

# LEAD GUITAR TACTICS

WHAT IT REALLY TAKES TO PLAY  
LEAD GUITAR LIKE A PRO



By Bob Murnahan

# Introduction...How To Use The Pentatonic Scale... Learn Classic Guitar Riffs Used By The Pros

Have you ever wondered how players like Page, Clapton and Beck use the pentatonic scale to play lead guitar? How about guitarists like Van Halen and Vai? Or how jazz guitarists like Pat Metheny and George Benson use the pentatonic scale?

If so, then you've come to the right place. In the series of lessons to follow you will be guided through a step by step sequence of instruction to help you play lead guitar.

## Take Your Lead Guitar Playing To The Next Level! In The Lessons That Follow You Will Learn...

- The most commonly used fingerings of the pentatonic scale.
- Guitar licks that you can use as a starting point to develop your own solos.
- Exercises to help you improve your technique.
- How to use passing tones to give your playing that extra spice that sounds great.

The goal of these lessons is not just to memorize a bunch of guitar licks, although this is recommended and will help you improve. The goal is to give you a starting point that you can use to learn how to improvise and make up your own solos.

The fun and joy that comes from being able to improvise is worth all the effort and practice that it takes to get there. Be patient and you will improve. Try to set aside a consistent time each day to practice and you will reach your goals.

There are 15 lessons to follow. I recommend that you do them in order but feel free to go straight to a lesson if you have a strong desire to do so. You can always go back to the ones you skip.

To your guitar playing success,

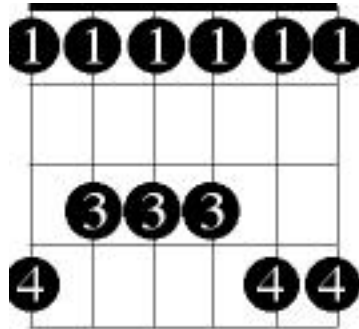
Bob Murnahan

# Lesson 1

## How To Play The Pentatonic Scale

Welcome to lesson 1 of the pentatonic scale. In this lesson you will learn how to read scale diagrams and tablature. You will also learn the most commonly used fingering for this scale.

Let's start by looking at a pentatonic scale diagram.



Here is a very important concept. Notice that this diagram of the pentatonic scale has no open strings. This means you can play it anywhere on the guitar. The fret does not matter. Just make sure you keep the spacing between your fingers the same as you move the scale around the neck.

When you move to a different fret, you are changing the key. Don't worry if you don't know what this means, more on this in a later lesson.

When reading this diagram of the pentatonic scale, start on the left hand side of the diagram.

This is the low E string (6th string). Play all of the notes on this string from top to bottom before moving on to the next string. In this example you would play 2 notes on the 6th string. The 1st finger followed by the 4th finger.

On the 5th string you would play 1st finger followed by the 3rd finger. The 4th string would be 1st finger and 3rd finger again. Continue in this manner until you play the entire pentatonic scale.

When you arrive at the end of the scale, turn around and go back down the scale. In reverse, you would start on the 1st string and play 4th finger followed by the 1st finger.

The 2nd string would also be 4th finger, 1st finger. The 3rd string would be 3rd finger, 1st finger. Continue on until you complete the entire pentatonic scale.

# Here are some other things to keep in mind as you play the scale on your guitar.

- Most of the scales that you will learn in these lessons cover a span of 4 frets. Follow the recommended fingerings using one finger per fret. If you have to stretch beyond that, it is no big deal to reach back with your 1st finger or stretch out with your 4th finger.
- To get your fingers in the proper playing position, allow your left hand to hang by your side completely relaxed. Turn your palm forward and without moving the upper arm, raise your forearm until your hand touches the edge of the fret board at the point where your fingers meet your palm.
- Place the thumb in the center of the neck behind your 1st finger. Arch your fingers over until they press down on the 3rd string. The tips of the fingers should be at a 90 degree angle to the fret board. The string should make a mark in the center of the fingers.
- As you spread your fingers to cover the 4 fret distance, they should be well separated at their middle joints. Your 1st finger should lean towards the head stock and your little finger will lean towards the bridge.
- When playing a note with the 1st finger, the string mark should be more on the side of your finger towards your thumb and the mark on your little finger will be out by the side of your hand.
- The palm of your hand should be parallel to the bottom of the neck.
- These are general guidelines. This will vary depending on where you are at on the neck as you play. I would recommend that you find a good teacher in your area if you are just starting out. Learning proper technique from the beginning is a great way to avoid headaches later on.

# Here's the pentatonic scale in guitar tablature

## Example 1

The image shows a musical score for the pentatonic scale in 4/4 time. It consists of a treble clef staff and three guitar strings labeled T (Treble), A (A), and B (Bass). The scale is written in a single line across three measures. The notes are: G4 (5th fret), A4 (7th fret), B4 (7th fret), C5 (8th fret), D5 (8th fret), E5 (8th fret), D5 (8th fret), C5 (8th fret), B4 (7th fret), A4 (7th fret), G4 (5th fret). The tablature for the T string is: 5 8 5 8 5 8 5 8 5 7 5. The tablature for the A string is: 5 7 5 7 5 7 5 7 5 7 5. The tablature for the B string is: 5 8 5 7 5 7 5 7 5 7 5 8 5.

Your goal for this lesson on the pentatonic scale is simply to memorize the pentatonic scale. As with all things in music, go slowly. Use a metronome when you practice and get plenty of repetitions.

If you were to play the pentatonic scale 20 times a day, 5 days a week for one month, that would be 400 repetitions in a month. It doesn't take a lot of time to do this, and it's this kind of practice that will help you learn guitar in the shortest time possible. Do the repetitions and I promise it will be worth it. When you start to get command over the tools of music like the pentatonic scale, your enjoyment of playing will increase many times over.

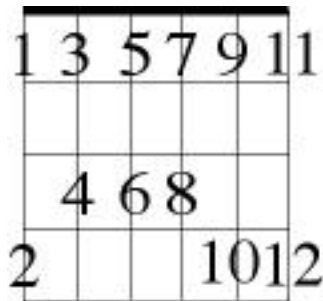
# Lesson 2.

## Pentatonic Scale Patterns

Welcome to lesson 2. In this lesson on the pentatonic scale you will learn about patterns and their importance as you continue on the path to learn guitar.

Pentatonic scale patterns, sometimes referred to as sequences, are one of the best things you can practice to gain more command of the pentatonic scale. In my experience, they are a must if you are even half way serious about learning the guitar. I will be the first to admit that they can be tedious to practice, but the long term rewards are definitely worth it.

What is a pattern? Look at this example using words. Red, green, blue, red, green, blue. What would be the next word in this pattern? Red is the obvious answer. A pattern is simply a sequence that gets repeated over and over. In the pentatonic scale, or any other scale for that matter, a pattern is a sequence of notes that are repeated on successive notes of the pentatonic scale. Look at the diagram of the pentatonic scale below as an example.



The scale is shown with each note numbered from 1-12. Now the numbers can be sequenced as follows.

(1 2 3) (2 3 4) (3 4 5) (4 5 6) (5 6 7) (6 7 8) (7 8 9) (8 9 10) (9 10 11) (10 11 12)

To play this sequence of the scale, start on number 1 and play 1, 2, 3. Then go back to number 2 and play 2, 3, 4. Next would be 3, 4, 5. etc. Play this until you go through the entire pattern.

To play it in reverse simply read from right to left. In reverse this pentatonic scale pattern would be 12, 11, 10. Then play 11, 10, 9. and continue in this manner until you get back to the beginning.

# Here is the same pentatonic scale pattern written in tablature

## Example 2

Example 2, first system. The notation shows a treble clef staff in 4/4 time, with a pentatonic scale pattern. The scale is divided into three groups of triplets. Below the staff are three guitar strings: Treble (T), Middle (A), and Bass (B). The tablature shows fret numbers for each string: T (5, 5, 7, 5, 7, 7, 5, 5, 8, 5, 8, 8), A (5, 7, 7, 5, 7, 5, 7, 7), and B (5, 8, 8, 5, 7, 5, 7, 7).

Example 2, second system. The notation shows a treble clef staff in 4/4 time, with a pentatonic scale pattern. The scale is divided into three groups of triplets. Below the staff are three guitar strings: Treble (T), Middle (A), and Bass (B). The tablature shows fret numbers for each string: T (8, 5, 5, 8, 8, 5, 8, 5, 5, 7, 7, 5), A (7, 5, 5, 7, 7, 5, 7, 5, 5), and B (7, 5, 5, 7, 7, 5, 7, 7, 5, 7, 5, 8, 8, 5).

As always, play each example at a speed that is easy for you to manage. Since this example breaks up the pentatonic scale into 3 note chunks or triplets, keep a steady 1 2 3 count going as you practice this pattern. The use of a metronome is highly recommended.

That's it for lesson 2. Be sure to practice the scale daily. It is the only way to reach your musical goals.

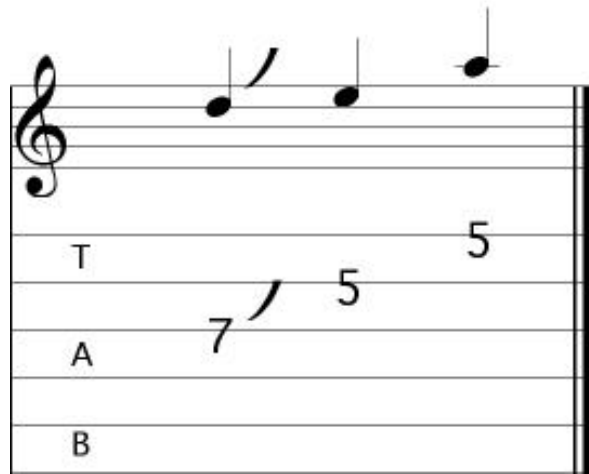
# Lesson 3

## Typical Pentatonic Blues Licks

Welcome to lesson 3 of the pentatonic scale, pentatonic blues licks. In this lesson you will be learning some ways to use the pentatonic scale in a solo. Several typical pentatonic blues licks will be used as a starting point to develop your knowledge of the pentatonic scale. Grab your guitar and get tuned up and let's go.

Take a look at example 1. This lick will be used as a springboard for all of the licks to follow, so make sure you nail this one.

### Example 3



The first thing to notice about this lick is a bend at the 7th fret, 3rd string. This type of bend is very common in pentatonic blues licks. If you are not used to bending here are some guidelines for this lick and those to follow.

This bend needs to raise the note one whole step. This is equal to 2 frets on the guitar. A good way to practice bends of this type is to listen to a target note and try to match it. In this case, play the note at the 9th fret on the 3rd string. This is your target note. Really get the sound in your ear.

Now put your 3rd finger on the 7th fret 3rd string and your 2nd finger on the 6th fret 3rd string. Use both fingers to push the string up until it matches the pitch of your target note. You will find that bending is much easier if you use two fingers to bend the note. Your thumb should be over the top of the neck for added stability.

After you bend the note, then play the 2nd string 5th fret followed by the 1st string 5th fret. There is no time signature for these licks. The idea is to play them as quarter notes and to loop them. It is typical of these pentatonic blues licks to be played over and over in a loop. As you play this lick just count 1-2-3 over and over and keep it steady.

## Example 4

The image shows a musical score for a guitar lick. The top staff is a treble clef with a 4/4 time signature. The lick consists of five quarter notes: G4 (bent), A4, B4, C5, and D5. The bottom staff shows the fretboard with strings T, A, and B. The notes are played on the 7th, 5th, 5th, 8th, and 5th frets of the second string. A 'full' arrow points to the 7th fret note, and a 'full' arrow points to the 8th fret note. A slur covers the 8th and 5th fret notes, indicating a pull-off.

This lick and all of the pentatonic blues licks to follow all start with the lick from example 1. A pull off has been added to expand the lick from example 1. The pull off is on the second string going from the 8th fret to the 5th fret. You should use your 4th finger and first finger to play these two notes. If you do not know how to do a pull off the following guidelines should help.

The idea of a pull off is to get two or more notes to sound by only picking the the string one time. In this example and the pentatonic blues licks to follow, you will be getting two notes to sound but you will only pick the string they are on once.

First, pick the note at the 8th fret, second string, then pull your little finger down towards the first string. I often tell people that a pull off should be called a pull down. If you pull your finger up off the string the second note( the one you are pulling off to) will not be loud enough or not heard at all. By pulling down towards the 1st string your little finger will be snapping off the 2nd string creating a strong pull off. Be sure to listen for this snapping sound as you pull off.

The note you pull off to should be as loud as the note you pick. I try to pull my little finger into the 1st string and use the first string to stop the downward motion of the pull off. By allowing the little finger to come to rest on the 1st string also prevents any unwanted noise.

This lick is made up of 5 notes and you should loop these 5 notes around and around creating a classic lick heard in the songs of many great players. Just treat each note as a quarter note and count in a steady fashion or use a metronome.

## Example 5

Musical notation for Example 5, showing a guitar lick in 7/4 time. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat. The bottom staff shows fret numbers for strings T, A, and B. The lick consists of two measures. The first measure starts with a pull-off on the 7th fret of the B string, followed by a full fret on the 7th fret, then a 5th fret, another 5th fret, an 8th fret, and a 5th fret. The second measure is identical. The notes are beamed together in pairs, with a slur over the 8th fret notes.

This example in our study of pentatonic blues licks is a lot like example 2. The only difference is that the pull off has been moved over to the 1st string. When pulling off of the 1st string you still want to pull down and get that snap. Be careful not to pull the string off the edge of the fret board. Again, keep it steady.

## Example 6

Musical notation for Example 6, showing a guitar lick in 7/4 time. The top staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat. The bottom staff shows fret numbers for strings T, A, and B. The lick consists of two measures. The first measure starts with a pull-off on the 7th fret of the B string, followed by a full fret on the 7th fret, then a 5th fret, another 5th fret, an 8th fret, a 5th fret, another 8th fret, and a 5th fret. The second measure is identical. The notes are beamed together in pairs, with a slur over the 8th fret notes.

This lick is a variation on the previous 2 pentatonic blues licks, combining the pull offs and putting them both in the same lick. This is an example of how you can really create a lot of different ideas with just a few different notes. You can combine and recombine same pieces of what you know to get a lot of different ideas to use in your playing.

## Example 7

Musical notation for Example 7, showing a guitar lick in 7/4 time. The top staff is a treble clef with a 7/4 time signature. The bottom staff shows fret numbers for strings T, A, and B. The lick consists of two measures. The first measure has notes on the 7th, 5th, 5th, 8th, 5th, 8th, and 5th frets. The second measure has notes on the 7th, 5th, 5th, 8th, 5th, 8th, and 5th frets. A "full" pull-off is indicated above the 7th fret in both measures.

Here the pull offs are reversed from the previous example. You can really start to learn how easy it is to create variations and form many pentatonic blues licks by playing around with these ideas. I really encourage you to play around and create some of your own.

## Example 8

Musical notation for Example 8, showing a guitar lick in 7/4 time. The top staff is a treble clef with a 7/4 time signature. The bottom staff shows fret numbers for strings T, A, and B. The lick consists of two measures. The first measure has notes on the 7th, 5th, 5th, 8th, and 5th frets. The second measure has notes on the 8th, 5th, 7th, 5th, and 7th frets. A "full" pull-off is indicated above the 7th fret in the first measure.

This lesson on pentatonic blues licks concludes with the pull offs going down the scale and ending on the 4th string, 7th fret. Try using the concept from the previous examples and change the string order of the pull offs. You can also delete a note here or there and see what you come up with. The main thing is to just experiment and have fun. You never know what you might discover.

# Lesson 4.

## More Typical Blues Licks

Welcome to lesson 4 of the pentatonic scale. In this lesson you will be learning more ways to use the scale in a solo. Additional typical blues licks will be used to develop your knowledge of the pentatonic scale. Grab your guitar, get tuned up and let's go.

Take a look at example 1. In this lick we see our old friend from lesson 3 as our starting point. The lick then descends in the pentatonic scale with a slight twist at the end of the lick going from the 5th fret 3rd string to the 5th fret 4th string. The lick then resolves to 7th fret, 4th string.

This example begins to show how to use the pentatonic scale in a more drawn out fashion.

This lick is also written using all eighth notes in the first measure and ends with a whole note at the beginning of the second measure. Be sure to keep the eighth notes evenly spaced.

Play slowly at first and the speed will follow naturally.

### Example 9

The image shows a musical example for a guitar lick. It consists of a treble clef staff with a common time signature (C) and a guitar tablature below it. The tablature is labeled with 'T', 'A', and 'B' on the left side, corresponding to the Treble, A, and B strings. The lick is written in two measures. The first measure contains eight eighth notes, and the second measure contains a whole note. The fret numbers for the notes are: 7 (A string), 5 (B string), 5 (A string), 5 (B string), 8 (A string), 5 (B string), 7 (A string), 5 (B string), 5 (A string), and 7 (A string).

Example 2 uses part of the pattern learned in lesson 2 on the pentatonic scale. It starts with the descending pattern in triplets and on the last triplet of measure 1 you will find our springboard lick from lesson 3. Hopefully you can see how you can combine parts of what you already know to create pentatonic blues licks like these.

This lick ends up with a bend on the 8th fret, second string. If you want to get more power in your bend, use your 3rd finger to play and bend that note instead of your 4th finger. In playing this pattern of the pentatonic scale, your 4th finger naturally lands on this note, but it is ok to change fingerings to make playing easier. Use your own judgment on this and do what works for you. [Click here](#) to return to lesson 3 on the pentatonic scale to get a refresher on bending.

### Example 10

Musical notation for Example 10, showing a guitar lick on a treble clef staff and a fretboard diagram below. The lick consists of four measures. The first measure contains four triplet eighth notes. The second measure contains four eighth notes. The third measure contains four eighth notes. The fourth measure contains two eighth notes followed by a quarter note with a "full" bend. The fretboard diagram shows fingerings: 5, 8, 5, 8, 5, 7, 5, 7, 5, 7, 5, 5, and 8 for the bend.

In example 3 the lick is a little longer and expands our use of the pentatonic scale even more. Again, make sure to play slow and even. Let the speed happen on its own. Take your time and let your fingers learn where they are supposed to go. Use these examples to create your own pentatonic licks. Experiment and see what you can create on your own.

### Example 11

Musical notation for Example 11, showing a guitar lick on a treble clef staff and a fretboard diagram below. The lick consists of three measures. The first measure contains four eighth notes. The second measure contains four eighth notes. The third measure contains two eighth notes followed by a quarter note with a "full" bend. The fretboard diagram shows fingerings: 7, 5, 7, 7, 5, 7, 5, 8, 7, 5, 5, 5, 8, 5, 8, 5, and 8 for the bend.

Example 4 uses triplets again and covers two measures. This lick is pretty much just down the pentatonic scale and back up again. Just a little twist right at the end of the lick and our old favorite to start this lick off. See how many ways we have been able to use this same idea over and over again.

### Example 12

The last lick of this lesson on the pentatonic scale begins with...you guessed it, our favorite 3 notes from the pentatonic scale. Well, maybe not your favorite 3 notes anymore. It's just that this combination has been used so much that it has to be part of your vocabulary.

Listen to Whole Lotta Love to hear these notes played by Jimmy Page. You can hear them in the 1st and 3rd licks of that solo. See if you can find them in other songs. This lick is all over the place.

This pentatonic lick may be the hardest one in this lesson. The tricky part is the second half of measure 1. Bend the notes at 8th fret, second string with your 3rd finger and play the note on the 8th fret, 1st string with your 4th finger. This will enable you to go between these two strings and keep the lick smooth and flowing.

### Example 13

I hope you are enjoying these lessons on the pentatonic scale. My goal is to inspire you to create your own music and solos using these tools. Always experiment! You never know what you might discover.

# Lesson 5

## More Patterns

Hi and welcome to lesson 5 on the pentatonic scale. In this lesson you will learn a second pattern. If you need a refresher on patterns or if you have not learned the pattern in lesson 2, review the lesson and come back here- pentatonic scale lesson 2.

In my opinion, practicing patterns is the quickest way to develop your ability to play lead guitar. You learn flexibility and receive great ear training from practicing patterns. These are both essential ingredients in creating your own guitar riffs from the pentatonic scale, or any other scale for that matter.

The pattern in lesson 2 broke the pentatonic scale up in three note fragments. In this lesson the scale is broken up into 4 note fragments that repeat on successive steps of the scale. As always, play with a steady tempo and if you have a metronome, use it! Use alternate picking and pay attention to your tone.

Here is the ascending version of the pattern. It is written in the key of A minor and when your comfortable with it at the 5th fret, move it around the fretboard and get comfy playing it anywhere on the guitar.

### Example 14

The musical notation for Example 14 consists of a treble clef staff with a 4/4 time signature. The melody is an ascending pentatonic scale in A minor, starting on the 5th fret. The notes are A5, B5, C6, D6, and E6. The guitar tablature below the staff shows the fret numbers for the strings T, A, and B. The tablature is as follows:

String	Measure 1	Measure 2	Measure 3	Measure 4	Measure 5
T					
A					
B	5 8	5 7 8 5 7 5	5 7 5 7 7 5 7 5	5 7 5 7 5 7 5	5 8 5 8 5 8 5 8

Now for the descending version. Remember to play at a tempo that you can manage. The speed will come automatically and you will be zipping around the pentatonic scale creating your own classic guitar riffs.

# Example 15

The image shows a musical score for guitar. The top staff is a treble clef staff with a common time signature (C). The music consists of five measures. The first measure contains a sequence of eighth notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4. The second measure contains a sequence of eighth notes: F4, E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3. The third measure contains a sequence of eighth notes: F3, E3, D3, C3, B2, A2, G2. The fourth measure contains a sequence of eighth notes: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F3. The fifth measure contains a sequence of eighth notes: G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4, F4, followed by a quarter note G4. Below the treble staff is a tablature staff with three lines labeled T, A, and B. The tablature consists of five measures corresponding to the notes in the treble staff. The first measure has fret numbers 8, 5, 8, 5, 5, 8, 5, 7. The second measure has fret numbers 8, 5, 7, 5, 7, 5, 7. The third measure has fret numbers 7, 5, 7, 5, 5, 7, 5, 7. The fourth measure has fret numbers 7, 5, 7, 5, 5, 7, 5, 7. The fifth measure has fret numbers 7, 5, 7, 5, 8, 7, 5, 8, 5.





# Lesson 7

## More Guitar Riffs

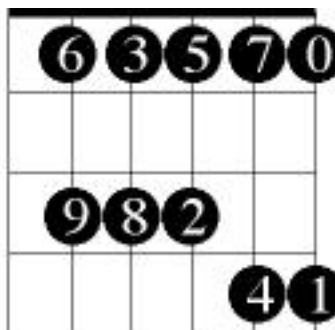
In this lesson on guitar riffs I would like to share a few ideas to help you come up with your own licks. Although there is no magic formula, I hope these tips will be useful for you. Have an open attitude and experiment. Above all, let your ear be your guide.

Some of these ideas may seem a little crazy at first but you never know what you might come up with. This is where the open attitude and a willingness to try things can come in handy.

Tip number 1...limit yourself. What do I mean by this. Try to create little melodies and guitar riffs by only playing the notes of the pentatonic scale on the first 2 strings, or the 2nd and 3rd strings. You get the idea. By limiting yourself in this way you will be surprised at what you can discover. Try it and see.

Tip number 2...this is a variation on tip number 1. Play with wide string skips. In other words, play on only the 1st and 3rd strings or 2nd and 4th strings. These big skips and wide intervals can really produce some interesting sounds.

Tip number 3...combine portions of licks you already know. I gave an example of combining guitar riffs in the Learn Guitar Online E-zine, issue 8. [Click here to check it out.](#)  
Tip number 4...Pick 10 notes from the pentatonic scale and number them 0-9. You will have something like the following. I picked the order of these notes at random. You can do as many of these as you like.



Now get out your phone book. You read that right, get out your phone book. Open it to any page and start getting phone numbers. Here are a couple out of mine.

475-1389, 228-7860, 258-3685, 863-0652

This should give you endless ways to create guitar riffs. Try combining 2 or 3 phone number to create longer licks. Some of these will be totally ridiculous but I guarantee you will find some cool note combinations to use in your own solos.

Tip number 5...this one is similar to the last one. Pick 6 notes at random out of the pentatonic scale. Number them 1-6. Now get some dice and roll them. Use the numbers that come up to create even more guitar riffs.

Tip number 6...this one has nothing to do initially with making up your own solos, but ultimately it will. Commit to learning a lick a day by one of your favorite guitarists. Keep adding to your vocabulary. The more you have to draw from, the better you will be able to play.

I hope you like these ideas. I know they seem a little crazy but if you give them a chance you will make some interesting discoveries.

# Lesson 8

## Still More Guitar Riffs

Welcome to lesson 8 and more guitar riffs. In this lesson you will learn a series of short little repeating licks that sound great when you get them up to speed. These are licks that I learned from some of my favorite guitarist and guitar solos. I will point them out as we go along.

Now take a look at example 1. I learned this lick years ago in a Larry Carlton solo. If you do not know about Larry I highly recommend that you check him out. Great guitarist and my personal favorite.

This lick starts with a bend at the 2nd string, 15th fret and is followed by a triplet figure. To get the rhythm of this lick count 1 2 and a 3 4 and a. Go slow at first and gradually increase your speed.

### Example 19

The image shows musical notation for Example 19. It consists of a treble clef staff with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a common time signature (C). The notation is divided into two measures. The first measure contains a bend on the 2nd string at the 15th fret, followed by a triplet figure. The second measure contains a bend on the 2nd string at the 15th fret, followed by a triplet figure. The fretboard diagram below the staff shows the following fret numbers: 15 (with an upward arrow labeled 'full'), 12, 15, 12, 15 (with an upward arrow labeled 'full'), 12, 15, 12. The fretboard diagram is labeled with 'T', 'A', and 'B' on the left side.

Example 2 is a variation of example of example 1. You can hear guitar riffs like this in the playing of Jimmy Page, Clapton and a host of others, all masters of the pentatonic scale. Notice that there is a pull off in the triplet figure. Using pull offs is a great way to increase your speed. Also try playing this example without the pull offs.

## Example 20

Musical notation for Example 20. The top staff is a treble clef with a common time signature (C). The melody consists of eighth notes with slurs and accents. The guitar tablature below shows fret numbers: 14, 12, 15, 12, 14, 12, 15, 12, 14, 12, 15, 12. There are four upward-pointing arrows labeled "full" above the 14th fret notes.

Example 3 is similar to a lick that is in the end of the solo from Freebird. That song is full of just about every pentatonic scale lick you can think of. It is guitar riffs to the max. Get a complete transcription to that one and you can really keep yourself busy for a while.

## Example 21

Musical notation for Example 21. The top staff is a treble clef with a common time signature (C). The melody consists of eighth notes with slurs. The guitar tablature below shows fret numbers: 14, 12, 14, 12, 14, 12, 14, 12. There are four "3" instructions below the first four pairs of notes, indicating triplets.

# Lesson 9

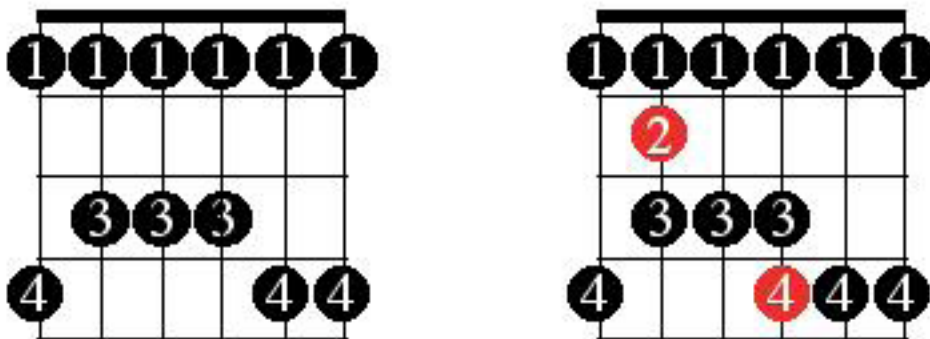
## The Blues Scale

Hi and welcome to lesson 9 on guitar scales. In this lesson I would like to talk how by adding one note to the pentatonic scale, referred to as a passing tone, you get an entirely new scale called the blues scale.

Of all the guitar scales, the pentatonic scale and the blues scale are probably the most often used. Even though I said the blues scale is an entirely new scale, it is easier to relate it to the pentatonic scale and just add the extra note.

I mentioned the term passing tone. What is a passing tone and how are passing tones used in guitar scales? Good question. A passing tone is simply a note that is added between two notes of a scale that are a whole step apart (2 frets on the guitar). By adding passing tones to a scale your playing will be a lot more interesting.

Take a look at the two guitar scales in example 1. The first one is the pentatonic scale and the second one is the blues scale. Notice the passing tone highlighted in red. Wait you might be saying, there are 2 notes highlighted in red. That is correct but it is the same note in different octaves, hence only one note.



Play the 2 different guitar scales now. Listen to the differences between the two. Most importantly, experience the bluesy flavor of the blues scale. I am sure that this is a sound that you recognize in many classic guitar solos. The one that immediately comes to mind for me is the opening lick that Jimmy Page played in the solo to Whole Lotta Love.

Your goal for this lesson is to memorize the blues scale and to make up some licks of your own. Look at some guitar tab of solos by Jimmy page, Clapton, Stevie Ray Vaughn and a host of others and find examples of how they used the blues scale.

# Lesson 10

## Guitar Scales

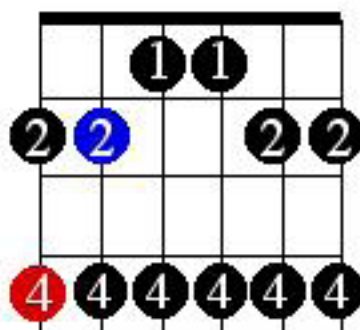
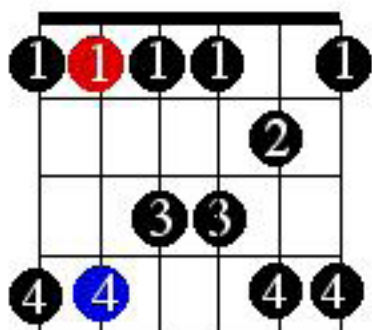
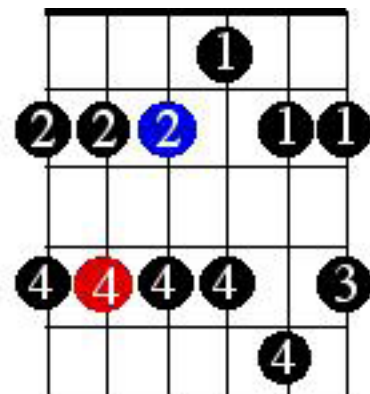
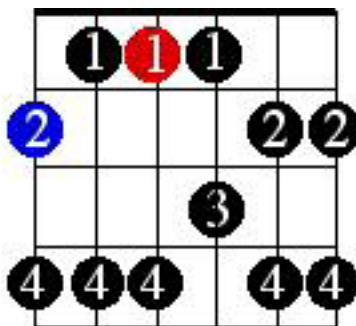
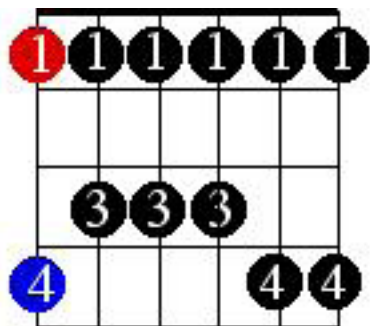
Welcome to lesson 10 on guitar scales. In this lesson you will learn the remaining fingerings for the pentatonic scale. When you know all 5 of these it makes it possible for you to play up and down the entire length of the fretboard, greatly expanding your range.

It also makes it possible to switch keys and keep your hand in one general area of the fretboard. This is a big advantage to have in your playing as you progress. As a matter of fact, this is one of the most important reasons to learn many different guitar scales, not just the pentatonic scale.

As you learn these fingerings here are a few essential points to keep in mind.

1. Memorize one position at a time. When learning guitar scales, or anything else for that matter it is easier to digest in small pieces. There is a joke that goes; How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time.
2. As always use a metronome. Practice with a slow steady tempo and gradually increase your speed.
3. Apply the patterns from previous lessons to these fingerings of the pentatonic scale. Practicing patterns is the best way that I know to really learn and absorb guitar scales.
4. Create your own licks out of these new fingerings and seek out the licks of your favorite players. Always try to expand your vocabulary. The internet is full of tab sites full of things to practice.
5. Find other musicians and friends to jam with. Put any new material that you learn to use right away, whether it is guitar chords, guitar scales, arpeggios, etc. The sooner and the more you apply your learning the quicker it becomes part of who you are.
6. This is the most important thing to know about the following diagrams. The pentatonic scale can be either major or minor depending on which note you consider to be the root. In the following scale diagrams, the red dots are the minor roots and the blue dots are the major roots.

# Pentatonic Scale Diagrams And Fingerings



# Lesson 11

## The Blues Scale

Hi and welcome to lesson 11 on guitar scales. In lesson 9 we discussed the addition of a passing tone known as the b5 to the pentatonic scale to create the blues scale. This lesson picks up where the last lesson left off and has all of the fingerings for the blues scale.

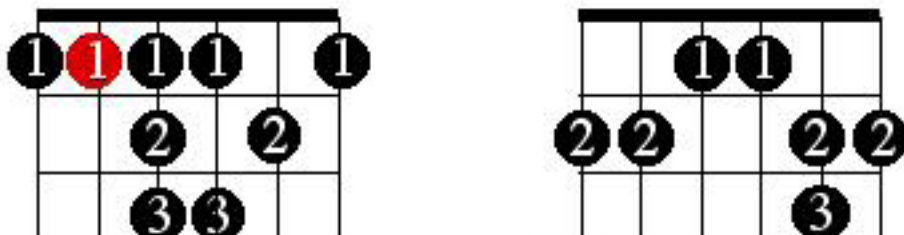
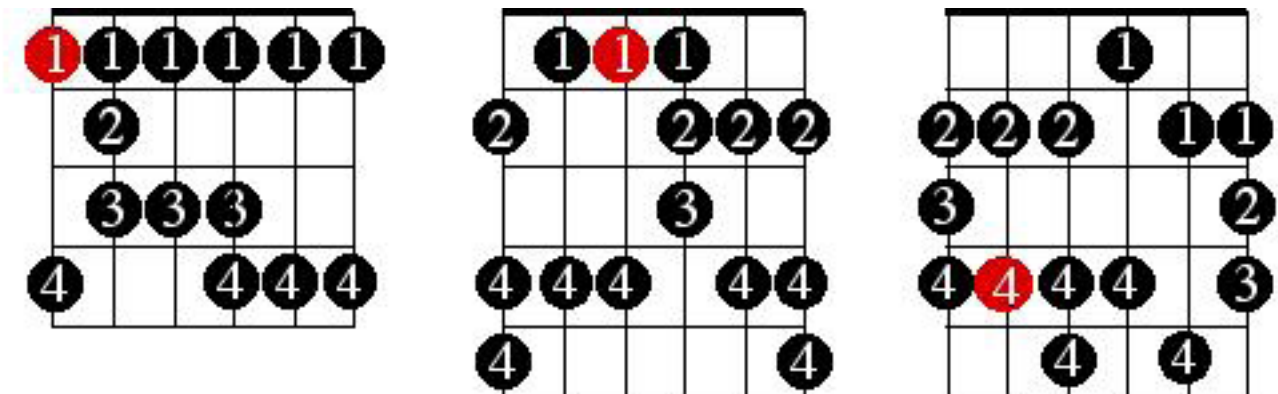
I would like to say that none of these fingerings are set in stone. Anytime you are working with guitar scales you have to be flexible. The music will dictate any necessary changes in fingering you might encounter.

These fingerings were given in the hope that you will develop your 4th finger. I see many self taught players that ignore using their little finger but when you take the time to develop it, you will see that it is well worth the time and trouble.

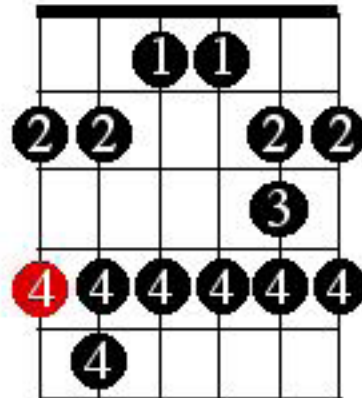
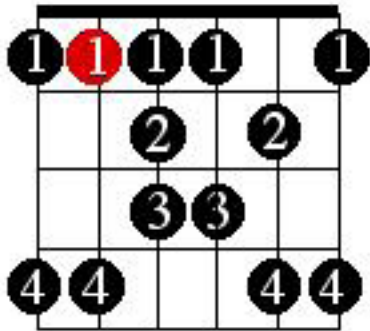
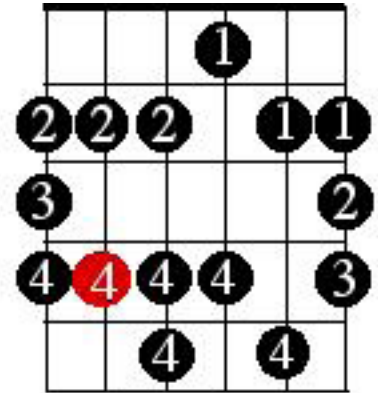
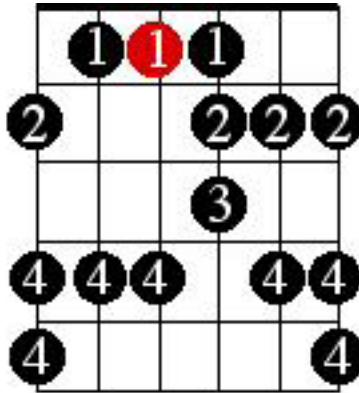
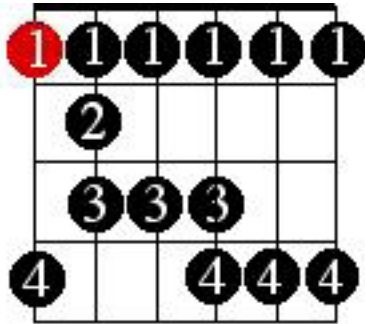
With that said, as you work through the following guitar scales, feel free to change and experiment with the fingerings.

Also one last point on the blues scale. It is typically thought of as a minor scale. In the diagrams of the guitar scales that follow the root note is designated by the red dot. Follow all of the usual guidelines set down in the earlier lessons to gain maximum benefit

### Blues Scale Diagrams With Fingerings



# Blues Scale Diagrams With Fingerings

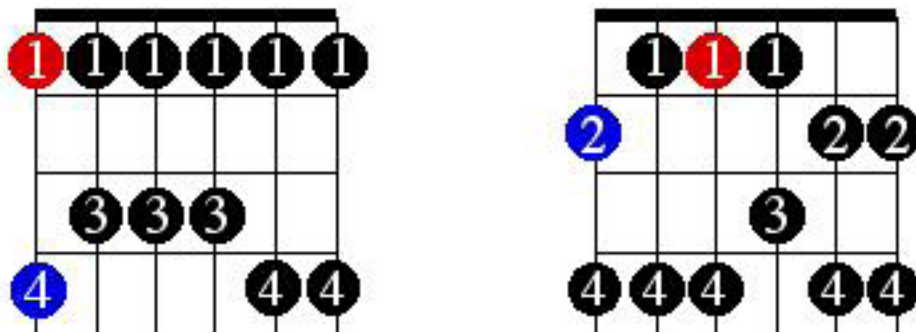


# Lesson 12

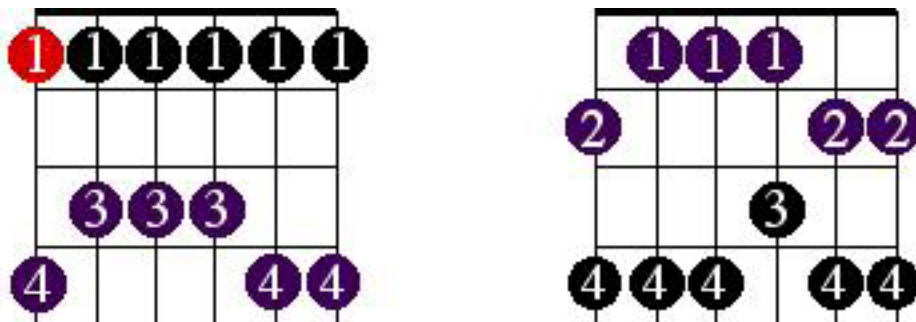
## How To Connect Pentatonic Scale Patterns To Play The Entire Fretboard

Welcome to lesson 12 on guitar scales. If you recall, in lesson 10 you learned the 5 most commonly used fingerings of the pentatonic scale. In this lesson you will learn how they hook together to cover the entire length of the fretboard.

We will start by reviewing the first two fingerings of the pentatonic scale. As stated in lesson 10, each pentatonic scale can be thought of as 2 different guitar scales, either major or minor depending on which note we consider as the root. The minor roots are shown in red and the major roots are shown in blue.



Now here are the same two guitar scales.

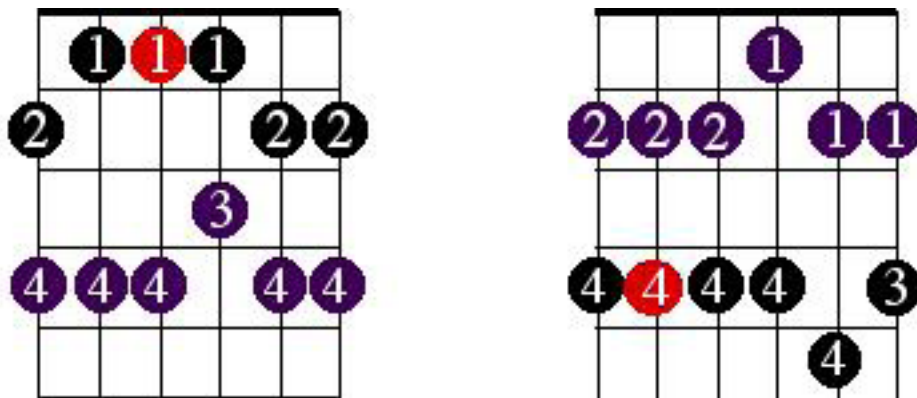


Notice the notes of each scale that are highlighted in purple. This is where these two fingerings of the pentatonic scale overlap. They fit together like pieces of a puzzle. Where the first one ends, the second one begins.

For example, if you are playing in A minor, the first two notes of fingering one will be at the 5th fret and 8th fret on the 6th string. The second fingerings first note would be located at the 8th fret, 6th string at the point where the two guitar scales overlap.

By connecting the scales in this manner you will be able to shift positions and move higher or lower on the neck, depending on which way you are going of course.

This example shows the overlap of the second and third fingerings of the pentatonic scale.



Now go back to lesson 10 and figure out the overlap point of the remaining guitar scales. When you know all of the fingerings well and how they connect, you will have the ability to play up and down the entire length of the fretboard.

# Lesson 13

## Adding Passing Tones To The Pentatonic Scale

Welcome to lesson 13 on guitar scales. In lesson 9 you learned how to change the pentatonic scale into the blues scale by adding a passing tone (the b5). In this lesson you will learn a few blues licks that incorporate this new note.

The pentatonic/blues scale is probably the most often used of all the guitar scales available to guitarists. Learning as many different ways to use these scales is definitely to your benefit. Just imagine what your friends will say when you rip off a solo using your new found knowledge.

Take a look at example one. As you play this example really listen to the sound of the blue note (15th fret, 3rd string). Hear how it adds extra color and spice to the pentatonic scale. Adding passing tones to guitar scales is a great and simple way to make your playing more interesting.

### Example 22

The musical notation for Example 22 is presented in three systems. The first system shows the treble clef and the notes of the scale: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (half). The second system shows the fret numbers for the strings: T (15, 12), A (15, 12, 15, 12), and B (15, 14). The third system shows the fret numbers for the strings: T (12, 14), A (15, 14, 12, 14, 12, 12), and B (14, 14, 12, 14).

Example two utilizes triplets and ends with a bend. These type of blues licks work great in shuffles.

### Example 23

Musical notation for Example 23, showing a guitar lick. The notation is presented in three staves: a treble clef staff, and two bass clef staves labeled T, A, and B. The treble staff shows a sequence of notes with three triplet markings (3) over groups of three notes. The lick concludes with a bend on the final note, indicated by an upward arrow and the word "full". The bass staves show the corresponding fret numbers for each note.

Example three in this lesson on guitar scales dips down into the lower notes. I recommend you really take time to work in the lower registers. I find this to be an often overlooked aspect of guitar playing.

### Example 24

Musical notation for Example 24, showing a guitar scale. The notation is presented in three staves: a treble clef staff, and two bass clef staves labeled T, A, and B. The treble staff shows a sequence of notes, including a bend on the final note, indicated by a flat symbol and a downward arrow. The bass staves show the corresponding fret numbers for each note.

# Lesson 14

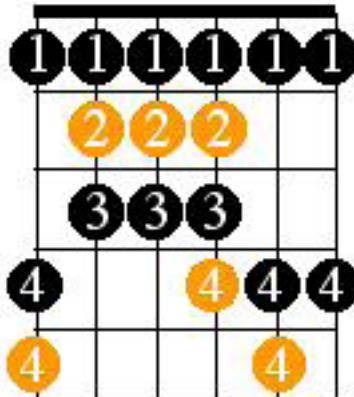
## The Use Of Passing Tones

Hi and welcome to lesson 14 on guitar scales. In this lesson we will add more passing tones to the pentatonic scale to create jazzier licks that you might hear in the playing of George Benson and other great jazz guitarists.

In lesson 9 we added the flatted fifth to the pentatonic scale and came up with the blues scale. In that lesson we defined a passing tone as a note that connects two scale tones that are a whole step apart. There are several other spots in the pentatonic scale that passing tones can be added.

Take a look at example one below. This shows the pentatonic scale and the location of the passing tones. The passing tones are shown in orange.

### Example 25



When you are comfortable with this idea, go back to lesson 10 on guitar scales and add passing tones into all of the fingerings of the pentatonic scale.

In example 2 I have put together a few licks that utilize these passing tones. Once again the passing tones are highlighted in orange.

### Example 26

The first lick is written in treble clef with a common time signature. The notes are G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The notes G#4 and A#4 are highlighted in orange. The ABC tablature below shows the fret numbers for each string: T (Treble), A (4th), B (5th). The sequence of fret numbers is 7 5 6 7 8 5 8 5 9 8 5 8 7 5 7 5 7.

The second lick is written in treble clef with a common time signature. The notes are B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3. The notes Bb4 and C4 are highlighted in orange. The ABC tablature below shows the fret numbers: T (Treble), A (4th), B (5th). The sequence of fret numbers is 5 8 7 5 7 6 5 7 7 5 7 6 5 5 7 8 5.

The third lick is written in treble clef with a common time signature. The notes are G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4, B3, A3, G3, F3, E3, D3, C3. The notes Bb4 and C4 are highlighted in orange. The ABC tablature below shows the fret numbers: T (Treble), A (4th), B (5th). The sequence of fret numbers is 5 8 5 9 8 5 8 7 6 5 7 5 7 5 8 5.

Hear how the passing tones add extra spice to the sound. This simple device is a great way to spice up your playing and works with all guitar scales.

# Lesson 15

## Putting It All Together

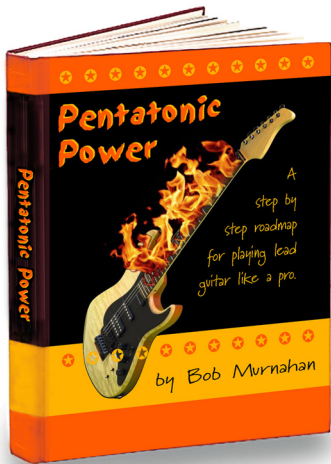
Welcome to lesson 15 on guitar scales. Congratulations on your drive and determination to get this far. In this final lesson on the pentatonic scale I would like to share some final thoughts on where to go from here.

As you continue to learn and practice guitar scales keep in mind the following. Be patient and practice at a comfortable tempo. Learn as many licks as you can by your favorite guitarist. Experiment constantly and make up your own licks. If it sounds good to you , then it is.

Take the licks from these lessons and break them up into different rhythms. Rhythmic variety is a great way to create new ideas from material that you know.

Get together with friends and other musicians. Jam and share ideas. Playing with others is one of the best ways to improve. Seek out players that are better than you and steal what you can from them. Bug them to show you as much as you can learn from them.

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## About the author

Hi, my name is Bob Murnahan. I got my first guitar as a Christmas present at the age of 8. It's been 40 years since I got that first guitar. I still play every day, I perform on a regular basis and I teach guitar lessons to 40 students a week. I've been fortunate enough to make a living doing something I truly love. Playing the guitar.

I attended The Ohio State University where I majored in jazz studies and also received two great years of classical guitar instruction. As a member of the OSU Jazz Ensemble I had an opportunity to tour Europe which included gigs at The North Sea and Montreaux Jazz festivals.

A few other career highlights include:

- Playing in the orchestra during productions of Grease and Jesus Christ Superstar.
- A stint in Las Vegas at the Four Queens Hotel.
- Being signed to the Sisapa Record Label as a member of the jazz fusion group Rager. We recorded 2 cd's, toured across the country and received national airplay.
- Conducted music store clinics as a representative of Peavey Guitars.

Some of my favorite guitarists and influences include Larry Carlton, Robben Ford, Pat Metheny, Pat Martino, Chet Atkins, Albert Lee and Eddie Van Halen. This is definitely the short list. There are many others. I am a big fan of good guitar, regardless of the style.

Thanks for checking out this report. If you have any feedback or questions please contact me at [bob@leadguitartactics.com](mailto:bob@leadguitartactics.com). No matter is too small.

To your guitar playing success,

Bob Murnahan

