

MAJOR PENTATONIC

So far we have worked with the minor pentatonic scale. Now let's have a look at the major pentatonic scale. This scale has a sweeter sound than the minor pentatonic scale. The major pentatonic scale is mostly associated with country music - though it is used by all guitarists. It can still be a tough sounding scale as shown by its constant use by Angus Young from AC/DC.

The major pentatonic scale and the minor pentatonic scale are highly related. In fact any minor pentatonic scale for one chord is also the major pentatonic scale for another chord. That's right! Exactly the same notes can be used for two different chords and two different sounds

For example what we were playing for A minor pentatonic scale is also the C major pentatonic scale. Because of this theoretical reason you can use the same practical work for minor and major soloing i.e. scale 1 and its boxes for the E shape bar chord, and scale 4 and its boxes for the A shape bar chord.

To find the major pentatonic scales and boxes for the same chord you move them 3 frets lower than where they were for minor.

So we can have minor and major pentatonic sounds for the same chord e.g. A minor pentatonic and A major pentatonic. Use the scales and boxes as

normal for minor, but move them 3 frets lower for major pentatonic.

To highlight the sound of the minor pentatonic scale we aimed at the tonic note of the scale or box. To get the sound of the major pentatonic scale you must aim at its tonic note. The major tonic note is the next highest note in the scale after the minor tonic note.

Because the scales are the same patterns you can use the same licks, ONLY for the major pentatonic scale you should emphasize the correct tonic.

When playing lead you can play entirely in either the major pentatonic or minor pentatonic scale, or you can mix them up. Generally you will use minor for dirty sounding blues and rock, and use major for sweet sounding blues and rock. Check this table - remember it is a generalization.

MINOR is mainly used for –

Dirty blues/rock.
Minor ballads.

MAJOR is mainly used for -


Sweet blues/rock.
Major ballads.

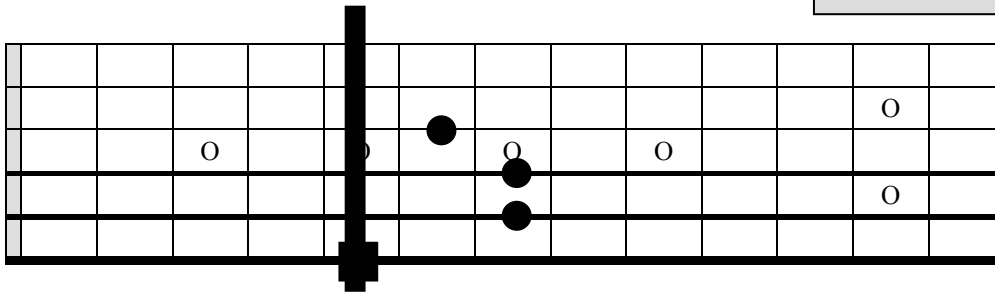
Most blues/rock is minor while most ballads are major.

MAJOR PENTATONIC E SHAPE

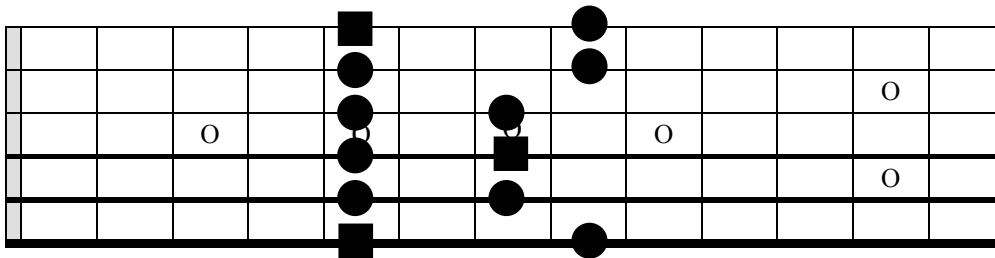
MINOR AND MAJOR PENTATONIC COMPARED
Same scale and boxes only major is three frets back.

E Shape Chord.

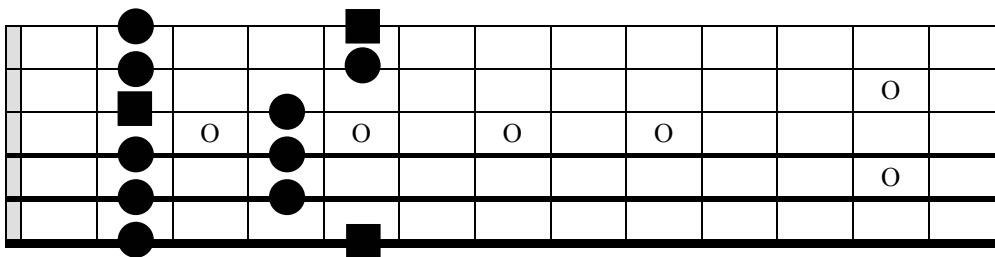
The tonic or root note is on string 6.
Shown as 



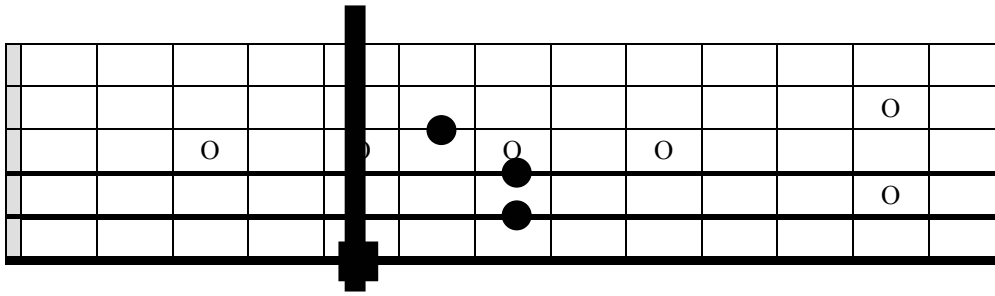
Minor Pentatonic. Scale Fingering 1.



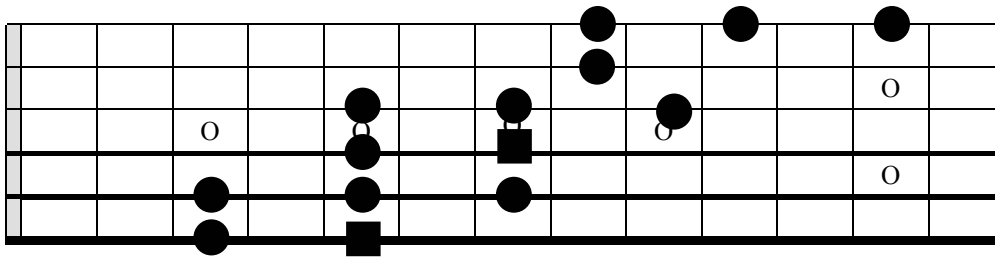
Major Pentatonic. Scale Fingering 1.



E Shape Chord.



Minor Pentatonic.
1-3 scale.



Major Pentatonic.
1-3 scale.

