

User's guide and tutorial:

Improvisation is a spontaneous expression and an essential aspect of playing lead, especially when it comes to free jazz, rock and blues... Listening and actively participating are the best ways to learn. When possible jam with fellow musicians or with your favorite recordings...

The basic function of your slide chart

is to display fingering patterns of blues and minor mode pentatonic scales for 6-string guitar. These traditional rock and blues-guitar patterns chart a tonal vocabulary perfect for crafting original lead licks, riffs, runs and solos. A split-colored dot indicates a single tone interval used in two separate, adjacent patterns. Each pattern has an assigned color. Color is merely added for contrast so you can differentiate the pattern positions. Each pattern as it transverse the fretboard begins with the lowest and ends with the highest note within a given range –

the patterns do not progress from keynote to keynote. The square dots indicate the keynote. The oval dots indicate the relative tones. Move the slide to display the scale patterns in all 12 keys.

Tutorial: It is recommended that you start here if you have limited experience playing scales. Also, this section will help to familiarize you with the use of your slide chart.

Fingering a box pattern in the key of "G":**Ascending (stepping up in pitch)**

Refer to side 1 of your slide chart: Align the square dots directly under the "G" tone-letters. This position will align automatically when the slide and the case are fully engaged. To play the pattern that you'll learn in this tutorial, place your fingering hand at an optimal position on the neck of your guitar for voicing each note highlighted in orange. Knuckles should be bent and fingers placed such that each digit operates with minimal travel above and at a right angle to the frets of your guitar. When playing the box patterns, the

idea is to assign one finger per fret. Some box patterns may require minor hand repositioning adjustments, but never more than one fret above or below the basic position.

Begin with your *index* finger in the keynote position over fret 3 of string 6 of your guitar (*string 6 is the thickest, lowest pitch string on your guitar*). Your finger should now correspond to a green/orange square dot. For this exercise, each scale step to follow is highlighted in *orange*. Synchronize your left and right-hand motions to finger (*hold down*) and pick each corresponding interval, one at a time. There are six steps in all before returning to the keynote, which is then an octave higher in pitch. Play through the pattern in the following sequential manner:

G, Bb, C, C#, D, F, G

G, 1st step, (*index*) fret 3, string 6
Bb, 2nd step, (*pinky*) fret 6, string 6
C, 3rd step, (*index*) fret 3, string 5
C#, 4th step, (*middle*) fret 4, string 5

D, 5th step, (*ring*) fret 5, string 5
F, 6th step, (*index*) fret 3, string 4
G, 1st step, (*ring*) fret 5, string 4

Descending (stepping down in pitch) Reverse the tone sequence in the previous example. Play this sequence:

G, F, D, C#, C, Bb, G

Continue to practice playing the pattern, both ascending and descending in pitch, until your fingering becomes fluent.

Fingering a lick pattern in the key of "G": (*Classic lick patterns feature a customary hand repositioning technique to simplify fingering. Generally only two fingers are used – usually the index and ring finger.*)

Refer to side 2 of your slide chart: Begin with your *ring* finger in the keynote position over fret 3 of string 6 of your guitar. Your finger should now correspond to a yellow/red square dot. For this exercise, each scale step to follow is highlighted in *red*.

Play through the pattern, both ascending and descending in pitch, in the following sequential manner:

G, Bb, C, D, F, G

G, 1st step, (ring) fret 3, string 6
Bb, 2nd step, (index) fret 1, string 5
C, 3rd step, (index) fret 3, string 5
D, 4th step, (ring) fret 5, string 5
F, 5th step, (index) fret 3, string 4
G, 1st step, (ring) fret 5, string 4

Notice that hand repositioning occurs on the index finger, which means the index finger fingers a second note where hand repositioning becomes necessary. Yet, in practice repositioning can occur on either the index or ring finger, as no rules govern fingering of a lick pattern. As a general rule hand repositioning occurs on the index finger.

Once fingering of a box or a lick pattern becomes fluent and its keynote position is memorized in a given key, it becomes easy to play the same pattern in any key. Learn the patterns in all 12 keys

using this technique...memorize the patterns until their positions, their shapes, the keynote locations and fingering become second nature to you.

General Observations:

☞ Notice that all of the patterns are in the same corresponding key for each keynote selected. While working in a given key, this allows you to connect patterns or pattern fragments, and play over the length of the fretboard.

☞ Intervals highlighted by a gray dot in the lick patterns can be added to convert this parent minor pentatonic scale into the blues scale. Conversely, leaving out the same interval when playing the box patterns converts the blues scale back to its natural, minor pentatonic form.

☞ Because each string of your guitar actually contains every possible note, the scales can be played entirely on a single string by following the dots while ignoring any color variances.

Improvisation:

Everyone has the ability to improvise. It's not difficult but you must stay confident and keep a positive attitude. Start out playing short phrases over a few bars. Try bending, rearranging, adding, removing and accentuating certain notes. Alter the cadence of your playing. Use emphasis with subtlety to make the patterns fit the mood and the score. Use your imagination, and very soon you'll be playing your own lead runs and improvised solos.

When playing tonal music, it's important that your instrument is accurately tuned – an electronic guitar tuner is recommended. And, it's important that you know the key of the music you're playing with...

If you don't know the key of particular piece of prerecorded music, you can find it by listening to the piece while playing individual notes on your guitar; listen closely to discover one or

more that sound very strong over the harmony. The strongest of these is the keynote. The other comparatively strong notes are relative tones.

Box or lick patterns in the same key as the music can be used throughout the piece without readjusting the key.

Keep in mind that bends play an important role in getting the familiar blues/rock sound as we know it, that phrasing is often based on triplets, and that the 2nd step (the scale-tone just above the keynote in pitch) is a strong interval to resolve to, almost as strong as the 1st (the keynote.)

Watch videos online to learn more about bends and triplets, as well as hammer-on and pull-off techniques. Remember that no single learning system can teach you everything you need to know, so you should take your inspiration from many sources.