

PENTATONIC SCALES

Pentatonic Scales are 5 note scales that are commonly used for improvising. They work well for constructing melodic lines because they contain a well balanced amount of leaps and stepwise motion. Triads create very angular phrases because there are too many large intervals, and 7 or 8 note scales are nearly all stepwise and contain hardly any leaps. Pentatonics are also useful because the missing notes mean that the same pentatonics can be used on different chords, allowing you to apply the same motifs/patterns/licks that you have learned. Pentatonics work particularly well for scale patterns. However, beware of over-using them. They have a distinct and recognisable quality of their own and can end up sounding rather trite if over played. But as part of a solo with other ingredients too, they can be very effective and are often employed by many of the great jazz improvisers.

There are two types of Pentatonic Scale

The Major Pentatonic Scale uses 1 2 3 5 6 notes from the Major Scale



The Minor Pentatonic Scale uses 1 3 4 5 7 notes from the Natural Minor Scale



Notice that they are the same notes. This works because D is the "relative" minor of F Major. Just the same as your key signatures. This means the major/minor pentatonic scale patterns are interchangeable (they are the same thing) and means you have more opportunities to employ the same patterns/licks/motifs when improvising over different chord types.

So make sure you practice your pentatonic scale patterns!