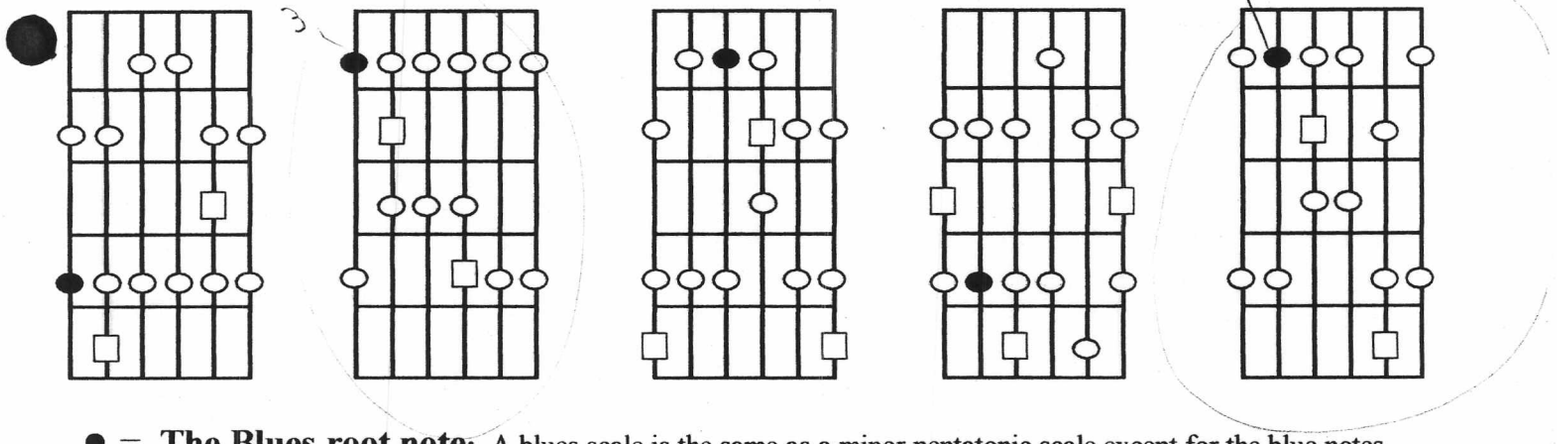
Blues Scales



● = **The Blues root note:** A blues scale is the same as a minor pentatonic scale except for the blue notes.

□ = **The blue notes:** The blue note is a bluesy sounding passing tone that bridges the gap between the 4th and 5th tones of a minor pentatonic scale. The blue note is a raised or sharped 4th and in the key of "A Blues" the blue note is D#.

How to Find the Blues Root Note

In blues it does not matter if the rhythm guitarist or player is playing in a major or minor key. For example, if the rhythm player is in A major or A minor the lead guitarist will play an A blues scales over either key. It is a good idea to have already memorized the pentatonic patterns before attempting the blues scales. As mentioned above the blues scales are just the minor pentatonic scales with the blue notes added. Now that the blue notes have been added in, it creates some awkward fingerings and requires some slight shifts of position or sliding to a fret to accommodate the notes in the scale. Finding the blues root notes are easy and they are the same as the minor pentatonic root notes. Just be a bit more flexible and creative with your fingerings for the blues scales. Listed here are the locations for the root notes in the key of "A" blues: Play the darkened in root note on the first pattern on the 6th string 5th fret. The second pattern root note is also the 6th string 5th fret but be sure to use the 1st finger to play the root note. The third pattern root note is on the 4th string 7th fret. The fourth pattern is on the 5th string 12th fret. The fifth and last pattern root note is also the 5th string 12th fret but be sure to use the 1st finger to play the root note. When improvising in the blues style try doing half step bends, whole bends, and a lot of hammer on and pull off technique. Be creative, have fun, and good luck!

Major Blues Chord Progressions

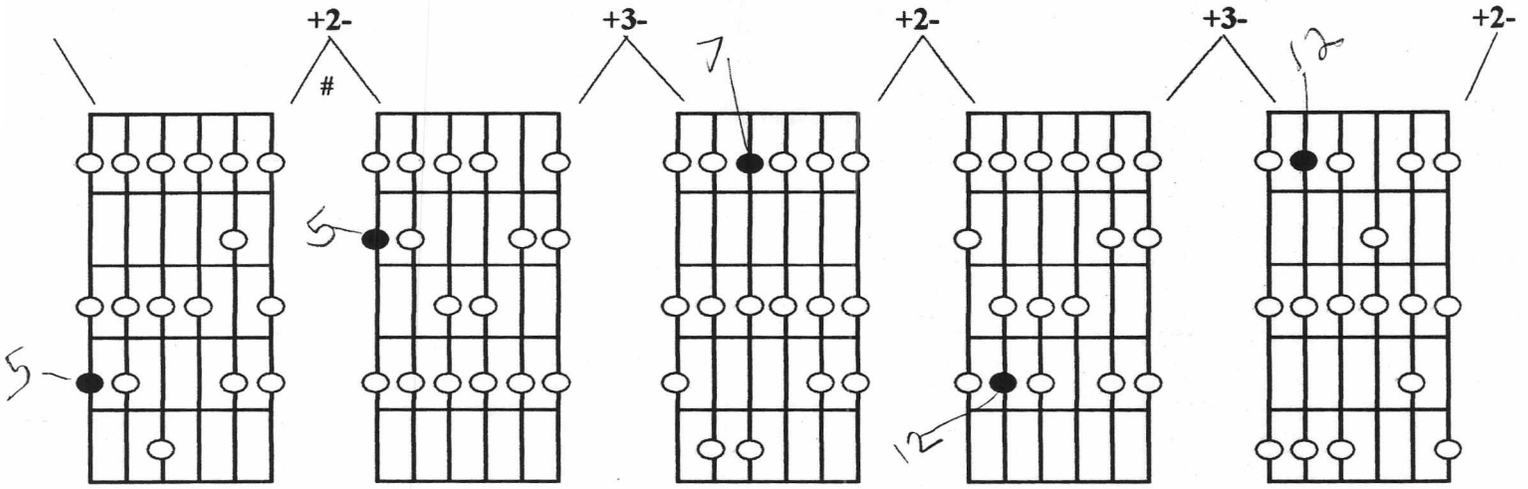
The most common combination for jamming the blues is for the rhythm player to play a major chord progression while the lead player uses the blues scale to improvise over the chord progression. Here is an example for the key of A. The rhythm player uses a 1, 4, 5_7 chord progression in the key of A major. These chords are A, D, and E7. Frequently in blues a variation on this is to play a 1_7, 4_7, and 5_7 chord progression which equals A7, D7, and E7. By playing all of the chords as dominant seventh chords, an extra bluesy sound is achieved. Most blues songs are just the three chord type progressions that are listed above but if you are bored and want to try some other chords that go well in this same key then try C, F, and G7. Since the A blues scale is based on the A minor pentatonic scale and A minor pentatonic scale is relative to C major, then the 1, 4, and 5_7 chord progression in C major is C, F, and G7. The easiest way to figure all of this out is to just go up a minor 3rd , (three frets higher), from the A root note which equals the C note. Just figure out the 1, 4, and 5_7 chords for the key of C which are the C, F, and G7 chords. Try using this technique of finding blues chord progressions for other keys such as E, C, D, and G.

Minor Blues Chord Progressions

Playing an A blues scale over an A minor chord progression produces a jazzy blues sound. Just figure out what the 1m, 4m, and 5_7 chords would be for the minor key that you are in. In the key of A minor the chords are Am, Dm, and E7. To add a few more chords to the basic chords just figure out the relative major chords are. From the 1m chord root note (A), count up a minor 3rd (3 frets) to get to a C. Play a C major chord because it is relative to the A minor chord. From the Dm chord count up a minor 3rd to get an F major chord. From the E7 chord count up a minor 3rd to get G7. Summing it up, in the key of A minor the six most common chords used by the rhythm player are Am, Dm, E7, C, F, and G7. Be sure to study up on theory so playing in any key is easy for you to do.

A major

Mode Patterns and Guidelines



● = **Ionian root note (Major root note)**

\# = Frets between patterns to stay in the same mode.

* Frets	Modes	Lead Style and Effect	** Chord Progression for each Mode							Location of half steps
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
0	1 **Ionian** (major)	**All styles: Happy and Bright**	maj	min	min	maj	maj	min	dim	**3 & 4 7 & 8**
-2	2 **Dorian**	**Jazz and Blues**	min	min	maj	maj	min	dim	maj	**2 & 3 6 & 7**
-4	3 **Phrygian**	**Flamenco, Latin, Jazz, Rock, and Heavy Metal**	min	maj	maj	min	dim	maj	min	**1 & 2 5 & 6**
-5	4 **Lydian**	**Jazz and Pop**	maj	maj	min	dim	maj	min	min	**4 & 5 7 & 8**
+5	5 **Mixolydian**	**Country, Country Rock, and Jazz**	maj	min	dim	maj	min	min	maj	**3 & 4 6 & 7**
+3	6 **Aeolian** (minor)	**All styles**: Emotional, Sad, or Romantic	min	dim	maj	min	min	maj	maj	**2 & 3 5 & 6**
+1	7 **Locrian**	**Jazzy and Dissonant**	dim	maj	min	min	maj	maj	min	**1 & 2 4 & 5**

* **How to use the "Frets" column:** If you want to play one of the scale patterns in A Aeolian, first find it in A major and then move up +3 frets with the same pattern. The pattern is now in A Aeolian. The root note of this mode is any "A" within the pattern. Another way to find the root note is to count the Ionian root note as number one and count up in pitch a total of six notes in the scale pattern. The sixth note, counting from the major root note, is the Aeolian root note because Aeolian is the sixth mode.

** **How to use the "Chord Progression for Each Mode" column:** Let's say that you would like to make up a chord progression for A Dorian. Notice in the "Location of half steps" column that in the Dorian mode the half steps fall between the 2nd and 3rd notes and also between the 6th and 7th notes of the mode. All other intervals will always be whole steps. Starting from "A" the notes in A Dorian are A, B, C, D, E, F#, G, & A. To figure out what chords are used in A Dorian use the "Chord Progression for each Mode" column to assign the appropriate chord extension to each note in the mode. The chords for A Dorian are: Am, Bm, C, D, Em, F# dim, and G. Playing the Dorian mode over these chords works perfectly. Often you will see the Am chord extended to Am7 or the C chord extended to Cmaj7. Other alterations can be made like playing an E7 instead of Em, it just takes a lot of experimenting and deeper study of theory to get the results that you are looking for. Notice that A Dorian has one Sharp in it's key signature which means it is related to G major and E minor since they also have the same F# in their key signature. Ionian (major) and Aeolian (minor) are the strongest and most pleasing modes to the ear. Sometimes when you are working in the other modes it sounds best to resolve to the relative major or minor key for the ending of a song. Resolving to G major in the above case sounds strong and is pleasing to the ear. Good luck!

How Modes are Relative to the Ionian/Major Scale

The following chart shows the C Ionian scale and all of it's relative scales based off of itself. Keep in mind that the Ionian mode is the same as a major scale, and the Aeolian mode is the same as the pure or natural minor scale. Ionian is the first mode and each successive mode is based off the next note in the Ionian scale. For example, Dorian is the second mode and D Dorian is based on the second note of the C Ionian scale. Another example is the A Aeolian/minor scale, which is the sixth mode, is based off of the sixth note of the C Ionian scale. Notice that in the key of C major that there aren't any sharps or flats. In the key of G Ionian/major, which has an F#, each successive mode based off of itself will have F# in it's scale. The "*H*" shows where the half steps fall in each scale. All other intervals between notes are whole steps.

			H				*H*						
1. **Ionian**	1	2	*3*	*4*	5	6	*7*	*8*					
(Major)	C	D	*E*	*F*	G	A	*B*	*C*					
2. **Dorian**		1	*2*	*3*	4	5	*6*	*7*	8				
		D	*E*	*F*	G	A	*B*	*C*	D				
3. **Phrygian**			*1*	*2*	3	4	*5*	*6*	7	8			
			E	*F*	G	A	*B*	*C*	D	E			
										H			
4. **Lydian**				1	2	3	*4*	*5*	6	*7*	*8*		
				F	G	A	*B*	*C*	D	*E*	*F*		
5. **Mixolydian**					1	2	*3*	*4*	5	*6*	*7*	8	
					G	A	*B*	*C*	D	*E*	*F*	G	
6. **Aeolian**						1	*2*	*3*	4	*5*	*6*	7	8
(Minor)						A	*B*	*C*	D	*E*	*F*	G	A
7. **Locrian**							*1*	*2*	3	*4*	*5*	6	7	8
							B	*C*	D	*E*	*F*	G	A	B

The emotional sound effect of where half steps fall in a scale:

Certain moods and tensions are portrayed depending on where the half step intervals fall within a scale. All of the above modes are diatonic scales. This means that they are eight note scales made up of whole and half steps. In general, half steps between the 3rd and 4th notes, and the 7th and 8th notes gives a happy or bright effect. Half steps between the 2nd and 3rd notes, and the 5th and 6th notes gives a sad or emotional effect. A half step between the 6th and 7th notes makes the 7th tone function as a m7 or a dominant seventh, which gives a mellow or blues effect. A half step between the 1st and 2nd notes gives a mysterious or Spanish type of effect. Having a half step between the 4th and 5th notes creates a bit of a dissonant effect.