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Electric Blues Essentials

LEVEL 3 • Guitar Skills

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Modern Blues

UNIT 2 • **LESSON 1** << PREVIOUS NEXT >>

Lesson notes Interactive tab Diagrams

M7B5 Chord

Before we dive into how to play the track, we need to work through the concept of the minor 7th flat 5th chord. Quite a mouthful eh? So first up, let's talk theory, what is a m7b5 chord? Here is the chord spelling:

1, b3, b5, b7



Notice how the first three notes are a diminished chord - 1, b3rd and b5th.

So, this clarifies the fact that this chord is based on a diminished chord with an additional 7th note. However, unlike the major 7th or minor 7th, **we can't call this a "Diminished 7th", that's a different chord** (we'll get to that in a sec). Instead, we refer to this as either a **"half-diminished"** or a **"m7b5"** chord. Both are exactly the same, just a different name for it. To clarify, we call this a half-diminished because a whole diminished needs to be made up of notes a minor 3rd apart. We will talk about this in-depth in Unit 3, so don't worry for now.

Course navigation

UNIT 1

Funky Blues

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UNIT 2

Modern Blues

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In unit 2, we dial back the aggression and focus on a modern style blues, using the most modern fingerstyle techniques, with a cool new set of chords and arpeggios called the minor 7 flat 5's!

Lessons:

- M7b5 Chord
- Groove and Chords
- The Solo
- Minor 7 Flat 5
- Solo Complete!

UNIT 3

8 Bar Blues

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UNIT 4

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so, why are we using this chord?

Good question! The answer is simple – The m7b5 chord can be almost identical in notes to the dominant 9th chord major 3rd below it. Here is the rule to remember:

“From the root of your dominant chord, move up a major 3rd. This new starting note is the root of your half-diminished (m7b5) chord.”

Notice how the fretboard shapes look identical except that the Bb9 has an additional Bb note in it. You can see it even better from the chord spelling:

Bb9 = Bb, D, F, Ab, C

Dm7b5 = D, F, Ab, C

So, following this rule, whenever you are playing a dominant chord in your blues, you can substitute it for a half-diminished (m7b5... whatever you prefer to call it!). The final thing is to learn and master those 2 shapes we use in the track, which we have as chord boxes here. Get those learnt and we'll move on to the next lesson.



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