



Guitar Soloing Hacks: Outlining the Chord Tones

Do you ever panic or freeze up when it's time to solo? Sometimes the answer to soloing ideas is right there in the notes in each chord. Simple patterns on the given chord tones can lead to great ideas. Here are some of my favorites!

Patterns Around the Chord Tones

Each chord contains specific notes. Soloing ideas can be derived around going to or from the chord tones in a variety of patterns.

APPROACHING FROM HALF-STEP BELOW

For example, the chord tones in a C major triad are C-E-G.

A simple pattern is approaching each chord tone from a half-step below.

C

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
T												
A	0	2	3	2	0	1						
B	3	3	2									

Here is the same example an octave up ascending & descending. Notice how you can outline the chord shape notated above the music.

C 8fr.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
T												
A	9	10	8	9	7	8	7	8				
B												


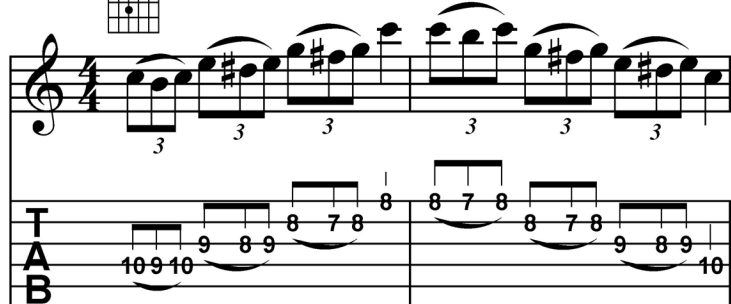
The pattern can be applied to minor chords as well.

Cm 8fr.

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
T												
A	9	10	7	8	7	8	7	8				
B												

Next, try this triplet pattern – sliding back and forth from the chord tone.

C

8fr.


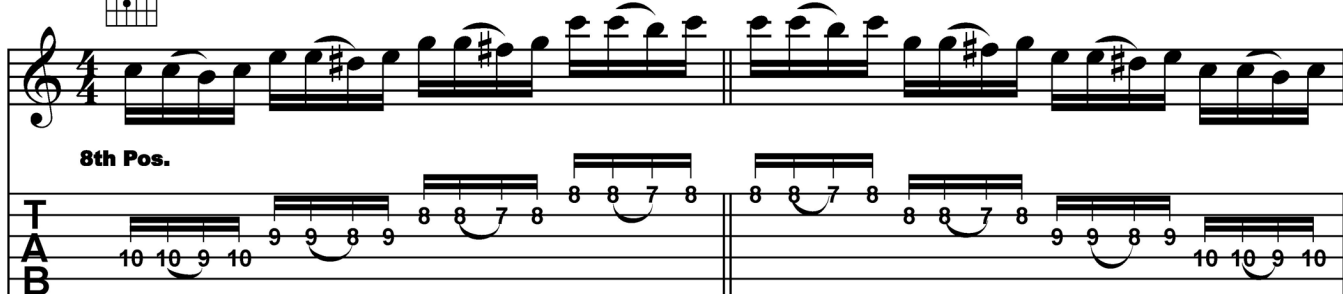
3 3 3 3 3

T
A
B

10 9 10 9 8 9 8 7 8 8 7 8 8 7 8 9 8 9 10

Here is a larger idea – still approaching the chord tone from below from a half-step.

C

8fr.

8th Pos.

T
A
B

10 10 9 10 9 9 8 9 8 8 7 8 8 8 7 8 8 8 7 8 9 9 8 9 10 10 9 10

APPROACHING FROM ABOVE CHORD TONE BY THE NEXT SCALE TONE.


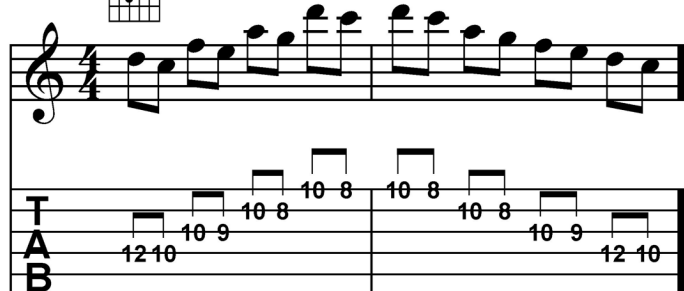
When approaching from below play half-steps below the chord tone.

When approaching from above use the next tone in the scale or key – rather than just a half-step.

Here are two examples of approaching the chord tone from above. The first example is in C major so the scale tones used would be from the C major scale.

The second example is in C minor so the scale tones used would be from the C minor scale – or the key of Eb and the Eb major scale (the relative key of Cm).

C


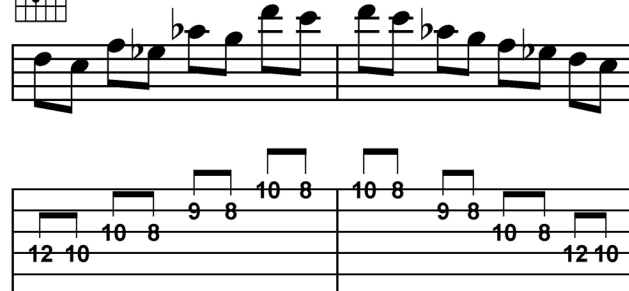



8fr.

T
A
B

12 10 10 9 10 8 10 8 10 8 10 9 12 10

Cm

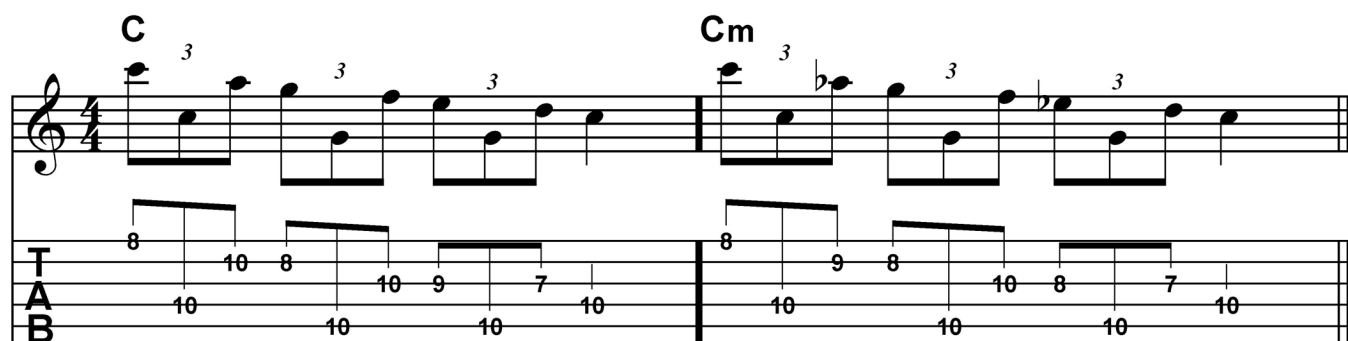



8fr.

T
A
B

12 10 10 8 9 8 10 8 10 8 9 8 10 8 12 10

Here are two versions of the same lick in C major and C minor. Notice the scale tones used for the major are from the C major scale and for C minor the C minor or E \flat major scale is used.

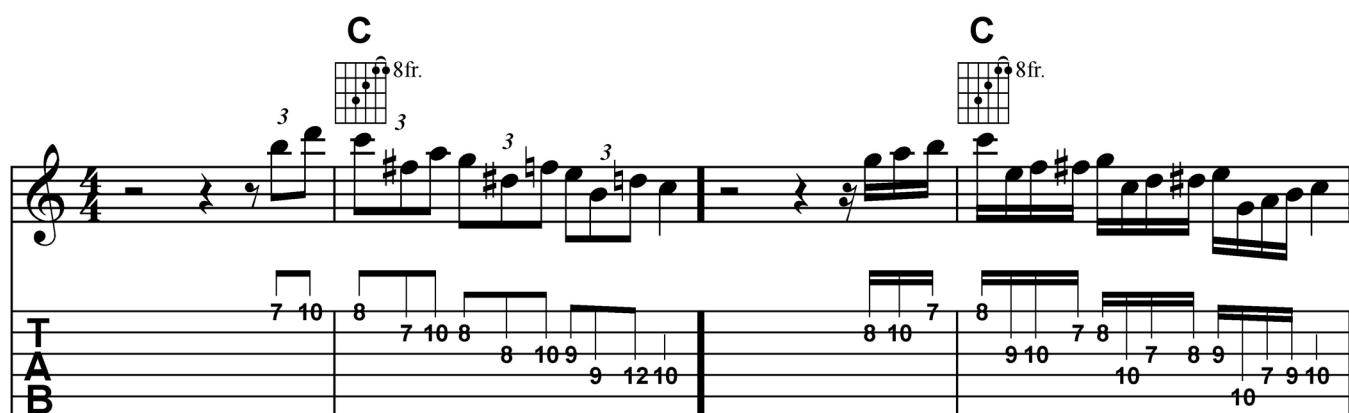


Two musical examples are shown side-by-side. The first is for C major, and the second is for C minor. Each example consists of a treble clef staff in 4/4 time and a guitar tablature staff below it. The C major lick starts on the 8th fret and uses the notes 8, 10, 8, 10, 9, 7, 10. The C minor lick starts on the 8th fret and uses the notes 8, 9, 8, 10, 8, 7, 10. Both licks are marked with a '3' above the first three notes, indicating a triplet.

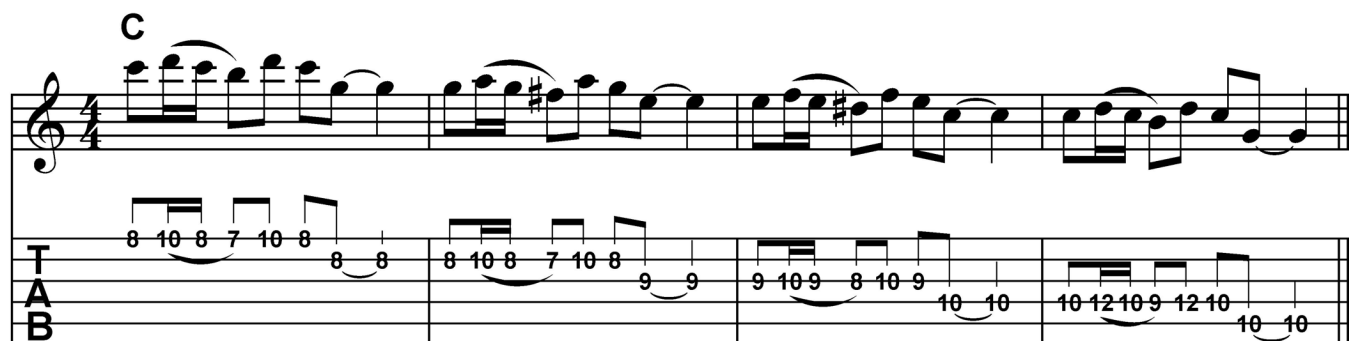
Combining Patterns

Approaching chord tones from above and below can be combined to create larger more musical ideas.

Here are a few great licks using patterns around the chord tones.



Two musical examples are shown side-by-side, both for C major. Each example consists of a treble clef staff in 4/4 time and a guitar tablature staff below it. Above each example is a small diagram of a guitar fretboard showing the C major chord tones (1, 3, 5) at the 8th fret. The first lick starts on the 7th fret and uses the notes 7, 10, 8, 7, 10, 8, 8, 10, 9, 9, 12, 10. The second lick starts on the 8th fret and uses the notes 8, 10, 7, 8, 9, 10, 7, 8, 7, 8, 9, 10, 10. Both licks are marked with a '3' above the first three notes, indicating a triplet.



A single musical example is shown for C major. It consists of a treble clef staff in 4/4 time and a guitar tablature staff below it. Above the example is a small diagram of a guitar fretboard showing the C major chord tones (1, 3, 5) at the 8th fret. The lick starts on the 8th fret and uses the notes 8, 10, 8, 7, 10, 8, 8, 10, 8, 7, 10, 8, 9, 9, 9, 10, 9, 8, 10, 9, 10, 10, 10, 12, 10, 9, 12, 10, 10, 10. The lick is marked with a '3' above the first three notes, indicating a triplet.