

# Tutorial 5A: Playing Outside, Part 1



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

1. About Outside Playing
2. Outside Notes and Keys
3. Melodic Resolution and Outside Keys
4. Using Whole-Tone Scales

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

Other Level 5 Tutorials

- 5B: Playing Outside, Part 2
- 5C: Rhythmic Freedom, Part 1
- 5D: Rhythmic Freedom, Part 2
- 5E: Rhythmic Pulses
- 5H: The Matrix

- ▶ Playing outside the chord progression can be a worrisome or satisfying experience, depending on your skills and preparation. There are definitely some effective ways to get started with outside playing – enjoy the journey!

## Part 1 – About Outside Playing

### A) What do “inside” and “outside” mean?

\*“Inside” means playing notes that fit with the key, and “outside” means playing notes that don’t, such as non-harmonic tones. But this view is a limited one; there’s much more to know about playing outside.

\*Playing outside notes can add new dimensions to your solos. Artists such as Ornette Coleman, Allan Holdsworth and Dave Liebman have taken outside playing to great heights.

\*When you play outside, you create *groups* of outside notes. Playing a single outside note usually sounds more like a mistake (such as holding C# in C Major). Playing meaningful groups of outside notes highlights the difference between inside and outside.

\*When you play outside, consider these issues:

1) *How closely do the notes fit with the current key?* The more the notes diverge from the key, the more outside it is likely to sound.

2) *How closely do the notes relate to each other?* Augmented intervals and wide intervals with non-harmonic tones tend to sound more outside.

3) *How do the notes sound in context, compared to what’s before and after?* Polychords and rapidly changing keys sound more outside.

### B) What are myths & facts about outside playing?

\*There are plenty of misconceptions about outside playing. Here are some common myths and facts:

*Myth #1:* Outside notes are chosen at random.

*Fact #1:* There are definite approaches to playing outside you can learn and depend on.

*Myth #2:* Inside is inside, outside is outside, and the two are a long way apart.

*Fact #2:* There are degrees of inside & outside, and you can go back & forth smoothly between inside & outside.

*Myth #3:* You only play outside on avant-garde tunes.

*Fact #3:* You can play at least a small amount of outside in many types of solos; it just depends on how well you play outside.

*Myth #4:* Playing outside is just a matter of choosing unusual pitches.

*Fact #4:* The other elements of improvisation, such as rhythm, development, and expression, are still important.

## Part 2 – Outside Notes and Keys

\*The “inside” key is the current key. The most inside notes are the ones that fit the key’s basic scale (such as the notes in the C Major scale). The most “outside” notes are ones that don’t relate to the current key, such as non-harmonic tones. But outside playing also uses other tones besides non-harmonic tones, in relative “degrees” of outside.

### A) What are the degrees of outside? MORE

\*To switch between inside and outside, you should know how outside any given note sounds, compared to the current key. The relative degrees of outside are:

- *Most outside:* Non-harmonic tones

- *Somewhat outside:* Active tones (2, 4, #4, 6, and 7). In major and dominant, the 4 and #4 are more outside; in minor, the #4 and 7 are more outside.

- *Least outside:* Chord tones (1, 3, 5)

### B) How do I use outside keys?

\*One way to play outside is to play in a different key from the current key (also known as *polytonal* playing). To do this, you can play the pentatonic scale in the new key. You need to know how outside (or inside) the new pentatonic notes are. You can assign *degrees of outside* to each note in the new pentatonic scale, as compared to the current key, to help you see the total outside effect of the new key.

\*For example, let’s superimpose F# Pentatonic over C Major. Four of the F# pentatonic notes are nonharmonic tones in C Major (G#, A#, C#, and D#), while F# is an active tone. If we score 3 for each nonharmonic tone (most outside), 2 for each active tone (F#), and 1 for each chord tone (none in this case), we get a total outside score of 14 (very outside) for F# Pentatonic over C Major. The outside score of C Pentatonic over C Major is only 7, so it’s very inside.

## (Part 2 – Outside Notes and Keys)

\*Against C Major, the other keys (pentatonic scales) are ranked below from most outside to most inside.

**Outside C Maj ----- In-between ----- Inside C Maj**

#4 b2 7 b6 3 b3 6 b7 2 4 5 1

F# Db B Ab E Eb A Bb D F G C

14 14 13 12 11 10 10 9 9 8 8 7



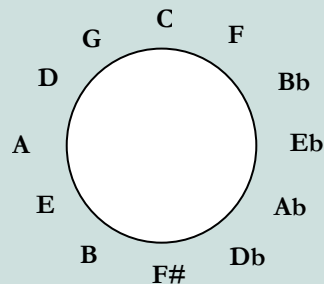
\*Over a CMa7 chord, you can switch between other pentatonic scales to create outside or inside sounds.

\*This is easier to do when the chord lasts longer. When you are familiar with the chart above, transpose it to the other major keys.

### C) How do I use outside keys?

\*One way is to use a diagram of the circle of 4ths. On the circle, the farther a key is from the current key (or on the opposite side of the circle), the more outside it sounds. The diagram for C Major is shown below. The most outside keys are at or near the bottom of each circle; the most inside keys are at or near the top of the circle.

Key of C Major – Inside



Outside

\*Now compare the outside keys in this diagram with the “Outside-Middle-Inside” chart above. The most outside keys in C Major are Db (up 1/2 step), B (down 1/2 step, and F# (up an augmented fourth). If you pick any other major key on the circle of fourths, the outside keys are still on the opposite side of the circle.

\*You can rotate this circle & use any key as the home key.

- ▶ **TRY IT – Basic:** For each major key around the circle of fourths, find the three most outside pentatonic scales.
- Medium:** Choose a major key progression from Practice Pages; play in those 3 keys on the progression.

## (Part 2 – Outside Notes and Keys)

## D) What about outside keys in minor?

\*The table below shows the “outside scores” for major pentatonic scales played against C Minor.

Outside C Min ---- In-between ----- Inside C Min

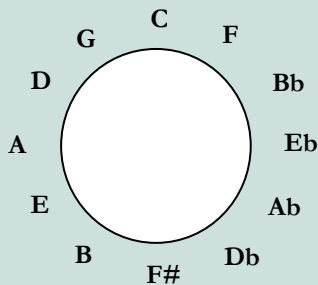
6 3 2 7 5 #4 1 b2 4 b6 b7 b3

A E D B G F# C Db F Ab Bb Eb

13 11 11 10 10 9 9 9 8 7 7 7



\*When these scores are arranged around the circle of fourths, the outside chords for minor are on the *left* side of the circle, and inside chords are at the right.



Inside

Outside

\*You can rotate this circle so any key is the home key.

- **TRY IT – Basic:** For each minor key around the circle of 4ths, find the 3 most outside major pentatonic scales.  
**Medium:** Choose a minor key progression from Practice Pages; play in those 3 keys on the progression.

## Part 3 – Melodic Resolution &amp; Outside

## A) How do I use melodic resolution to go outside?

\*When you jump right into an outside key it can sound too abrupt. To go smoothly from outside to inside, you can use melodic resolution. Here are the steps:

- 1 Play in the home key (such as C Major).
- 2 Choose an outside key to go to (such as F# Major).
- 3 Use melodic resolution to move by a no-step, half-step, or whole-step to a connection note in the new key (see Chapter 3B: *Melodic Connections*).
- 4 Continue with other notes in the outside key.

### (Part 3 – Melodic Resolution & Outside)

\*Once you're in the outside key you can use the steps above to go to other outside keys, then return to the home key. The first example below switches from C Major to F# Major. The second example switches from C to F# to B.



Example C - From C (inside) to F# (outside)



Example C1 - From C (inside) to F# (outside) to B(outside)

- ▶ **TRY IT – Basic:** In a major key progression, play inside and resolve to an outside key. **Medium:** Return to the home key. **Challenge:** Go to two different outside keys before returning. Practice Pages

**B)** How do I emphasize outside notes?

\*As an alternative to melodic resolution, you can simply emphasize outside notes without leading up to them. When you do this, keep these points in mind:

- Make sure the timing is good for the surprise notes.
- Play the notes securely, repeating them sometimes.
- Use interesting rhythms.

- ▶ **TRY IT – Basic:** Play a two-bar idea with 2 emphasized outside notes. **Medium:** Play a long idea with 4 or more emphasized outside notes.

### Part 4 – Using Whole-Tone Scales

\*You can use whole-tone scales to emphasize outside tones in major and minor keys. Against C Major, a C whole-tone scale has Ab and Bb as outside tones and F# as its most active tone. Against C Minor, a C whole-tone scale has E (outside tone) & F# & Ab (strong active tones).

**A)** How do I switch between whole-tone scales?

\*Because the root whole-tone scale has only a few outside tones, you can switch between it and the whole-tone scale that's *up a half-step*. When you alternate these scales, you

## (Part 4 – Using Whole-Tone Scales)

cover every chromatic pitch. This disguises your key, which sounds outside.

\*There are actually *only two different* flexible whole-tone scales: C and Db. The C, D, E, F#, Ab, and Bb whole-tone scales all have the same pitches as the C whole-tone; all the other whole-tone scales all have the same pitches as Db whole-tone.

\*When you switch between C and Db whole-tone scales, it's best to use half-step melodic resolution to change smoothly. Here's the switching process:

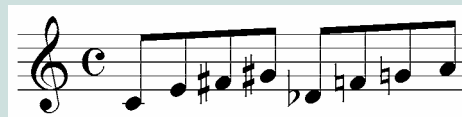
- 1 Play the first flexible whole-tone scale.
- 2 To make the switch, play a half-step interval. This note becomes part of the new whole-tone scale.
- 3 Play the new whole-tone scale, on the note.

Db =====^C =====



\*You can also *sequence* a whole-tone motif up a half-step:

C ===== Db =====



Or, use a wider interval (4th, 5th , or major 6th ) to switch:



\*You can also stay longer on any whole-tone scale before switching. But don't overdo the whole-tone sound, and use interesting rhythms to mix things up.


- ▶ **TRY IT – Basic:** Play a C whole-tone scale; switch to a Db whole-tone scale with a half-step link. **Medium:** Switch between the two scales several times. **Challenge:** Switch with half-steps and wider intervals.

That's all for Tutorial 5A!

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

## QUIZ - 5A: Playing Outside, Part 1

Click on the letter for the best answer for each question. You'll hear a C Major 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.

- 1) To switch whole-tone scales, go  
A) up a whole-step B) down a whole-step C) down a major third D) up a half-step
- 2) If you play an outside note without melodic resolution, the effect is  
A) natural B) surprising C) boring D) none of these
- 3) If note duplication is eliminated, how many whole-tone scales are there?  
A) 1 B) 2 C) 3 D) 11
- 4) In minor, the most outside major chord is the  
A) 6 B) 4 C) flat 3 D) flat 2
- 5) Which is not true about outside playing?  
A) outside notes are random B) inside and outside can be easily connected C) you can play outside on most tunes D) outside means more than pitches
- 6) In minor, the most inside major chord is the  
A) 6 B) 4 C) flat 3 D) flat 2
- 7) In major, the most outside chord is the  
A) 7 B) #4 C) 2 D) flat 7
- 8) In major, the most inside chord is the  
A) 3 B) 2 C) 5 D) 1





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