

Why Pentatonics

Why Pentatonic Scales? Because they are simple. The Pentatonic Scale is a five note scale (hence the name Pentatonic). It is created by removing the 4th and 7th degree of the Major Scale or the 2nd and 6th degree of the Minor Scale.

There are four common patterns (two Major and two Minor) and they almost assure no bad notes.

G Major Pentatonic

E Minor Pentatonic

The diagram shows the G Major Pentatonic scale (G, A, B, D, E) and the E Minor Pentatonic scale (E, G, A, B, D) on a guitar fretboard. The G Major scale is played on strings 1-4, and the E Minor scale is played on strings 2-5. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5.

C Major Pentatonic

A Minor Pentatonic

The diagram shows the C Major Pentatonic scale (C, D, E, G, A) and the A Minor Pentatonic scale (A, C, D, E, G) on a guitar fretboard. The C Major scale is played on strings 1-4, and the A Minor scale is played on strings 2-5. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5.

In any standard I-IV-V progression you have two primary options; the Major Pentatonic (based on the I Chord) and the Minor Pentatonic (based off the Relative Minor) i.e. in G Major you can play the G Major Pentatonic or the E Minor Pentatonic.

Another Pentatonic often used is the Blues Scale. Essentially it is a Minor Pentatonic w/a flatted 5th and is used in much the same way as the Minor Pentatonic.

A Blues Scale

E Blues Scale

The diagram shows the A Blues Scale (A, B, C, D, E, F) and the E Blues Scale (E, G, A, B, C, D) on a guitar fretboard. The A Blues scale is played on strings 1-4, and the E Blues scale is played on strings 2-5. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5.