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Freddie King

Player Studies



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Going Up

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Damn, That's Blues

Now that we've had a listen to the track, let's set the scene and lay the groundwork to be able to get the most out of the learning process. The first thing I want to briefly talk about is **Freddie King's use of finger picks**. Yep, he's one of the few who actually use these bad boys, and he uses them on his thumb and fingers! Check this out:

It's hard to get a clear shot from YouTube, but here you can definitely see a fingerpick on his first finger and thumb!



This goes a long way to explain how he gets such a unique and aggressive tone! A lot of up strokes with that first finger, and downstrokes with the thumb. **Don't worry, I'm not going to ask you to head to the local music store and pick up a bag of finger picks**, we're going to do the whole course with a standard pick. Still, it's very worth knowing!

Freddie Loves D Blues...

Course navigation

UNIT 1

Going Up

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We're not messing about here, as we dive headfirst into our first track. This track is all about learning to hit the big riffs like Freddie does.

Lessons:

- **Damn, That's Blues!**
- **The Core Riff**
- **Solo Part 1**
- **Solo Part 2**
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Slightly Different Blues

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The other thing I want to talk about in this first lesson is Freddie's obsession with the key of D blues. Of course, as with any artist, there are exceptions to the rule, but on the whole, Freddie loves the key of D. **I believe this is because the key of D very much suits his vocal range**, and therefore he'll hang around that key as often as possible. Understandable really, especially if you know you can blow people away with your vocal skills if you're in the right key. So, what is the key of D blues?



"A 'blues' key is based around dominant 7th chords, and indicates a blend of the major key and minor key."

DAN HOLTON

Let's take a closer look at the idea of the blues key. Essentially, in most blues tracks, we are using a I IV V progression, in which all of the chords are dominant. For example, in the key of D blues, we use the chords:



You can see that, although a lot of these notes do fit into the D major scale (**D E F# G A B C# D**) we also have notes in there that don't. In fact, those other notes fit quite naturally into the D minor pentatonic scale (**D F G A C**). So, when it comes to the Blues key,

we're really talking about the major and minor crossover, meaning you can use both the major and minor pentatonic! Pretty sweet!

"NOTE: Notice also that the G7 chord (the IV) has notes very strongly fitting into the D minor pentatonic, which is why it's a great idea to switch to minor over the 4 chord, then more of the major pentatonic over the 1 and 5 chords. Give it a try yourself, have some fun, and in the next lesson, we'll get to the track."



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