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# Electric Blues Essentials

LEVEL 3 • Guitar Skills

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## Modern Blues

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### 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

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### UNIT 2

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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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