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### How to Take a Rockin' Guitar Solo! Guitar Theory – Guitar Soloing

#### What is a Guitar Solo?

A guitar solo is when the 'lead' guitar player improvises a melody (on the spot) over the rhythm section of a band.

*(Carlos Santana, George Harrison, Eric Clapton, Jimmy Hendrix, etc.)*

Yup, the lead guitarist makes it up as they play it!

You are probably thinking to yourself...Hmmm, will *I* ever be able to do that?

Make up a solo on the spot?!

The answer is **YES**, you can.

There are 'tricks of the trade' for guitar soloing just as there are for any specialty or profession.

I am going to guide you right to the point, just like all of my reports.

No fluff, No BS. We'll discuss **ONLY** what you need to know to take a freakin' guitar solo!

Hopefully You have a good idea about how to hold a guitar and play a note. You do **not** have to know what note you are playing! (ex. A, C, G, etc)

All you have to know, is how to **play** a note. That is pressing a finger down on a fret and strumming or picking the strings with the other hand.

Also, you will need to know how to read Guitar TAB. I tought TAB in my first guitar lesson report. There are resources online that show you how to read TAB for **FREE!** Just search: '**Guitar TAB**' on your favorite search engine.

Now that we got that out of the way...let's learn!

#### Who Plays a Guitar Solo and Where does it Fit in?

As I mentioned above, the '**lead guitar**' player of a band/group is the one who will take a guitar solo. (Duh, of course, a keyboard solo would be taken by the keyboardist!)

A typical song usually consists of a 'Chord Progression' and a 'Melody'. The 'Chord Progression' is the combination of chords that is played in the

background over the melody. The melody usually consists of notes that are part of the chord being played at any given time. So if the chords for a song are G, C, D. (which **MANY** famous songs are just 3 chords! More than you can imagine..)

The melody of the song would probably include one of the notes of a G chord while the band plays that chord. When the band switches to a C chord, the singer or whatever is playing the main melody switches to a note that sounds good with the C chord and so on. That is how a song is constructed which is a whole different lesson!

During a song, sometimes an instrument will take a solo.

This occurs in classical music as well as rock 'n roll and a lot of styles in between!

Jazz is very big on soloing and improvisation.

The melody line will stop, but the rest of the rhythm section of the band will continue to play the 'chords' of the 'background music' while the lead guitarist takes a nice solo over the music. That doesn't mean that they play the same melody that the singer was just singing! It's more about showing what the instrument is capable of, and making musical 'phrases'.

So the guitarist solos and then the singer usually comes back in for a final chorus and then the song ends. What I am going to do, is narrow down the notes for you, so you know what you need to play to take a great sounding solo.

### **Let's Get to the 'Tricks of the Trade' and Solos Already!!**

Ok, Ok! Phew. I didn't realize you were that anxious.

Calm down, and grab your guitar. ;-)

Ok, what I'm about to tell you will change the way you feel about guitar solos and how difficult they are.

Almost EVERY Guitar Solo that you ever heard, consisted of a 6 note pattern!

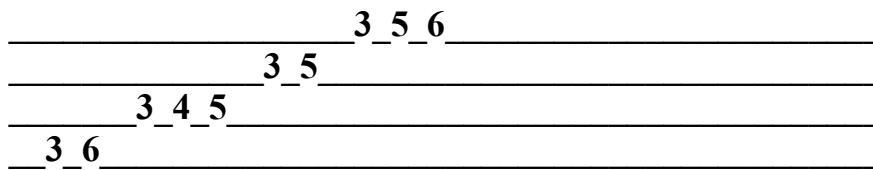
What!?! You heard me, more than 90% of all guitar solos are played using the 'Blues Scale' otherwise known as the 'Minor Pentatonic' Scale. This scale is only 5-6 notes long (one note is optional).

It obviously repeats itself in higher pitched octaves therefore you can go up and down the guitar neck and take a crazy solo....but it's still only 6 notes.

WOW. That's a heavy load for a lot of people who dream of taking guitar solos.

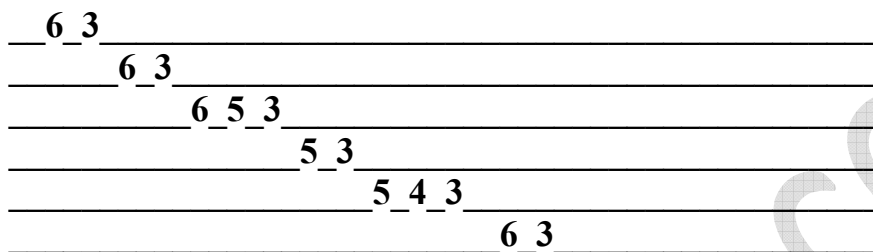
Why? Because it's not as hard as you think. Only **6 notes**. The pattern I will show you will make it **even easier!**

**Here is the Guitar TAB for this AMAZING pattern!**



That is going 'UP' the scale.

Here is going 'DOWN' the scale:

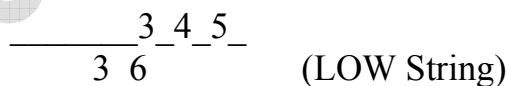


You might notice this already, but even JUST playing this scale sounds like a guitar solo!!!

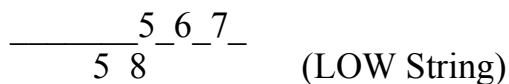
### ANOTHER TRICK OF THE TRADE:

I call this the 'Universal Pattern' Law.

Anything you do in one spot on the guitar, can be done the same way on any other spot on the guitar! Sound weird? It is. For example, the first few notes of this scale:



By starting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> fret we are soloing in the key of G. If we wanted to solo in the key of A we would have to start on the 5<sup>th</sup> fret of the lowest string:



The pattern looks AND feels the same as when we did it starting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> fret. You can get the pattern down perfectly the way I showed you starting on the 3<sup>rd</sup> fret, and then try to do the same solo on any other fret on the bottom string. You can slide your hand just one fret to the right and start on the 4<sup>th</sup> fret:

4 5 6  
4 7 (LOW String)

You will see what I mean as soon as you play all of these examples.

### **That is GREAT NEWS!!!**

I just basically told you that you can take a guitar solo using the 6 note pattern (done 2 and a half times thus the 14 total notes) that I showed you. AND you don't have to learn how to solo in every key!!! Just memorize the pattern and you'll automatically be able to play it in ANY KEY! Whoa. That's great news if you ask me.

### **Taking it Further**

Once you have mastered the above scale, check out [theorylessons.com](http://theorylessons.com) to learn more about different positions of the blues and pentatonic scales. It should be noted, that many guitarists get a lot of mileage out of the single position above, so experiment with creating guitar solos before you memorize a whole bunch of scale positions.

Now, you're ready to improvise. The concept is simple; string together series of notes from the scale that sound pleasing together (these series of notes are often referred to as "licks"). When you're done experimenting a little, look up videos of your favorite guitar players and solos. Listen to the Licks they play and try memorizing, and utilizing some of these in your guitar solos.

### **Using the Scale to Play Guitar Solos!**

Now that you're comfortable with the blues scale, you'll want to play guitar solos over some form of accompaniment. The most common things guitar players solo over is a 12 bar blues.

Something that beginner lead guitarists don't realize is that improvising ( or, "soloing") does not involve playing a series of random notes, and then they magically sound great together. Rather, guitarists draw their guitar solos from a scale, using it as a template to improvise with. The Blues Scale, despite it's name, is a scale which is used extensively in all styles of guitar solos.

To use the blues scale, play it so that the root of the scale starts on the letter name of the scale you want to play. For example, to play a G blues scale, find the note G on the LOW string (3<sup>rd</sup> fret) and start the scale there. (this is the one we learned!)

An 'A' blues scale would start on the 5<sup>th</sup> fret of the LOW string.

Try playing the scale up and down at first. Start off slow, then get faster and faster. Try messing around with different phrases and patterns (all within the same notes of the scale though). You will hear and see how powerful this is after you play it for the first time!

**Congratulations! You took the 1<sup>st</sup> step in learning how to take rockin' guitar solos!!! This is Part 1 of a 3 part lesson, practice what you've learned here, look up some TAB for sweet guitar solos online and start rockin! Then, when you feel like you're ready, jump into part 2!**

**PART 2 Will Include:**

- 1) Hot Licks, Riffs, and more...
- 2) More (different) scales that are used for soloing!
- 3) Let's take a solo
- 4)

Thank you for reading, I wish you all the best success!

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