

The Minor Pentatonic Scale

By Paul Tauterouff

The Minor Pentatonic scale is one of the most commonly scales used in Rock, Blues, Country and Jazz music.

The following examples are in the key of A. As you will learn, these patterns can be transferred to all keys. The root notes (A in these examples) are circled so that you can learn their locations.

Pattern I.

5 8 5 8 8 5 8 5 7 5 7 5 7 7 5 7 5 8 5

5 8

A Minor Pentatonic Scale 1st Pattern

The notes of the A Minor Pentatonic Scale are A, C, D, E, and G.

If we played these five notes on the low E string, we would end up with the pattern shown below:

5 8 10 12 15 17
A C D E G A

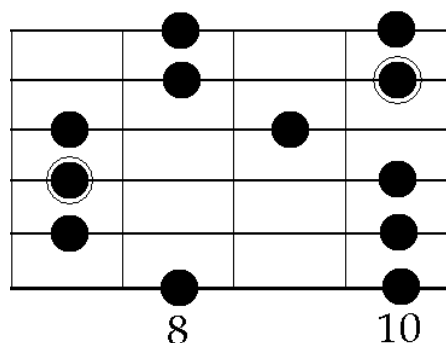
A Minor Pentatonic Scale on low E String

By continuing the same five-note sequence, and starting at each of the four other notes on the low E string, we will end up with four more distinct patterns or shapes (for a total of five.)

Pattern II begins with the note C at the eighth fret, and continues the same sequence of notes (C, D, E, G, A.)

Pattern II.

** Note: Start Pattern II with your second finger.



A Minor Pentatonic Scale 2nd Position

Key Points:

1. It is important to keep in mind that we are still playing the same sequence of notes. We are just playing them at different locations on the fretboard and in different octaves.
2. The patterns look different from each other because we are starting each pattern at a different note and different fretboard location.
3. Mastery of this and other scales will enable you to play lead solos (in any key) all over the neck of the guitar. It is important that you thoroughly memorize these patterns and how they fit together so that you can recall them instantly when improvising.
4. Even though this scale does not have a lot of notes in it, it is still a very useful tool for generating soloing ideas.

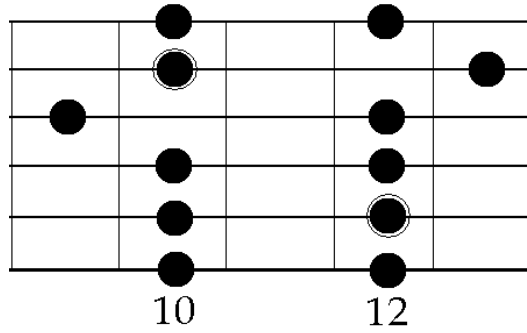
Now, Let's continue on with Pattern 3, starting at the note D at the 10th fret of the low E string.

Pattern III.

Musical notation for Pattern III. The top staff shows a melodic line in treble clef. The bottom staff shows guitar tablature for strings T, A, and B. The tablature is as follows:

T				10-13	10-12-12-10	13-10			
A			9-12				12-9	12-10	
B	10-12	10-12	10-12					12-10	12-10

** Note: Start Pattern III with your first finger and stretch left with your index finger to reach the 9th fret on the G string.

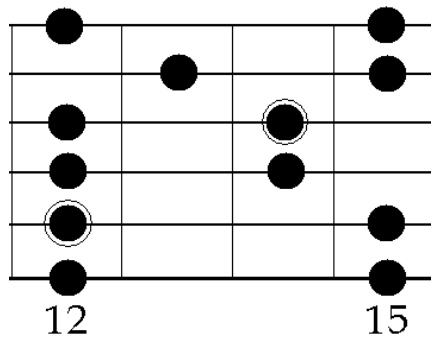


A Minor Pentatonic Scale 3rd Pattern

Pattern IV.

Musical notation for Pattern IV. The top staff shows a melodic line in treble clef. The bottom staff shows guitar tablature for strings T, A, and B. The tablature is as follows:

T				13-15	12-15-15-12	15-13			
A			12-14	12-14			14-12	14-12	
B	12-15	12-15	12-14					15-12	15-12

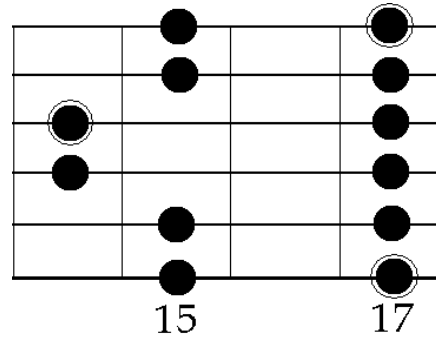


A Minor Pentatonic Scale 4th Pattern

Pattern V.

The musical notation shows a treble clef staff with a scale of notes. Below it is a tablature staff with three strings labeled T, A, and B. The fret numbers are: T (15-17, 15-17, 17-15), A (14-17, 14-17, 17-15), and B (15-17, 15-17, 17-15). The scale starts on the 15th fret and ends on the 17th fret.

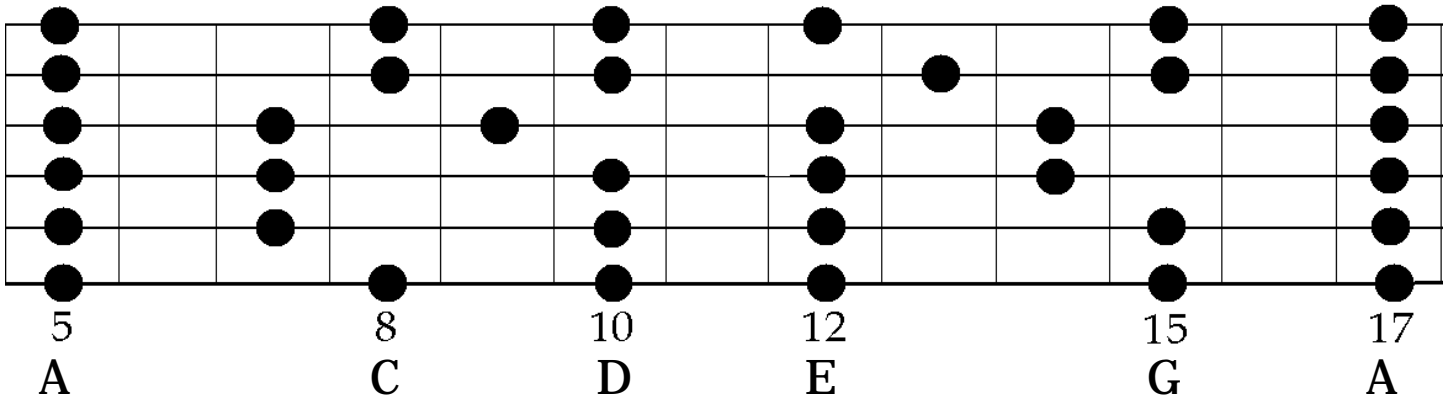
** Note: Start Pattern V with your second finger.



A Minor Pentatonic Scale 5th Position

Once you have all mastered all five positions, you will be able to visualize and more importantly, play the Minor Pentatonic scale over the entire fret board.

Also note that the scale does not end here. You would simply play pattern one again at the A note on the 17th fret.



All five patterns of the A Minor Pentatonic Scale (one complete octave)

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