



BLUES LICKS: EASY TO PRO

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Blues is all about the “feel” – what you can “do” with the simple musical licks. Here are a variety of licks common in blues guitar playing. Learn the licks but also figure out how to play them in other parts of the neck and in other keys.

Blues Lick 1 – Seventh Chord Hammer-On

Skill Level: Intermediate

This is a common rhythm pattern using a hammer-on to a 7th chord that can be used on all three blues chords (the I, IV, & V). Shown here in the key of G, this pattern works great as an accompaniment figure or a basis for solo ideas.

Use the 1st finger to barre the 4 upper strings – then hammer on the 2nd finger note on the 3rd string.

G7

C7

D7

Try playing the lick through all of the chords of the blues in G.


Blues Lick 2 – Seventh Chord Back & Forth

Skill Level: Intermediate/Pro


The second riff is similar to the first but adds a quick barre chord played with the 3rd finger creating a great back and forth blues pattern. The lick is shown here on all three chords of the blues in G.

Practice over the blues progression in G.


G7




C




C7




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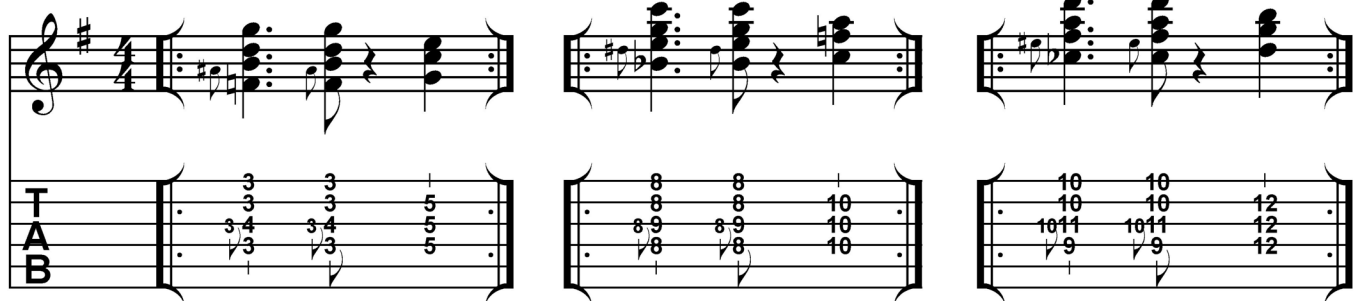


D7



G





Next, practice variations of this lick. Try switching the order of the chords – putting the 3rd finger barre chord first before the hammer-on chord. Improve your own rhythms.

Blues Lick 3 – Slide Up to the Root – 3rds

Skill Level: Easy

The lick is a simple whole step slide up to the root with the interval of a 3rd. This works on the root of each of the blues chords. Or, you can even just use the lick going to the root of the key no matter what chord is being played.

The lick is shown here in two different string combinations. Note how the fingerings change slightly depending whether the root note is on the 2nd or 1st string.

G7

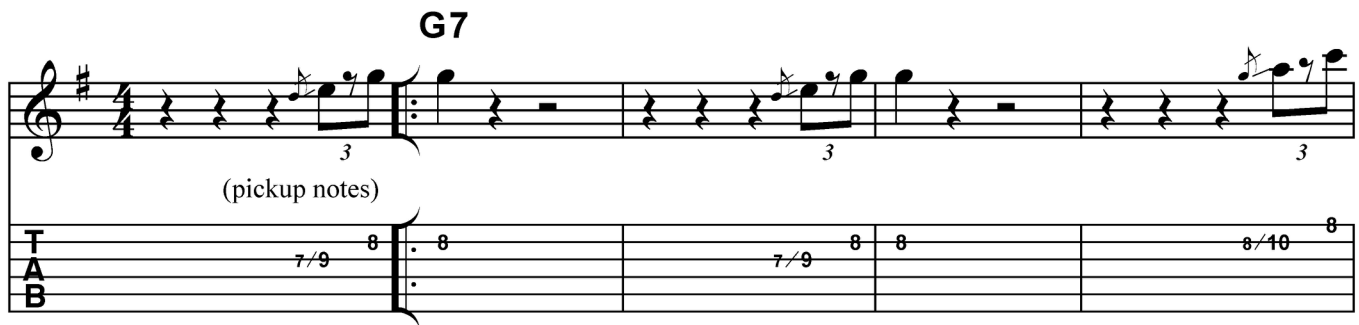


Diagram 1: G7 lick. The musical notation shows a 4/4 measure with a pickup note (quarter note) and a triplet of eighth notes. The fretboard diagram shows the 7th, 9th, and 8th frets on the 2nd string, with a slide up to the 8th fret (root) and a triplet of eighth notes (8, 10, 8).

C7 G7

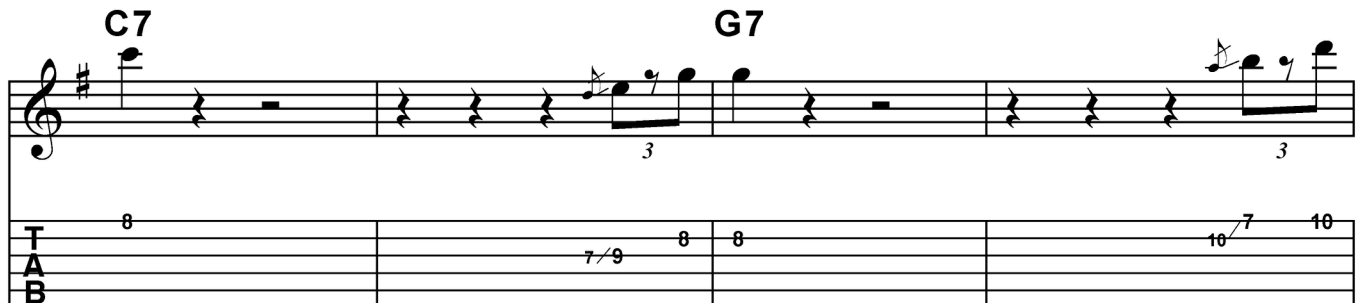


Diagram 2: C7 and G7 licks. The musical notation shows two measures. The first measure is for C7 (pickup note, triplet of eighth notes) and the second measure is for G7 (triplet of eighth notes). The fretboard diagram shows the 8th fret on the 1st string for C7, and the 7th, 9th, and 8th frets on the 2nd string for G7, with a slide up to the 8th fret (root) and a triplet of eighth notes (10, 7, 10).

D7 C7 G7

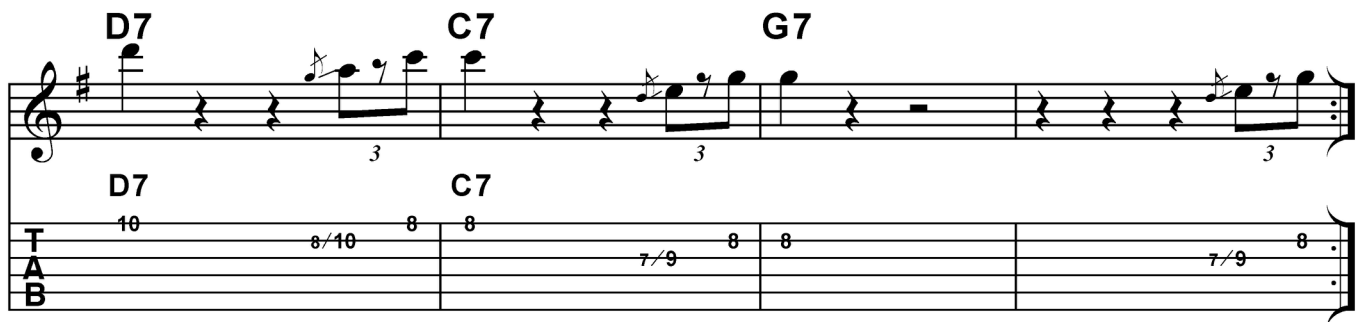


Diagram 3: D7, C7, and G7 licks. The musical notation shows three measures. The first measure is for D7 (pickup note, triplet of eighth notes), the second measure is for C7 (triplet of eighth notes), and the third measure is for G7 (triplet of eighth notes). The fretboard diagram shows the 10th, 8/10th, and 8th frets on the 1st string for D7, the 8th fret on the 2nd string for C7, and the 7th, 9th, and 8th frets on the 2nd string for G7, with a slide up to the 8th fret (root) and a triplet of eighth notes (7/9, 8).

Blues Lick 4 – Slide Up to the Root – 6ths

Skill Level: Easy

The lick is a variation of the previous one but instead of sliding the interval of a 3rd, you slide a 6th. The fingerings are the same – but there is a string in between the notes.

G7



(pickup notes)

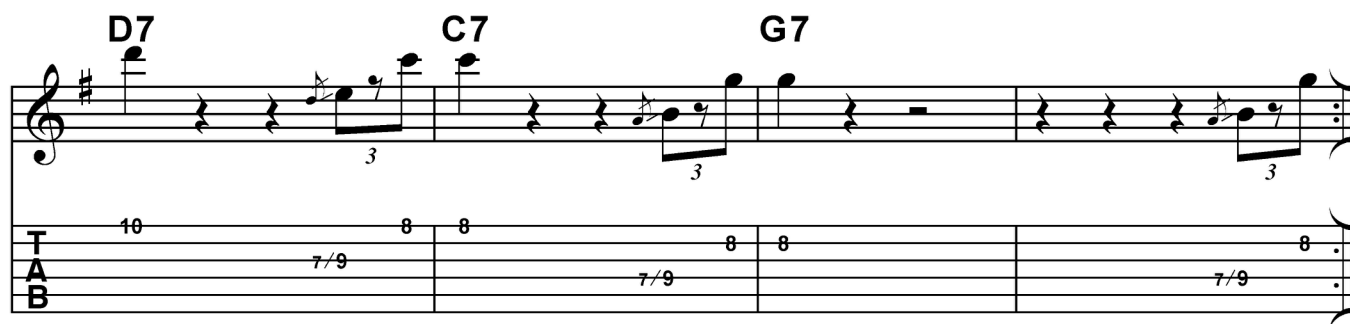
7/9

C7 **G7**



7/9

D7 **C7** **G7**



7/9

Blues Lick 5 – Flat 5 Bend to Root

Skill Level: Intermediate

The lick is based off of the minor pentatonic shape – with an added flatted fifth tone.

This lick is formed in the KEY of the song – not on each individual chord.

Notice how the lick is the same for the I (G7) and IV (C7) chords. Then it only changes the last note for the V (D7) chord.

Blues Lick 6 – Sliding 6ths Licks

Skill Level: Intermediate/Advanced

Here is a combination of licks using the interval of a 6th as a foundation – shown here in the key of A.

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.

**2 Note
Version**

**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.

**2nd-4th
Strings
Version**

**1st-3rd
Strings
Version**

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



The musical score is written for guitar in A major, 4/4 time, with a tempo of 84 beats per minute. It consists of four systems, each featuring a guitar staff and a corresponding tablature staff. The tablature staff is labeled with 'T' for the treble strings and 'B' for the bass strings. The score includes various musical notations such as triplets, slides, and specific fret numbers (0, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9) to guide the player. The first system is for the A7 chord, the second for D7, the third for A7 and E7, and the fourth for D7 and A7. The score is designed to be played over a backing track or as a solo piece.