

Pentatonic Scales #2

By
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This article is a continuation of last month's Pentatonic #1. I recommend that you read the previous article before moving on to this one. It provides some basic knowledge about pentatonic scales, which is good to know before getting into the more harmonically complex use of a five note scale.

This article will introduce you to some different pentatonic concepts. As long as the scale consists of five notes it's considered a pentatonic scale. By altering different notes in the pentatonic scale, it can serve several different functions.

Maj7 #11 Chords

A Major pentatonic scale a step above covers the 9th, 3rd, #11, 6th and the major 7th.

FM7(#11)



The image shows two musical staves. The top staff is a chord diagram for FM7(#11) in treble clef, showing the notes F, A, C, E, G, and B. The bottom staff shows the corresponding pentatonic scale in treble clef, starting on G (the 3rd degree of the chord) and moving up stepwise to F, then down stepwise to G, A, B, and C.

Dominant Altered chords.

Play the major pentatonic scale a tri-tone away. That'll cover the #11, b13, b7, b9, #9

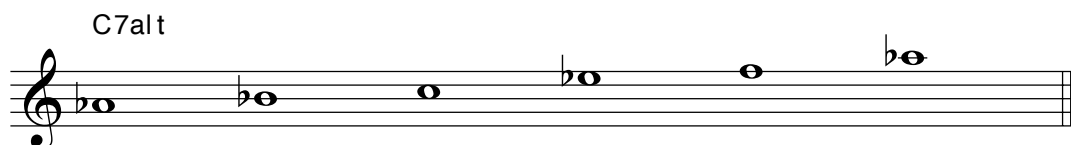
C7alt



The image shows two musical staves. The top staff is a chord diagram for C7alt in treble clef, showing the notes C, E, G, Bb, and Db. The bottom staff shows the corresponding pentatonic scale in treble clef, starting on Eb (the b9 degree of the chord) and moving up stepwise to C, then down stepwise to Eb, E, F, and G.

Using the Ab pentatonic over a C7alt chord will create a slight "out" sound due to the tension between F in the scale and the E in the chord. Notes covered: b13, b7, root, #9, 4.

C7alt



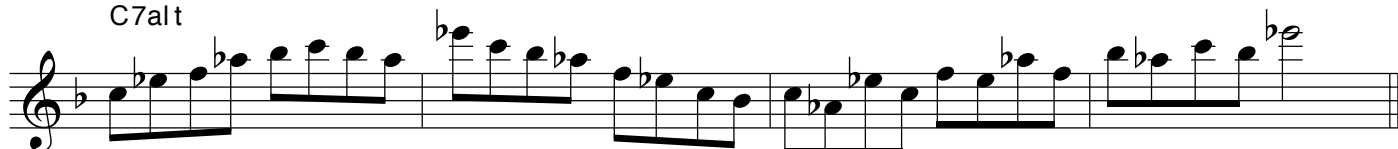
The image shows two musical staves. The top staff is a chord diagram for C7alt in treble clef, showing the notes C, E, G, Bb, and Db. The bottom staff shows the corresponding pentatonic scale in treble clef, starting on Ab (the b13 degree of the chord) and moving up stepwise to C, then down stepwise to Ab, Bb, and C.

D \flat pentatonic over a C7alt also works, but it's not as strong sounding as the A \flat . D \flat pentatonic covers the $\flat 9$, $\sharp 9$, 4, $\flat 13$, $\flat 7$.

C7alt



C7alt



A \flat Pentatonic -----

C7alt



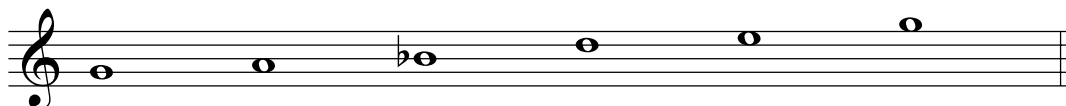
D \flat Pentatonic -----

Pentatonic Scales $\flat 3$

So far we have only used the traditional version of the major pentatonic scale. But like many other scales in jazz, the pentatonic scale can also be altered. When a pentatonic scale is altered it opens up several new harmonic possibilities.

In the example below you'll see a pentatonic $\flat 3$ scale. The only difference from a regular major pentatonic scale is the flatted 3rd.

G pentatonic $\flat 3$.



When using this scale over a half diminished chord, use the pentatonic scale that starts on the flat 3 of the chord. **So on E half diminished, use G pentatonic $\flat 3$.**

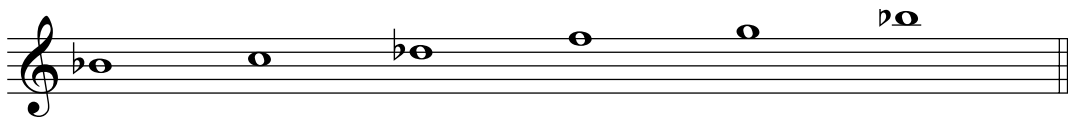
Em7($\flat 5$)



G pentatonic $\flat 3$ -----

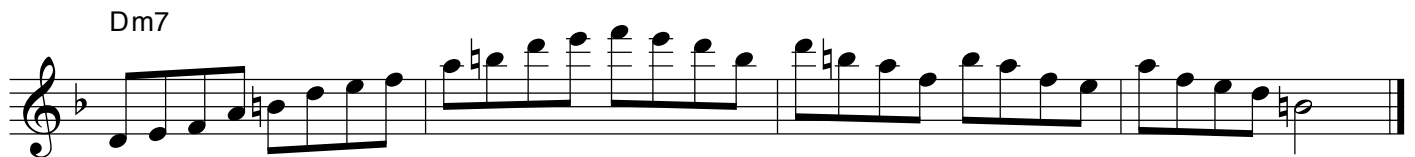
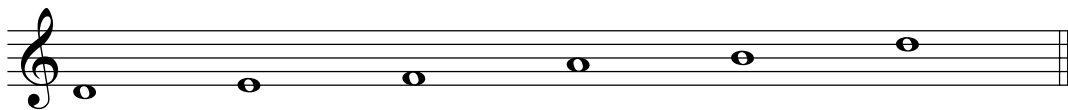
Over an altered chord, use the pentatonic scale that starts a half step above the chord. **So on A7 altered, use B \flat pentatonic $\flat 3$.**

B \flat pentatonic $\flat 3$.

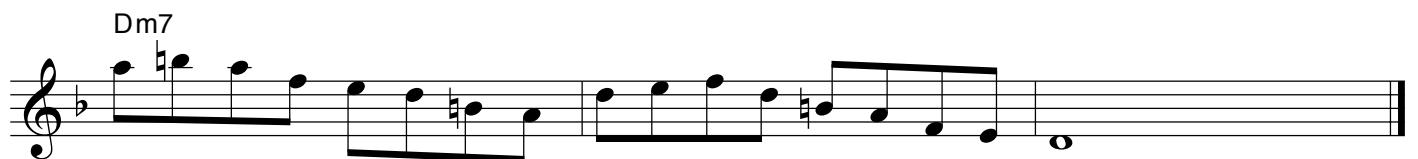


Pentatonic $\flat 3$ also works well over a minor chord. It creates a unique sound because the scale includes the major sixth instead of the flat seven. **Use D pentatonic $\flat 3$ over a Dm7 chord.**

Dm pentatonic $\flat 3$.



Listen to the sound of the pentatonic $\flat 3$ when played over a minor ii-V-i progression.



The possibilities with pentatonic scales are endless but remember to use taste and good musical judgement when improvising.