

THE MINOR PENTATONIC BLUES SCALE OVER THE ENTIRE NECK -written by David Taub

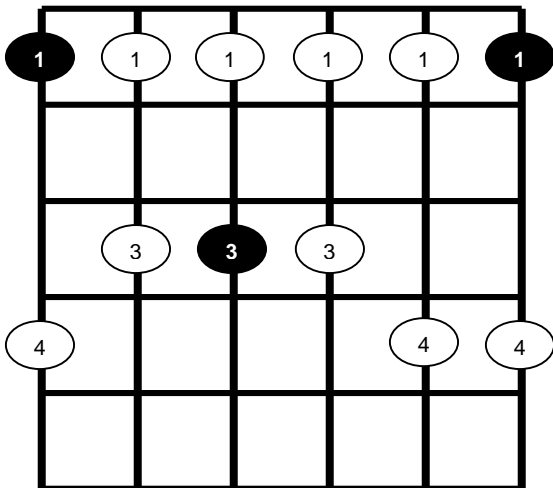
Lets think of the blues scale as basically a Minor Pentatonic scale, with one added note, the flatted 5th, or blue note. The b5 creates a certain amount of tension that is extremely useful. The blues scale is not solely utilized in blues music but rather has pretty much unlimited potential. Because it is I, IV, V based the blues scale is utilized is just about every other music genre from rock, pop, country, alternative, metal, jazz, swing, reggae – just about everything except for classical music as it is not I, IV, V based. Adding this scale to your bag of tricks will definitely add a little “bluesy” color and texture to your playing. Use it pretty much whenever you play minor pentatonic scales – so now make it the minor pentatonic blues scale and have the added color from the b5 note.

The Minor Pentatonic scale is a five-note scale constructed from the scale degrees of root, b3rd, 4th, 5th, and b7th. Make this the blues scale by adding the b5th to this formula and we get the six-note blues scale constructed from the degrees of root, b3rd, 4th, b5th, 5th, and b7th. The first illustration below on the left is the basic box shape minor pentatonic scale. Directly below that we add the b5th and have the minor pentatonic blues scale – you can see they only differ by one note, the b5th, illustrated in blue. The illustration below to the right is the Expanded I Minor Pentatonic Blues Scale.

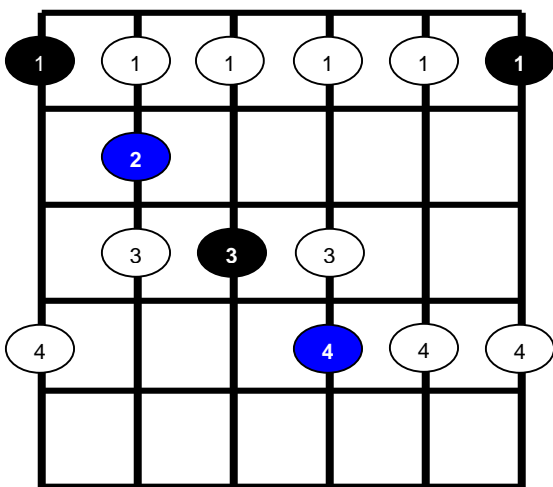
A common challenge I see with many students is that they always play and think of scales in box patterns and they stay in one box, then stop, move to the next box, then stop, and so on. This has a real boxy and fragmented sound with lines that have no continuity. What I have found is students benefit greatly by learning to play **ACROSS** the neck by playing laterally, not just vertically. In this lesson you will learn how to start connecting various boxes into EXPANDED SCALES. You will be combining boxes together and playing across the neck for a much more fluid sound. This will improve your phrasing and add continuity to your lead lines as you move across the neck and start connecting ideas, shapes, and patterns together. The ultimate goal is to see the entire neck as one big connected scale. Then just leave them all connected and just move the whole chunk back and forth as one chunk, to change key. These expanded scales will pull you out of the traditional boxes and that boxy sound that many players cant seem to leave behind.

As always, utilize consistent fingering and practice these scales in all keys and learn all the shapes up and down the neck. Then apply them by practicing your soloing over jam tracks. Make strong solo statements by emphasizing strong chord tones, employ good phrasing and continuity, and play laterally across the neck. See my lesson on how to apply the minor pentatonic and blues scales and start ripping it up! Rock on!

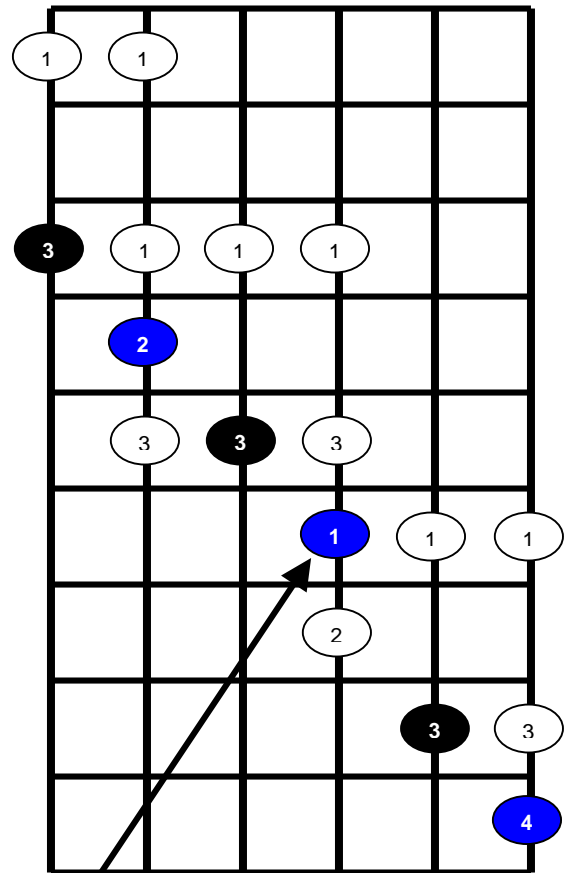
Basic Box Minor Pentatonic Scale



Minor Pentatonic Blues Scale



Expanded I Minor Pentatonic Blues Scale



When ascending the scale at the G-string pivot with your 1st finger playing 1,3 then 1,2. Then descending use a 3,2,1,1 finger combination on the G strings

● = root note

● = blue note (b5)