



Lesson Twenty Two

Gigajam Guitar School Lesson 22 IGS IP1

Improvisation Part 1

Lesson Objectives

- Build our musical theory to develop Lead Playing.
- Memorize and play the A minor Pentatonic Extended Scale.
- Move around within the A minor extended pattern to play licks.
- Understand and identify Root Notes.

Building Theory for Lead Playing

In Lessons 19 and 21 we covered the main techniques required in Lead Guitar playing.

These were Slides, String Bends, Curls, Vibrato, Hammering On and Pulling Off.

Not only do we need to understand how to physically play the guitar but also which notes can be played at any given time.

A minor Pentatonic Extended Scale

In lesson 19 we learned how to play position 1 of the Am Pentatonic scale.

When playing Lead Guitar we want to be able to play over the whole fingerboard and not merely in one area of a few frets. Each scale on the guitar requires five different finger patterns and positions to cover the whole fingerboard.

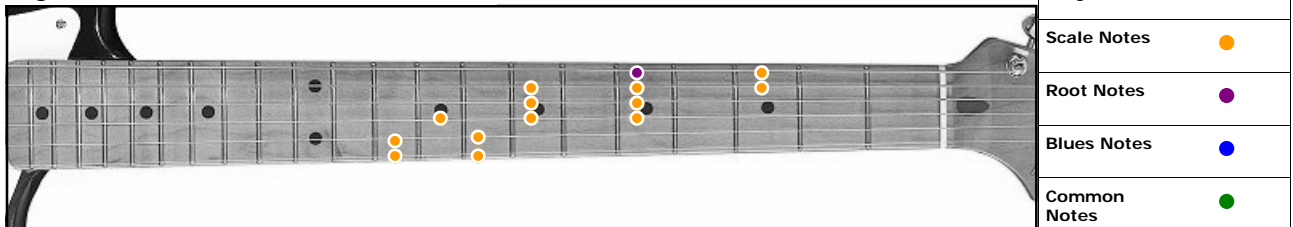
We will investigate all five patterns for the Minor Pentatonic in subsequent lessons, but for now we will concentrate on the extended Minor Pentatonic pattern in the key of A minor.

This scale is actually a hybrid of patterns 5, 1 and 2.

This sequence of notes has become widely used and indeed become a fingering pattern in it's own right as it allows you to go from low notes to high notes in a diagonal direction in a comfortable finger pattern. Below is the finger pattern for the Am Pentatonic Extended Scale.

We will be colour coding different notes through this part of the course and the Root Note (A) is seen here as a purple dot on the fretboard.

Fig. 1 Am Pentatonic Extended Scale



Fingering

Play the scale up and down smoothly with no spaces between the notes picking each note with alternate picking. The only fingers used are 1 and 3 with the exception of the 9th fret on the 3rd string descending which is played with finger 2. The reason for this is that this is the easiest finger to use at this point of the scale.

Notice that the root note (A) falls under the 3rd finger on the 6th string at fret 5. In pattern one, learned in lesson 19, it was the same note but under finger one.

When placing the 3rd finger on the guitar, it is useful to place the 2nd finger on the same string one fret lower simultaneously. This means that when string bends or vibrato are required the fingers are already in place.

Watch the video very carefully so that you can see how the fingers are used to play the patterns and join each section of the scale together.

Time Signatures

You will notice that the third bar in this exercise is written as 5/4, as opposed to the more common C for Common time.

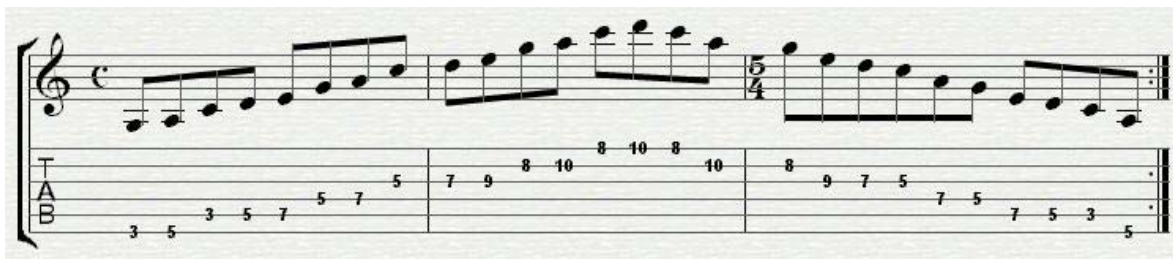
As we discussed in part 2 of the course the top number means the amount of beats in the bar and the bottom number relates to the type of beat.

In this instance the bottom number is 4, which means quarter notes. Accordingly therefore you just need to count to five in the third bar.

Exercise 1 lesson022.igsp.01



Note that this exercise has a two bar count in.



Developing Improvisation

To improvise and invent solos we need to know which notes are allowed and be able to apply techniques to articulate these notes.

Even though lead guitarists use improvisation frequently creating a "make it up as you go along" style, it in fact usually involves the processing of notes, techniques and licks learnt previously. In reality, far from just making it up.

We are going to look at how the same lick can be played in different areas of the neck creating variations on the same licks.

To do this we need to see where some important notes are inside the scale. The most important note is the root note. In this case A.

There are in fact several A's inside the scale pattern. Conveniently they all fall under our 3rd finger. These notes are highlighted in purple on the fingerboard below.

Let's examine the first lick that we learnt back in lesson 19. Take a look at exercise 2.

Exercise 2
lesson022.igsip.02



Figure 2 Am Pentatonic Extended Scale-Root notes

Key Code	
Scale Notes	●
Root Notes	●
Blues Notes	●
Common Notes	●

As you can see the lick ends on the note of A on the 7th fret on the 4th string under our 3rd finger.

Now lets play the exact same lick on a different part of the extended scale. Take a look at exercise 3 and then use the multi media files to learn this lick in this next position.

Exercise 3
lesson022.igsip.03



Having played this lick you will hear that it is identical in notes but higher in pitch. The finger pattern is the same except the curl needs to go up rather than down to avoid falling off the neck.

The reason that this works is that there is a group of four notes which appears three times inside the extended scale pattern. These three groups are highlighted below. The same licks can be played on all three of these patterns.

Let's play another now, again using the multi media files to help. Notice how in each of the following licks, how they all finish on an A.

Exercise 4
lesson022.igsip.04



Try out all of the licks learnt in lessons 19 and 21 in the other two areas of the fingerboard.

When comfortable, play them over the multi media backing track, embellishing or re-phrasing in anyway you like with the techniques you have acquired.

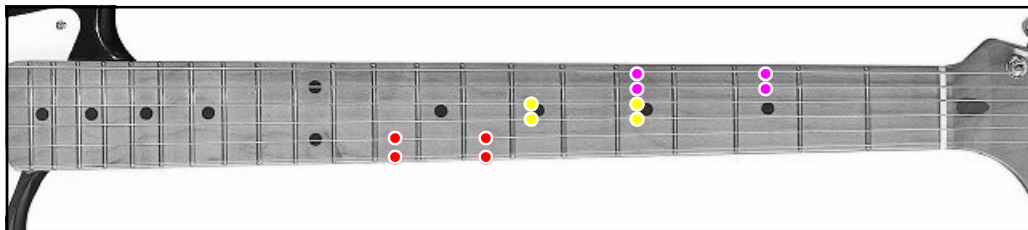
Moving around the neck

To become increasingly more familiar with the fingerboard, try and learn to see the Minor Pentatonic scale pattern in small pockets of notes. Play in a three or four note pocket and then 'walk' to the next pocket. An example of this is tabbed below in our next exercise.

In our first example we are showing the lick in the high section of the Extended Scale which then walks down to the middle of the extended scale pattern where again we play the same lick.

To differentiate from just another diagram of the scale, you will see that I have highlighted the three pockets of four notes in different colours.

Fig. 2 Am Pentatonic Extended Scale-Root notes



Exercise 5 lesson022.igsip.05



Our second example shows our lick played in the middle of the extended scale pattern and then moves down to the lower portion. Again, use the multi media files so that you can see the fingering and technique employed. Once you are comfortable then have a go at playing along with the GuitarXtractor file.

Exercise 6
lesson022.igsip.06



Identifying Root Notes

Be aware when playing where the root notes are. At this stage it's not so important to worry about the note names, as where about within the pattern they're located. The root notes can be viewed as 'safety notes' as they always sound good.

Try making up your own licks with them initially finishing on a root note.