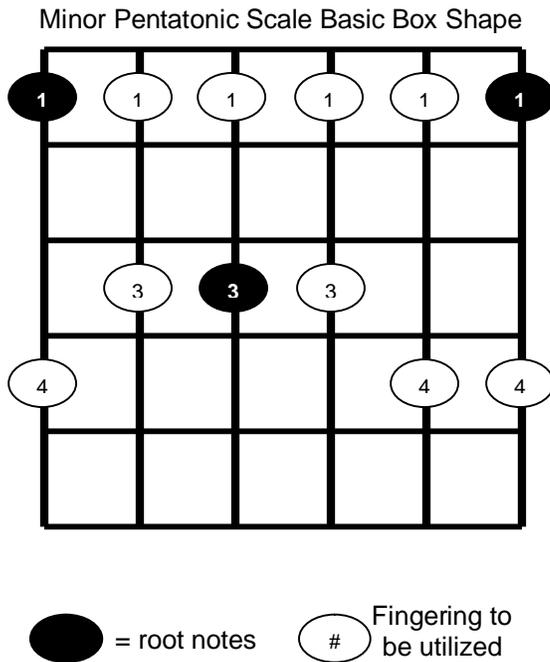


THE MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE

-written by David Taub

The pentatonic scale is one of the most commonly utilized scales in most music genres all over the world. Penta, is Latin for five, much like a penta-gram has five sides. Pentatonic scales are constructed from five notes. The Minor Pentatonic scale is constructed from five notes from the Natural Minor Scale, or Aeolian mode. The minor pentatonic scale is built from the five scale degrees of root, b3rd, 4th, 5th, and b7th. The scale illustrated below is what many call the basic "box" position and has its low root played with the first finger on the low E string. The root notes are illustrated with black circles and the numbers inside the circles indicates the fingering to be utilized when playing this scale. It's important to learn this basic scale first, as we are going to build upon this scale in coming lessons and eventually you will need to learn this scale in all positions all over the neck and in all keys.



This shape is also referred to as a "box" pattern. Take your time and play the scale slow and in time, speed will come. Practice the scale utilizing the fingerings illustrated. Sound each note clean, with no string buzzes or overtones. As you move through the scale make a mental note of when you hit the three root notes, (illustrated with the black circles).

The key signature is determined by which root note is played on the 6th string. For example if you play this shape starting at the fifth fret on the low E string it is an **A** minor pentatonic scale consisting of the five notes A, C, D, E, and G. If you were to play this scale on the 8th fret it would be a form one **C** minor pentatonic scale consisting of the five notes C, Eb, F, G, and Bb.

Much like moveable bar chords this scale can be moved up and down the guitar neck and the root note will determine the key you are playing. Practice the scale in all keys.

This scale will form the building block of many concepts to come. You want to be very familiar with this scale pattern, but do not rely on it exclusively as we are going to build on it extensively, spicing it up and expanding it, making it a more fluid sounding scale that you can move laterally across the neck and not get stuck in any boxes.

Hip string bends when utilizing the above Minor Pentatonic scale: – bending strings is one of the most expressive things you can do on the guitar. So you will want to really get proficient at string bending. Bending strings is an art and always bend to a target note. When bending strings it is imperative that you are bending the notes in pitch. You don't want to over bend the note or it will be sharp. You also do not want to under bend the note or it will be flat. Bend the note and check the pitch by sounding the note you are attempting to bend to – that's a good self-check to ensure you are bending in pitch. Practice string bending by plugging directly into an electronic tuner and watch the needle as you bend a note – keep doing it over and over till you feel the bend and hear the bend in pitch.

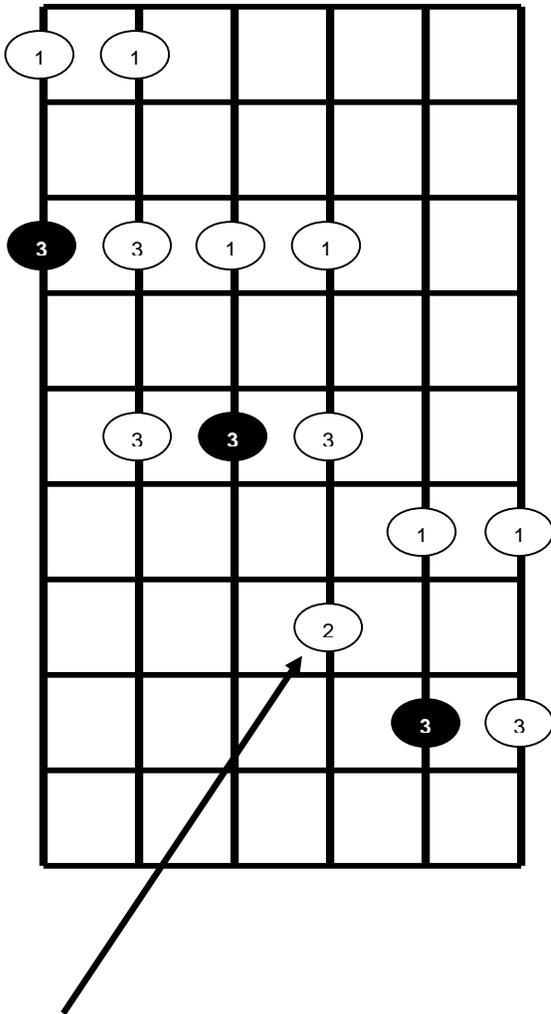
For purposes of this string bending exercise play the scale with a fifth fret root or A minor pentatonic scale, but once learned, practice the bends and scale in all keys.

1. Bend the b7th a whole step to the root – bend the G note at the 8th fret of the B string up one whole step to the A root note. You can also bend the same note an octave lower at the G note at the 5th fret on the D string bend up one whole step to the A root note.
2. Bend the 4th a half step to the blue note - bend the D note on the 7th fret of the G string up one half step to the Eb note.
3. Bend the 4th degree a whole step to the fifth - bend the D note on the 7th fret of the G string up one whole step to the E note. (The 4th or D note can be bent either a whole or a half step).
4. Bend the b3rd a full step to the 4th – bend the C note at the 8th fret of the high E string one whole step to the D note.
5. Unison bend – Utilize your 4th finger to bend the G note on the 8th fret of the B string a whole step to an A note while playing the A note at the 5th fret of the high E string with your 1st finger.
6. Unison bend – Utilize your 3rd finger to bend the D note on the 7th fret of the G string a whole step to an E note while playing the E note at the 5th fret of the B string with your 1st finger.
7. Double stop bend – bend two strings a half step each with your 3rd finger. Bend the D note at the 7th fret of the G string one half step while also bending the F# note at the 7th fret of the B string one half step.
8. Double stop bend – with your 3rd finger bend the D note at the 7th fret of the G string a whole step while playing the G note on the B string with your 4th finger.
9. b3rd to major 3rd bend – bend the b3rd or C notes a quarter to a half step to the major 3rd. This is a very cool bend as the b3rd is a very ambiguous note in this scale. It sometimes will sound great as the b3rd but also as a major 3rd like when playing over a 7th chord. So this note has some play in it and you don't have to be exact with the bend – play with it and you will soon be utilizing it all the time.

THE MINOR PENTATONIC EXPANDED SCALE 1 -written by David Taub

Let's build on the minor pentatonic scale that you learned in page one of this lesson. We are now going to expand the scale two frets in each direction. We are still going to play the same five-note scale. However, the expanded scale exudes a much more fluid sound and sets up many additional and different combination runs and licks than staying solely in the "box" shape. You certainly want to have the pentatonic scale in the box pattern in your arsenal, but this expanded scale you will find really opens the pathways to possibilities a lot further. Commit it to memory and learn it in all keys.

Expanded One Minor Pentatonic Scale



For the G string pivot with your **second finger** for the 1,3,2 fingering combination

Analyzing this expanded scale you can see part of the box pattern encapsulated in the middle of the shape. The shape is then expanded two frets in each direction. Now you have a Pentatonic Minor shape that **doubles** the fret span of the box pattern scale.

As always when learning a new scale, take your time and play the scale slow and in time. Sound each note clean, with no string buzzes or overtones. As you move through the scale make a mental note of when you hit the three root notes, (illustrated with the black circles). Practice the scale utilizing the fingerings illustrated. Notice the shift in fingering when you get to the G-string. There is a one – three – two finger combination. Utilize your second finger when playing the third note on the G-string as that will set you up for the two and three note combinations and licks to be played with the G, B, and high E strings. As always, you want to utilize the proper fingerings that set you up for your next lick, run, or chord.

Much like the first minor pentatonic in the box pattern the key signature for the expanded scale is determined by which root note is played on the 6th string. Play that note with your third finger. For example if you play this shape starting at the fifth fret on the low E string it is an expanded **A** minor pentatonic scale consisting of the five notes A, C, D, E, and G. If you were to play this scale starting with your 3rd finger on the 10th fret it would be an expanded **D** minor pentatonic scale consisting of the five notes D, F, G, A, and C. Practice this scale in all keys up and down the fret board.

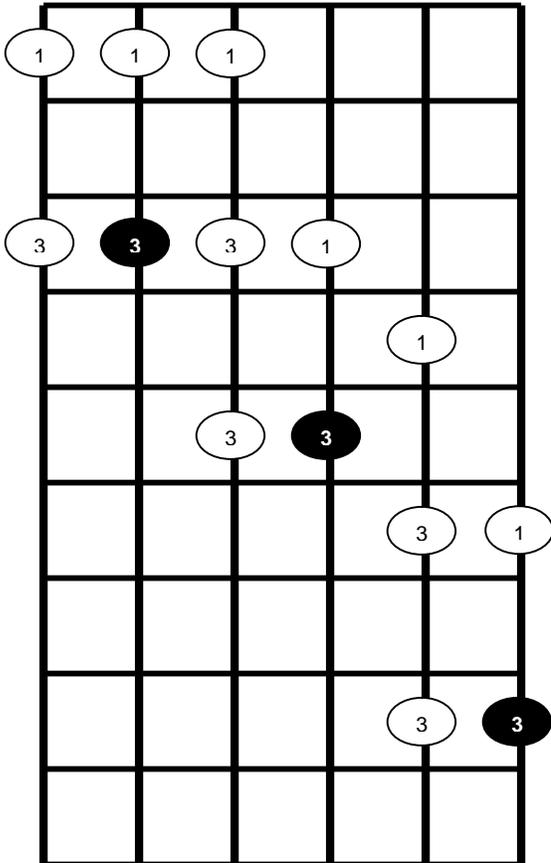
Remember you can grab these scales fast if you memorize the two above scales as:

1. Box Position Minor Pentatonic Scale – 1st finger low root on the E string
2. Expanded 1 Minor Pentatonic Scale – 3rd finger low root on the E string

THE MINOR PENTATONIC EXPANDED SCALE 2 -written by David Taub

Now that you are familiar with the minor pentatonic scale in the box position and in an expanded 1 scale, lets learn the minor pentatonic expanded 2 scale. This scale will have its root note on the 5th or A string and you can start with your 3rd finger. Illustrated below is the expanded 2 minor pentatonic scale. With both expanded scales and the "box" shape you can cover just about the entire fretboard. Practice these scales in all keys up and down the fret board.

Expanded Two Minor Pentatonic Scale



Take your time when first learning this scale pattern, and play the scale slow and in time. Sound each note clean, with no string buzzes or overtones. As you move through the scale make a mental note of when you hit the three root notes, (illustrated with the three black circles). Practice the scale utilizing the fingerings illustrated and work up this expanded scale in all keys.

In this expanded 2 scale the key signature is determined by which root note is played with the third finger on the on the 5th or A string. For example if you play this shape starting at the tenth fret on the low E string it is an expanded form two **A** minor pentatonic scale consisting of the five notes A, C, D, E, and G. This is due to the root note being played on the 12th fret of the A string – an "A" note. If you were to start this scale on the 12th fret of the low E string it would be an expanded form one B minor pentatonic scale.

Remember you can grab these scales fast if you memorize the three above scales as:

1. Box Position Minor Pentatonic Scale – 1st finger low root on the E string
2. Expanded 1 Minor Pentatonic Scale – 3rd finger low root on the E string
3. Expanded 2 Minor Pentatonic Scale – 3rd finger low root on the A string

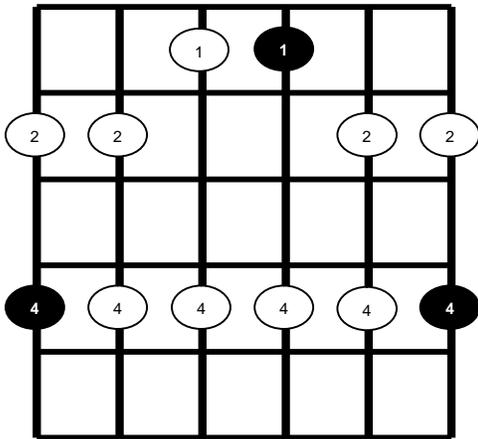
THE MINOR PENTATONIC SCALE – 5 box positions

-written by David Taub

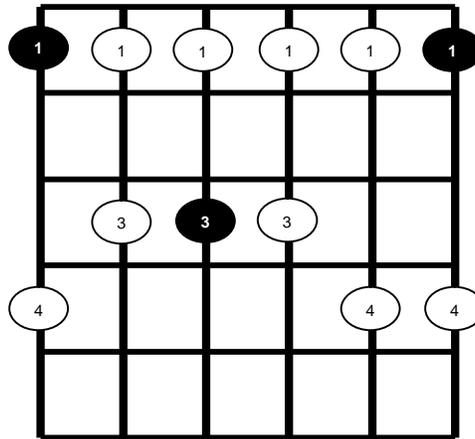
Illustrated below are the five common box shapes for the Minor Pentatonic scale. I usually find myself playing the expanded I and expanded II scales more often, but you should know all 5 positions so you can utilize the entire neck. Practice these in all keys and remember to make mental notes where the root notes lie. Start learning the scales below in the key of Am as they line up across the fretboard nicely and you can start the number 1 box with your 4th finger on the 5th fret of the Low E string on the A note. Follow the notes in the boxes above each shape for the proper fingerings.

Commit all the shapes and notes to memory and you will soon be gliding across the neck in minor pentatonic heaven. Remember, it is critical to memorize what notes you are playing, not just the shapes. You want to be able to pick out and land on any given note depending on what chord changes you are playing over. Too many times guitarists just memorize shapes and forget what notes they are actually playing. So spend time learning the notes in all keys and you will benefit greatly with this extra work. These box shapes will give you many different riff ideas and runs. You will find them to be quite useful. Remember to practice and learn these scales in all keys and practice linking them together. Soon you will be able to see the entire fretboard mapped out as one large pentatonic scale that travels up and down the entire neck.

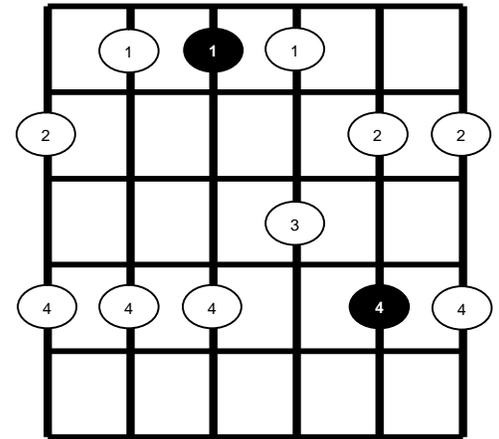
#1 box – in Am start with 4th finger on the 5th fret, low E string on the A note. (same shape as the Alternate Block 1 shape)



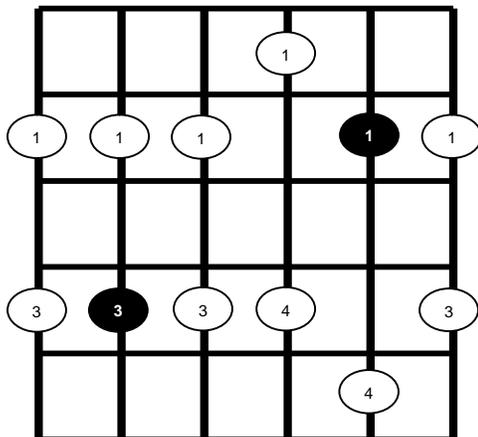
#2 box – in Am start with 1st finger on the 5th fret, low E string on the A note. (same shape as the basic box shape)



#3 box – in Am start with 2nd finger on the 8th fret, low E string on the C note. (these first three boxes are the Expanded 1 shape)



#4 box – in Am start with 1st finger on the 10th fret, low E string on the D note. (same shape as the Alternate Block 2 shape)



#5 box – in Am start with 1st finger on the 12th fret, low E string on the E note. (these last two boxes and the first one combine to form the Expanded 2 shape)

