



# 5 EASY BLUES RIFFS

## 5 Easy Blues Riffs!

Here are three simple blues riffs and some variations that can be added in a variety of musical settings like Blues, Jazz, or Rock. They are shown in a variety of string combinations and fingerings. Learn the riffs but also figure out how to play them in other parts of the neck and in other keys.

Remember, a riff learned in one key can only be used in one key. But the same riff learned in a couple of different forms - especially a moveable form - can be played in any key.

### Blues Riff 1

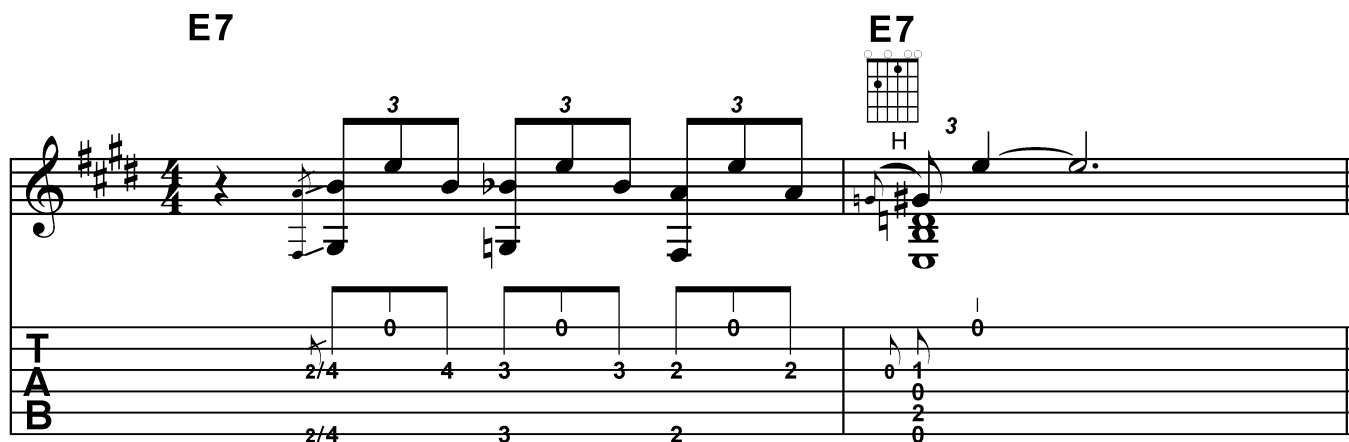
This common riff is based off of the interval of 6ths in the key of E. The highest tones serve as the melody, which starts on the 3rd of the key (G#) and works its way down to the root shown here in open position.

Here is the same riff shown in a moveable form using a different set of strings. Because the alternate fingering used here has no open strings it can be used to play the same riff in any key.

## Blues Riff 2

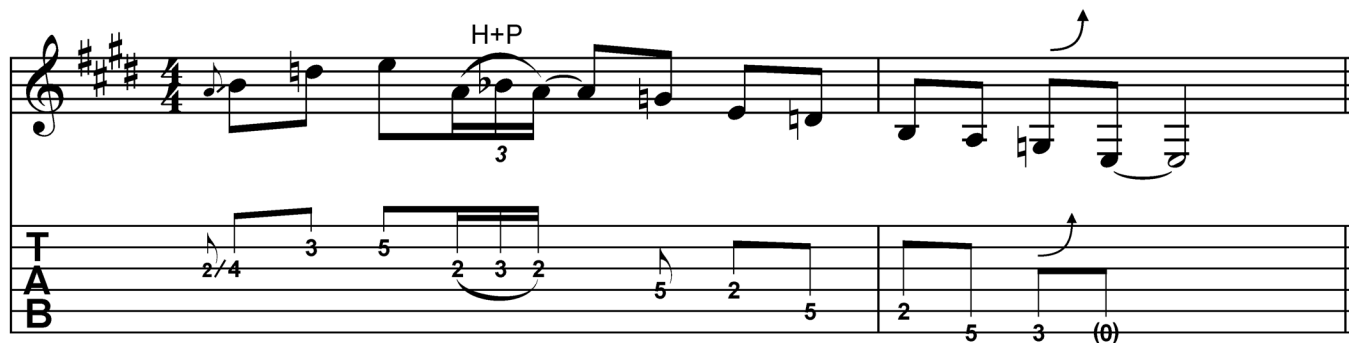
The second riff is similar to the first but inverts the intervals.

**E7**



## Blues Riff 3

The third riff is a descending melodic line based off of an Em pentatonic scale.

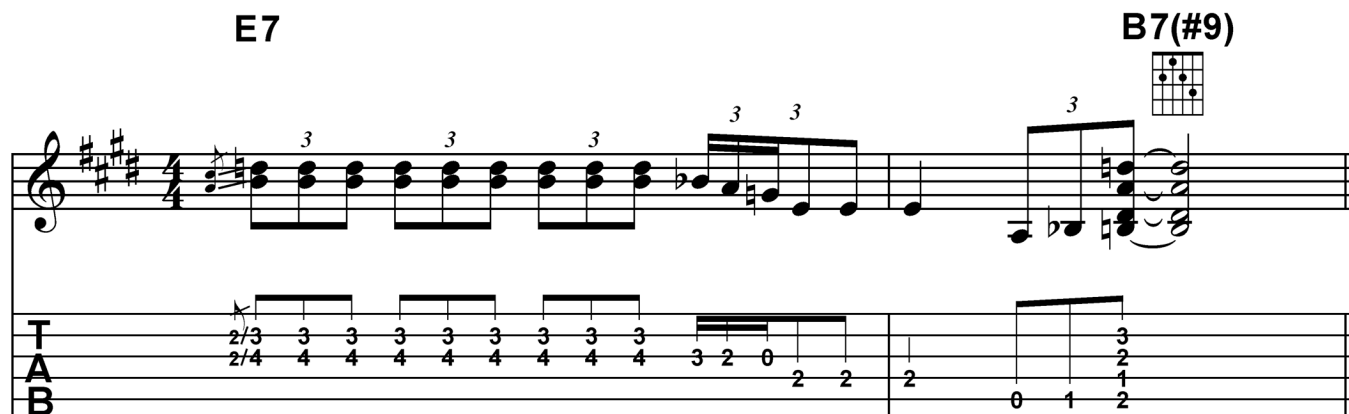


## Blues Riff 4

Here is a Stevie Ray Vaughn inspired lick sliding the 5<sup>th</sup> and b7<sup>th</sup> notes.

**E7**

**B7(#9)**

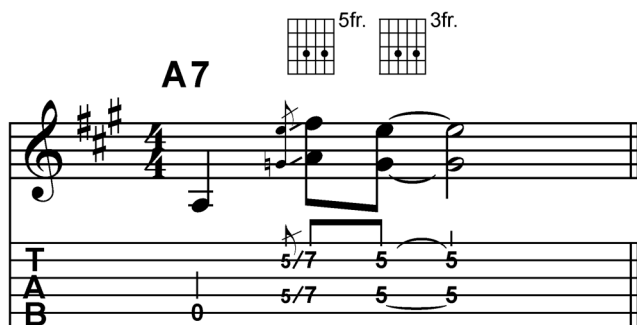


# Blues Riff 5 – Sliding 6ths

It's a common blues finger pattern using 6ths combined with 3rds that are slid from the 5th up to the 6th scale step over any major chord in a blues setting.

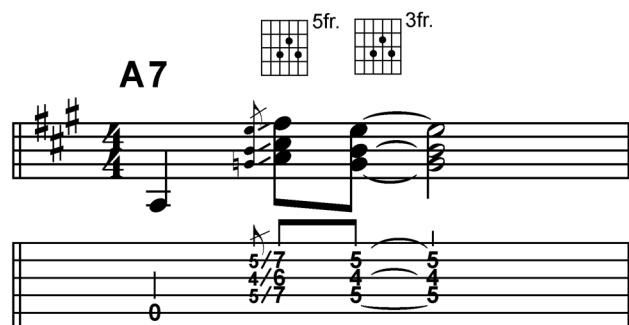
Here are the basic two-note version and the three-note version of the sliding 6ths riff in the key of A. These would work well over an A7 chord in a blues setting.

**A7**



**2 Note  
Version**


**A7**



**3 Note  
Version**

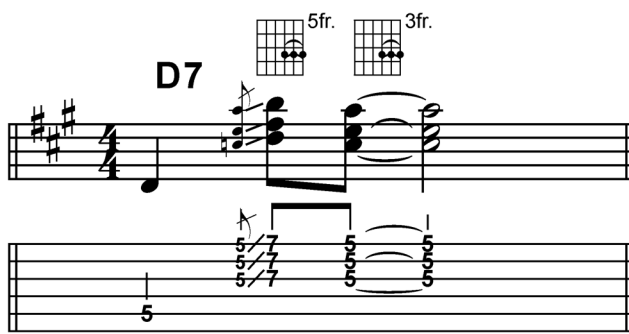
The sliding 6ths riff comes in two common shapes - one using the 2nd-4th strings and another half-barre shape used to create the same combination of notes on the 1st-3rd strings.

**A7**



**2nd-4th  
Strings  
Version**

**D7**



**1st-3rd  
Strings  
Version**

You can put this new blues riff to work in the song on the next page. Experiment using the sliding 6ths riff in different keys and different musical situations. Work out variations that sound great to you and try it out on your next blues gig!

# Blues Riff Song

This is a blues in A, as played in the lesson, using both shapes for the sliding 6ths riff. The riff played over the A chord uses the first shape on the 2nd-4th strings. The riff played over the D7 and E7 chords uses the second shape on the 1st-3rd strings.

♩ = 84

**A7**

**D7**

**A7** **E7**

**D7** **A7**

