

# Tutorial 2A: More Scales for Improvisation



Welcome! In this tutorial you'll learn how to play:

1. Flexible pentatonic scales
2. Flexible expanded blues scales
3. Flexible Lydian Dominant scales
4. Flexible minor pentatonic scales
5. Flexible melodic minor ascending scales

Enjoy the learning, and see you at the cypress ...

Other Level 2 Tutorials

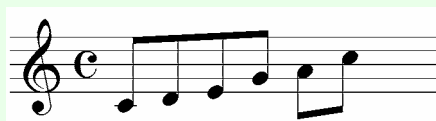
- 2B: Melodic Shapes
- 2C: Swing Rhythms
- 2D: Three and Four
- 2E: Embellishments
- 2F: Melodic Development
- 2H: Tune Forms
- 2K: Preparing Concert Material

- This additional set of scales will help you expand your ideas over most chord progressions. When you combine these flexible scales with SHAPE and virtual practice, you have the tools to take the next steps in your improvisation.

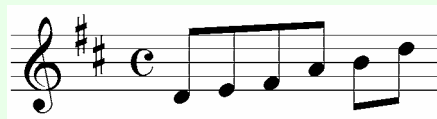
## Part 1 ~ Flexible Pentatonic Scales

### A) What is a pentatonic scale?

\*The Major *pentatonic* (“five-tone”) scale has the 1, 2, 3, 5, and 6 degrees of the major scale. It lacks the 4 and 7, so it doesn’t have as much color as a major scale.



1 2 3 5 6 8



1 2 3 5 6 8

### B) When do I use them?

- Improvising in faster passages
- Improvising on major chords
- Improvising on dominant chords
- Improvising “outside” the key (Tutorial 5A)

\*Pentatonic scales are sometimes over-used because they are easier to play. Still, they can be very useful, especially when you play them with interesting rhythms or with good development techniques.

- **TRY IT – Basic:** Spell the pitches for the C Pentatonic scale, then for all pentatonic scales. **Medium:** Spell the pitches for all 12 pentatonic scales, from *top to bottom* of each scale.

### B) How do I practice flexible pentatonic scales?

Use the Practice Levels for Flexible Scales (Tutorial 1E):

- Level 1: Steps
- Level 2: Steps, hold color notes
- Level 3: Steps and new rhythms
- Level 4: Steps and 3rd skips
- Level 5: Steps, 3rds, new rhythms
- Level 6: Steps and wider intervals
- Level 7: Steps, wider intervals, new rhythms

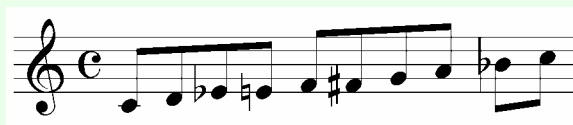
- **TRY IT – Basic:** Use the Practice Level ideas in Part B to practice flexible pentatonic scales. Practice Pages

## Part 2 ~ Expanded Blues Scales

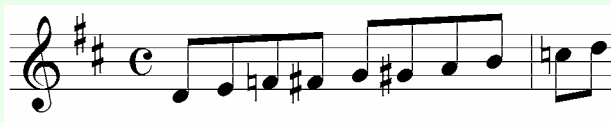
### A) What is a flexible, expanded blues scale?

\*To expand a blues scale, add the 2, 3, and 6 to it. This gives you a scale with 1, 2, b3, 3, 4, #4, 5, 6, and b7.

\*The only missing tones out of the chromatic scale are the b2, b6, and 7.



C: 1 2 b3 3 4 #4 5 6 b7 8



D: 1 2 b3 3 4 #4 5 6 b7 8

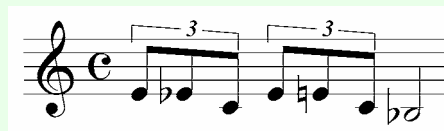
### B) What advantages does it have?

\*The *expanded* blues scale can add more color to your solos. Many players stop at just the notes in the basic blues scale, thus missing some great possibilities for color and variety.

\*The expanded blues scale has two additional tri-tones (augmented 4ths) – the b3 to 6 and the 3 to b7. This, combined with the 1 to #4 of the regular blues scale, provides three tri-tones to use.

\*Remember, you don't need to run the whole expanded blues scale up and down in your solos – use the *flexible* expanded blues scale for a wealth of possibilities.

### C) How about examples of expanded blues scales?



- **TRY IT – Basic:** Spell the pitches for the C expanded blues scale, then for all other expanded blues scales.  
**Medium:** Do the same, *top to bottom* of each scale.

### 3

## (Part 2 – Expanded Blues Scales)

### C) What are some tips for expanded blues scales?

- Take advantage of all the tri-tones in the expanded blues scale for additional color.
- Alternate the 3 with the b3 to create an interesting “major-to-minor” shift.
- Use the stretch of 6 chromatic notes, from the 2 to the 5, to create some interesting sounds.
- Play the 2 to avoid over-emphasizing the root.

### D) How do I practice expanded blues scales?

- **TRY IT – Basic:** Use the Practice Level ideas in Part B to practice expanded blues scales. Practice Pages

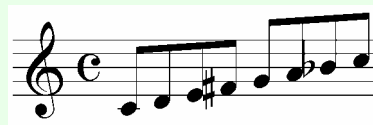
## Part 3 – Flexible Lydian Dominants

### A) What is a Lydian Dominant scale?

\*The Lydian Dominant scale is a colorful alternative to the Mixolydian scale in dominant chords. It was pioneered by George Russell, Don Ellis, David Baker,

and others in the 1960s.

\*The Lydian Dominant scale is like a cross between the Lydian and Dominant (Mixolydian) scales. Compared to major, its pitches are 1, 2, 3, #4, 5, 6, and b7:



C: 1 2 3 #4 5 6 b7 8



B: 1 2 3 #4 5 6 b7 8

- **TRY IT – Basic:** Spell the pitches for the C Lydian Dominant scale, then for the other 11 scales. Medium: Spell the pitches for all 12 scales, from *top to bottom*.

### B) How do I practice Lydian Dominant scales?

- **TRY IT – Basic:** Use the Practice Level ideas in Part B to practice flexible Lydian Dominant scales. Practice Pages

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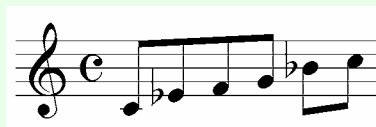
## Part 4 – Flexible Minor Pentatonics

### A) What is a minor pentatonic scale?

\*The minor pentatonic scale, like the major pentatonic, has only five different notes.

\*It's identical to the blues scale, but without the sharp 4th. (It's also identical to the major pentatonic that starts on its 3rd degree; Eb Major pentatonic and C Minor pentatonic have the same notes).

\*The minor pentatonic scale is useful for quickly navigating minor or even dominant chords.



C: 1 b3 4 5 b7 8



G: 1 b3 4 5 b7 8

► **TRY IT – Basic:** Spell the pitches for the C Lydian Dominant scale, then for the other 11 scales. Medium: Spell the pitches for all 12 scales, from *top to bottom* of each scale.

### B) How do I practice Lydian Dominant scales?

► **TRY IT – Basic:** Use the Practice Level ideas in Part B to practice flexible Lydian Dominant scales. Practice Pages

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## Part 5 – Melodic Minor Ascending

### A) What is a melodic minor ascending scale?

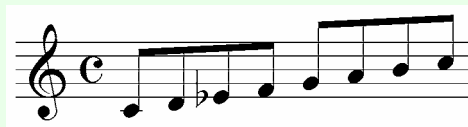
\*The melodic minor ascending scale is a useful choice for any type of minor chord.

\*Its natural 7th degree provides tension, similar to the sharp 4th in major.

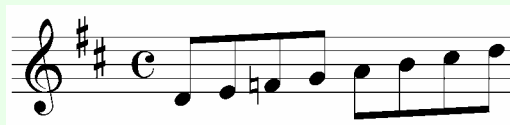
\*The melodic minor *descending* scale is actually the same as the natural minor scale, so we don't refer to it separately – in jazz, melodic minor assumes “ascending” or natural 7.

\*In most cases, you can use melodic minor (natural 7) *even when* the chord indicates a flat 7 (such as Cm7).

## (Part 5 – Melodic Minor Ascending)



C: 1 2 b3 4 5 6 7 8



D: 1 2 b3 4 5 6 7 8

- **TRY IT – Basic:** Spell the pitches for the C melodic minor scale, then for the other 11 scales. **Medium:** Spell the pitches for all 12 scales, from *top to bottom* of each scale.

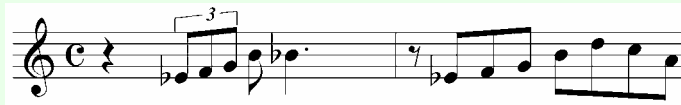
## B) How do I practice melodic minor scales?

- **TRY IT – Basic:** Use the Practice Level ideas in Part B to practice melodic minor scales. **Practice** Pages \_\_\_\_\_

## C) How do I handle the 7th degree in minor?

The *flat* 7th degree is used in most minor scales and is fine to emphasize. You can also use the *natural* 7th degree in minor. For example:

- Emphasize the natural 7.
- Resolve it to the natural 6th, flat 7th, or root.
- Delay the resolution, such as 7 to 2 to 1.
- Play the natural 7th degree even if the chord symbol indicates a flat 7th (such as Cmi7).
- Alternate the natural and flat 7th over a minor 7 chord.



- **TRY IT – Basic:** Play a flexible C melodic minor ascending scale: hold the natural 7 or resolve it to the flat 7. **Medium:** Do this around the circle of 4ths; then add delayed resolutions in each scale.

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That's all for Tutorial 2A!

Next is the Quiz – to get started, go to the next page.

## QUIZ – 2A: More Chords and Scales

Click on the letter for the best answer for each question. You'll hear a C Maj6 arpeggio if you're right. If you miss 2 or less, you pass the Tutorial!

Or, click Back  to review the Tutorial before taking the Quiz.

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| <p>1) What major-scale tones are omitted from the pentatonic scale?</p> <p>A) 3 and 6 B) 4 and 7 C) 2 and 5 D) 2 and 6</p> <p>2) The melodic minor ascending scale has the following different tone(s) from major:</p> <p>A) 3rd B) 4th C) 7th D) there are more differences</p> <p>3) Which note does not fit in a Bb Lydian Dominant scale?</p> <p>A) E B) A C) G D) C</p> <p>4) Which scale most closely matches the blues scale?</p> <p>A) Lydian Dominant B) melodic minor ascending C) pentatonic D) minor pentatonic</p> | <p>5) What tones are added to a blues scale to make it expanded?</p> <p>A) 2, 5, b7 B) 3, 6, b7 C) 2, 3, 6 D) 2, 3, b 7</p> <p>6) The expanded blues scale has a tri-tone that begins on the:</p> <p>A) 2 B) 3 C) 4 D) 5</p> <p>7) The natural 7 degree fits best with:</p> <p>A) minor pentatonic B) blues C) Lydian Dominant D) melodic minor ascending</p> <p>8) How many consecutive chromatic notes are in the expanded blues scale, if you start on the 2nd?</p> <p>A) 3 B) 4 C) 5 D) 6</p> |
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