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Hey You! Guitar Quiz! Do You Know The Answer?

What Chords Belong Together In The Key of A?

a) A, G, E b) A, D, E c) A, B, G d) A, D, C

[Click Here To Find The Correct Answer...](#)

Guitar Scale Exercises - Improve Your Speed, Strength & Timing

To make the most effective use of the guitar scale exercises in this series, use them in conjunction with the timing elements introduced in the [timing series](#).

That means using quarter, eighth and sixteenth notes and gradually increasing the BPM on your [metronome](#) (I recommend increments of 5 BPM). Have **patience** and **discipline** with it and you'll soon notice dramatic improvements in your ability to navigate scales in a fluid way.

Note that the exercises in this series are a general guide and can be applied to *any scale you learn*. However, for any examples, I'll be using the [major scale](#).

The important thing is you come out of this lesson with a clear process for building your own effective guitar scale exercises rather than relying on tabs being thrown in front of you for every single scale (although there will be separate scale exercise lessons to give you some ideas!). In other words, look at these exercises as **patterns** rather than specific notes.

Tip: These exercises are great for warming up. Spend around 10 minutes before each practice session combining the techniques below for your chosen scale (e.g. a scale you're currently learning).

Guitar Challenge

Q. What Scale Should You Play In E?

A. a) A Major b) C# Minor c) G Major

[Click Here For The Correct Answer](#)

Guitar Scale Exercises Set #1 - Runs

Scale runs are simply where you ascend up or descend down a scale pattern in repetitive, linear and staggered movements. Think of runs as playing a given scale in straight sequence (e.g. note 1 up to 7 or 7 down to 1) but with interruptions or "set backs" to make them sound more interesting.

Get the print sheet for this lesson - Includes tabs for all 20 exercises to read away from your computer/device. [Download Here \(PDF\)](#)

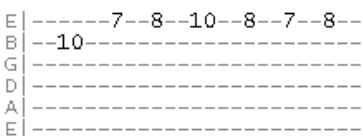
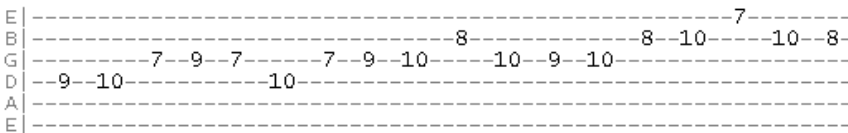
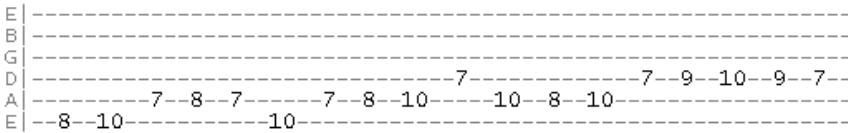
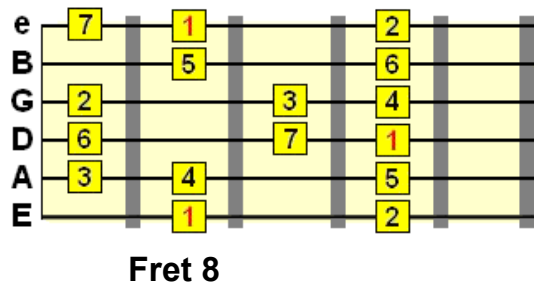
Exercise 1

In the sequence below, each number represents a degree of a 7 note scale (most scales have 7 notes, with 1 being the root). This is how a "4 steps forward, 2 steps back" run would play out...



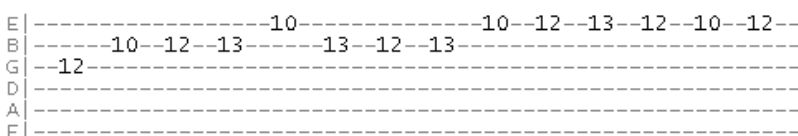
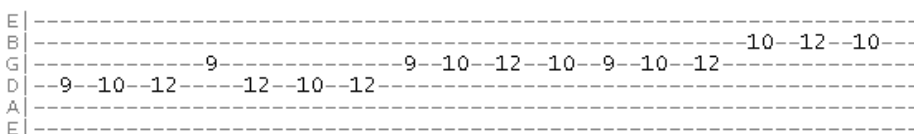
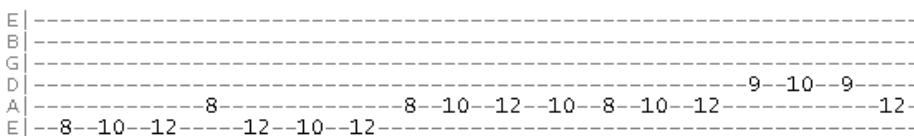
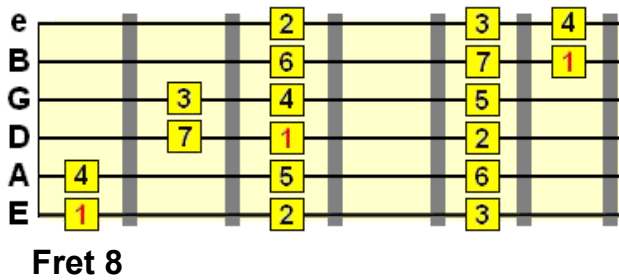
1	2	3	4	3	2	3	4	5	6	5	4	5	6	7	1	7	6
>	>	>	<	<	>	>	>	>	<	<	>	>	>	>	<	<	

Using the C major scale as an example, I could apply this run sequence to its 1st position boxed pattern as follows...



Exercise 2

A wider, 3-notes-per-string pattern as follows...



Runs can also be played across patterns, but start with the box and 3-notes-per-string patterns and gradually expand to cover more of the fretboard.

Exercise 3

Don't forget to **descend** using the same pattern, starting from the 1st (high E) string...

1	7	6	5	6	7	6	5	4	3	4	5	4	3	2	1	2	3
<	<	<	>	>	<	<	<	<	>	>	<	<	<	<	>	>	

```

E| --8--7-----7-----
B| -----10--8--10-----10--8-----8-----
G| -----10--9--10-----10--9--7-----7--9--7-----
D| -----10-----10-----
A| -----
E| -----
  
```

```

E| -----
B| -----
G| -----
D| --9--7--9--10--9--7-----7-----
A| -----10--8--10-----10--8--7-----7--8--7-----
E| -----10-----10--8--7--8--
  
```

Tip: Try occasionally repeating sections of the run based on string pairings. You don't always have to run up/down the entire pattern.

Below are some more run patterns for you to try.

Remember, these can be applied to **any** scale, including pentatonic scales (although obviously you have fewer notes-per-octave to run through).

Remember also that you don't always have to start on the root (1) note of the scale. Once you've learned the sequence, try starting the run pattern on each note of the scale. Test yourself and be spontaneous!

Exercise 4

5 steps forward, 3 back ascending...

1	2	3	4	5	4	3	2	3	4	5	6	7	6	5	4
>	>	>	>	<	<	<	>	>	>	>	>	<	<	<	

```

E| -----
B| -----
G| -----
D| -----7--9--7-----7--9-----7--9-----
A| -----7--8--10--8--7-----7--8--10-----10--8--10-----
E| --8--10-----10-----
  
```

```

E| -----
B| -----8--10-----
G| -----7-----7--9--10--9--7-----7--9--10-----
D| --10-----10--9--7--9--10-----10-----
A| -----
E| -----
  
```

```

E| -----7--8--7-----7--8--10--8--
B| --8-----8--10-----10--8--10-----
G| --10--9--10-----
D| -----
A| -----
E| -----
  
```



Exercise 5

Same as Ex 4 but descending from the top to bottom of the pattern...

1	7	6	5	4	5	6	7	6	5	4	3	2	3	4	5
<	<	<	<	>	>	>	<	<	<	<	<	>	>	>	

E | -----7-----
 B | -----8-----
 G | -----10-----
 D | -----10-----
 A | -----10-----
 E | -----10-----

E | -----
 B | -----
 G | -----7-----
 D | -----9-----
 A | -----10-----
 E | -----10-----

E | -----
 B | -----
 G | -----
 D | -----7-----
 A | -----10-----
 E | -----10-----

Exercise 6

2 steps forward, 1 back ascending...

1	2	1	2	3	2	3	4	3
>	<	>	>	<	>	>	<	

E | -----
 B | -----
 G | -----
 D | -----7-----
 A | -----10-----
 E | -----10-----

E | -----
 B | -----
 G | -----7-----
 D | -----10-----
 A | -----10-----
 E | -----10-----

E | -----7-----
 B | -----10-----
 G | -----
 D | -----
 A | -----
 E | -----

Exercise 7

Same as above but descending...

1	7	1	7	6	7	6	5	6
<	>	<	<	>	<	<	>	



E|-----8--7--8--7-----7-----
 B|-----10-----10--8--10--8-----8-----
 G|-----10-----10--9--10--9--7--9--7-----
 D|-----
 A|-----
 E|-----

E|-----
 B|-----
 G|-----7-----
 D|--10-----10--9--10--9--7--9--7-----7-----
 A|-----10-----10--8--10--8--7--8--7-----
 E|-----10-----

E|-----
 B|-----
 G|-----
 D|-----
 A|--7-----
 E|-----10--8--10--8--7--8--

Exercise 8

3 steps forward, 1 back ascending...

1	2	3	2	3	4	5	4	5	6	7	6
>	>	<	>	>	>	<	>	>	>	<	

E|-----
 B|-----
 G|-----7-----7-----7--9-----7--9-----
 D|-----7--9--7--9--10-----10-----
 A|-----7-----7--8--10--8--10-----
 E|--8--10-----10-----

E|-----7--8--7--8--10--8--7--8--
 B|-----8--10--8--10-----
 G|--10--9--10-----
 D|-----
 A|-----
 E|-----

Exercise 9

Descending...

1	7	6	7	6	5	4	5	4	3	2	3
<	<	>	<	<	<	>	<	<	<	>	

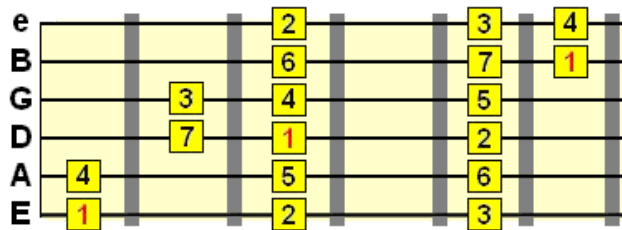
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 B|-----10-----10--8-----8-----
 G|-----10-----10--9--7--9--7-----
 D|-----10--9--10--9--7-----
 A|-----10-----
 E|-----

E|-----
 B|-----
 G|-----
 D|--7-----
 A|-----10--8--7--8--7-----
 E|-----10--8--10--8--

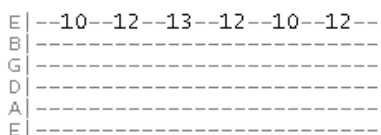
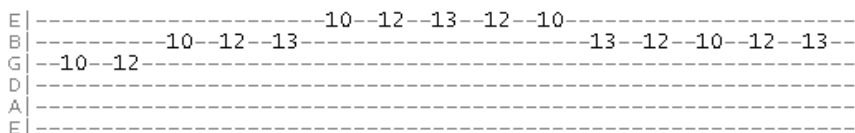
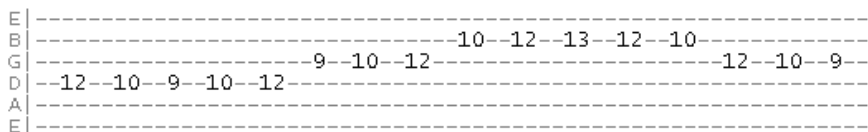
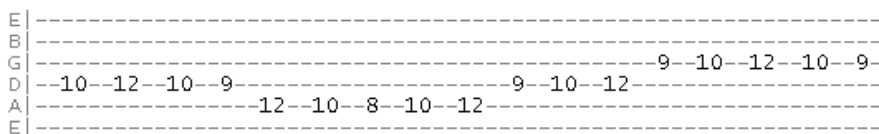
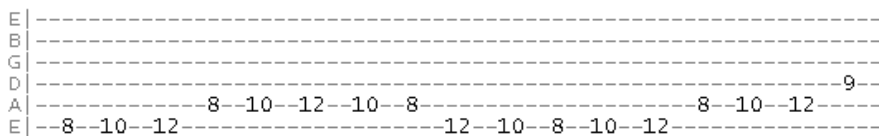


Exercise 10

You can also play longer, more elaborate runs. This pattern is specifically designed for 3-notes-per-string scale patterns as it would typically involve legato playing (hammer-ons and pull-offs).



1	2	3	4	5	6	5	4	3	2	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	1	7	6	5	4
>	>	>	>	>	<	<	<	<	<	>	>	>	>	>	>	>	>	<	<	<	<	<	



Exercise 11

This exercise is also designed for 3-notes-per-string scale patterns as you play two 3-note triplets on each string, ascending or descending through the scale pattern. Remember, the numbers represent the **scale degrees** and can be applied to **any** scale. It's the *sequence*, the movement between the scale's degrees we're looking at here...

3	2	1	3	2	1	6	5	4	6	5	4	2	1	7	2	1	7	5	4	3	5	4	3
<	<	>	<	<	>	<	<	>	<	<	>	<	<	>	<	<	>	<	<	>	<	<	



E |-----
 B |-----
 G |-----
 D |-----12-10-9-12-10-
 A |-----12-10-8-12-10-8-
 E |-----12-10-8-12-10-8-

E |-----13-12-10-
 B |-----13-12-10-13-12-10-
 G |-----12-10-9-12-10-9-
 D |-----9-
 A |-----
 E |-----

Exercise 12

We can draw out the above run even more by repeating the triplets more times on each string...

3	2	1	3	2	1	6	5	4	3	2	1	6	5	4	6	5	4	2	1	7	6	5	4
<	<	>	<	<	>	<	<	<	<	<	>	<	<	>	<	<	>	<	<	<	<	<	<

E |-----
 B |-----
 G |-----
 D |-----12-10-8-
 A |-----12-10-8-12-10-8-12-10-8-
 E |-----12-10-8-12-10-8-

E |-----
 B |-----
 G |-----12-10-9-
 D |-----12-10-9-12-10-9-12-10-9-12-
 A |-----8-12-10-8-
 E |-----

E |-----13-12-10-13-12-
 B |-----12-10-9-12-10-9-13-12-10-12-10-9-13-12-
 G |-----10-9-
 D |-----
 A |-----
 E |-----

E |-----13-12-10-13-12-10-12-
 B |-----10-13-12-10-13-12-10-
 G |-----
 D |-----
 A |-----
 E |-----

Exercise 13

How about interrupting these triplets a bit more with a further step back at the end of every 2nd triplet? Arrgh! More to think about...

3	2	1	3	2	1	2	1	6	5	4	6	5	4	5	4	2	1	7	2	1	7	1	7
<	<	>	<	<	>	<	>	<	<	>	<	<	>	<	>	<	<	>	<	<	>	<	<



E |-----
 B |-----
 G |-----
 D |-----12-----
 A |-----12-10-8-12-10-8-10-8-----
 E |--12-10-8-12-10-8-10-8-----

E |-----
 B |-----
 G |-----13-12-----
 D |--10-9-12-10-9-10-9-----
 A |-----
 E |-----

E |-----13-12-10-13-12-10-12-10-----
 B |--10-13-12-10-12-10-----
 G |-----
 D |-----
 A |-----
 E |-----

Exercise 14

Countless combinations! We could use a "back and forth" sequence as follows...

3	2	1	2	3	2	1	2	6	5	4	5	6	5	4	5	2	1	7	1	2	1	7	1
<	<	>	>	<	<	>	>	<	<	>	>	<	<	>	>	<	<	>	>	<	<	>	>

E |-----
 B |-----
 G |-----
 D |-----
 A |-----12-10-8-10-12-10-8-10-----
 E |--12-10-8-10-12-10-8-10-----

E |-----
 B |-----
 G |-----12-10-9-10-12-10-9-10-----
 D |--12-10-9-10-12-10-9-10-----
 A |-----
 E |-----

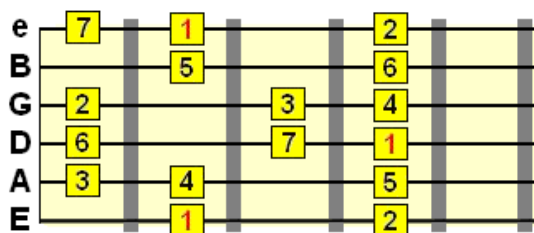
E |-----13-12-10-12-13-12-10-----
 B |--13-12-10-12-13-12-10-12-----
 G |-----
 D |-----
 A |-----
 E |-----

The next few guitar scale exercises involve *skipped notes* in the run sequence. This means when moving forward or back, we jump over a note or two, repeating the sequence up or down the scale pattern. A bit more challenging to negotiate, but stay disciplined with the metronome and there's no reason why you can't get up to a good speed with it for any scale you learn.

Exercise 15

Starting with a descending sequence (from the "top" of the scale pattern), we play the first note, skip a note in the scale, play the 2nd note, step back and play the note we skipped and stagger downwards like that. For this, I could use a smaller box pattern as follows...





2	7	1	6	7	5	6	4	5	3	4	2	3	1	2
<	>	<	>	<	>	<	>	<	>	<	>	<	>	<

E | --10--7--8--7-----7-----
 B | -----10-----8--10--8-----
 G | -----10-----9--10--7--9-----7-----
 D | -----10-----9--10--7-----
 A | -----
 E | -----

E | -----
 B | -----
 G | -----
 D | --9-----7-----
 A | --10--8--10--7--8-----7-----
 E | -----10-----8--10--7--8-----

Exercise 16

Things are going to get a little trickier now because the repetitions are more complex. Challenge yourself with different variations on the above exercises - mix skipped note sequences with straight sequences like in the following, gradual descent (again, using that box pattern from above)...

2	1	7	6	1	7	6	5	7	6	5	4	6	5	4	3	5	4	3	2	4	3	2	1
<	<	<	>	<	<	<	>	<	<	<	>	<	<	<	>	<	<	<	>	<	<	<	<

E | --10--8--7-----8--7-----7-----
 B | -----10-----10--8-----10--8-----10--8-----8-----
 G | -----10-----10--9-----10--9-----10-----
 D | -----
 A | -----
 E | -----

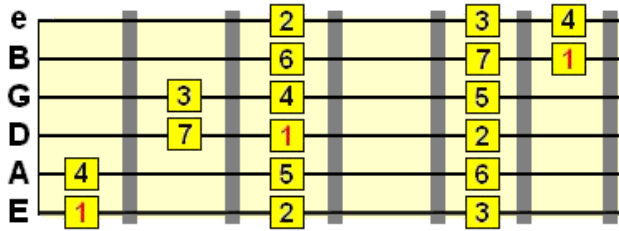
E | -----
 B | -----
 G | --9--7--10--9--7-----9--7-----7-----
 D | -----10-----10--9-----10--9--7--10--9--7-----
 A | -----10-----
 E | -----

E | -----
 B | -----
 G | -----
 D | --9--7-----7-----
 A | --10--8--10--8--7--10--8--7-----8--7-----
 E | -----10-----10--8-----

Exercise 17

Now a 3-notes-per-string mixed variation...





4	2	3	2	1	7	6	7	1	6	7	6	5	4	3	4	5	3	4	3	2	1	7	1
<	>	<	<	<	<	>	>	<	>	<	<	<	<	>	>	<	>	<	<	<	<	>	

E | --13--10--12--10--
 B | -----13--12--10--12--13--10--12--10--
 G | -----12--10--9--10--
 D | -----
 A | -----
 E | -----

E | -----
 B | -----
 G | --12--9--10--9--
 D | -----12--10--9--10--12--9--10--9--
 A | -----12--10--8--10--12--
 E | -----

E | -----
 B | -----
 G | -----
 D | -----
 A | --8--10--8--
 E | -----12--10--8--10--12--8--10--8--

Exercise 18

A slight variation on the above...

4	2	3	6	7	1	7	6	1	6	7	3	4	5	4	3	5	3	4	7	1	2	1	7
<	>	<	>	>	<	<	>	<	>	<	>	>	<	<	>	<	>	<	>	>	<	<	

E | --13--10--12--
 B | -----10--12--13--12--10--13--10--12--
 G | -----9--10--12--10--9--
 D | -----
 A | -----
 E | -----

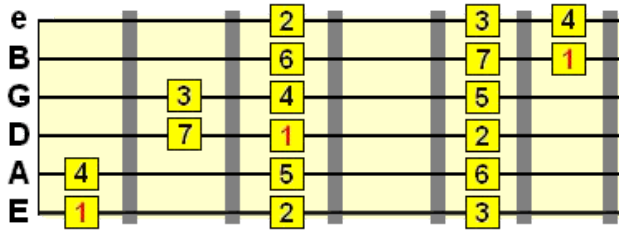
E | -----
 B | -----
 G | --12--9--10--
 D | -----9--10--12--10--9--12--9--10--
 A | -----8--10--12--10--8--12--
 E | -----

E | -----
 B | -----
 G | -----
 D | -----
 A | --8--10--
 E | -----8--10--12--10--8--

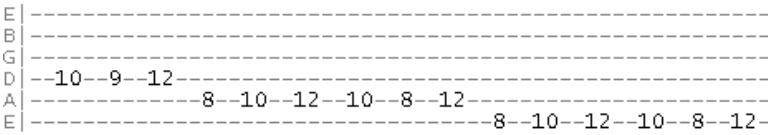
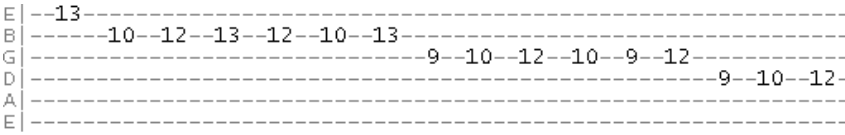
Exercise 19

Or, with a wider note skip at the start of each repetition...





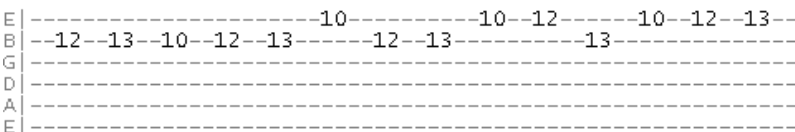
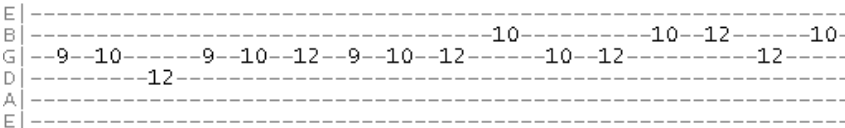
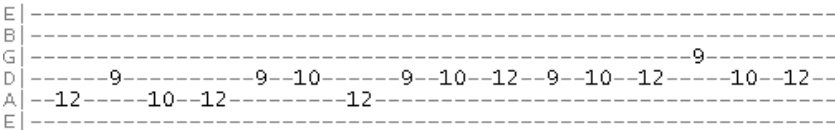
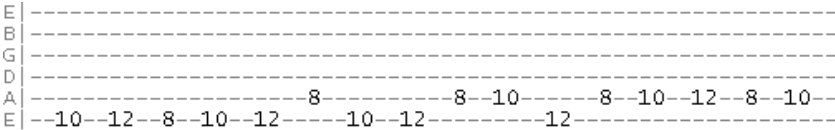
4	6	7	1	7	6	1	3	4	5	4	3	5	7	1	2	1	7	2	4	5	6	5	4
<	>	>	<	<	>	<	>	>	<	<	>	<	>	>	<	<	>	<	>	>	<	<	



Exercise 20

You could also try skipping "behind" the starting note of each repetition (skip backs greyed out). Very difficult to explain in words, so here are the diagrams! This is an ascending pattern.

2	3	1	2	3	4	2	3	4	5	3	4	5	6	4	5	6	7	5	6	7	1	6	7
>	<	>	>	>	<	>	>	>	<	>	>	>	<	>	>	>	<	>	>	>	<	<	



Shake off and grab a beer...

As you can probably tell by now, there are 1001 examples I could give you, but I think you have enough variation ideas from which to build your own run sequences.



A lot of the sequences you build will be dictated by the fingering of your chosen scale pattern. As we've seen, some runs are more accessible using 3-note-per-string scale patterns, whereas others are better suited to narrower box patterns.

Either way, when it comes to making your own exercises, or even a solo, you should try mixing different sequences - note skips, staggered repetitions, triplets and straight runs - as it will all go towards improving your speed, timing and finger dexterity.

In the next part, we'll look at more effective guitar scale exercises you can use to further develop your speed and timing. In the meantime, devote at least 10 minutes a day to the above exercises (you don't have to cram them all into the 10 minutes, choose one per day to work on, starting from the top).

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Chris

11 years ago

Awesome lesson, I'm self taught so I know literally nothing about scales, only the pentatonic. This is very informative.

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Mefco 96

2 years ago

Please is that the Process for creating Longer Legato Lines ?
Step forward or backward Shapes ?

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2 years ago

We need Some Audio files for all the examples

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Biohazard

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