

Chapter 2 – Mixed Blues Scale

To begin your study of swing blues guitar you explore three different blues scales leading up to the mixed blues scale at the end of this chapter.

Each of these scales is an essential part of playing swing blues, blues blues, and jazz blues, so they're important to get down in your playing.

Start by working the minor blues scale, then when ready move on to the major blues scale.

The major blues scale adds an extra challenge to your solos as you can only use that scale over one chord at a time.

Because of that added challenge, take your time with the major blues scale and only move on to the mixed blues scale when comfortable.

Have fun diving into these fun and exciting soloing devices as you begin your swing blues guitar journey.

Minor Blues Scale

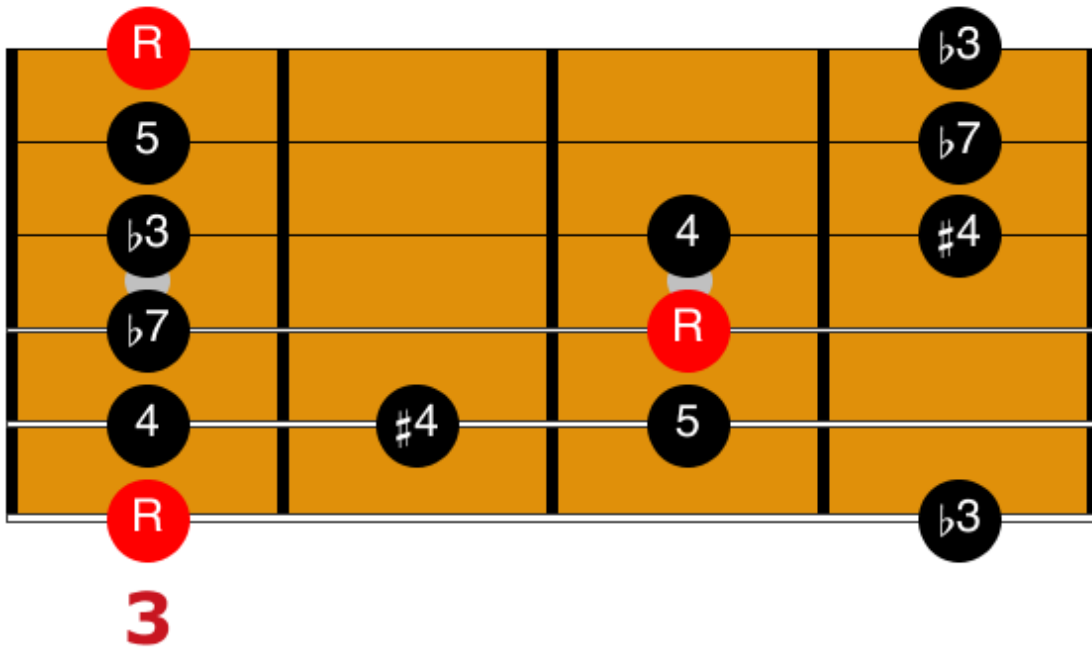
The first scale you learn and explore in this chapter is the minor blues scale, built with the intervals R-b3-4-#4-5-b7.

This scale is the most versatile in all of modern music as you can use it to solo over just about any chord type and diatonic progression.

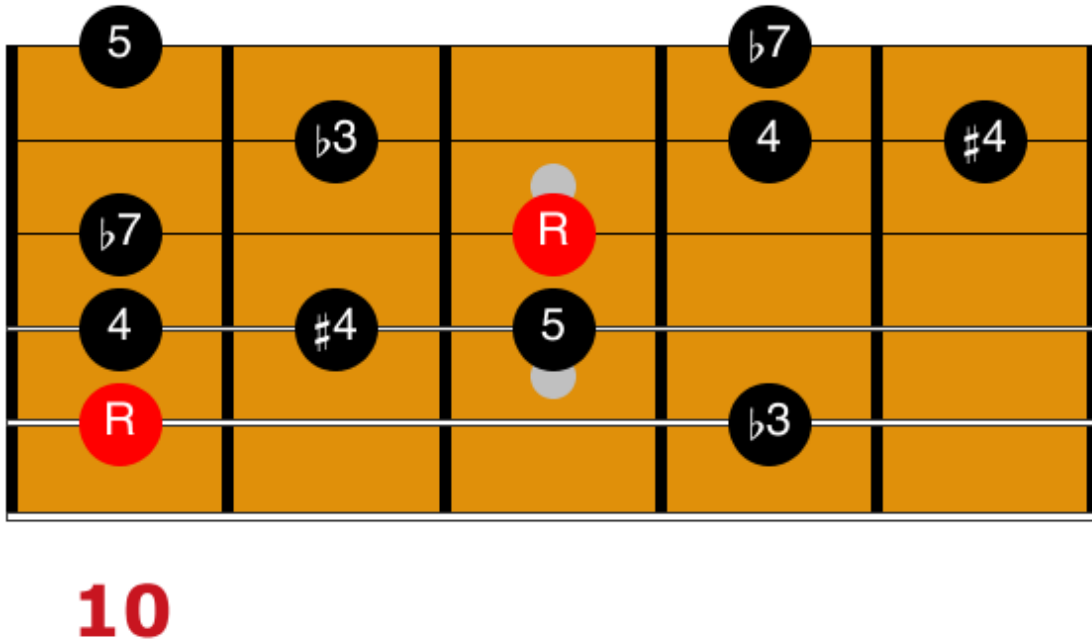
In a blues soloing situation, you can solo over the entire blues chord progression with one minor blues scale, such as Gm blues over a G blues song.

Start by learning the two shapes below, get them under your fingers, then jump down and start to solo over the G blues backing tracks with those scale shapes.

G Minor Blues



G Minor Blues



Soloing Exercises

With the minor blues scale under your fingers you're ready to apply it to the backing track and get soloing with this cool-sounding scale.

Put on the backing track and start to improvise with the G minor blues scale over the entire progression.

As you learned earlier, the minor blues scale works over the entire blues chord progression.

This allows you to quickly jump in and solo over the entire G blues form.

From there, when ready, move on to the major blues scale which will level up your playing and challenge your skillset in new and exciting ways.

The image shows three staves of musical notation, each representing a different chord in a blues progression. Each staff contains four measures of music, indicated by diagonal lines. The first staff is for the G7 chord. The second staff is for the C7 chord, with a G7 chord indicated above the third measure. The third staff is for the D7 chord, with a C7 chord indicated above the second measure and a G7 chord indicated above the third measure.

Major Blues Scale

The next scale you explore in this chapter is the major blues scale, which is built with the intervals R-2-b3-3-5-6.

Because this scale has a 3rd in it, you can only use it over one chord at a time in a blues soloing situation.

This means that over G7 you solo with G major blues, then over C7 you solo with C major blues, etc.

While the scale shape isn't too tough to get under your fingers, changing scales with each chord in a blues is very tricky for many players at first.

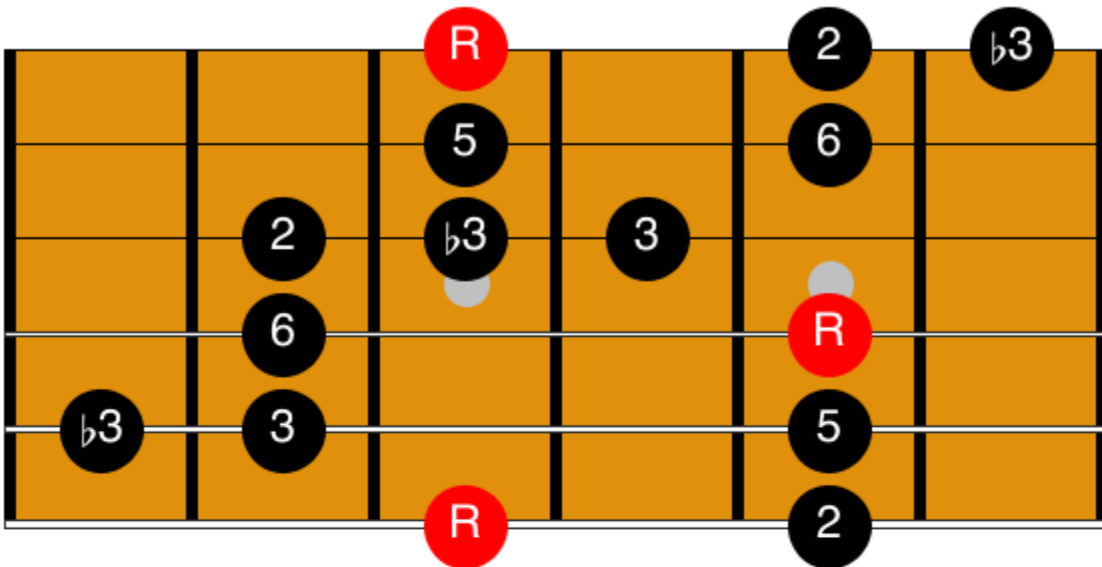
To help you make that transition smooth in your playing, start by soloing over only G7 with the related major blues scale.

Then, solo over only C7, then over D7 only to get those scales fully under your fingers.

Work one shape at a time, then combine the two scale shapes over these individual chords in your studies.

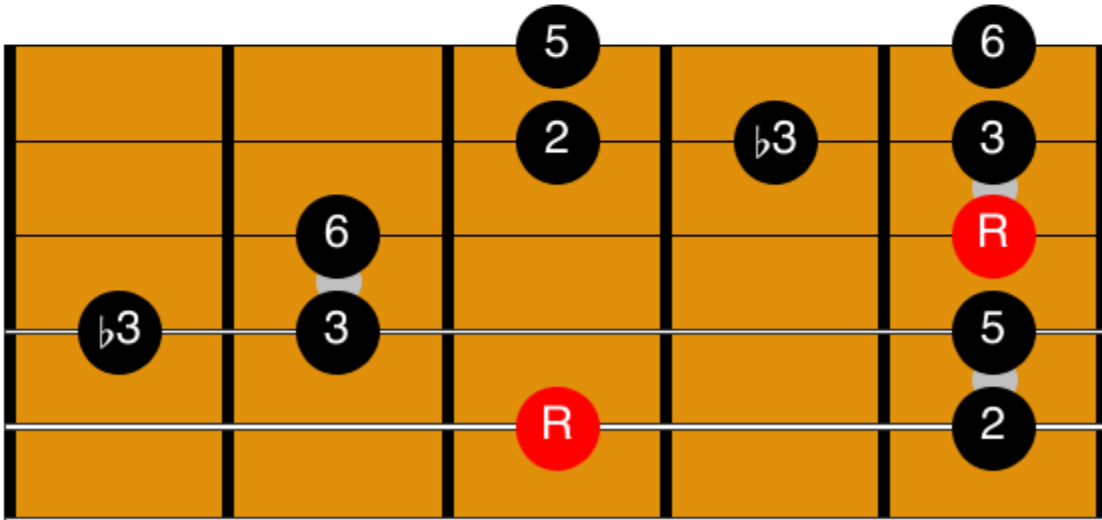
From there, only when you feel ready, head down and apply the major blues scale to your solos over a full G blues progression.

G Maj Blues Scale



1

G Maj Blues Scale



8

Soloing Exercises

You're now ready to take the major blues scale to a full G blues chord progression.

Start by soloing over one chord at a time and resting, or playing chords, over the other chords in the form.

When ready, solo over all 3 chords with the major blues scale over the backing tracks.

To take things further, mix the Gm blues scale into your lines as you combine the minor and major blues scales in your solos.

The image displays three musical staves, each with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The staves are designed for soloing exercises over specific chord progressions. Each staff is divided into four measures, with diagonal lines indicating where a soloist can play. The chords are indicated by labels above the staves: G⁷ for the first staff, C⁷ and G⁷ for the second staff, and D⁷, C⁷, and G⁷ for the third staff.

Staff 1: G⁷
The first staff is labeled G⁷ and contains four measures of diagonal lines, indicating a solo over a single G⁷ chord.

Staff 2: C⁷ G⁷
The second staff is labeled C⁷ and G⁷. It contains four measures of diagonal lines, indicating a solo over a C⁷ chord for the first two measures and a G⁷ chord for the last two measures.

Staff 3: D⁷ C⁷ G⁷
The third staff is labeled D⁷, C⁷, and G⁷. It contains four measures of diagonal lines, indicating a solo over a D⁷ chord for the first measure, a C⁷ chord for the second measure, and a G⁷ chord for the last two measures.

Mixed Blues Scale

The next scale that you explore is something I call the “Mixed Blues Scale,” as it mixes the minor and major scales in one shape.

Here, you play the Root, b3, 4, #4, and 5 from the minor blues scale mixed with the 3 and 6 from the major blues scale to form a hybrid scale in your solos.

Because the mixed blues scale uses notes from the major blues scale, you use one scale per chord in your solos.

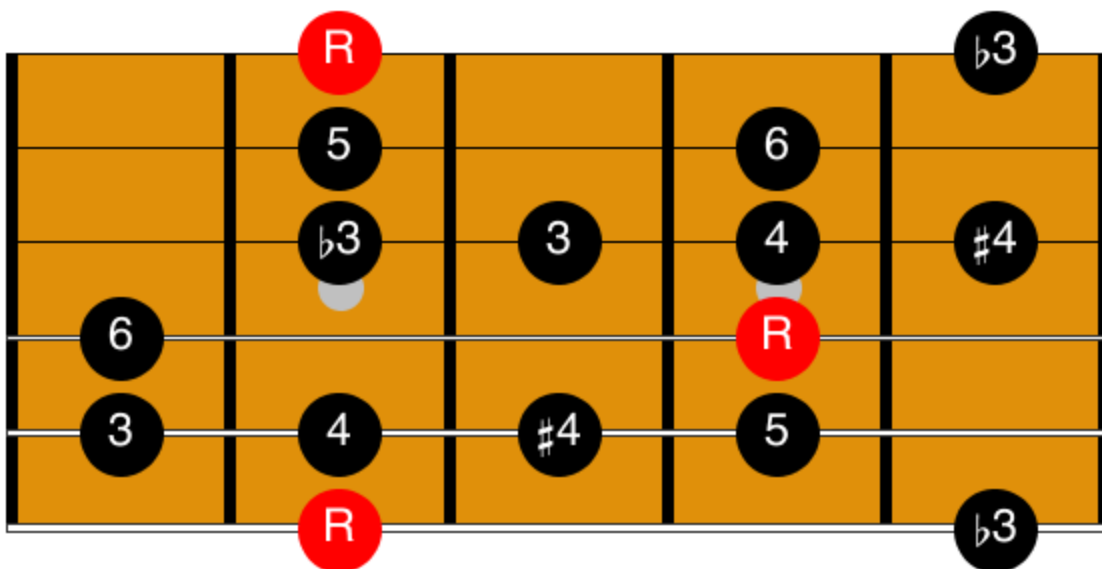
This means that you solo over G7 with the G mixed blues scale, then over C7 you switch to the C mixed blues scale, etc.

Start by learning the fingerings below one at a time.

From there, solo over the single-chord backing tracks as you take this scale to your soloing workout.

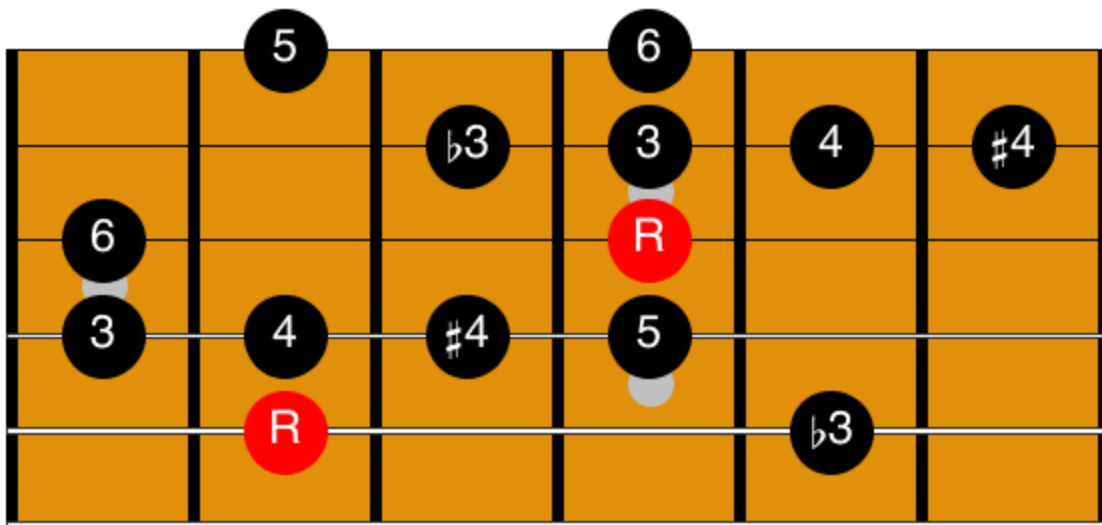
When ready, move on to the full G blues as you expand on this new sound in your practice routine.

G Mixed Blues Scale



2

G Mixed Blues Scale



9

Soloing Exercises

You're now ready to apply the mixed blues scale to the G blues chord progression.

Start slow, solo over one chord at a time, so only soloing over G7 and resting on the others for example, until you work up to soloing over every chord.

Once you get the mixed blues scale down over these chords, mix the minor blues and major blues scales into your mixed blues scales solos.

Over time you learn where and when you want to use each scale in your solos and how you want to blend them together.

Working each scale separately before combining them drills the sound of those scales into your ears, making it easier to combine scales when ready.

The image displays three musical staves, each representing a different chord progression in a G blues style. Each staff is in 4/4 time and contains four measures of music, indicated by diagonal lines. The first staff is labeled G7. The second staff is labeled C7 and G7. The third staff is labeled D7, C7, and G7.

Staff 1: G7

Staff 2: C7 G7

Staff 3: D7 C7 G7