

So you want to become a guitar player?

Lesson 1 of 3: Pentatonic Scales

By George Collichio

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In our last session we learned about Major Scales and how to construct them. Hopefully by now you have learned the seven positions and are able to play them in every key. The next types of scales we will work on are the pentatonic scales. There are many Pentatonic Scales but we will discuss only a couple of them. A Pentatonic Scale is a scale that has five notes or tones from the tonic (1st note) to the octave.

Let's look at the Major Pentatonic Scale first. It is built by leaving two notes out of the Major Scale. If we play just the 1 2 3 5 6 notes of the Major Scale (leaving out the 4th and 7th note) we will have the formula for building a Major Pentatonic Scale.

Example:

C Major Scale

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
C D E F G A B C

C Major Pentatonic Scale = 1 2 3 5 6

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
C D E - G A - C (notice we leave out the 4 and 7)

So the notes in a C Major Pentatonic Scale are :

C D E G A

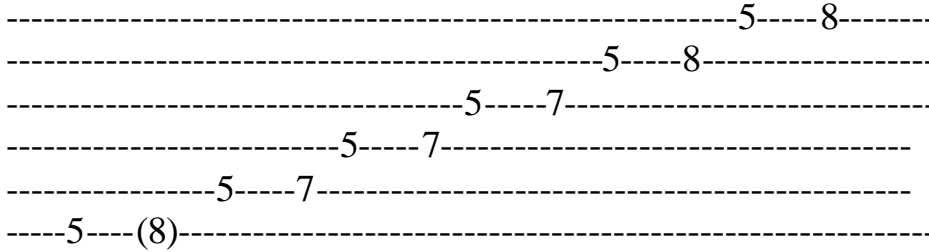
Now we need to learn them in at least five positions on the neck of the guitar.

() = ROOT OF THE SCALE

C Major Pentatonic Scale:

-----3-----5-----
-----3-----5-----
-----2-----5-----
-----2-----5-----
----- (3) -----5-----
-----3-----5-----

C Major Pentatonic Scale: continued ...



Now lets look at the Minor Pentatonic Scale. We build this scale the same way except that the formula is different. This time we will build it using the 1 b3 4 5 b7 of a Major Scale

C Major Scale

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
C D E F G A B C

C Minor Pentatonic Scale = 1 b3 4 5 b7

1 2 b3 4 5 6 b7
C - Eb F G - Bb

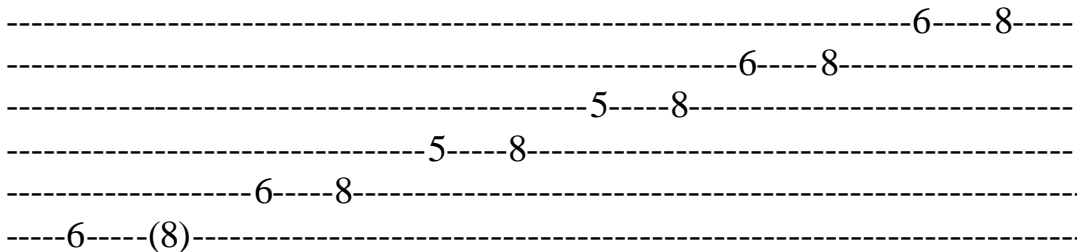
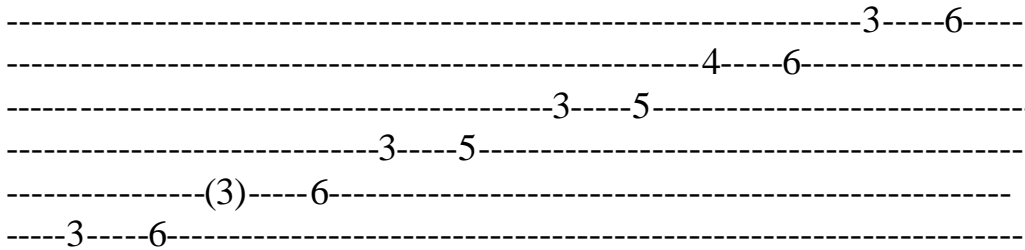
So the notes in a C Minor Pentatonic are:

C Eb F G Bb

Now we need to learn them in a least five positions on the neck of the guitar.

() = ROOT OF THE SCALE

C Minor Pentatonic Scale:



Now learn the five positions for both the Major and Minor Pentatonic Scales. Then transfer them to EVERY key.

The next thing you need to do is learn to play these scales on the guitar.

You should know five positions for each Major and Minor Pentatonic Scales. Go to my web site www.georgecollichio.com and click on the school link for the complete shapes of the Pentatonic scales. Practice them over and over till you have them completely memorized in every key. Next time we will learn how to improvise with them.

George Collichio is a national recording artist. With eight CDs to his credit he regularly tours Southern California and other parts of the country doing concerts and guitar clinics. He also does studio work in California and Nashville. George is fully endorsed by Whirlwind and uses Whirlwind DIs and Leader cables exclusively during the performances and workshops that he conducts around the country. He is the owner of Collichio School of Music in Rochester, N.Y. with over 300 students and has a Bachelors Degree in Guitar Performance from the State University of New York.

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