

How To Play Blues At A Jam Session.



You Are Here

STOP 1: RHYTHMS & CHORDS

- * Common Blues Chord Shapes
- * The 12 Bar Blues Form
- * Common Blues Rhythm/Strumming Pattern
- * Blues Intro (to start the song)
- * Blues Ending (to end the song)

STOP 2: SOLOING

- * What Note And Beat To Start Your Solo On
- * Minor Blues Scale, Box 1
- * The 4 Note Solo Pattern (Box 2)
- * Lead Techniques (Bends, Hammer-Ons, Pull-Offs)
- * Licks!

STOP 3: PUTTING THE PIECES TOGETHER

- * Stringing together your Intro, Rhythm, Solo, And Ending
- * Using Licks Or Single Notes As Fills Between Vocal Lines

**You have reached
your destination!**

How To Play Songs At A Blues Jam – Roadmap (Part 2)

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Hopefully you got the hang of the rhythm from the last stop on our little “road trip...”

For this part, we’ll tackle the fun stuff – soloing!

You'll need to know these things:

1. What note to start your solo on
2. When to start your solo (what beat)
3. The minor blues scale (box 1 pattern)
4. The 4 Note Solo/House/Box 2 pattern (you'll see what I mean when we get there)
5. When you can use bends and other techniques
6. Licks... you gotta have something to say before you can say anything.

This is super important – I’m going to give you a bunch of rules throughout this little road trip, and they can all be broken and will be broken regularly.

What I’m going for are things that are *guaranteed to work*. Not things that work sometimes but not others. As you get more experience you’ll have the knowledge to handle things that only work sometimes. Right now, you want to be assured that whatever you play isn’t going to crash and burn.

What note to start your solo on...

Simple... the tonic, or root of the I chord. (Remember, this is guaranteed to work. It’s far from the only option.)

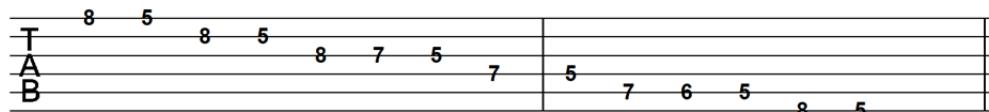
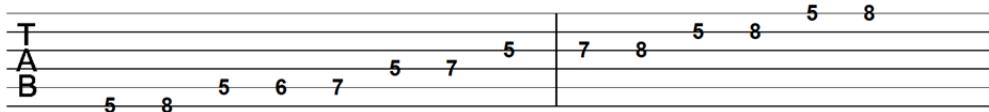
When to start your solo...

The hardest thing to get a new soloist to do is wait to get started... but you really need to.

Coming in on beat just generally doesn’t work well. It’s just not the sound you’re looking for. Wait for beat 2 and start there and you’ll never be wrong. (Again, we’re going for a guarantee.)

The A minor blues scale (box 1)...

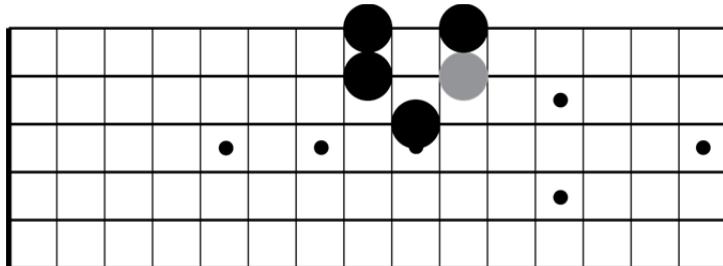
If you choose the root on the 1st string, this is the scale that goes with it:



The "House" Pattern...

If you choose the root on the 2nd string, then the "house" pattern (also just 1 note more than the 4 Note Solo box and it's the top end of box 2) is a great choice.

Here's what it looks like on the fretboard with the root shown. Put your 3rd finger on that root and it all falls into place.



When you can use bends, hammer-ons, etc...

Most of these things come from notes within the boxes that, when bent, go to another note of the scale 1 whole step away.

For example, in box 1:

- The 8th fret of the 1st string
- The 8th fret of the 2nd string
- The 7th fret of the 3rd string

And for the box 2 pattern, it's the 10th fret on the top string.

Licks!

What follows is the whole solo I played and I've labeled each lick. You'll notice I took them out of order from how I demonstrated them... that's on purpose to show you that you can probably mix and match these into several solos that will all sound unique despite having the same licks in them.

Jam Track starts from the V to give time to get ready...

A blank musical score for guitar, consisting of two staves. The top staff is a standard five-line staff with a treble clef. The bottom staff is a guitar neck diagram with three horizontal lines labeled T, A, and B from top to bottom.

Musical score for guitar featuring two staves. The top staff shows a lick labeled "Lick 1" over an A⁷ chord. The bottom staff shows a guitar neck diagram with fingerings: 5, 5, 5, 8, 8, 5, 8. The top staff then transitions to "Lick 3" over a D⁷ chord, with a "full" pick stroke indicated above the 5th string. The bottom staff shows fingerings: 10, 10, 8, 10, 8, 10, 8, 10, 8.

Musical score for guitar featuring two staves. The top staff shows "Lick 2" over an A⁷ chord. The bottom staff shows a guitar neck diagram with fingerings: 5, 5, 8, 5, 7, 8, 5, 7, 5, 7, 5, 7, 5. The top staff then transitions to "Lick 4" over an E⁷ chord, with a "full" pick stroke indicated above the 10th string. The bottom staff shows fingerings: 10, 10, 8, 10.

Musical score for guitar featuring two staves. The top staff shows "Lick 5" over a D⁷ chord, followed by an A⁷ chord, and finally an E⁷ chord. The bottom staff shows a guitar neck diagram with fingerings: 10, 10, 8, 10, 9, 8, 10, 8, 10, 8.