60 Essential Guitar Scale Patterns

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Scale patterns are an essential guitar technique that builds chops, expands fretboard knowledge, and gives you inspiration in your guitar solos.

Though they benefit every guitarist, you might not know how to get the most out of this guitar technique in your practicing.

This article shows you how to play over 60 different scale patterns, essential rhythms and accents, and how to use these patterns in your guitar solos.

As well, you cover pentatonic scales, modes, and jazz guitar patterns in this lesson.

This creates a well balanced approach to working scale patterns into your technical and soloing practice.

To begin, check out the “how to use this guide” section.

Then, grab your guitar and get ready to build monster chops with these essential guitar scale patterns.

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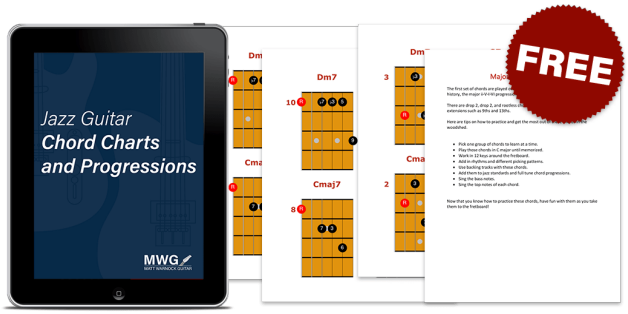

Scale Patterns Contents (Click to Jump to a Section)

- How to Use This Guitar Techniques Guide
- How to Practice Guitar Scale Patterns
- Essential Guitar Rhythms
- Picking Techniques – Accents
- Pentatonic Scale Patterns
- Major Scale Patterns
- Jazz Guitar Scale Patterns
- Octave Displacement Scale Patterns
- Giant Steps Patterns

How to Use this Guitar Technique Guide

As you can see from a look at the title, there are many different guitar techniques in this article.

There are over 60 different patterns applied to pentatonic, modes, jazz scales, and a famous jazz tune to explore in your studies.

Now, don't freak out.

You don't have to learn every pattern to benefit in your practice routine.

If you're new to scale patterns, start at the beginning and learn a few pentatonic patterns to begin.

From there, keep going in order, or jump around and try out patterns that sound interesting to you.

For more advanced players, skim through, find a pattern you like, and work from that point forward.

As well, any of these scales are beneficial to players of all genres of music.

Even the jazz scale patterns. For jazzers, pentatonic scale and major scale patterns are found in the solos of Wes Montgomery, John Coltrane, Pat Metheny, and others.

Just as rock and blues players benefit from the jazz patterns, jazz guitarists benefit from studying pentatonic and major scale patterns.

Have fun with these patterns and bookmark this page for future study.

You won't be able to work on every pattern all at once, nor would you want to.

Pick a pattern you like, work it for a while and take it to your guitar solos.

Then, when ready, return to this lesson and move on to the next pattern.

With that approach, learning guitar technique is less daunting, and this lesson provides a lifetime of study to enjoy.

How to Practice Patterns on Guitar

As you begin to work these scale patterns, you realize that having an organized practice routine helps immensely.

This is where working scale patterns in groups is helpful.

When learning many, not all, of these patterns, you learn four variations that you can apply to patterns in the practice room.

These scale pattern variations are:

- Ascending
- Descending
- One Up and One Down
- One Down and One Up

You can use these patterns to build your chops and understanding of scales, but also to organize your practice routine.

Once you pick a pattern, work it through the four variations, if applicable.

This gives you an understanding of that pattern, and provides you with variations to use in your guitar solos.

Speaking of solos, make sure to work each pattern with a metronome to build guitar technique, as well as apply that pattern to your solos to build improvisational skills.

To increase your vocabulary further, refer to the essential guitar rhythms and accents below and add any or all of these variations to your practicing.

These rhythms and accents challenge your technique, as well as provide rhythmic variety when using these patterns in your guitar solos.

Lastly, as you work any pattern, alter your picking hand to provide variety to your technical and soloing studies.

These picking-hand variations are:

- Every Note Picked
- Hammer-Ons
- Pull-Offs
- Slides

You won’t be able to apply all of these picking-hand techniques to every scale pattern.

But.

With experimentation, you can find two or three that fit over any pattern.

This gives your picking-hand a workout, and again, makes the patterns more engaging when applied to your solos.

As you can see, there are many variations when studying these patterns.

Whether it’s different rhythms, soloing, running with a metronome, or changing your picking, variations help you dig deep into any pattern and provide organization to your practicing.

Essential Guitar Rhythms

One of the most important aspects of guitar technique to possess is a strong sense of rhythm, especially with single notes.

Often, beginner and even intermediate guitarists just play fast and slow.

There's no definition to their rhythms, or understanding of the exact rhythms they're playing.

The best way to improve rhythmic control is by applying rhythms to your scale and scale patterns practice routine.

In this section, you apply essential guitar rhythms to any scale and scale pattern that you're working on.

As you work the patterns in this lesson, use as many of these rhythms as you can with each pattern.

This way, you increase your guitar technique, and build your rhythmic foundation at the same time.

A practice room win-win.

Quarter Notes

The first rhythm is the quarter note. Think of this rhythm as being one note per beat.

So, if you set a metronome, when working quarter notes, you play one note per click.

Here's a demo of quarter notes through a C major scale.

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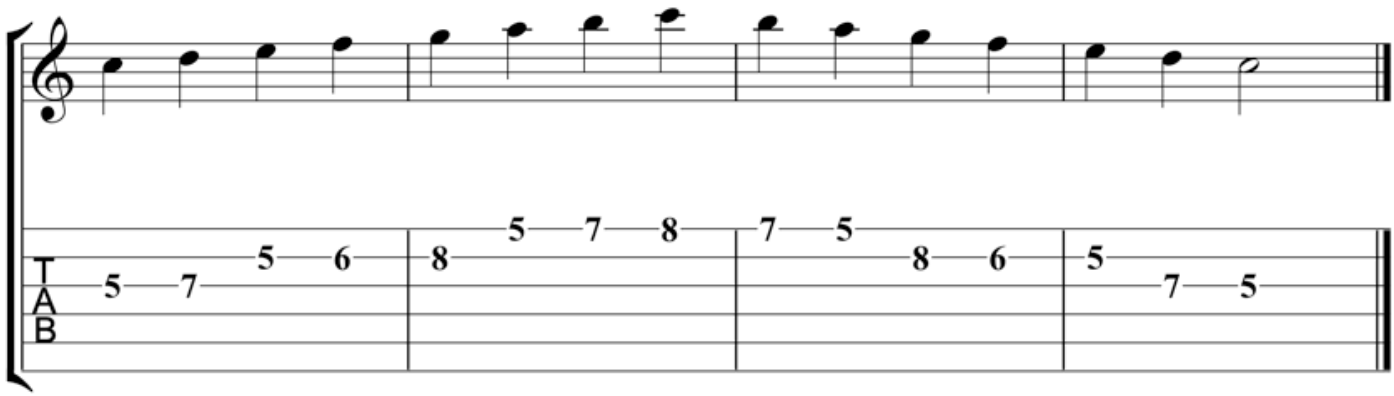

Quarter Note Triplets

Quarter-note triplets are built by playing three quarter notes in the space of two.

This means that for a bar of 4/4 time, you play two quarter note triplets.

One falls on beats 1 and 2, and the second falls on beats 3 and 4.

If you’re new to practicing rhythms, skip ahead and come back to quarter-note triplets when you’re more confident with rhythmic patterns.

Longer triplets like this can be hard to count and feel at first.

But.

With time, they become easy to navigate, and add a new dimension to your guitar technique and scale practice routine.

Here are quarter-note triplets applied to a C major scale.

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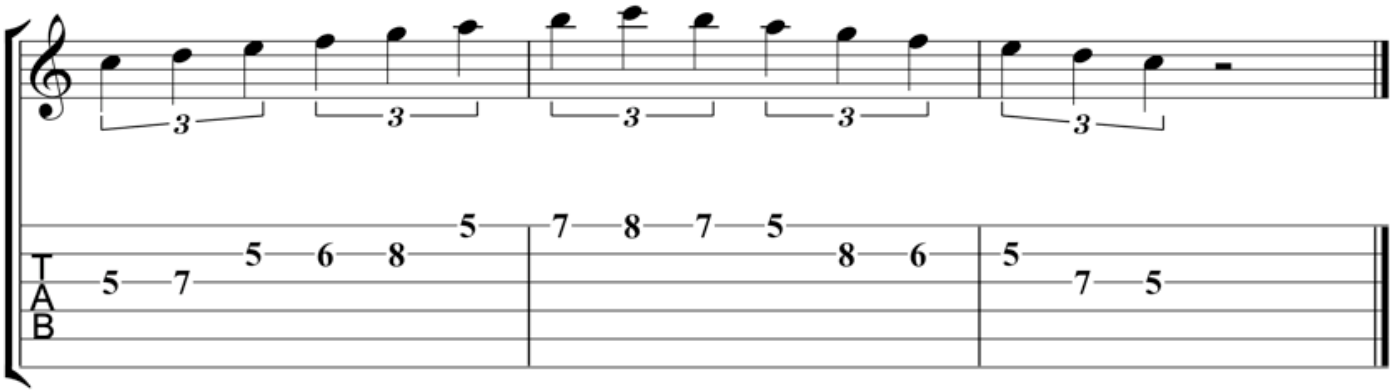

8th Notes

You now play two notes per beat as you learn 8th-notes through scales and scale patterns.

When you play in a bar of 4/4, there are 8, 8th-notes in a bar.

Hence the name.

If you work with a metronome, you play two notes per click.

As well, a lot of modern metronomes have a function to set the click to 8th notes.

This is helpful when learning 8th notes, with the goal to move away from that practice aid as you progress.

Here are 8th notes applied to a C major scale.

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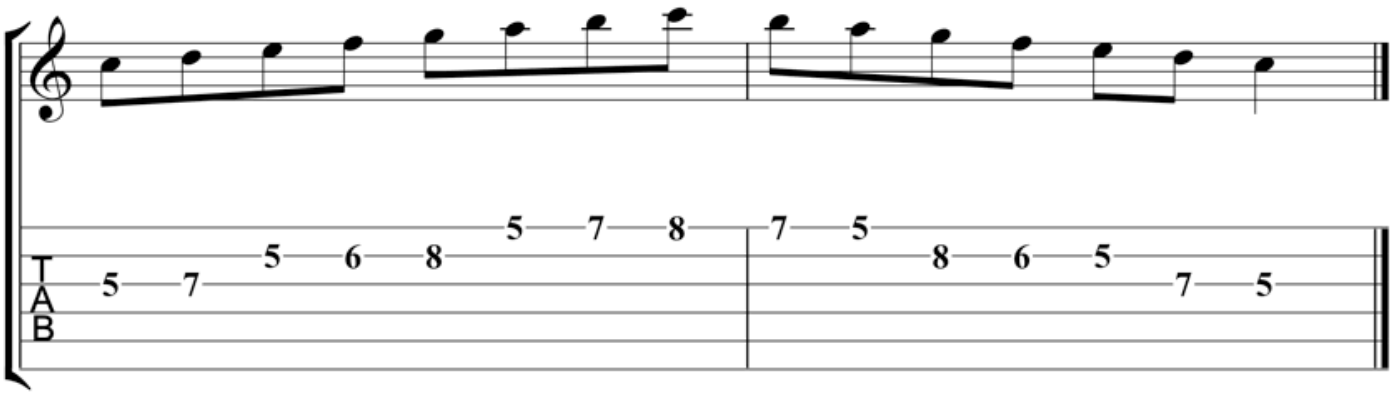

8th-Note Triplets

As was the case with quarter notes, you can build triplets out of 8th notes.

In this case, you play three notes in the space of one quarter note.

This tends to be easier compared to quarter-note triplets.

Mostly because each 8th-note triplet lines up with the beat of your metronome.

Here are 8th-note triplets applied to a C major scale.

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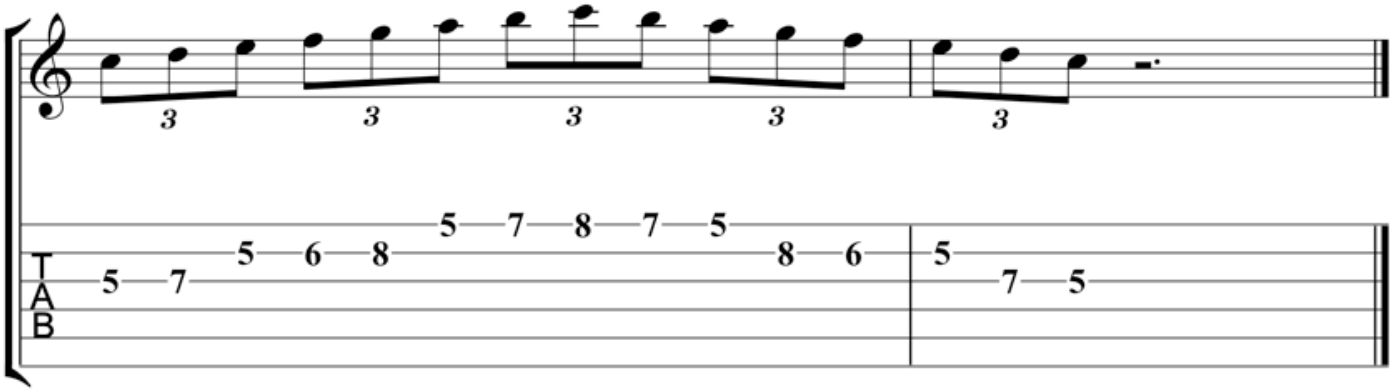

16th Notes

Moving into the faster realm of rhythms, you're ready to explore 16th notes.

Here, you play four notes for every beat.

This means you play 16 notes in a bar, hence their name.

Here are 16th notes applied to a two-octave C major scale.

It's easier to run faster rhythms, such as 16th notes, through longer scales.

Because the scale is longer, it gives you more time to get into a flow with these faster rhythms.

Give 16th notes a try as they challenge your guitar technique and increase your rhythmic knowledge at the same time.

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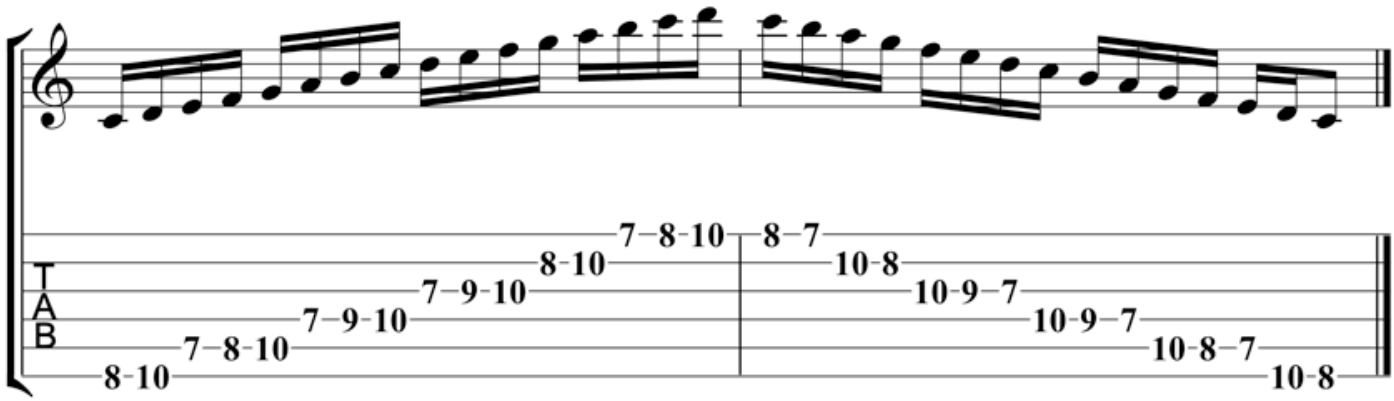

Combo Rhythms

As well as practicing singe rhythms, you can mix and match two or more rhythms in your studies.

Here are a few examples of where to begin when working on combo rhythms over scale patterns.

The first example mixes quarter notes and 8th notes over a C major scale.

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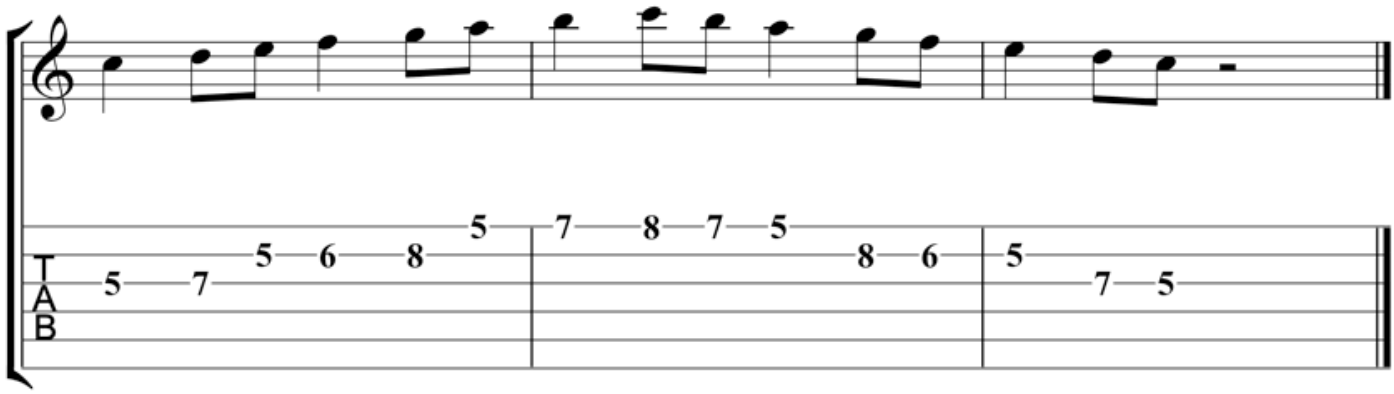

Moving on, here’s a classic rhythmic combo, 8th and 16th notes combined over each beat.

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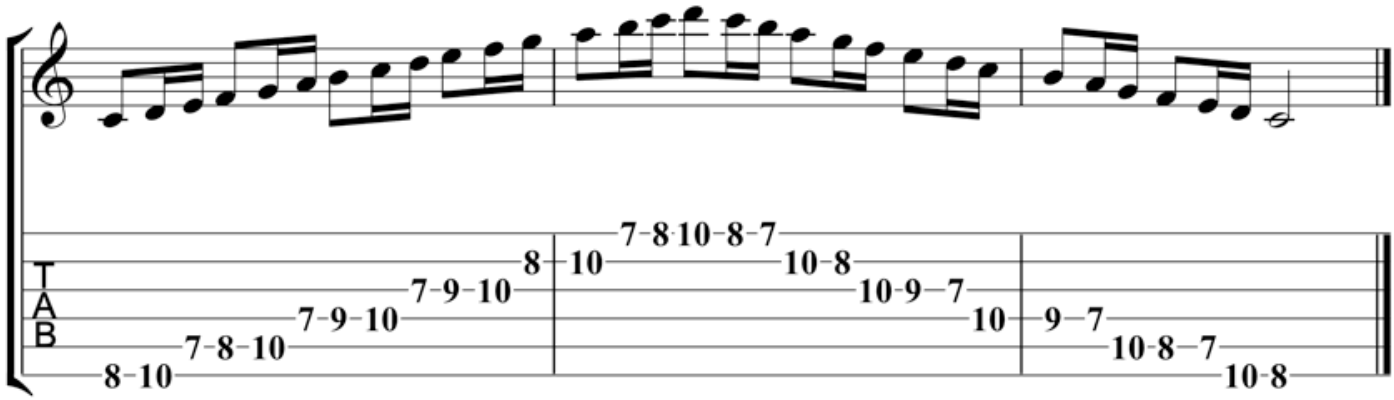

After working these two sample combos, combine any two, or more, rhythms over any guitar scale pattern you’re currently studying.

Now that you have a number of rhythmic variations under your fingers, you're ready to check out picking-hand accents.

Guitar Picking Patterns – Accents

As well as using scale patterns to build your fretting hand, you can use these same exercises to build your picking technique.

To do so, you add accents into any scale pattern in the lesson below.

An accent is when you play one note louder than the others within a group of notes.

One of the most direct and beneficial ways to do this is to break up any scale pattern into groups of 4 notes.

When doing so, you can then accent each of those four notes in that group.

You can also do this with three-note groups when practicing triplets.

Here are examples of four-note accent groups that you can add to the scale patterns in this lesson.

The first accent pattern is on the first note of each four-note group.

In this case, in a bar of 4/4 you accent the 1st and 3rd beats of each bar.

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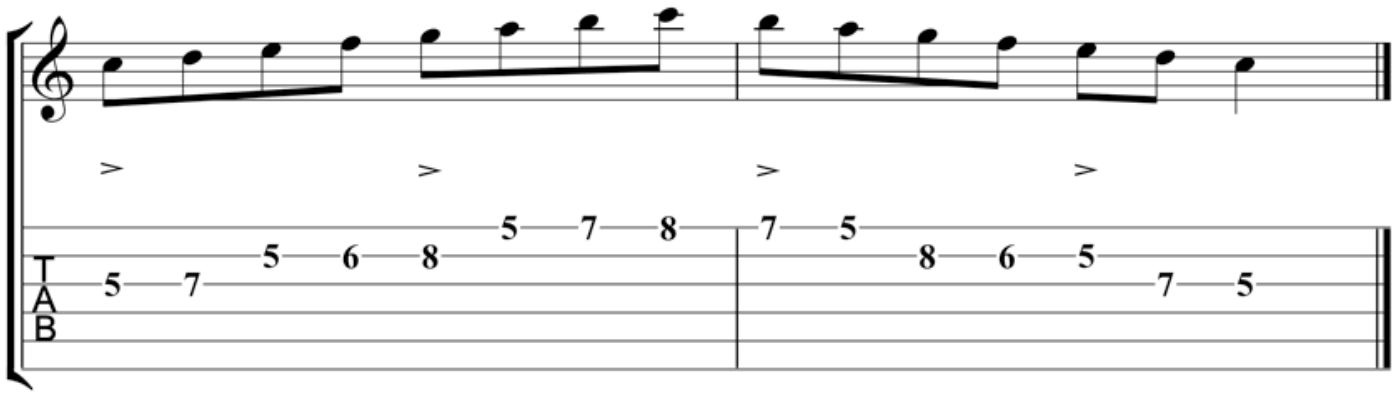

Moving on, you can accent the second note in each four-note group.

In this case, you accent the & of 1 and 3 in each bar of 4/4.

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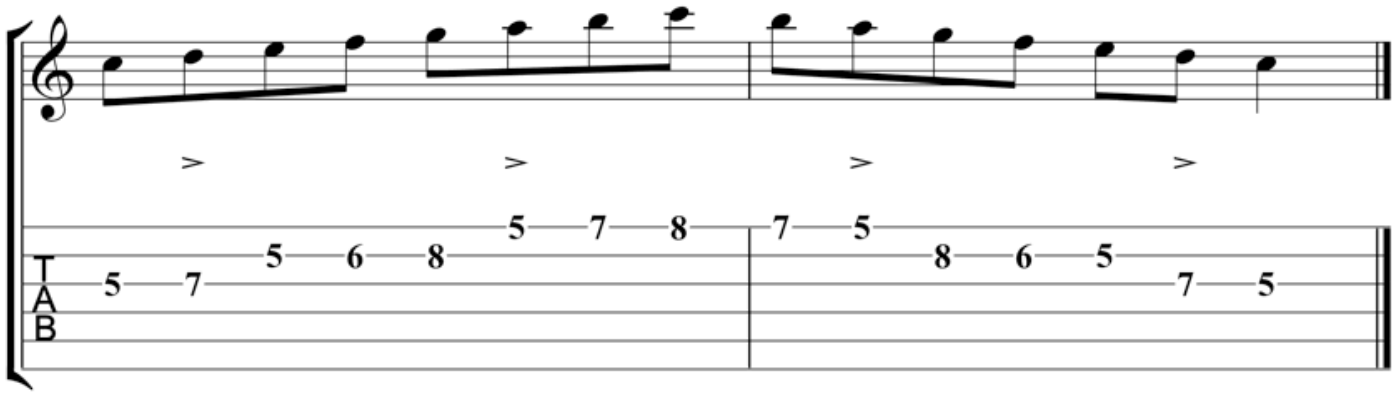

Next, you add the accent to the third note of each four-note group.

When doing so, you accent beats 2 and 4 in a 4/4 bar of music.

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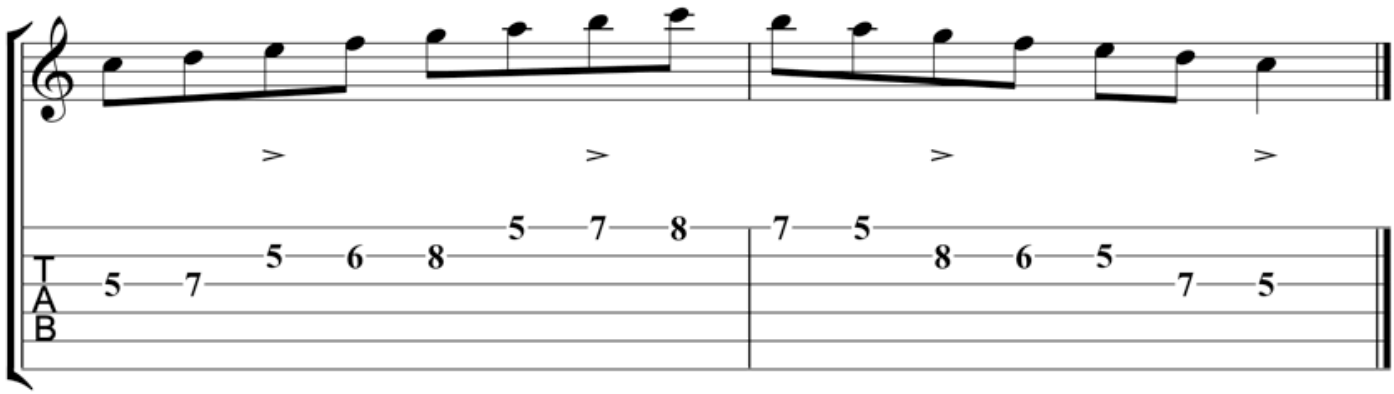

The last single accent falls on the fourth note of each four-note group.

This places the accents on the & of 2 and 4 when applied to a measure of 4/4 time.

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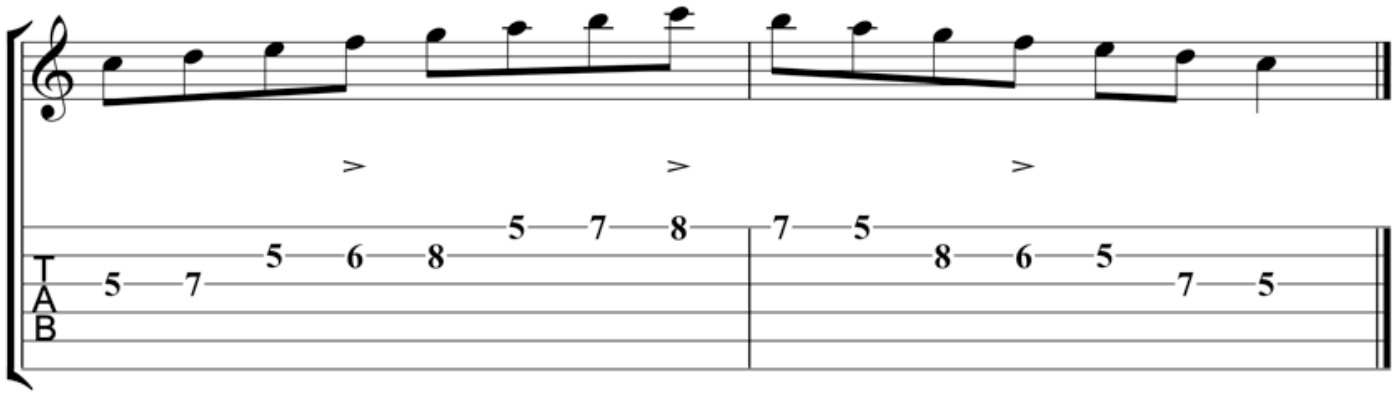

You can also combine accents to have two in each four-note group.

Here’s an example of how to play accents on the 1st and 3rd notes of those groups.

This places the accents on each beat of a 4/4 bar of music.

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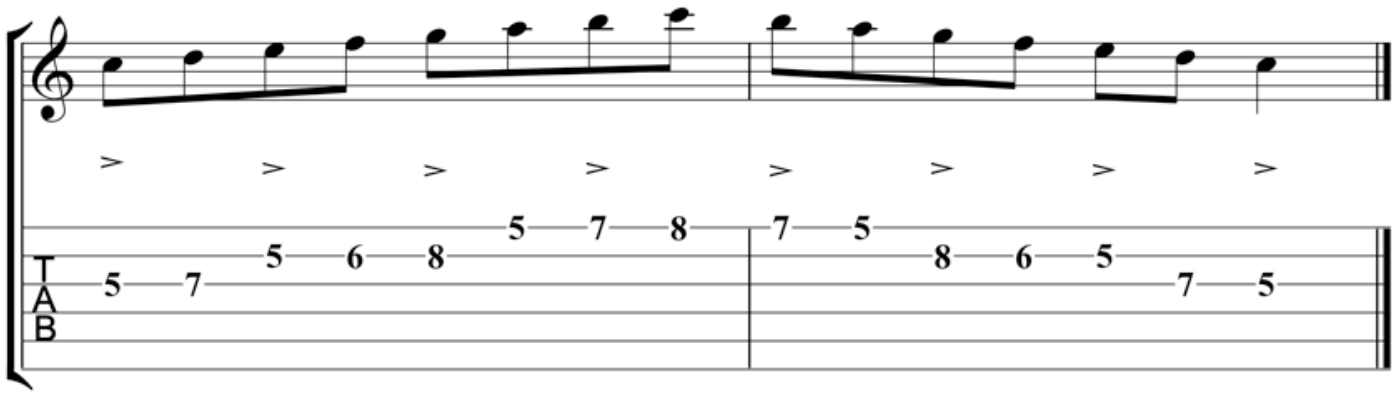

Here’s another example of a combined accent pattern.

In this case, the accents fall on the &’s of each beat in a bar of 4/4 time.

There are many other combinations when practicing accents.

Try these examples, then come up with other accent combinations of your own as you explore this guitar technique further.

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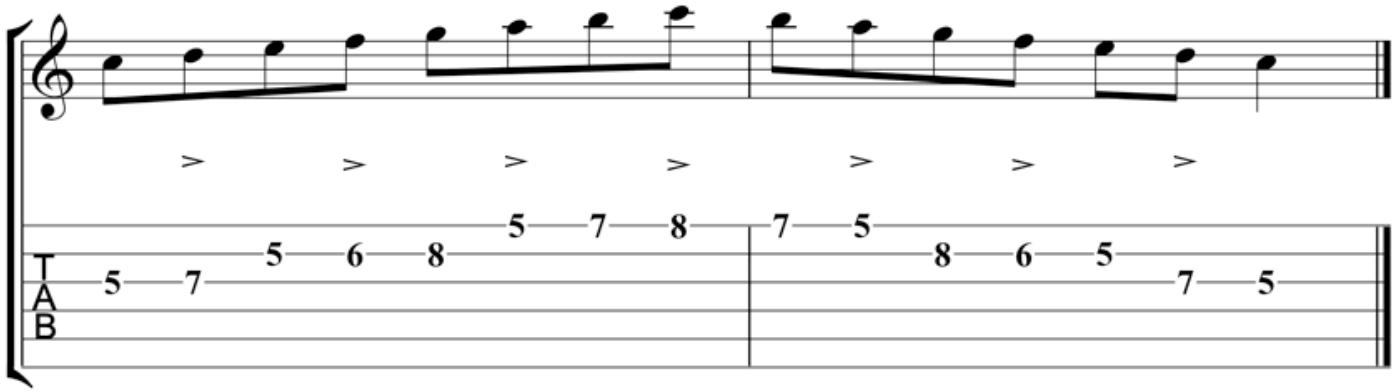

With rhythmic and picking variations under your belt, you’re ready to take these variations to the scale patterns below.

Pentatonic Scale Patterns

One of the best scales to practice scale patterns is with the pentatonic scale.

Whether it’s the minor, major, Dorian, or any variation, patterns help you learn any 5-note scale.

As well, because pentatonic scales are the first scale guitarists learn, it’s easy to get stuck in a rut with these melodic devices.

Applying patterns to pentatonics builds chops and brings a breath of fresh air to the most common scale on guitar.

In this section, you learn patterns over the pentatonic scale, as well as study essential variations for any pattern you learn and apply to your practice routine.

Pentatonic Scale Pattern 1

The first pentatonic pattern runs three notes from each note in the scale.

This means that if you think of the pentatonic scale as having five notes, 12345, you’re playing 123, 234, 345, etc.

Then, as you reach to the top of the scale you reverse the pattern.

On the way down you play 543, 432, 321, etc. from each note in the scale.

Here’s this pattern over an A minor pentatonic scale.

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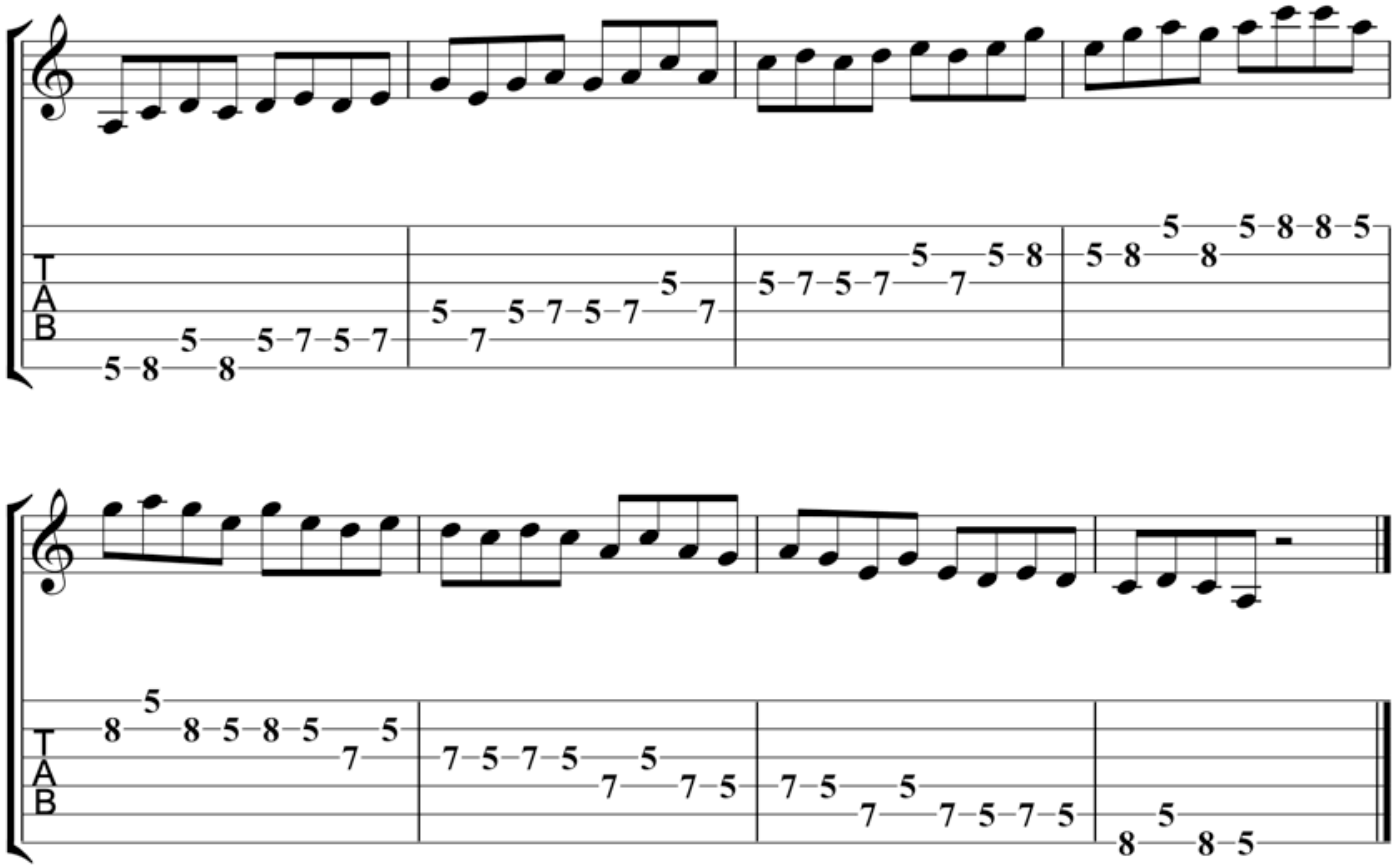

Pentatonic Pattern 2

You can now expand upon the previous pattern by adding a note to form a 1234 pattern.

When doing so, you play 1234, 2345, etc. up the scale.

Then, you reverse the pattern to play 5432, 4321, etc. down the scale.

Here’s an example to begin, then take this pattern to any key or fingering for the pentatonic scale in your studies.

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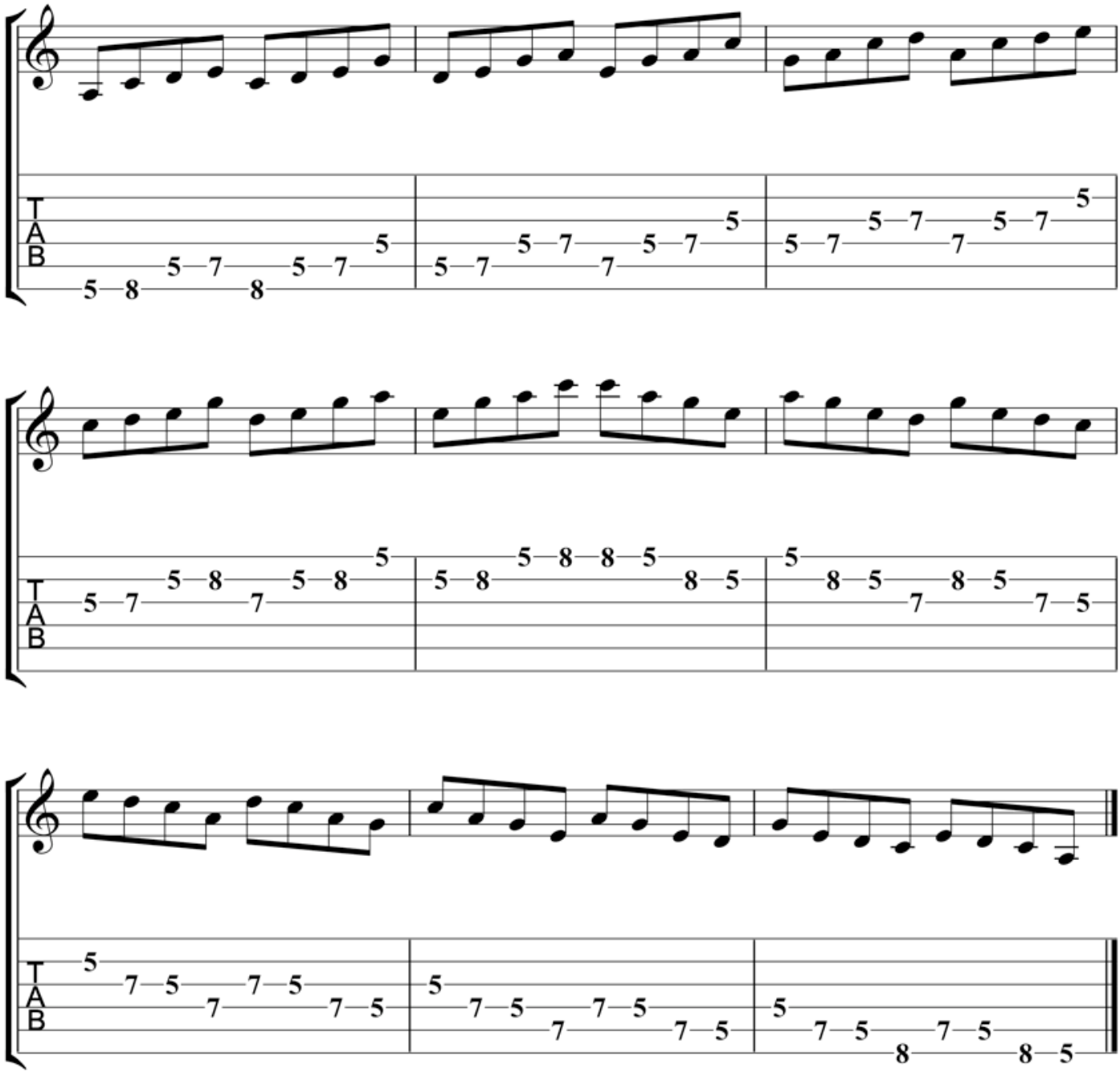

Pentatonic Pattern 3

This pattern skips a note as you run up and down any pentatonic scale.

When doing so, you form the interval pattern 13, 24, 35, etc. going up the scale.

Then, on the way down you play the same intervals, but now descending the scale.

This type of scale pattern is very popular with sax players.

When applied to the fretboard, it provides you with a new perspective on both patterns and shapes in your playing.

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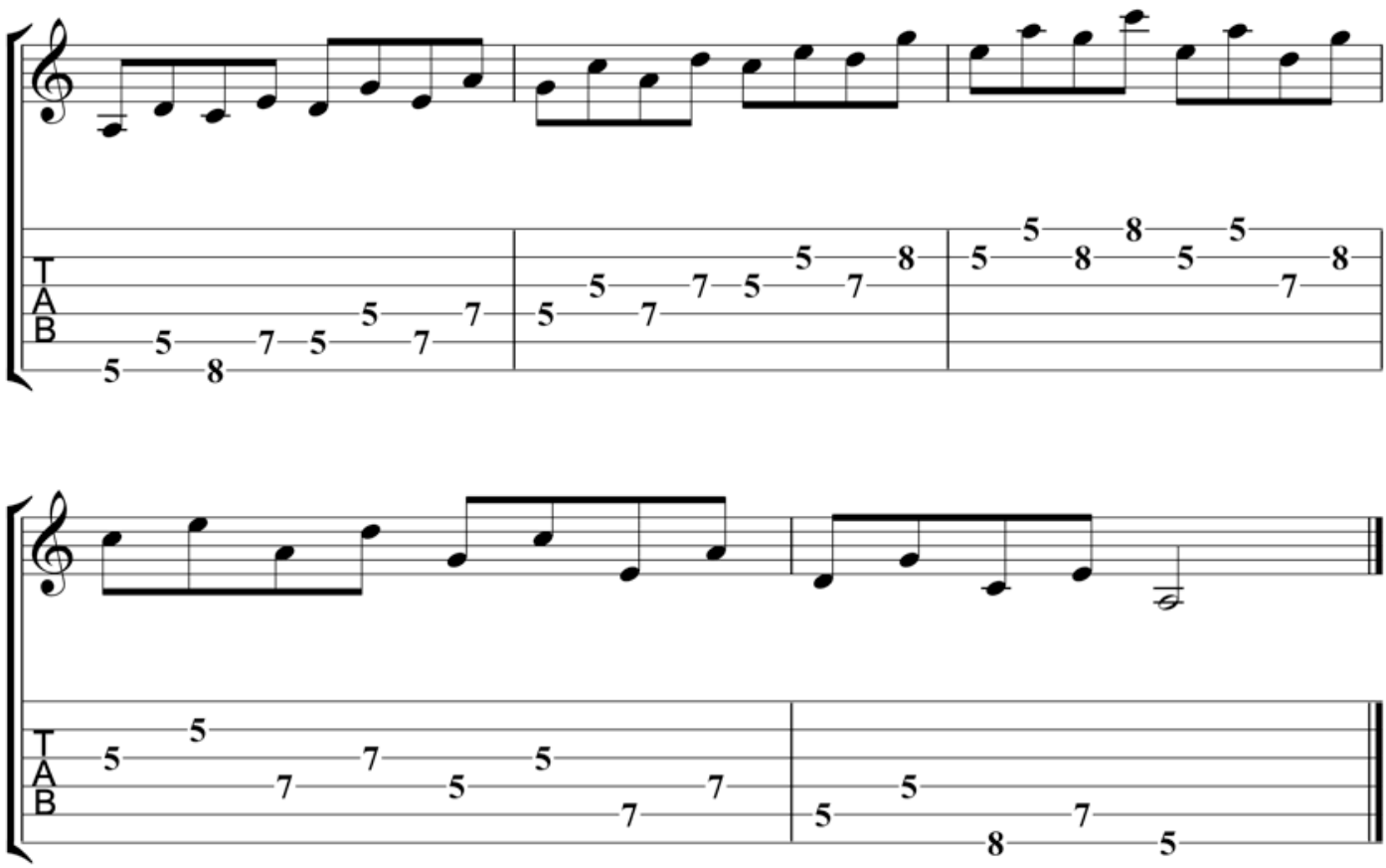

Pentatonic Pattern 4

You now reverse the previous pattern as you play 31, 42, 53, etc. up and down the pentatonic scale.

As you've gathered by this point in the lesson, reversing scale patterns is a common variation of this technique.

When learning new scale patterns, always reverse the pattern to double the amount to material derived from that single pattern.

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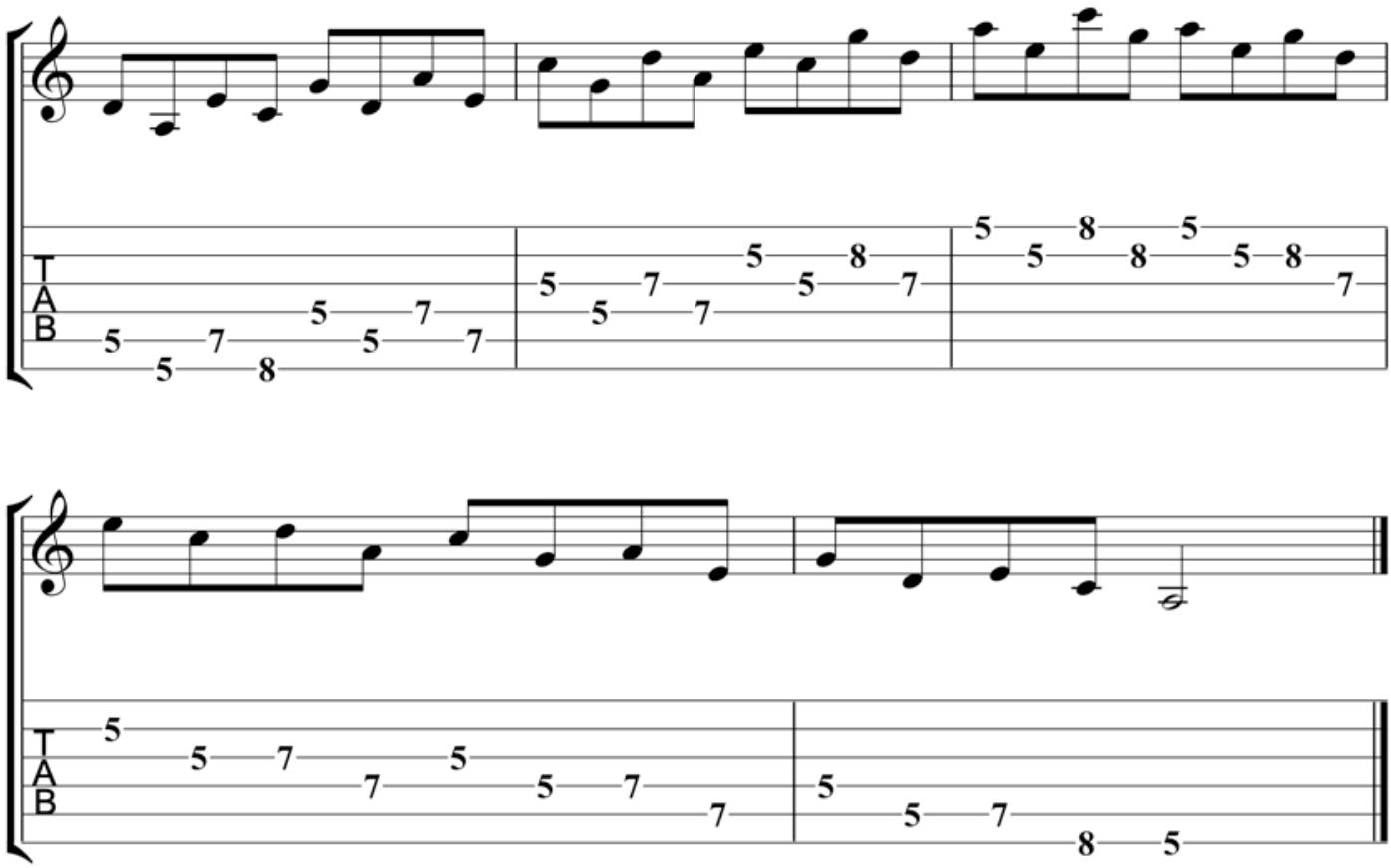

Pentatonic Pattern 5

Once you've worked on reversing any scale pattern, you pair up the first and second versions of that pattern over any scale.

In this case, you can see the last two scale patterns combined over the A minor pentatonic scale.

Again, this allows you to expand a single scale pattern through variation, rather than learn a new scale pattern right away.

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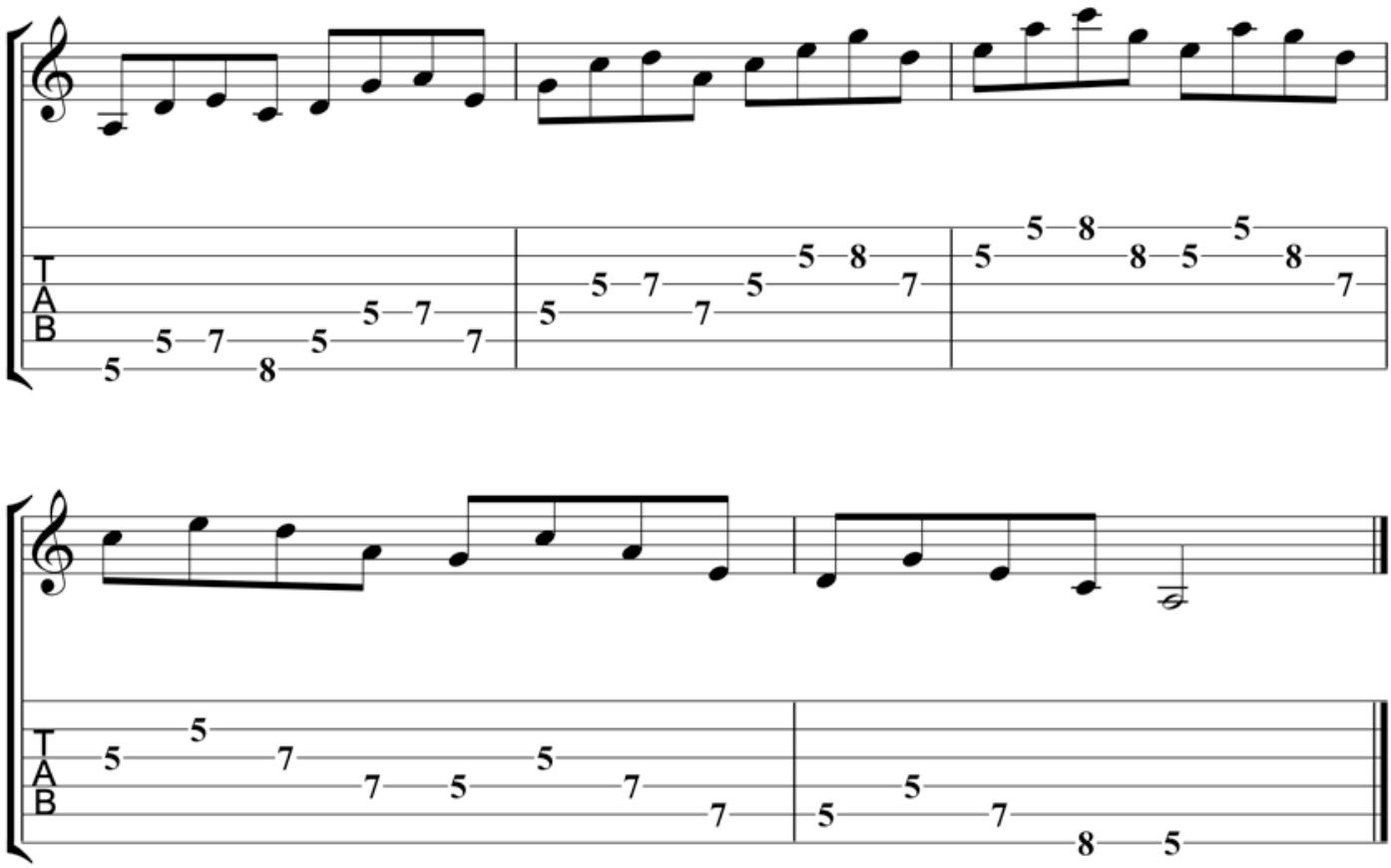

Pentatonic Pattern 6

You now take this approach a step further as you reverse the combined pattern.

Reversing and combining patterns provides you with four options for any scale pattern that you study.

This expands your options when adding these scale patterns to your guitar solos.

If you’re new to these guitar techniques, not to worry, you dig deep into reversal and combination scale patterns in the major scale patterns below.

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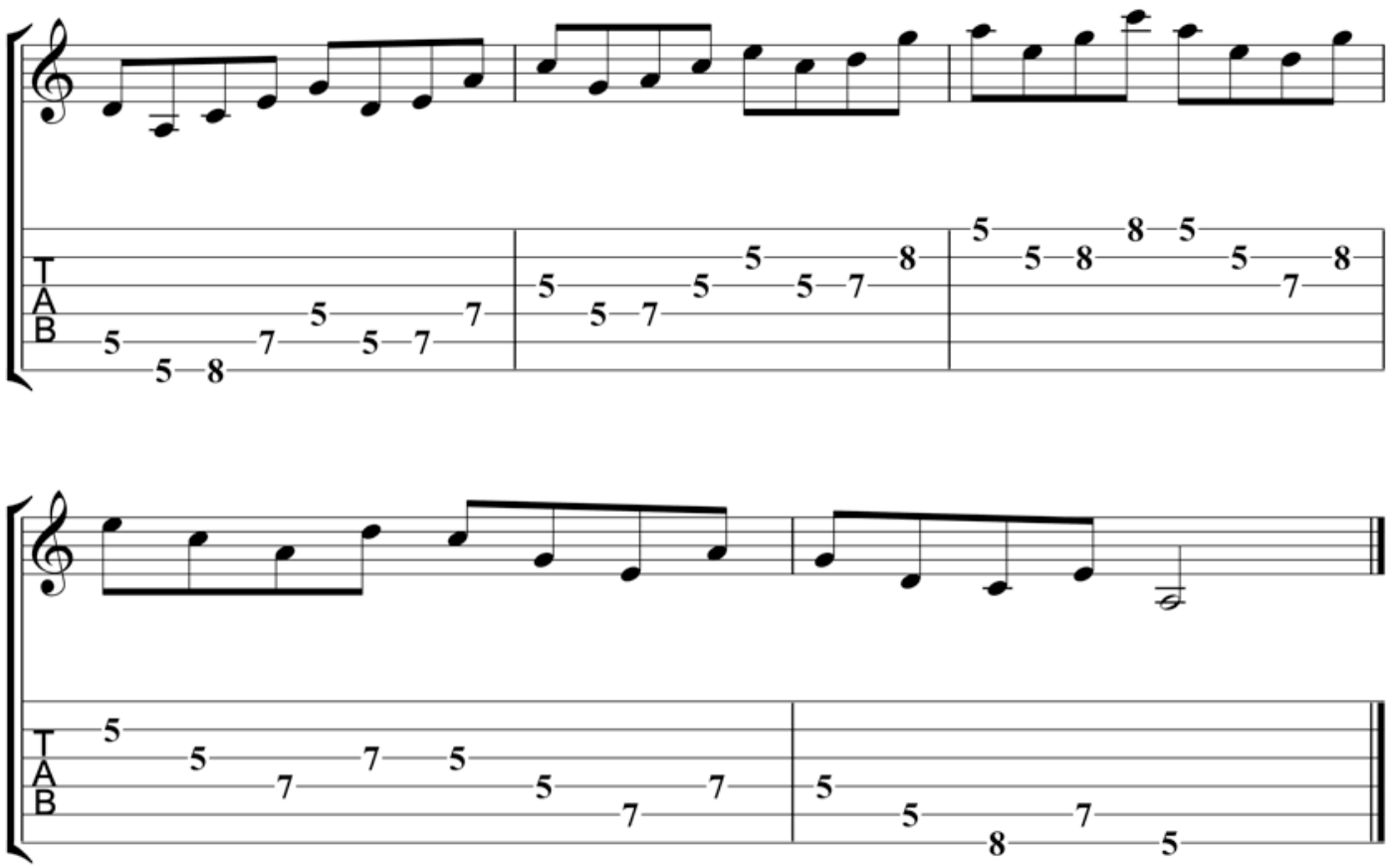

Pentatonic Pattern 7

Here’s a four-note pattern that brings a modern, modal sound to your pentatonic scales.

The pattern is built by playing three notes up the “left” side of the scale, followed by one note on the “right” side of the scale.

For left-handed guitarists, these sides would be reversed.

Because it’s a four-note pattern, you cover the entire pentatonic scale pretty quickly.

To keep things flowing, play this pattern three or four times in a row before increasing the tempo.

This helps you get into a flow when working this larger scale pattern on guitar.

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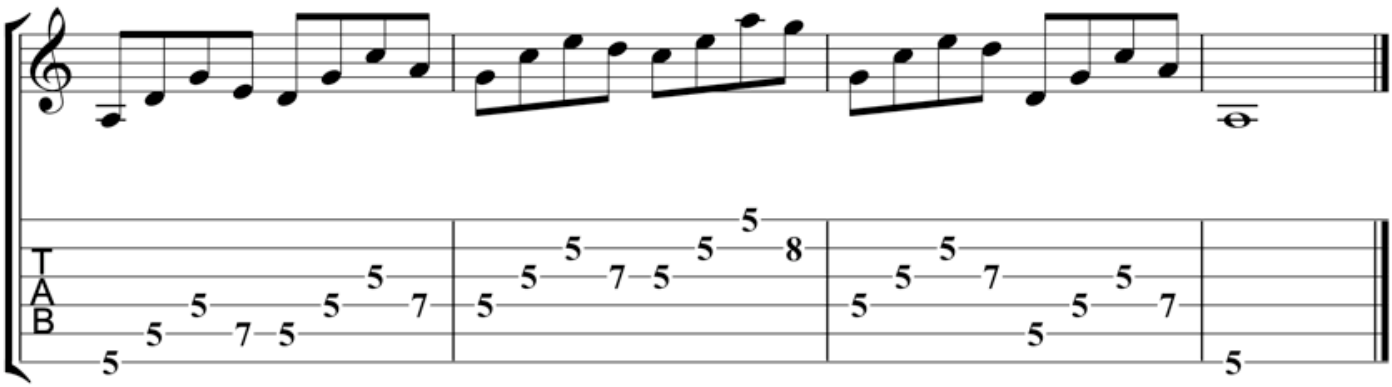

Pentatonic Pattern 8

In the next four patterns, you work out the four variations for a three-note pentatonic scale pattern.

This pattern is built by playing three notes up the left side of the scale, followed by three notes up the right side of the scale.

Again, you play the pattern ascending through both directions of the scale in your studies.

Here’s the ascending, original, version of the pattern applied to an A pentatonic scale shape.

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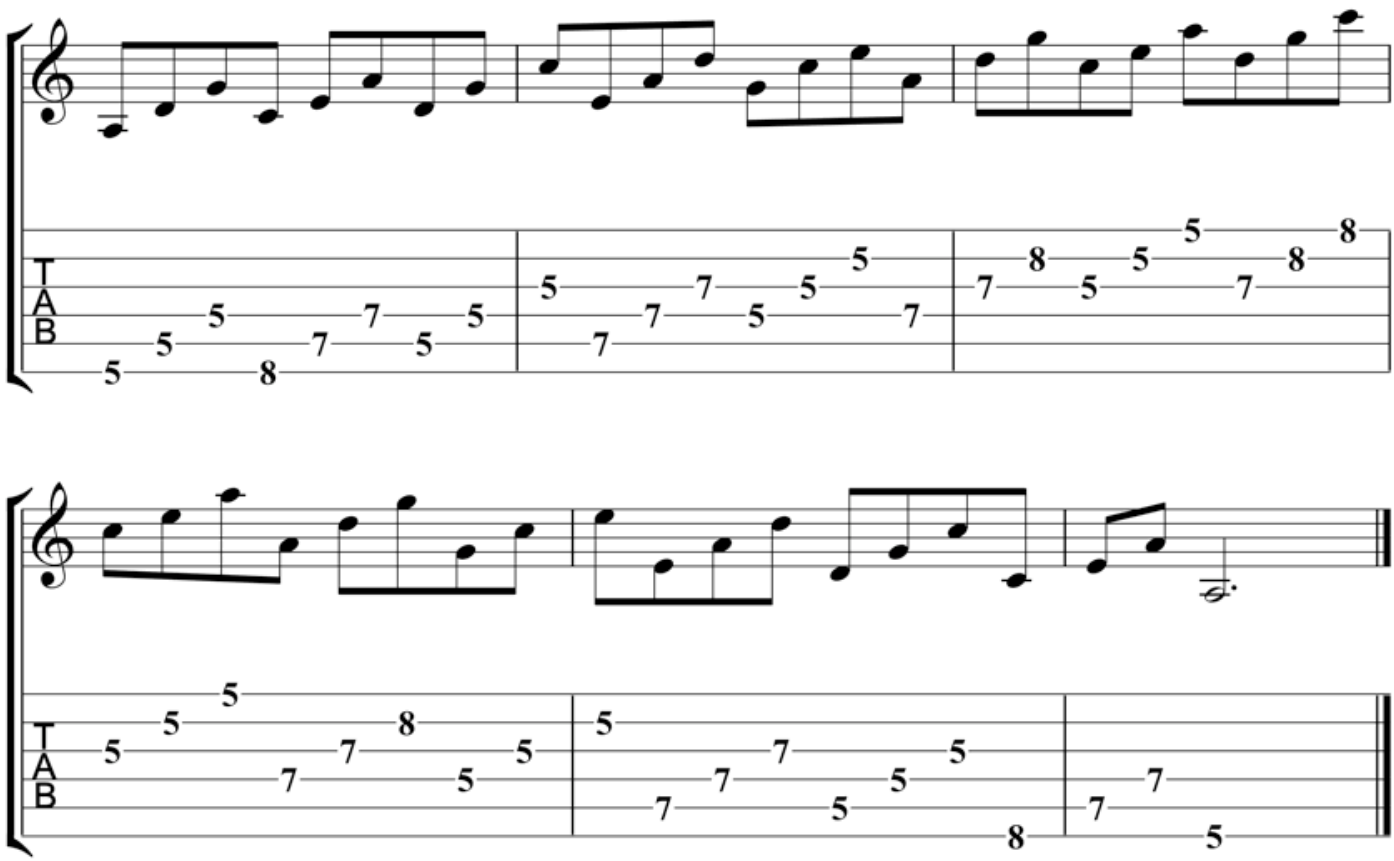

Pentatonic Pattern 9

You now reverse the previous pattern as you descend three notes up and down the pentatonic scale.

Watch your picking with this, and any three-note, pattern.

Often you'll find yourself sweeping through the three-note pattern.

Which is fine.

But.

When doing so, avoid ringing the notes like a chord.

This prevents the exercise creeping into the arpeggio side of your studies.

There will be some overlap between notes, but think of it as being smooth and not overhanging.

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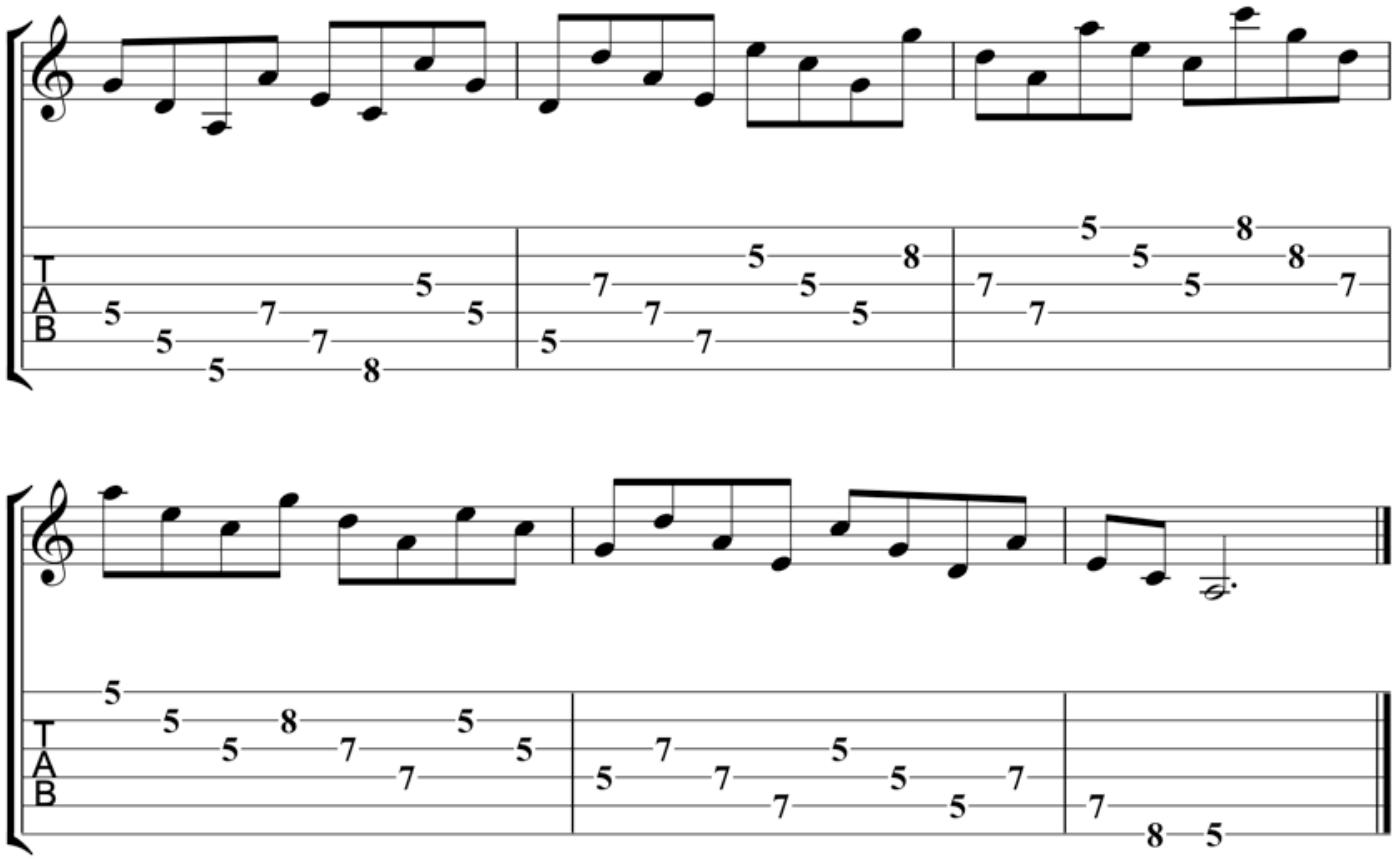

Pentatonic Pattern 10

As you probably guessed, you now combine the ascending and descending versions to form a combined pattern.

Again, sweeping through the pattern is perfectly acceptable.

Just work on keeping each note separate, and not ringing like an arpeggiated chord.

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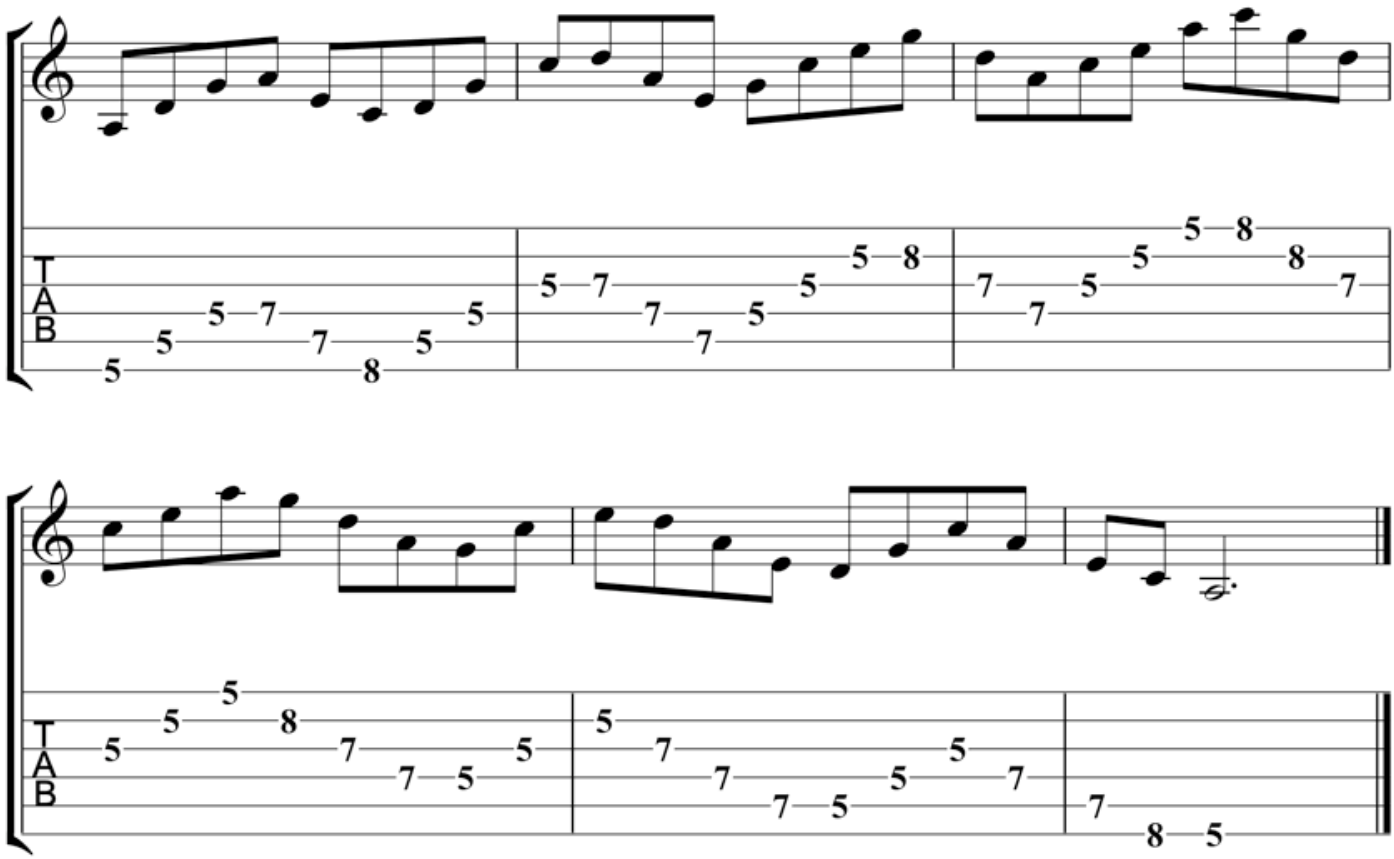

Pentatonic Pattern 11

The final pentatonic scale pattern is a reversal of the combo you just learned.

As you practice this, or any scale pattern you learn, make sure to work it two ways.

The first is with a metronome to build fundamental guitar technique.

The second is to solo with these patterns over chords to build your soloing chops with the same pattern.

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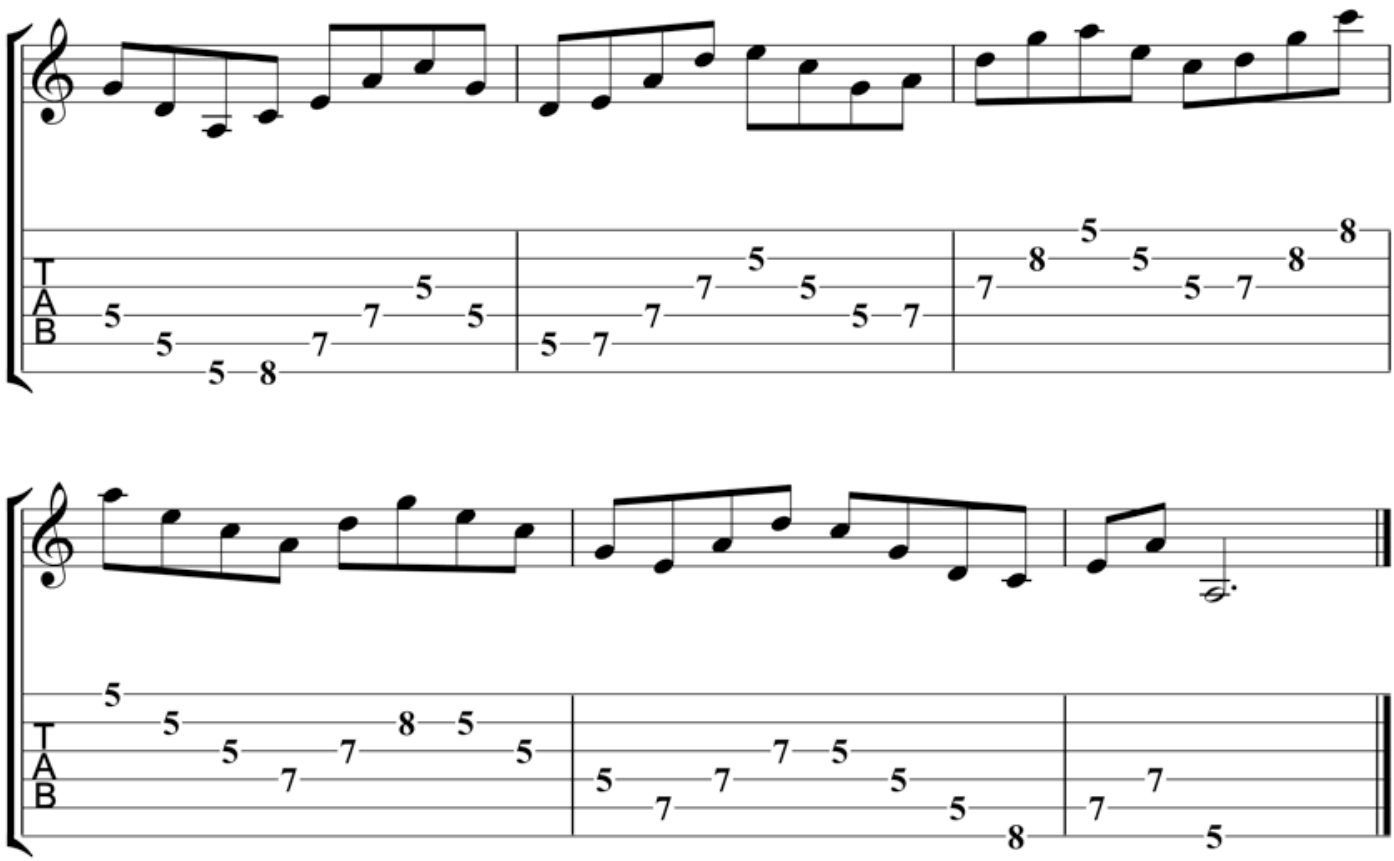

Major Scale Patterns

The second group of scale patterns are applied to major scale fingerings.

Though they're used over the major scale in these examples, you can apply them to every mode in your studies.

When learning how to play scales and modes on guitar, it's tempting to learn one scale, or even one fingering, and then quickly move on to the next scale.

While you cover a lot of ground that way, this approach leads to memory problems with scales down the road.

By applying patterns to scales and modes, you expand your guitar technique, deeply ingrain fingerings, and increase your soloing vocabulary at the same time.

This provides a beneficial practice room experience for guitarists of any experience level or background.

123 Scale Pattern

The first major scale patterns are based on the 123 group.

This is the perfect scale pattern for those beginning their study of 7-note scales.

As there are no skips in this pattern, you challenge your technique without pushing it so far that it falls apart.

Lastly, this pattern is often used in guitar solos by rock, jazz, funk, and fusion guitarists.

Because of its popularity, the 123 scale pattern will become a regular part of both your technical and soloing practice routine.

123 Scale Pattern 1

As you did with the pentatonic scale, you begin with the ascending 123 pattern.

If you're new to this pattern, notice that the direction of the pattern is the same as you play down the scale.

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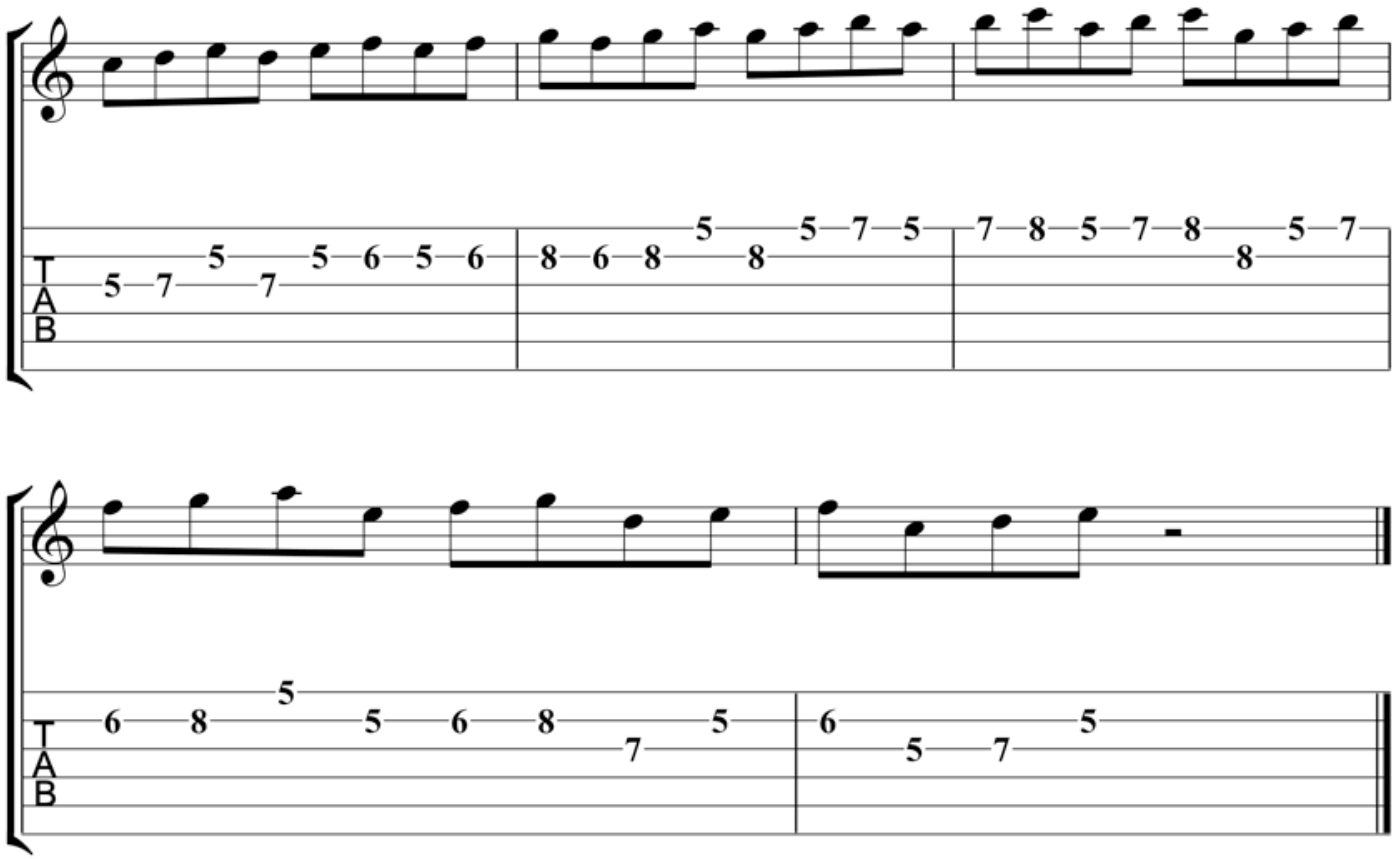

123 Scale Pattern 2

The second major scale pattern is a reversal of the first, as you now play 321, 432, etc., up and down the scale.

If you worked the pentatonic scale patterns, try playing the pattern below without reading the music.

Then, if you get stuck, look to see if you're correct in your application of the reversal technique with this new scale and pattern.

This helps you build the skill of reversing any pattern, rather than simply memorizing the pattern in your studies.

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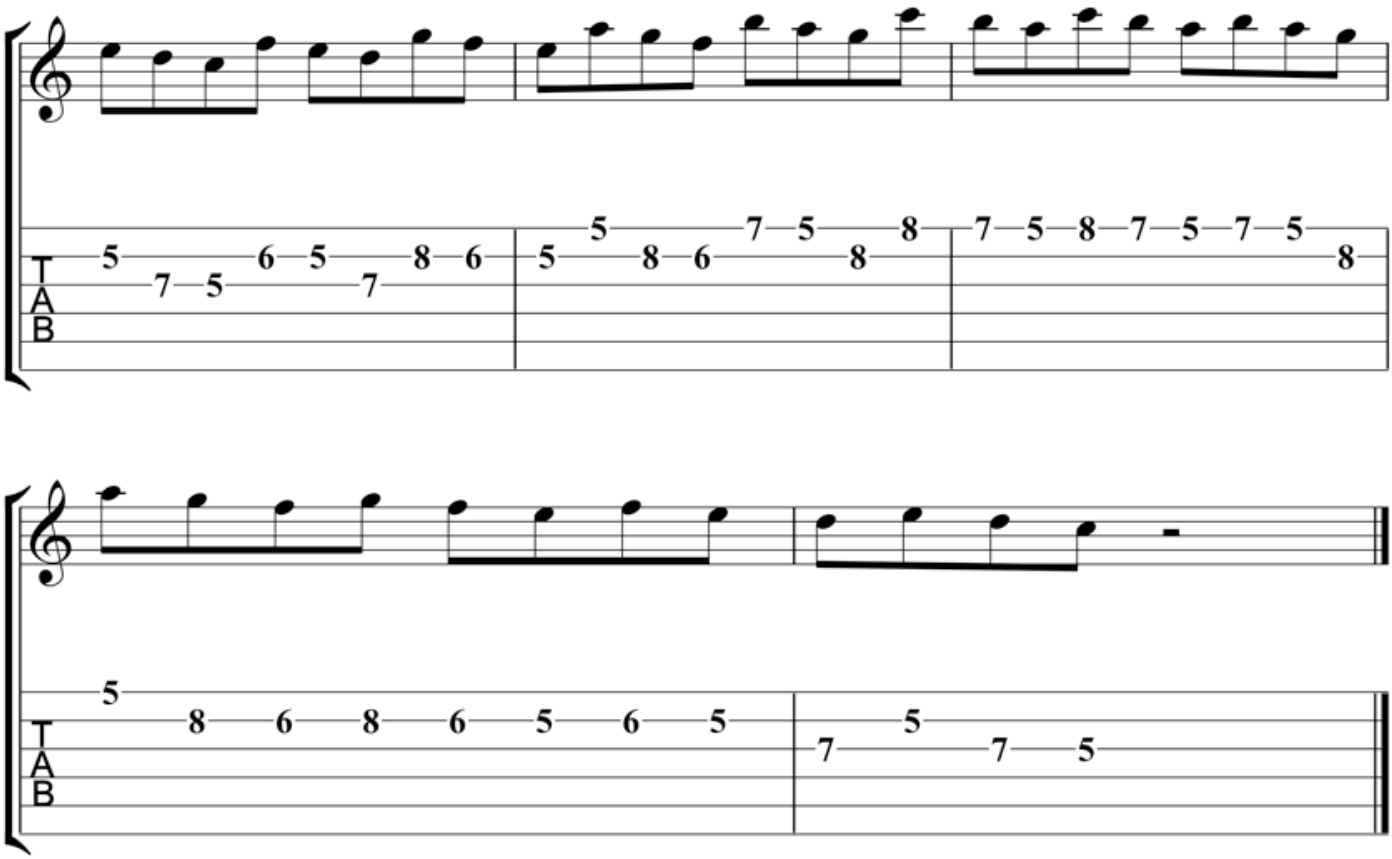

123 Scale Pattern 3

Here’s the first combination for the 123 pattern.

Though each pattern in this section is demonstrated over a one-octave shape, make sure to work these patterns over two-octave scales as well.

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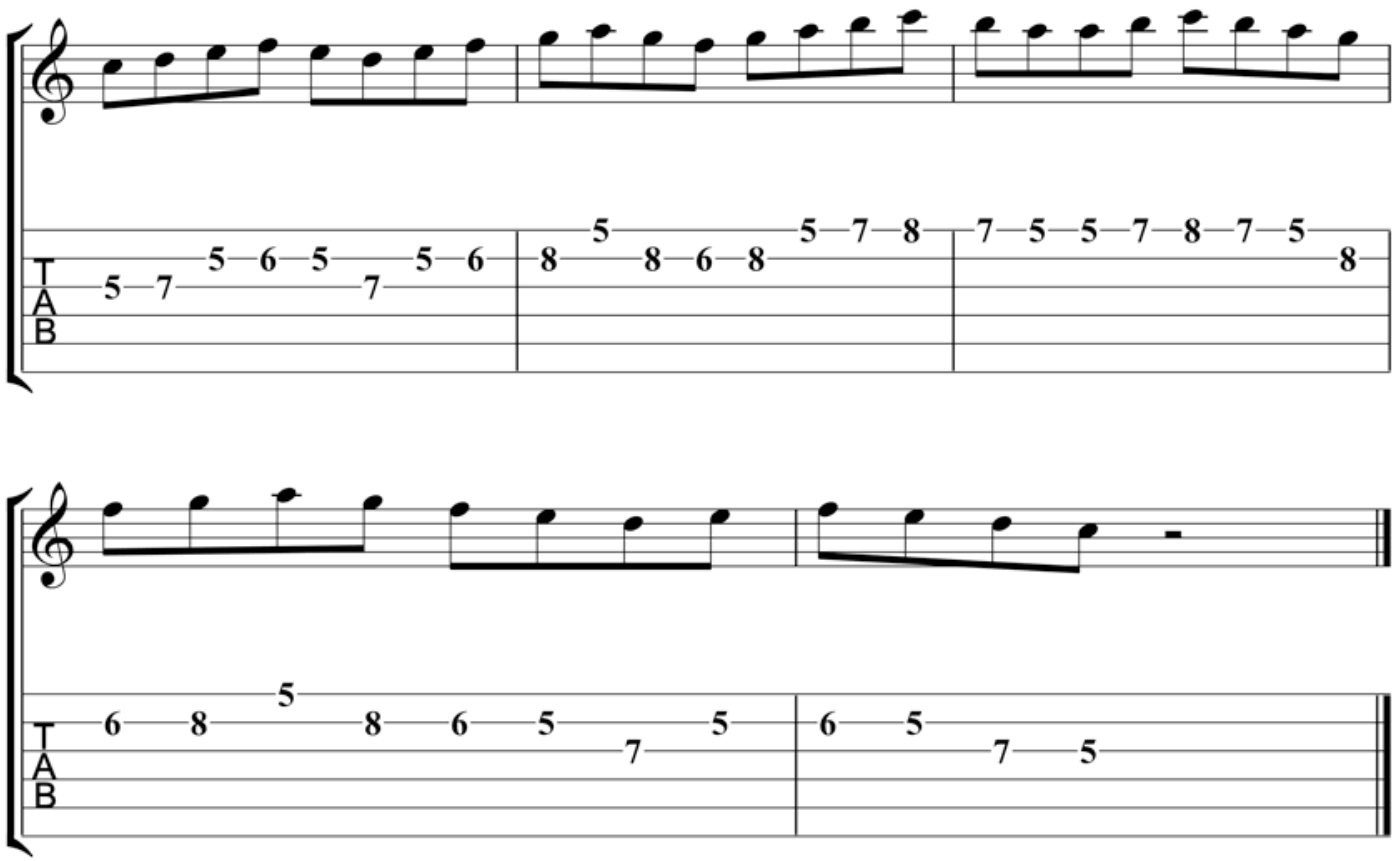

123 Scale Pattern 4

The last variation of the 123 scale pattern features a reversal of the combination you just learned.

By now you should have the hang of the four scale pattern variations.

- Ascending
- Descending
- Combination
- Combination Reversed

If you’re comfortable with these variations, practice applying them to future scale patterns without reading the music.

Again, this focuses on skill building in your practice routine.

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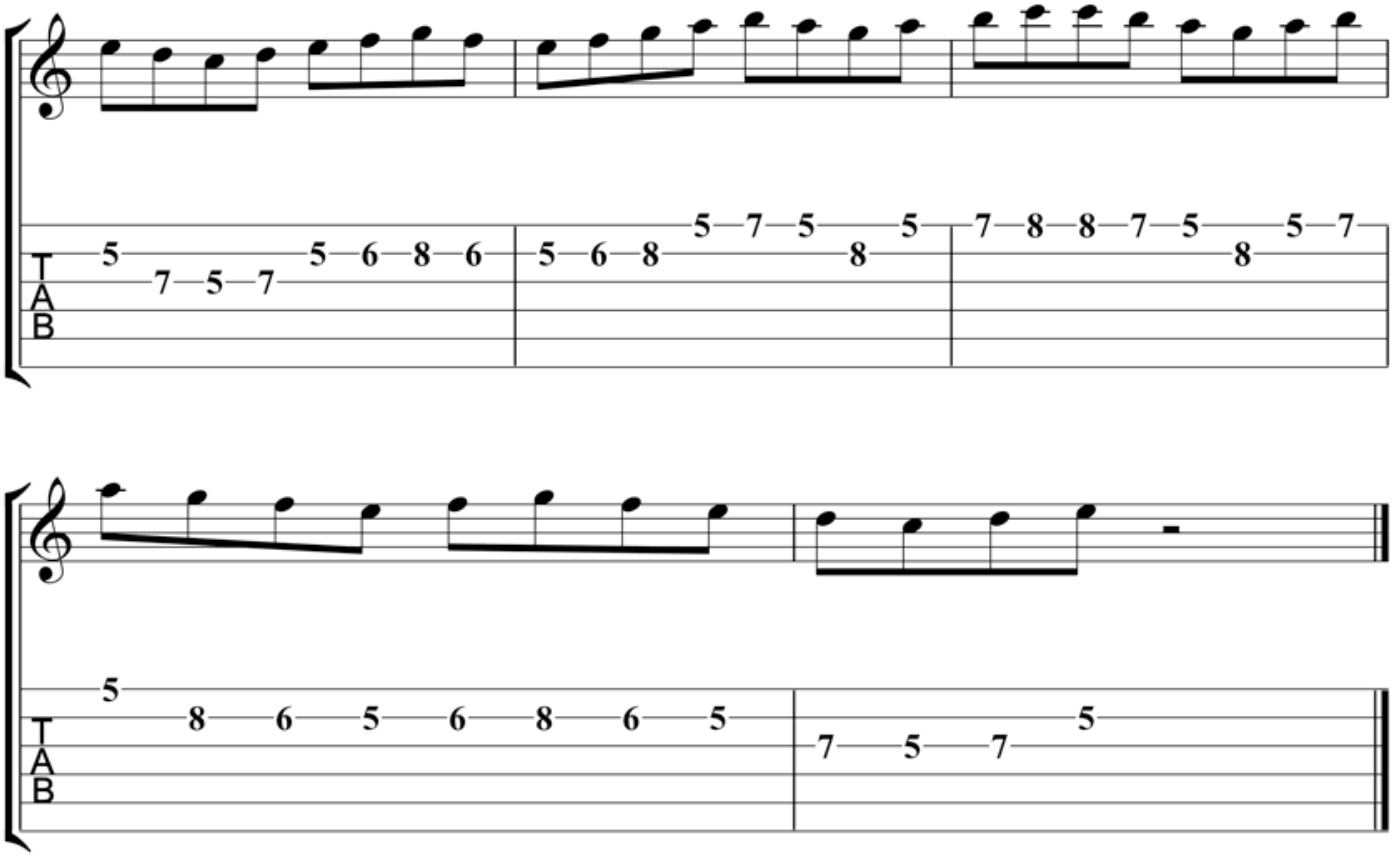

1234 Scale Pattern

As was the case with the pentatonic patterns, you now add a note to the previous pattern to form a four-note scale pattern.

When doing so, you play 1234, 2345, etc. up the scale.

Though it’s only one more note in each pattern, these four notes are tougher to master.

They require more attention to the fingering, and a deeper understanding of the scale you’re practicing.

So, if you get stuck with any of these 1234 variations, take a minute and review the scale you’re working on.

Then, return to the pattern and continue your study from there.

1234 Scale Pattern 1

To begin, here's the ascending version of the 1234 pattern to learn and apply to your solos.

Go slow with this pattern, starting with quarter notes and 8th notes in the beginning.

From there, for an extra challenge, work triplets with this pattern.

Applying a three-note rhythm to a four-note pattern pushes any scale pattern to new heights in your playing.

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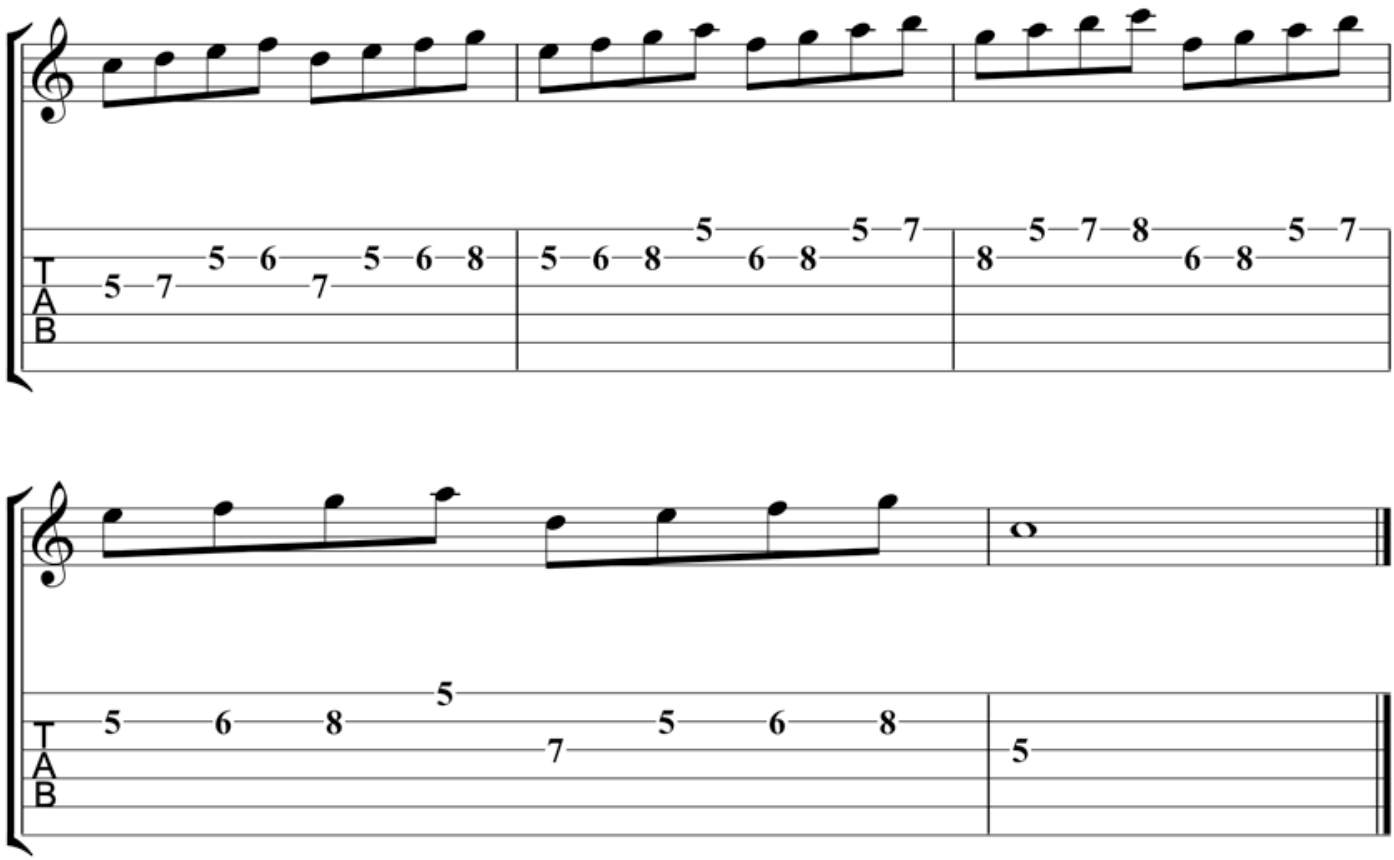

1234 Scale Pattern 2

Here’s the reverse 1234 pattern to work in your studies.

As you progress through these variations, play two of them back to back.

So, play up and down the scale with the ascending 1234 pattern. Then, right away play up and down the scale with the descending 1234 pattern.

This helps you switch gears with different patterns, and keeps older pattern fresh within your practice routine.

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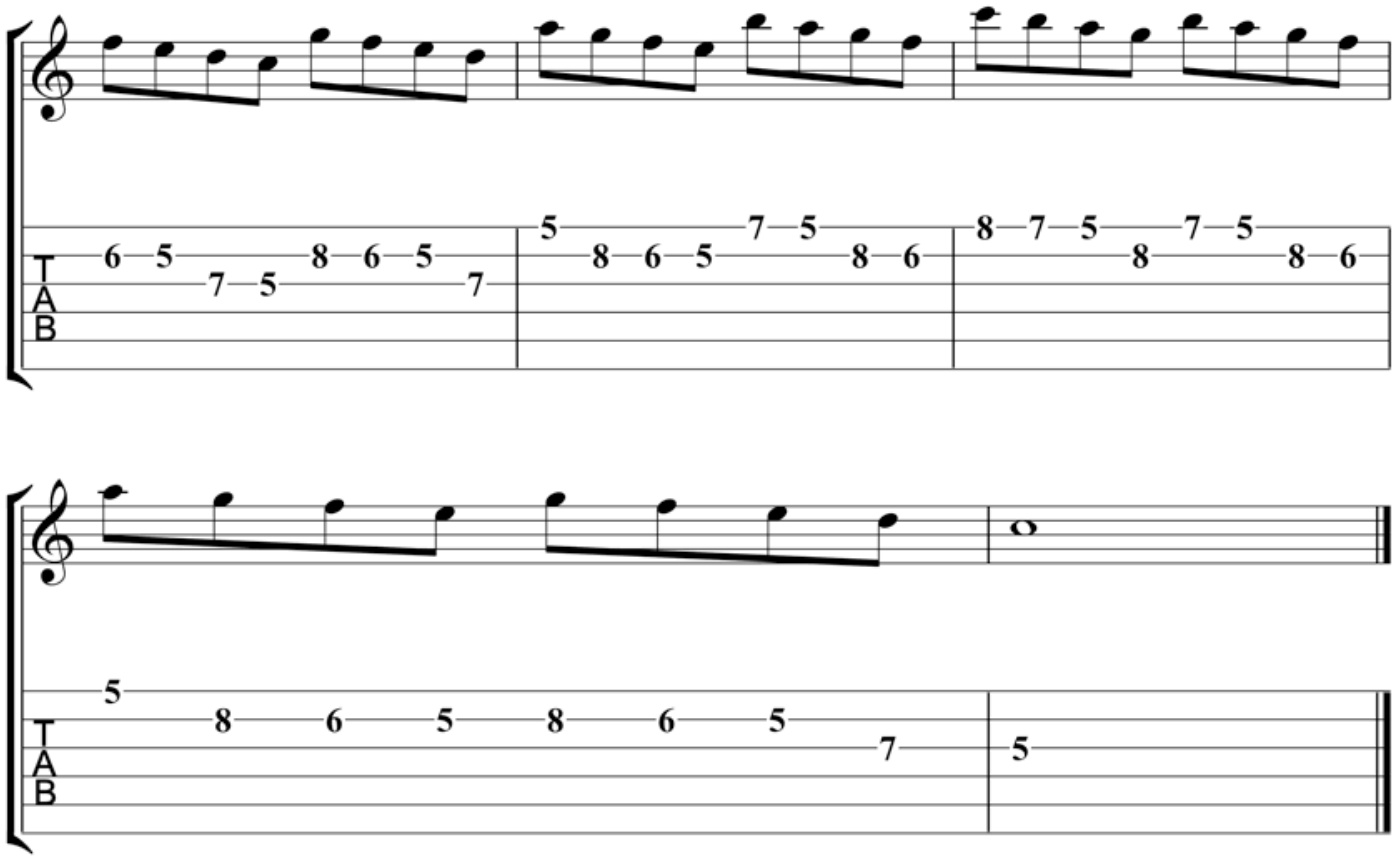

1234 Scale Pattern 3

Moving on, here’s the first 1234 combination pattern to add to your technical and soloing practice.

Again, work this pattern first through the example fingering below.

Then, when ready, take it to other major scale fingerings, as well as to other scales and modes.

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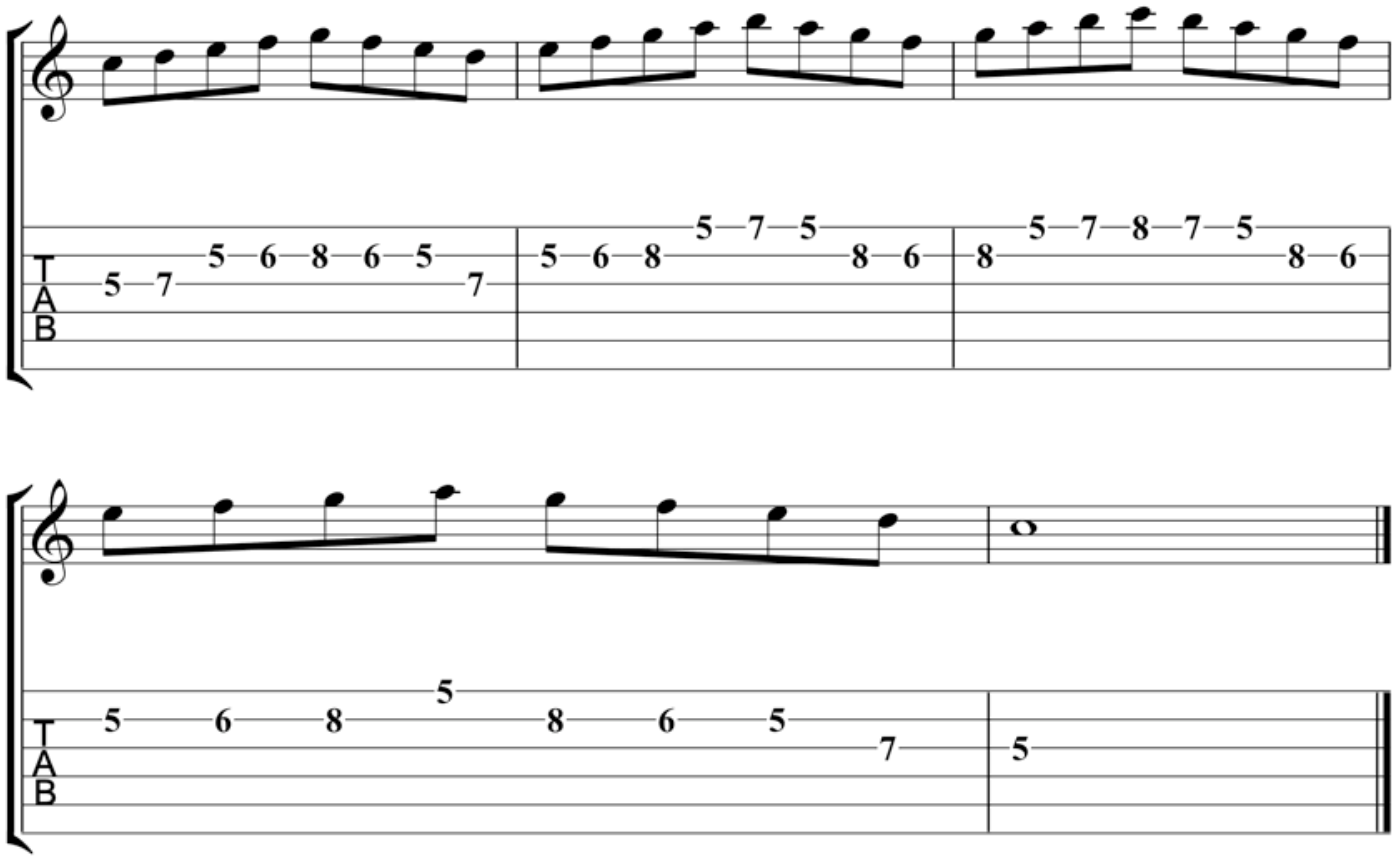

1234 Scale Pattern 4

Lastly, you work out the reverse version of the 1234 combination pattern you just studied.

To challenge yourself further, play through all versions in a row over a C major scale.

From there, work that exercise in all 12 keys as you push yourself even further with this important guitar scale pattern.

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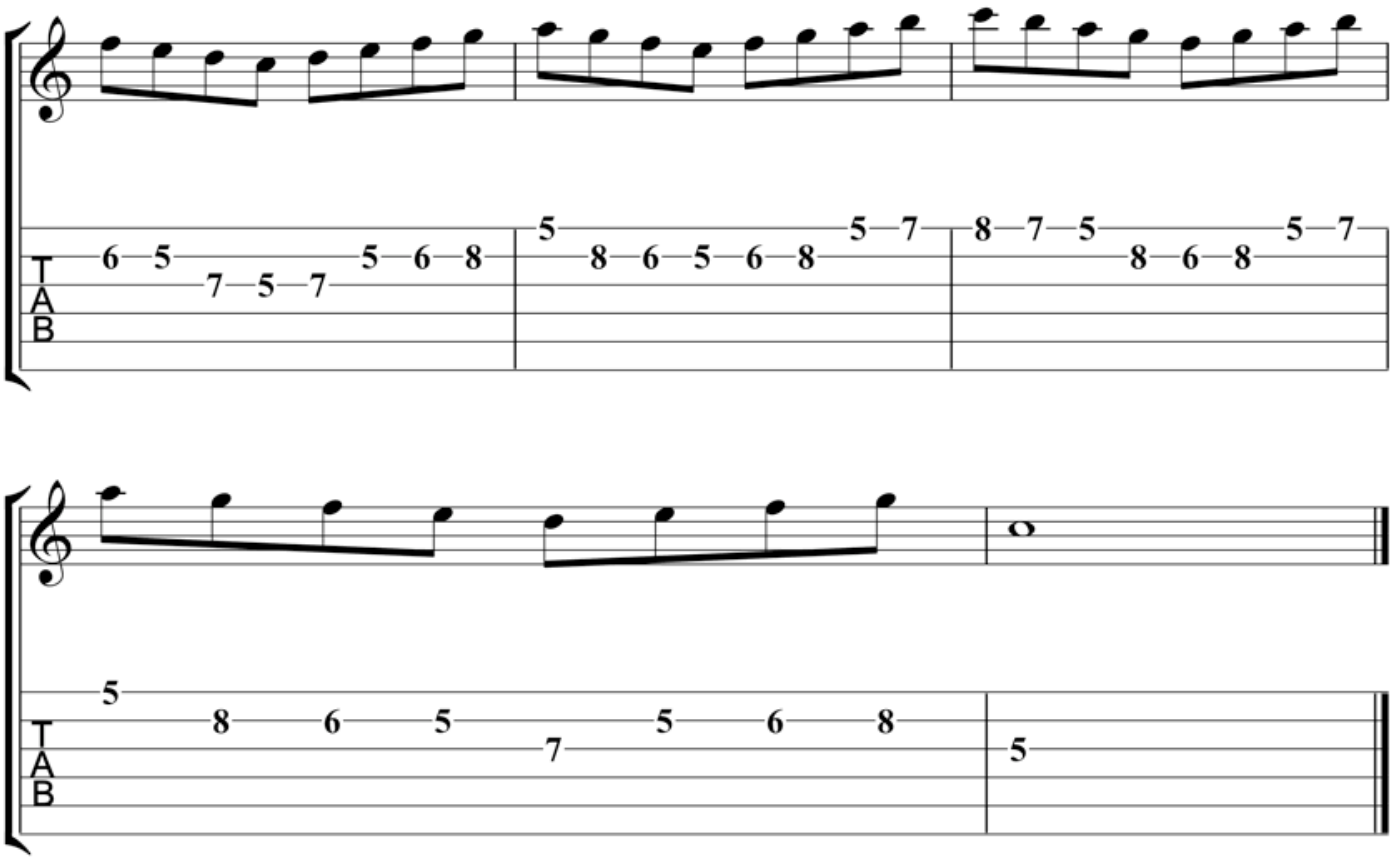

Diatonic 3rds Scale Patterns

Applying intervals to any scale is hugely beneficial to your guitar technique, fretboard knowledge, and soloing skills.

In this section, you apply 3rds to major scales using the four variations.

After you work on 3rds, you can expand this approach by working 4ths, 5ths, etc., through any scale fingering.

While they're beneficial, they're also more difficult to play as compared to the previous major scale patterns.

This is due to the skipping that's involved when playing 3rds.

Go slow with each variation, work with a metronome, and in time you'll have these four scale patterns under your fingers.

Diatonic 3rds Pattern 1

To begin, here are ascending 3rds through a C major scale. Keep a focus on your picking hand as you play this pattern.

When jumping around the scale like this, the biggest challenge is often the picking hand.

While it may be a challenge, 3rds produce big results with your picking hand.

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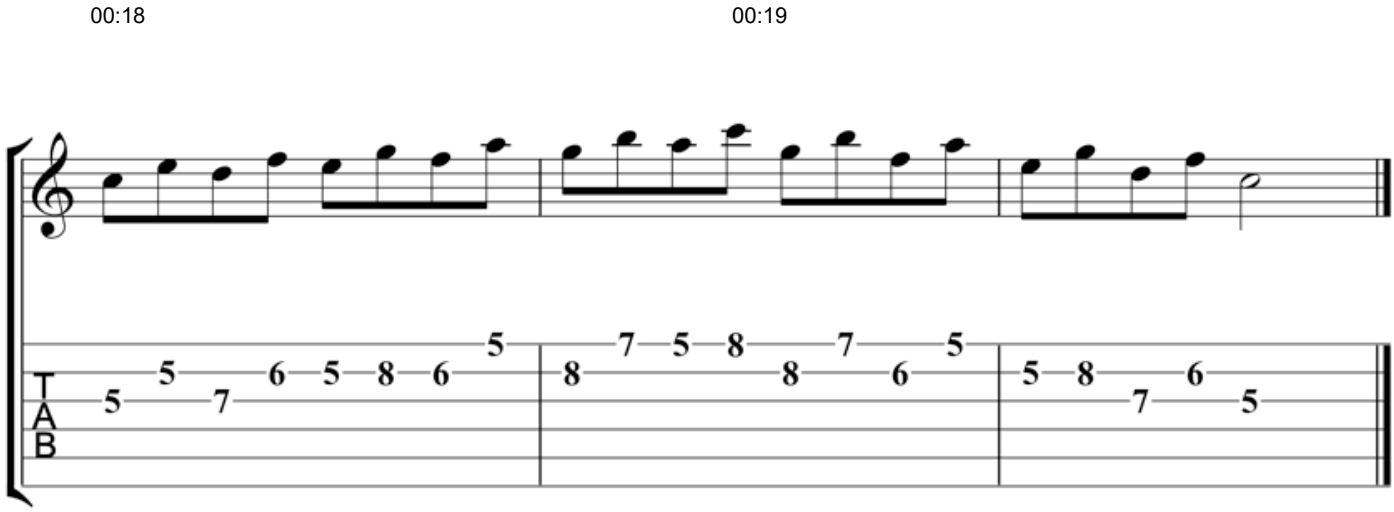

Diatonic 3rds Pattern 2

Here's the reverse 3rds pattern. If you're finding it hard to play 3rds with your picking hand, take time to work out the picking.

Study the string transitions, and see if you want to use economy or alternate picking with this pattern.

This expands your guitar technique, and lifts your picking hand to the level of your fretting hand.

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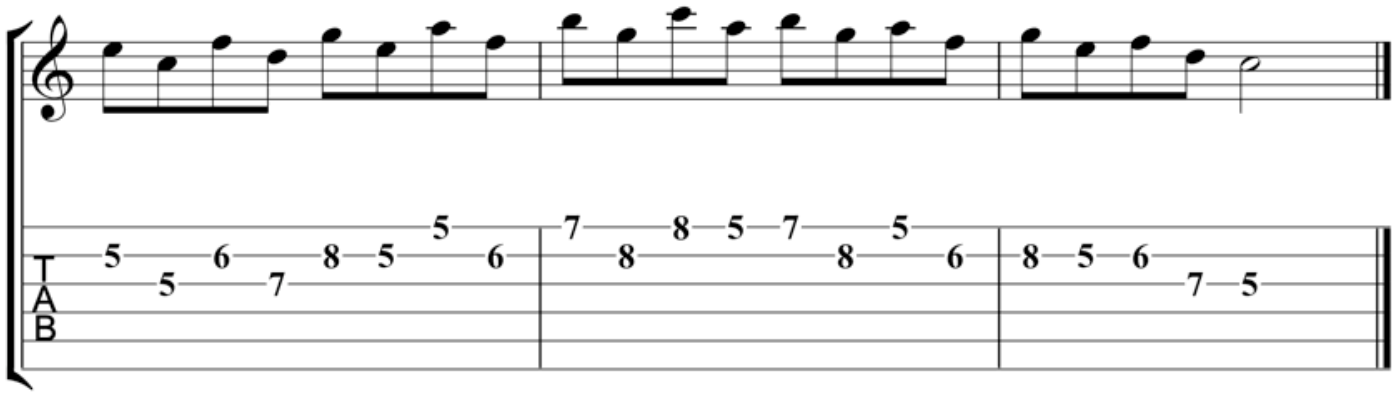

Diatonic 3rds Pattern 3

The third variation features a combination of one ascending and one descending 3rd.

For those players focussing on improvising, this pattern is a great addition to your soloing vocabulary.

It has a modern sound, in as modern as a major scale can be, and when mixed with various rhythms brings a new light to your major-scale lines.

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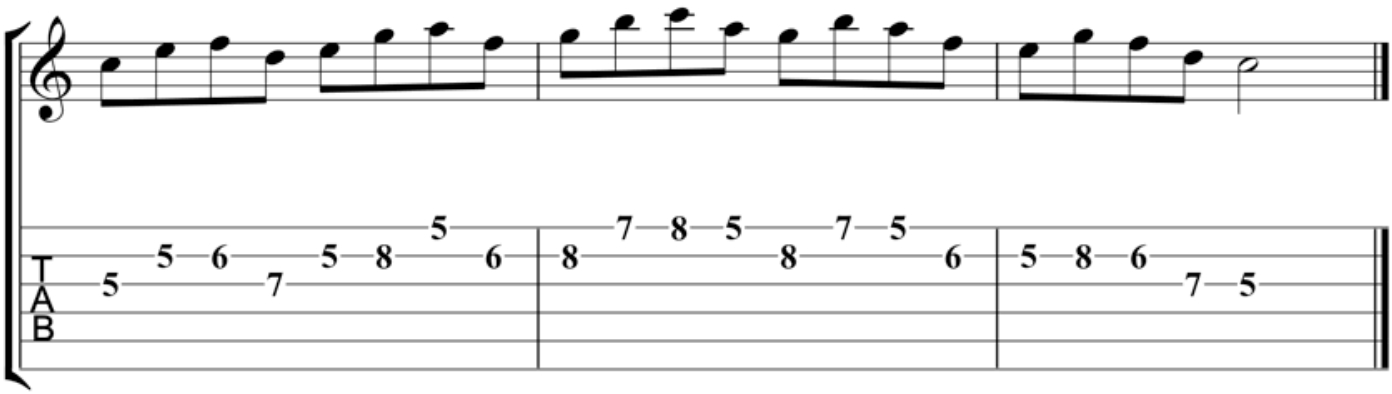

Diatonic 3rds Pattern 4

To finish your study of 3rds, here’s the reverse combination pattern.

With all four 3rds patterns under your belt, play them back to back as you challenge yourself further.

For an even bigger challenge, play each variation with a different rhythm as you expand your rhythmic and technical chops in the practice room.

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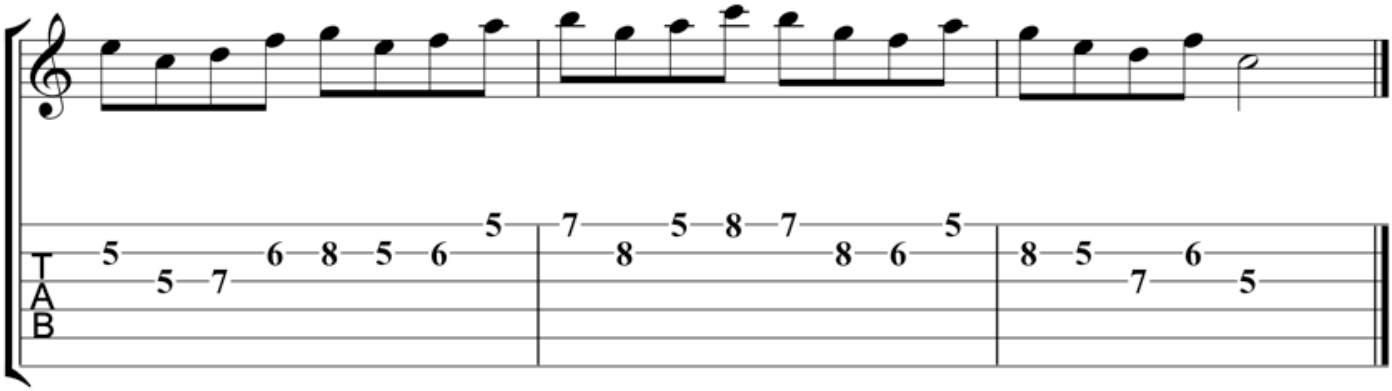

Diatonic Triads Scale Patterns

In the next four scale patterns, you work on applying triads to your major scale practice routine.

When working on diatonic triads through any scale, you play two skips in a row.

Doing so will challenge both your picking and fretting hands.

Because of this, triads through scales is one of the best techniques to build coordination between both hands.

Work each pattern separately at first.

Then, play them back to back as you expand your study of these important guitar techniques.

Diatonic Triads Pattern 1

Here’s the ascending triads version of the pattern.

Because this is a three-note pattern, it’s longer than the patterns you’ve studied before.

This builds endurance as well as technique, especially when playing two or more variations back to back.

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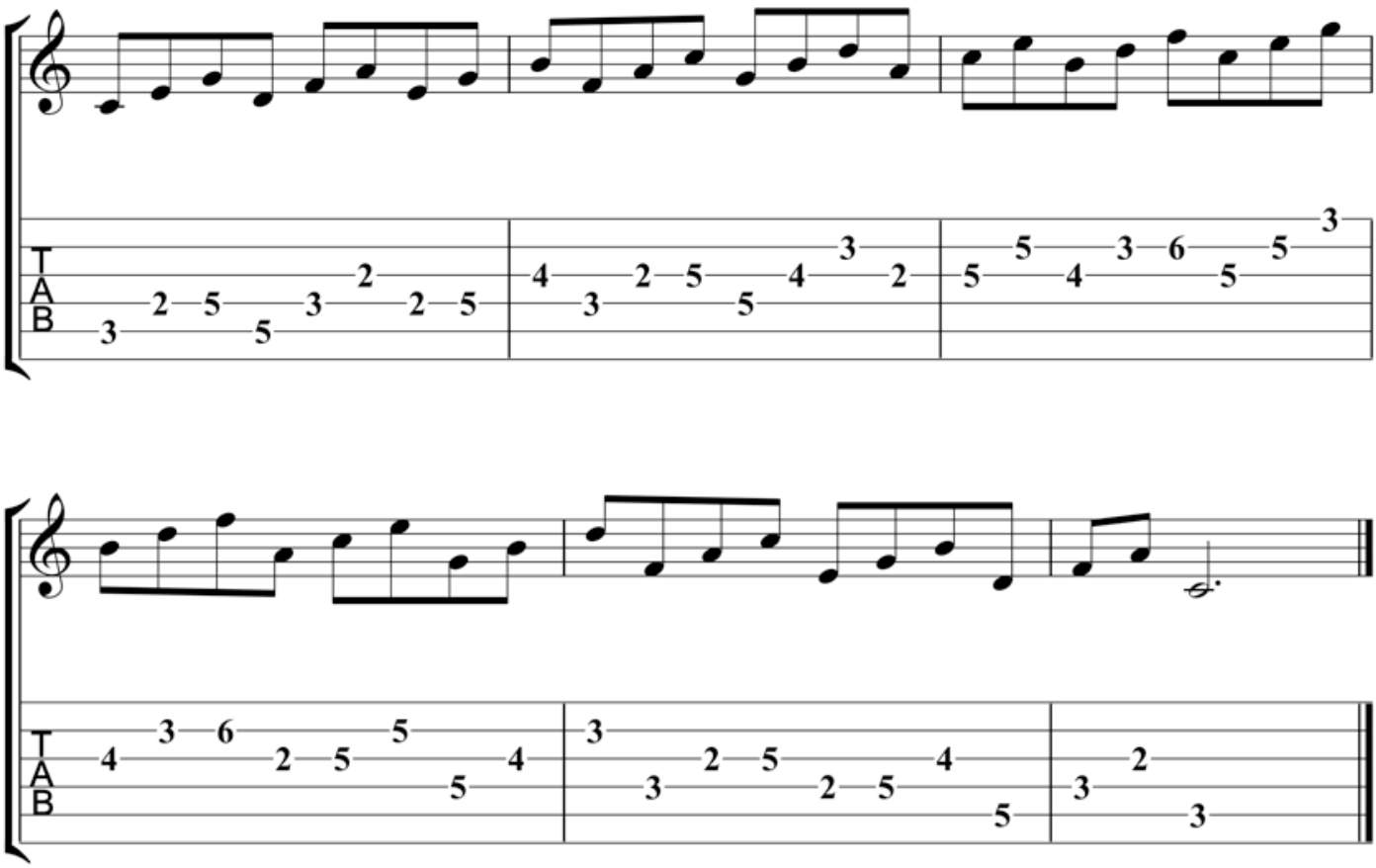

Diatonic Triads Pattern 2

Here’s the reversal of that first triad pattern, descending diatonic triads.

To push yourself further, work on saying each triad as you play through the scale.

For instance, when playing in the key of C major, say the following triad names as you played them.

C-Dm-Em-F-G-Am-Bdim

You don’t have to say each triad to benefit from this exercise.

But.

Learning theory with your scale patterns opens up your fretboard and increases your knowledge of music theory at the same time.

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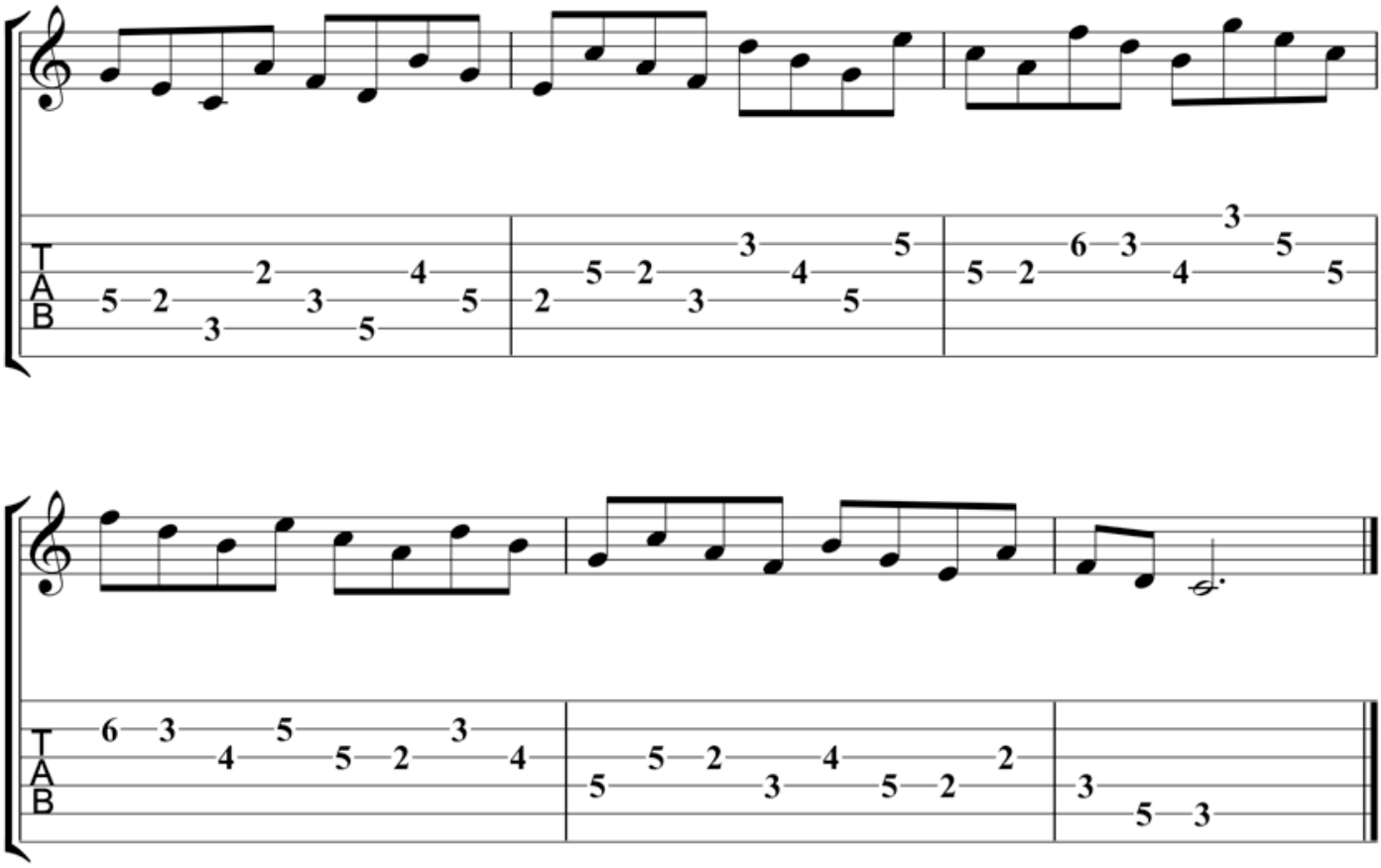

Diatonic Triads Pattern 3

This is the first combination triad scale pattern, featuring one ascending and one descending triad through the scale.

Again, say each triad to expand this exercise in your routine.

If you find this difficult, start without any tempo.

Just play the first triad and say C.

Then say Dm and play the next triad.

Even doing that once before running the scale with a metronome is beneficial.

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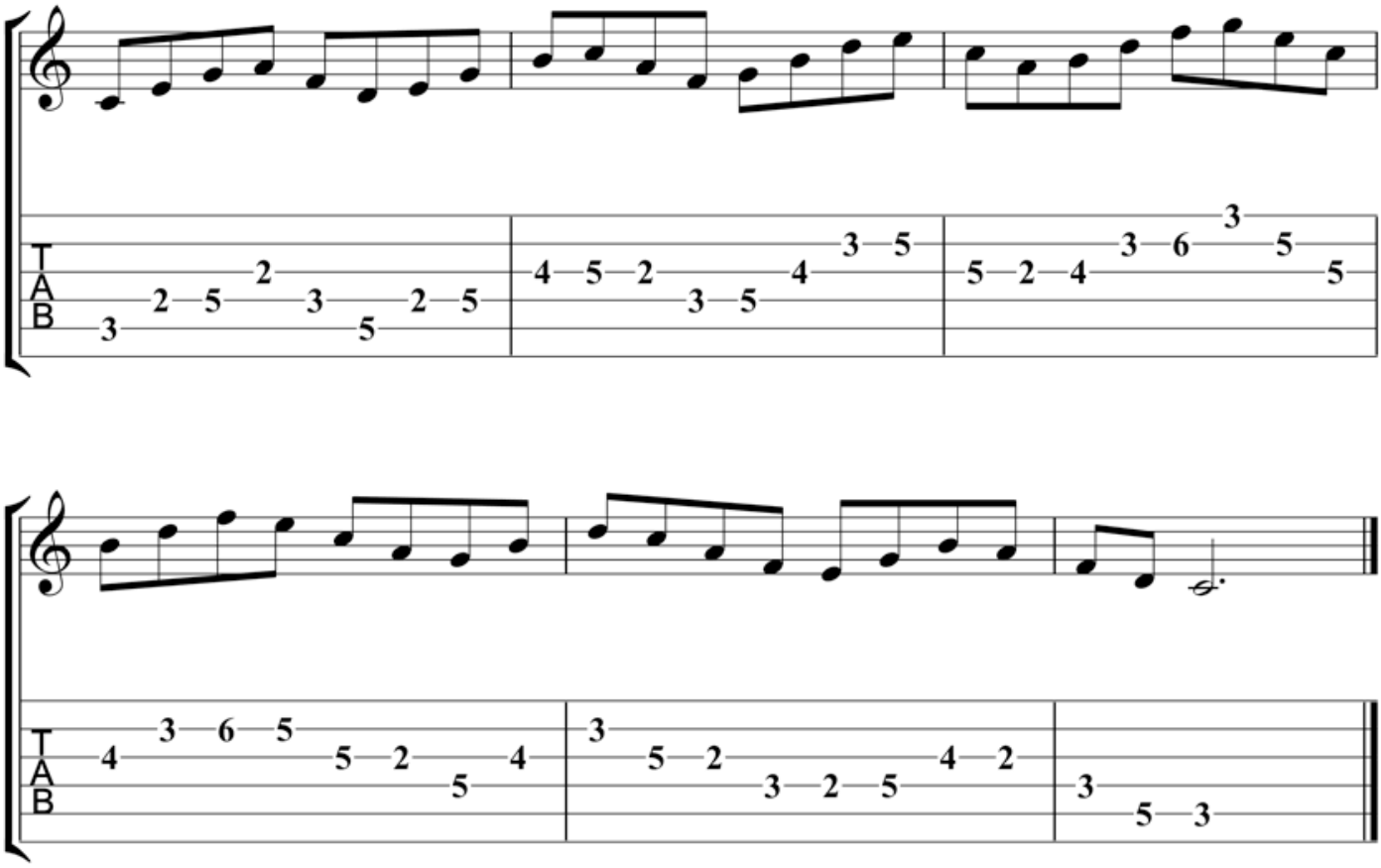

Diatonic Triads Pattern 4

To finish your study of triads through scales, here's the second combination version of this pattern.

Don't forget to apply these triad patterns to your solos as well.

Working guitar technique is great with a metronome, but it really takes off when used in a soloing setting.

As I've often said to my private guitar students:

“If you can play a technique, it’s memorized. But, if you can solo with a technique it’s internalized.”

You always want to internalize any technique, not just memorize it in your studies.

This way, techniques such as these patterns become a part of your vocabulary, and don’t remain on the page as a small part of your practice routine.

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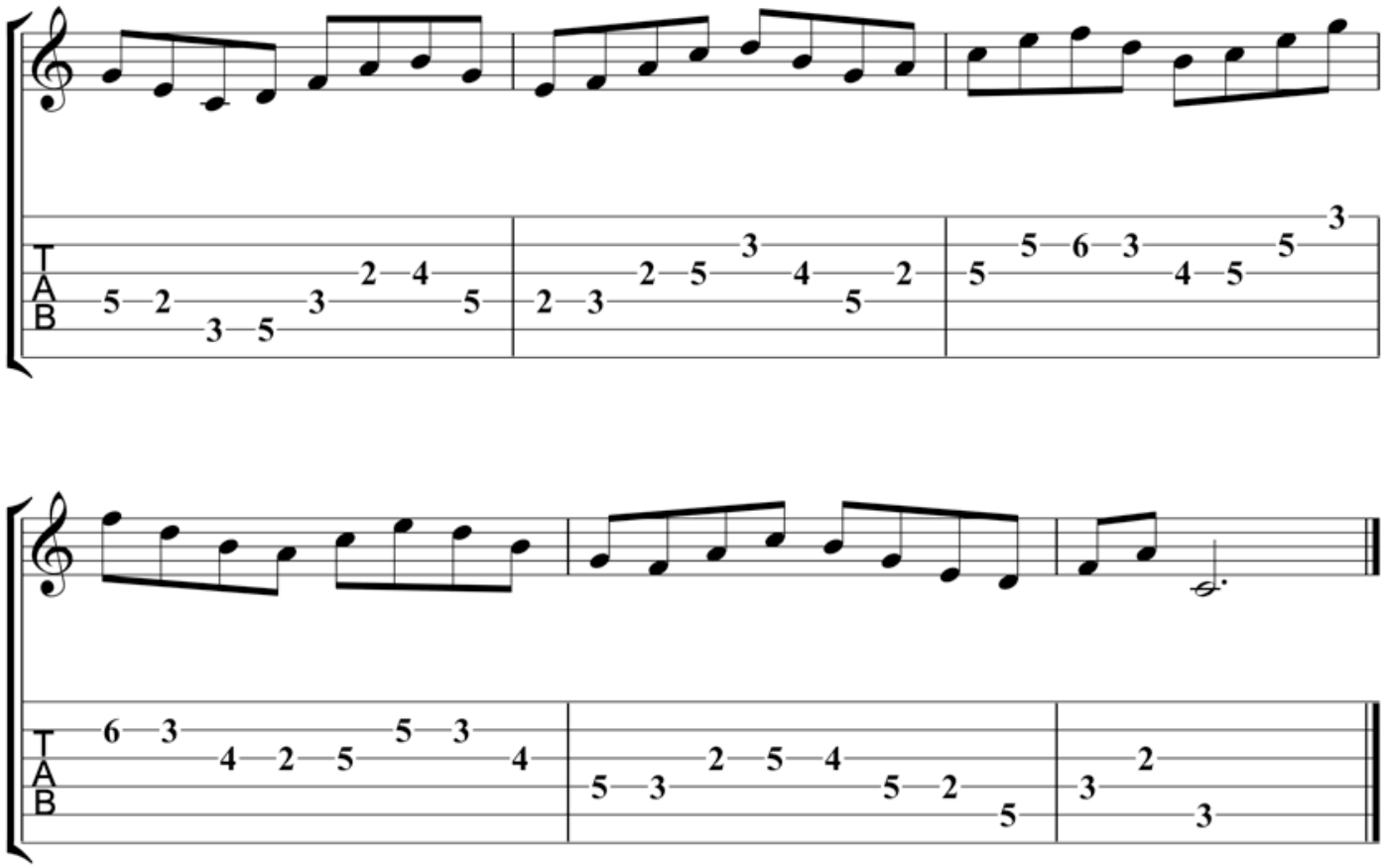

Diatonic Arpeggio Patterns

If you've been working through these techniques in order, you know that once you learn a three-note pattern, you add a note to make it a four-note pattern.

When adding a note to the three-note triads, you form four-note arpeggios. Below are four variations of diatonic arpeggios applied to the C major scale.

Work these variations both with a metronome and over backing tracks in your studies.

As well, to challenge yourself, say each diatonic arpeggio as you play it through each scale.

Diatonic Arpeggio Pattern 1

To start, here are ascending arpeggios through the C major scale.

If you want to say each arpeggio as you play them, here is the order for the key of C major.

Cmaj7-Dm7-Em7-Fmaj7-G7-Am7-Bm7b5

From there, move this scale pattern and those diatonic arpeggios to other keys.

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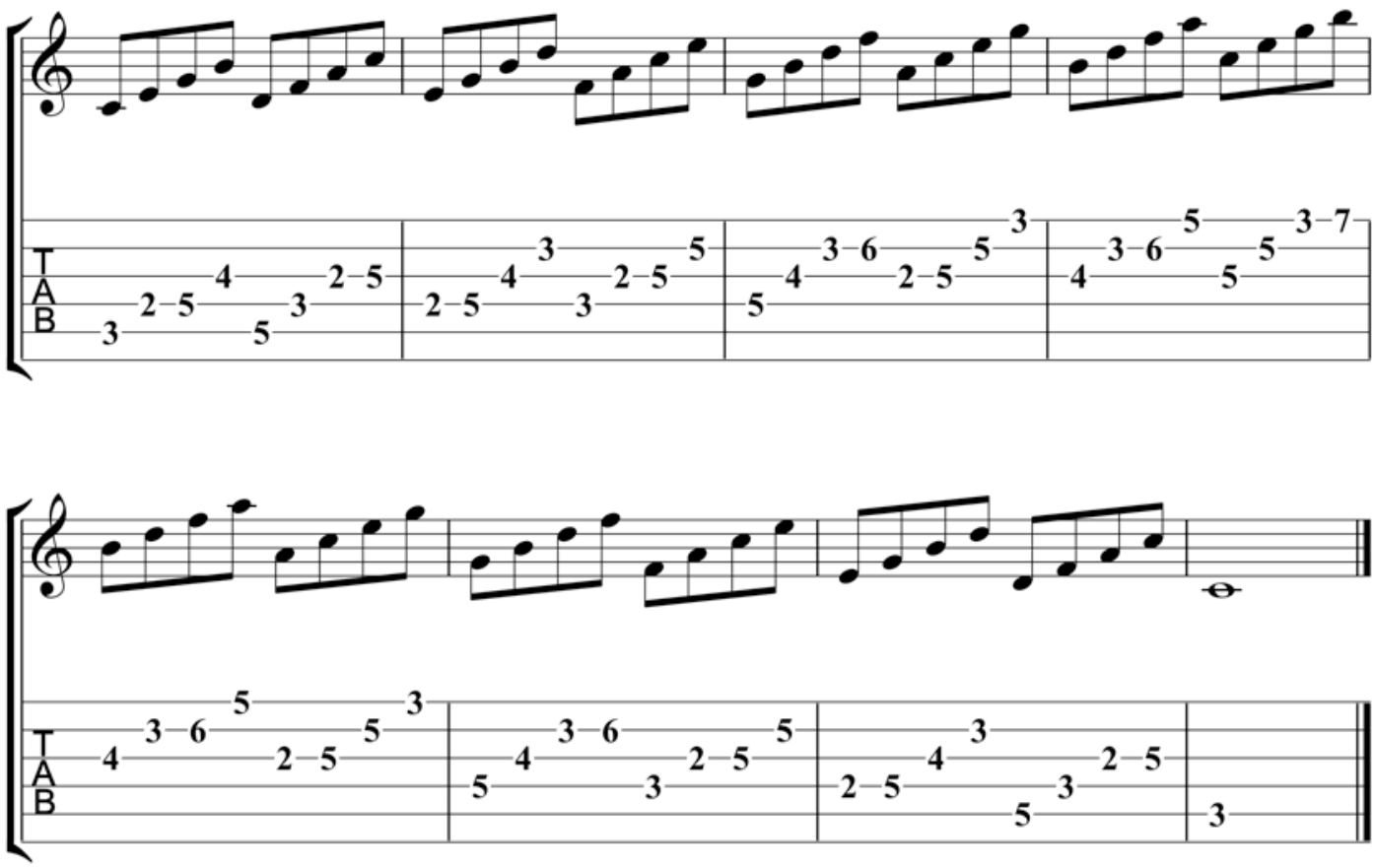

Diatonic Arpeggio Pattern 2

Here’s the descending version of the diatonic arpeggio pattern.

Though they’re a reversal of the pattern you just learned, descending arpeggios are difficult to play.

Picturing the top note of an arpeggio and playing it down from there is tough as it is.

Then, add tempo, rhythm, and different keys, and you’ve got a practice room challenge in front of you.

To make this easier, play through any arpeggio pattern first with no metronome to visualize the shape on the fretboard.

Then, add the metronome to bring these diatonic arpeggios up to speed in your studies.

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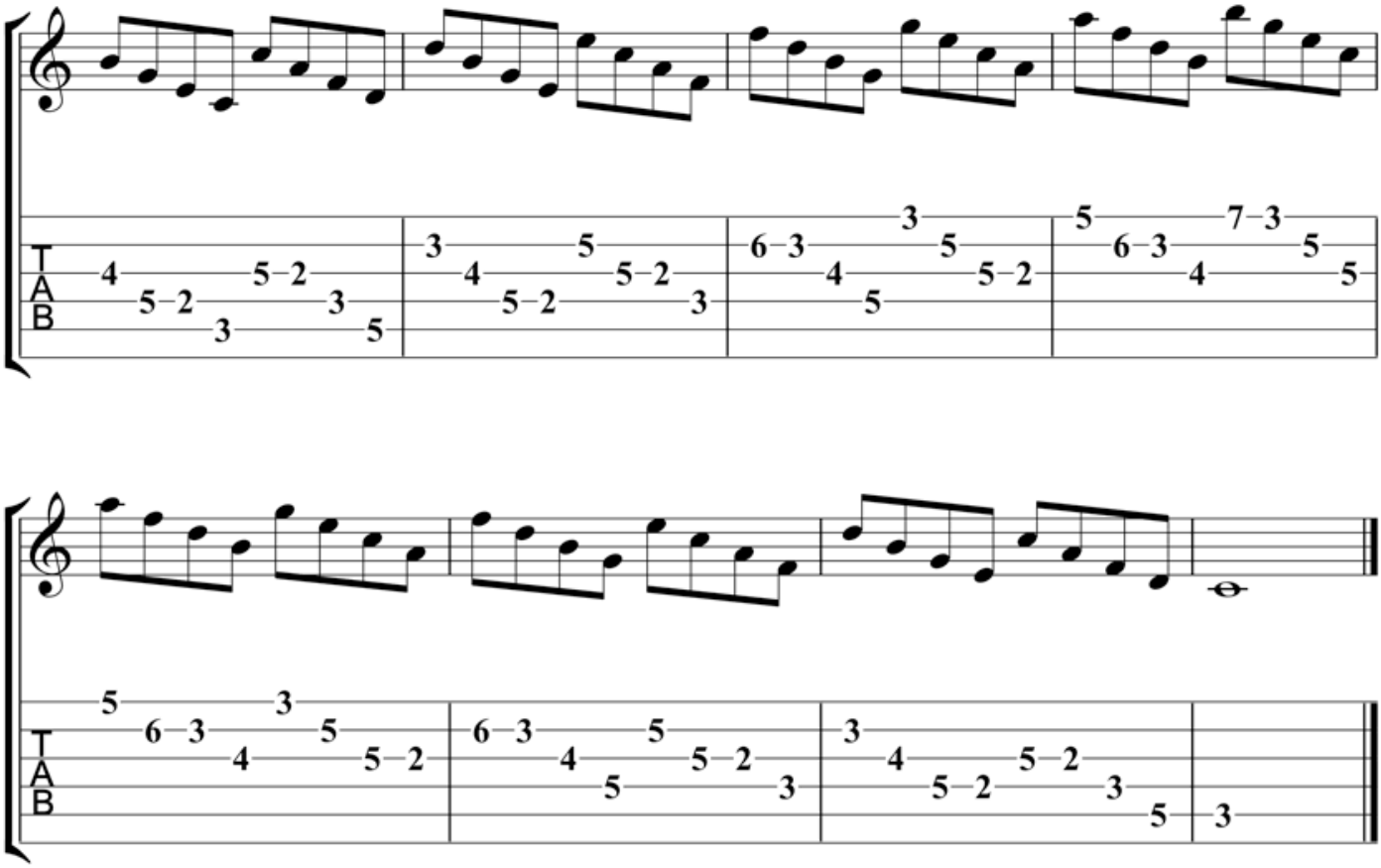

Diatonic Arpeggio Pattern 3

Moving on, you're combining the first two diatonic arpeggio patterns in this exercise.

Make sure to solo with these patterns to apply them to a musical situation.

When doing so, start with a one-chord vamp, then move on to more complex chord progressions and full songs from there.

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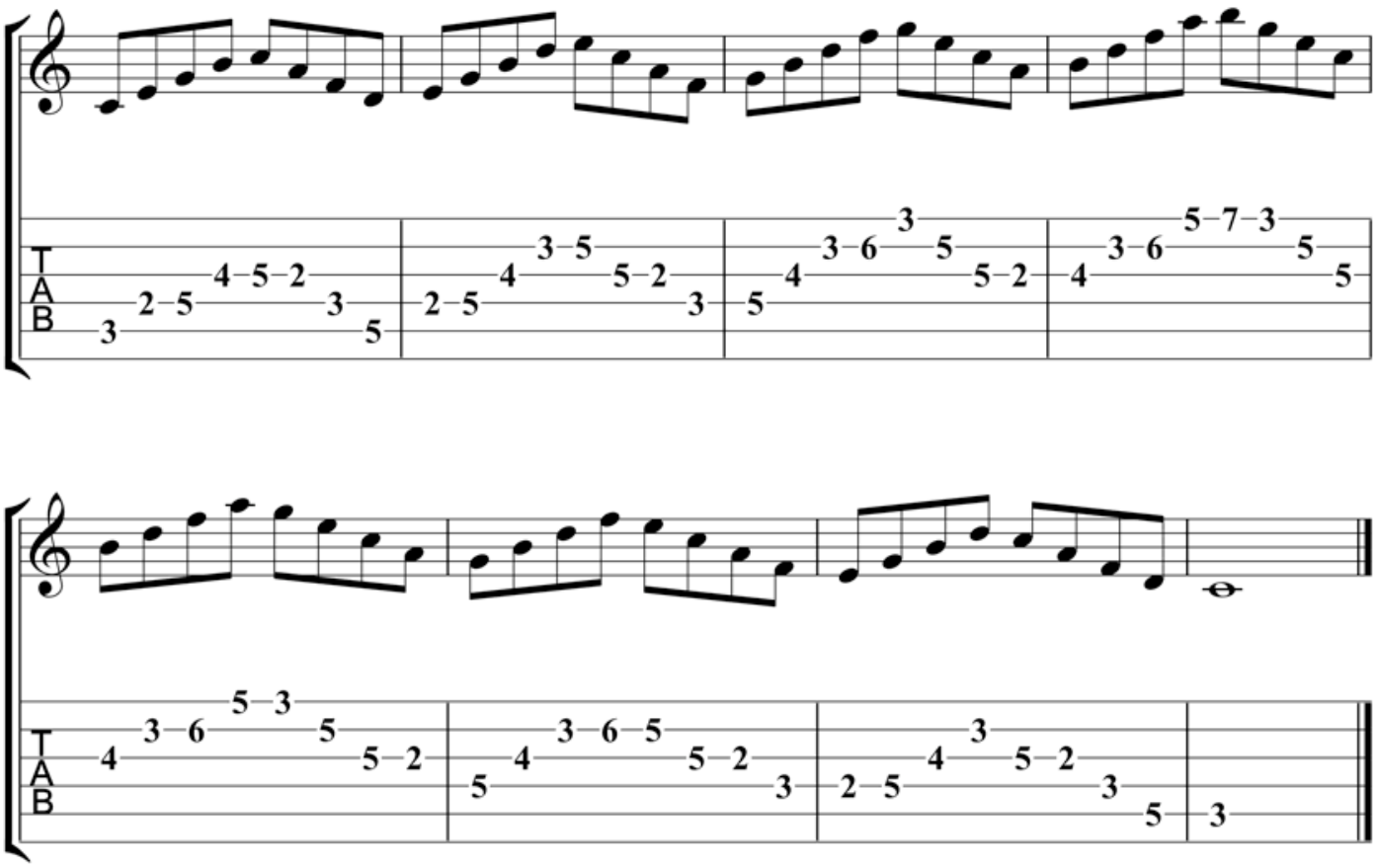

Diatonic Arpeggio Pattern 4

The last variation is a descending arpeggio followed by an ascending arpeggio through the C major scale.

To work on building endurance, play all four arpeggio patterns back to back.

This tests your memory, builds coordination, and challenges your endurance all at the same time.

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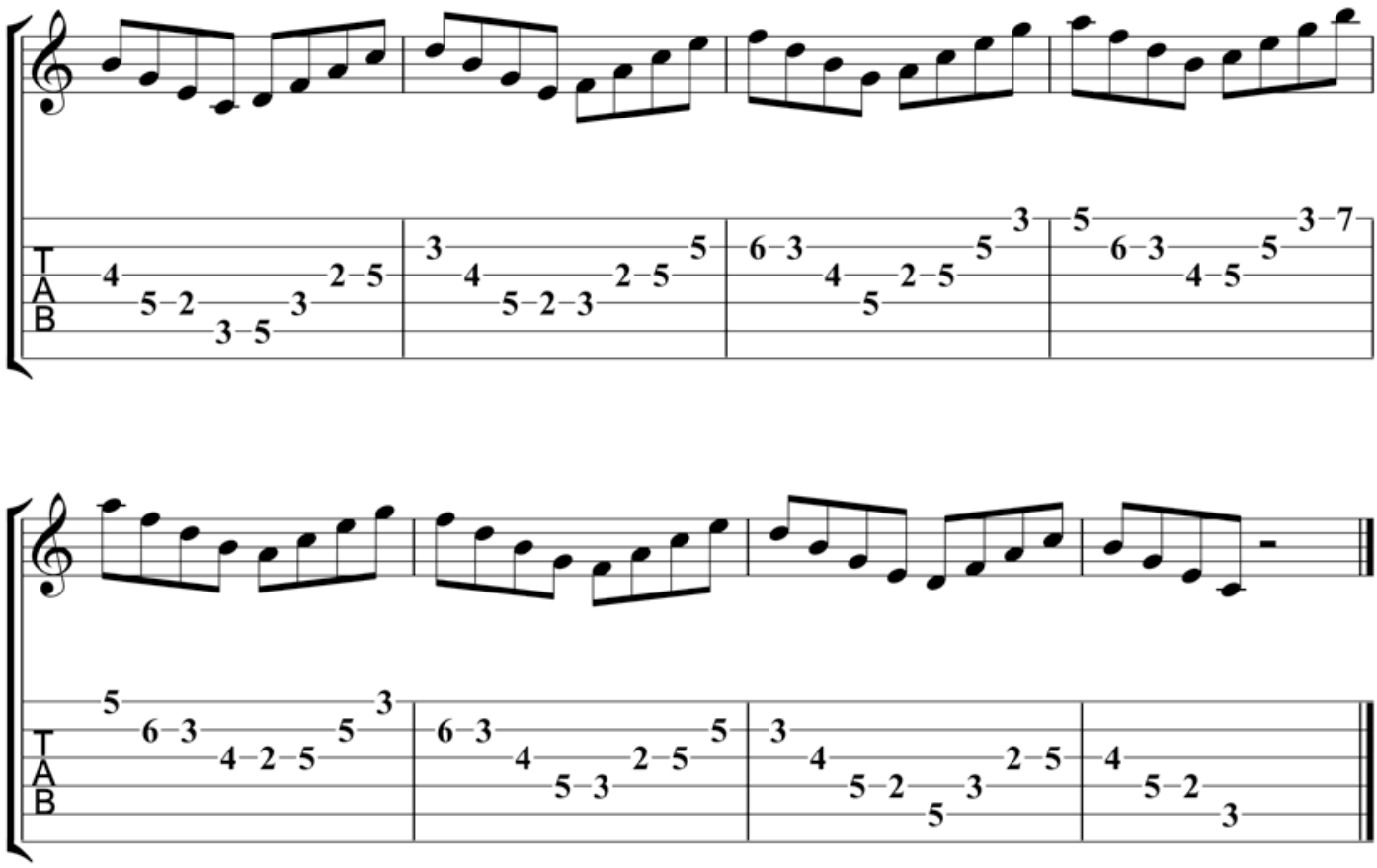

1235 Scale Pattern

The final major scale pattern comes from the late, great saxophonist John Coltrane.

This pattern became famous after Trane used it in his solo over the song Giant Steps.

While he applied the 1235 pattern to each chord, one at a time, you apply this pattern to each note in the major scale.

This is tricky to apply on the fly.

So, feel free to use the music for the first few variations, then practice the 1235 group from any note in the major scale without the music.

Learning guitar technique often means going beyond the fretboard and taking inspiration from other instruments.

The 1235 scale pattern is an example of this approach.

1235 Scale Patterns 1

Here’s the ascending 12345 pattern.

As you saw earlier, using triplet rhythms with a four-note scale pattern moves your playing into new directions.

So, start with quarter or 8th notes.

Then, when ready, move on to triplets to hear how a three-note rhythm alters the sound of a four-note scale pattern.

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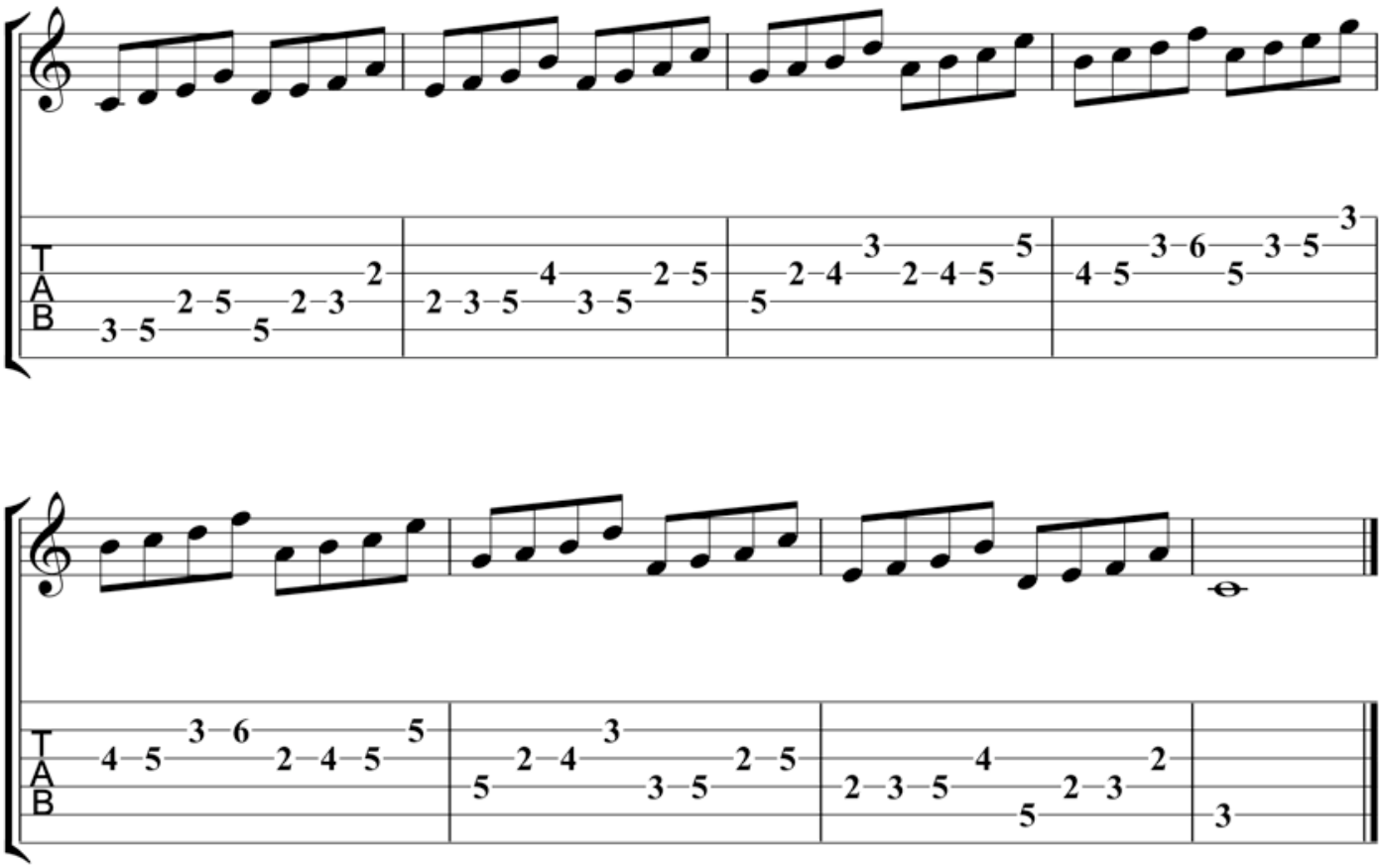

1235 Scale Patterns 2

Here’s the first variation of the 1235 pattern, where you descend the pattern over the scale shape.

When doing so, you produce the interval structure 5321.

As was the case with diatonic arpeggios, the descending 1235 pattern is tough to get down.

Take your time with this scale pattern in your studies.

With time, and focus in the woodshed, you can nail this essential scale pattern.

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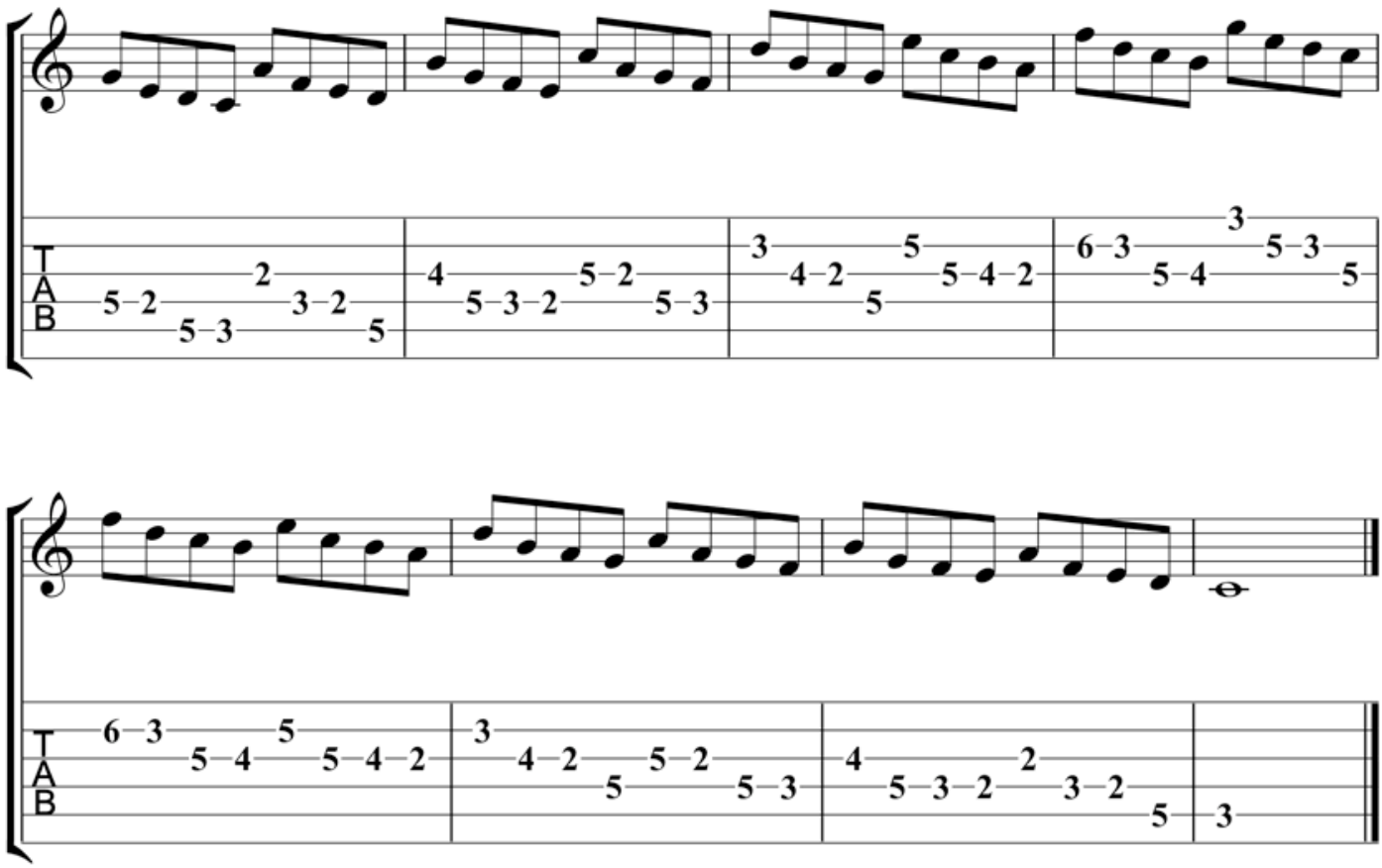

1235 Scale Patterns 3

Here’s the first 1235 combination scale pattern.

Watch your picking when switching directions with this pattern, or any combination scale pattern.

Sometimes they'll sit nicely on the fretboard.

But, other times those switches need focus to get them down smoothly.

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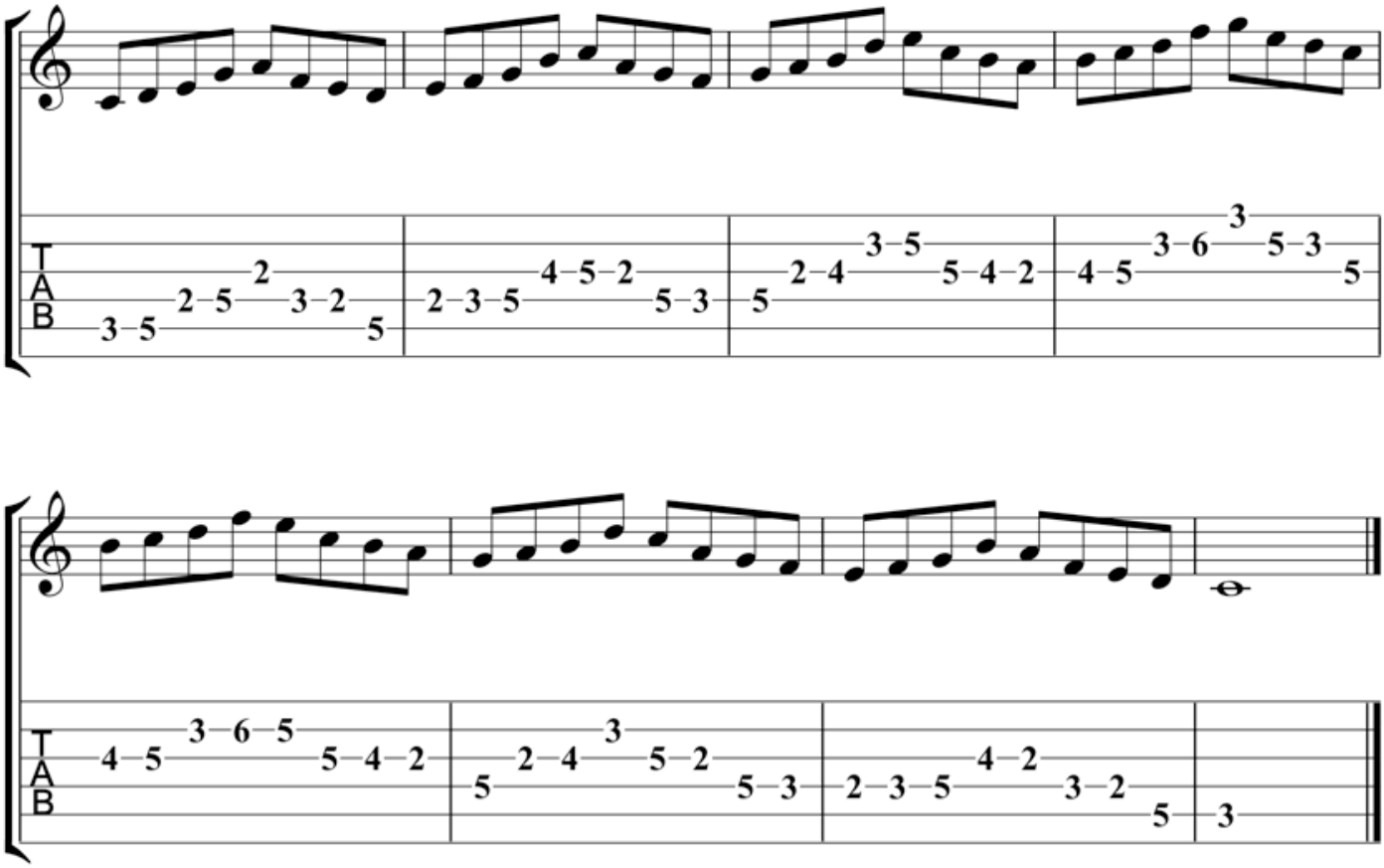

1235 Scale Patterns 4

The final 1235 pattern is the reverse combination pattern.

When practicing guitar technique you want to build your endurance as much as anything.

So, after learning this pattern, play as many patterns as you can in a row over the C major scale.

Even at a slow tempo this is a highly beneficial exercise.

It builds your chops and works your memorization of scale patterns in one exercise.

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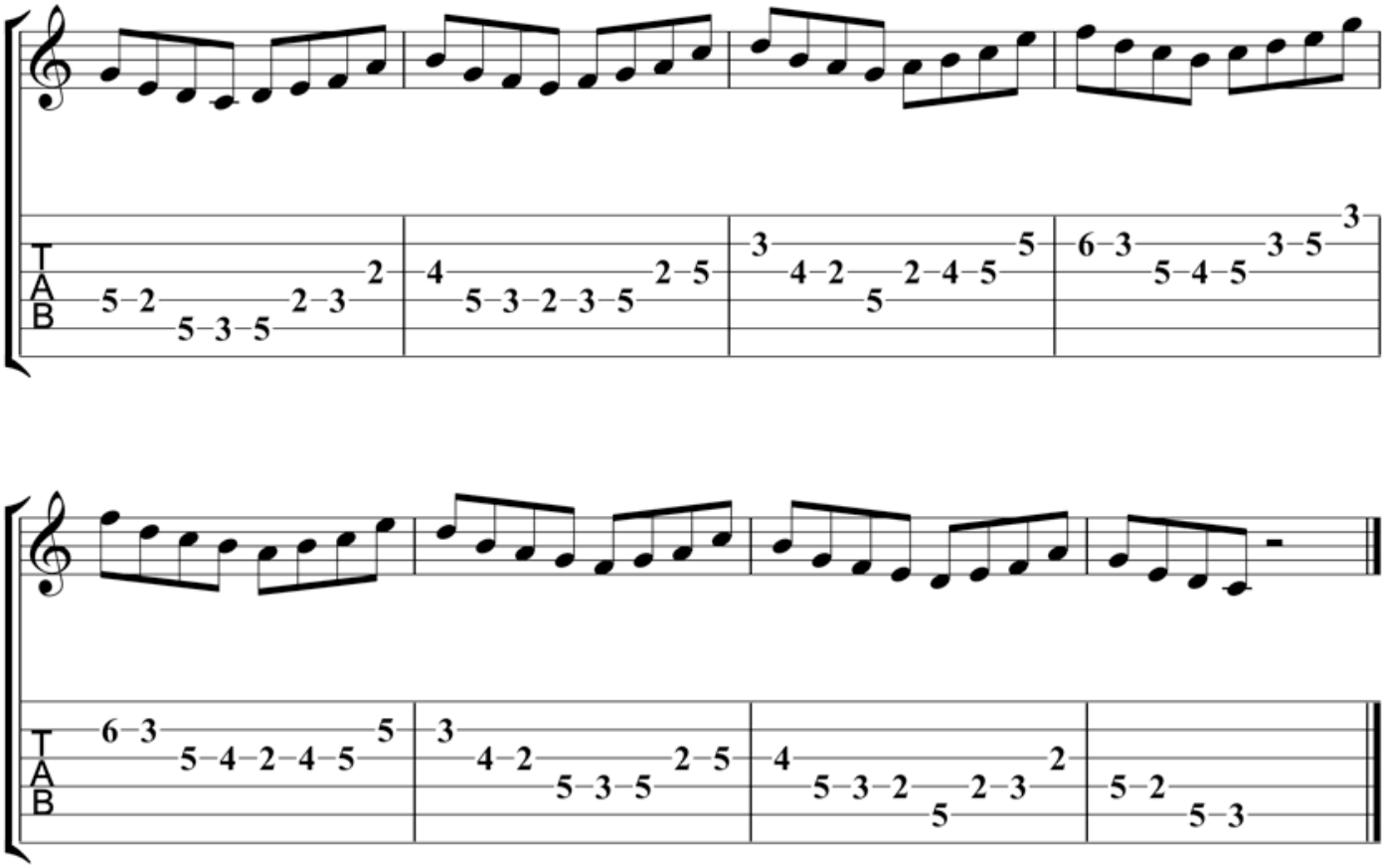

Jazz Scale Patterns

If you're exploring jazz guitar, these scale patterns are essential to bring into your practice routine.

Each pattern comes from transcribed solos by Joe Pass, Mike Stern, and more.

Not only do these patterns build technique, they instantly turn your scales into jazz guitar licks when used over jazz standards in your solos.

Each of the patterns below is demonstrated over a G7 chord. Make sure to apply them to other scales to build a balanced practice approach.

These include major modes, harmonic minor modes, and the ever popular bebop scale.

Lastly, when working jazz scale patterns, they sound best played down the scale in the beginning.

So, each of the patterns below is presented with an ascending G7 arpeggio followed by the descending pattern.

When you're comfortable with any pattern, apply it in any direction to your jazz guitar solos.

Enclosed Root

The first jazz guitar pattern is one of the most important, the enclosure.

Enclosures have many variations, but this one is the most popular.

Here's how you build this enclosure:

- First play a note one fret higher than the target note.
- Then, play one fret below the target note.
- Then play the target note.

Enclosing that target note with two chromatic notes.

Building tension, these chromatic notes need to be resolved to avoid awkward moments in your solos.

So, you can add enclosures over any chord or scale, but make sure to land on the target note at the end of each enclosure.

This allows you to build tension and release in your jazz guitar solos, and avoid any lines sounding like mistakes.

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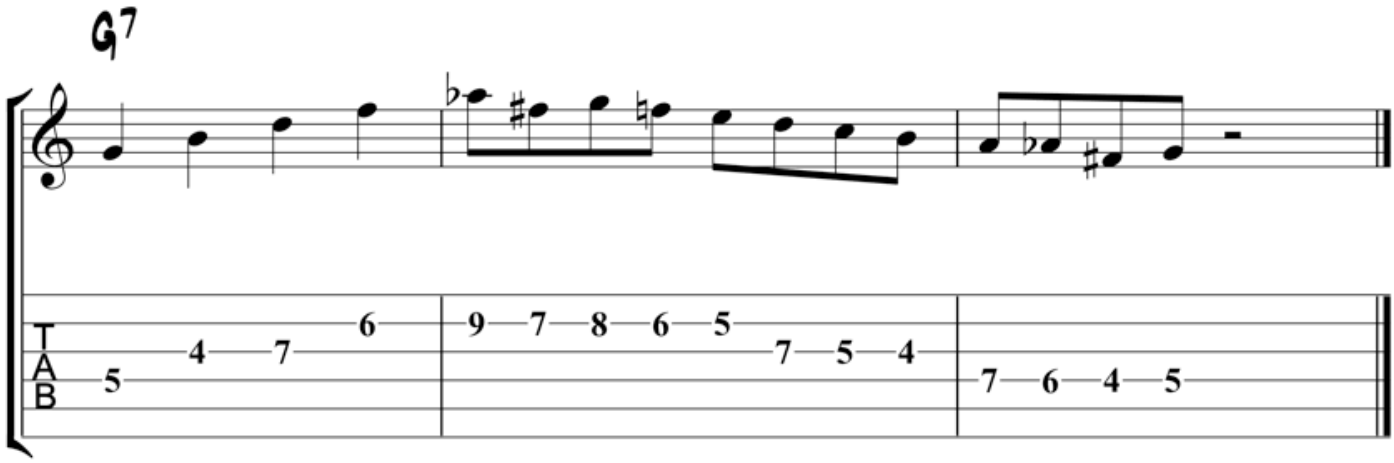

Enclosed 5th

As well as adding enclosures to the root of any scale, you can enclose the 5th.

Here’s an example of adding an enclosure to the 5th of G Mixolydian.

When this pattern is comfortable, take it to other scales to expand upon the enclosed 5th in your practice routine.

As well, don’t forget to bring this pattern to your soloing studies, that’s where the musical rubber really hits the road.

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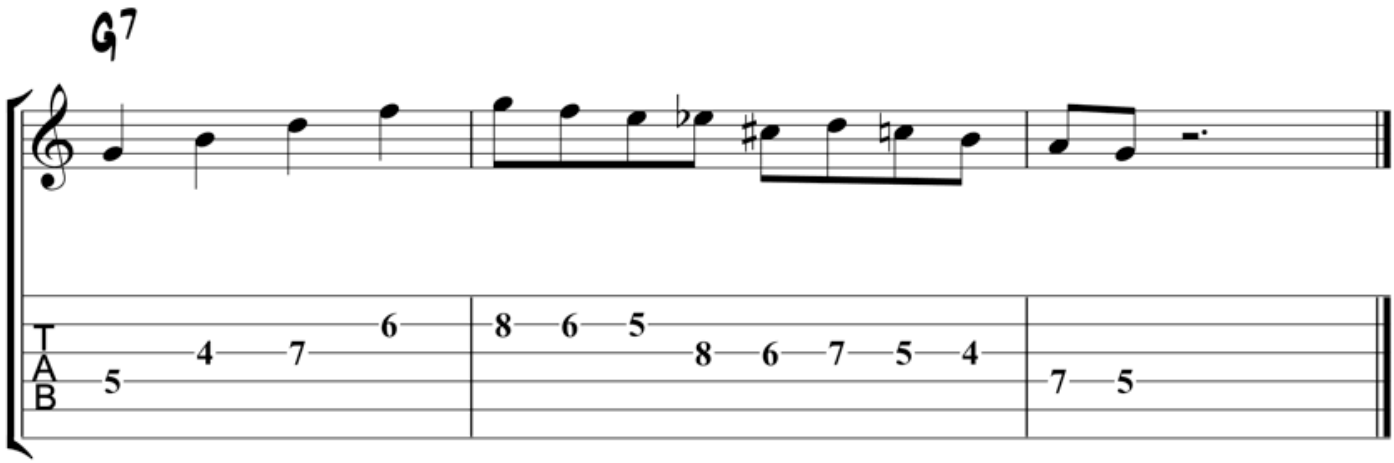

Enclosed Root and 5th

Here are both the enclosed root and 5th applied to G Mixolydian.

This may sound too tense for some players, but give it a try.

It might be too harsh at first.

But.

With time, your ears become accustomed to this new sound and you can apply these enclosures organically in your solos.

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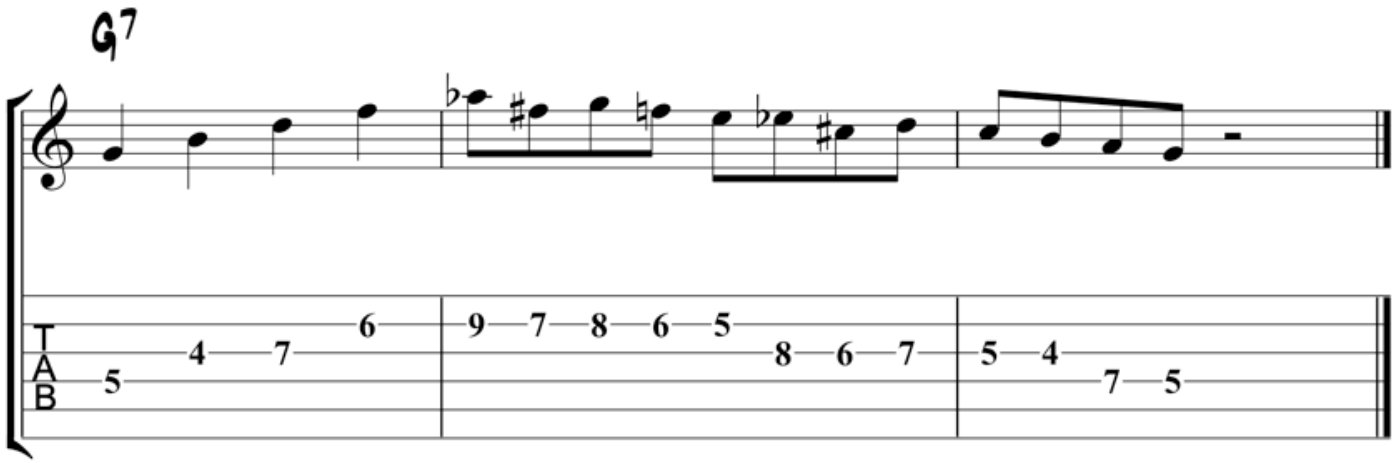

Honeysuckle

One of the most popular jazz guitar patterns, the Honeysuckle is based on the the song by Fats Waller, Honeysuckle Rose.

In this pattern, you add a chromatic passing note to the original melody line to form this new melodic sound.

The pattern begins on the root note of any dominant or minor family chord you're soloing over, such as 7th and m7 chords.

When starting on the root, you play down three chromatic notes, before running up a diatonic triad to finish that section.

From there you can run down the rest of the scale as is.

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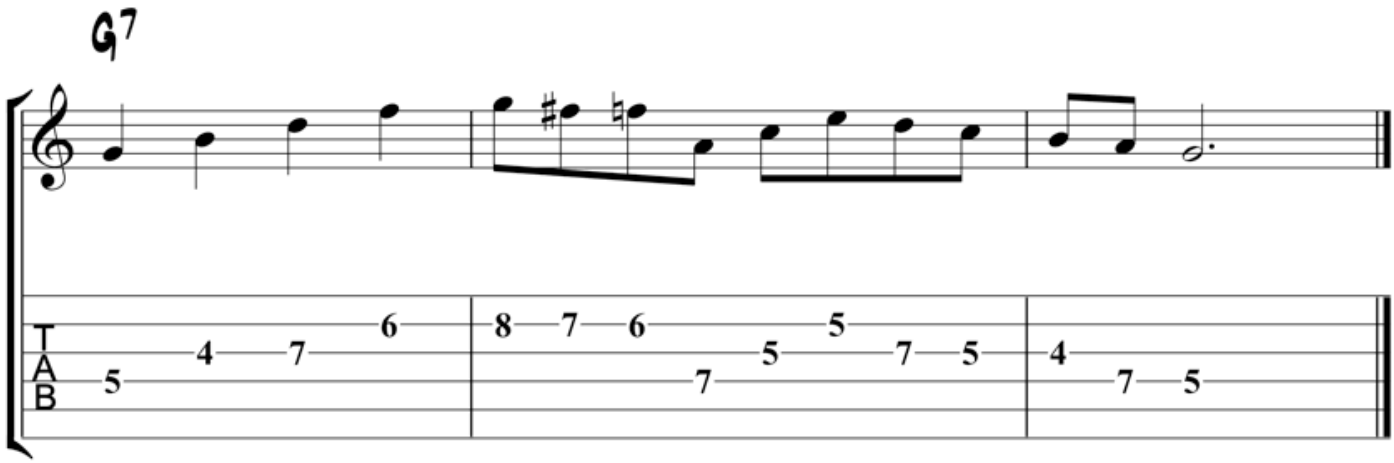

Honeysuckle Enclosed Root

Here's that same Honeysuckle pattern with an added enclosure on the root.

Again, work the Honeysuckle pattern, and enclosure, over both minor and dominant family chords.

Start by learning the following example over G7, then bring this extended pattern to other scales from there.

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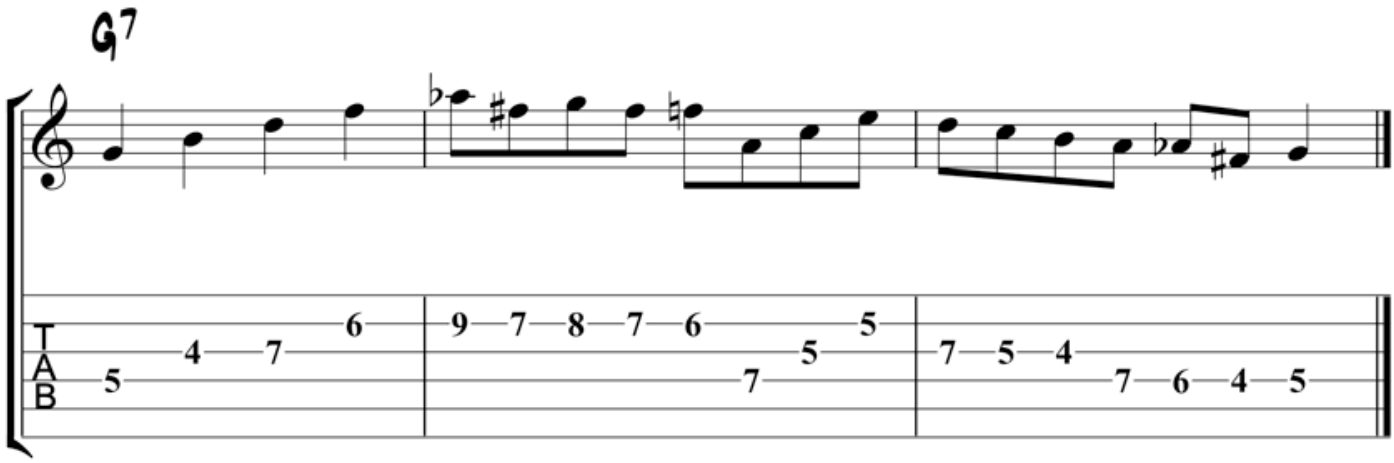

Honeysuckle Enclosed 5th

You can now add the enclosed 5th to the Honeysuckle pattern as you expand this jazz guitar technique further.

After you've worked out this pattern, bring both the enclosed root and 5th to your Honeysuckle pattern.

Try it out, though that may be too busy for you, it's worth exploring in your practice routine.

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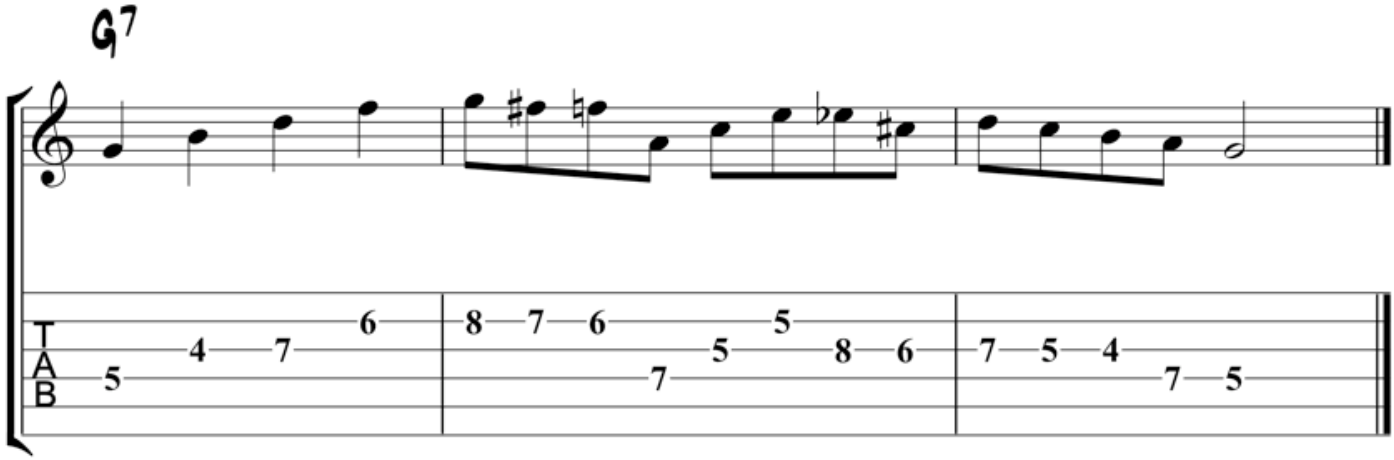

Double Approach

You'll now use a double approach pattern to highlight the 3rd of any 7th or maj7 chord.

As you can see, you play one note above the target note, in this case C with a B target note.

From there, you play two chromatic notes below that resolve up to your target.

In this key those four notes are C-A-A#-B. You can see this pattern over a G7 chord below.

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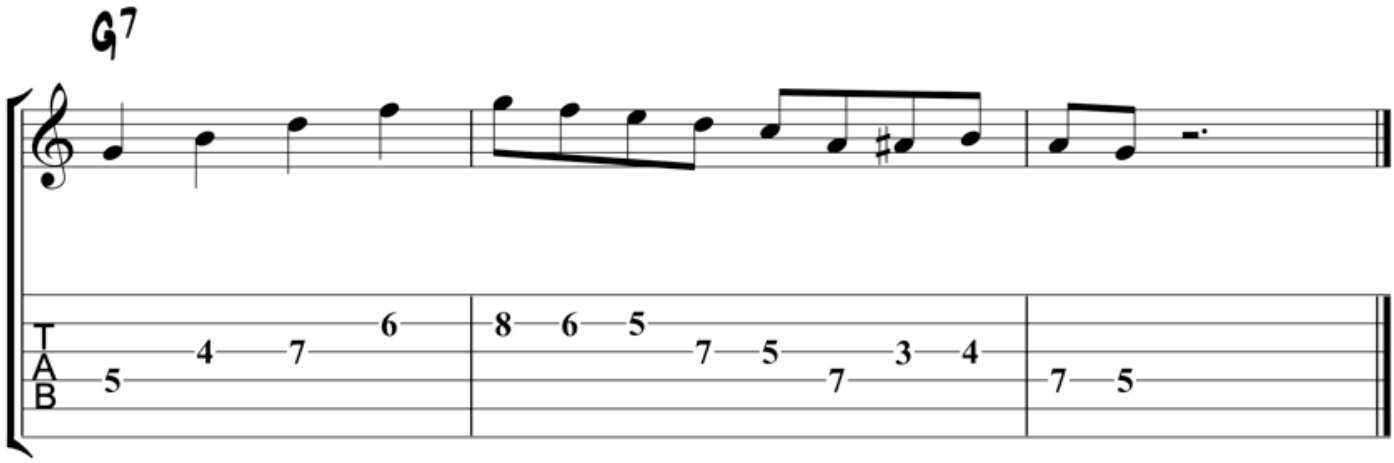

Double Approach 2

Here’s the same approach note pattern, only this time applied to the 6th note of the Mixolydian scale.

As you can apply this double approach to any two notes a half-step apart, you can use it between the 3rd and 4th, and 6th and b7th of the Mixolydian scale.

After you’ve learned this, and the previous, pattern, apply it to any scale you know where you have two notes one fret apart on the guitar.

Click to hear guitar techniques scale patterns 50

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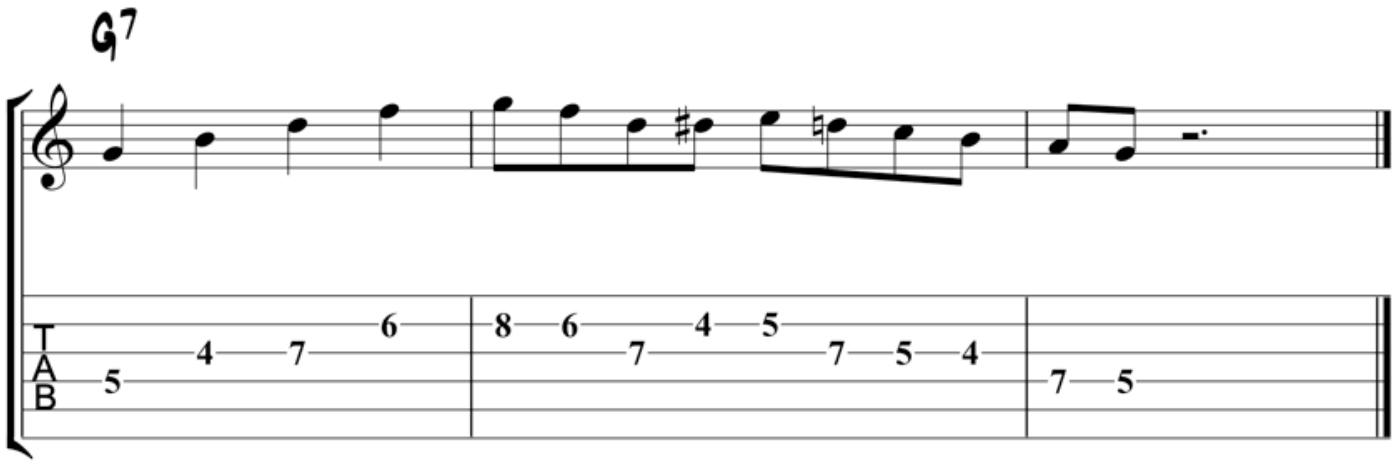

Joe Pass

Here’s a Joe Pass inspired pattern that you can use to add a jazz flavor to your dominant and major family lines.

The crux of this pattern is the chromatic triplets running from the 3rd to the 5th and back again.

In the example below, there’s an enclosure on the 3rd at the start of the chromatic notes.

This is to make the exercise run smoothly, and it’s optional when working this pattern into your jazz guitar solos.

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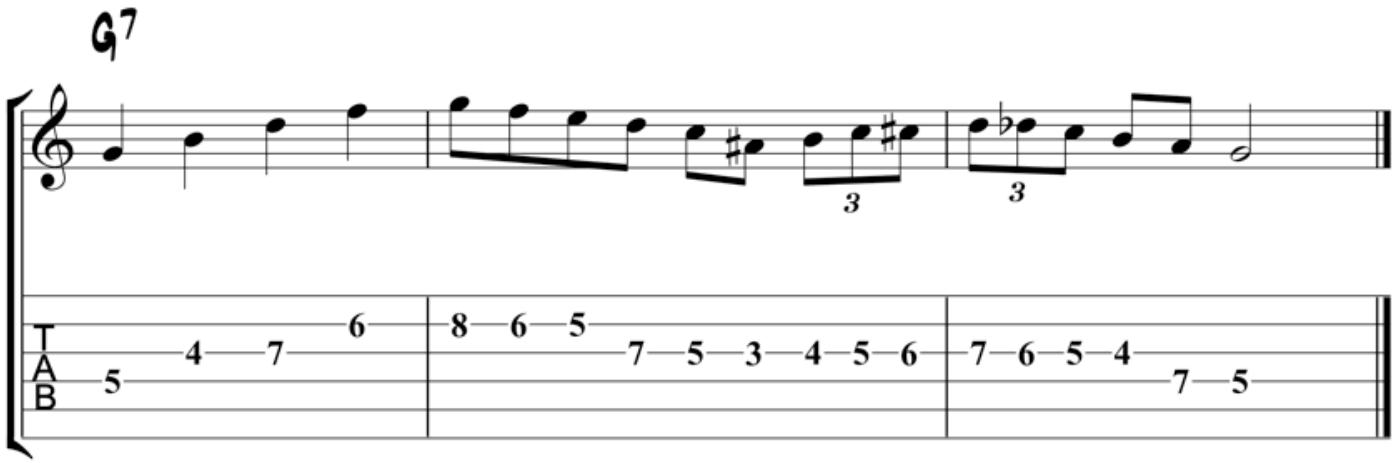

Dim7 Arpeggio

You can now mix an arpeggio into your jazz pattern practice.

Because this arpeggio is played from the major 3rd, you only use this pattern over dominant 7th chords.

But, you can use it with any 7th-chord scale, such as Mixolydian, bebop, Lydian dominant, and the altered scale.

When you play a dim7 arpeggio from the 3rd of a 7th chord, you outline a 7b9 sound in that chord.

The b9 interval causes tension, so make sure to resolve that tension so it doesn't sound like a mistake in your solos.

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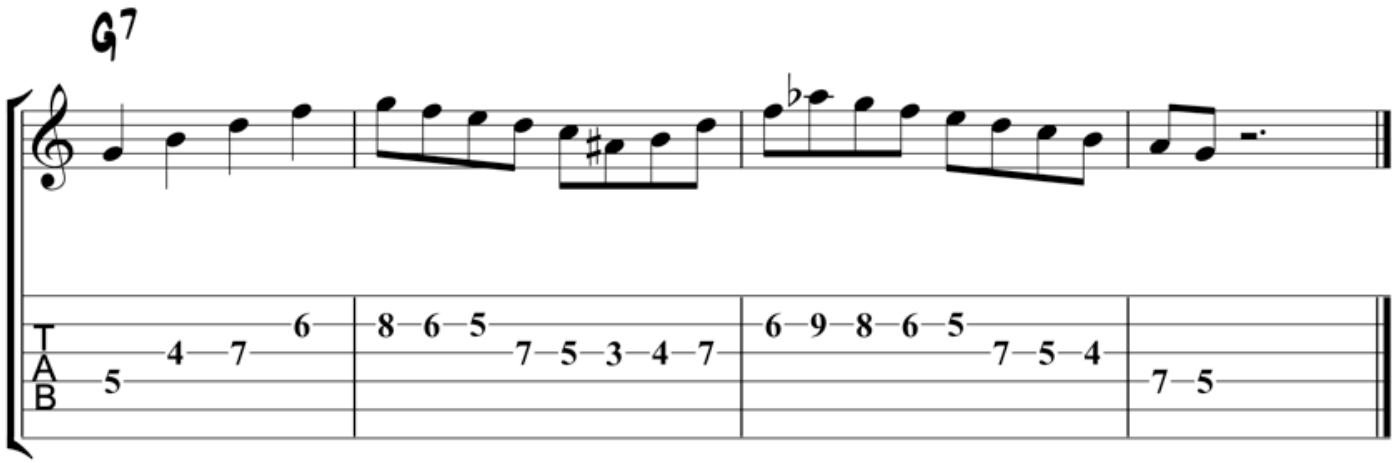

Dim7 Arpeggio Enclosure

The final jazz pattern adds an enclosure to the top of your dim7 arpeggio when applied to a G Mixolydian scale.

When adding in the enclosure, you can change the rhythm of the upper note to be a quarter note.

This allows the rest of the line to be smooth, and emphasizes to the b9 interval.

Tension is cool is jazz, such as the b9, as long as you resolve that tension.

This is a good example of that concept in action.

Click to hear guitar techniques scale patterns 53

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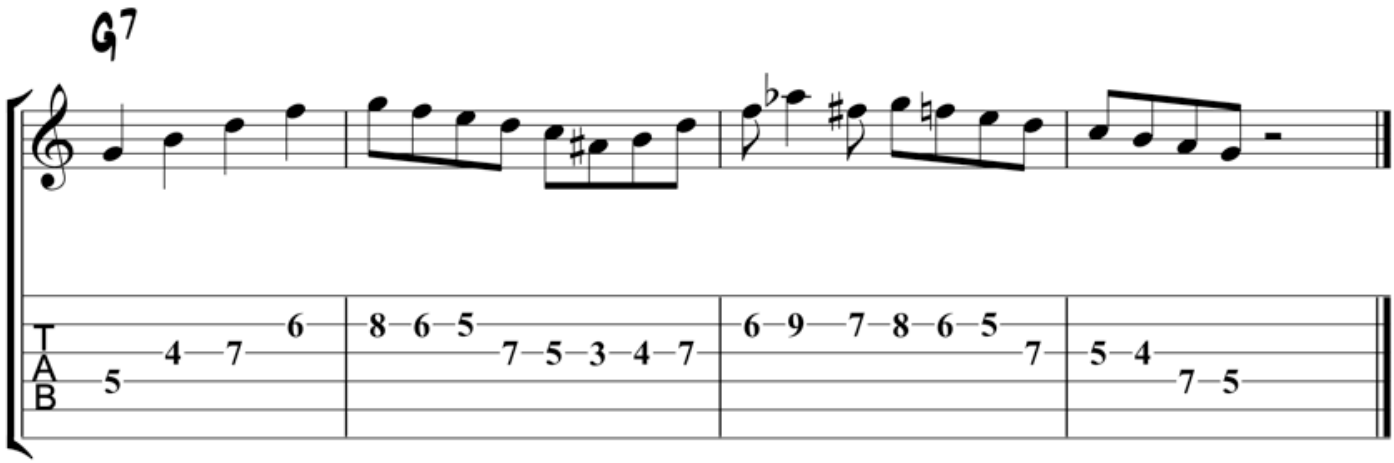

For the jazz players in the room, these scale patterns are essential.

They're the most common scale patterns in the genre, and make any scale you play sound like jazz.

For the non-jazz guitarists, check these patterns out.

They expand your guitar technique, open your ears to new options, and bring a bit of jazz into your playing.

And who knows, we might just win you over to the dark side one of these days.

Oz Noy Scale Patterns

Octave displacement is a technique used by many guitarists to break up scale shapes in their riffs, licks, and solos.

Recently, I was checking out a video by New York guitarist Oz Noy where he talks about his approach to octave displacement over a Cmaj7 chord.

The video prompted me to expand Oz's approach to all seven major modes in order to create a chops building exercise that teaches you the fretboard at the same time.

If you're looking for a way to work scales in note order, but hide the fact that you're playing scales, octave displacement is the way to go.

Work these patterns over the given scale shapes before moving them to other positions on the fretboard in your studies.

Ionian

You'll begin by applying Oz's technique to Ionian, which is used to solo over Maj7 chords.

Notice how the scale still sounds like Ionian, but the octave displacement creates a new way to get around a scale that you use everyday.

Click to hear oz noy scales 1

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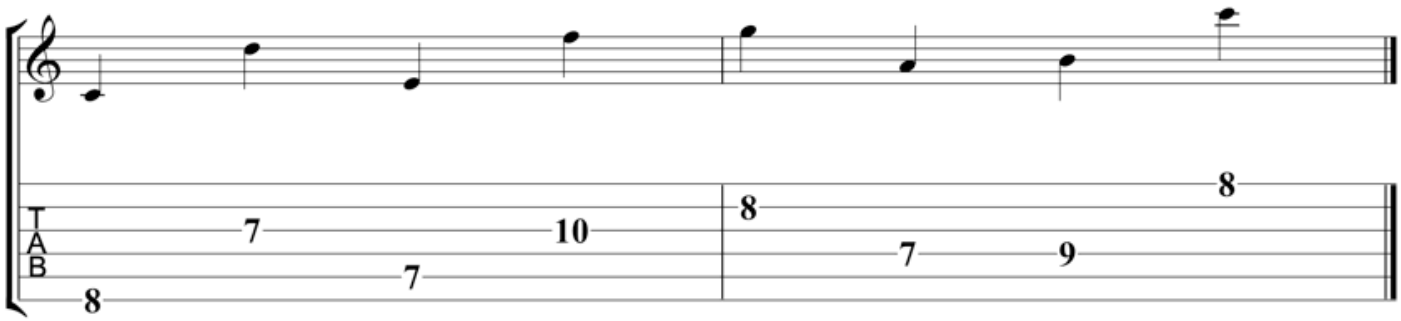

Dorian

Besides Ionian, Dorian is the second most used mode of the major scale, as it works great over m7 chords in any context.

Here's the octave displacement approach applied to one position of Dorian, that you can learn before expanding to other positions from there.

Click to hear oz noy scales 2

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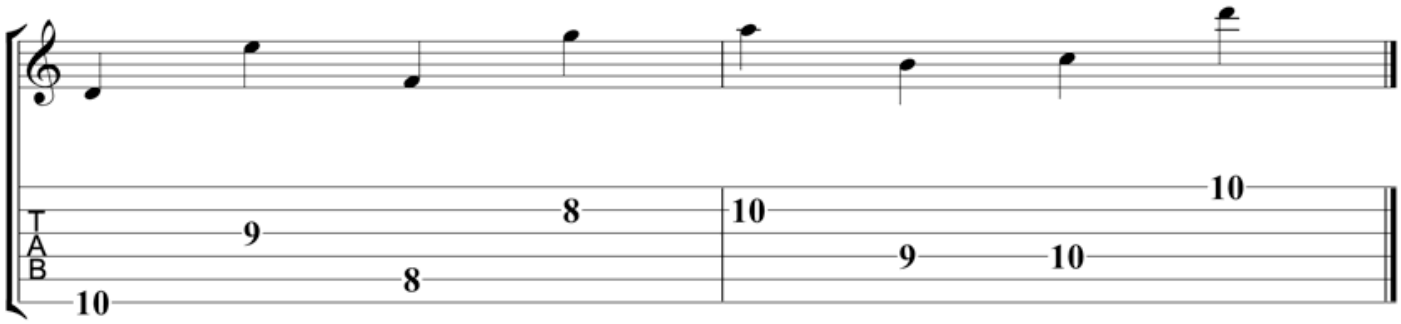

Phrygian

Though not as commonly used as Dorian and melodic minor scales, Phrygian has a unique sound that spices up your m7 lines.

The cool thing about octave displacement with Phrygian, is that it expands the b2 to the a b9, which adds a new approach to this characteristic interval in your playing.

Click to hear oz noy scales 3

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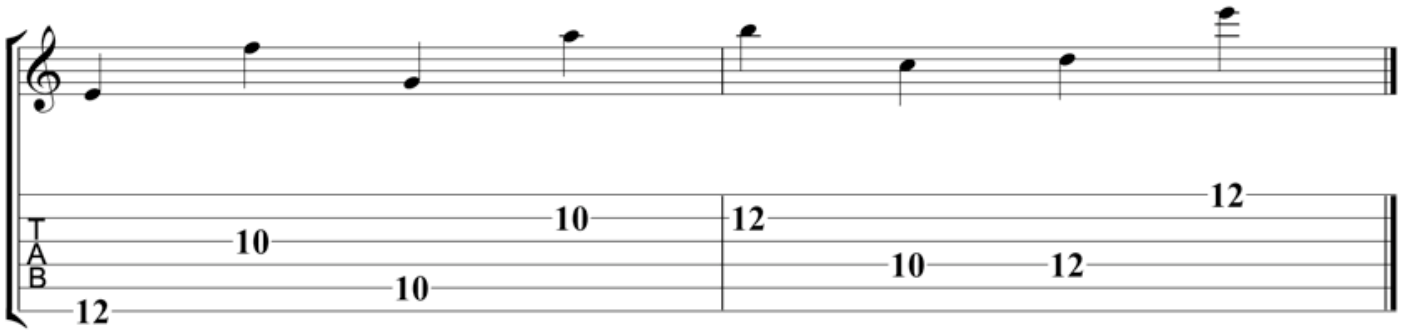

Lydian

Lydian is an effective way to expand your Maj7 soloing ideas, and adding octave displacement takes that approach one step further.

An effective way to practice this idea, is ascending Lydian and descending Ionian, mixing both major sounds in your studies.

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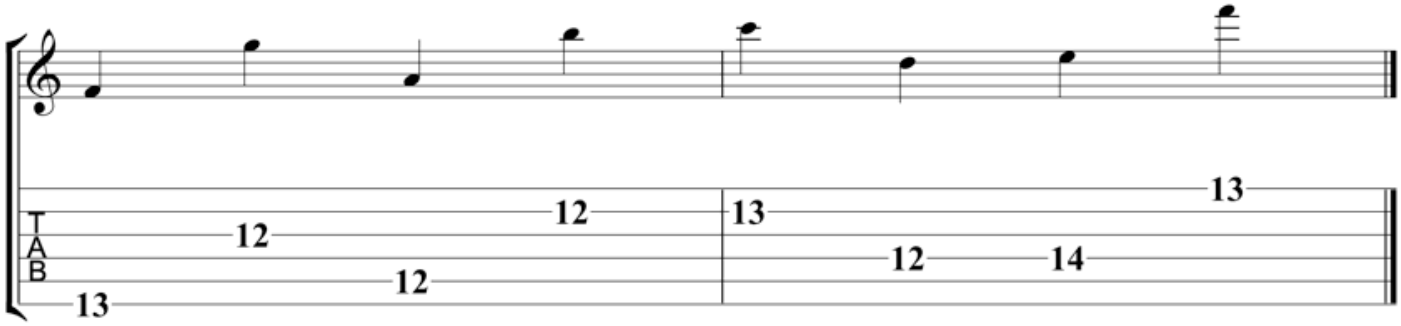

Mixolydian

Now you can apply Oz's fingerings to one of the most common modes, Mixolydian, which is used to solo over Dominant 7th chords.

Pairing this mode with Dorian cousin gives you a one-two punch that you can apply to major ii-V-I progressions, which crop up all over modern repertoire.

Click to hear oz noy scales 5

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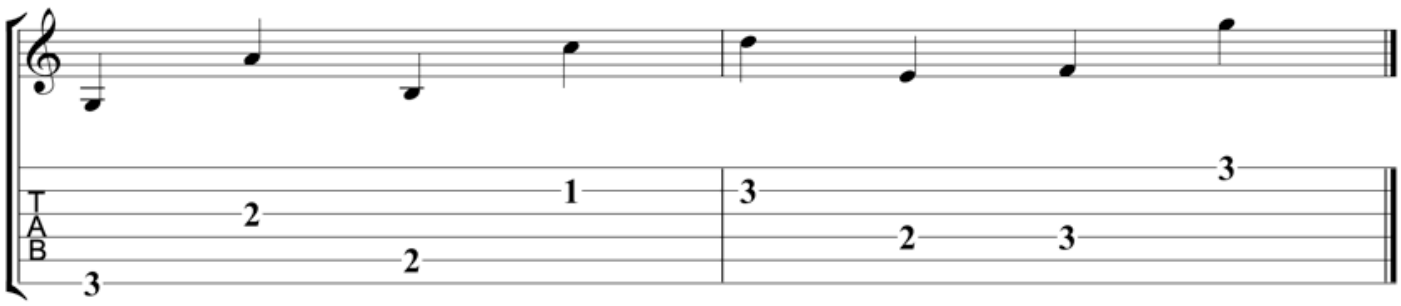

Aeolian

Next up is Aeolian, often referred to as the natural minor scale.

Take this idea and solo over any tonic minor sound, such as the im7 chord in any tune like Summertime or Blue Bossa.

Click to hear oz noy scales 6

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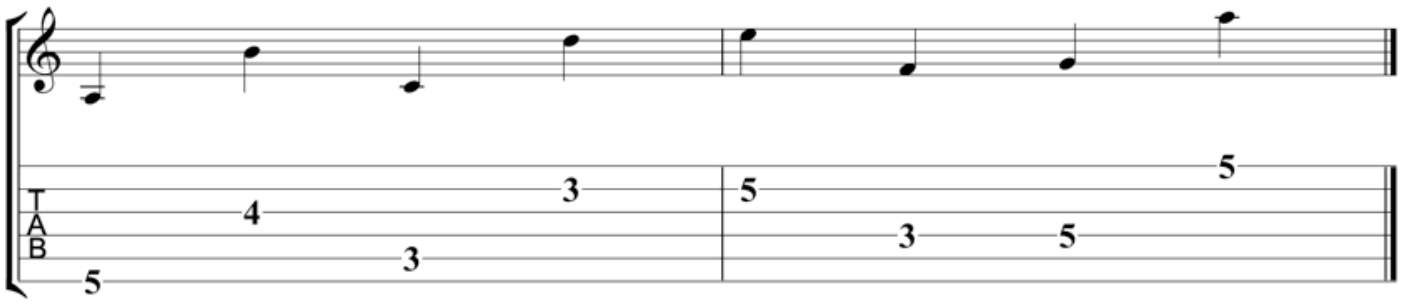

Oz Noy Scales – Locrian

You can now take this idea to Locrian, which you use to solo over m7b5 chords, most often as the ii chord in a minor ii-V-I progression.

Click to hear oz noy scales 7

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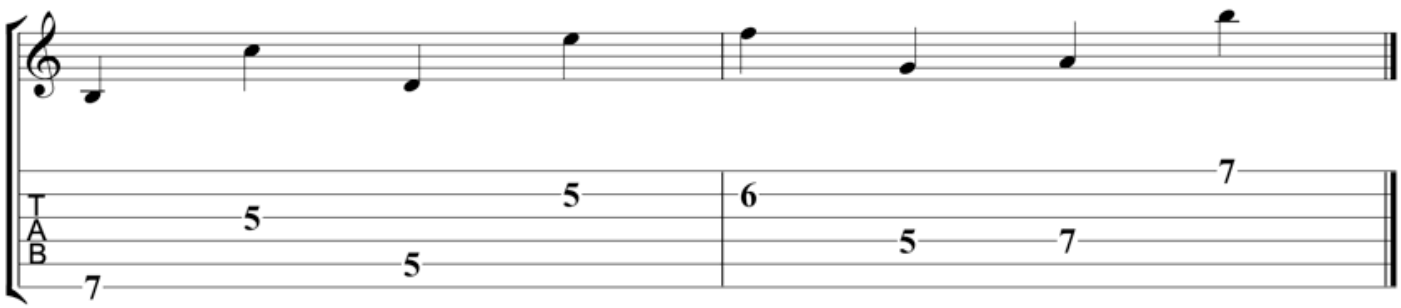

John Coltrane Scale Patterns

If you want to challenge yourself, working patterns through chord progressions is the way to go.

After you've run patterns through scales, you can use them in your solos; running patterns or chord progressions is the bridge between those two goals.

All of these patterns are taken from Coltrane's Giant Steps solo, and some you've seen previously in this lesson, only now in the context of a song.

If you find these patterns too difficult at this stage to work through, no worries.

Go back to the scale patterns above and focus on running those in your studies until they're comfortable.

When you reach that point, come back to this section and see if they're easier to run in your studies.

Here are 5 Giant Steps patterns from Coltrane's solo to study, run with a metronome, and add to your guitar solos over this, and other, chord progression.

Giant Steps Patterns 1 – 1235

You've seen this first pattern earlier over a scale shape, and here is the 1235 pattern through the Giant Steps progression.

Coltrane's most used pattern in his Giant Steps solo, this pattern outlines the triad of each chord, with the 2nd (9th) thrown in for color.

Begin by learning this pattern as written, then take it to other positions and strings sets from there.

Click to hear giant steps licks 1

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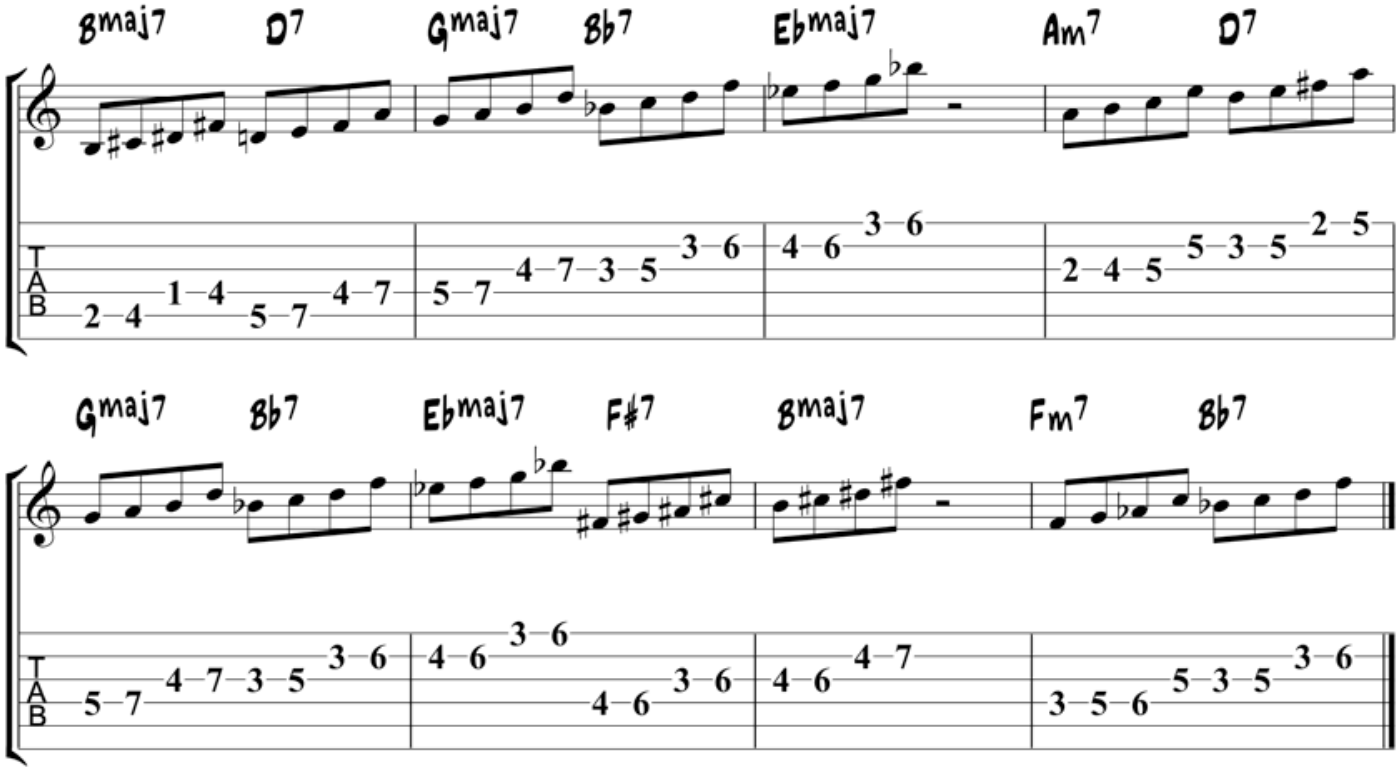

Giant Steps Patterns 2 – 135

The second pattern is not so much a pattern as it is a melodic shape, 135, the common triad.

Coltrane used triads frequently, and with variations that you can use to build your chops.

Below, you'll find eight different triad variations that Coltrane used in his Giant Steps solo.

Notice that he used three and four note groupings, repeating one nots to fill out the two beats for each chord in the tune.

Triads can seem simple, but in the hands of a master like Trane, they sound hip and fresh.

So, check them out over Giant Steps by running the variations through each chord change.

Then, improvise using only triads for each chord.

Though they don’t have a 7th, they still outline each chord and sound cool when using the different variations below.

1. 135
2. 3513
3. 3513
4. 1315
5. 513
6. 351
7. 5315
8. 531

Here’s an example of how the first half of Giant Steps sounds when running triads, with a variation, 3513, through each chord.

Work it as written, then take it to other positions on the guitar to expand this pattern in your studies.

From there, work the other variations above through these changes.

Click to hear giant steps licks 2

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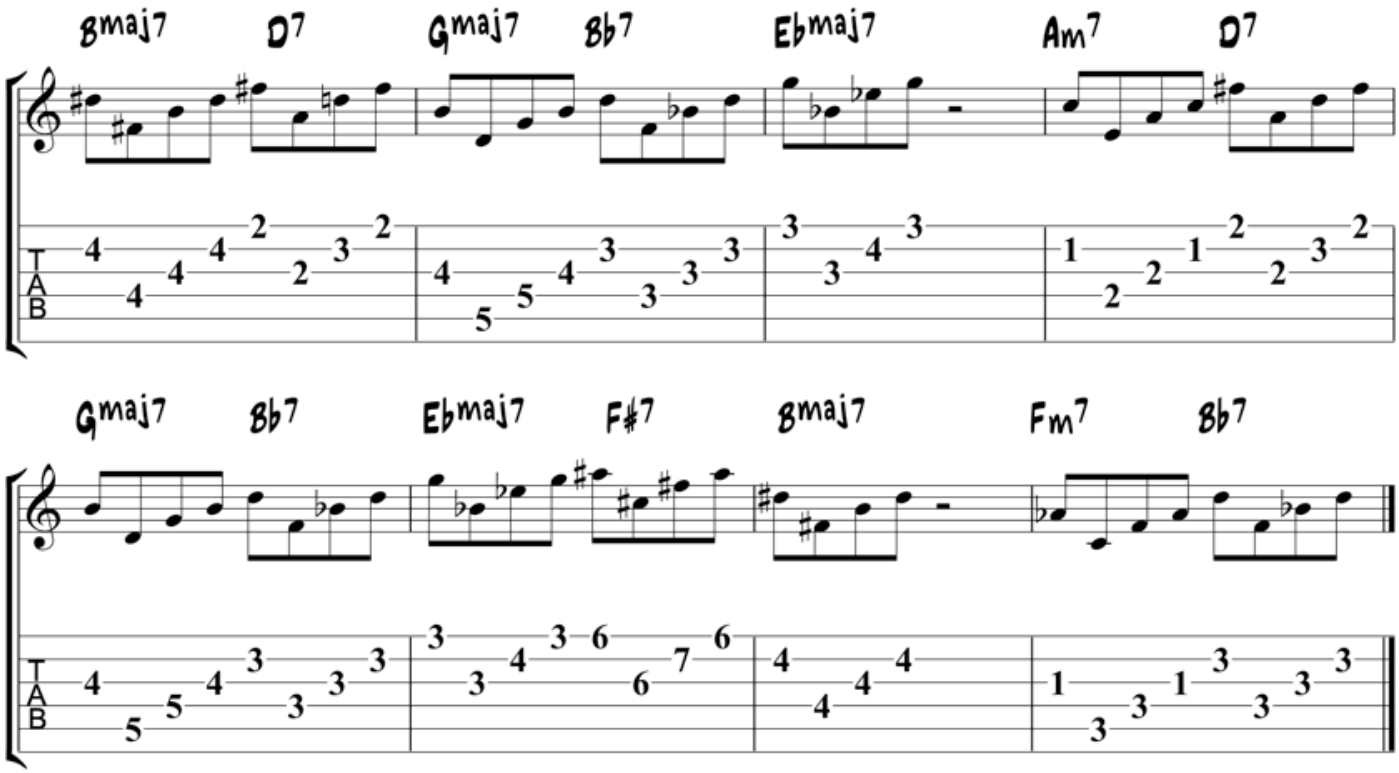

Giant Steps Patterns 3 – Arpeggios

Another pattern that Coltrane uses heavily in his Giant Steps solo is four-note arpeggios, with multiple variations.

Below are four arpeggio variations that Trane used in his solo.

As was the case with triads, run each one through the chords, then improvise using only arpeggios.

1. 1357
2. 8537
3. 5317
4. 3579

Here's how the first eight bars of the tune look with an arpeggio variation, R537.

Notice how he took a descending arpeggio, dropped the 7th and octave and voila, a new, hip sound from a simple melodic device.

Often you feel that you've mastered a musical idea, such as arpeggios.

But, when you get to that mental point in your practicing, take a step back.

Write out as many variations of that idea as you can to find new approaches to a well-known concept.

Here is that pattern to work out in this position, and others, in your practice routine.

Click to hear giant steps licks 3

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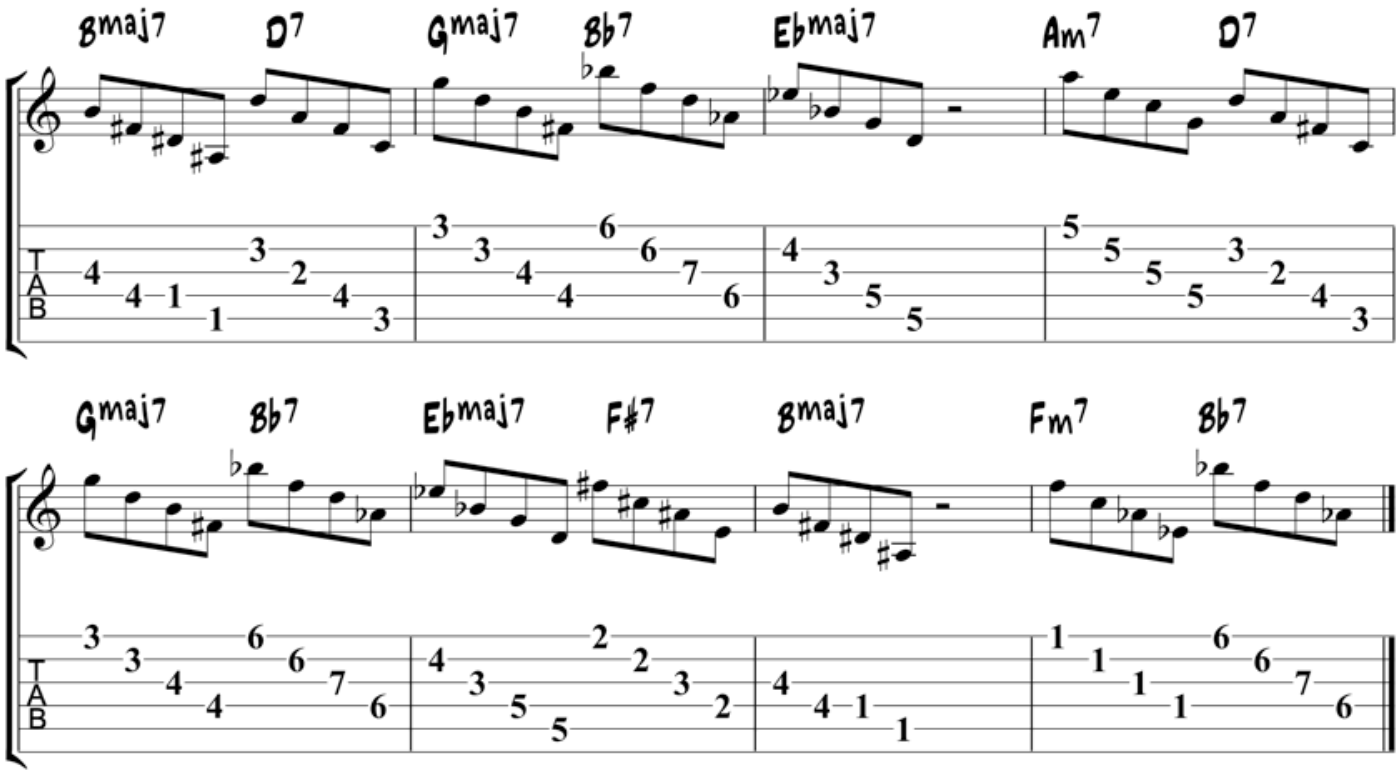

Giant Steps Patterns 4 – 12345

The next lick uses a simple, yet highly effective, melodic approach, scale fragments.

Here, Trane runs four scale notes in a row, mostly from the root or 5th of the chord.

He also connects two four-note groups together to form a scale, which he enjoyed using over Ebmaj7 with Ionian and Bb7 with the bebop scale.

These scale fragments mix things up melodically when soloing with triads and arpeggios.

Here's an example of these scale fragments over the first half of Giant Steps.

The line starts with a 1235 over Bmaj7 before using scales from there.

After working this pattern out as written, move it to other positions and string sets to expand on it in your practice routine.

Click to hear giant steps licks 4

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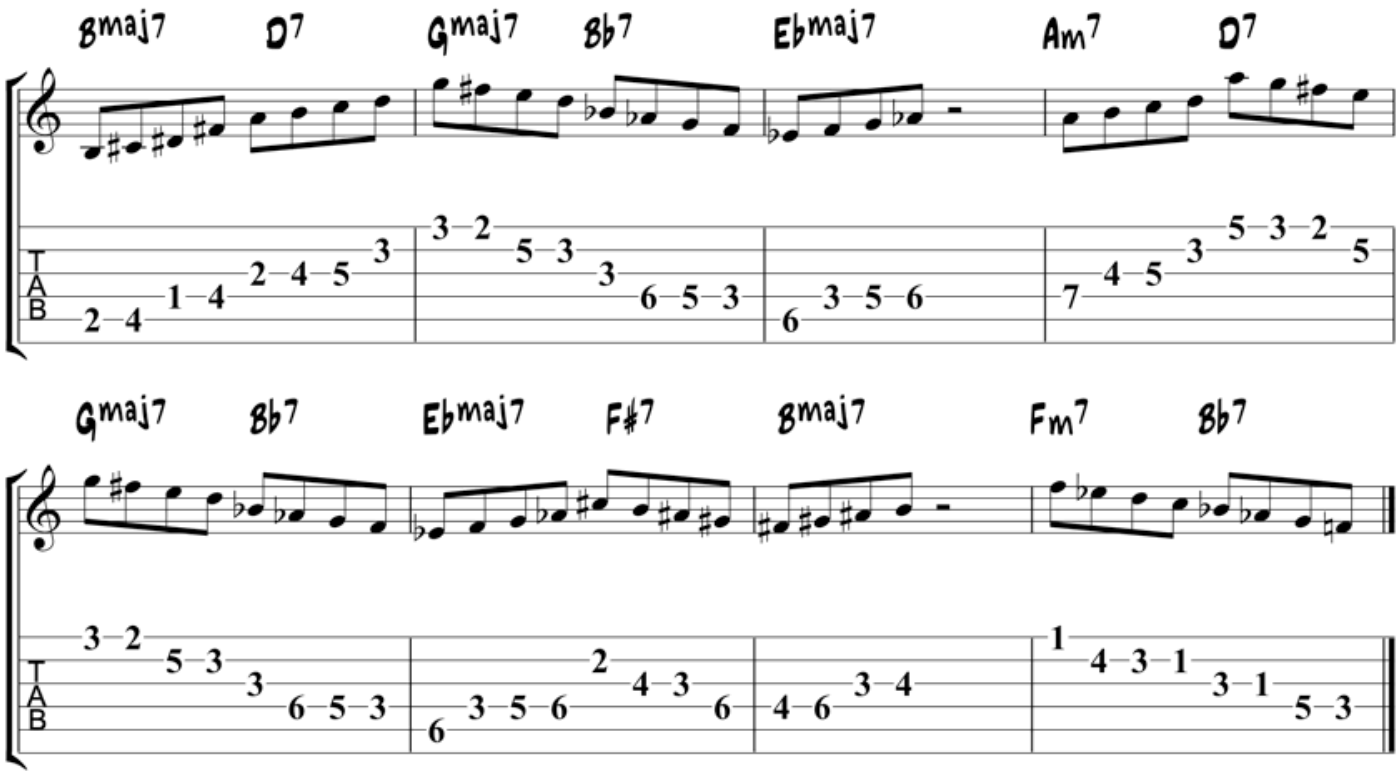

Giant Steps Patterns 5 – The "Return" Lick

This group of Giant Steps licks are referred to as “returns.”

This is when Trane starts on one note, moves away from that note before returning to the original note at the end of a four-note grouping.

An example of a return lick would be playing D-C-B-D, 2-1-7-2, over a Cmaj7 chord.

There are six variations of this lick in Trane’s solo. Here they are as intervals to explore in your studies.

1. 2172
2. 3123
3. 5675
4. 7217
5. 1671
6. 2432

Here’s an example of running the first variation, 2172, through all the changes in the first half of Giant Steps.

Start in this position before taking it to other areas of the neck.

Then, work other variations of this lick before mixing them together to form longer lines in your solos.

Click to hear giant steps licks 5

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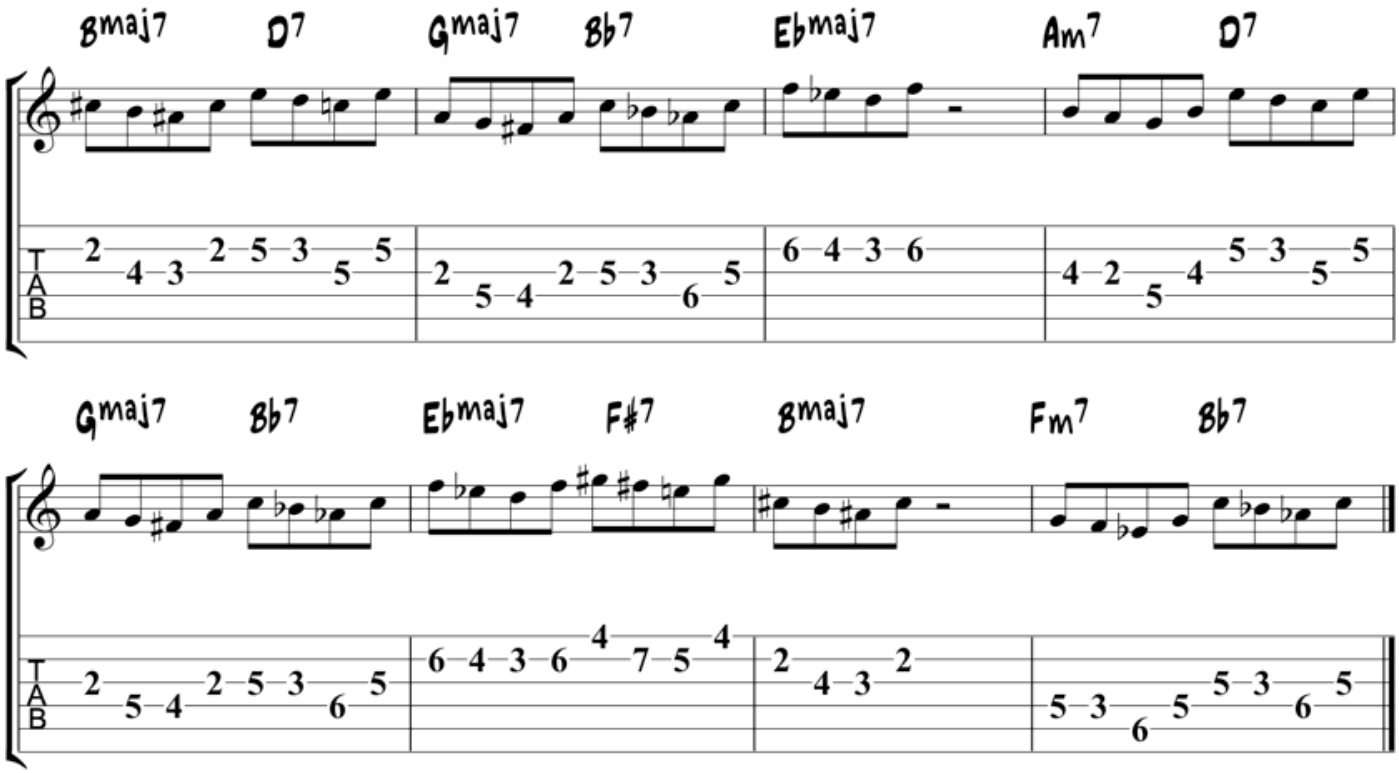

Have fun with these Giant Steps patterns.

They’re effective chops builders, open up your fretboard, and introduce you to this classic jazz tune at the same time.