

How To Play The Most Awesome Licks Over Any Blues Chord – FREE Guide

by Antony Reynaert

Do you know the feeling when you're listening to your favourite guitarists and they play a lick that sends shivers down your back? What is their trick you ask? They play the exact right notes at exactly the right time, with exactly the right feeling. As simple as this might sound, you'll experience what is behind this in a second. You'll learn that beginner and intermediate guitarists do this the wrong way, because they are using the wrong notes in their soloing, compared to advanced guitarists.

The name of this free guide is exactly what we will look at here. Let's see look at how advanced/professional guitarists deliver these great sounding licks by playing the right notes at the right time.

The following is a standard 12 bar blues progression in the key of A:

A7 A7 A7 A7

D7 D7 A7 A7

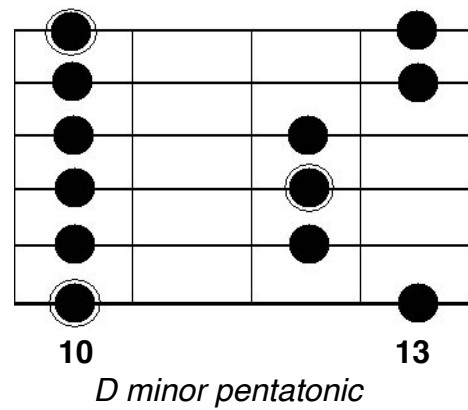
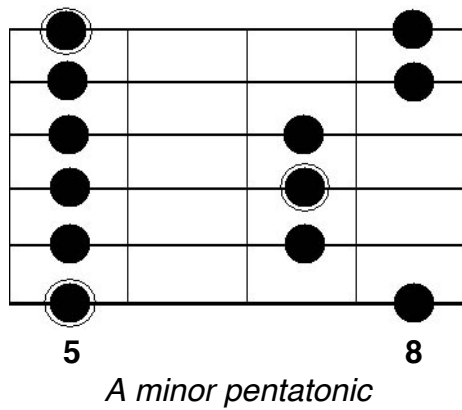
E7 D7 A7 A7

A common thing for many guitar players to do is to play A minor pentatonic over this progression. At first this can sound great, but taking your lead guitar playing to another level will require a bit more spice.

When Transposing Scales Go Horribly Wrong Resulting In An Instant Amateur Sound

The A minor pentatonic scale doesn't sounds all that great over all three chords in this standard blues progression. In other words there are better note choices that you can use so that you won't be so limited in your soloing. As you probably know, transposing on the guitar is very easy, we can shift positions up and down the neck.

But there's a catch! Many beginner guitarists will think that if one can play the A minor pentatonic scale over the A7 chord in a blues in A, we can transpose that position to the D minor pentatonic scale over the D7 chord, as you see in the scale diagrams below.



Never ever play the D minor pentatonic over the D7 chord when soloing over a blues in A, it will sound really off! If you would use this D minor pentatonic scale over the D7 chord in jam session, you'll send out a very clear signal that you don't know what you are doing.

Here's how this would sound:

[Listen to this sound example](#) (this is **NOT** how to do it)

So remember, never ever play the D minor pentatonic over the D7 chord when soloing over a blues in A!!!

Enough with the transposing horror stories, let's look at which scales do work. First it's good to realise that imposing the D minor pentatonic scale over the D7 chord is only partially wrong.

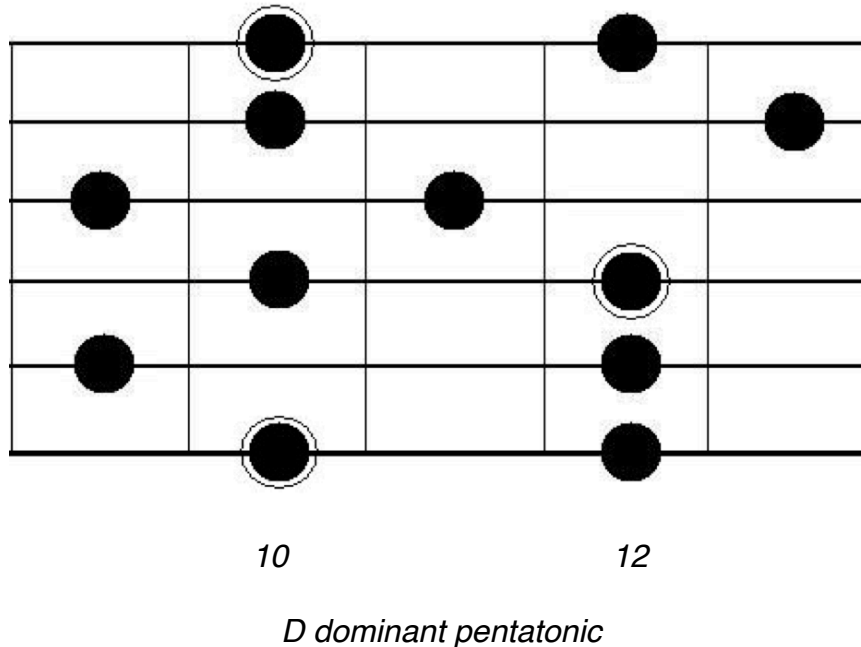
When you are improvising and the D7 chord comes around in the chord progression, you will notice that some of the notes of the D minor pentatonic will sound good. Some notes sound completely off target, but other notes are usable.

One of the notes that will sound completely wrong over the D7 chord is the F note. When you play a D7 chord and you play an F note it will clash against the F# note which is in the D7 chord.

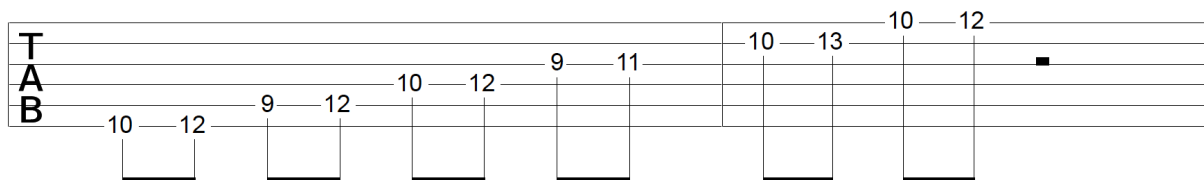
The Scales That Will Make You Sound Like a Pro

There is one scale that is very similar to the D minor pentatonic scale that will sound totally awesome when played over the D7 chord.

Here's the scale:

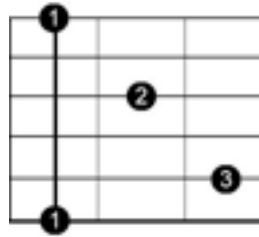


Here's the tab:



You see that three of the five notes of the D minor pentatonic scale are the same. It's only the F note that we raised to F# and the E note that we've added to this scale. We call this scale the D dominant pentatonic scale. Try playing it over the D7 chord, it will sound totally cool. Of course improvising with this scale is a bit more challenging because you need to know the possibilities that are laying in the reach of this position. That's why we'll look at some licks in a moment.

Just like the regular minor pentatonic scale, there are 5 dominant pentatonic positions on the guitar neck. This position is just one of them, but it's a very good one to know because we can use it directly over the D7 chord shape with it's root note located on the 6th string as shown on the next page.



10

12

D7

Why The Dominant Pentatonic Scale Works So Well

In case you are wondering why this dominant pentatonic scale works so well and where it's coming from, let's look at how this scale works.

When you play a dominant seventh chord (such as D7) there are 4 notes total in this chord.

In case of the D7 chord these notes are: D F# A C.

When we play the D dominant pentatonic scale we play 5 notes (because it's a pentatonic scale, 'penta' means five).

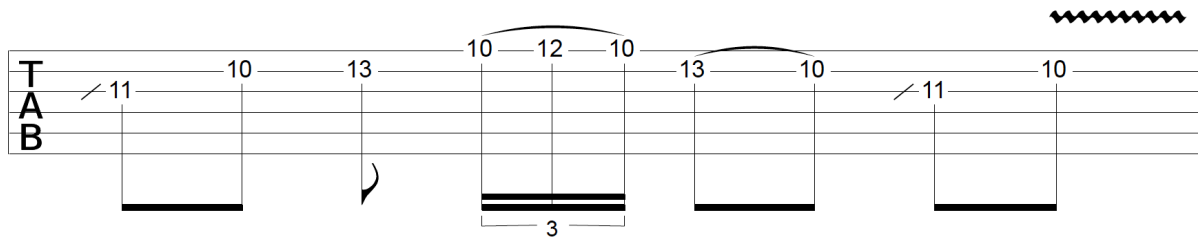
In the example of the D dominant scale these notes are: D E F# A C.

Now compare the D7 chord with the D dominant scale, as you can see there is only one note that is in the scale, but not in the chord (which is the 9th of the scale, a very beautiful tone and a great one to use in your improvisations). It's good to realize that the dominant pentatonic scale is the scale that shares the most notes with the chord it is derived from. If we play the D dominant scale over the D7 chord there isn't a scale that more closely relates to that chord than this scale.

Now it's time to look at some ways in which you can use this scale, starting with the examples of how great blues guitarists use make the most use of it.

How Great Blues Guitarists Use The Dominant Pentatonic Scale

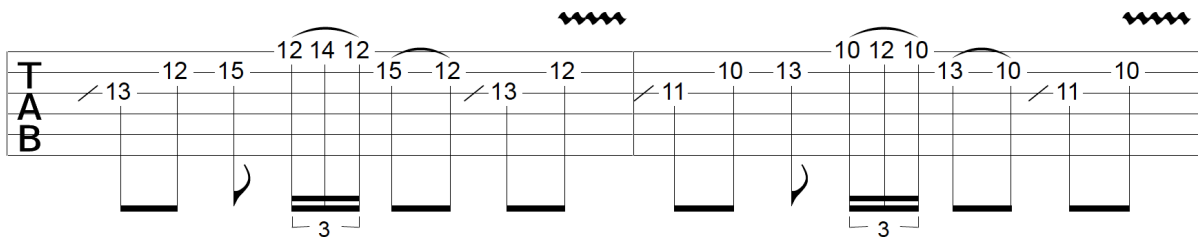
Here is a great Stevie Ray Vaughan lick that uses this dominant pentatonic scale:



[Listen to this sound example](#)

When improvising over a blues in A you would use this lick over the D7 chord for maximum impact. Yes, you could use it over the other chords as well if you really wanted to do that (and if you used your ears to make sure that the lick still sounds great; in reality you might want to alter some notes when playing this lick over the other chords), but it will have maximum impact over the D7 chord.

Take a look at the same lick below. We can use it over both the D7 and E7 chords. Since the E7 chord is located 2 frets higher than the D7 chord we just can copy our D7 licks two frets higher to play over the E7 chord.



[Listen to this sound example](#)

This is a great way to play over these two chords in a standard 12 bar blues progression.

Conclusion

As guitarists such as Stevie Ray Vaughan can sound really good using this dominant pentatonic scale, so can you. Shifting from playing one scale over a chord progression to using a different scale over each chord is what you need to start your growth and stay advancing in your lead playing. If you're ready and committed to continue your blues guitar improvement start here: [The Essential Blues Guitar Soloing Lesson](#).