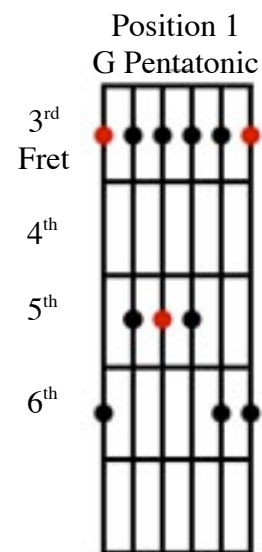


# HOW TO IMPROVISE USING THE PENTATONIC SCALE

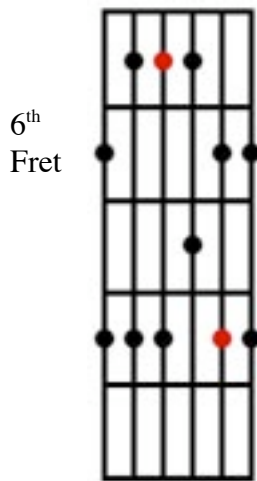


Whether based on previous ideas or completely made up on spot, improvising is a very important part of playing music. The most basic form of improvising that everyone knows is the famous "solo" on the electric guitar that spices up so many of your favorite songs. Although people may realize that there are many similarities in some of their favorite solos, many are unaware that so many of these solos are based on only 5 different notes that are played all over the guitar neck. The notes in which the guitarist plays, and in which order and with what rhythms individualize each persons solo into their "improvised" creation. Lets start by learning the scale and then we can discuss what it is that makes these 5 notes into a face-melting solo!

As mentioned above the 'penta'tonic scale only has 5 different notes that can be played all over the neck at the same pitch, and at different octaves. We are going to learn 5 different patterns (starting on all 5 of these notes) so that we can play them all over the neck. It is very important to understand though that we are still only playing those 5 different notes. Lets say our song is in the key of G and we would like to start on G. G is the 3rd fret so lets start there. The 5 notes that we will be playing for the G Pentatonic scale are **G, B flat, C, D & F**. Therefore for position 1 we will start on the G (root) which is represented by the red dot. Try playing the pattern to the right, again starting on the 3rd fret notice we play the red dot (G root) three times. From the root to the next is only 5 notes and then we repeat. Play from root to root and then next root to root and you will hear they sound the same just in a higher octave.



Position 2  
G Pentatonic Scale



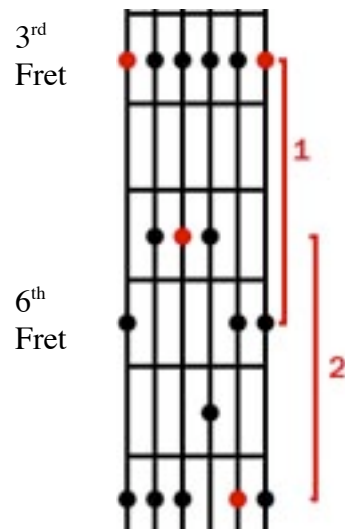
Once you have gotten very familiar with pattern 1 you are ready for the next pattern, again remembering that these will be the same notes **G, B flat, C, D & F**, but now starting on the **B flat**. Notice the root is now the last note we play until we repeat the pattern again, so the order of notes we play are **B flat, C, D, F & G**. Play this pattern starting on the 6th fret with your 2nd finger so that you have your first finger ready for the notes on the 5th fret.

# HOW TO IMPROVISE USING THE PENTATONIC SCALE

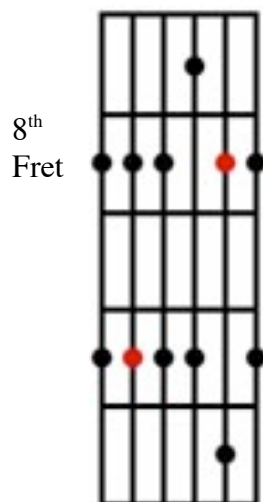


Now you are familiar with position 2 for G Pentatonic Scale lets understand how it connects with Position 1. Notice the top notes of the 2nd position are the same as the bottom of position 1. Each position is going to connect just like this model because remember they are the same notes. Try practicing position 1 ascending (up) and descending (down) and then when you get to the last note (root) go to position 2 with your 2nd finger. You will see the scales sound the same.

Position 1 + Position 2  
G Pentatonic Scale



Position 3  
G Pentatonic Scale



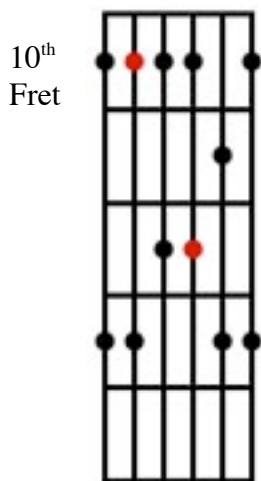
Understanding the connection of all the pentatonic scales is probably the hardest thing to comprehend while learning the scales, so I will go through it the same way for position 3. To the left is the 3rd pattern that again is still the G Pentatonic scale just starting on the 3rd note of this scale which is **C**. So now our scale has the same notes but they are now ordered **C, D, F, G & B flat**. Notice the root (red dot) is now the 4th note. Try practicing this scale again starting on the 2nd finger understanding that your pinky will have to stretch an extra fret on the 2nd string.

# HOW TO IMPROVISE USING THE PENTATONIC SCALE

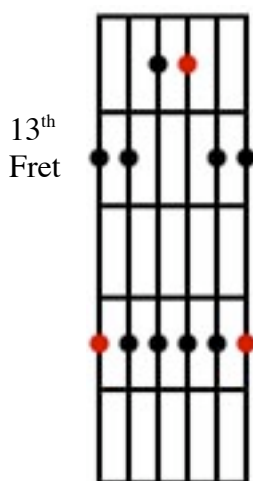


To the right you see how the first three patterns connect with each other. Again the bottom note of the one scale is always going to connect with the top note of the next. Notice how half of the notes are shared with its next scale. Practice going up and down each scale to get practice moving from one to the other as well as starting to see the connection of the scales on the fretboard while you are playing them.

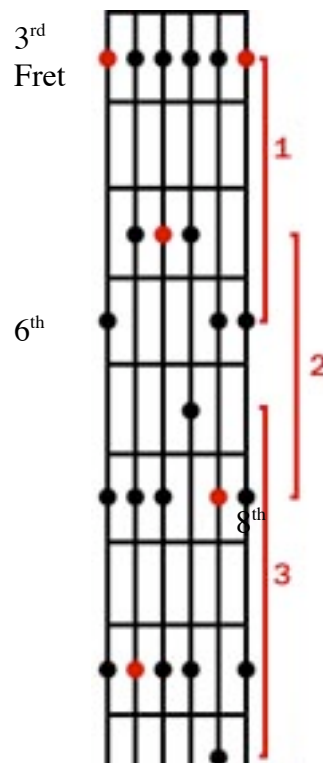
Position 4  
G Pentatonic Scale



Position 5  
G Pentatonic Scale



Position 1, 2 + 3  
G Pentatonic Scale



Above are the last 2 positions of the G Pentatonic scale. The 4<sup>th</sup> position of course now starts on the **D**, the 4<sup>th</sup> degree of the scale. The order in which the 4<sup>th</sup> position is played is **D, F, G, B flat, and C**. The 5<sup>th</sup> Position starts on the **F**, followed by **G, B flat, C and D**.

# HOW TO IMPROVISE USING THE PENTATONIC SCALE



By now you should have all five pentatonic scales memorized. As I mentioned before once memorized you should practice switching in between these patterns, that's the whole reason why you spent so long memorizing them all!! Practice an exercise that consists of starting at position, ascending and descending the scale. Then once you get back to the root (G) continue to the next scale (position 2) with your 2<sup>nd</sup> finger. Ascend and descend the scale again and continue to the 3<sup>rd</sup> position. Continue all the way to the 5<sup>th</sup> position and then reverse the exercise going back to position 1. Although this is a fantastic exercise, don't stop here! You need to be able to switch in between positions on all strings not just the 6<sup>th</sup> string. Pick a different string to switch positions on and use the same exercise to move around the neck.

Another thing that we haven't touched on that is very important is that once you get to the 5<sup>th</sup> position the 1<sup>st</sup> position continues after! The first position is going to start on the **G** an octave up at the 15<sup>th</sup> fret. Yes you guessed it, the 2<sup>nd</sup> position will then start on the 18<sup>th</sup> fret, and so on.

It is also important to understand that this is just the G pentatonic scale. Say for example if you were trying to play the A pentatonic scale you would first have to find the A on the 6<sup>th</sup> string to figure out where to start position 1. Since the A is on the 5<sup>th</sup> fret, every single note will move up two frets because position 1 now starts on the 5<sup>th</sup> fret! Test yourself by trying different keys (starting positions). Its difficult but as long as you just memorize the patterns and not fret numbers you will have no problems.

After you have practiced this for a little you are ready for the next step. Watch the "improvising" video we have in our free lesson section. If you want to have some fun with it and learn a lot at the same time, purchase one of our projects that have a solo it in. Stairway to heaven is a great lesson to practice moving around the A pentatonic scale. Good luck!

All Positions  
G Pentatonic Scale

