The Complete Electric Blues Guitar Method

Beginning - Intermediate - Mastering

WAYNE RIKER
The Complete Electric Blues Guitar Method
Beginning • Intermediate • Mastering

WAYNE RIKER

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In this edition, pages are sewn together in multiples of 16. This special process prevents pages from falling out of the book while allowing it to stay open for ease in playing. We hope this unique binding will give you added pleasure and additional use.

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Wayne Riker has been a guitar teacher and performer for twenty-five years, playing and teaching all styles of music. A graduate of the Guitar Institute of Technology (1980), he also earned a degree in English and Music from Fairleigh Dickinson University in 1973. He has been an instructor at the National Guitar Summer Workshop's California campus since its inception in 1990. Wayne is a teacher and freelance guitarist in the San Diego area, and conducts workshops around the country.
HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Since this book explores a wide variety of blues styles and improvisational ideas, it is not absolutely necessary that you proceed chapter by chapter. However, the book has been organized in a way that progressively adds new terms and information in each chapter. Don't assume you know everything about a subject, even if it's one of your strengths. Everyone approaches the blues from a different perspective, so if one new concept that you learn from this book helps your playing, it's worth it.

No book can make you a better player. You have to go out and play to improve. A book can provide new vocabulary that can be added to your musical repertoire. Whether you play informally or professionally, try immediately plugging examples you like into your playing. For the single-note examples, experiment with different phrasing, add your own notes to extend a lick or play the same lick on different string sets.

The musical definition section at the beginning of this book should be used as a glossary. Look up any terms or concepts you don't understand. You should read the basic theory section to make sure you have no gaps in your understanding of keys, intervals, harmonized scales, etc. Taking a college level course or obtaining a couple books in theory is a good way of improving your theoretical knowledge. Becoming a good musician as well as a good guitarist is essential, particularly if you are going to play professionally.

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my parents, Virginia and Walter Riker, and to my two children, Tara and Trent, who have all stood by me in the best and worst of circumstances.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to recognize the people whose musical influence and inspiration have helped shape this book: Dion Grody, Walt Riker III, Craig Linenberger, Greg Gucker, John Varner, Dr. Unicio Violi, John Abercrombie, Al Alpert, Marc Sussman, Dave English, Kimbo Smith, Les Wise, Don Mock, Ron Eschete, Howard Roberts, and special thanks to Nat Gunod, David Smolover, and all my colleagues at the California campus of the National Guitar Summer Workshop.

An audio recording is available for every book in this series. We hope it will make learning with these books easier and more enjoyable. This symbol will appear next to every example that is played on the audio recording. Use the recording—and your rewind button!—to help ensure that you are capturing the feel of each example, interpreting the rhythms correctly, and so on. If you have the compact disc version of this book, you can use the Track numbers below the symbol to go directly to the examples for any page. Have fun!
**Half Step**—The distance from one fret to the next, or from the open string to the first fret.

**Whole Step**—The distance of two frets, or from the open string to the second fret.

**Accidentals**—A sharp #, which raises a pitch one half step; a double sharp ##, which raises a pitch one half step; a flat ♭, which lowers a pitch one half step; a double flat ###, which lowers a pitch one half step; or a natural sign ♯, which cancels out the previous accidental.

**The Chromatic Scale**—The foundation for all musical motion on the guitar, from single notes to chords, scales, licks and melodies. All the notes of the chromatic scale are one half step (one fret) apart. It is the “slide rule” for finding the letter note names in the musical alphabet. You should definitely learn to recite the twelve notes of the chromatic scale before you play them on the guitar.

```
E  F  F♯  G  G♯  A  A♯  B  C  C♯  D  D♯  E
    or   G  or   A  or   B  or   C  or   D  or   E
```

Now let’s put these notes on the fingerboard.

```
      E  F  F♯  G  G♯  A  A♯  B  C  C♯  D  D♯  E
      B  C  C♯  D  D♯  E  F  F♯  G  G♯  A  A♯  B
      G  A  A♯  B  B♯  C  C♯  D  D♯  E  F  F♯  G
      D  E  F  F♯  G  G♯  A  A♯  B  B♯  C  C♯  D
      A  B  C  C♯  D  D♯  E  F  F♯  G  G♯  A  A♯
      E  F  F♯  G  G♯  A  A♯  B  B♯  C  C♯  D  D♯

III  V  VII  IX  XII
```

**Enharmonic**—Notes that are of equal pitch, but have two different names. Note the enharmonic relationships in the chromatic scale above: F♯ = G♭, G♯ = A♭, C♯ = D♭, and D♯ = E♭.

**Intervals**—The distance between two notes, or the interval, is the backbone for musical understanding of chord structures, double-stop patterns, single-note solos and melodies. The term “melodic interval” refers to the distance from one note to the next. “Harmonic interval” refers to the distance between two notes played simultaneously.
It is helpful to measure intervals in half steps. Memorize all the interval names below, using C as the starting pitch, then play them on the guitar to hear how each interval sounds.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Half steps</th>
<th>Pitches</th>
<th>Interval</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>C - C</td>
<td>unison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>C - C♯</td>
<td>augmented unison</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>C - D♯</td>
<td>minor 2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>C - D</td>
<td>major 2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>C - E♯</td>
<td>augmented 2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>C - E</td>
<td>minor 3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>C - F</td>
<td>major 3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>C - F♯</td>
<td>perfect 4th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>C - G♯</td>
<td>augmented 4th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>C - G</td>
<td>diminished 5th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>C - A</td>
<td>perfect 5th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>C - A♯</td>
<td>augmented 5th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>C - A♯</td>
<td>minor 6th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>C - B</td>
<td>major 6th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>C - B♯</td>
<td>augmented 6th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>C - B</td>
<td>minor 7th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>C - C</td>
<td>major 7th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>C - C</td>
<td>perfect octave</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Key**—The tonal center or home base of a tune. Refers to the entire set of pitches and harmonies resulting from building a scale on a root note. If a tune is in the key of A, corresponding notes, scales, and chords are categorized by their numerical interval distance from A.

**Diatonic**—To be within a key, or only playing notes that belong to any non-chromatic scale. E-F♯-G♯-A-B is diatonic because all of the notes belong to the key of E Major. E-F-F♯-G is chromatic because of the passing-tone between E and F♯ (F♯).

**The Major Scale**—The arrangement of notes in the diatonic major scale is the foundation for the musical system we use in Western music. The intervals used to construct this scale, starting on any pitch is: whole step, whole step, half step, whole step, whole step, whole step and half step. For example, the key of F Major:

![Diagram of the major scale]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>W</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>VII</th>
<th>IX</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>XII</th>
<th>H</th>
<th>XV</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

W = whole step  
H = half step

Memorizing the notes of the twelve major scales is essential in order to play any type of music. Here is a table for the major scales in a cycle of 5ths (all the roots are a 5th apart). Notice that G♯ and F♯ are enharmonically equal. Also, notice that the number of sharps ascend and the number of flats descend. The first tone, called the tonic or root, gives the key its name. Arabic numerals (1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8) represent single notes.

### The Major Scales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>F♯</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>F♯</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C♯</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C♯</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>F♯</td>
<td>G♯</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>F♯</td>
<td>G♯</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>C♯</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>F♯</td>
<td>G♯</td>
<td>A♯</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F♯</td>
<td>G♯</td>
<td>A♯</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>F♯</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G♯</td>
<td>A♯</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>G♯</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D♯</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>G♯</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D♯</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A♯</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>A♯</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E♯</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>A♯</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key Signature (Major)—A key signature at the beginning of a piece defines the key, telling you which scale was used in its composition. If you compare the chart below to the chart of major scales, you will see that the key signatures are derived from the major scales.

The Relative Minor—The relative minor key is based on the scale that starts on the sixth degree of any major scale. It has the same key signature as its relative major scale. Since the note E is the sixth note of a G Major scale, E Minor is the relative minor to G Major. C Minor is the relative minor to E♭ Major, etc.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Signature</th>
<th>Major Key</th>
<th>Minor Key</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key Signature</td>
<td>Major Key</td>
<td>Minor Key</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>E</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>G</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key Signature</td>
<td>Major Key</td>
<td>Minor Key</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>D</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B♭</td>
<td>G</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E♭</td>
<td>C</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A♭</td>
<td>F</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D♭</td>
<td>B♭</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G♭</td>
<td>E♭</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chord—Two or more notes played together.

The Triad—A three-note chord consisting of the root, 3rd and 5th of a scale. There are four basic triad types: major (Maj), minor (min), diminished (dim, or sometimes “♭”) and augmented (aug).

The Harmonized Major Chord Scale—The harmonized major scales are the result of building a triad from each note of the major scale. For example, in the key of F:

Here is the table for all the harmonized major scales in all twelve keys. Harmonies are indicated with Roman numerals. Capitol numerals are major, and lower case numerals are minor or diminished. In each key the I, IV, and V chords are major, the ii, iii, and vi chords are minor, and the vii° chord is diminished.
The Harmonized Major Chord Scale (Triads)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I</th>
<th>ii</th>
<th>iii</th>
<th>IV</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>vi</th>
<th>vii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Dm</td>
<td>Emin</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Amin</td>
<td>Bdim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Amin</td>
<td>Bmin</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>Emin</td>
<td>Fdim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Emin</td>
<td>Fmin</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>Bmin</td>
<td>Cdim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Bmin</td>
<td>C7min</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>Fmin</td>
<td>G7dim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>F#min</td>
<td>G7min</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C7min</td>
<td>D7dim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>C7min</td>
<td>D7min</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>F#</td>
<td>G7min</td>
<td>A7dim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Abmin</td>
<td>B7min</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>D#</td>
<td>E7min</td>
<td>F7dim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>C7min</td>
<td>Fmin</td>
<td>Gb</td>
<td>Ab</td>
<td>B7min</td>
<td>Cdim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>B7min</td>
<td>C7min</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>E#</td>
<td>Fmin</td>
<td>G7dim</td>
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<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Fmin</td>
<td>Gmin</td>
<td>Ab</td>
<td>Bb</td>
<td>Cmin</td>
<td>D7dim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>C7min</td>
<td>D7min</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Gmin</td>
<td>A7dim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Gmin</td>
<td>Amin</td>
<td>Bb</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Dmin</td>
<td>Edim</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Harmonized Major Chord Scale in 7ths—Now let's go one step farther and harmonize a four-note chord from each note of a major scale. This means adding another note a 3rd above the 5th of the triad. Here is a 7th chord scale in F:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FMaj7</th>
<th>Gmin7</th>
<th>Amin7</th>
<th>BbMaj7</th>
<th>C7</th>
<th>Dmin7</th>
<th>E7b5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IMaj7</td>
<td>ii7</td>
<td>iii7</td>
<td>IVMaj7</td>
<td>V7</td>
<td>vi7</td>
<td>vii7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T 5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A 5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B 7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Here is a table of the 7th chords in all twelve major keys. Notice that the I and IV chords are major 7th chords (1, 3, 5, 7), the ii, iii, and vi chords are minor 7th chords (1, 3, 5, 7), and the vii chord is a min7 5 chord—also known as a half diminished chord (1, 3, 5, 7). The V chord is a dominant 7th chord, written as V7 (1, 3, 5, 7).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IMaj7</th>
<th>ii7</th>
<th>iii7</th>
<th>IVMaj7</th>
<th>V7</th>
<th>vi7</th>
<th>vii 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CMaj7</td>
<td>Dmin7</td>
<td>Emin7</td>
<td>FMaj7</td>
<td>G7</td>
<td>Amin7</td>
<td>Bmin7 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GMaj7</td>
<td>Amin7</td>
<td>Bmin7</td>
<td>CMaj7</td>
<td>D7</td>
<td>Emin7</td>
<td>F#min7 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DMaj7</td>
<td>Emin7</td>
<td>F#min7</td>
<td>GMaj7</td>
<td>A7</td>
<td>Bmin7</td>
<td>C#min7 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMaj7</td>
<td>Bmin7</td>
<td>C#min7</td>
<td>DMaj7</td>
<td>E7</td>
<td>F#min7</td>
<td>G#min7 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EMaj7</td>
<td>F#min7</td>
<td>G#min7</td>
<td>AMaj7</td>
<td>B7</td>
<td>C#min7</td>
<td>D#min7 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BMaj7</td>
<td>C#min7</td>
<td>D#min7</td>
<td>EMaj7</td>
<td>F#7</td>
<td>G#min7</td>
<td>A#min7 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G#Maj7</td>
<td>A'min7</td>
<td>B'min7</td>
<td>C#Maj7</td>
<td>D#7</td>
<td>E'min7</td>
<td>F#min7 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D'Maj7</td>
<td>E'min7</td>
<td>Fmin7</td>
<td>G#Maj7</td>
<td>A#7</td>
<td>B'min7</td>
<td>Cmin7 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A'Maj7</td>
<td>B'min7</td>
<td>Cmin7</td>
<td>D'Maj7</td>
<td>E#7</td>
<td>Fmin7</td>
<td>Gmin7 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E'Maj7</td>
<td>Fmin7</td>
<td>Gmin7</td>
<td>A'Maj7</td>
<td>B#7</td>
<td>Cmin7</td>
<td>Dmin7 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B'Maj7</td>
<td>Cmin7</td>
<td>Dmin7</td>
<td>E'Maj7</td>
<td>F#7</td>
<td>Gmin7</td>
<td>Amin7 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FMaj7</td>
<td>Gmin7</td>
<td>Amin7</td>
<td>B'Maj7</td>
<td>C7</td>
<td>Dmin7</td>
<td>Emin7 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Alternate Changes**—Chords extended or substituted for a basic chord to bring more color and chord motion to a tune.

**Arpeggio**—The notes of a chord played one after the other, either in ascending or descending order.

**Attack**—The articulation of a note. Notes can vary in sound depending on the way you strike them: how hard you hit the note; how long you hold the note; what pick direction you use; or at what angle your pick hits the string.

**Backcycle**—A series of chords that are a 5th apart in root name when measured backwards from the final chord.

\[
\begin{array}{ccccccc}
C & \dot{v} & E7 & A7 & D7 & G7 & C \\
\end{array}
\]

As we move backwards from the C chord in bar seven, G7 is the V of C, D7 is the V of G7, A7 is the V of D7 and E7 is the V of A7.

\[\dot{v} = \text{repeat previous measure}\]

**Changes**—The progression of chords in a tune.

**Choke**—Stopping the sound of a bent note as soon as it reaches the intended pitch.

**Chord Inversion**—A chord voiced with a note other than the root in the bass.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>root</th>
<th>first inversion</th>
<th>second inversion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Chord Voicing**—Refers to the particular arrangement or order of notes played in a chord. Voicings are measured from the bottom note (bass) to the top.

**Closed Position**—Notes or chords in any part of the neck that does not use open strings.

**Comping**—Improvising rhythms with chords to accompany a solo or melody. Mainly used in jazz by pianists and guitarists, comping usually employs short and sporadic rhythmic punches that provide space in the chord changes through which a soloist can weave in and out.

**Contrary Motion**—Two melodies moving in opposite directions.

![A7 chord diagram]

**Cycle of 5ths**—A series of chords whose roots are a 5th apart.

![Cycle of 5ths diagram]

As you backcycle from C, G is the V of C, Dmin is a 5th above G, and Amin is a 5th above Dmin. If you count forward from the Amin chord, the chords cycle in 4ths.

**Dampen**—Creating an unpitched percussive sound by lifting the string(s) off the wood while leaving the finger(s) on the string. Also known as muting (to mute a note or chord), or a “chuck.”

**Dynamics**—The volume level within a song. Playing softly or loudly to create a change in mood.
Flat 5 (5) Substitution—Substituting a chord a 5 above the basic chord. For instance, D7 can be used instead of G7. D♭ is a 5 above G.

The D♭7 chord is a 5 above G7, so it can be substituted for the G7, because both of these dominant chords share the same 3rd and 7th tones, B and F respectively. The 5 substitution is often used to create chromatic movement between adjoining chords.

Hammer-on—A slur sound, ascending in pitch, executed by picking a note and then sounding the next with your fretting hand.

Movable Chord—Any chord without open strings that can therefore move with its shape intact.

Oblique Motion—One melody note remains constant as other notes move around it.
Octave—Refers to the distance between two notes that have the same name and pitch, but are located twelve half steps or eight diatonic tones of the major scale away from each other. The G note on the third fret of the sixth string and the G note on the fifth fret of the fourth string are an octave apart.

Open Position—Fretted notes combined with open strings within the first three frets.

Palm Mute—Resting the palm of the picking hand lightly on any string near the bridge to dampen the string sound.

Passing Tones—Non-scale tones played in between melody, scale, or chord tones.

Pedal Tone—A sustained note, usually in the bass, sounding against moving harmonies above.

Pickup-Note(s)—Notes played before the opening bar to begin the melody or lick.
**Pull-off**—A slur sound descending in pitch, created by pulling a finger of the fretting hand off the string (usually downward towards the floor), causing a lower note on the same string to sound without being picked. The lower note can be either the open string or another note on the string taken by a finger anchored firmly to the fret.

![Pull-off Example](image)

**Quarter Tone**—Half of a half step. A very distinctive blues sound. Since the frets divide the strings in half steps, the quarter tone is reached by bending slightly up from a fretted tone.

**Root**—The note from which a chord or scale is constructed. For example, a C note is the root of a C Major, C Minor or C7 chord. C is also the root of a C Blues or a C Major scale and a C Minor scale.

**Shortpicking**—Moving your thumb and index finger down to the edge of your pick and combining the skin of either finger with the pick as you strike the string. This produces a short or staccato note, sometimes producing overtones of other notes as well.

**Slash Chords**—Chord symbols for chords that have a bass note that differs from the chord name (inversions). G/B is a G Major chord with a B note in the bass. Dmin/C is a D Minor chord with a C note in the bass.

**Slides**—Picking a fretted note or chord and then sliding a finger or fingers up or down a string(s) to a designated location, producing a sliding, gliding sound. Indicated with this symbol: — or —.

![Slides Example](image)
Syncopation—Rhythmic patterns accenting weak beats or weak parts of beats. This usually means getting away from accenting one and three.

Tap-on or Tapping—Bringing the index or middle finger of the picking hand over to fret a note.

Tempo—The rate of speed at which a tune is played. Learn the metronome markings often seen at the top of a chart. At the rate of speed of \( \frac{3}{4} = 60 \), the quarter notes are played in the space of one second (sixty per minute).

Time Signature—The fractional number at the beginning of a tune to indicate the meter or “feel.” The top number denotes the number of beats in each measure, the bottom number indicates what type of note gets one beat.

\[ \frac{4}{4} \] = Four beats in a bar; quarter note = one beat

\[ \frac{12}{8} \] = Twelve beats in a bar; eighth note = one beat.

Transpose—Playing a tune in a different key than the original key. The music stays the same except for a change in pitch. All the chords move up or down an equal distance.

Transposition up a perfect 5th:
Tremolo Picking—Rapid alternate picking.

```
C7 or Cmin7
```

```
E7 or Emin7
```

T  8  11  10  8
A  10 10 10 10
B  10 10 10 10

Trill—Rapidly combining hammer-ons and pull-offs between two notes.

```
A7 or Amin7
```

```
E7
```

T  tr  tr
A  (5  8)  (0 1)
B

Unison—Notes exactly the same in pitch played on different strings. For example, the F note found on the first fret of the first string can also be sounded on the sixth fret of the second string, the tenth fret of the third string and the fifteenth fret of the fourth string.
CHORDS FOR CHAPTER 1

E7

A7

B7

A⁹dim7

C¹⁷

F¹⁷

Eric Clapton
The twelve-bar blues structure, using all dominant seventh chords, is the most common blues format. Ninety percent of the time we deal with this structure when we play the blues, so we are not talking about brain surgery here! However, since the blues format is so limited you need to know as many ways as possible to vary and enhance a blues tune. Your audience is tuned into this sound, as it is the basis for many rock, jazz, country and R&B (rhythm-and-blues) songs, so you need to turn their heads and keep them interested. Let's look at the most widely used chord pattern and at some other possibilities, too.

The I chord, A7, is added in bar two.
The $A^\flat$ diminished chord ($A^\flat\text{dim}7$), also known as an $A7^9$, in measure six adds color to the I chord, $A7$.

\[
\begin{array}{cccccc}
E7 & A7 & E7 & \times & A7 & A^\flat\text{dim}7 \\
I7 & IV7 & I7 & IV7 & \sharp IV^\flat \\
E7 & \times & B7 & A7 & E7 & B7 \\
I7 & V7 & IV7 & I7 & V7
\end{array}
\]

The addition of $C^\flat7$ and $F^\#7$ in measures eight and nine creates a cycle of 5ths progression. If you backcycle from the $B7$ in measure ten, $F^\#7$ is the V chord of $B7$, and $C^\flat7$ is the V chord of $F^\#7$.

\[
\begin{array}{cccccc}
E7 & A7 & E7 & \times & A7 & A^\flat\text{dim}7 \\
I7 & IV7 & I7 & IV7 & \sharp IV^\flat \\
E7 & C^\flat7 & F^\#7 & B7 & E7 & B7 \\
I7 & VI7 & II7 & V7 & I7 & V7
\end{array}
\]
SHUFFLE BLUES

The most important factor in blues rhythm playing is to create chord movement. Playing static dominant seventh chords tends to be bland. This next example shows chord motion using intervals of a 6th with a shuffle rhythm (a dotted eighth/sixteenth note feel).

Think of the thumpthump—thumpthump of your heartbeat (hopefully normal) to remember a shuffle rhythm. Now let’s shuffle off to Buffalo.
Another alternative for creating chord motion are blues-rock rhythm patterns, which are variations of the old barrelhouse and boogie-woogie blues piano styles. The keys of E and A work the best for these rhythms because the open strings can ring out. They also fit well under the fingers in the open positions, unlike other keys that require a closed position and lots of finger stretching. Here are two examples of patterns over the I, IV, and V chords in the key of A. Combine them and play them through a twelve-bar blues.

**Standard riff reaching out to the 6 and 7 of each chord**

```
A7  D7  E7  
```

The movement from the minor to the major 3rd tones of each chord on the bass strings is typical in this style.
Full blown boogie-woogie

E7

A7

T

A

B

A7

B7

T

A

B

Johnny Copeland
Slow Memphis rhythm

E7

A7

B7

10

Track 5.1

I7

IV7

V7

T

A

B

2 0 4 0 5 0 4

A la "Honkey Tonk" by Bill Doggett

E7

A7

B7

11

Track 5.2

I7

IV7

V7

T

A

B

2 0 4 5 0 4

Buddy Guy
Let's conclude with this finger stretcher in E.

```markdown
Let's conclude with this finger stretcher in E.

E7

```

---

A7

---

B7

---

`Chapter I—The Twelve-Bar Blues 27`
THE CLOSED-POSITION RHYTHM PATTERNS

As we move blues rhythms to other keys, away from the open position, the two-note form combining the root and 5th of each chord works best.

Transpose this progression to other keys and try playing some of the open position rhythms in this closed position. This will create some long stretches that look and sound impressive.

FUNK BLUES

Funk blues progressions move away from the traditional shuffle rhythm found in most blues patterns. Syncopated rhythms with chord chokes (×) make the groove happen.

Since horn players like to jam over this format, they will love you if you play in flat keys such as F, B♭, or E♭. Nothing is worse for horn players than playing in the keys of E and A all night. Sometimes they have to make that adjustment if it's a guitar-oriented band, but to avoid dirty looks, let them blow in keys that make them comfortable for most of the night. Make sure the choked string sound on beat two is strongly accented. The 7♭9 chord is a strong turnaround chord in this style. (See Chapter Two for more about turnarounds.)
Twelve-bar minor blues funk progression

Cmin7  \nFmin7

Cmin7  A\(^b\)7  G7  Cmin7  G7\(^b\)9

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CHAPTER 2
Intros, Turnarounds, Vamps and Endings

INTROS

Introductions, or, intros for short, immediately cue your audience to the gist of a tune. A catchy intro grabs their attention right away. Since you may be the only chordal instrument, you may often be starting tunes by yourself. Make sure you count the correct tempo in your head before playing the intro. Drummers will hurl their extra sticks at you if the tune takes off too fast. The last thing you need is that sinking feeling of playing a tune at the wrong tempo for five minutes.

Slow blues a la T-Bone Walker

Medium blues

30  Chapter 2—Intros, Turnarounds, Vamps and Endings
A la Freddie King

E

Edim

T
A
B

A

E

B7

T
A
B

Medium minor blues chordal intro

Gmin7

Cmin

Gmin E7 D7

T
A
B
Slow tempo arpeggiated minor intro

Cmin

Cmin(Maj7)

Cmin7

G7

Slow blues a la Robert Johnson

C7

Cdim7

Bdim7

C7

C

G7

A la Big Bill Broonzy

G7
A turnaround is the musical phrase occurring in the last two measures of a blues progression, usually connecting a chord lick on the I chord into the V chord. A turnaround is the glue that attaches the end or bottom of a blues pattern back to the top. Make sure everybody's on the same page at each turnaround. Three musicians playing three different turnarounds at the same time can make for some interesting dissonances that would make even Stravinsky snarl.

**Parallel motion.** The E7 chord on the fifth fret moves down chromatically to the open E7 chord using the same shape.

**A la Robert Johnson**

---

Chapter 2 — Intros, Turnarounds, Vamps and Endings  33
Oblique motion. The E note on the third string remains constant as the notes on the fourth string move in half steps.

A la Freddie King

A la John Lee Hooker
**Separated 3rds**

```
E7
```

```
T 9 9 7 7 6 6 5 7 4 6 7 (7)
A 11 9 7 6 8 5 7 5 6 6 (6)
B
```

**A la Eric Clapton**

```
D7
```

```
T 7 7 8 9 10 10 11 12 (12)
A 5 7 7 8 8 9 9 10 10 11 12 (12)
B 5 7 8 8 9 9 10 10 11 12 (12)
```

**Contrary motion a la Scott Joplin.** Hey, you can steal (learn!) from piano players too! The notes on the second string move up while the notes on the fourth string move down.

```
C9
```

```
T 5 5 6 7 7 8 8 3 8 (8)
A 8 5 6 7 6 5 9 8 (8)
B
```
A vamp is chord pattern you can repeat for as many measures as you choose. It can be used at any point in a blues song. Generally, a vamp is heard at the end or beginning of a tune as a device for singers to introduce a tune or to tell their life story. If a vocalist tells you to vamp until ready, that’s your cue to experiment with every possible chord inversion and substitution known to man. Starting a tune with a solo over a vamp before the regular eight or twelve-bar structure begins or jamming at the end of a tune over a vamp is a nice alternative to the normal blues format.
Amin6  E7♭9  Amin6  E7♭9  E7♭9
1

T  5  5  5  5  5
A  4  4  4  4  4
B  5  5  5  5  5

Fmin9  B♭13

T  8  8  8  8  8
A  7  7  7  7  7
B  6  6  6  6  6

Albert King

Chapter 2—Intros, Turnarounds, Vamps and Endings 37
Every tune must eventually end, so make sure your endings are musically tight. You may have played what you thought was a lousy solo in the middle of the tune, but a catchy ending can grant you a reprieve and some applause. The public has a short memory.

You and the bass player take this one home together.

The A7 on the fifth fret moves chromatically down to the open position A chord on the second fret.

A la “Rock Around the Clock”
A la Duke Ellington

B♭7

Jazz blues ending

A7 A7/C♯ D7 D♭dim A/E B♭7 A7

Gospel blues ending

G G7 C Cmin G G7

Chapter 2—Intros, Turnarounds, Vamps and Endings
The blues scale is the primary building material from which most blues ideas are constructed. The characteristic blues scale tones are the $\text{b}3$, $\text{b}5$ and $\text{b}7$. Let's look at the blues scale structure in the key of A.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E$\flat$</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>G</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1(R)</td>
<td>$\text{b}3$</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>$\text{b}5$</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$\text{b}7$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If we eliminate the $\text{b}5$, we arrive at an A Minor Pentatonic scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>G</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1(R)</td>
<td>$\text{b}3$</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$\text{b}7$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With the deletion of the $\text{b}5$, there are no longer any half step relationships, which make a blues scale sound even blusier than the rock and country oriented minor pentatonic scale. However, the blues and pentatonic scales are interchangeable in most situations. In the key of E the blues scale is spelled as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>E</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B$\flat$</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1(R)</td>
<td>$\text{b}3$</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>$\text{b}5$</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$\text{b}7$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CLOSED POSITION BLUES SCALES

Here are the five patterns for the blues scale in the keys of E and A. They are shown here in two keys to emphasize the fact that these patterns are fully transposable. We simply move them around to the appropriate roots to play in the different keys. Notice also that they are shown starting in the lower positions and moving to higher positions. That is why the A Blues scale starts with Pattern #4.

(R) = Root
Most of the original blues guitar songs, particularly in delta blues, are played in the open position. Improvising with open strings and notes on the first three frets gives you that down-home blues sound. Overlapping open strings and fretted notes on different strings can create some haunting effects. Hammer-ons, pull-offs, and trills are easier to do with open strings, and have more snap to them than those in the closed position. Here are the open position blues scales in the keys of E, A, G, B, and D. As an exercise, play a twelve-bar blues line in each of these keys just using the open position.

---

E Blues Scale

A Blues Scale

G Blues Scale

B Blues Scale

D Blues Scale

○ = Play the open string

---

Chapter 3—The Blues Scale
Have you ever been improvising over a chord progression with a scale and realized that you were just playing hit and miss with the scale tones? The biggest step you can take as an improviser is to learn the relationship of each tone to every chord over which you are playing, particularly the notes on which you begin and end your lick. Let's look at a lick emphasizing each tone of the A Blues Scale using Pattern #5. The tones being emphasized in each lick are shown in boxes.

**The root.** A chord tone. Strong starting and ending note.

```
A7

T 5 5 8 5 8 7 5 7
A B
```

**The '7.** A chord tone. Primary blues tone. Very strong ending note.

```
A7

T 8 5 8 7 5 7 7 5
A B
```

**The 5th.** A chord tone. Strong.

```
A7

T 6 7 5 7 5 7 8 5
A B
```
The 5th. Primary blues tone. Effective mainly as a passing tone.

A7

The 4th. Neither a blues tone or a chord tone. It's a suspended tone, the weakest note of the scale, and best used as a passing tone.

A7

The 3rd. Primary blues tone. Very strong. Best used in the middle or at the start of a lick.

A7

Now practice the same concepts in the other four patterns of the A Blues Scale. Make up licks carefully considering the tones you use over the A7 chord.
CHAPTER 4

Blues Techniques

The essence of improvising the blues lies in the expression of each note. The following hand techniques are the most important factor in making single note blues playing stand out as a unique sound. Many blues players improvise with similar scales and licks, but the strength of the following techniques will make one blues player stand out from the others. Playing fewer notes with more expression separates blues improvisation from other styles.

LEFT HAND TECHNIQUES

VIBRATO

It should only take a few minutes of watching B.B. King play to discover the importance of vibrato—the even fluctuation or shaking of a note back and forth. Most players are confident with finger vibrato, moving a note back and forth with any finger, either from side to side or up and down. The wrist vibrato, however, is a key part of any great player’s technique.

To initiate a strong wrist vibrato, take a note with the left side of your index finger. Then rock your wrist and forearm back and forth. This motion will automatically move your finger to create a strong vibrato sound.

![Diagram of wrist vibrato]

Practice your wrist vibrato at many different speeds. A slow vibrato can be just as powerful as a fast one. Now continue on to practice wrist vibrato with the middle finger, ring finger, and pinky.
BENDING

Bending all the way to the intended pitch is absolutely critical in blues improvising. Nothing sounds worse than a bend that doesn’t reach its proper pitch. Sloppy bending will keep you in the garage while others are out playing gigs. Every time you bend a note you must know exactly how far in pitch you intend to go. In the following examples you will encounter quarter step, half step, whole step, whole-and-a-half step and two-whole step bends. Make sure you are bending with your ring finger, with your index and middle fingers glued to your ring finger to support your bend.
Quarter step bend on the third string. Pull slightly downwards (towards the floor) with the index finger to achieve the quarter step bend. Make sure you don’t bend too far, or it will sound like a half step bend that didn’t quite make it.

Quarter step bend on the first string. Push upwards slightly (towards the ceiling) with the index finger.

Half step and whole step bends. In this example we bend a half step into the $\frac{1}{5}$ (E$^\flat$), followed by a whole step bend into the 5th (E) from the 4th (D).
In this one, pull the fifth string downwards to bend the bass note up a half step.

Two bends in one. Bend up a half step and then without picking again push the bend up to a make it a whole step bend.

Whole step bend with choke and whole step bend release
Whole step bend and choke

Whole step bend on low E string from G to A. Notice that the next note after the bend is the open A string, creating the sound of successive unison A notes.

One of the more popular whole step bend combinations
Whole-and-a-half step (minor 3rd) bend, a la Eric Clapton and Freddie King. Make sure the note gets all the way there. If you aren’t using a set of lighter gauge strings, now may be the time to do so, especially the third string.

**A7 or Amin7**

Whole-and-a-half step bend on the second string

**A7 or Amin7**

Whole-and-a-half step bend on the third string

**A7 or Amin7**
Two-whole step (major 3rd) bend. Get ready to break some strings on this one.
Jimi Hendrix loved these.

Two-whole step bend on the third string

Hammer-on and bend combination. Bend and release the note without picking after the hammer-on.
Hammer-on and whole step bend combination

Hammer-on and whole-and-a-half step bend combination

Slide and bend combination. Slide and then bend the note up and down with the same (index) finger.
BENDING INTO PITCH

A great exercise for bending accuracy is to bend through the blues scale on one string. Bend each note on one string at a time working through the first, second and third strings. Use a chromatic tuner to check the accuracy of your bends.
BEND AND VIBRATO

Now it's time to separate the men from the boys and the women from the girls. The ability to bend and then vibrato a note is the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. As you end a phrase with a bend, shake the note like it's the last note you will ever play. This human vocal crying sound is what you want to replicate in your blues solos. Practice this technique with slow, medium and fast vibrato speeds, starting the vibrato after the bends.
Sweeping is a classic blues technique used by many guitarists, particularly B.B. King, to create a crisp snapping effect between two notes on adjacent strings. After striking the first note, let the pick fall either forward or backwards to the next string without lifting the pick off the string of the first note. If you have the tape for this book, listen carefully to this effect.
RAKING

Raking is the percussive effect attained by muting all the strings with your fretting hand, and then sweeping the pick across the strings until you reach the string you intend to sound.

```
77
Track 27.1
A7 or Amin7
```

```
78
Track 27.2
```

```
79
Track 27.3
```

---

56 Chapter 4—Blues Techniques
You will often hear blues players stay in only one blues scale as they improvise over a I7-IV7-V7 progression. From this point on we will look at improvising techniques that combine different ideas to create stronger musical lines. With a little bit of cerebral energy you can rise above the crowd of players who are wearing out one standard blues pattern.

Over a I chord in the key of A (A7), combine the A Blues scale with the F♯ Blues scale, which is three half steps, or a minor 3rd, below A. If you delete the b5 from each of these scales, the A Blues scale becomes the A Minor Pentatonic scale, and the F♯ Blues scale becomes the A Major Pentatonic scale.

A BLUES SCALE

![A Blues Scale Diagram]

Pattern #5

F♯ BLUES SCALE

![F♯ Blues Scale Diagram]

Pattern #1

COMPOSITE SCALE

Combining these two scales results in a nine-note composite scale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>C♯</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E♭</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F♯</th>
<th>G</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2(9)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notice that by using the A Blues scale Pattern #5 and the F♯ Blues scale Pattern #1 we can play both scales in the same area of the neck. This is helpful for creating composite scale licks.
Proceed further and combine both blues scales using the other four patterns, then transpose them to the key of E, combining the E and C♭ Blues scales to use over the V7 chord, (E7). Against the IV7 chord (D7), use the B Blues scale or D Major Pentatonic scale, which is a major 3rd down from D.

C♭ BLUES SCALE

B BLUES SCALE

Remember, you can still play the A Blues scale over the entire I-IV-V progression, but by adding the blues scale a minor 3rd below all three chord names, you create more possibilities for licks. Sometimes in a slow blues tempo you can play the parent blues scale for each chord: A Blues over A7, D Blues over D7 and E Blues over E7. At a medium or fast tempo this does not work as well because it sounds like you are changing keys on each chord change.
Here's a twelve-bar blues solo in the key of A using composite blues scales. (See page 61, bottom.)
Now let's look at the following licks in the key of C, using the C Blues scale and the A Blues scale.

A)

C7

A Blues  ———— C Blues  ————

T  3 4 5 5 4 3 3 5 5 5
A           B

B)

C7

A Blues  ———— C Blues  ———— 1/4

T  7 8 7 10 8 10 (10)
A           B

C)

C7

A Blues  ———— C Blues  ———— 1/4

T  10 8 11 10 7 8 9 10 (10)

D)

C7

A Blues  ———— C Blues  ————

T  5 5 8 5 14 15 13 16 13 15 12 13 (13)
A           B

E)

C7

1/4

T  5 5 8 5 14 15 13 16 13 15 12 13 (13)

△ = F Blues
● = A Blues
♦ = B Blues
■ = C# Blues
THE MIXOLYDIAN MODE

Just when you thought it was safe to improvise without too much thinking, we are going to add another piece to the puzzle. The Mixolydian mode is another tool for adding more color to your blues vocabulary. When playing over a blues progression in the key of G, for instance, we can add in the G Mixolydian mode.

The Mixolydian mode is the scale that results from playing a major scale, but starting on the fifth degree. The G Mixolydian scale contains the notes of a C Major scale starting on G, the 5th degree in the key of C. If we call G “1” instead of “5”, we get the G Mixolydian mode, which looks like this:

\[ \begin{array}{cccccccc}
G & A & B & C & D & E & F \\
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 & 7 \\
\end{array} \]

THE FIVE PATTERNS FOR THE G MIXOLYDIAN MODE

These patterns can be transposed to any key, just like the blues scale patterns.

![Pattern #1](image1)

![Pattern #2](image2)

![Pattern #3](image3)

![Pattern #4](image4)

![Pattern #5](image5)
Now let's look at licks using the G Mixolydian mode over the G7 chord. The Mixolydian mode is very effective when mixed in with the blues scales. The Mixolydian 7th degree makes it a perfect match for dominant chords with the same root as the mode. This mode also adds melodic color to the blues licks often used by jazz and country players.
THE DOMINANT 7TH ARPEGGIO

Single note arpeggios provide a strong nucleus for improvising since they are constructed from the tones of the chord over which you are improvising. The best formula for the blues is to add in the arpeggio with the blues and Mixolydian scales. Here are the main positions for the G7 arpeggio. Remember, these too are fully transposable to any key.

G7 ARPEGGIOS

\[
\begin{array}{c|c|c|c}
G & B & D & F \\
R & 3 & 5 & 7 \\
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c|c|c|c|c}
 & R & 5 & 7 & 3 \\
III & 3 & R & 5 & \\
V & \\
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c|c|c|c|c}
 & 3 & 5 & 7 & R \\
VII & 3 & R & 5 & \\
X & \\
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c|c|c|c|c}
 & 3 & 7 & R & 5 \\
VII & 3 & R & 5 & \\
X & \\
XII & \\
XV & \\
\end{array}
\]

Here are some licks using a combination of scales and arpeggios over I7 (G7), IV7 (C7), and V7 (D7) in the key of G. Try creating a twelve-bar solo using these examples.
THE MINOR 7\(^5\) ARPEGGIO

Playing a min7\(^5\) chord arpeggio starting a major 3rd above the root of a dominant 7 chord can add the sound of a higher extension to the harmony. Here’s how it works:

A G9 chord is spelled:

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
G & B & D & F \\
R & 3 & 5 & 7 \\
\end{array}
\]

Inside or superimposed in the spelling of the G9 chord is a Bmin7\(^5\) chord.

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
G & (B & D & F \\
\end{array}
\]

B MINOR 7\(^5\) ARPEGGIOS

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
B & D & F & A \\
R & 3 & 5 & 7 \\
\end{array}
\]

So you see learning the arpeggio positions for the min7\(^5\) chord gives you a new weapon for playing over any dominant chord, particularly the 9th chord.
Here are licks using the Bmin7\(^5\) arpeggio over G9, the Emin7\(^5\) arpeggio over C9 and the Fmin7\(^5\) arpeggio over D9. Remember, the arpeggios are most effective when used in combination with scales. Also, remember this concept requires that the root of the arpeggio is a major 3rd above the root of the dominant 7th chord.

G9

C9
C9

```
T: 7 9 10 11 8 11 8 (8) 
A:  
B:  
```

D9

```
T: 2 5 5 5 (5) 
A:  
B:  
```

D9

```
T: 8 10 8 10 7 9 7 9 9 
A:  
B:  
```
THE MAJOR TRIAD

Using the major triad within a blues lick can add nicely to a blues solo. Learn the following G Major positions and practice transposing them to other keys, too. The G Major triad is contained in a G7 chord:

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
(G & B & D) & F \\
R & 3 & 5 & 7
\end{array}
\]

G MAJOR ARPEGGIOS

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
G & B & D \\
R & 3 & 5
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
R & 5 & 3 & R \\
3 & R & 5 & V
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
3 & R & 5 \\
5 & 3 & V & VII
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{cccc}
5 & 3 & R \\
3 & R & 5 & X & XII
\end{array}
\]

Larry Carlton

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The following three examples show ways to use the major triad in blues licks in G. Make up licks over the IV (use the C Major triad) and V chords (use the D Major triad).
THE MINOR TRIAD

The minor third (3) also works effectively against a dominant chord blues progression, so we can also use the minor triad. As you know, even the basic blues scale has a 3. Use the minor triad whose root has the same letter name as the dominant 7th chord over which you are playing. Learn the following minor triad positions:

G MINOR ARPEGGIOS

G  B♭  D
R  3  5

III  V

V  VII  X

X  XII  XV
Here are licks showing the use of a G minor triad over the G7 chord. You can also use these licks over Gmin or Gmin7 in a minor blues progression. Practice transposing these licks to play over C7 and D7 in a dominant blues progression or for Cmin7 and Dmin7 in a minor blues progression. Then you will be ready to put this concept to use through entire dominant and minor type blues progressions.
TARGETING CHORD TONES

A common phrase heard by improvising musicians is "there are only twelve notes you’re messing with, just play all of them and make sure you land on the right ones." Targeting notes chromatically can be a powerful improvisational tool. Notes that are not included in scales and arpeggios can be used as passing tones targeted for the strong tones in blues.

Here are examples of aiming for these tones against a I-IV-V blues in A.

Albert Lee

The 5th (E on the second string), the 3rd (C^ on the third string), and the 7th (G on the fourth string), are being targeted.

The 3rd (C^ on the first string), the 7th (G on the second string), and the 3rd (C^ on the third string), are being targeted.
The 6th (B on the first string), the 3rd (F♯ on the second string), and the 7th (C on the third string), are all being targeted.

D7

The 3rd (F♯ on the third string), the 5th (A on the second string), and the root (D on the first string), are being targeted in this one.

D7

This time the targets are the 3rd (G♯ on the fourth string), the 6th (C♯ on the third string), and the 3rd again (G♯ on the first string).

E7
CHAPTER 6

Licks Over the I7-IV7-V7 Blues

Studying licks that combine all the improvisational concepts we've talked about up to this point should vastly improve your vocabulary for improvising blues and all other styles of music. Every time you learn a new lick you should analyze where it's coming from musically. This will put you a step ahead of other players because you can then make up your own licks and find your own improvisational voice.

The following licks are specifically designed to be played over the I chord, the IV chord or the V chord in the key of A. They can then be applied to playing over a continuous I-IV-V progression. Go beyond the lick examples. Change the phrasing, add in other notes beyond the lick, and play the lick on different string sets and in different octaves.

LICKS OVER THE I7 CHORD

F♯ licks a la B.B. King

\[ \text{Track 39.1} \]

\[ \text{Track 39.2} \]
A la T-Bone Walker, Jimi Hendrix and Stevie Ray Vaughn. A blues lick with a colorful 9th tone added, the B note on the first string.

F♭ Blues scale lick a la Jimmy Page

F♭ Blues scale lick in the style of Eric Clapton
Mixing the A Blues scale, A Major triad, and A Mixolydian

**F# Blues**

LICKS OVER THE IV7 CHORD

D7 arpeggio and D Mixolydian back-to-back a la Jimi Hendrix
Major Pentatonic lick combined with bends into the 7 (C)

B Blues scale followed by D Mixolydian

A targeting lick followed by a D7 arpeggio
LICKS OVER THE V7 CHORD

E Major Pentatonic followed by an E7 arpeggio

An E7 arpeggio sandwiched by E Mixolydian

C♯ and E Blues scales. This lick has a strong finish due to the whole step bend.
Double-stop licks, also known as double-string licks, are extremely important in the blues. They are a traditional sound dating back to the delta blues. Learn as many double-stop licks as you can and use them consistently in your solos. They help take the monotony out of single-note soloing.

Double-stops are also interchangeable as rhythm guitar patterns. Most of these licks are harmonized in thirds and sixths from the Mixolydian mode. For example, if you are playing against E7 you would use harmonic intervals built from E Mixolydian, which is the A Major scale from E to E. This works because E7 is the V chord in the key of A Major.

Harmonized 3rds in E Mixolydian

Harmonized 6ths in E Mixolydian
The following double-stop licks are commonly used phrases in blues. All examples are played against A7. Practice transposing and move them to other keys.

A classic lick in 3rds a la Robert Johnson. This has been used by every player since Johnson's time.

Elmore James' favorite. Notice the A Minor triad shape.

Intervals of a 6th using the A Mixolydian mode
The remaining licks can also be used as rhythm guitar patterns. Move the same shape up five frets to use against the IV chord and seven frets up to use against the V chord.

**Lick in 3rds**

B.B. King goes cha-cha. This one opens with a diminished 5th interval.

**Good horn line lick**
Now let's put it all together in a twelve-bar solo in A.

A7

D7

A7
COUNTRY BLUES DOUBLE-STOPS

Some of the best double-stop licks are made by holding one note in place while either bending, pulling-off or hammering-on the second note. These hot licks can add a nice mix to your double-stop repertoire. Players such as Albert Lee, Danny Gatton and Jerry Donahue are known for blending blues lines with pedal-steel sounding runs.

Danny Gatton

Classic country lick. This is used by jazz and blues folks, too.

E7 arpeggio lick combination
A la Albert Lee and Jerry Garcia. This one targets intervals of a 3rd through the E Mixolydian mode.

Make sure the E note on the twelfth fret of the first string and the B note on the twelfth fret of the second string sound while the notes below are bending.

Classic release bend trick. After you make the opening whole step bend on the second string, keep the string bent. As you get ready to pick and release the note, strike the third string instead, which should be bent up about a whole step by virtue of the second string bend. Try to keep both strings sounding as you release them.
Octaves are another way to thicken the sound of a solo. By playing any single note in combination with its octave, you can create a fuller sound.

When you play octaves there is always a string in between that is not played. One alternative is to use both the pick and your middle finger to strike the strings. If you choose to just use the pick, dampen the non played string with any part of your index finger, which is always on the bottom note of the octave.

Practice a blues solo using only octaves. Listen to Wes Montgomery and George Benson for octave ideas. Also, check out Alvin Lee of Ten Years After. He used octaves quite a bit in a blues context. Let's look at octaves moving horizontally and vertically through the E and A Blues scales.
Twelve-bar Blues Solo. Here is a twelve-bar blues solo in E that summarizes some of the ideas we’ve talked about in this chapter.
CHORDS FOR CHAPTER 7

G

D7

G7

C

C#dim7

PHOTO - INSTITUTE OF JAZZ STUDIES

Freddie King

90  Chords for Chapter 7
The eight-bar blues is the second most common blues form. This form will usually have a different chord sequence than the twelve-bar form. The I chord moving to the V chord right away, in the second measure, is a characteristic of the eight-bar blues.

As you will see in the first example, the eight-bar blues is the main format for gospel blues tunes, usually played in a 12/8 time signature. Many R&B and slow blues tunes are also counted in 12/8 time.

Based on the gospel blues tune, "Bring It On Home," this eight-bar blues pattern is used frequently. The diminished chord in measure four adds tension to the IV chord before returning to the tonic G chord in measure five.

This next example is in the “Key to the Highway” format, an eight-bar blues standard from Big Bill Broonzy. Use the movable double-stop blues-rock rhythm pattern we talked about earlier for this tune.
Another way to devise an eight-bar blues is to eliminate the first four measures of a twelve-bar blues. By doing this, you are starting your progression on the IV chord. Listen to the solo sections of Bonnie Raitt's "Love Me Like a Man" and Buddy Guy's "Mary Had a Little Lamb" as examples of this format.

**Eight Bar Blues in E.** Notice that it starts on the IV chord, A7.

![Chord diagram for Eight Bar Blues in E.]

---

**THE DIMINISHED 7TH CHORD**

The diminished chord (or demented chord as many blues cats call it!) is used quite a bit as a transitional chord, particularly in gospel and jazz blues progressions. A diminished chord one half step above the root of the previous dominant seventh chord is its most common usage in blues. For example, in the key of G, the IV chord, C7, is followed by a C\textsuperscript{dim}7 chord to create more color and a good movement to the V chord.

\[
\begin{align*}
C7 &= \text{C E G B}\text{\textsuperscript{b}} \\
R_3 & \quad 5 \quad \text{b}_7 \\
C\text{\textsuperscript{dim}7} &= \text{C\textsuperscript{b} E G B}\text{\textsuperscript{b}} \\
R_{\text{b}3} & \quad \text{b}_5 \quad \text{b}_7
\end{align*}
\]

By raising the root of the C7 chord a half step to C\textsuperscript{b}, we arrive at the root name of the diminished chord, C\textsuperscript{dim}7. All the notes are the same except for the C\textsuperscript{b}. Since C\textsuperscript{b} is enharmonic to D\textsuperscript{b}, this chord can also be called C7\textsuperscript{9}, because D\textsuperscript{b} is a minor 9th interval above C.

![Fretboard diagrams for C7 and C\textsuperscript{dim}7 or C7\textsuperscript{9}]

---

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A diminished 7th chord is built in consecutive minor 3rd intervals:

\[ C^\flat \text{dim7} = C^\flat \text{ E G B}^b \]
\[ \quad \min3 \min3 \min3 \]

Therefore, any diminished chord can move every three frets with the same shape intact. Learn these three diminished chord shapes and practice moving them every three frets. Any of the notes in the chord can be called the root.

All three of the following diminished 7th chords can be called either C\(^\flat\)dim7, Edim7, Gdim7 or B\(^b\)dim7.

---

**THE DIMINISHED 7TH ARPEGGIO**

The diminished 7th arpeggio is commonly used in blues to improvise over the dim7 chord. For instance, you can use the C\(^\flat\) diminished 7th arpeggio over a C\(^\flat\)dim7 chord. Remember, the following arpeggio positions can be respelled as E, G and B\(^b\) diminished 7th arpeggios as well.

**C\(^\flat\) Diminished 7th Arpeggio**

\[ C^\flat \text{ E G B}^b \]
\[ \text{R } \text{3 } \text{5 } \text{7} \]

---

Chapter 7—The Eight-Bar Blues
Here are two examples of the diminished 7th arpeggio moving over the IV chord and resolving to the I chord.

The third measure shows an F\textsuperscript{7} diminished arpeggio over the IV chord, F7, in the key of C.

This example is played over measures five, six and seven of a twelve-bar blues in C. Notice the F\textsuperscript{dim7} arpeggio in the second measure (measure six).
EIGHT-BAR BLUES SOLOS

Playing over the eight-bar blues format gives you the opportunity to use the composite blues scales and arpeggios to accurately play over the quicker chord changes.

G Major Pentatonic  D Major Pentatonic  E Blues  G7 arpeggio

C7  C♯dim7  G Major Pentatonic

C7 arpeggio  C♯dim arpeggio  G Major Pentatonic

D7  G  C  G  D7

G Blues  targeting chord tones

Chapter 7—The Eight-Bar Blues 95
Chapter 7—The Eight-Bar Blues
CHORDS FOR CHAPTER 8

C9

F9

G9

G9

G19

GMaj7

Amin7

Bmin7

B17

A17
### Slow Blues

**Basic Slow Blues**

Slow blues progressions feature the dominant 9th chords and other extensions above the 7th chord. As we leave the dominant 7th chord structure, the blues segue from delta based blues styles to uptown, or Chicago based blues. Most slow blues tunes use the 12/8 feel.

In a slow blues, just strumming the 9th chord, without anything else happening, can make the twelve-bar form seem like an eternity. The next two examples show ways to create chord motion.

Keep the ninth chord ringing as you stretch your pinky out to start the descending melody. Play through a twelve-bar blues in C using this pattern for the I, IV, and V chords. You can transpose this to any key in a closed position.
Classic blues rhythm pattern in the key of E. Sliding into the ninth chord from a half step below and a whole step above fills each measure with chord motion. Play through a twelve-bar blues using this pattern over the I, IV and V chords.

STORMY MONDAY BLUES

The Stormy Monday Blues form has become a standard slow blues chord progression. It is a unique pattern because of the chord motion in measures seven through ten. In measure seven the GMaj7 sound is introduced. The progression then moves as follows:

GMaj7 (I), Amin7 (ii), Bmin7 (iii), B7 (⁷ substitution for E7, the V chord of Amin7 in measure nine), A7 (⁵ substitution for D7, the V chord of the tonic, G in measure eleven), G7 (I), C9 (IV), G7 (I), D9 (V).
The original version of Stormy Monday, by T-Bone Walker, uses the standard I7-IV7-V7 progression. The Bobby Blue Band and the Allman Brothers versions added the other chords. Since they may be new to you, here is an outline of the best way to play over these changes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Chord</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>G9</td>
<td>G Blues scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>C9</td>
<td>A Blues (Start on any C Major chord tone C, E, or G)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-4</td>
<td>G9</td>
<td>G Blues scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-6</td>
<td>C9</td>
<td>A Blues scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-8</td>
<td>G Maj7, Amin7, Bmin7, B7</td>
<td>E Blues (or G Major Pentatonic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Amin7</td>
<td>Amin7 arpeggio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>A7</td>
<td>A7 arpeggio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-12</td>
<td>G7, C9, D9</td>
<td>G Blues scale</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**THE AUGMENTED CHORD**

The augmented chord is commonly heard as an intro or turnaround chord, particularly in a slow blues. The augmented triad is spelled 1, 3, 5. For example:

**D Augmented**

```
D Augmented
D  F♯  A♯
1  3   5
```

Sometimes the 7th can be added to make a 7♯5 chord.

**D7♯5**

```
D7♯5
D  F♯  A♯  C
1  3   5   7
```

---

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THE AUGMENTED ARPEGGIO

Try using the augmented arpeggio against the V chord in a turnaround or intro, whether or not the V chord is augmented. The 75 provides a strong lead back to the I chord.

**Augmented Arpeggio**

Here are two examples of augmented arpeggio usage.

**Turnaround lick in G.** Note the augmented arpeggio in measure two.

**The G Augmented arpeggio leading into the IV chord.** This works well from measure four connecting into measure five for a twelve-bar blues in G. G7 can be thought of as the V chord of C.

---

Chapter 8—Slow Blues 101
CHORDS FOR CHAPTER 9

Amin7

Dmin7

Emin7

Bdim

Gmin

Amin7\5

B\'Maj7\5

E\2

Cmin7

F\#dim7

D7\9

Gmin7

Emin7\5

F\#min7\5

Gmin6
Minor Blues

The minor blues format is based on three different harmonized scales: natural minor, harmonic minor and melodic minor. Minor blues tunes have varying bar structures, anywhere from eight to sixteen measures. These tunes can have the traditional blues sound, or, depending on the rhythmic feel, many of them have pop, folk, jazz or Latin sounds.

THE NATURAL MINOR BLUES

In a natural minor blues you are still dealing with a I-IV-V chord progression, but the chords are now minor instead of dominant. There are three minor chords in the C Major chord scale.

The twelve bar blues in the next example contains the three minor chords found in the harmonized C Major scale. Here they are with the 7ths added:

C I  Dmin7 ii7  Emin7 iii7  F IV  G V  Amin7 vii  Bdim vii

The key of A Minor is called the relative minor of C Major because it shares the same key signature as C, its relative major. The harmonized A Natural Minor scale contains the same chords as that of C Major, except Amin7 is now the tonic chord (i7).

Amin7 i7  Bdim ii  C III  Dmin7 iv7  Emin7 v7  F VI  G VII
Here are the five scale patterns for the A Natural Minor scale, also known as the A Minor scale, A Relative Minor scale or the A Aeolian mode (the notes of a C Major Scale from A to A). The following scale patterns are, of course, transposable to any key.

**The Five A Natural Minor Scale Patterns**

- **Pattern #1**
- **Pattern #2**
- **Pattern #3**
- **Pattern #4**

**PHOTO** - ROBERT KNIGHT

*Robert Cray*
Practice playing over the twelve-bar minor blues progression in Example 153, this time mixing the A Minor scale with the A Blues scale. The only blues scale that works in a minor tune is one whose root name matches the root name of the key. (e.g., use the A Blues scale over an A Minor blues tune, or the E Blues scale over an E Minor blues tune, etc.)

THE MINOR 7TH ARPEGGIO

The minor 7th arpeggio fits like a glove played over the chords in a minor blues. Since a min7 chord is spelled R, 3, 5, 7, this arpeggio accentuates two of the characteristic blues tones: 3 and 7. Learn the following patterns for an Amin7 arpeggio and then jam over an A Minor blues progression using the A Blues scale, A Minor scale and Amin7 arpeggios. As the tune moves to the iv chord, Dmin7, and the v chord, Emin7, change to their respective arpeggios, mixed in with the A Blues and A Minor scale. Transpose and practice these ideas in another key, such as E Minor.

The Amin7 Arpeggio Patterns

```
   A   C   E   G
   I  3   5   7
      R
      5
      3
      7
      R
      V
      VII

      5
      7
      R
      3
      5
      7
      XII
      XV

      5
      R
      3
      7
      R
      V
      VII
      X
      XII
      XV
```
Here are a few example licks to use over the Amin7 chord. These minor 7th arpeggio licks can be used over an A7 chord, as well, since the 13rd is one of the characteristic tones of the blues scale.
THE MAJOR 7TH ARPEGGIO

Superimposing a major 7th arpeggio over each minor chord in a minor blues progression can add an interesting color to a solo. The trick is to play a major 7th arpeggio whose root is a minor 3rd, or three frets, above the minor chord root. Against an Amin7 chord, for instance, play a CMaj7 arpeggio:

C E G B
R 3 5 7

These notes in relationship to an Amin7 chord are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>Min 7th Arpeggio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>E G B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>3 5 7 9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This creates an Amin9 arpeggio without the root note (A). For a Dmin7 chord you would use an FMaj7 arpeggio, and for Emin7 a GMaj7 arpeggio. Learn the following patterns for the Maj7 arpeggio. As always, you should transpose them to other keys, too.

The CMaj7 Arpeggio Patterns

C E G B
R 3 5 7

Joe Pass

Chapter 9—Minor Blues 107
Here are a few examples using the CMaj7 arpeggio over an Amin7 chord.
Now, let's look at a twelve-bar blues solo in A Minor that illustrates a combination of the improvisational ideas covered so far.
THE HARMONIC MINOR

The harmonic minor scale can be used effectively over a minor blues progression when the V chord is a dominant 7th chord, as opposed to the minor 7th v chord derived from the natural minor scale. The notes of the harmonic minor scale are the same as the natural minor scale, except there is a raised 7th. It is this raised 7th that makes the V chord a dominant 7th as opposed to a minor 7th.

G Natural minor:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>G</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B♭</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E♭</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

G Harmonic minor:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>G</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B♭</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E♭</th>
<th>F♭</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The sound of the harmonic minor scale has been called many things including Spanish, Middle Eastern, Gypsy and Egyptian. The augmented 2nd interval caused by raising the 7th gives it this exotic sound. Harmonizing the harmonic minor scale creates a new chord pattern, commonly seen in many different styles of music, such as jazz.

G Harmonized Harmonic Minor Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gmin</th>
<th>Amin7♭5</th>
<th>B♭Maj7♭5</th>
<th>Cmin7</th>
<th>D7</th>
<th>E♭</th>
<th>F♭dim7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>ii</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>iv</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>VI</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Combined with the blues scale, the harmonic minor scale provides a great sound contrast used frequently in rock, jazz and blues. If you don’t combine the blues scale with the harmonic minor in your minor blues solo, you will sound like the feature artist at a Greek wedding, which may be a good thing, but it’s not a blues thing. Here are the scale positions for the harmonic minor scale.

Bonnie Raitt
The G Harmonic Minor Scale Patterns

Pattern #1

Pattern #2

Pattern #3

Pattern #4

Pattern #5

HARMONIC MINOR CHORD PROGRESSIONS

Note the chord movement from E♭ (VI) to D7 (V) in Example 161. This kind of chord movement can be found in many minor blues tunes, such as B.B. King's "The Thrill Is Gone."

\[
\begin{align*}
G\text{min7} & \quad C\text{min7} & \quad G\text{min7} & \quad E♭ & \quad D7 & \quad G\text{min7} & \quad D7\#9
\end{align*}
\]
This example is based on the famous folk blues tune, "St. James Infirmary."

Let's conclude this section by looking at some lick ideas using the harmonic minor and blues scales together.

```
Gmin D7  Gmin  Gmin E7  D7  Gmin D7  Gmin Cmin  E7  D7  Gmin D7

<p>| | | | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

```
Gmin7

[Music notation]

D7#9

G Blues  G Harmonic Minor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5</th>
<th>6/7</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
<td>S</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

```
Gmin7

[Music notation]

D7#9

G Blues  G Harmonic Minor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>12</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

```
Gmin7

[Music notation]

D7#9

G Harmonic Minor  G Blues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>S</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
```

112  Chapter 9—Minor Blues
THE MELODIC MINOR

The melodic minor scale, like the harmonic minor scale, can be used when the V7 chord appears in a minor blues progression. The melodic minor scale is the same as the natural minor scale, but with raised 6th and 7th degrees.

G Natural minor:  
\[
\begin{array}{cccccc}
\text{G} & \text{A} & \text{B}^\flat & \text{C} & \text{D} & \text{E}^\flat & \text{F}^7 \\
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 & 7 \\
\end{array}
\]

G Melodic minor:  
\[
\begin{array}{cccccc}
\text{G} & \text{A} & \text{B}^\sharp & \text{C} & \text{D} & \text{E} & \text{F}^\natural \\
1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 5 & 6 & 7 \\
\end{array}
\]

The notes of the G Melodic Minor scale are the same as a G Major scale with a lowered 3rd, (B♭ instead of B⁷). The harmonized melodic minor scale is another chord system worth knowing.

G Harmonized Melodic Minor Scale

\[
\begin{array}{cccccccc}
\text{Gmin} & \text{Amin7} & \text{B}^\flat\text{Maj7} & \text{C7} & \text{D7} & \text{Emin7} & \text{F}^\natural\text{min7} \\
i & ii & III & IV & V & vi & vii \\
\end{array}
\]

The G Melodic Minor Scale Patterns

Pattern #1

Pattern #2

Pattern #3

Pattern #4

Pattern #5
Like the harmonic minor, the melodic minor scale is best used in combination with the blues scale over minor blues tunes.

Here are two strictly melodic minor licks.
CHORDS FOR CHAPTER 10

C6

F6

C6

F6

John Lee Hooker
The open position blues tunes, almost always played in the keys of E and A, represent the original blues guitar styles. These delta blues rhythm guitar patterns from the early deep south form the backbone for all blues-based styles that came afterwards. Since most of this music was performed by one person and their guitar, it gave the performer lots of freedom. This freedom led to a style that mixed chordal pattern playing and fill licks. This is similar to the vocal style of call and response that also has its roots in the south.

Both of these are Muddy Waters style. The fills commonly enter on the second part of the third beat, the “and-of-three” in each measure.
Two licks in the style of Robert Johnson. The chord rhythm in measure one is followed by a fill response in measure two.

```
E

0 0 0 0 0 0
A 0 0 0 0 0 0
B 0 0 0 0 0 0
```

Make sure the B note on the first string doesn’t move as you make the quarter step bend from the G note on the second string.

```
E

0 0 0 0 0 0
A 0 0 0 0 0 0
B 0 0 0 0 0 0
```

Muddy Waters

---

Chapter 10—Blues Rhythms With Fills 117
Four licks a la John Lee Hooker. You can’t get too much Hooker!

E

\[\text{Track 63.1}\]

TA
AB

E

\[\text{Track 63.2}\]

TA
AB

E

\[\text{Track 63.3}\]

TA
AB

E7

\[\text{Track 63.4}\]

TA
AB
Here is a typical delta blues pattern through a twelve-bar blues in E. Maintain the E7 chord shape as you play the fills to sustain the sound. The same goes for the A7 and B7 chord licks... let the notes of the chord continue to ring as you play the fill.
Playing a bass riff in the rhythm part is a great way to break the monotony of endless chords, especially when you and the bassist are playing a line together. Sometimes you can play your own riff against the bass player’s riff if it doesn’t clash harmonically. The key is to communicate and work together towards what works best in each groove.

Move this pattern in G through the IV and V chords, too. Chord chokes enhance the rhythm.

In the style of Albert King

Medium tempo funk blues groove. This works well behind a harmonica solo a la Paul Butterfield.
Play this minor blues pattern through a twelve-bar blues in A Minor.

A la Muddy Waters. Start the lick on the “and-of-three.” Combines double-stop licks with a bass riff.

No chord is needed for this one. Sometimes the bass riff alone is a strong alternative. Don’t always feel obligated to play chords.
Twelve-bar blues in E a la Buddy Guy. This should give you some helpful ideas for riffs to use in between chords.

E7

H

E7

A7

H P P

E7

B7

A7

E7

Track 67
The same concept applies here as in the bass riff section. If there's a horn player in your group, play some lines together. If not, you're the horn section.

Third intervals work particularly well. Move this lick up five frets for the IV chord, B♭7, and seven frets for the V chord, C7.

Slow blues groove in E. This pattern can also move up the fingerboard to work for the IV and V chords.

In this example the I chord (B♭7) moves through the IV chord and down to an inversion of the I chord.
The major sixth chord is a common horn section voicing that works well over up-tempo shuffle and swing-blues tunes. Use this pattern over a I7-IV7-V7 blues in the key of C.
CHORDS FOR CHAPTER 11

C7
- II
- IV

F7
- II
- IV

Bmin
- II
- IV

D7dim7
- II

Fmin7
- VI
- VIII

G7
- VI
- VIII

George Benson
CHAPTER 11

Pop Blues

SECONDARY DOMINANTS

Pop blues refers to blues-based tunes that stray from the I7-IV7-V7 pattern, but still have a strong blues rhythm and/or melody. Most of these progressions are moving through cycles of 5ths. In other words, each chord's root is the V of the next chord. When all the chords are dominant, they are called secondary dominants. Defined another way, secondary dominants are chords that act as the V of a chord other than the tonic or root chord.

Here is an example of a cycle of 5ths in C. E7 is the V of A7, which is the V of D7, etc.

E7 to A7 to D7 to G7 to C
\[ \text{V of V of V of V of I} \]

Sometimes a dominant chord will resolve to a minor chord. Remember, the V7 chord resolves to the i minor chord in the harmonized harmonic minor scale. Next are two examples of this type of chord sequence and solos for each one. Strum through the progressions first, then check out the solos.

This is based on the eight-bar blues tune, "Nobody Knows You When You're Down and Out" in the key of A. C7 is the V of F7. F7 is the V of Bmin. F♯7 is also the V of B7. B7 is the V of E7. E7 is V in the key of A.
Solo for Example 191

C E7 A7

T 7 7 7 5 7 8
A B

A7 D7

T 4 5 5 5 8 8
A B

G7 C G7

T 10 12 12 10
A B

Chapter 11—Pop Blues
Solo for Example 192

```
A | Cmaj7 | Fmaj7 | Bmin | Fmaj7
---|---|---|---|---
T 4 4 4 4 4 (4) 2 | H 2 1
A B

Bmin Fmaj7 | Bmin
---|---
D | D7dim7 | A | Fmaj7

S 4 2 3 2 5 5 3 (3) 5 7 5 7 7 7 7 8 5 6 5 6 7 7
A B

B7 | E7
---|---
T 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10 10
A B
```
Many pop tune blues are based on the ii-V progression of a harmonized major scale. Sometimes this progression can be an entire song, or an extended vamp at any point of the tune. "Spooky" by the Classics IV, George Benson's version of "This Masquerade" or Carole King's "I Feel the Earth Move," are good examples of the ii-V progression.

The Dorian mode is found by playing a major scale, but starting on the second degree. If you play a C Major scale, but start and end on a D note, you will get the D Dorian mode. Learn the following positions of the F Dorian mode (the notes of an E Major scale from F to F).

As you start to play pop and jazz blues styles, flat keys begin to appear. When you are the only guitarist thrown in with horn players and other non-string playing folks, your familiarity with every key becomes essential.

The F Dorian Mode Patterns

Pattern #2

Pattern #3

Pattern #4

Pattern #5

Pattern #1
Notice that the bending technique is still present in these licks over the ii-V progression. Any time you are playing over the modes of the major scale, keep the blues feeling alive. Carlos Santana is a perfect example of a player bending notes through a Dorian mode as if it were a blues scale. The F Blues scale combines nicely with the F Dorian scale over the ii-V groove. If you weave in and out with these two scales, you will get a great combination of blues and melodic licks.

![Musical notation]
CHORDS FOR CHAPTER 12

A7\(^9\)

A7\(^9\)

Amin7\(^9\)

B\(^1\)Maj7

B\(^1\)3

Bmin7\(^5\)

Bdim7

CMaj7

C7

C7\(^9\)

C13

Cmin9

D7\(^9\)

D7\(^9\)

Dmin7\(^5\)
In a jazz-blues format we still play a twelve-bar blues with the I-IV7-V7 progression intact. However, connective chords cycling in 5ths are inserted before you arrive at each primary chord (I, IV and V). In this example of a typical "alternate change" jazz blues pattern, the root names are a 5th away from each other as they resolve to the I, IV, and V. In measure four, F is a 5th above B, and B is a 5th above the E chord in measure five. In measure eight, D is a 5th above G, and the G chord is a 5th above the C chord in measure nine. C is a 5th above the F chord in measure ten, and F is a 5th above the B chord in measure eleven. In the turnaround (measures eleven and twelve), G is a 5th above C, and the C chord is a 5th above F. Most of the chords extend to 9ths and 13ths, and to altered chords (chords with lowered and/or raised 5ths and 9ths). Play these examples with a swing rhythm.

Make sure you accent the choked strum on the last beat of the eighth note triplet.
Here is the same alternate change progression transposed to the key of F. Most of the jazz blues literature is written in the keys of B♭ and F, so start woodshedding in those flat keys.

Now let's look at a twelve-bar solo over these changes in key of B♭.
The be-bop jazz-blues tunes from the 1940's also use the cycle of 5ths chord motion extensively. In many of these tunes, the I chord in measure one and the IV chord in measure five are major 7th chords. Get ahold of some recordings by Charlie Parker, the alto saxophonist who best epitomizes this up-tempo style.

Here is the same progression transposed to the key of C.
Here's a twelve-bar blues solo in the key of F exemplifying this style.

F Maj7  Emin7b5  A7b9  Dmin7  G7b9

C min7  F7b9  Bb7  Bdim7

F Maj7  Bb7  Amin7b5  D7b9  Gmin7

C7  F Maj7  D7f9  Gmin7  C7f9
This is a handy technique for those times when there is no bass player around, or when one doesn’t show up for a gig. This style works well in duo situations when accompanying vocalists, horns or backing up a solo by another guitarist or pianist. Try using the pick and fingers technique in which the pick plays the bass line while your fingers pluck the rest of the chord. Also try using your fingers alone, without a pick. Check out Joe Pass or Tuck Andress for an earful of this technique. Here’s a twelve-bar blues in C using alternate chord changes. The basic theory in walking bass lines is to place the bass note one half step above or below the destination chord.

Swing the Eighths

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{C9} & \quad F7 & \quad F\# \text{dim7} & \quad C9 & \quad G\text{min7} & \quad C9 \\
\text{T} & \quad 3 & \quad 3 & \quad 3 & \quad 2 & \quad 2 & \quad 3 & \quad 3 & \quad 3 & \quad 3 \\
\text{A} & \quad 2 & \quad 2 & \quad 1 & \quad 1 & \quad 2 & \quad 3 & \quad 3 & \quad 4 & \quad 3 & \quad 2 & \quad 3 & \quad 2 \\
\text{B} & \quad 3 & \quad 3 & \quad 2 & \quad 1 & \quad 1 & \quad 2 & \quad 3 & \quad 3 & \quad 4 & \quad 3 & \quad 2 & \quad 3 & \quad 2 \\
\end{align*}
\]
EVERY BEAT BLUES

Playing a different chord on every beat probably seems impossible at first, but if you think of each measure as a four chord pattern, it's much easier to learn. This style is often heard in big band blues arrangements. Freddie Green's playing, Count Basie's guitarist, best exemplifies this style. Since the chords are changing quickly, the three- and four-note chord voicings sound the cleanest. In the first six measures of this example in G, the first chord in the measure walks up through connecting chords to a chord inversion of its own name on the last beat of the measure. In the last six measures the chords are approached by another chord a half step above and below, similar to the walking bass.

G7 F/A B♭ dim G/B  C7 Dmin7 E♭ dim C9  G7 F/A B♭ dim G/B  Emin7 E♭7 Dmin7 D♭7

C7 Dmin7 E♭ dim C9  C♯ dim E dim G dim B♭ dim  G7  C♯7  C7 B♭ min7 B min7 B min7♭5  E7♭5 A♭ min7

Amin7  Amin13  Amin7  D7♭9  D7  D7♭9  D13♭9  D7♭9  G7  F7  E7  B♭7  A7  E♭7  D7  A♭7
A jazz waltz, because of its livelier tempo, is played in 6/8 time as opposed to the standard 3/4 waltz time. The rhythmic accents fall on beats one, three, four and six.

Here's a classic twelve-bar jazz waltz blues à la Miles Davis.

G7  Amin7  Bmin7♯5  Amin7

Gmin7  Amin7  Gmin7/B  Amin7/C  Gmin9/D  Amin7/C  Gmin7/B  Amin7  G7  Amin7  Bmin7♯5  Amin7

D7♯9  E7♯9  D7♯9♯5  G7  Amin7  Bmin7♯5  Amin7

140  Chapter 12—Jazz Blues
Finally, here are some improvisational ideas for playing over this progression.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Changes</th>
<th>Scales and Arpeggios</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>G7-Amin7-Bmin7-Amin7</td>
<td>G Blues scale, G Mixolydian, G7 Arpeggio, Bmin75 arpeggio or the F Major arpeggio.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gmin7-Amin7-Gmin7/B'-Amin7/C</td>
<td>G Dorian mode, B'Maj7 arpeggio.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D7(#9)-E7(#9)-D7(#9)</td>
<td>G Melodic Minor (Start on the D note).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Practice Tips**

Make sure your practice time is quality time, which means concentrating on your musical and technical weaknesses. If you can play a B.B. King solo in your sleep, you don’t need to practice it over and over. File it away and move on to the next challenge. Always try to come away from your practice with a new musical idea or an improvement on an existing skill. Here is a checklist to help your practice:

1. Warm up with scales and arpeggios. Use a metronome. Play quarter notes, eighth notes, swing eighths and triplets.
2. Transcribe your licks (write them down). Keep a book of licks and the chords they should be played over.
3. Jam with recordings and play along tapes, such as the *Stand Alone Tapes and CDs* from Alfred and the National Guitar Workshop (see page 143).
4. Practice in all keys. Pick a different key to explore each week.
5. Try playing a twelve-bar blues solo on just two adjacent strings.
6. Transpose and play tunes a perfect fifth above their original keys.
7. Constantly practice bending accuracy and vibrato.
8. Practice reading chord rhythm charts and memorize some new chords every week.
9. Practice with other guitarists, but try to play with as many other instrumentalists as you can.
10. Learn about your idiom. Read books, trade magazines and other sources to learn about the history of the blues. Find out what your heroes did to learn music and the guitar.
DELTA BLUES


URBAN OR CHICAGO BLUES

B.B. King, Muddy Waters, Buddy Guy, Albert King, Magic Sam, Otis Rush, Son Seals, Luther Johnson, Pinetop Perkins and Magic Slim.

TEXAS BLUES


ROCK BLUES

Eric Clapton, Mike Bloomfield, Roy Buchanan, Jimi Hendrix, Robben Ford, Gary Moore, Mick Taylor, Robert Cray, Duane Allman, Peter Green, Carlos Santana, Ron wood and Amos Garrett.

JAZZ BLUES


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Hank Garland, Carl Perkins, Dicky Betts, Jerry Reed, Albert Lee, and James Burton.
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BEGINNING BLUES GUITAR
by David Hamburger

Perfect for beginning blues and rock/blues guitarists. Included are tips in basic blues theory and left-hand techniques. You will also discover the rhythm styles of Texas Swing, slow and minor blues, and styles of blues greats such as Muddy Waters, Buddy Guy and many others. Call-and-response phrasing, intros, turnarounds, endings and improvisation are also covered. This is the best step-by-step blues method for guitar that teaches the substance and style of the blues.

INTERMEDIATE BLUES GUITAR
by Matt Smith

This book is great for the guitarist who knows the basics of blues guitar and is ready to take the next step. Topics include blues techniques and phrasing, R&B- and funk-blues fills, non-scale tones, chord extensions and substitutions, and more. You will start with a quick review of basic materials and finish with "Licks of the Masters."

MASTERING BLUES GUITAR
by Wayne Riker

This advanced method for blues guitarists is also a great method for rock players who want a blues edge. This book includes everything from blues to composite scales, the Mixolydian mode, arpeggio superimpositions, the eight-bar blues, gospel blues, minor blues and more. It also includes techniques and licks of the great players like Muddy Waters, Big Bill Broonzy, Freddie King, B.B. King, John Lee Hooker and many others. This is the most thorough method for electric blues guitar.