



How to Solo With The Minor Pentatonic Scale

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The two pentatonic scales we use in guitar solos are the major pentatonic and the minor pentatonic scale. The major pentatonic scale has five notes - the root note, the second note, the third, fifth and sixth. The minor pentatonic scale contains the root, flattened third, fourth, fifth and flattened seventh. In the key of C the major pentatonic scale is C D E G A and the minor pentatonic scale is C Eb F G Bb

The minor pentatonic scale is commonly used to solo over guitar chords. Mastering the knack of soloing with this commonly used scale will add unimagined excitement to your hitherto dreary guitar solos. So how do we best exploit this handy guitar player's tool? We are going to learn to how to play solos over major, minor and dominant chords.

Let's take a common chord progression using the root, fourth and fifth notes of the scale. If we are playing a song in the key of C major, the I, IV and V chords are C, F and G major.

For every major chord there is a relative minor chord. You can best find the relative minor of a major chord on your guitar by finding the note that is three frets below the major chord's root note.

Let's say we have a C major chord, the root note will be C. If you take the C note on the fifth string of the guitar which is at the third fret, three notes below that gives us the open fifth string which is the note A. So if you ask what the relative minor of C major is, the answer is A minor. So if you want to play a solo over a C major chord, you would use the A minor pentatonic scale. To play a guitar solo

over an F chord, you would use the D minor pentatonic, and over the G major chord, the scale to use would be the E minor pentatonic.

It is a little simpler to explain how to solo over minor chords. You just play the E minor pentatonic over an E minor chord, a D minor pentatonic scale over a D minor chord, and so on.

For playing over dominant seventh chords you would play the relative minor pentatonic scale or you could use the minor pentatonic one tone below the root of the dominant seventh chord.

To simplify things you could just use the A minor pentatonic for all the chords in the key of C. As with all musical theory, converting these ideas into practice is easier than explaining them.

Discussion on guitar solos is not really complete without talking about the "blues scale". There is a six note blues scale that is made up of the minor pentatonic but it has a flattened fifth. There is another blues scale that has seven notes. This is basically a major scale with flattened third, fifth and seventh notes. You can also play your guitar solos using the major scale of whatever key you are in and leave out or put in the flattened notes according to how you feel.

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