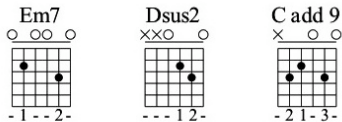


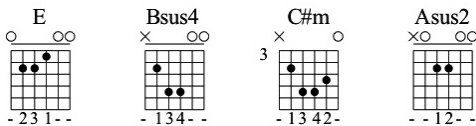
The Major Pentatonic.

The blues scale box that most of us learned first is a very useful scale, a real case of "One size fits all" but is it really? If you try it at fret 12 over a chord progression like Em D C (Ex. 1)



Ex.1.

It sounds great but try recording this one: E B F#m A:



Playing the E blues scale at fret 12 (Ex. 2) over this one doesn't work quite so well, you could get away with it but....

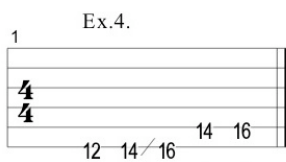
Try moving the E blues scale down 3 frets so you are now playing the same shape at fret 9 (Ex. 3).

Ex.3.

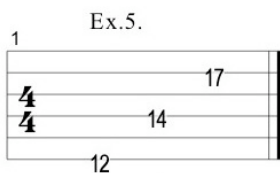
It looks like C# blues scale but the chord progression is still in E so something odd has happened. We'll look at that in another lesson, but listen to the sound of the scale as you play it in it's new position, doesn't it sound sweet? Try some of your old blues licks, some will work, some might sound a bit odd.

So, to summarize, try your favourite blues scale shape, if it doesn't quite fit, move it down 3 frets! Sounds simple and this is a very handy dodge however it does have a drawback in my opinion. Human nature being what it is, most people will simply play all their good old blues riffs, just 3 frets lower. These will probably sound good most of the time but you must understand that this new "3 frets lower" scale is a whole new scale in it's own right. If you don't explore this aspect you will never find out what it does and this would be unfortunate because it has a whole neckload of cool riffs and tones. I would go as far as to say that you should try to consider the fact E major pentatonic and C# blues scale look the same as a coincidence, nothing more.

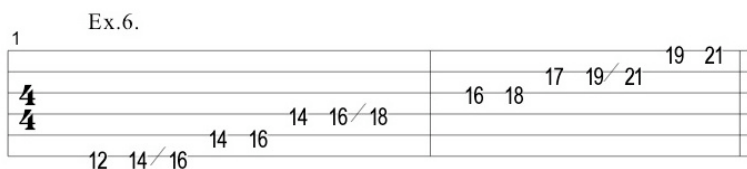
There is another way to look at the major pentatonic scale so that it's apparent similarity to the blues scale is obscured, and forces us to dream up a whole bunch of new riffs. (Ex. 4)



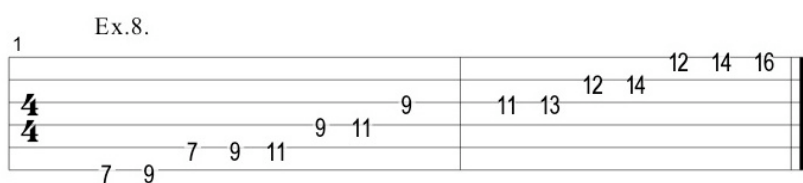
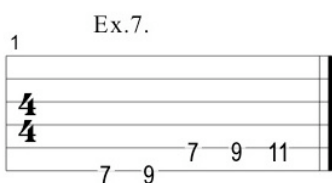
As you can see, you start on the root note of the key you want to play in, there are 3 notes on string 6 and 2 on string 5. We can play this pattern from any E note, so looking at ex. 5 you can see we have 3 E notes all handily located just past fret 12.



If we play example 4 off each of these E notes we get ex. 6, which is a very fluid diagonal version of the major pentatonic.



This shape can only be played in one place though, the root being on string 6. If we reverse the order of the notes, putting the 2 note part on string 6 and the 3 note part on string 5, (Ex. 7) we can stack it up in a similar way but this time the root is on string 5.(Ex. 8) .



Due to the fact that we have a root note on string 5 and a root note on string 6, we get 2 diagonal stripes of scale covering virtually all of the fret board.

As a final thought, this scale shape will give you a lovely fluid slidey sound to you solo and is very easy to remember. Just make a note that the root is the 1st one on the string with three notes, and bend the middle one on the same string a little bit sharp.

Look out for my lesson on how to mix major and blues lines over a 12 bar. Enjoy!

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