

Chapter 12 – Major to Minor Soloing

Over the years I've learned a lot of important soloing and musical lessons by transcribing Miles Davis' solos.

One of the biggest lessons I've learned comes from his approach to the blues.

When analyzing Miles' solos as a student, I realized he would play a major line over the I7 chord, meaning it had a major 3rd in it.

Then, he would repeat or play a similar line with a minor 3rd in it, so a minor version of the same line over the IV7 chord, just one note different.

Man, these lines sounded great, and were easy to play as they used small shapes and only one note difference between each of those two chords.

Being a guitarist, I put this concept into shapes on the fretboard so I could create my own lines in this Miles style.

In this chapter, you explore how to use major and minor blues scales, and major and minor arpeggios, so replicate this same approach in your blues solos.

Have fun as you dig into this major to minor approach over the blues, over the I7 and IV7 chords and extended to the entire form to take it even further.

Major to Minor Scales

To begin, here are two scale shapes to learn and later add to your solos over the G blues progression.

The first shape is a G major blues scale and the second is a G minor blues scale.

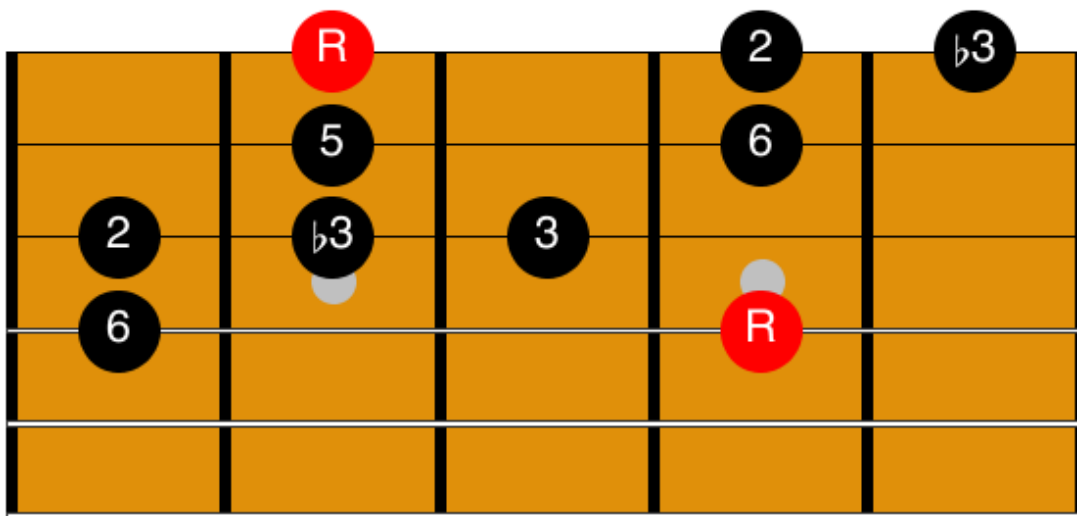
Start by learning each scale shapes one at a time, focusing on memorizing the shapes as you learn them.

You can take them to other keys if that helps you internalize the shapes, but it's not necessary at this point.

Focus on memorizing each shape in the written key of G, which prepares you to use them in your solos quickly and easily later in this chapter.

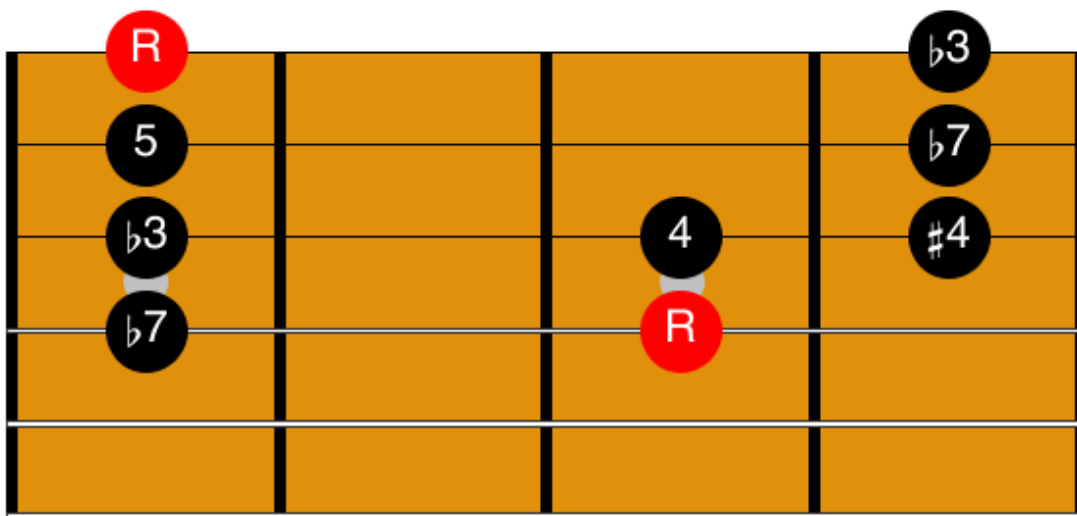
Have fun as you learn, or review, these two essential scale shapes in the practice room.

G Major Blues



2

G Minor Blues



3

Here's a second position for each scale shape, G major blues and G minor blues, to learn and memorize in your studies.

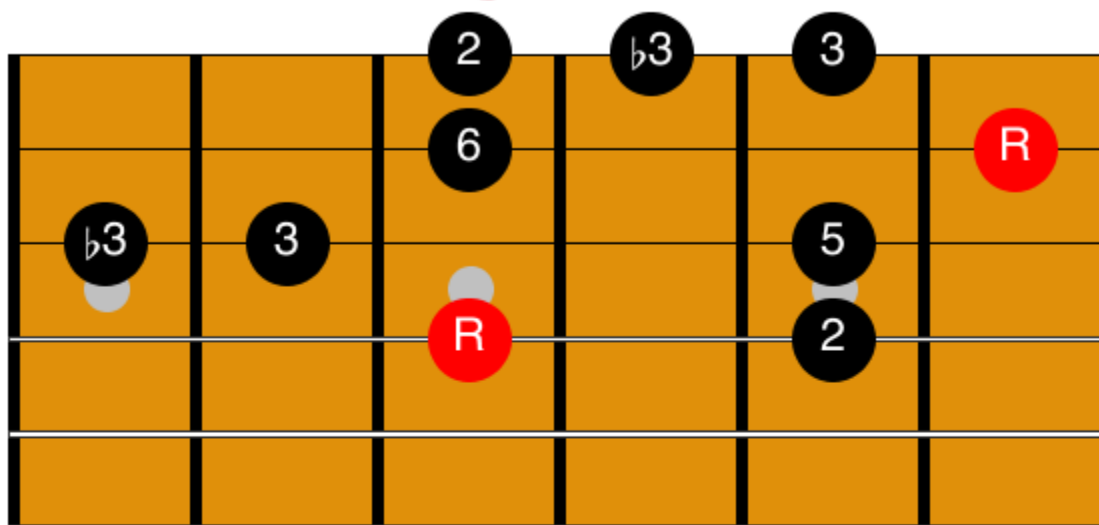
Again, focus on this one key for now, or transpose to other keys if it helps your memory.

When ready, play both major blues scales up and down back to back to see how they relate on the fretboard.

From there, repeat the same exercise with the minor blues scale, play both back to back in the key of G.

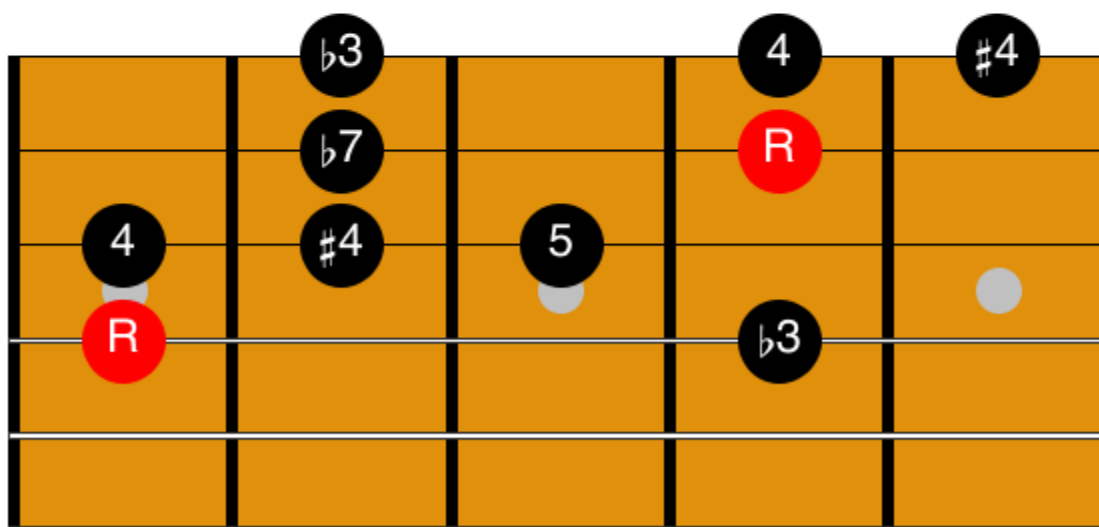
When ready, head to the soloing workout in the next section as you take these shapes to the G blues backing tracks in the woodshed.

G Major Blues



3

G Minor Blues



5

Soloing Exercise 1

You're now ready to take the scale shapes to the G blues progression.

Here are tips on how to get the most out of this exercise in your studies.

- Start with the first scale shapes you learned above.
- Solo with the major scale only, rest or play chords over the other changes.
- Solo with the minor scale only, rest or play chords over the other changes.
- Solo with both scale shapes over the changes.
- Start with the slow backing track, then medium, then fast if ready.
- Sing along to get your ears involved in your solos.
- Record your solos, take notes, adjust your playing, and repeat.
- Repeat every exercise with the 2nd scale shapes you learned above.
- Mix both scale positions together when comfortable.
- Have fun!

Now that you know how to work this exercise, time for the fun part, grab your favorite axe and tear it up!

G⁷ **C⁷** **G⁷**

Maj _____ min _____ Maj _____

C⁷ **G⁷** **E⁷♭⁹**

min _____ Maj _____ min _____

A^m7 **D⁷** **G⁷** **E⁷♭⁹** **A^m7** **D⁷**

Maj _____ min _____

Major to Minor Arpeggios

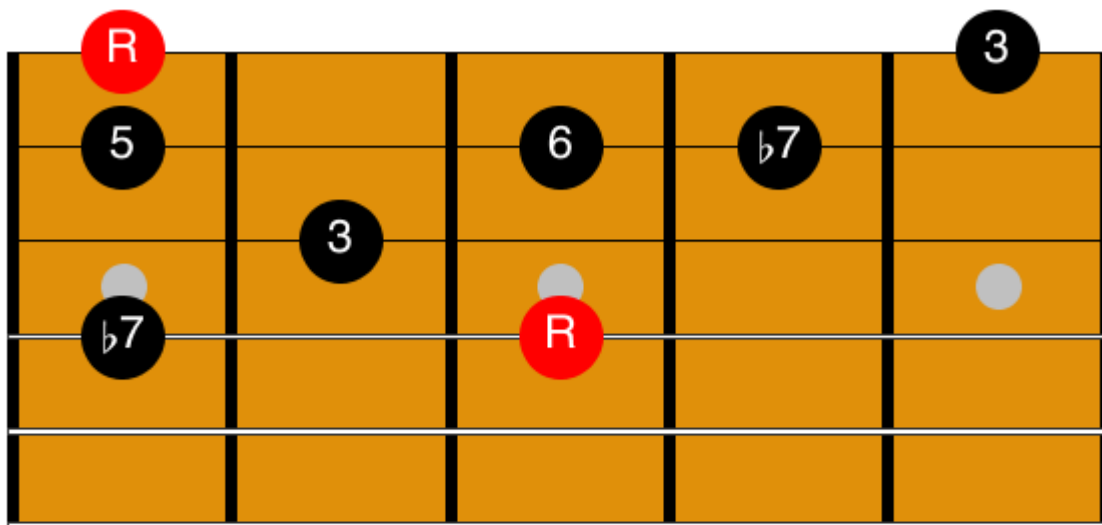
As well as soloing with the major and minor blues scales over the G blues progression, you can solo with major and minor arpeggios.

To avoid confusion, since you use G arpeggios over every chord, I've labelled them as arpeggio 1 and arpeggio 2.

Arpeggio 1 is the major sound and arpeggio 2 is the minor sound.

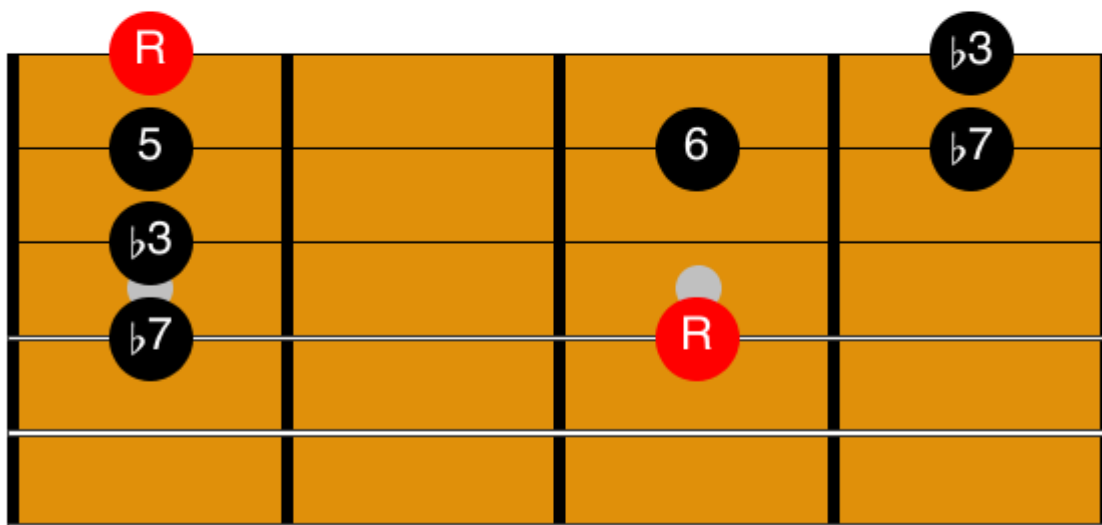
Start by memorizing these two shapes, and when ready head down to the soloing workout below to take them to the full tune in your improvisations.

Arpeggio 1



3

Arpeggio 2



3

Soloing Exercise 2

You're now ready to take the arpeggio shapes to the G blues progression.

Here are tips on how to get the most out of this exercise in your studies.

- Solo with arpeggio 1 only, rest or play chords over the other changes.
- Solo with arpeggio 2 only, rest or play chords over the other changes.
- Solo with both arpeggio shapes over the changes.
- Start with the slow backing track, then medium, then fast if ready.
- Sing along to get your ears involved in your solos.
- Record your solos, take notes, adjust your playing, and repeat.
- Have fun!

Now that you know how to work this exercise, time for the fun part, grab your favorite axe and tear it up!

G⁷ C⁷ G⁷

1 _____ 2 _____ 1 _____

C⁷ G⁷ E⁷♭⁹

2 _____ 1 _____ 2 _____

A^m⁷ D⁷ G⁷ E⁷♭⁹ A^m⁷ D⁷

1 _____ 2 _____

Creative Challenge

The creative challenge in this chapter is to put on the backing track and solo using both approaches mixed together in your solos.

This means soloing with the major to minor scales and arpeggios over the G blues backing track.

Here are some tips to get the most out of this challenge in the practice room.

- Solo over the track with the major to minor scales as a review.
- Solo over the track with the major to minor arpeggios as a review.
- Solo over the track mixing the arpeggios and scales together.
- Sing along with your solos for added ear training.
- Start with the slow backing track, then medium, then fast if ready.
- Record your solos, listen back, take notes, adjust, and repeat.
- Have fun!

Now that you know how to tackle this challenge, grab your guitar and go for it!