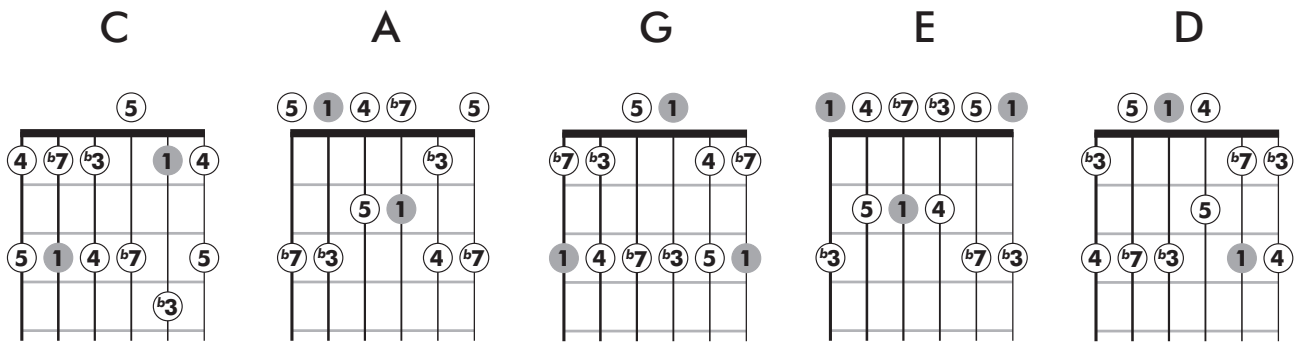


# Intro to the Minor Pentatonic and "Blues" Scales

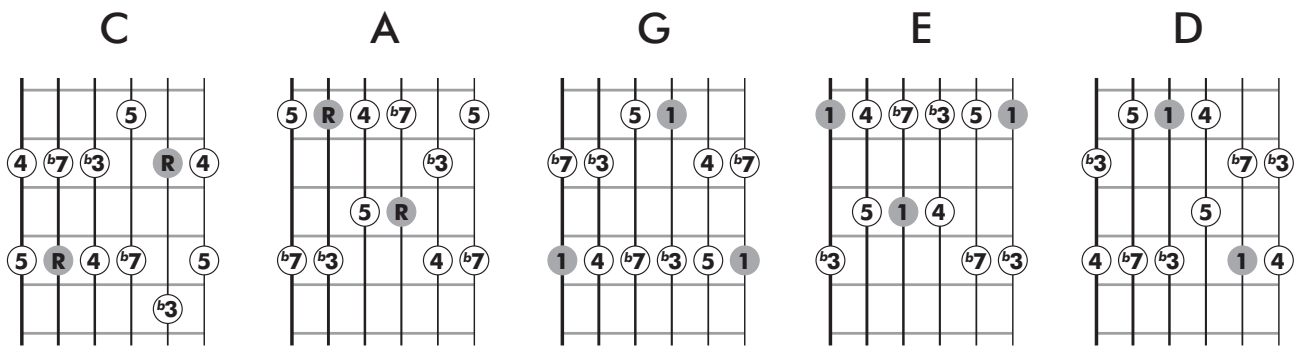
The minor pentatonic scale is among those most frequently used by improvisers, especially when playing certain styles of blues. One of the things that makes this such a popular scale for beginning (as well as experienced) improvisers is that you can often use this one 5-note scale over all the chords of a typical 12 bar blues. This is possible not because the minor pentatonic scale actually *fits* with all the chords of the progression, but because this style of blues allows for much more dissonance than some other genres of music. So-called *blue notes* are precisely those that in another context might be considered plain old *bad* notes!

The minor pentatonic scale is made up of these scale degrees: 1 – b3 – 4 – 5 – b7 and this is what is shown in all the diagrams below. It is very common, however, to add the note that falls between the 4th and 5th scale degrees, thus creating what some refer to as the "blues scale".

## Minor Pentatonic Scales in Open Position



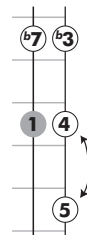
## Minor Pentatonic Scales in Closed Position



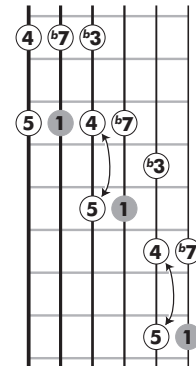
## "Horizontal" Scale Forms

The diagrams to the right offer an alternative approach to playing minor pentatonic scales. The furthest diagram to the left shows one scale "unit". Think of this as the building block used to construct the longer scale forms shown to the right. As you can see, these keep you moving the length of the fingerboard rather than staying in one position. You can play these scale forms using only the 1st and 3rd fingers, sliding into a new position at those points indicated by the arrows.

One scale "unit"



Roots on 5, 3 & 1



Roots on 6, 4 & 2

