic box shapes.



And if you no longer want to play in that pattern you can move back down the neck again using the other pattern I showed you previously, with the Major 2<sup>nd</sup> on the left side of the minor 3<sup>rds</sup>.



In this example we moved between two box shape on either end of the long diagonal patterns but remember that the diagonal pattern moves through the other 'box' shapes giving you the freedom to jump into a box at any point you wish.

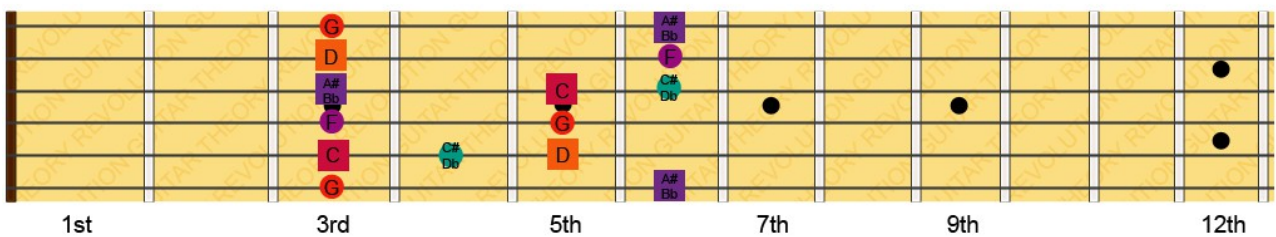
## 15. The Hexatonic Blues Scale

It's time to expand on our use of the Pentatonic and add a bit more blues into the mix. We can do this by adding a single note to the scales we've been playing. In the context of a Major Pentatonic scale it's the minor 3<sup>rd</sup> and in the context of the minor Pentatonic scale it's the Diminished 5<sup>th</sup>.

Since I already showed you how the Major and minor Pentatonic scales can be viewed as being extensions of each other we only need to add a single note to our patterns to cover both.

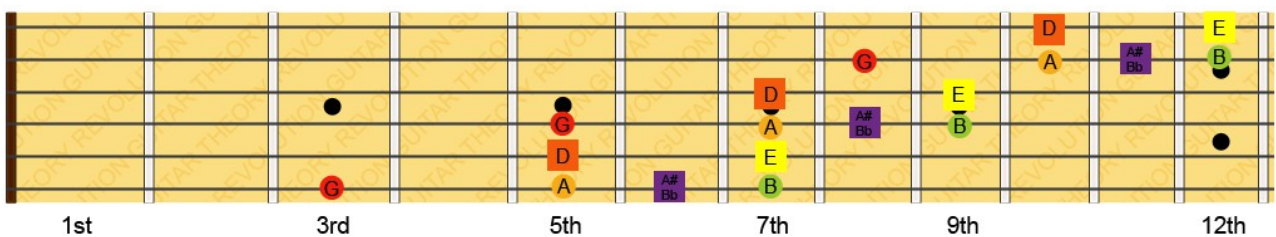
First here's an example of one of the Pentatonic boxes with this 'blue' note added.

Bb Major / G minor



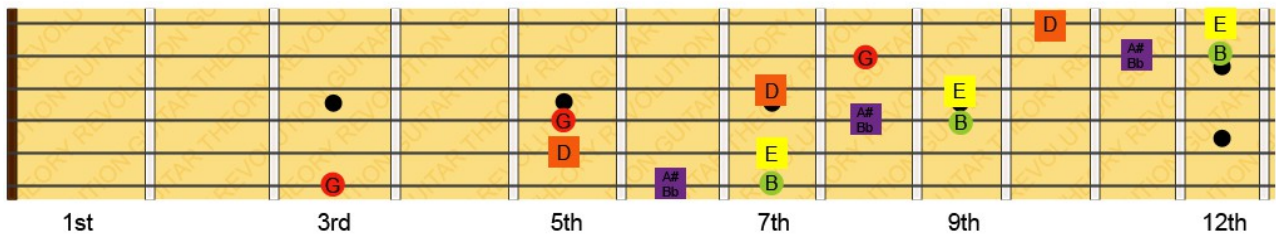
Here's an example of one of the extended patterns I showed you with this note added.

G Major / E minor

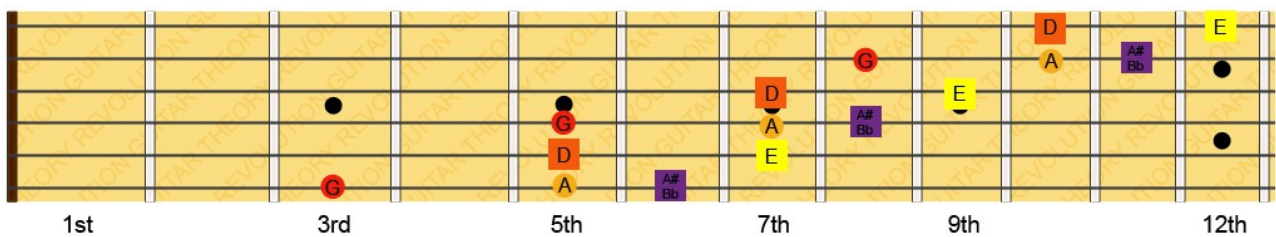


Finally here are two interesting variations to try where we return to a five note scale by removing in one case the 2<sup>nd</sup> note of the scale and in the other the 3<sup>rd</sup> note of the scale.

### G Major with the 2 omitted



### G Major with the 3 omitted

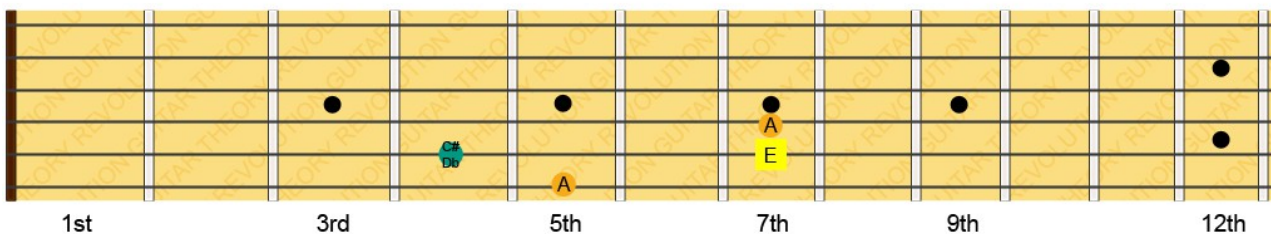




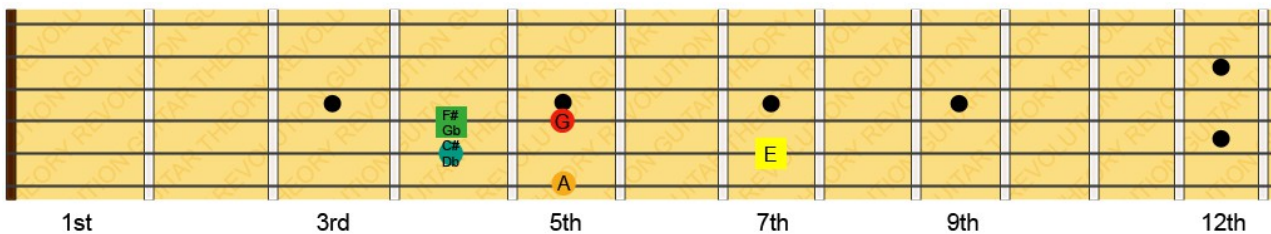
## 16. Using Passing Notes

An easy way to expand the number of notes you can play is by making use of passing notes also known as chromatic runs.. A passing note is one that you quickly play as a bridge between two notes that are part of the key or scale you are playing in. In a way this allows you to play any note as long as you don't linger on it too long. It's very popular with bass players.

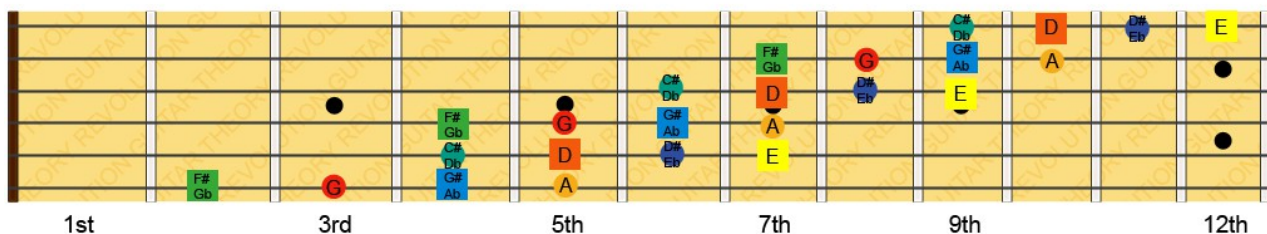
We'll apply this idea to the key of A Major. Below you can see the root note on the low E string. Then the interval 0 - 4 (Major 3<sup>rd</sup>) and the the interval 0 - 7 (Perfect 5<sup>th</sup>), finally the octave (0 - 12) of the first A.



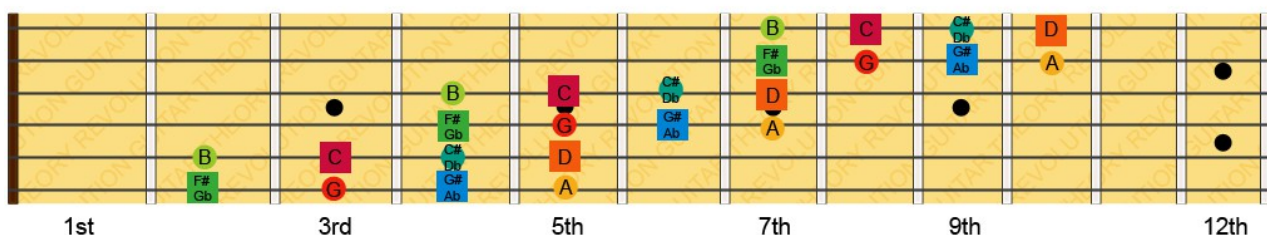
Next we can add the 0 - 9 interval (Major 6<sup>th</sup>) and the 0 - 10 interval (Minor 7<sup>th</sup>). The latter note is in the Mixolydian mode and is often used in blues and rock music. This pattern allows you to do some simple improvisation with just a couple of notes.



You can add more passing notes, such as the interval 0 - 5 and 0 - 6 (Minor 4<sup>th</sup> and Perfect 4<sup>th</sup>). In a way you could justify playing any note over a progression. But the point is to be aware of what notes you are playing and with what intention. Yes you can play a dissonant note over a chord for the sake of it. Or you could use it as a way to add flavour between two notes that are in the scale. In the below diagram I've added notes from the relative minor of the A Major which is F# minor. This way the pattern extends down to the 2<sup>nd</sup> fret.



Here's an example of the same idea applied to the key of D Major which is the IV in relation to A Major (I). If you want to know what to play over the V chord then just shift the below pattern up two frets to get it in E Major.



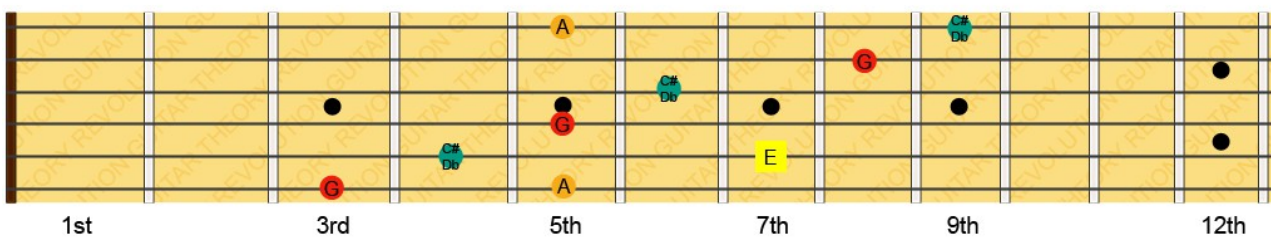
Like I mentioned before, the point is not just that you can play any note over any chord and it will serve some kind of musical purpose. That would make for a very short book. The point is to help you explore different maps and ways of looking at the fretboard. Sometimes you want to use a straight Pentatonic scale, sometimes you want to add in a 0 - 6 interval for a little blues flavour. Other times you may want to add in some passing tones as you move between the important notes of the scale (the root, Major 3rd and Perfect 5th if you're playing over a Major chord for example).

As long as you have in mind what your Tonic or Root note is you have quite a lot of freedom to move around.

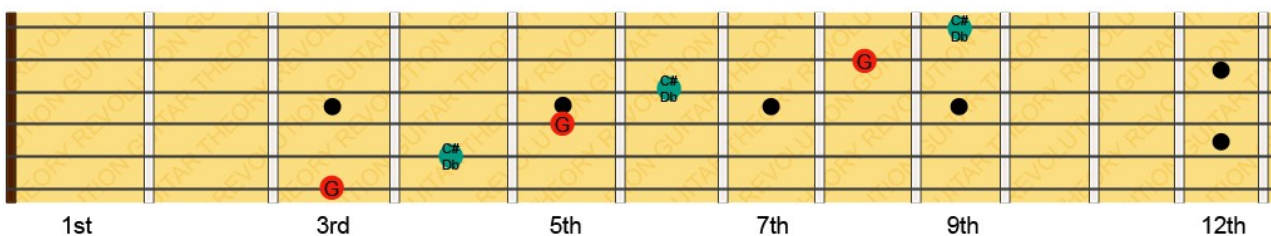
## 17. Using the Tritone

We're going to take another look at the 0 - 6 interval (Diminished 5th) and how to see it on the fretboard. In the diagrams below you'll see the main notes for a blues progressions in A Major: I - IV - V.

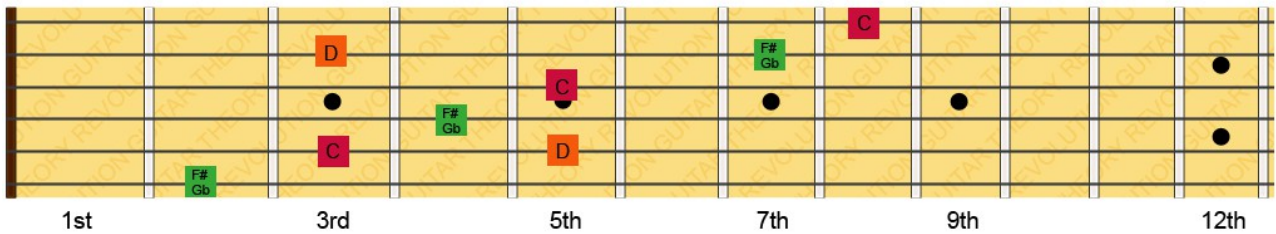
In the first diagram, the A7 chord we have the root note A, C# is the 0 - 4 (Major 3rd), the E is 0 - 7 (Perfect 5<sup>th</sup>) and the G, the 0 - 10 (Minor 7<sup>th</sup>).



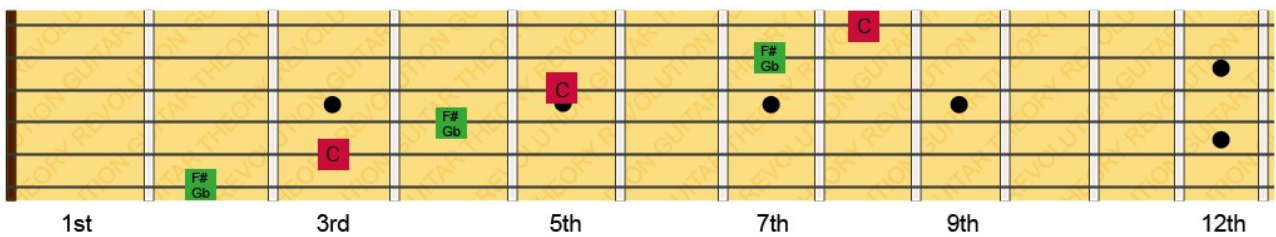
Now, if you ignore for the moment the root and the Perfect 5<sup>th</sup> you can see that the G and C# are in a diagonal line, each a distance of 0 - 6 from each other. The line is only broken by the way the G and B string are tuned in relation to each other.



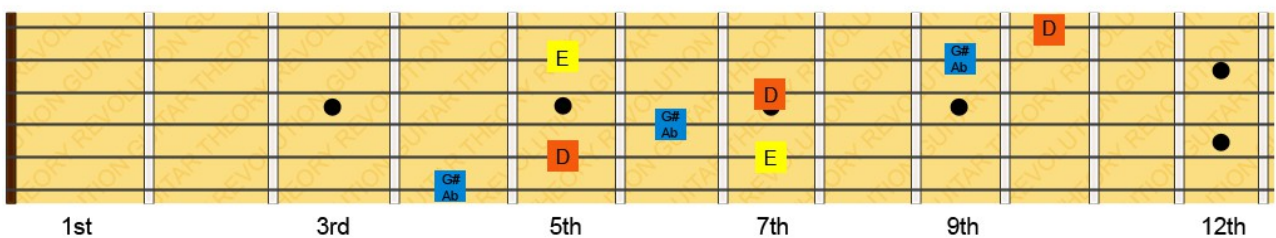
Let's do the same for the next chord (D7) in the progressions. Here we have the D (root), F# (Major 3<sup>rd</sup>) and the C (minor 7<sup>th</sup>). I'll leave out the A (Perfect 5<sup>th</sup>) because it's not needed to get the point across.



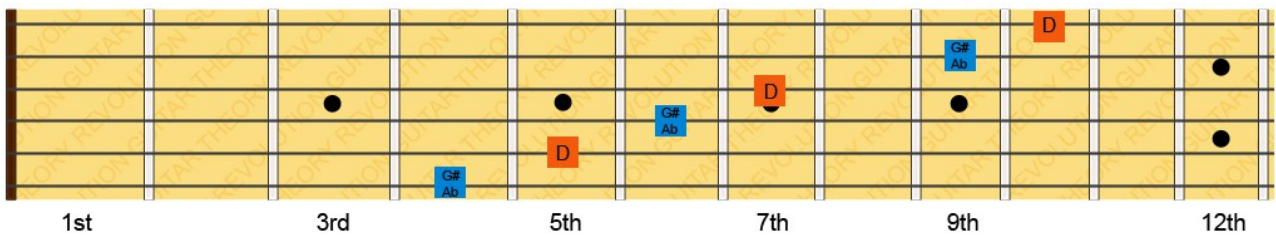
Again, let's look only at the notes that are 0 - 6 from each other to see the diagonal line. Notice how all the notes are one fret to the left of the diagonal pattern we saw earlier?



Finally let's do the same for the E7 chord. Here we have E (root), G# (Major 3<sup>rd</sup>) and the D (Minor 7<sup>th</sup>). Again I'll leave out the B (Perfect 5<sup>th</sup>) since it's not needed in these examples.



Again notice the pattern of notes that are 6 frets apart from each other. This time they are one fret to the right of the original diagonal pattern that we found.



So there you have the 0 - 6 interval easily accessible right next to each other for each chord of the A7 – D7 – E7 ( I - IV – V ) progression. Using these intervals is a great way to give your Blues a real nasty and dirty sound.

## 18. Triad Islands

I mentioned before that a good way to start improvising is by playing arpeggios. An arpeggio is simply playing the notes that make up a triad or chord one at a time. In this lessons we'll take a look at arpeggios of four different triads.

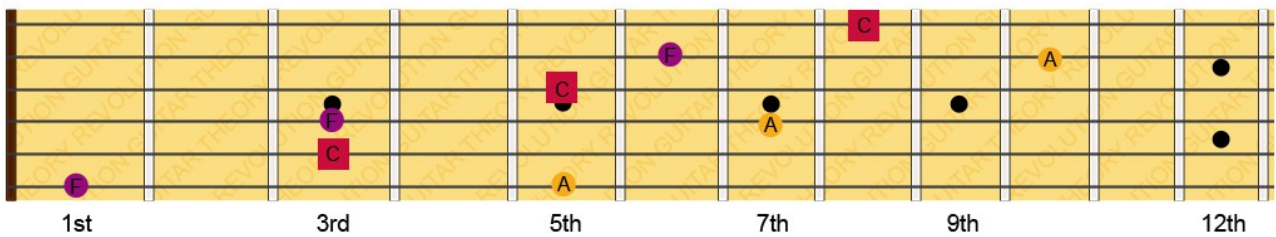
The formulas for these triads are listed below.

Major:               0 - 4 - 7  
minor:               0 - 3 - 7  
Diminished:        0 - 3 - 6  
Augmented:        0 - 4 - 8

Here are examples of each triad. Notice how the can play each mini arpeggio on two strings.

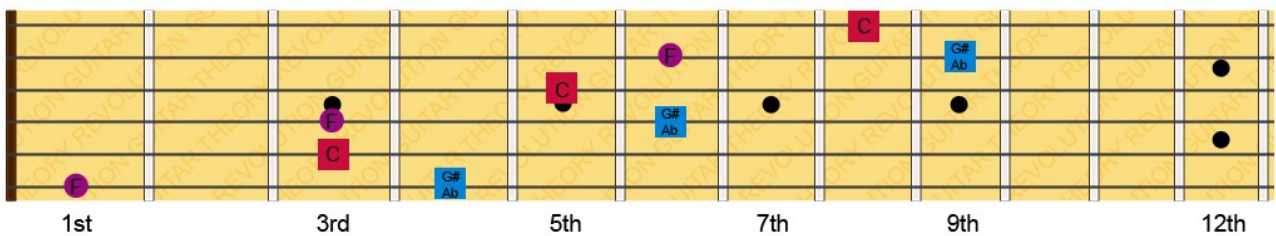
F Major: 0 - 4 - 7

Notes: F A C



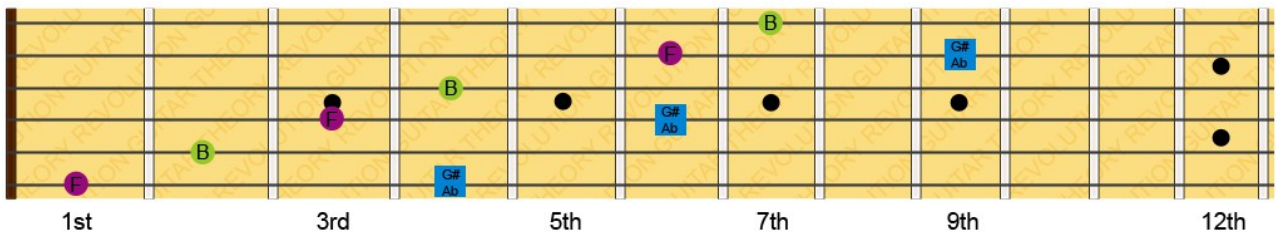
F Minor: 0 - 3 - 7

Notes: F Ab C



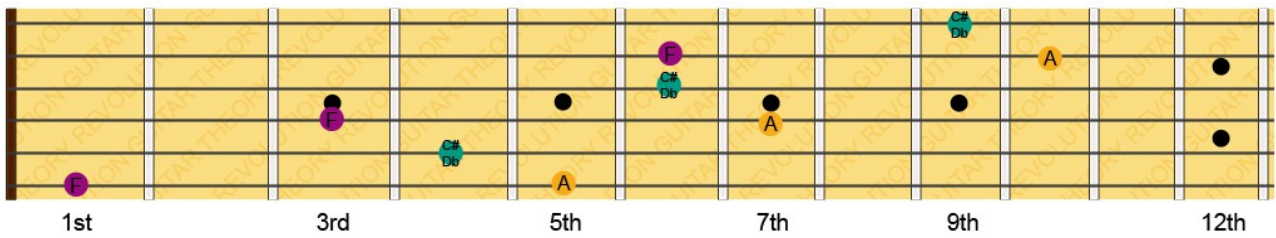
F Diminished: 0 - 3 - 6

Notes: F Ab B



F Augmented: 0 - 4 - 8

Notes: F A C#

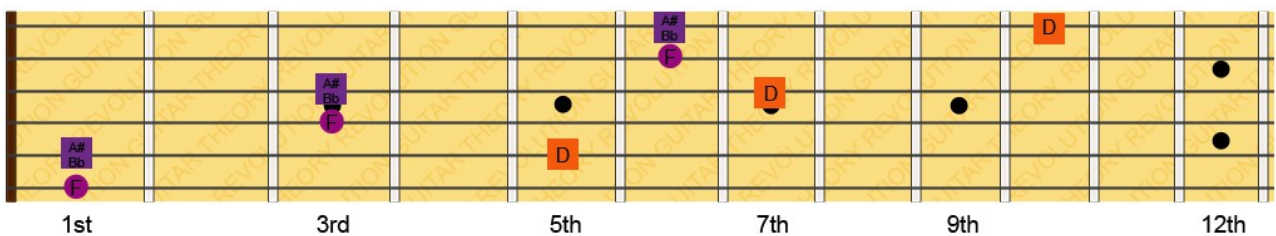


Next are some second inversion arpeggios. This means that the 2nd note of the arpeggio is played on the lowest string.

As an aside, you may have heard this term used when describing triads and chords. It means exactly the same thing. A 2nd inversion of the F Major triad would mean you play the A on the lowest string. It's technically the same triad but using inversions in this way can help you create movement in your music or help in establishing a particular tonality.

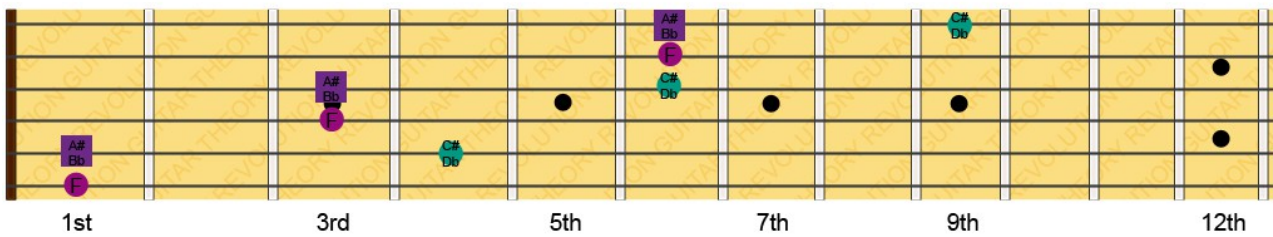
F Major: 0 - 4 - 7

Notes: Bb D F



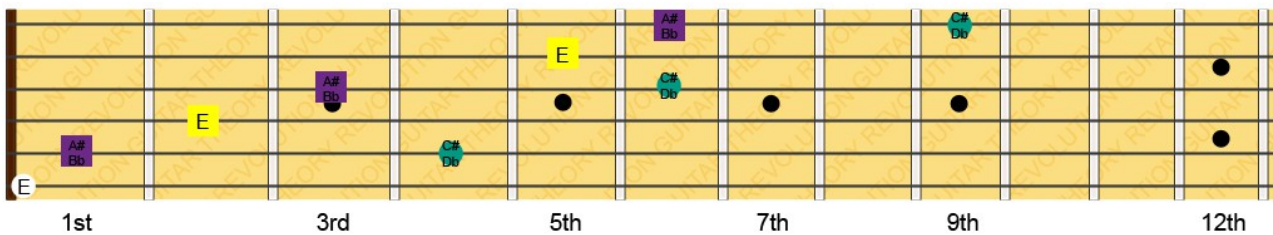
F Minor: 0 - 3 - 7

Notes: Bb C# F



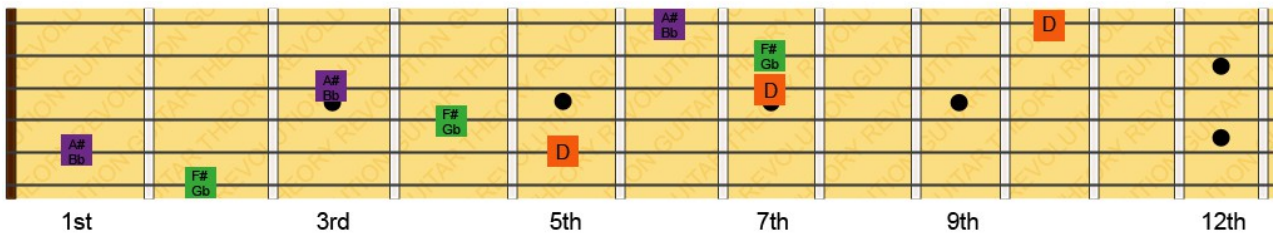
F Diminished: 0 - 3 - 6

Notes: Bb C# E



F Augmented: 0 - 4 - 8

Notes: Bb D F#



Learning these short arpeggios for all the different keys will be a great resource to call upon when improvising by following the chord changes or when you want to write your own music that moves away from simply playing chords on the first 3 frets.



## 19. The Modes of the Major scale

I discussed modes briefly in my previous book but we can go a little more in depth this time. We'll have a look at how you can find and learn the different modes of the Major scale (sometimes known as Church Modes), how to recognise chord progressions that are based on a particular mode and how to come up with your own modal progressions.

When talking about modes in the context of playing guitar most people are referring to the modes of the Major (Ionian) scale and the chords derived from it. So saying a piece of music is in the Mixolydian mode refers to the chords being used or that the main melody is implying the Mixolydian mode / scale.

Before I go any further I want to make a point that in some of the tables below I construct all the chords for each mode in a logically consistent way. However in practice you need to keep in mind that if you want to imply a particular mode with your playing will need to avoid certain notes or playing particular chords, otherwise listeners will hear something other than what you intend. How this happens will become clear as we progress through the material.

A quick recap on how to find the modes of the Major scale. All you have to do is take a scale and play it from a different starting position. We can start with C Major (Ionian) C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C. Next: D, E, F, G, A, B, C is D Dorian, E, F, G, A, B, C, D is E Phrygian etc. The sound of each mode is determined by the intervals being played, starting on a different note changes the order of these intervals.

Here's a list of each mode of the C Major scale and its fret formula. Of course you can work out the modes in any key using the fret formulas.

Ionian Fret Formula:	0 - 2 - 3 - 5 - 7 - 9 - 10 - 12
Conventional:	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8
C Ionian:	D - E - F - G - A - B - C - D
Dorian Fret Formula:	0 - 2 - 3 - 5 - 7 - 9 - 10 - 12
Conventional:	1 - 2 - b3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - b7 - 8
D Dorian:	D - E - F - G - A - B - C - D
Phrygian Fret Formula:	0 - 1 - 3 - 5 - 7 - 8 - 10 - 12
Conventional:	1 - b2 - b3 - 4 - 5 - b6 - b7 - 8
E Phrygian:	E - F - G - A - B - C - D - E
Lydian Fret Formula:	0 - 2 - 4 - 6 - 7 - 9 - 11 - 12
Conventional:	1 - 2 - 3 - #4 - 5 - 6 - 7 - 8
F Lydian:	F - G - A - B - C - D - E - F
Mixolydian Fret Formula:	0 - 2 - 4 - 5 - 7 - 9 - 10 - 12
Conventional:	1 - 2 - 3 - 4 - 5 - 6 - b7 - 8
G Mixolydian:	G - A - B - C - D - E - F - G
Aeolian Fret Formula:	0 - 2 - 3 - 5 - 7 - 8 - 11 - 12
Conventional:	1 - 2 - b3 - 4 - 5 - b6 - b7 - 8
A Aeolian (Natural Minor):	A - B - C - D - E - F - G - A
Locrian Fret Formula:	0 - 1 - 3 - 5 - 6 - 8 - 10 - 12
Conventional:	1 - b2 - b3 - 4 - b5 - b6 - b7 - 8
B Locrian:	B - C - D - E - F - G - A - B

Later I'll show you a way to play the modes in a way that will allow you to compare their individual sounds more easily. You'll hear how each mode sounds darker than the last as you progress through a particular cycle.

As we learned in my previous book we can use each scale / mode to build triads and chords by harmonising each mode; finding the Root, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> note of each one in turn in the same way we always build chords from a scale. Here are the results for each mode.

### **Ionian: Major 7<sup>th</sup>**

Conventional: Root + Major 3<sup>rd</sup> + Perfect 5<sup>th</sup> + Major 7<sup>th</sup>  
Fret Formula: 0 - 4 - 7 - 11

### **Dorian: Minor 7<sup>th</sup>**

Conventional: Root + minor 3<sup>rd</sup> + Perfect 5<sup>th</sup> + minor 7<sup>th</sup>  
Fret Formula: 0 - 3 - 7 - 10

### **Phrygian: Minor 7<sup>th</sup>**

Conventional: Root + minor 3<sup>rd</sup> + Perfect 5<sup>th</sup> + minor 7<sup>th</sup>  
Fret Formula: 0 - 3 - 7 - 10

### **Lydian: Major 7<sup>th</sup>**

Conventional: Root + Major 3<sup>rd</sup> + Perfect 5<sup>th</sup> + Major 7<sup>th</sup>  
Fret Formula: 0 - 4 - 7 - 11

### **Mixolydian: Dominant 7<sup>th</sup>**

Conventional: Root + Major 3<sup>rd</sup> + Perfect 5<sup>th</sup> + minor 7<sup>th</sup>  
Fret Formula: 0 - 4 - 7 - 10

### **Aeolian: Minor 7<sup>th</sup>**

Conventional: Root + minor 3<sup>rd</sup> + Perfect 5<sup>th</sup> + minor 7<sup>th</sup>  
Fret Formula: 0 - 3 - 7 - 10

## Locrian: m7b5

Conventional: Root + minor 3<sup>rd</sup> + Diminished / Flat 5<sup>th</sup> + minor 7<sup>th</sup>  
Fret Formula: 0 - 3 - 6 - 10

In each case you can see the normal intervals that make up Major, minor and Diminished triads (0 - 3, 0 - 4, 0 - 6 and 0 - 7). But they all have an extra note to turn it into a type of 7<sup>th</sup> chord.

Major 7<sup>th</sup> chords (A Major triad with a 0 - 11 interval)

minor 7<sup>th</sup> chords (A minor triad with a 0 - 10 interval)

7<sup>th</sup> chords (also known as Dominant 7<sup>th</sup> chords, A Major triad with a 0 - 10 interval)

m7b5 chords (A Diminished triad, 0 - 3 and 0 - 6, and a 0 - 10 interval)

As an aside there is often a lot of confusion around the naming of the Half-Diminished 7<sup>th</sup> / Minor 7<sup>th</sup> b5 chord. As a reminder the fret formula for this is 0 - 3 - 6 - 10. The 'Half' refers to the fact that the 7<sup>th</sup> is the interval 0 - 10 instead of 0 - 9. The Diminished part is left untouched. Just another reason I prefer to describe chords by their intervals.

Below is a table showing what type of chord you'll find for each scale degree of each scale / mode.

Mode	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
Ionian	Major 7	minor 7	minor 7	Major 7	Dominant 7	minor 7	m7b5
Dorian	minor 7	minor 7	Major 7	Dominant 7	minor 7	m7b5	Major 7
Phrygian	minor 7	Major 7	Dominant 7	minor 7	m7b5	Major 7	minor 7
Lydian	Major 7	Dominant 7	minor 7	m7b5	Major 7	minor 7	minor 7
Mixolydian	Dominant 7	minor 7	m7b5	Major 7	minor 7	minor 7	Major 7
Aeolian	minor 7	m7b5	Major 7	minor 7	minor 7	Major 7	Dominant 7
Locrian	m7b5	Major 7	minor 7	minor 7	Major 7	Dominant 7	minor 7

Here's an example of each chord for the modes of C Ionian / Major.

Mode	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
<b>C Ionian</b>	C Major 7	D minor 7	E minor 7	F Major 7	G Dominant 7	A minor 7	B m7b5
<b>D Dorian</b>	D minor 7	E minor 7	F Major 7	G Dominant 7	A minor 7	B m7b5	C Major 7
<b>E Phrygian</b>	E minor 7	F Major 7	G Dominant 7	A minor 7	B m7b5	C Major 7	D minor 7
<b>F Lydian</b>	F Major 7	G Dominant 7	A minor 7	B m7b5	C Major 7	D minor 7	E minor 7
<b>G Mixolydian</b>	G Dominant 7	A minor 7	B m7b5	C Major 7	D minor 7	E minor 7	F Major 7
<b>A Aeolian</b>	A minor 7	B m7b5	C Major 7	D minor 7	E minor 7	F Major 7	G Dominant 7
<b>B Locrian</b>	B m7b5	C Major 7	D minor 7	E minor 7	F Major 7	G Dominant 7	A minor 7

Notice how the types of chords on the top row from left right are the same as those on the far left column from top to bottom. It's the same chords just with a different starting position.

Technically using this table you can say that C Major 7 - F Major 7 - G Dominant 7 is **I - IV - V** in the Ionian mode and **III - VI - VII** in the Aeolian mode. However in practice, with some of the other modes, to capture their tonal flavour you'll need to include, exclude or play in a particular order certain chords or notes that will lead your ear to hear one mode over the other.

In this case the progression with it's strong cadences will definitely sound like the Ionian mode. So in order to imply the Aeolian mode you will have to avoid playing Dominant 7<sup>th</sup> chords which have the 0 - 10 interval that supports those kinds of cadences. Remember that you can play these chords as simple triads, removing the 7<sup>th</sup> where necessary to aid in establishing a mode. Another thing to help establish the Aeolian mode could be to have a bass line that focuses on the A, to help establish that as the Tonic or Root. More on creating your own modal music later.

You could also find all the modes with the same root note, on the next page are all the modes with C as the root note. In order to get these chords you have to harmonise scales other than the C Major scale. So don't get confused and think you can modulate between them in the same way. For example the E Major 7 chord in C Dorian is 0 - 4 - 7 - 10, the notes E, G#, B, D. It contains a G# (0 - 4) note, while the C Ionian mode contains a G (0 - 3).

Mode	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
C Ionian	C Major 7	D minor 7	E minor 7	F Major 7	G Dominant 7	A minor 7	B m7b5
C Dorian	C minor 7	D minor 7	E Major 7	F Dominant 7	G minor 7	A m7b5	B Major 7
C Phrygian	C minor 7	D Major 7	E Dominant 7	F minor 7	G m7b5	A Major 7	B minor 7
C Lydian	C Major 7	D Dominant 7	E minor 7	F m7b5	G Major 7	A minor 7	B minor 7
C Mixolydian	C Dominant 7	D minor 7	E m7b5	F Major 7	G minor 7	A minor 7	B Major 7
C Aeolian	C minor 7	D m7b5	E Major 7	F minor 7	G minor 7	A Major 7	B Dominant 7
C Locrian	C m7b5	D Major 7	E minor 7	F minor 7	G Major 7	A Dominant 7	B minor 7



Most Pop, Rock and Blues is in familiar modes like Ionian, Aeolian and Mixolydian. Here are some examples of songs in specific modes or that imply a certain mode in the important melodies.

**Dorian:**

Oye Como Va - Carlos Santana  
Surfing With The Alien - Joe Satriani  
Bad Horsie - Steve Vai

**Phrygian:**

Wherever I May Roam - Metallica  
White Rabbit - Jefferson Airplane

**Lydian:**

For the Love of God - Steve Vai  
Flying In A Blue Dream - Joe Satriani

**Locrian:**

Army of Me - Bjork (bass line)  
Juicebox - The Stokes (bass line)

**Implying modes through chord and note choices.**

We can group the modes by the chords which do the most to imply them.

**Major 7<sup>th</sup> Chords imply:** Ionian and Lydian

**Minor 7<sup>th</sup> Chords:** imply Dorian, Phrygian and Aeolian

**Dominant 7<sup>th</sup> Chords imply:** Mixolydian

**Minor 7<sup>b</sup>5 Chords imply:** Locrian

Hopefully you'll recognise some things from previous chapters, for example how the Dominant 7<sup>th</sup> chord and the Mixolydian mode are connected.

With the above knowledge you can look at a chord progression and take a guess at what mode is being used (the first chord is usually a good indication). In some cases a single chord like a Major 7<sup>th</sup> could imply either the Ionian or the Lydian mode. By looking at the notes of the melody and the intervals it contains you'll be able to get a better idea of which mode it is.

### **Major 7<sup>th</sup> Chords**

Ionian: Perfect 4<sup>th</sup>, 0 - 5

Lydian: Augmented 4<sup>th</sup>, 0 - 6

### **Minor 7<sup>th</sup> Chords**

Dorian: Major 6<sup>th</sup>, 0 - 9

Phrygian minor 2<sup>nd</sup>, 0 - 1 and the minor 6<sup>th</sup>, 0 - 8

Aeolian Major 2<sup>nd</sup>, 0 - 2 and the minor 6<sup>th</sup>, 0 - 5

### **Dominant 7<sup>th</sup>**

Mixolydian: minor 7<sup>th</sup>, 0 - 10

### **m7b5**

Locrian: The problem with the Locrian mode is that it sounds unstable and your ear will want to hear a resolution to the Ionian mode. For this reason not much music can be said to be definitely in the Locrian mode. An example of a piece of Locrian music is the bass line in Army of Me by Bjork or the bass line from Juicebox by the Strokes.

## 20. Creating Modal Music

We'll now look at how we can make music that has a particular modal sound and how to create bring modal vamps. Vamps are most often just a couple of chords that establish a tonal centre around a mode but don't sound like a progression because they aren't leading to a Tonic or home chord.

If you incorporate these kinds of vamps into a larger chord progression then you are going to find that the music will have places where it's quality is different than your intended mode. There's nothing wrong with that just realise that you're adding a modal flavour to a particular section of the music rather than playing an entire piece in a mode.

To play in a certain mode you will have to treat everything you learned so far as a type puzzle. You have to choose intervals and chords that are characteristic of a particular mode while avoiding any that could be heard as one of the other modes.

For example, if you want to create a Lydian progression or vamp then start with an A Major 7, to avoid it sounding like Ionian or Mixolydian you need to pick another chord that isn't in those modes. Looking at the tables I showed earlier we can see that Lydian is the only one out of the three that has a Major chord as the **II**.

The same applies to improvising, play intervals that are distinctive to the intended mode. A good way to keep a progression or vamp anchored in a particular mode is to get the bass guitar to play the Tonic or Root note of your intended mode.

Here's a list of some modal vamps and progressions. They're grouped according to the chord types that they start with. The chords have a '/' indicate which bass note should be played under the chord in order to preserve the character of the mode.

### Major 7th Chords

<b>Ionian</b>	A Major 7th - Bm/A A - D/A - A Major 7th - D/A
<b>Lydian</b>	A Major 7th - B/A

### Minor 7th Chords

<b>Dorian</b>	Am7 - Bm/A Am7 - D7/A - Am7 - D7/A
<b>Phrygian</b>	Am7 - Bb/A
<b>Aeolian</b>	Am7 - G/A Am7 - F

### 7th Chords

<b>Mixolydian</b>	A Dominant 7th - G/A
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### Minor 7b5 Chords

<b>Locrian</b>	Am7b5 - Bb/A - Dm
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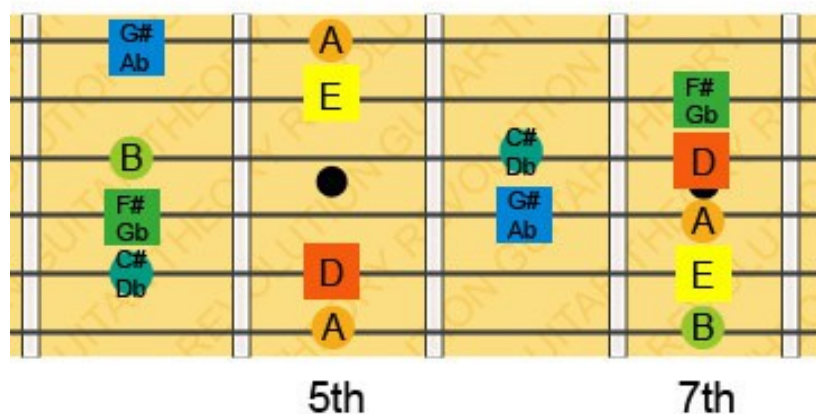
## 21. Another Way To Learn Modes

I want to show you a good way to play all the different mode scales in a way that allows you to more easily discern the unique sound of each one. When practising it over a droning root note for example.

To do this we'll use the following sequence of numbers: 1 4 7 3 6 2 5 1. It tells you which notes to flatten in order to move from mode to mode. As you play them in this order you'll hear the sounds of each mode get progressively darker.

We'll start with the A Major scale, also known as A Ionian. As an aside there's an argument that the Lydian mode should actually be the mode to start with, i'll talk about that later.

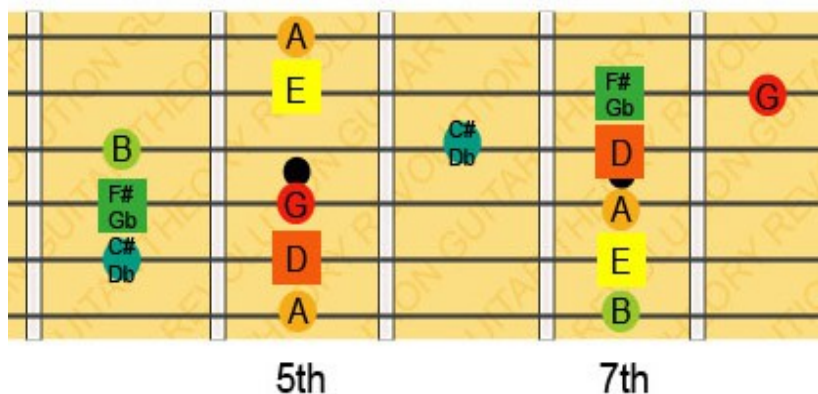
So the A Major / Ionian scale can be played across two octaves as shown here.



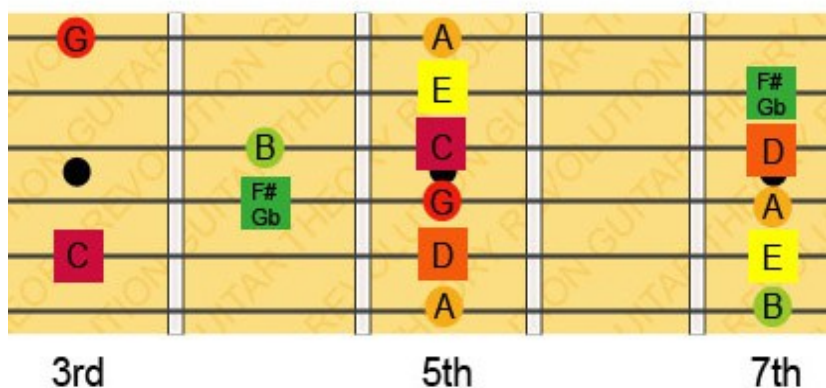
We find the next mode to play by lowering the 7<sup>th</sup> note of the scale by a half note. We skip 1 and 4 from the sequence mentioned earlier. I'll discuss why this is later.

1 4 7 3 6 2 5 1

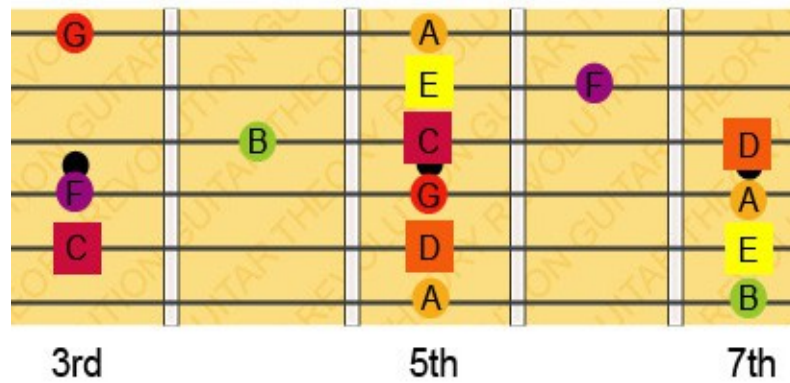
Lowering the 7th note gives us A Mixolydian.



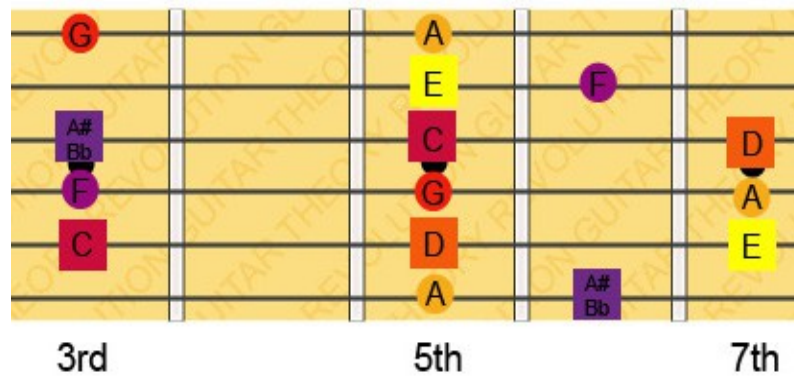
According to the formula the next note to lower by half a step is the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1 4 7 3 6 2 5 1 note of the scale. This gives us A Dorian.



Next up is the 6th note. 1 4 7 3 6 2 5 1 which gives us A Aeolian, otherwise known as the A minor scale.

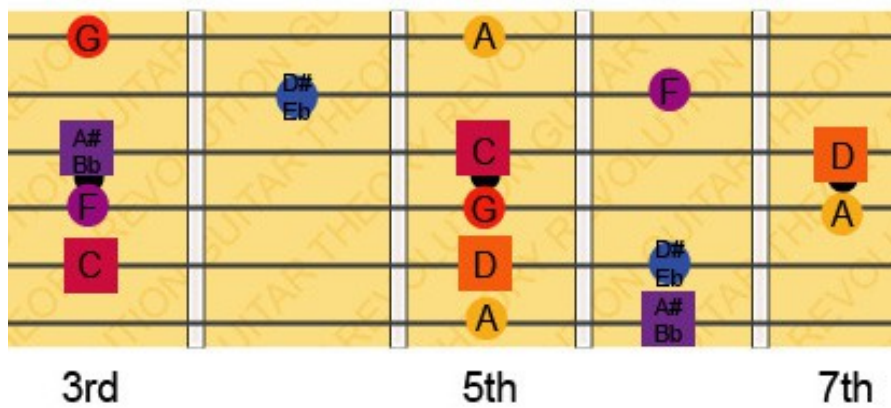


Now we lower the 2nd note to get the Phrygian mode. 1 4 7 3 6 2 5 1

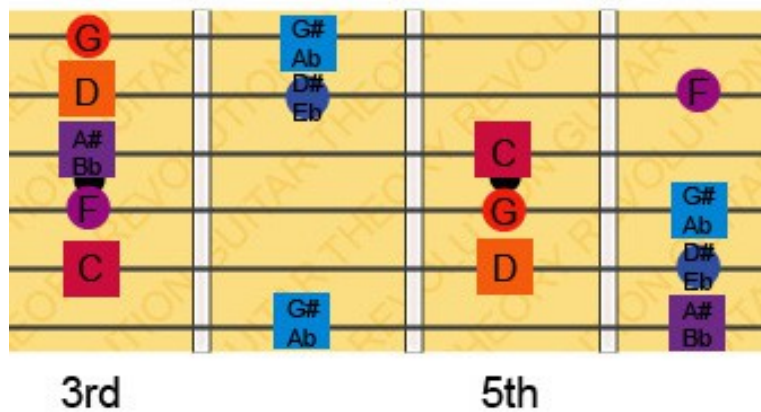




Lowering the 5th note gives us the Locrian mode. 1 4 7 3 6 2 5 1



Finally we lower the 1st note and we get the Ab Lydian scale. 1 4 7 3 6 2 5 1



After Ab Lydian you could lower the 4th note and get Ab Ionian, 1 4 7 3 6 2 5 1, and you're back at the beginning of the cycle.

Now you'll have noticed a couple of things as we done this. First of all each successive mode sounded darker or more ominous until we got to the Lydian mode which sounded incredibly bright and happy.

Notice also that the Lydian key was in a key a half note lower than the key we started in. You can continue lowering the notes in the order of the formula and cycle through each key until you get back to A Ionian again.

Now in this particular instance we started with the A Major / Ionian scale which meant we had to start by lowering the 7th note. Why not start with the Lydian mode, since it's the most bright sounding of all modes? And also the fact that you have to lower the 1st note to get it seems to indicate it is somehow special.

There are in fact schools of thought that say the Lydian mode should be considered the tonal gravity from which music should be analysed. However this is a complex topic that goes beyond what I cover in this book. It's use is primarily in Jazz music such as the work of Miles Davis and John Coltrane. You can find out more here:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lydian\\_Chromatic\\_Concept\\_of\\_Tonal\\_Organization](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lydian_Chromatic_Concept_of_Tonal_Organization)

(Search 'Lydian Chromatic Concept of Tonal Organization' on Wikipedia)

## 22. Using Modes In Blues Music

The two modes most commonly used in a Blues context are the Dorian and Mixolydian modes.

### Dorian

Conventional: 1 – 2 – b3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – b7 – 8

Fret Formula: 0 – 2 – 3 – 5 – 7 – 9 – 10 – 12

The Dorian mode is really easy to use in the Blues, basically you play a minor Pentatonic scale but add a Major 2<sup>nd</sup>, 0 - 2 and Major 6<sup>th</sup>, 0 - 9 interval.

Another way to find it is by playing a Major scale for the given key but choosing the second note as the root. So when playing over a Blues progression in the key of G Major you would play the G Major scale but focus on A as the root.

### Mixolydian

Conventional: 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 – b7 – 8

Fret Formula: 0 – 2 – 4 – 5 – 7 – 9 – 10 – 12

The Mixolydian mode or scale is one of the most used scales in Blues and Rock music. It contains all the intervals of the Dominant 7<sup>th</sup> chord, 0 - 4, 0 - 7 and 0 - 10 which as we've seen earlier is commonly used in Blues. Because of this you'll have to play the appropriate scale over each chord in the progression. For example A Mixolydian over A7, D Mixolydian over D7 and E Mixolydian over E7.

The easiest way to learn this is to compare the Mixolydian scale to the Major scale shapes that cover the fretboard (based on the CAGED formula), it's only the 7<sup>th</sup> note that is different, it's a b7 or 0 - 10 interval instead of a 0 - 11.

When you write out the notes of those Mixolydian scales you'll notice that they have many notes on common.

Chord	Scale							
A7	A Mixolydian	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C#</u>	<u>D</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>F#</u>	G
D7	D Mixolydian	<u>D</u>	<u>E</u>	<u>F#</u>	G	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	C
E7	E Mixolydian	<u>E</u>	<u>F#</u>	<u>G#</u>	<u>A</u>	<u>B</u>	<u>C#</u>	<u>D</u>

In this table I've underlined the notes that they all share. This gives you some common notes that you can play across the whole A7 - D7 - E7 progression. And it shows you that you can't expect to play the non bolded notes like G across the whole progression because there's no G in E Mixolydian.

But those notes are not to be avoided completely because by using them you'll be outlining the underlying chord changes.

To practice this I suggest you concentrate on moving between two chords only. If you have a loop pedal now is a good time to use it. Record yourself playing an A7 for a couple of bars and then D7 for a couple. Then practice playing lead over the two, first using only the common notes then using the note that are not shared.

BTW, as a side note you can also view A Mixolydian as D Major, D Mixolydian as G Major and E Mixolydian as A Major scale. But in each case you are starting on the 5th note of the Major Scale.

So for example: A Major / E Mixolydian: A - B - C# - D - E - F# - G#.

## 23. More Resources

Here are some recommended resources to help you practice what I've taught in this book. I receive a commission for sales through these affiliate links which helps support my research and work. Thank you!

Backing tracks to help you practice. Here are the most relevant to the material in this book:

[Blues Jam Tracks](#)

[Guitar Playback: Blues Jam Tracks](#)

[Guitar Playback: Modes Jam Tracks](#)

[Guitar Playback: Modal Ballads](#)

[Guitar Playback: Modal Explorer](#)

Learn how to play Acoustic Blues: [Acoustic Blues](#)

[The Guitar Grimoire: A Compendium of Formulas for Guitar Scales and Modes](#)

This book contains all the scale patterns you will ever need. The other books in the Guitar Grimoire series are highly recommended for an exhaustive range of scales and chords.