

# Go To Licks

We asked a few of our staff members to provide us with a prized possession... their go-to lick.



# Allen Van Wert

25 Years of Playing. The "Robot". Author, Composer.

PLAY AUDIO TRACK



Around twenty years ago I came up with a weird way to tap higher notes on guitar where I would quickly repeat the same two notes by using two or more fingers on the picking hand while playing legato with the fretting hand in between those notes. I was told it sounds like a nintendo and used to have a lot of fun with it making noise. I then began to use it with actual melodic purpose and used it on my first instrumental album. People started calling it "Robot Tapping" after my nickname. I use it often without much thought and it clearly defines MY sound and character musically. People would remember it and know it is something unique and expect at least a little of it from me. I throw it in all over the place in couple of ways because it adds a cool texture to the sound that takes it out of guitar land and into keyboard land. It is more of a foundation technique I use to play structured or improvised ideas so I included me playing a couple of different ideas using it and tabbed out the first lick.

E-Gt

*mf*

T T T T T T T T T T

12-5-8-12 13 12 13-5-8 12-5-8-12 13 12 13-5 12-5-7-12 14 12 14-5-7 12-5-7-12 14 12 14-5-7

T  
A  
B

T T T T T

T  
A  
B

10-3-5-10 12 10 12-3-5 10-3-5-10 12 10 12-3-5

I used my ring and middle finger on the picking hand to tap everything on this recording.

The technique allows you to execute a lot of notes in a very short timeframe which seems cool at first but I find that it sounds best when you keep it to a medium speed where the texture of the sound can still be heard. Once you go too fast it all sounds like a blur to the listener and I think the magic gets lost.

# Brendan Burns

25 Years of Playing. Jazz Performer, Educator, Department Chair.

PLAY AUDIO TRACK



## "Emphasis on the 9"

This is something I use a lot for soloing and comping. The simplest way to think about it is to lean in on the note that is one whole step above the root: the "9" (or sometimes called the "2"). For example, on a G major chord, the 9 would be "A."

This will work well with most major & minor chords, and it's got very unique feel to it when it lands on a strong beat. It's great way to keep things moving in a solo. In this example, I'm using the "9" on every chord. In real life, I think I would use this technique with a bit more discretion, but this way you can hear what it sounds like to have it EVERYWHERE.

Dist Gtr

1 *mf* *Em* *G*

2

3 *Am* *Em* *Bm*

4

5 *Am* *G* *F* *C*

6

7 *D* *Em*

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

# Dave Isaacs

30 Years of Playing. Nashville Session Player, Educator.

PLAY AUDIO TRACK



This lick is a cool example of how we can mix major and minor sounds to create a nice jazzy effect. You might hear something like this from a straight-up jazzier like Wes Montgomery, or in the playing of jazz and swing-influenced blues and rock players like Robben Ford, Jerry Garcia, or Warren Haynes.

The lick works beautifully over G7, and starts off with a quick minor-major 3rd hammer-on on the 3rd string. We use the 5th fret E note on the 2nd string to climb the major pentatonic, but then come right back down from the high G with a little taste of G mixolydian by including the 6th fret F natural.

Notice the quarter-step bend in measure 2 up from the 6th fret A#/Bb, which brings us back into a bluesy minor tonality for a moment before returning to a major pentatonic figure. The answering phrase begins the same way as the first, but end with a series of double-stops that once again borrow from the G mixolydian mode (essentially a G major scale with a lowered 7th, F natural instead of F#). Use middle and ring fingers to slide into the 6th/7th fret double-stop, followed by a partial barre across the 5th fret to grab the next one before shifting back to the 3rd fret and adding the same minor-major hammer-on we started off with.



# David Wallimann

25 Years of Playing. Rock and Jazz Composer, Session Player.

PLAY AUDIO TRACK



This lick is based on the first position of an A minor pentatonic scale. It's built by taking the traditional pentatonic box, and adding a chromatic passage between each notes separated by a full step. In order to play this properly, make sure you are using your index, middle and ring finger throughout the idea. The middle finger is in charge of bending the chromatic note to make it sound like the next note of the scale which in this case is always found a half step above. I love how this idea can make a common pentatonic scale sound a lot more colorful.

S-Gt

*mf*

T  
A  
B

5 6 7 6 5 6 7 6 7 8 9 8 8 9 10 9 8 9 10 9 3 0 4 (3) (0) (4)



# Dustin Prinz

20 Years of Playing. Singer/Songwriter, Performer.

PLAY AUDIO TRACK



My Go-To Riff is a percussive guitar solo that I always play around with whenever I pick up the guitar before hitting the stage. This is a quick way for me to hone in and warm up my signature "Parapicking" technique and approach to the guitar. This solo is in 4/4 time and the percussive hits that you hear in the recording are employed by hitting your right picking hand thumb on the lower strings while hitting your right hand pinky on the body of the guitar - to the left of the bridge by the pick-guard. It helps to keep a driving force.

The percussion lands on the 2 and the 4 of the 4 beats per measure. All percussion also lands on the downpick of its partner note. The intro to the lead line is a series of ascending hammer-ons that also help warm my fretting hand up followed by a series of pull-offs towards the end of the solo! This solo and technique is my playing style pretty much wrapped up in a nutshell and I hope you enjoy it!!

Take a stab at it and remember to have fun!!  
Best to you!

Acoustic

1 (G)

mf

P.M.



# Hawkeye Herman

50 Years of Playing. Famed Educator. Iowa Blues Hall of Fame.

PLAY AUDIO TRACK



Some of my favorite "Go-To" lick(s) for lead and accompaniment playing are taken from what is known as the 'blues turnaround.' At the end of each verse of many blues songs is usually a two-measure lick that takes the song back to the top/measure one, and can also be used as an end tag/at the end of a song. This is considered by many as a 'signature aspect' of blues music, but does not have to be relegated to only being used at the end of a verse or the end of the song.

Acoustic

*mf*  
*let ring throughout*

T  
A  
B

Turnaround figures can also be used for lead guitar fills, as well as a basis/aspect of blues guitar solo/lead playing. Please listen to the brief audio examples I've provided, and be sure to play through all of the variations of the turnaround that I've supplied in tablature/notation. Please keep in mind that the turnaround/licks can be played both ascending and descending, from low to high, and high to low, and can be played in partials/small bits, not necessarily the entire turnaround. I encourage you to experiment with arpeggiating the notes in any order, as you wish, as well as to experiment with timing of the notes: playing notes as triplets, quarter notes, eighth notes, or whole notes, mixing it up/making variations, as you wish, to create interesting turnaround combinations, guitar fills, leads, and end tags in many genres of music, not just blues. The turnaround lick(s) are like a Rubick's Cube of guitar, a seemingly infinite combination of notes/ideas can be created through experimenting with ascending/descending the turnaround notes, the order of notes being arpeggiated, and duration of notes (whole, eighth, triplet, quarter notes). Learn, explore, and enjoy.

# Ian Argys

25 Years of Playing. Jazz Performance, Educator.

PLAY AUDIO TRACK



This is a cool phrase I borrowed from Wayne Krantz's track Lynxpaw on his 2 Drink Minimum album from 1995. Great album! It's amazing how when I transcribe something, it sticks with me forever. It becomes like a little catch phrase or slang term that you heard and decided to borrow and integrate into your own vocabulary, you dig?

This phrase starts with an Octave shape on the 3rd and 1st strings and begins in what I consider Pattern 5 of the Pentatonic Scale. There is some chromaticism and then we shift down to Pattern 4 for a little bluesy bend and ultimately down to Pattern 3 where we end the phrase first on the tonic, E (Fret 7 String 5) and finally on the interval of a Minor 2nd (something I hear in Thelonious Monk, Jim Hall, Bill Evans, Bill Frisell and many other great players) to imply the 9th and Minor 3rd of an E Minor 9 Chord. If none of that makes sense, don't sweat it, you can still learn this lick! And, if you'd like to know more about Pentatonic Patterns check out my UnCaged Course here on JamPlay.Com. Good luck, and happy picking!



# John Auker

20 Years of Playing. Performer, Educator, Worship Leader.

PLAY AUDIO TRACK



There comes a time in a developing guitarist's life when we desire to play longer phrases. By using a sequence (the repetition of a melodic pattern that starts on a new note with each repeat), we create longer, fluid, time-filling lines that add a sense of direction and momentum to solos. The lick in this article is solid transitional material that may set up faster, higher energy ideas, or even kick a solo into the next gear.

Dist Gtr

A5

1

*mf*

T  
A  
B

7-7-5 5-5 7-7-5 5-5 7-5 8-8-5 5-5 8-5 8-5 5-8 5 8

full

Here is how this lick works.

It's a four note sequence: two repeated notes, then 2 consecutive notes down the A Minor Pentatonic scale. We play the pattern on the root of the scale (A, A, G, E). Then we start the pattern one note higher than before. Each time we repeat the sequence, we start it one scale step higher than where we played it last. Note that the sequence pattern itself is a descending line, but since the starting note is higher each time, we ultimately end up an octave higher than where we started, giving the line a "sawtooth" shape. In general terms, this lick is a few notes down, a leap up, a few notes down, another leap up, and so on. We're traveling up an octave, just in a round-about way that extends our line to hit the target note exactly on beat one.

I like twists, so on beat four of measure two I decided to circle the opposite way, leaping down first, then walking back up the scale. This sets up the last bend to A on measure three, beat one.

This lick is a fine introduction to the concept of sequences, but I encourage you to come up with your own sequence patterns in order to further develop your own playing style. Feel free to vary note lengths, rhythms, number of notes, direction of the smaller sequence pattern, and direction of the overall line from start to finish. Enjoy!



# Marcelo Berestovoy

35 Years of Playing. Flamenco Artist, Grammy Nominee.

PLAY AUDIO TRACK



What do Flamenco, Heavy metal and Gypsy Jazz have in common? The use of the Phrygian Dominant scale! Also known as the Phrygian Major or the "Spanish scale" is the 5th mode of Harmonic minor. At first it feels weird to the fretting hand because it contains an unusual interval (aug 2) that forces you to move your fingers in an unusual way but let me tell you: once you get use to finding this sound chances are you'll be hooked on it no matter what style of music you play!

This lick is based on the first Tetrachord of the scale:

Acoustic

Free time

E

1

*mf*

let ring -----

TAB

0 1 4 0 2 0 4 1 0

2 3 1 2 0 2 1 3 2

5

E

F

TAB

5 6 4 5 7 5 4 6 5

0 1 4 0 2 0 4 1 0

9

E

F

E

F

TAB

2 3 1 2 0 2 1 3 2

5 6 4 5 7 5 4 6 5

# Nick Kellie

25 Years of Playing. Jazz Artist, BBC Big Band Jazz Winner.

PLAY AUDIO TRACK



This lick uses the A mixolydian mode (mode 5 of the D Major Scale) and it fits over an A7 chord so would be perfect in an A Blues. The Idea with this lick was to create a fingering that lended itself better to the use of Sweep Picking. I wanted to show how sweep picking is more than just sweeping 5 or 6 sting arpeggios and that it can be very useful for creating a really smooth flow of notes. There is a use of Chromaticism as well as a healthy dose of arpeggios (diatonic to A mixolydian). BE sure to adhere to the picking indications and fingering numbers as they are integral to the flow of the lick. Be sure to come up with your own ideas!

PLAYED OVER A7

E-Gt

mf

TAB

5 6 7 4 5 7 5 6 7 7 6 5 4 7 5 6

The musical score for 'The Wind' by Gustav Mahler, showing the vocal line and the TAB (Tuning, Action, Bow) line. The vocal line is in G major, 4/4 time, and the TAB line is in G major, 4/4 time. The score includes a key signature change from one sharp to two sharps and a tempo change from 'Allegretto' to 'Allegretto molto'.

# Michael "Nomad" Ripoll

30 Years of Playing. Performer. Celine Dion, Babyface.

PLAY AUDIO TRACK



One of my favorite licks is based around A Minor Pentatonic infused with A Dorian. Perhaps my all time favorite mode, Dorian allows you to play and Bluesy-Pentatonic based notes you choose along with two other cool sounding ones, the 2nd or 9th scale degree, and the 6th or 13th scale degree. In this case those notes would be B and F#. !

Growing up with Van Halen as my foundation, then evolving into many other genres and players such as Prince, Al Dimeola, George Benson, George Harrison, Pat Metheny, etc, I am to say the least, a versatile player. As I embarked upon my career as a Session Guitarist, I was pleased with the idea of having to learn many different styles of guitar playing. Moving from Rock into the RnB and Funk scene, I realized that these cats were playing a lot of the same riffs and utilizing the same tools! That's why this funky, bluesy, rocky gumbo of a riff is perhaps one of my all time favorites! Notice how it incorporates all of the aforementioned ingredients while emphasizing the B and F# with their illustrious sounds! Also notice the tone I'm using is a combination of clean with some breakup from the amp. I also love to use my fingers when playing both acoustic and electric so this lick definitely sounds unique because of that as well.



# Paul Musso

35 Years of Playing. Director of Guitar, University of Denver.

PLAY AUDIO TRACK



This simple lick is something that I stumbled upon while attempting to find ideas over dominant seventh flat nine chords. Don't let the notation fool you. As you can see, the top four strings contain a symmetrical shape, alternating from frets 5-8 on the E string to frets 4-7 on the B string. The lick is very useful because it can be played over dominant seventh chords as well as diminished chords. In this case the lick can be played over both D7(b9) and Cdim7. The audio examples reflect both.

Electric

C°7(D7(b9))

*mf*

T  
A  
B

Faster

T  
A  
B

Diminished chords repeat every minor third so this lick also fits over Ebdim7, Gbdim7 and Adim7. What's mind blowing is that this very lick also fits over F7(b9), Ab7(b9) and B7(b9). Eight chords for one lick - Mind blow!

# Phil Demmel

30 Years of Playing. Lead Guitarist, Machinehead.

PLAY AUDIO TRACK



This is a “Sounds harder than it actually is” lick that I’ll use as a place-holder (temporary) solo while we’re still structuring songs early in the writing process. The picking is syncopated and is the key to getting the lick down. The last pull-off is a bit of a stretch but sounds killer when you nail it.

Electric

1

*mf*

TAB

13 12 15 12 14 12 15 12 15 12 15 12 17 12 17 12

4

19 12 19 12 17 12 19 12 19 12 17 12 19 12 19 12 12 15 19 12 12 15 12 12 15 (15) (15)

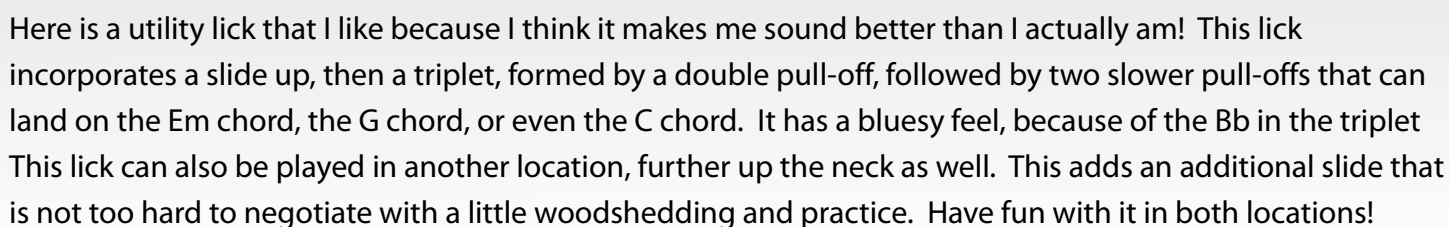
full

full



50 Years of Playing. Folk Author, Performer. Over 15 Albums.

PLAY AUDIO TRACK



Discover JamPlay on the web.

## 5,000 Lessons

**80 Instructors**

## Live Courses

## Progress Reports

**Join Now**

# Tyler Grant

30 Years of Playing. Artist. National Flatpicking Champion.

PLAY AUDIO TRACK



My "Go-To" lick is a pretty standard country-blues figure that targets the 3rd and the 7th of the G chord. Then it repeats itself over an implied C chord. Note that it is the exact same lick on a G, then C chord, then it's the exact same two figures one octave higher. This is meant to demonstrate how you can take a simple figure and stretch it out into a longer phrase.

S-Gt

G

T  
A  
B

0—1 2—0—2—0—3—2—0—1—2—0—2—0—3—2—0—3

T  
A  
B

4—3—5—3—6—5—3—4—5—3—5—3—6—5—3

This lick was born of an approach to navigate the chord change of G to C, then repeating again, two beats each, so the short figure fits in the exact timeframe of each chord, with a short pickup of two sixteenth notes (these changes are noted in parentheses on the score). I like to use pickup notes to licks to anticipate a chord change. However in this context we are using this extended figure to "vamp" on a G chord. Sometimes you find longer phrases by playing over changes just to discover that they also work when there is no chord change. So have fun with this and practice it over a 1 and 4 chord in G, then practice it just over a G Chord, then practice it in other keys and realize how such a simple idea can be incorporated into your vocabulary and used in varying contexts. You can fit this lick in to anything from Blues, Bluegrass and Country all the way to Jazz, Classic Rock and Funk.

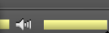
# Will Ripley

20 Years of Playing. Rock Guitarist, Performer, and Educator.

PLAY AUDIO TRACK



PLAY LICK SAMPLE



This lick has it all! It might seem like a crazy bunch of notes on tab, but actually, it's just the same lick played in 3 different octaves. So once you get one phrase, the other 2 lines will come very quickly.

Often times I hear from my beginner soloing students: "I feel like I'm in a rut, playing the same things very badly". This lick should shake you up a bit and get the wheels turning in just the right direction.

Often, a beginner soloing guitarist needs to get busted out of the "pentatonic rut". Not only does this lick introduce some fresh sounds, but it will also have you expanding your fretboard knowledge as to how you can play the same lick in 3 different places on the guitar (which is SO helpful!).

Based in E minor pentatonic, and is very bluesy, we have 2 key notes that really introduce some flair and magic. These notes are the MAJOR 3rd (G#) and the b5 (Bb). Theory wise, combining your minor 3rd and the major 3rd is one of the weirdest things about Blues - but it just works and sounds great.

This is really the big picture idea here - we're keeping things "classic" sounding with the base of this lick being minor pentatonic. Next, you'll be adding "colours" to the minor pentatonic scale and simultaneously, you'll be expanding your knowledge of the fretboard instead of being locked into only 1 position.

Try putting this lick to work over an Emi backing track - that will help solidify the finger placement and groove. This lick is HOT! It also has a great funk groove to it when you work the rhythm and just sounds smokin'. Enjoy!

The image displays three systems of musical notation for a guitar lick, each with a treble clef staff and a corresponding guitar tablature staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#), indicating E minor pentatonic. The first system is labeled 'Dist Gtr' and 'mf'. The second system is marked with a tempo change to '♩ = 90 Slower'. The third system continues the lick. The tablature shows various fret numbers and techniques like bends and trills.



JamPlay.com is a community where guitar players come together to learn how to get better at our beloved instrument. With hundreds of in-depth video courses all online, you can pop on and progress your playing when it's convenient for you. And because we bring in the best guitar teachers on the planet, you'll always know that you're learning the right stuff. Courses are regularly updated, with new lessons added daily. That's right, we are the most active publisher of structured video guitar lessons on the planet.

Over 5,000 Lessons in HD

Over 80 Pro Instructors

All genres and styles

Live Lessons Daily

JamTracks, Tools and More

# Holiday Sale

Our Holiday Sale is right around the corner, and the gifts will keep on coming! We are scrambling to put together our beloved 10 Year Anniversary video and information for you to enjoy... coming on Tuesday! Stay tuned for more.

Tuesday, December 13<sup>th</sup>

**10 Year JamPlay Anniversary Celebration**

Friday, December 16<sup>th</sup>

**JamPlay Holiday Sale Released**

Tuesday, December 20<sup>th</sup>

**2016 Guitar Buyers Guide Released**

Monday, December 26<sup>th</sup>

**2016 Live Guitar Giveaway Event**

Visit [JamPlay to learn more](#), and we will see you soon!

