1 Bar Jazz Licks

Now that you have a handful of jazz blues licks under your fingers, you can learn licks over individual chords.

When learning these licks, which are placed in order that you see them in major and minor ii V I changes, work them as written to begin.

Then, add those licks into your solos, transposing them to new keys if needed to apply them to tunes you know.

Lastly, these one-bar lines can also be broken down into smaller 2 and 3-beat patterns.

Make sure to take those smaller patterns into your solos, which are labeled and explained as you run into them with these licks.

m7 1 Bar Jazz Licks

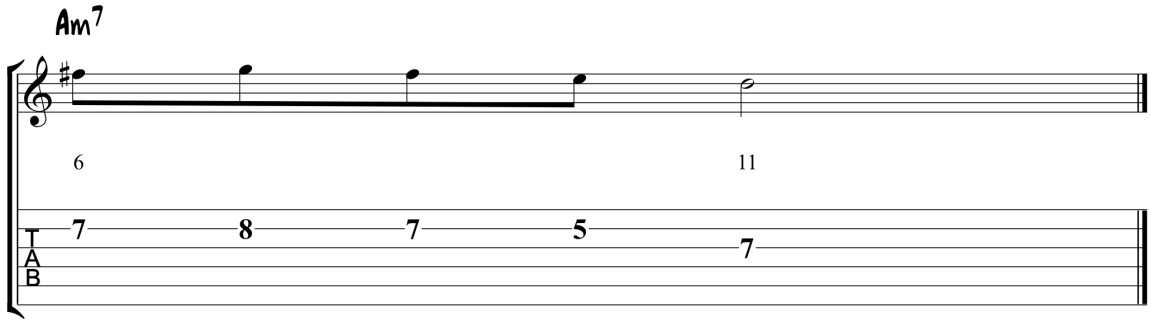
The first m7 lick accents two color tones during the line, the 6 and 11, marked in the tab.

When using scales, such as the Dorian scale here, accenting or highlighting color tones brings interest to your scale lines.

Often, scale lines sound too busy to outline the underlying chord or to target important notes in your solos.

Bringing focus to color tones, such as the 6 and 11 over m7 chords, takes your scale lines to the next level.

Audio Example 12

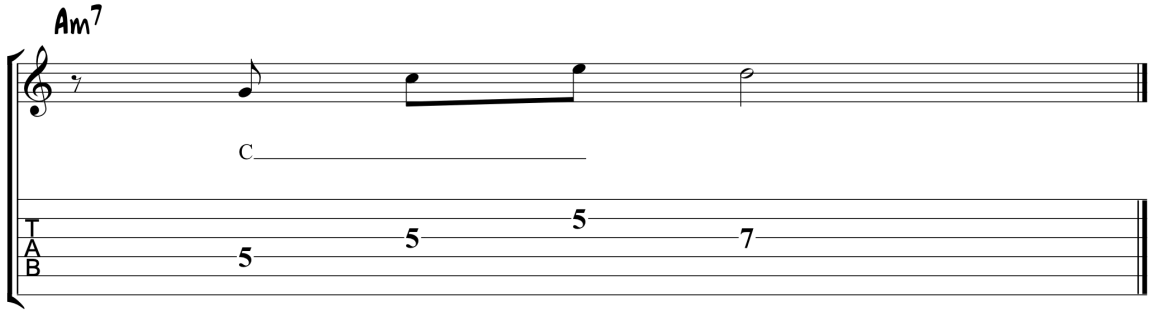


The next Am7 lick uses a popular jazz approach to m7 soloing, playing the 3-5-7 triad from the underlying chord.

In this lick, you play a C triad over Am7, which highlights the b3-5-b7 intervals over that chord.

When soloing over m7 chords, you can play a major triad from the 3rd of that chord to repeat this concept in your own lines.

Audio Example 13



The final m7 lick uses the minor pentatonic scale over Am7, a popular yet sometimes overlooked jazz concept.

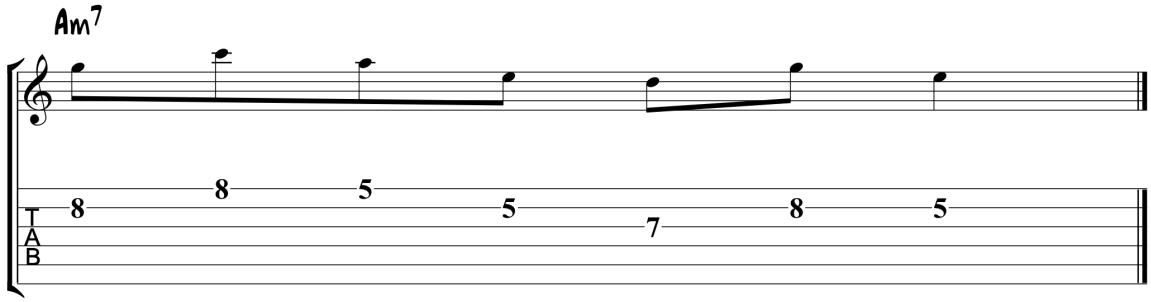
When moving from the rock and blues world to jazz, many players think they have to move beyond the pentatonic scale in their solos.

This couldn’t be further from the truth, as jazz guitarists from all eras use this essential scale in their solos.

If you want to explore minor pentatonic scales in your jazz solos, begin with licks like this one.

This line breaks up the scale into large intervals, creating a jazz sound with the pentatonic scale over an Am7 chord.

Audio Example 14



7th 1 Bar Jazz Licks

In the next three licks, you study vocabulary over 7th chords, which you can use in jazz blues tunes and the V7 in a major ii V I, for example.

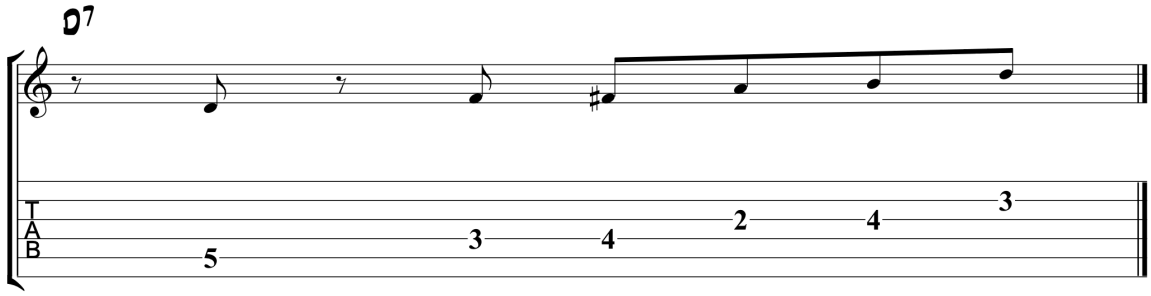
The first line uses a D major blues scale in a Charlie Christian inspired lick over a 7th chord.

The major blues scale is built with the intervals R-2-b3-4-5-6, and has no 7th in its construction.

Because the major blues scale doesn’t have a 7th in it, it’s used over both 7th and maj7 chords in the jazz tradition.

After learning this lick, put on a backing track and apply the major blues scale to your solos over that track.

Audio Example 15



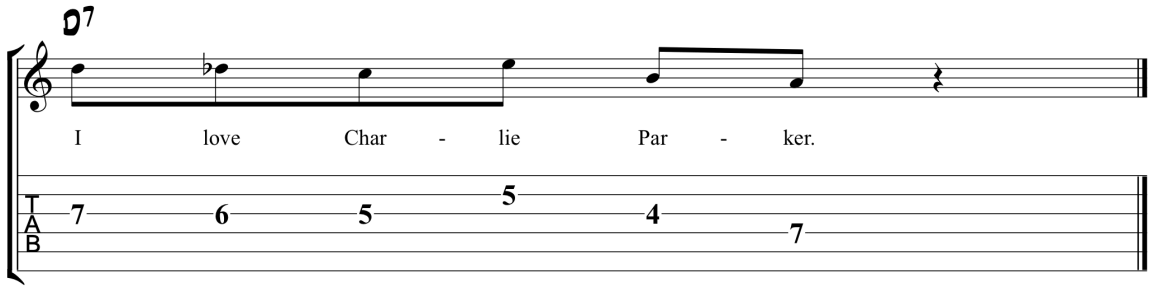
This is a classic bebop lick, the “I Love Charlie Parker” line, as labeled in the music below.

This six-note phrase shows up time and again in this eBook, and in solos you transcribe, as it’s essential jazz vocabulary.

Named after Bird, because it was a favorite lick in his sax solos, this idea can be played as a whole, cut up into chunks, and altered in other ways.

While you can alter this line over time, start by learning this lick as is and apply it to your solos over this, and other, jazz chords.

Audio Example 16



The final 7th lick uses a bebop phrase that you see throughout this eBook, G-E-F-F#, here over a dominant 7th chord.

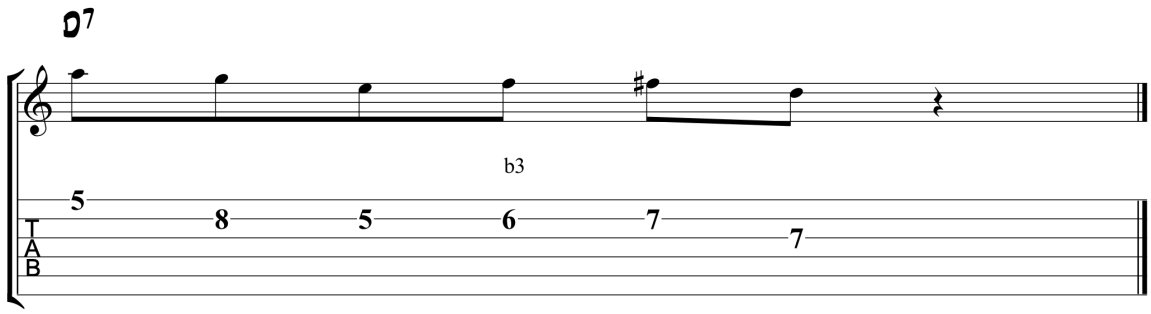
As you move forward in your studies, you notice time and again a few lines will show up over every chord you study.

When you see these lines, which I point out here, in your own studies, keep track of them.

If you find that one player uses a line over and over, that's part of their voice on the instrument.

But, if you hear a line in the solos of many players, that's an essential part of the jazz vocabulary you need in your own solos.

Audio Example 17



Maj7 1 Bar Jazz Licks

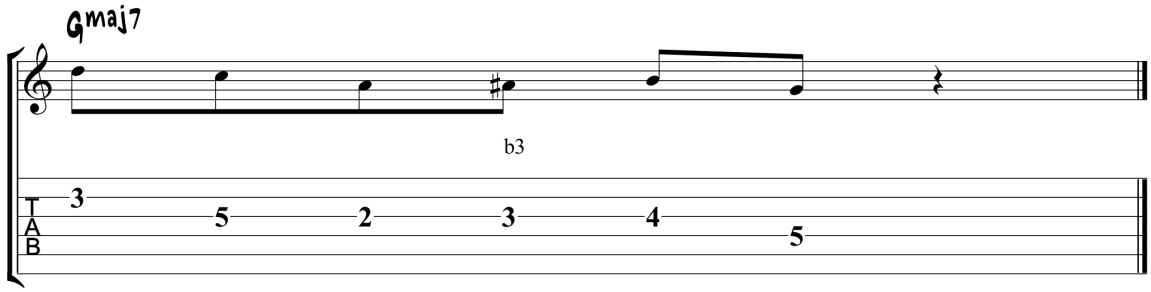
The final group of major key licks are played over the Imaj7 chord in a ii V I progression.

To begin, this first maj7 lick uses a classic bebop pattern that you've seen before, C-A-A#-B, over this new chord change.

A big part of learning to apply lines to your solos is digging into your vocabulary to apply old lines to new chords.

This lick is an example of that concept in action using a classic bebop pattern over a maj7 chord.

Audio Example 18

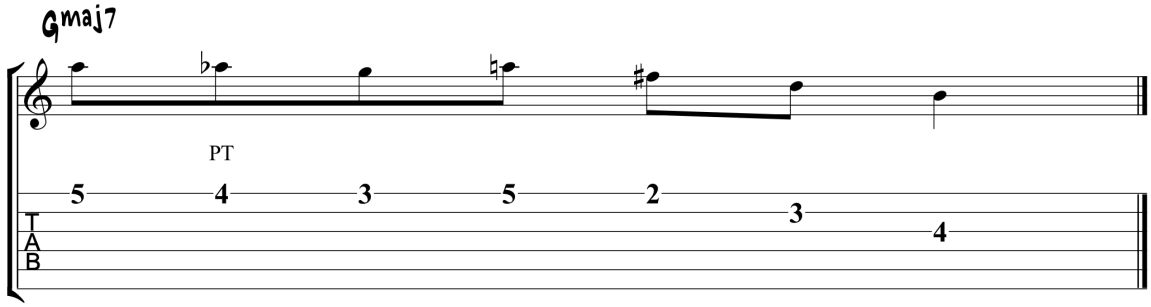


Here's an example of the "I Love Charlie Parker" line applied to a maj7 chord.

Because this lick is so versatile, and essential learning, you learn licks over most chords in this eBook that use that line.

After learning this lick, put on a backing track and solo using the Parker line over maj7 chords to take this idea further in your studies.

Audio Example 19



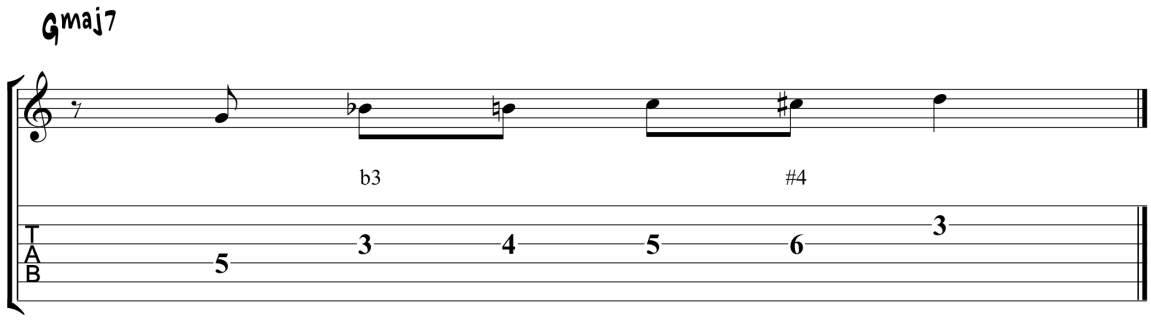
The final lick mixes in two blues notes, b3 and #4, to create a Kenny Burrell style line over Gmaj7.

When soloing over maj7 chords, adding blues notes to maj7 arpeggios and major scales is an important concept to explore in your studies.

You can do this by mixing the blues scale into your maj7 ideas, or you can focus on individual blues notes in your lines.

Either way, the end result is the same, so work this idea in your practice routine to take it further in your solos.

Audio Example 20



m7b5 1 Bar Jazz Licks

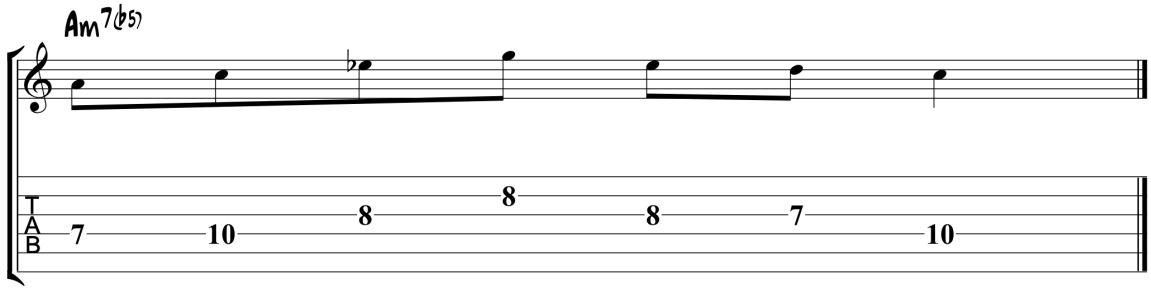
Moving on to minor keys, you now study licks that outline each chord in a minor iim7b5 V7alt Im6 chord progression.

To begin, here are three m7b5 licks based on the m7b5 arpeggio and Locrian scale, which is used to solo over that chord.

This first lick runs up an Am7b5 arpeggio, before running down three notes of the Locrian scale.

Playing up an arpeggio and down a scale, of any kind, is an essential bebop technique that you can study in other situations.

Audio Example 21

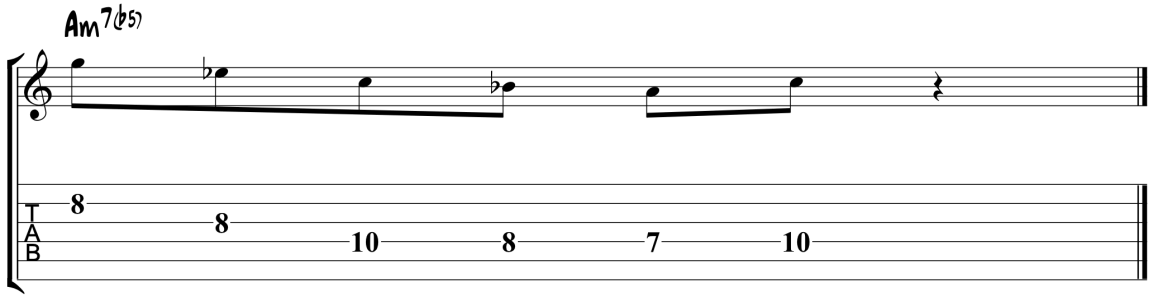


The next m7b5 lick runs down the Am7b5 arpeggio, with the b9 used to connect the b3 and root, before climbing up to finish on the b3, C.

When soloing with arpeggios, over m7b5 or any chords, one or two scale notes break up those leaps and create interest in your lines.

This lick is an example of how one scale note breaks up an arpeggio to prevent the line from becoming predictable.

Audio Example 22

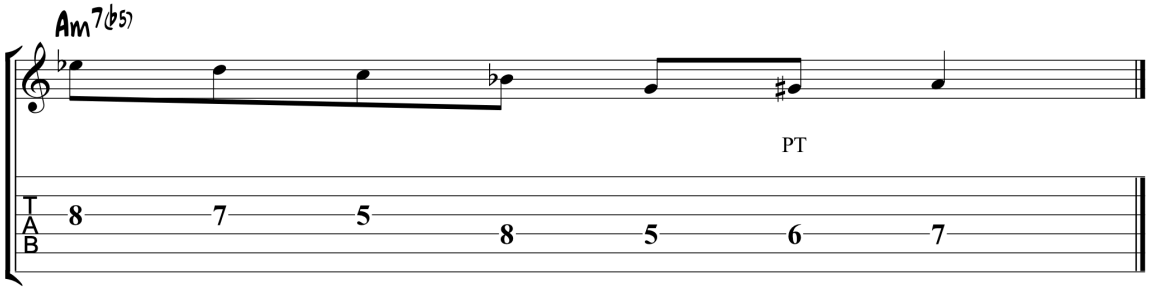


The final m7b5 line uses a familiar pattern in a new situation, the last four notes, Bb-G-G#-A.

Here, you descend A Locrian for three notes before launching into that chromatic bebop idea to finish the lick.

Though there are fewer options for bebop material over m7b5 chords, you can use bebop ideas over these chords in your solos.

Audio Example 23



7alt 1 Bar Jazz Licks

Moving on to the V7alt chord in a minor ii V I progression, you use the altered scale in these lines.

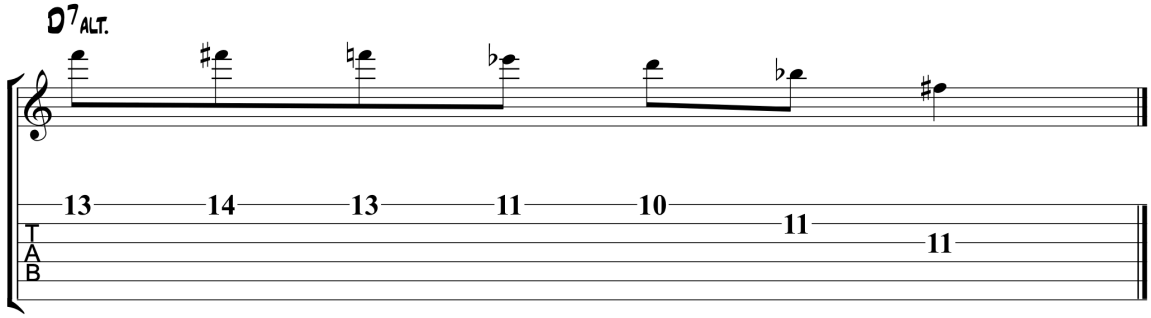
The altered scale is the 7th mode of melodic minor, which means that for D7alt you play Eb melodic minor to get that sound.

When doing so, you outline the b9, #9, b5, and #5 intervals in your lines over dominant chords.

This first lick is a classic Pat Martino style altered line that you can learn and take to your improvised solos in minor keys.

You can also use 7alt sounds over normal 7th chords, even in major keys, as long as you resolve the tension notes in your lines.

Audio Example 24

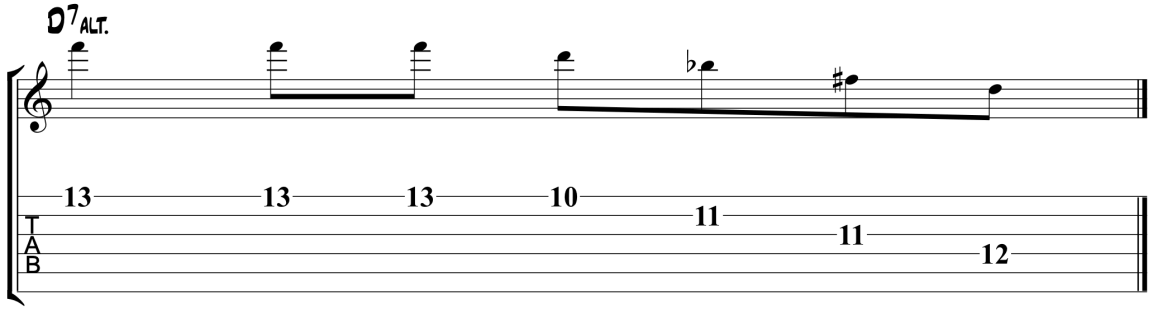


This Wes Montgomery style altered lick uses a common rhythm from Wes' repertoire.

Here, you play a quarter note, then the same note as two 8th notes, before descending down a Daug triad to finish the line.

When soloing, playing the same note as quarter-2 8ths brings an instant Wes vibe to your solos with that rhythmic motive.

Audio Example 25



This final altered line, from the McCoy Tyner school of soloing, is a classic line you've heard many times on recordings.

Because the line covers 4 beats, you can also break it down into two halves, the first four notes and second four notes.

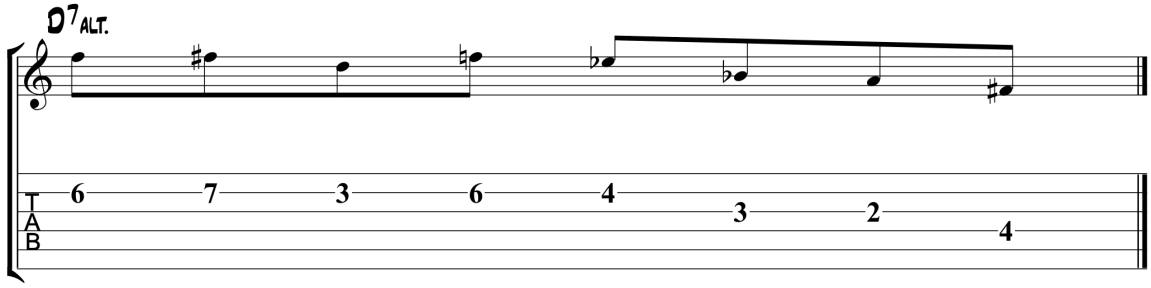
When doing so, you can apply those two-beat ideas to your solos, resolving them in new ways to comply with the chords you play over.

When studying this, or any lick, breaking them down to smaller ideas allows you to create your own licks in the moment, based in tradition.

The second last note in this lick is the note A, the natural 5th, which isn't part of the altered scale, but is often used over 7alt chords.

The natural 5th works when you have other altered notes in your lines, especially the b13 as you have here, Bb, resolving down to the 5th.

Audio Example 26



m6 1 Bar Jazz Licks

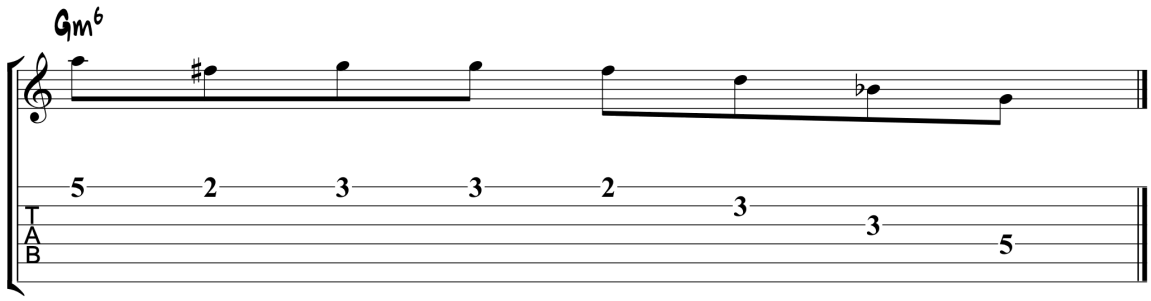
The final single-chord licks are played over the tonic minor chord, m6, which you find in a minor iim7b5 V7alt Im6 progression.

m6 chords are also used in place of m7 chords when you want to bring a Dorian or melodic minor sound to your comping.

In this first lick, you use melodic minor to outline the m6 sound, which also contains the raised 7th interval, F#.

When using the raised 7th, which causes tension, work on resolving that note in your playing so it doesn't sound like a mistake in your solos.

Audio Example 27

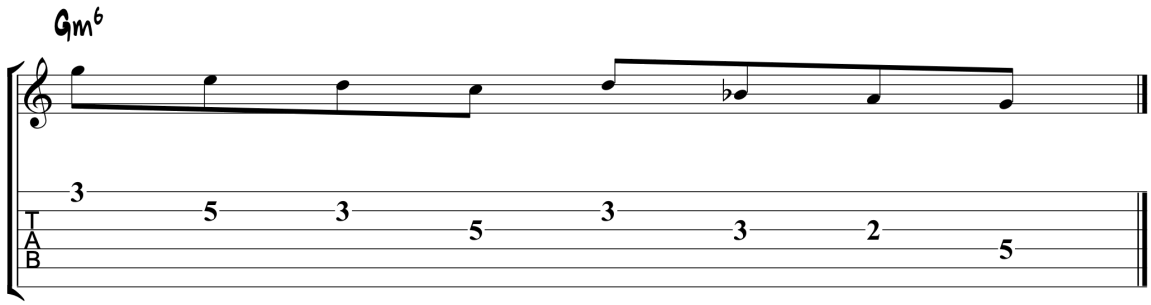


This diatonic lick is reminiscent of Pat Martino's lines, as it works a scale pattern over Gm6 without playing the 7th.

When soloing over m6 chords, you can highlight the 7th, or you can avoid it in your lines.

If you avoid the 7th, the best place to start with licks such as these, then move on to using this approach in a real-time situation from there.

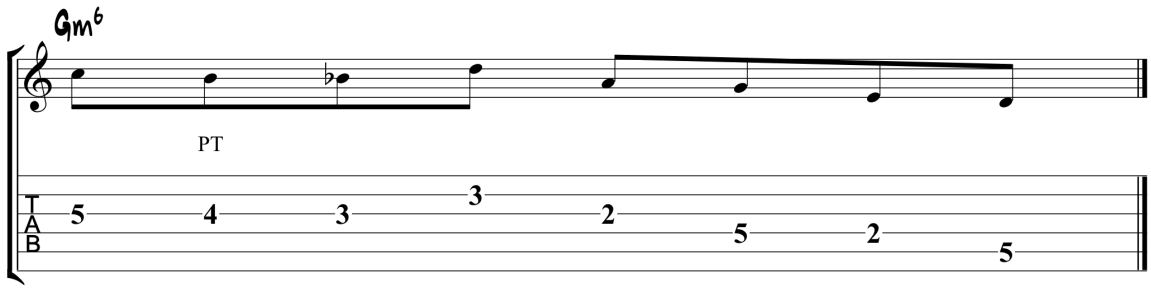
Audio Example 28



The final m6 lick uses a passing tone to connect the 4th and b3 of the underlying chord.

This passing tone is part of the bebop riff you've seen before, only applied to a new chord in this situation.

The second half of the bar is based on the Am pentatonic scale, which produces the intervals 9-11-5-6-R over Gm6.

When soloing over m6 chords, you can play a minor pentatonic one tone higher to create that same sound in your solos.

Audio Example 29