

Pentatonic Minor 101

Insert Country Lesson Pentatonic Minor 101 Video

In this lesson we learn the importance of the pentatonic minor scale. This is the most common scale used in country, blues, pop and rock music. It is easy to learn and is a must for learning to improvise in any style. 'Penta' means five and 'tonic' means note, so 'Minor Pentatonic Scale' really just means 'Minor Five-Note Scale'.

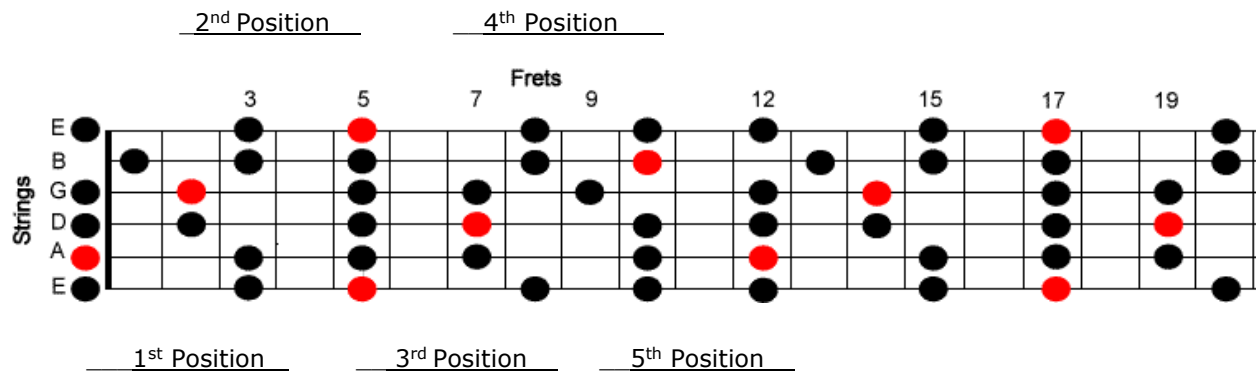
The reason we learn scales is that they are groups of notes that sound really good together that we can use to make up solos and melodies. They are also great for developing your technique for playing single notes, so they are an important part of your development as a guitar player.

We will also learn the five positions where the pentatonic minor scale can be played on the guitar neck and then, start combining them together. Let's get started.

First we must learn the notes that make up the scale and learn it on one string. We will use the key of A for these examples. The pentatonic minor scale is made up of the root which is the 1, 3rd, 4th, 5th, and 7th degrees. Thus the notes in key of A would be;

A	C	D	E	G
Root	3rd	4th	5th	7th

Here is all the positions of the pentatonic minor scale in the Key of A. We will focus on the first 12 frets as the fret board repeats after the 12th fret. Each position covers 4 frets or 2 steps.



* Note that the positions overlap, for instance position two is simply the top half of position one mated with the bottom half of position 3.

All of these positions fit together perfectly and will always be in the same order that they are here. That means that they must always be positioned together as they are and their relation to each other will never change. Now that you can see all of the positions and how

they work together to form the A pentatonic minor scale, we will do some exercises that will teach you the individual positions and how we can use them on single and multiple strings.

Exercise 1

Here is an exercise playing the scale on a single string. It may seem foolish or simple but it will make you see patterns that are very important. The midi track is set at 50bpm 8th notes. Practice with it first. Set your metronome on a comfortable practice speed and practice on every string 5 minutes each once a day for a week. The object here is not to master the speed but rather observe and learn the patterns.

Exercise 1 A Minor Pentatonic Scale

1st String

Standard tuning

♩ = 50

The musical notation for the 1st string exercise is presented in two systems. The first system shows the treble clef staff with a 4/4 time signature and a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic marking. The scale is written in three measures: the first measure contains an ascending eighth-note scale from E4 to A4 (labeled with a '1' above the first note), the second measure contains a descending eighth-note scale from A4 to E4 (labeled with a '2' above the first note), and the third measure contains a whole note E4 (labeled with a '3' above the note). The second system is a guitar tablature (TAB) with six lines. The notes are indicated by fret numbers: 0-3-5-8-10-12-15-17 for the ascending scale, 15-12-10-8-5-3-0-3 for the descending scale, and 5 for the final whole note. The letters 'T', 'A', and 'B' are stacked vertically on the left side of the tablature lines.

Exercise 1 A Minor Pentatonic Scale

2nd String

Standard tuning

♩ = 50

The musical notation for the 2nd string exercise is presented in two systems. The first system shows the treble clef staff with a 4/4 time signature and a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic marking. The scale is written in three measures: the first measure contains an ascending eighth-note scale from E4 to A4 (labeled with a '1' above the first note), the second measure contains a descending eighth-note scale from A4 to E4 (labeled with a '2' above the first note), and the third measure contains a whole note E4 (labeled with a '3' above the note). The second system is a guitar tablature (TAB) with six lines. The notes are indicated by fret numbers: 1-3-5-8-10-13-15-17 for the ascending scale, 20-17-15-13-10-8-5-8 for the descending scale, and 10 for the final whole note. The letters 'T', 'A', and 'B' are stacked vertically on the left side of the tablature lines.

Exercise 1 A Minor Pentatonic Scale

3rd String

Standard tuning

♩ = 50

E-Gt

mf

T
A
B

0 2 5 7 9 12 14 17 | 14 12 9 7 5 2 0 2

Exercise 1 A Minor Pentatonic Scale

4th String

Standard tuning

♩ = 50

E-Gt

mf

T
A
B

0 2 5 7 10 12 14 17 | 19 17 14 12 10 7 5 2 | 5 7

Exercise 1 A Minor Pentatonic Scale

5th String

Standard tuning

♩ = 50

E-Gt

mf

T
A
B

0 3 5 7 10 12 15 17 | 15 12 10 7 5 3 0

Exercise 1 A Minor Pentatonic Scale

6th String

Standard tuning

♩ = 50

E-Gt

mf

T
A
B

0 3 5 8 10 12 15 17 | 15 12 10 8 5 3 0 3 | 5

Exercise 2

Practice all five positions of the A pentatonic scale. The midi track is set at 50bpm 8th notes. Practice with the midi track to learn the scales. When you feel you are ready to play faster set your metronome on a comfortable practice speed and practice every position daily. I find that practicing scales daily is very useful in progressing you're playing skills. Practice position one in open position and also at the 12th fret. In my opinion I find the 12th fret position very useful. Make sure you practice at a tempo that allows smooth sounding notes. Never practice at a tempo too fast to play smoothly. Your ultimate goal is to work your way to faster speeds however, it takes lots of practice to master speed scales. Increase your tempo as your skills progress.

Exercise 2 A Minor Pentatonic Scale

1st Position

Standard tuning

♩ = 50

E-Gt

mf

T
A
B

Exercise 2 A Minor Pentatonic Scale

1st Position at 12th fret

Standard tuning

♩ = 50

E-Gt

mf

T
A
B

Exercise 2 A Minor Pentatonic Scale

2nd Position

Standard tuning

♩ = 50

E-Gt

mf

T
A
B

Exercise 3

In this exercise we will work the pentatonic minor scale on two strings. I find this useful in soloing because same notes sound different on each string. You will also start to see 2 string patterns also. Set your metronome on a comfortable practice speed.

Exercise 3 A Minor Pentatonic Scale

1st & 2nd Strings

Standard tuning

♩ = 50

The musical notation for Exercise 3 A Minor Pentatonic Scale on the 1st and 2nd strings is presented in two systems. The first system covers measures 1 through 4, and the second system covers measures 5 through 8. The notation includes a treble clef, a 4/4 time signature, and a dynamic marking of *mf*. The scale is played in ascending order in the first system and descending order in the second system. The notes are: E2 (open), F2 (1), G2 (3), A2 (5), B2 (7), C3 (8), D3 (10), E3 (12), F3 (13), G3 (15), A3 (17). The tablature below the staff shows the fret numbers for each note: 1-3, 0-3, 3-5, 5-8, 8-10, 10-13, 13-15, 12-15, 15-17 in the first system; and 17-15, 17-15, 15-13, 12-10, 13-10, 10-8, 8-5, 8-5, 5-3, 5-3, 3-0, 3-1, 2 in the second system.

Exercise 3 A Minor Pentatonic Scale

4th & 3rd Strings

Standard tuning

♩ = 50

The musical notation for Exercise 3 A Minor Pentatonic Scale on the 4th and 3rd strings is presented in two systems. The first system covers measures 1 through 4, and the second system covers measures 5 through 8. The notation includes a treble clef, a 4/4 time signature, and a dynamic marking of *mf*. The scale is played in ascending order in the first system and descending order in the second system. The notes are: E3 (12), F3 (14), G3 (15), A3 (17), B3 (19), C4 (20), D4 (22), E4 (24), F4 (26), G4 (28), A4 (30). The tablature below the staff shows the fret numbers for each note: 0-2, 0-2, 2-5, 2-5, 5-7, 5-7, 7-10, 7-9, 10-12, 9-12, 12-14, 12-14, 14-12, 14-12, 12-9, 12-10 in the first system; and 9-7, 10-7, 7-5, 7-5, 5-2, 5-2, 2-0, 2-0, 2-0, 2 in the second system.

Exercise 3 A Minor Pentatonic Scale

5th & 6th String

Standard tuning

♩ = 50

E-Gt

mf

T
A
B

0-3 0-3 3-5 3-5 5-8 5-7 8-10 7-10 10-12 10-12 12-15 12-15 15-17 15-17 17

T
A
B

17-15 17-15 15-12 15-12 12-10 12-10 10-7 10-8 7-5 8-5 5-3 5-3 3-0 3-0 0-3 0

Exercise 4

Here are some popular minor pentatonic licks. I tried to use all or parts of these licks in the solo of the head video. I played the licks with a click track at 90 bpm. Practice them with the tracks to learn them. Feel free to practice them also with your own metronome or drum tracks. All of the licks are in A. I have also included the jam track I used in video at the end of this lesson.

Lick#1

This is a nice hammer-on lick. This is derived from pentatonic 2 string patterns on the first and second string from exercise 3.

Exercise 4 A Minor Pentatonic Scale

Lick 1

Standard tuning

$\text{♩} = 90$

E-Gt

mf

T
A
B

Lick#2

This is a real common lick found in a lot of rock songs. It is a really neat and works well in other styles of music also. It is a bit tricky and will take lots of practice to acquire fast speeds. It will sound better at faster speeds.

Exercise 4 A Minor Pentatonic Scale

Lick 2

Standard tuning

$\text{♩} = 100$

E-Gt

mf

T
A
B

Lick#5

This is the classic Johnny B Goode type of pattern used so much in blues, rock and country.

Exercise 4 A Minor Pentatonic Scale

Lick 5

Standard tuning

$\text{♩} = 120$

E-Gt

mf

full full full full full full

TAB

Lick#6

This is another hammer-on pull-off lick pentatonic minor lick.

Exercise 4 A Minor Pentatonic Scale

Lick 5

Standard tuning

$\text{♩} = 120$

E-Gt

mf

full full full full full full

TAB

Lick#7

Just simple but neat.

Exercise 4 Pentatonic Minor 101

Lick 7

Standard tuning

$\text{♩} = 100$

E-Gt

T
A
B

Lick#8

This lick is same as lick #7 but with a sweet 3 fret or 1 ½ step bend to end it. Always use 2 fingers to make string bends when possible. I used 2 fingers on this lick, it makes the bend a bit easier. If you are not a conditioned bender take your time, 3 frets is a tough bend.

Exercise 4 Pentatonic Minor 101

Lick 8

Standard tuning

$\text{♩} = 100$

E-Gt

T
A
B

When you feel like you are getting your practice speeds up to pace try playing the pentatonic minor scale in other keys and tempos. Here is a Jam Track that was in the video plus, tabs to the solo.

[A Minor Pentatonic Practice Track 115 BPB](#)

Video Solo Tabs > insert Pentatonic Minor 101 Solo

