

Lesson

81

Learn to play a blues rhythm riff

This blues rhythm riff is the most common riff you hear a blues guitarist play. It is very simple but sounds really cool.

It is based on these three barre chords:



They're more of a visual reference because you aren't actually playing the whole chord. You will only be playing the bottom two strings of the chord and your 4th finger will be in motion.

Here is the riff for G7. Spend some time getting comfortable with it. The C7 and D7 riffs are very similar.

G7

fingering: 2 4 2 4 2 4 2 4
1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1

counting: 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

Mute the strings with the side of your right hand near the bridge when you play and it will sound "lighter."

C7

fingering: 2 4 2 4
1 1 1 1

counting: 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

D7

fingering: 2 4 2 4
1 1 1 1

counting: 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

This chord progression is called a 12-bar blues and it is the foundation for this style of music. Guess what? It's twelve bars long!

1 2 3 4

5 6 7 8

9 10 11 12

The last two bars of a blues progression, bars 11 and 12, are referred to as the **turnaround**.

C7								C7								G7								G7							
5	5	7	7	5	5	7	7	5	5	7	7	5	5	7	7	5	5	7	7	5	5	7	7	5	5	7	7	5	5	7	7
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
2		4		2		4		2		4		2		4		2		4		2		4		2		4		2		4	
1	&	2	&	3	&	4	&	1	&	2	&	3	&	4	&	1	&	2	&	3	&	4	&	1	&	2	&	3	&	4	&

D7				C7				G7				D7			
7	7	9	9	5	5	7	7	5	5	7	7	7	7	9	9
5	5	5	5	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	5	5	5	5
2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4	2	4
1	&	2	&	1	&	2	&	1	&	2	&	1	&	2	&

Also, listen to the **shuffle** feel I use in the video. This is another important aspect of the blues style. For now, just let your body emulate this rhythm as you play the riff and you can explore the music theory involved later. In actuality, playing blues music is more about the *feel* of the music. Listen to a lot of blues recordings and you will start to hear what I am talking about.