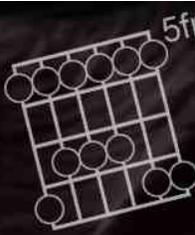




PENTATONIC SCALES

GUITAR TOOLS YOU NEED TO KNOW

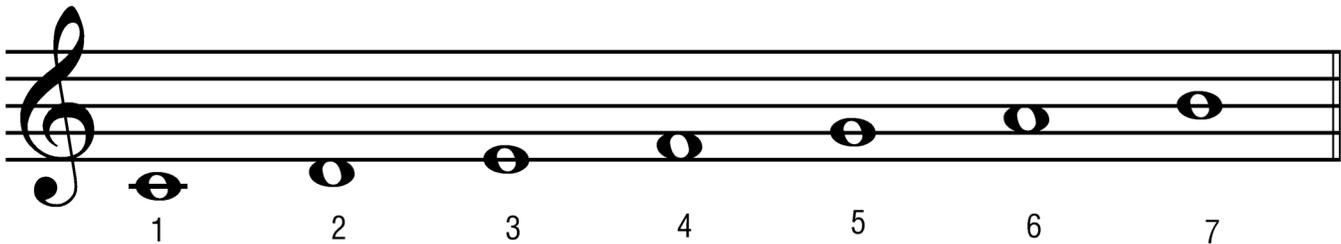


Pentatonic Scales

A pentatonic scale is a 5-note scale derived from the major scale. The five notes of the pentatonic scale create five pentatonic forms that connect together like jigsaw puzzle pieces on the neck of the guitar. Many players know some of the forms but don't understand how they connect together. This lesson shows you how these scales connect together so you can play any pentatonic scale anywhere on the neck.

C Major Scale

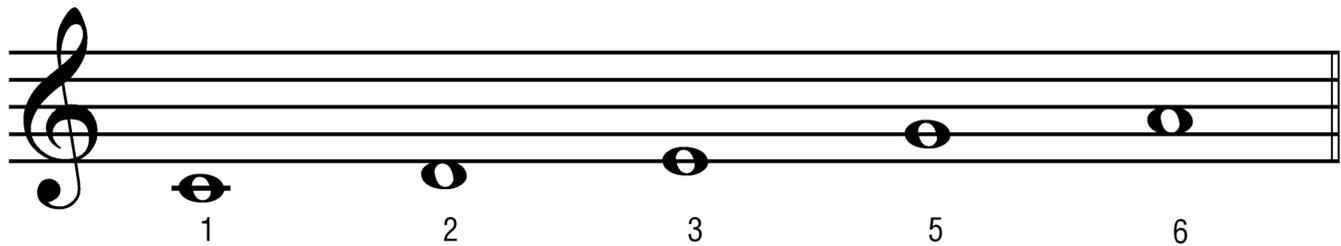
The major scale has 7 notes. Here is the C major scale.



C Pentatonic Scale

The pentatonic scale has 5 notes – hence the name “pentatonic”.

The pentatonic scale is a subset of the major scale and uses the first, second, third, fifth and sixth steps of the major scale. The pentatonic scale omits the 4th and the 7th step of the major scale.



Relative Major and Minor Roots

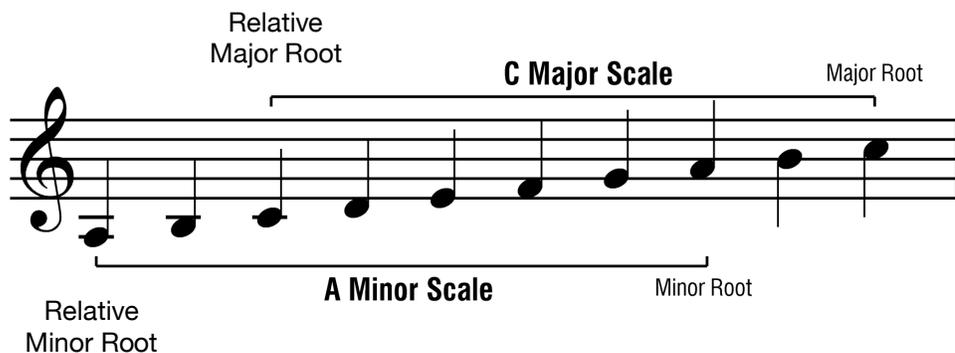
There is a special relationship between the first and sixth steps of the major scale which is called RELATIVE.

The first step of the major scale is called the RELATIVE MAJOR.

The sixth step is called the RELATIVE MINOR.

So, a major scale can be made starting on the 1st step, and a minor scale can be made by using the same set of notes starting on the 6th step.

It's two scales that share the same key signature.

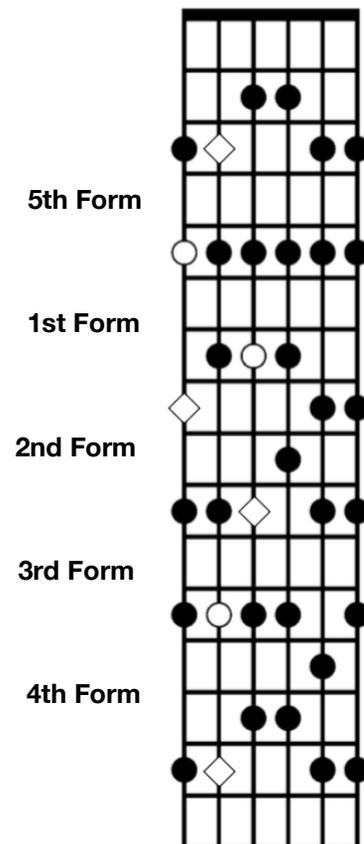
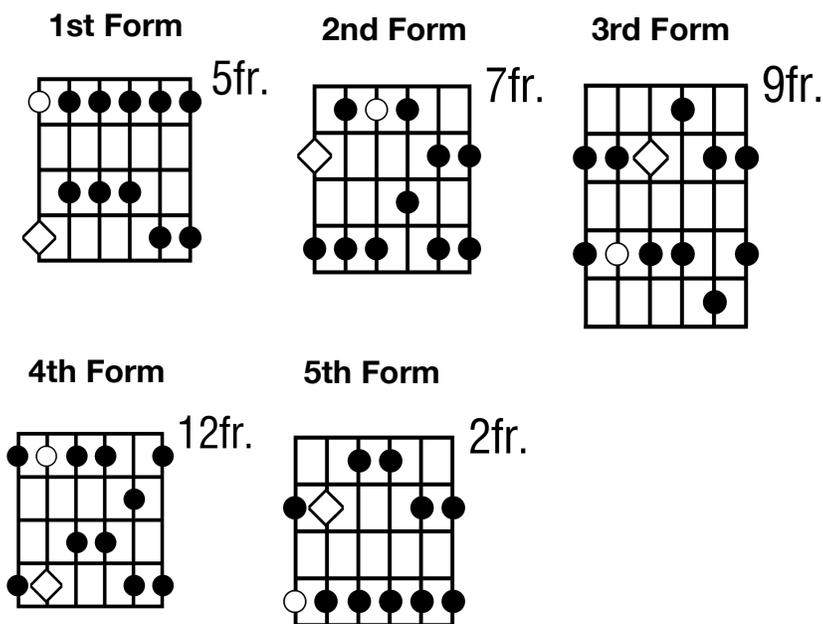


The Five Pentatonic Forms

Since there are five notes in a pentatonic scale, there are five different forms that we can use to play the scale on guitar – each starting on a different note.

Below are the five forms of a C major pentatonic scale which can also be used to form an A minor pentatonic scale. (The diamond indicates the major root and the circle is the minor root.)

◇ = Major Root ○ = Minor Root



Pentatonic Forms Connect Together

The pentatonic forms connect together on the guitar neck like puzzle pieces – with one side of a form sharing the same side as the next one.

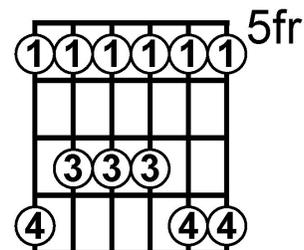
Common Pentatonic Patterns

Here are some common pentatonic patterns played on guitar. These patterns are shown using pentatonic form #1 – but they can be applied to the other forms as well.

Directions: Practice each pattern – slowly at first, then gradually increase your speed. Then, play the patterns in different keys and places on the neck.

Finally, apply them to all of the five pentatonic forms.

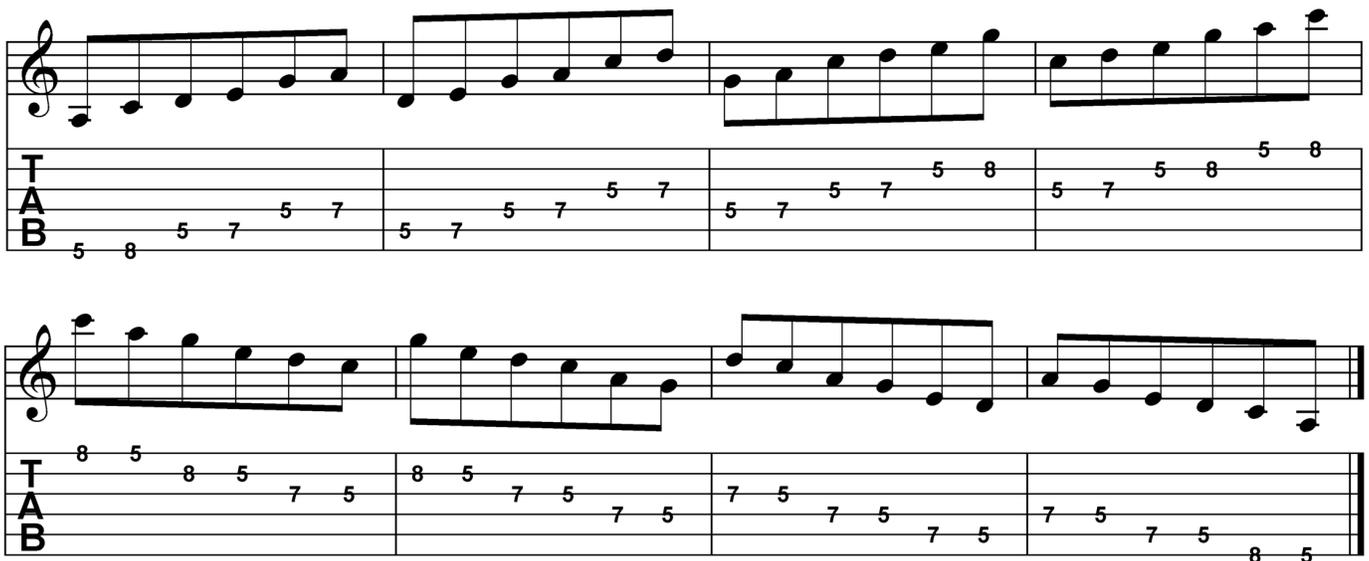
1st Form



Pattern #1 (Sets of 4)

Pattern #2 (Sets of 3)

Pattern #3 (3 Pairs)



The image shows two systems of musical notation for Pattern #3 (3 Pairs). Each system consists of a treble clef staff with a melodic line and a guitar tablature below it. The first system's tablature has three lines labeled T, A, and B. The second system's tablature has three lines labeled T, A, and B in reverse order (B, A, T). The tablature contains fingerings (5, 7, 8) and bar lines indicating the structure of the pattern.

Tips for Successful Learning

Learn the Forms First.

Get the five pentatonic forms underneath your fingers first. Learn the finger patterns. A good way to learn these scales is to take one form and play it ascending and then descending. Then shift up a half step and play it again. Continue working your way up the neck until you run out of neck to play the form, then come back down descending.

Practice that for a few days then take the next pentatonic form and work on it ascending and descending – occasionally working on the first form to keep it in your memory.

Keep doing this until all forms are learned.

Speed Will Only Come After You Know the Forms.

Don't try to play faster until you are confident in playing each form by memory. Speed comes as you develop the muscle memory needed to play the pentatonic patterns confidently.

Solo Using the Notes of the Scale – Not the Scale Itself.

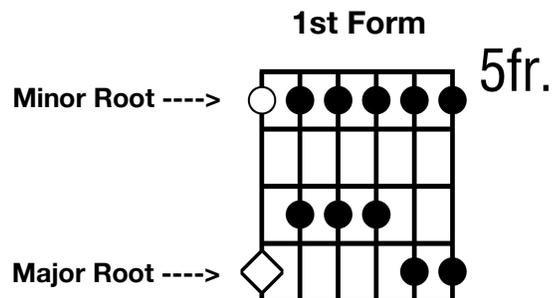
Think of these scales and finger patterns as letters and words that you are going to use to say what you want to say musically. Simply playing through the finger patterns does not make a good solo.

Spend some time being creative with them. Experiment with starting on a note in the middle of the form or try to skip around on the notes. Try to create a melodic idea and develop it. That's what soloing is about.

Pentatonic Scales Workout

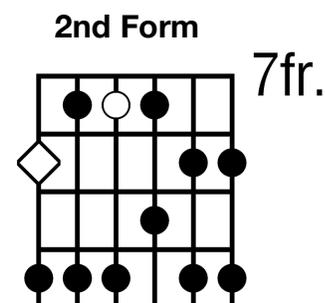
1st Pentatonic Form

- Review Form
- Exercise 1: Play C/Am Ascending & Descending
- Exercise 2: Play Bb Major Ascending & Descending
- Exercise 3: Play Eb Major Ascending & Descending
- Exercise 4: Play in F Minor Ascending & Descending



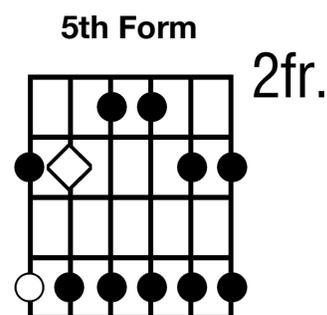
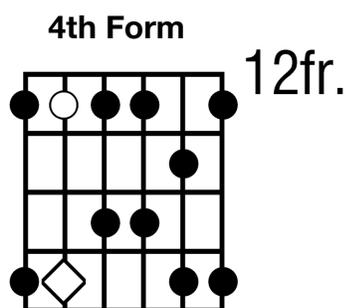
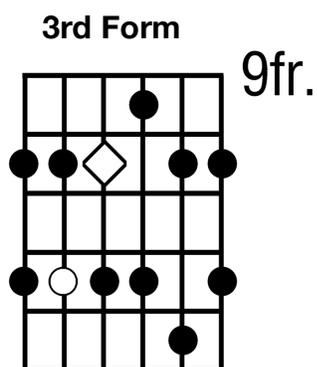
2nd Pentatonic Form

- Review Form
- Exercise 5: Play C/Am Ascending & Descending
- Exercise 6: Move to other keys
- Exercise 7: Play G Major Ascending & Descending



3rd, 4th, & 5th Pentatonic Forms

- Review Forms
- Play Ascending & Descending



Common Pentatonic Patterns (Shown on pages 3-4)

- Exercise 8: Play Pattern 1 (Sets of 4) in C/Am
- Exercise 9: Play Pattern 2 (Sets of 3) in C/Am
- Exercise 10: Play Pattern 3 (3 Pairs) in C/Am

Connecting Pentatonic Patterns in C/Am

1st Pentatonic Form Ascending

Musical notation for the 1st Pentatonic Form Ascending in C/Am. The treble clef staff shows the notes C4, D4, E4, F4, G4. The guitar tablature (TAB) shows the following fret numbers: 5, 8, 5, 7, 5, 7, 5, 8, 5, 8.

2nd Pentatonic Form Descending

Musical notation for the 2nd Pentatonic Form Descending in C/Am. The treble clef staff shows the notes G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The guitar tablature (TAB) shows the following fret numbers: 10, 8, 10, 8, 9, 7, 10, 7, 10, 7, 10, 8.

3rd Pentatonic Form Ascending

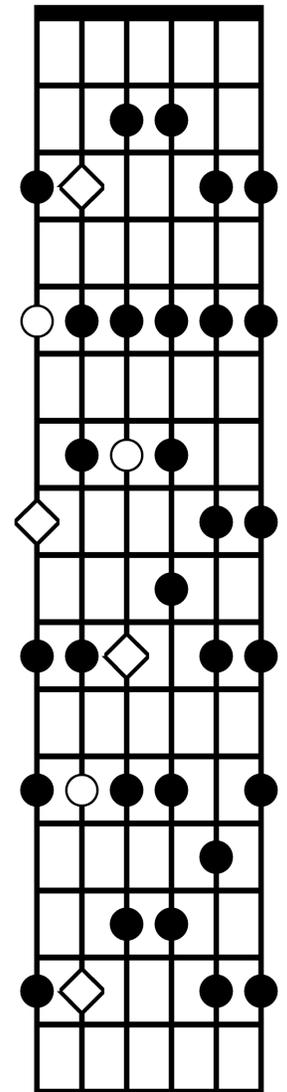
Musical notation for the 3rd Pentatonic Form Ascending in C/Am. The treble clef staff shows the notes C4, D4, E4, F4, G4. The guitar tablature (TAB) shows the following fret numbers: 10, 12, 10, 12, 10, 12, 9, 12, 10, 13, 10, 12.

4th Pentatonic Form Descending

Musical notation for the 4th Pentatonic Form Descending in C/Am. The treble clef staff shows the notes G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The guitar tablature (TAB) shows the following fret numbers: 15, 12, 15, 13, 14, 12, 14, 12, 15, 12, 15, 12.

5th Pentatonic Form Ascending

Musical notation for the 5th Pentatonic Form Ascending in C/Am. The treble clef staff shows the notes C4, D4, E4, F4, G4. The guitar tablature (TAB) shows the following fret numbers: 3, 5, 3, 5, 2, 5, 2, 5, 3, 5, 3, 5.



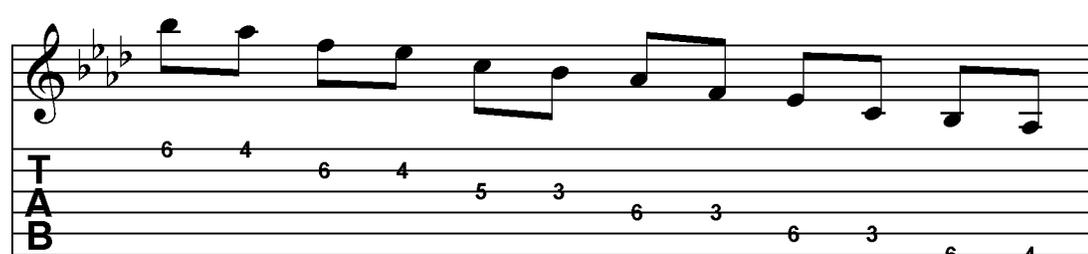
Connecting Pentatonic Patterns in Fm/Ab

1st Pentatonic Form Ascending



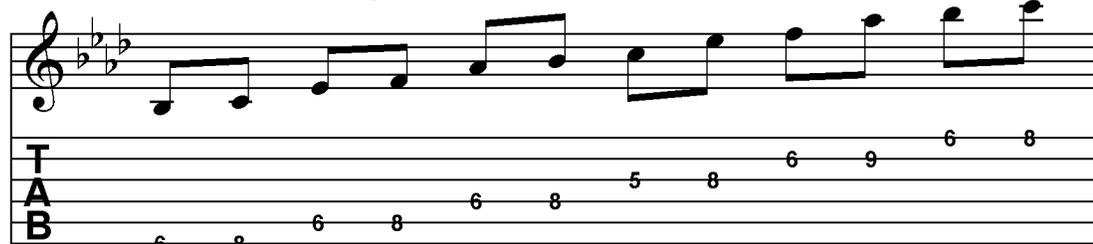
Musical notation for the 1st Pentatonic Form Ascending in Fm/Ab. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of two flats (Fm/Ab), and a series of eighth notes ascending across the staff. Below the staff is a guitar tablature with fingerings: 1 4, 1 3, 1 3, 1 3, 1 4, 1 4.

2nd Pentatonic Form Descending



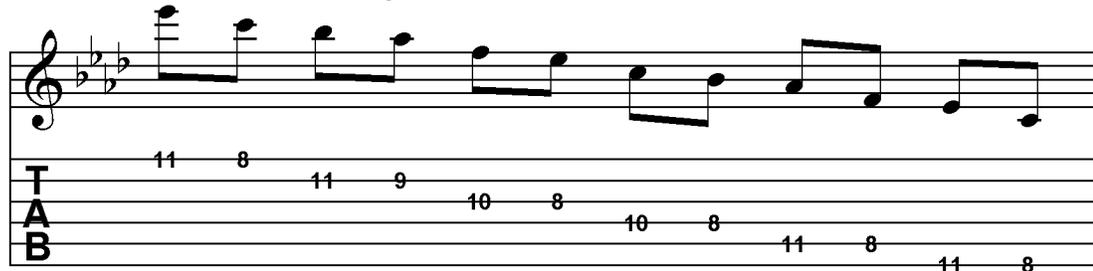
Musical notation for the 2nd Pentatonic Form Descending in Fm/Ab. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of two flats (Fm/Ab), and a series of eighth notes descending across the staff. Below the staff is a guitar tablature with fingerings: 6 4, 6 4, 5 3, 6 3, 6 3, 6 4.

3rd Pentatonic Form Ascending



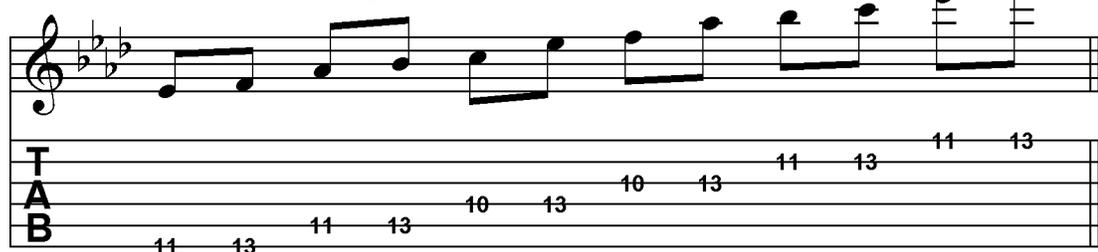
Musical notation for the 3rd Pentatonic Form Ascending in Fm/Ab. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of two flats (Fm/Ab), and a series of eighth notes ascending across the staff. Below the staff is a guitar tablature with fingerings: 6 8, 6 8, 6 8, 5 8, 6 9, 6 8.

4th Pentatonic Form Descending



Musical notation for the 4th Pentatonic Form Descending in Fm/Ab. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of two flats (Fm/Ab), and a series of eighth notes descending across the staff. Below the staff is a guitar tablature with fingerings: 11 8, 11 9, 10 8, 10 8, 11 8, 11 8.

5th Pentatonic Form Ascending



Musical notation for the 5th Pentatonic Form Ascending in Fm/Ab. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of two flats (Fm/Ab), and a series of eighth notes ascending across the staff. Below the staff is a guitar tablature with fingerings: 11 13, 11 13, 10 13, 10 13, 11 13, 11 13.

The Blues Scale

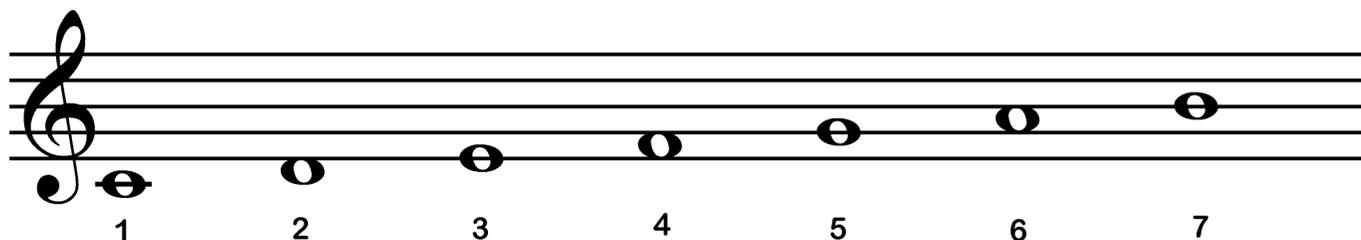
A BLUES SCALE is derived from the major scale. Some notes are added, and some notes are adjusted.

Step 1) To form a blues scale, add the flatted third and the flatted fifth step to the major scale.

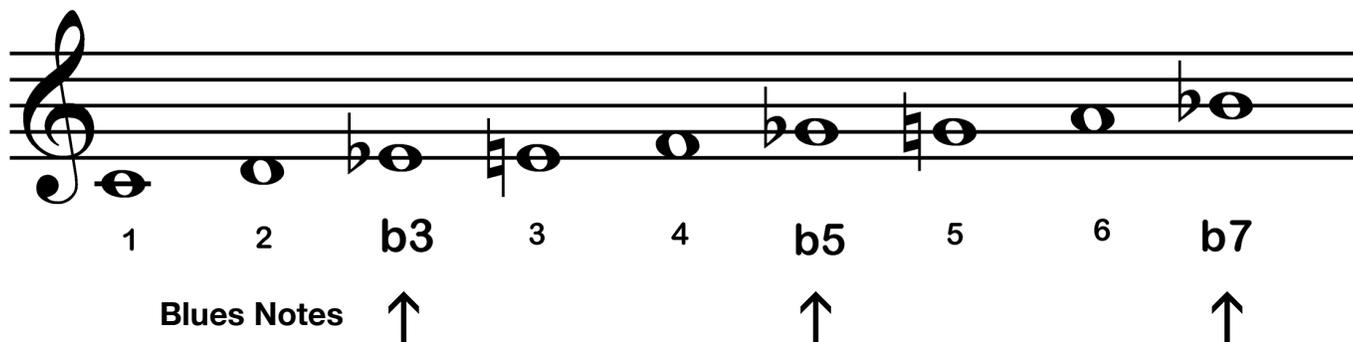
Step 2) Adjust the seventh step of the major scale down a half step to form a flatted seventh.

The flatted third, fifth, and seventh would be called the BLUES NOTES.

C Major Scale



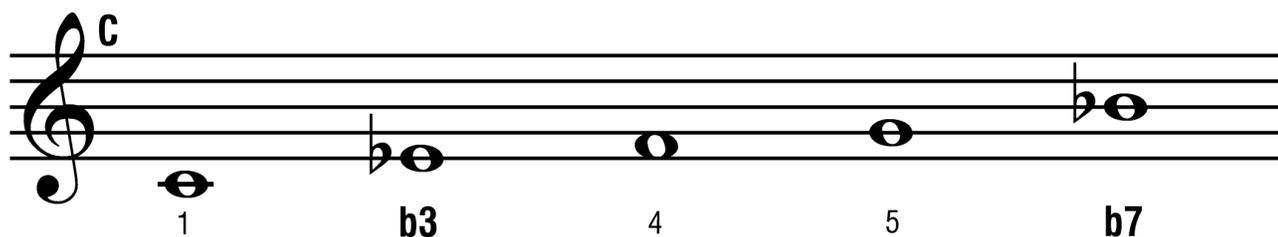
C Blues Scale



The Blues Scale and the Minor Pentatonic Scale

The C MINOR PENTATONIC scale already includes all but one of the blues notes.

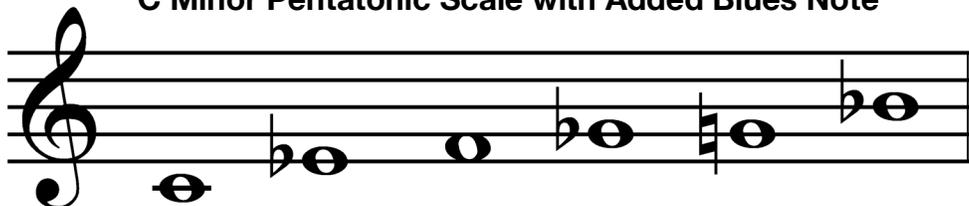
So, an easy way to sound bluesy is to play the minor pentatonic form.



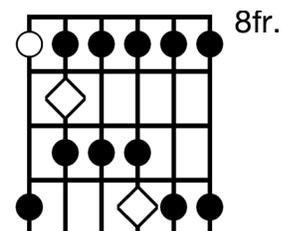
The Minor Pentatonic Scale with Added Flatted 5th

If you want to add the remaining blues note – the flatted fifth- you need to add one extra note to the form.

C Minor Pentatonic Scale with Added Blues Note



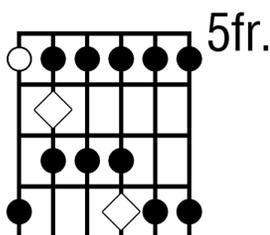
Pentatonic 1st Form with Added Blues Note



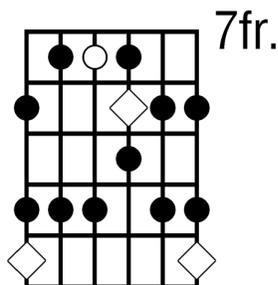
Pentatonic Forms with Blues Notes

Here are the five forms based on an A minor pentatonic (A-C-D-E-G) with the added flatted 5th blues note (Eb) to form a six-note scale (A-C-D-Eb-E-G-A).

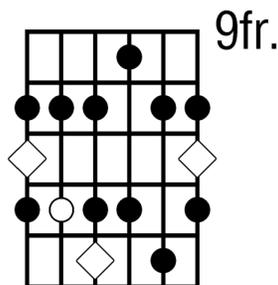
1st Form



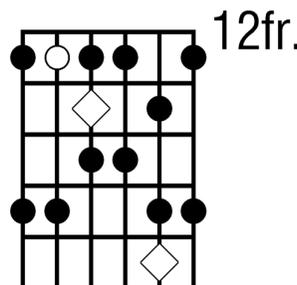
2nd Form



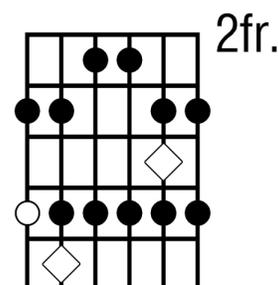
3rd Form



4th Form



5th Form

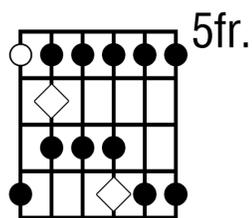


Pentatonic Scales with Blues Notes Workout

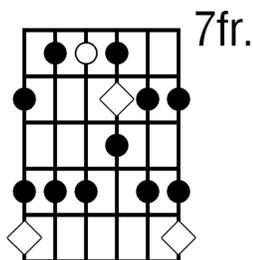
1st Blues Pentatonic Form

- Review 1st Form
- Exercise 1: Play Am/C Blues Pentatonic
- Exercise 2: Play Bbm/Db Blues Pentatonic
- Exercise 3: Play Dm/F Blues Pentatonic
- Exercise 4: Play Fm/Ab Blues Pentatonic

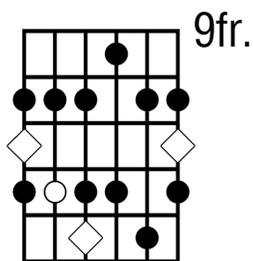
Pentatonic Blues Forms in Am



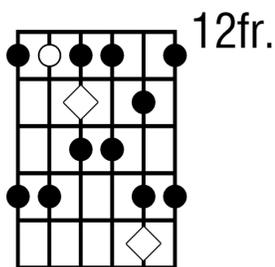
1st Pentatonic Form with Blues Notes



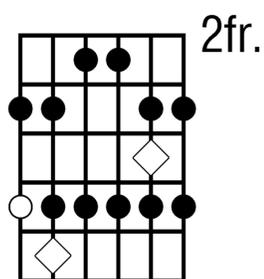
2nd Pentatonic Form with Blues Notes



3rd Pentatonic Form with Blues Notes



4th Pentatonic Form with Blues Notes



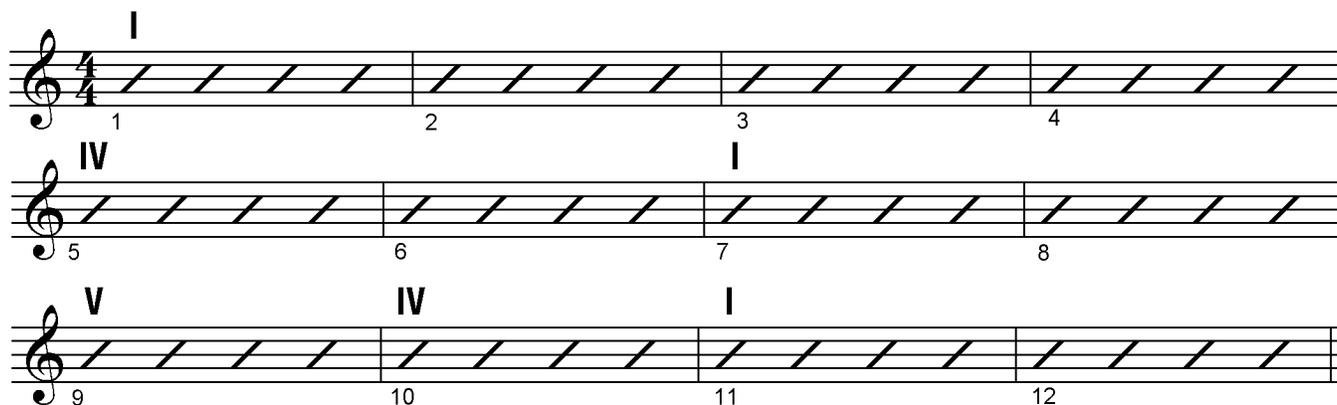
5th Pentatonic Form with Blues Notes

Other Blues Pentatonic Forms

- Review 2nd Form in Am/C
- Review 3rd Form
- Review 4th Form
- Review 5th Form

12 Bar Blues Chord Progression

- Measures 1-4: The I Chord
- Measures 5-6: The IV Chord
- Measures 7-8: The I Chord
- Measure 9: The V Chord
- Measure 10: The IV Chord
- Measure 11: The I Chord
- Measure 12: The V Chord (to turn around the progression again)



Blues Chord Progression

- Say and Play Blues Progression in C
- Blues Progression in A
- Blues Progression in E