5 Miles Davis Lines

You now learn five lines inspired by Miles Davis' solo on So What.

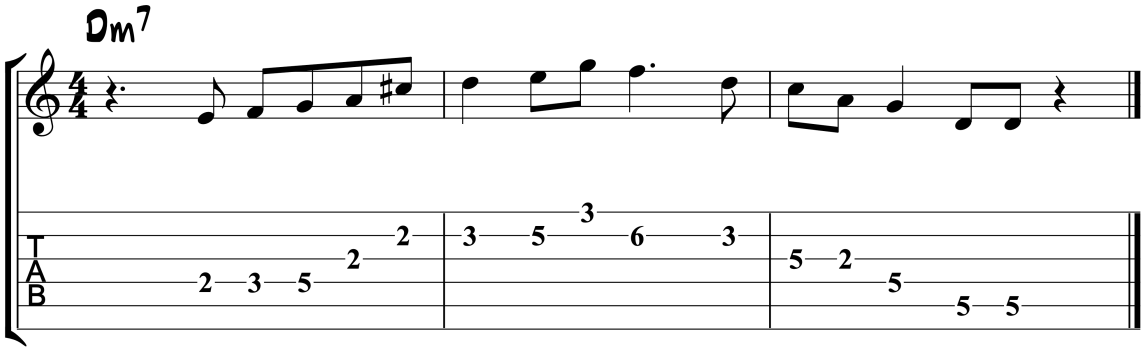
Learn these lines, add them to your solos, then work on the concepts behind these lines to get the most from them in your playing.

The first line uses a melodic minor scale in the first bar, then Dorian for the rest of the line from there.

Melodic minor may sound tense at first when applied to So What, but check out Miles', Coltrane's, and later Grant Green's solo on this tune.

All three use melodic minor to great effect, and so they can act as inspiration for your own melodic minor lines.

Audio Example 27

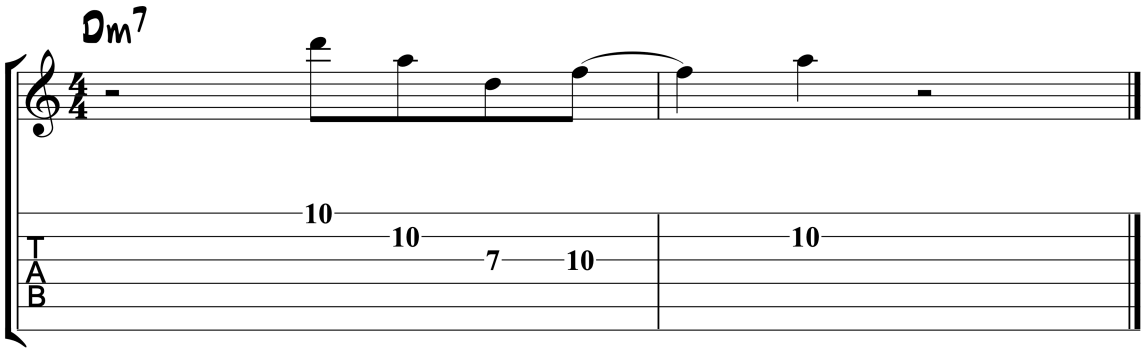


The next line is simple in its construction, it uses only the Dm triad, but the rhythm and direction of the line makes it sound great.

This is a good lesson to learn from Miles, sometimes less is more, and you can get a lot of mileage out of simple ideas with rhythms.

Play this line, then practice using fewer notes and more interesting directions and rhythms in your lines over So What.

Audio Example 28



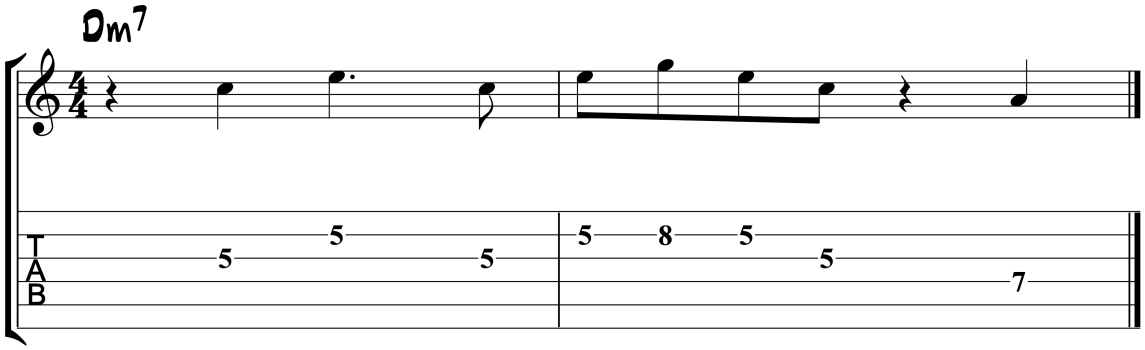
The next line uses Am pentatonic over Dm7.

When soloing over any m7 chord, you can always use a pentatonic from the 5th of that chord for added color.

When doing so, you create the intervals 5-b7-R-9-11, which is a lot more colorful than Dm pentatonic.

After you learn this line, practice soloing over Dm7 with Am pent and over Ebm7 with Bbm pent to take this concept further.

Audio Example 29



The next line is over Ebm7 and uses the minor bebop scale to outline that chord.

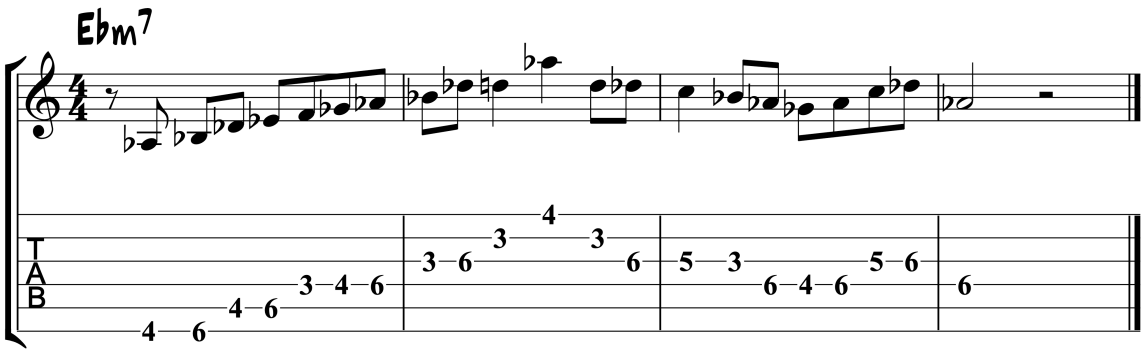
The minor bebop scale is a combination of Dorian and melodic minor, played at the same time.

This means that you play Dorian with an added major 7 note in the scale, 1-2-b3-4-5-6-b7-7.

When doing so, you create tension with the major 7 interval, and then resolve that tension back into the scale, as you hear here.

Have fun with this line and with adding this new sound to your solos over So What.

Audio Example 30

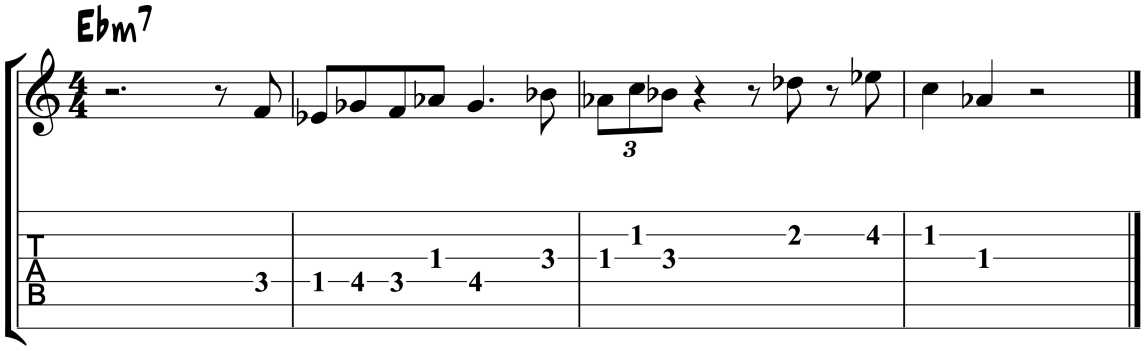


The last line is a climbing phrase that uses space and different rhythms to create interest over Ebm7.

As you work on soloing over So What, use this line as inspiration.

To do this, leave space in the middle of your lines to create anticipation, and use different rhythms to create variety.

Sometimes the best note to play is none at all, and then best thing to do is changing the rhythms rather than add new sounds.

Both of these concepts are found in Miles' playing on this, and other tunes to use as inspiration.

Audio Example 31