

Guitargate 2.7 - Music Theory 202 - Pentatonic Scales

The first scales we will be learning to play are five note scales, known as pentatonic scales. The reason we start with five note scales and not the full seven note major scale is because not only are they easier to learn and play, but they are extremely prevalent in popular music. Pentatonic scales can be both major and minor in tonality.

The major pentatonic scale contains the following intervals:

1 2 3 5 6

The minor pentatonic scale contains the following intervals:

1 b3 4 5 b7

Pentatonic scales are incredibly popular because of their lack of half steps. This gives the scales a vocal quality that makes them super easy for making melodies. There are no shortage of great players who played the pentatonic scales exclusively. These should sound extremely familiar to you.

I have attached patterns 1 and 2 of the major and minor pentatonic scale. Spend some time with these and get used to matching them with chords.

For example:

Pick a chord, say A Minor pattern 2.

Play the octave shape, then the chord shape, and then the scale shape.

Always practice by starting and ending on the root.

Again, practice these in a couple of different keys and work on both major and minor sounds.

This leads us to the next very important concept about plays scales:



Context Is King...

Scales only perform a specific function when played over chords. Without the context of chords the roots are not the roots so to speak. Notes alone have no real function.

This is beyond important. While practicing these scales, do it over one of these backing tracks, with a looper, or with a friend. You need to start getting into the habit of viewing scales as contextual.

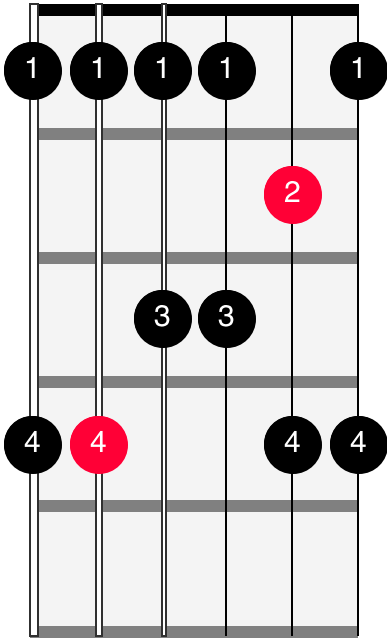
We will go into this in depth in future lessons, but for now, just play the scale associated with the Jam Tracks below:

Jam Tracks:

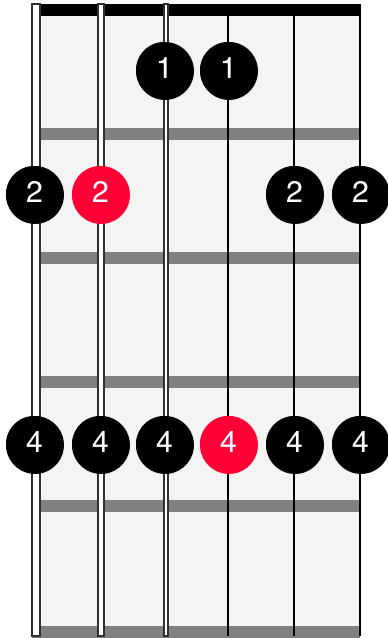
1. C major vamp
2. A minor vamp
3. G major vamp
4. E minor vamp

Major Pentatonics

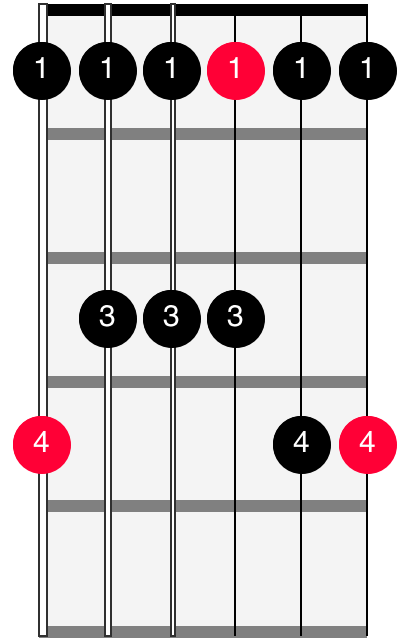
Pattern 1 major



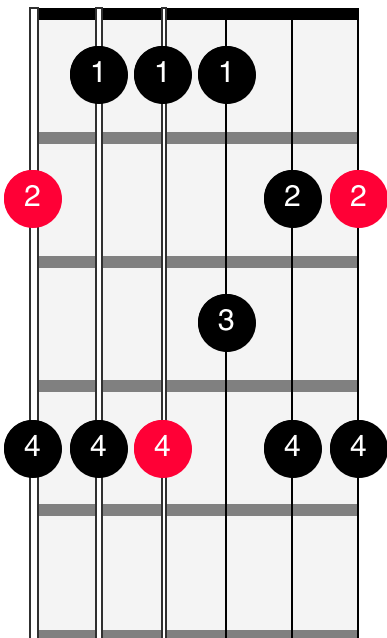
Pattern 2 major



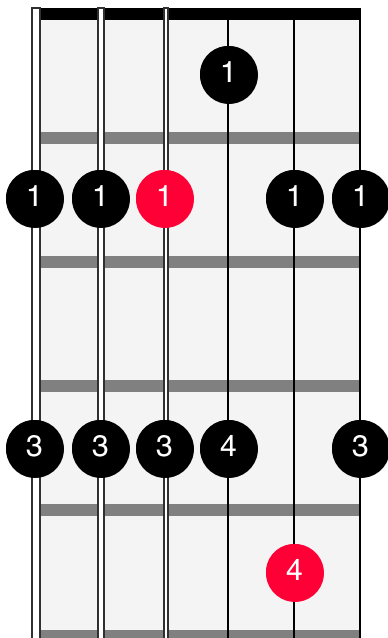
Pattern 3 major



Pattern 4 major

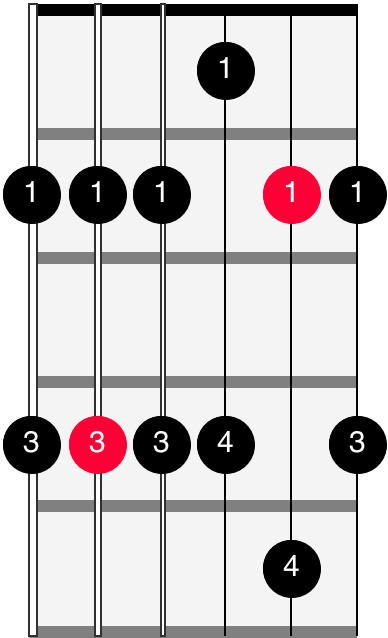


Pattern 5 major

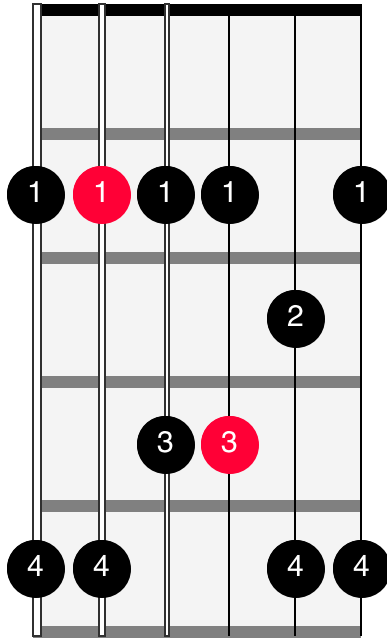


Minor pentatonics

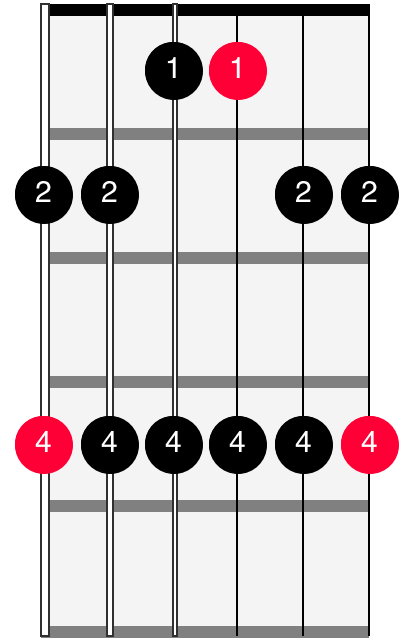
Pattern 1 minor



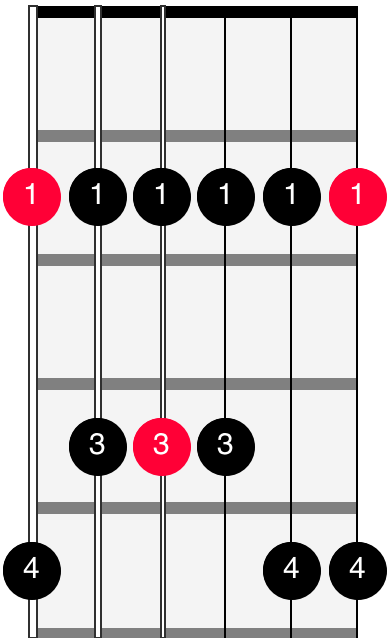
Pattern 2 minor



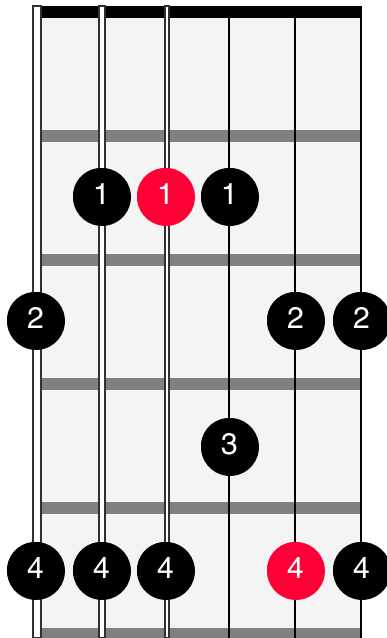
Pattern 3 minor



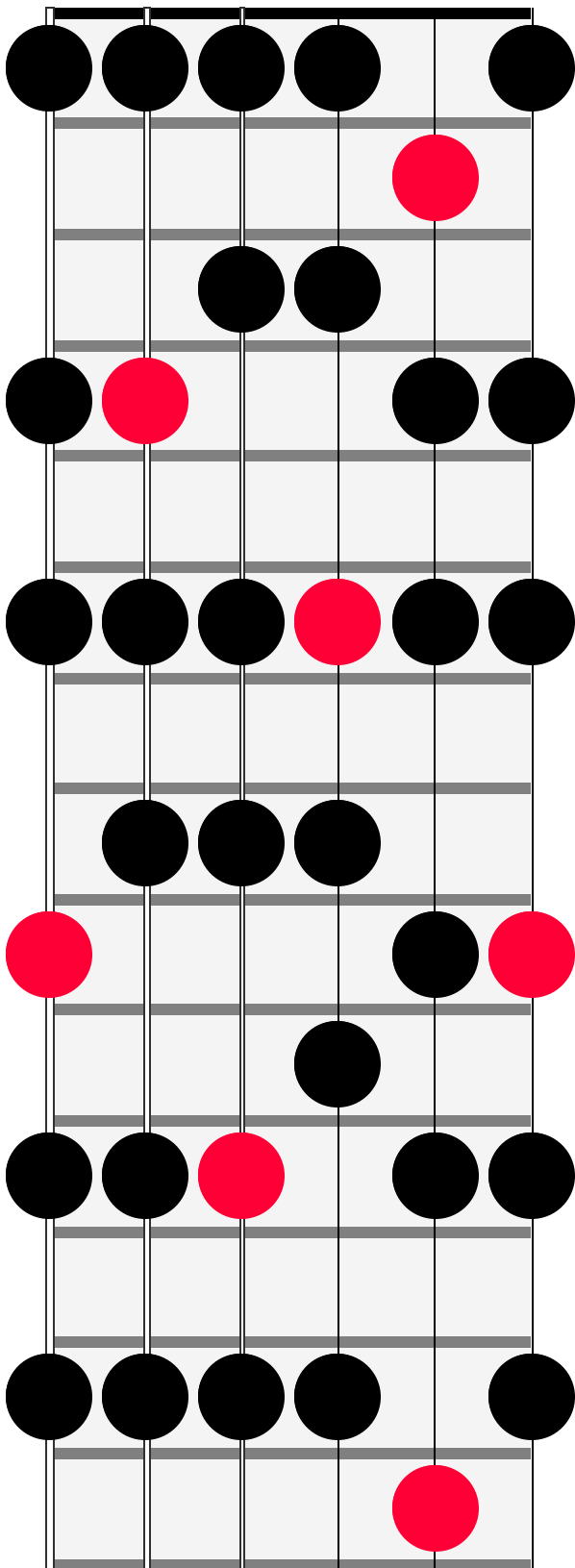
Pattern 4 minor



Pattern 5 minor



Major Pentatonics
combined



Minor Pentatonics
combined

