

# Jazz Guitar ONLINE

The Internet Publication for the Jazz Guitarist  
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## Lessons ONLINE



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# Lesson 1: The ii-V Progression

## What it is

This is the most common chord progression in Jazz music. Knowing how to solo over it will be the most useful skill you can have as a jazz guitarist. First, let's look at the progression itself. In the key of C, a ii-V would be composed of the following chords: **Dmi7** and **G7**.

The image shows the ii-V progression in the key of C. The top staff is a treble clef with a C-clef, showing the chords Dmi7 and G7. The bottom staff is a guitar fretboard diagram with six strings and six frets. The Dmi7 chord is shown with fret numbers 6, 5, 7, 5 on the strings from top to bottom. The G7 chord is shown with fret numbers 3, 4, 3, 2 on the strings from top to bottom.

Typically, this is followed by the I, which in this case is **Cmaj7**. (Notice that in jazz, the 7 is automatically added to virtually every chord.) Both the ii chord and the V chord are organic to the original key; that is, you don't have to add any accidentals to create the chords. Let's change keys and see what a ii-V would be in Eb:

The image shows the ii-V progression in the key of Eb. The top staff is a treble clef with a C-clef, showing the chords Fmi7 and Eb7. The bottom staff is a guitar fretboard diagram with six strings and six frets. The Fmi7 chord is shown with fret numbers 9, 8, 10, 8 on the strings from top to bottom. The Eb7 chord is shown with fret numbers 6, 7, 6, 6 on the strings from top to bottom.

Hopefully, that will show you what a ii-V progression is. Anytime you see a minor 7 chord followed by a dominant7 chord whose root is a fourth higher, it is a ii-V. The chords themselves can also have added tones, like **Dmi9-G13**.

# Lesson 2: The Harmonic Minor Scale

The Harmonic Minor scale is one of more limited usefulness than the Major scale, but it yields some interesting possibilities. Let's see how this scale is constructed: If we have A harmonic minor, the pitches are A, B, C, D, E, F, G#, A. There are two ways of describing this scale.

**Natural minor with a raised 7th**  
**Major with flat 3rd and flat 6th**

Musical notation for the A harmonic minor scale starting on A. The scale is shown in a single staff with a treble clef and a common time signature. The notes are A, B, C, D, E, F, G#, A. Below the staff are two lines of guitar fretboard diagrams. The first line shows the scale starting on the 7th fret of the 6th string, with fingerings: 7, 4, 5, 7, 5, 6, 4, 5, 4, 6, 5, 7, 5, 4, 7. The second line shows the scale starting on the 4th fret of the 5th string, with fingerings: 4, 5, 7, 5, 6, 4, 5, 4, 6, 5, 7, 5, 4, 7.

If we look at this scale according to the first example, we see something useful. The raised 7th is known as a “leading tone” because it leads your ear up to the tonic. If you know your theory, you know that the chord that contains the leading tone is the V. What is the V7 chord of A minor? E7 is. What if we took this harmonic minor and used it over a E7? To experiment, we will start the A har. min. on a E:

Musical notation for the A harmonic minor scale starting on E. The scale is shown in a single staff with a treble clef and a common time signature. The notes are E, F, G, A, B, C, D, E. Below the staff are two lines of guitar fretboard diagrams. The first line shows the scale starting on the 2nd fret of the 5th string, with fingerings: 2, 3, 1, 2, 4, 1, 3, 5, 3, 1, 4, 2, 1, 3, 2. The second line shows the scale starting on the 2nd fret of the 4th string, with fingerings: 2, 3, 1, 2, 4, 1, 3, 5, 3, 1, 4, 2, 1, 3, 2.

That gave us the 1, 3, 5, 7, b9, 11, b13. Wow, those are colorful notes. Seems that if you're in A minor and hit a E7 of some kind, the A Harmonic Minor scale gives you an interesting option. Here's another even less common usage: Start the scale on the F. What do we get then?

Over an F major chord, we would have 1, 3, 5, 7, #9, #11, 13. How's that for an unorthodox sound? I also see some interesting triads in that scale, like C augmented.

The key to getting these sounds in your ear is rote repetition. If you can "hear" it, it becomes easier to incorporate into your playing. Try it out yourself. Now get up from the computer and GO PRACTICE!

### *Lesson 3: The Melodic Minor Scale*

The melodic minor scale (also called the Jazz Minor) is a very useful one in jazz playing. Like the major scale, this scale spawns a host of modes that work with a variety of different chords. The scale itself is identical to a regular minor scale EXCEPT for the raised 6th and 7th degrees (You could also think of this scale as a major scale with a flatted 3rd). In classical theory, this is called the Ascending melodic minor, while the Descending scale is identical to the natural minor. This distinction is useless in jazz, so we will consider the ascending and descending scales to be the same. Here is the scale in C minor:

Used by itself, the scale can be used over a Minor(maj7) chord. The chord is spelled: **1, b3, 5, 7**. Like this:

The image shows a musical staff in treble clef with a common time signature (C) and a key signature of one flat (Bb). The chord is Bb7, with notes Bb, D, F, and G. Below the staff is a guitar fretboard diagram for the Bb7 chord in the 8th position, with fingerings: 3 on the 8th fret, 4 on the 9th fret, 4 on the 10th fret, and 3 on the 11th fret.

If you want to hear this chord in a tune, the best one would be Horace Silver's **Nica's Dream**. The scale is also useful over augmented sounds, i.e., C melodic minor over B7aug. As for the modes of the melodic minor, I'll just discuss two of them.

### Mode 4: Lydian b7

The Lydian b7, or Lydian Dominant, starts on the 4th degree of the melodic minor scale. In our case, it would look like this:

The image shows a musical staff in treble clef with a common time signature (C). The scale is Lydian b7, starting on Bb. The notes are Bb, C, D, Eb, F, G, Ab, Bb. Below the staff is a guitar fretboard diagram for the Lydian b7 mode in the 8th position, with fingerings: 8 on the 8th fret, 10 on the 9th fret, 7 on the 10th fret, 9 on the 11th fret, 10 on the 12th fret, 8 on the 13th fret, 7 on the 14th fret, 10 on the 15th fret, 9 on the 16th fret, 7 on the 17th fret, 10 on the 18th fret, and 8 on the 19th fret.

This mode is most useful over the 9(b5) or 9(#11) chord. An F9(#11) is spelled F, A, C, Eb, G, Cb. It has an interesting sound. The most famous use of this chord is in bars 3 and 4 of **Take the "A" Train**, by Billy Strayhorn.

### Mode 7: Diminished/Wholetone

This mode has several names: altered, altered dominant, etc. I pick this name because I think it is the most accurate description of this scale. A Bdim/wt mode would look like this:

The image shows a musical staff in treble clef with a common time signature (C). The scale is Diminished/Wholetone, starting on Bb. The notes are Bb, C, D, Eb, F, G, Ab, Bb. Below the staff is a guitar fretboard diagram for the Diminished/Wholetone mode in the 9th position, with fingerings: 9 on the 9th fret, 10 on the 10th fret, 7 on the 11th fret, 8 on the 12th fret, 10 on the 13th fret, 8 on the 14th fret, 10 on the 15th fret, 7 on the 16th fret, 10 on the 17th fret, 8 on the 18th fret, 7 on the 19th fret, 10 on the 20th fret, and 9 on the 21st fret.

This mode can be used over almost any type of altered chord. In this case it could be: B7#9, B7(#5b9), etc. This sound is most useful in a ii-V progression in a minor key (remember Lesson 1?).

As you have seen, the Melodic Minor is a very versatile scale. This is one to spend a lot of time on. See you next week!

## Lesson 4: The Bebop Dominant Scale

The innovations of Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie in the 1940s changed jazz forever. These two guys codified how the language should be spoken. This scale is one result of their efforts. This particular term for the scale was coined by David Baker, so I use it myself.

The Bebop Dominant Scale is basically a Mixolydian mode with an extra note — a natural 7th. Here is the basic C Mixolydian mode:

Musical notation for the basic C Mixolydian mode. The scale is shown in treble clef, C major, with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The notes are: C, D, E, F, G, A, Bb, G, F, E, D, C. Below the staff is a guitar fretboard diagram with two lines of fret numbers: 10 7 9 10 8 10 11 8 | 11 10 8 10 9 7 10.

The Bebop Dominant has the extra natural 7th, like so:

Musical notation for the Bebop Dominant scale. The scale is shown in treble clef, C major, with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The notes are: C, D, E, F, G, A, B, Bb, G, F, E, D, C. Below the staff is a guitar fretboard diagram with three lines of fret numbers: 10 7 9 10 8 10 6 7 | 8 7 6 5 8 6 5 7 | 10.

This added note does two things: 1) Provides a smooth descending leading tone, 2) gives the scale 8 notes. Item 1 is immediately obvious. Item 2 is not apparent until you start soloing with the scale. What the 8 notes do is give you the ability to play **chord tones on all downbeats**. This is important; it is the most effective way to get long phrases. For example, check out this standard Mixolydian lick:

The image shows a musical score for a standard Mixolydian lick. The top staff is in treble clef with a common time signature and a C7 chord symbol. The melody starts on G4, ascends to Bb4, and then descends: A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The bottom staff shows the corresponding fretboard positions: 11, 10, 8, 11, 10, 8, 10, 9, 7, 8, 7, 10, 8, 10, 8.

Notice how the last half starts to sound awkward. You don't have chord tones on downbeats. Look at this bebop lick:

The image shows a musical score for a bebop lick. The top staff is in treble clef with a common time signature and a C7 chord symbol. The melody starts on G4, ascends to Bb4, and then descends: A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The bottom staff shows the corresponding fretboard positions: 8, 7, 6, 5, 8, 7, 6, 5, 8, 6, 5, 7, 5, 4, 3.

Do you hear it? It just wants to keep going. That's how those guys like Parker, Gillespie, Adderley, etc. could get those endless lines. Even Pat Martino uses this technique. Remember this however: Use the added 7th **ONLY** when descending. Skip it when you ascend. And **KEEP THE CHORDTONES ON DOWNBEATS!** By the way, I highly recommend **David Baker's** 3 volume set on how to play Bebop.

This little device can revolutionize your playing if you take time with it. It can change how you view improvisation. I am not kidding. **The Bebop technique is one of the secrets of the masters.** Take this one home and lock yourself in a room for a week. Experiment. Make your own licks. Create lines. Then, go get a gig!

# Lesson 5: Bebop lines over the Minor 7 Chord

Just as you can use them over their native Dominant 7 chord, Bebop scales can also be used over a Minor 7 chord whose root is a 4th below the root of the scale. In other words, anything that works over  $\langle b \rangle C7 \langle /b \rangle$  will work over  $\langle b \rangle Gmin7 \langle /b \rangle$ . For your further practicing enjoyment, here are some minor licks in the Bebop style that I came across some years ago. They have a Pat Martino-ish sound to them. Enjoy!

The first musical example consists of a treble clef staff in C major with a common time signature. The melody is: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The first two notes (C4, D4) are beamed together. The key signature has one flat (Bb). Below the staff is a guitar fretboard diagram with two strings shown. The first string has frets 3, 5, 6, 3, 4, 5, 3, 5. The second string has frets 2, 3, 5, 2, 5, 2, 3, 3.

The second musical example consists of a treble clef staff in C major with a common time signature. The melody is: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The first two notes (C4, D4) are beamed together. The key signature has one flat (Bb). Below the staff is a guitar fretboard diagram with two strings shown. The first string has frets 6, 5, 4, 5, 3, 6, 5, 3. The second string has frets 5, 2, 3, 3, 2, 3, 2, 5. The third string has frets 3, 5, 3, 5.

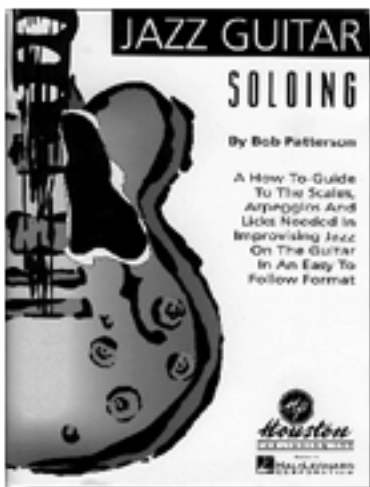
The third musical example consists of a treble clef staff in C major with a common time signature. The melody is: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The first two notes (C4, D4) are beamed together. The key signature has one flat (Bb). Below the staff is a guitar fretboard diagram with two strings shown. The first string has frets 5, 6, 5, 8, 7, 8, 7, 6. The second string has frets 5, 7, 8, 5, 7, 6, 5, 8.

The fourth musical example consists of a treble clef staff in C major with a common time signature. The melody is: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F4, E4, D4, C4. The first two notes (C4, D4) are beamed together. The key signature has one flat (Bb). Below the staff is a guitar fretboard diagram with two strings shown. The first string has frets 6, 7, 6, 5, 8, 7, 6, 8. The second string has frets 5, 7, 5, 8, 7, 8, 6, 7. The third string has frets 5, 7, 7, 5.

Hope you liked those. You should transpose them in all keys so you can use them whenever the need arises.



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