

# The Blues

## Blues Scale

The blues scale is essentially a minor pentatonic scale with an added note — the #4, which is the note on 4th scale step raised by half step. Compare the scales to the right. Notice that the only difference between the A blues scale and the A minor pentatonic scale is that the blues scale adds the D#, which is the raised 4th scale degree in the key of A.

Scales	1	2	3	4	4#	5	6	7	8
A Minor	A	B	C	D		E	F	G	A
A Minor Pent.	A		C	D		E		G	A
A Blues	A		C	D	D#	E		G	A

The blues patterns are identical to the minor pentatonic, and the added note (circled) usually fits right under the fingers. Again, notice how the patterns dovetail each other.

**Pattern One**

**Pattern Two**

**Pattern Three**

**Pattern Four**

**Pattern Five**

□ = Tonic (1st scale degree)  
○ = Raised 4th scale degree

## Blues Licks

This lick, based on pattern one, can be traced back to Delta bluesmen like Robert Johnson and Son House. Notice the grace notes that move on the 3rd (C to C#). This is a pianistic way of playing a blues note (i.e. b3), as opposed to bending the C up to C#.

♩. = 88

TAB: 7 5 6 5 8 5 7 5 8 5 | 5 6 7 5 4

This blues lick is in open position, which means that is located within the first five frets, uses open strings, and doesn't follow the pattern of any of the five block patterns above.

♩. = 100

TAB: 2=4 3 4\2 0 2 0 2 1 0 1 0 3

This Stevie Ray Vaughan lick is from his recording of "The Sky is Crying", by Elmore James.

♩. = 60

TAB: 13 10 12 10 12 11 10 10

♩. = 100

TAB: 7 7 8 9 9 12 11 10 12 10 10 11 | 7 9 7 9 9 1/2 9 7