

LEARN BLUES FINGERPICKING

INTERMEDIATE COURSE

2.3 Riffs in Position 2



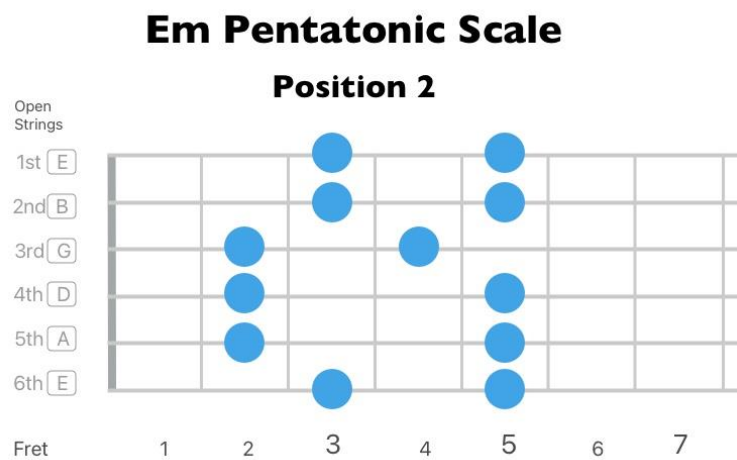
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Intro

In this lesson, we will look at the Em Pentatonic scale & E Blues scale in position 2 of the guitar neck. This is the position between 2nd and 5th frets.

Remember we get the E blues scale by just adding one note to Em Pentatonic so it's not as much work as it sounds! Then we'll learn 4 riffs that use this scale so that we actually get to play something musical.

Here is the chart for the Em Pentatonic scale:



Here is the tab for the Em Pentatonic scale ascending:

1 2

mf

T
A
B

3 5 2 5 2 5 2 4 3 5 3 5

And the Em Pentatonic scale descending:

1 *mf* 2

T
A
B

5 3 5 3 4 2 5 2 5 2 5 3

As mentioned above, we just add one note to Em Pentatonic scale to get the E Blues scale and that note is highlighted here in red (the blues note it is sometimes called). In E, that note is Bb.

Em Blues Scale

Position 2

Open Strings

1st	E								
2nd	B								
3rd	G								
4th	D								
5th	A								
6th	E								

Fret 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

We have the tab for E Blues scale in position 2 ascending:

1
mf
2
3 5 6 2 5 2 5 2 | 3 4 3 5 3 5 6

And then descending:

1
mf
2
6 5 3 5 3 4 3 2 | 5 2 5 2 6 5 3

Now it's time for some riffs!

Riff A

The first half of this riff involves playing a riff note with the bass and then 2 riff notes per one bass note.

It's the first time we have done this so take your time with it.

We repeat the same motif first on the 1st string then on the 2nd string

Musical notation for the first half of Riff A, measures 1 and 2. The notation is in treble clef with a common time signature (C). The first measure is marked with a first finger (1) and the second measure with a second finger (2). The dynamic marking *mf* is present. The guitar tablature (TAB) shows the fretting for the first string (5, 3, 5) and the second string (5, 3, 5) in both measures. The bass line (B) is indicated by zeros (0) on the staff, representing open strings.

The second half of this riff is simpler with one riff note per bass and then letting the last note ring for a whole bar.

Musical notation for the second half of Riff A, measures 4 and 5. The notation is in treble clef with a common time signature (C). The first measure is marked with a fourth finger (4) and the second measure with a fifth finger (5). The guitar tablature (TAB) shows the fretting for the first string (2, 4) and the second string (3, 5) in the first measure, and the first string (5) in the second measure. The bass line (B) is indicated by zeros (0) on the staff, representing open strings.

Riff B

The first half of this riff involves playing 4 notes (all from Em Pentatonic scale) and then letting one note ring for a whole bar.

Musical notation for the first half of Riff B. The notation is in treble clef with a common time signature (C). The first measure contains four eighth notes, and the second measure contains a single half note. The dynamic marking *mf* is placed below the first measure. The guitar tablature below shows the fretting for each note: 4, 3, 5, 3 in the first measure, and 5 in the second measure. The bass line consists of open strings (0) for all notes.

The second half of this riff is similar at the start but for the last bar, we play 2 notes per one bass note.

You could cycle this last bar and do those 2 notes (with a bass note) and just 3 more bass notes (counting “two three four”) and then repeat to get the feeling of that “2 notes per one bass note”.

Musical notation for the second half of Riff B. The notation is in treble clef with a common time signature (C). The first measure contains four eighth notes, and the second measure contains a half note followed by a dotted quarter note. The guitar tablature below shows the fretting for each note: 4, 3, 5, 3 in the first measure, and 3, 5 in the second measure. The bass line consists of open strings (0) for all notes.

Riff C

This riff just repeats (the first half and second half are the same)

Because we add the blues note (the 3rd string at the 3rd fret) we are playing in the E blues scale rather than Em pentatonic.

I suggest playing this melody first and then add the bass.

Adding the Bass

Here we play 2 notes with the bass – then 2 bass notes alone – then 4 more notes with the bass.

The image shows musical notation for Riff C. It consists of a treble clef staff in C major, 4/4 time, and a guitar tablature staff below it. The melody is divided into two measures, labeled 1 and 2. Measure 1 contains four eighth notes: G4, A4, B4, and C5. Measure 2 contains four eighth notes: G4, A4, B4, and C5. The tablature shows the fretting for each note: 4, 3, 0, 0 for the first measure and 4, 3, 3, 2 for the second measure. The bass line is indicated by '0' on the bottom staff, meaning open strings. The dynamic marking *mf* is placed below the first measure.

Riff D

This riff goes on a long run – all notes from the E blues scale. Note the blues note on the 1st string at the 6th fret.

Musical notation for Riff D, measures 1-2. The notation includes a treble clef, a common time signature (C), and a dynamic marking of *mf*. The first measure contains four eighth notes, and the second measure contains four eighth notes, including a blues note (F#) on the 1st string at the 6th fret. The TAB below shows the fretting for each note: 4, 3, 5, 3 in the first measure and 5, 6, 5, 3 in the second measure. The bass string is fretted at 0 in all measures.

At the end of this run of 8 notes, we play a ninth note and let it ring. And then we just have two notes in the last bar (the second of which we let ring)

Musical notation for Riff D, measures 3-4. The notation includes a treble clef and a dynamic marking of *mf*. The third measure contains four eighth notes, and the fourth measure contains two eighth notes, including a blues note (F#) on the 1st string at the 6th fret. The TAB below shows the fretting for each note: 5, 5, 5, 5 in the third measure and 3, 5 in the fourth measure. The bass string is fretted at 0 in all measures.