

SIX STRING Recess

"BREAKING OUT OF THE BOX"



<http://www.sixstringrecess.com>

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FREE PREVIEW

INTRODUCTION

If you've learned anything about playing lead on the guitar, you probably know some version of the *pentatonic scales*. These are five-note scales (hence the prefix *penta*-) and there isn't a bad note in them. And that's part of the problem. It's easy to get stuck in a rut playing the same old licks over and over again..

Good music (and good art, for that matter) is a delicate balance of the expected and the unexpected. If you play something that's unexpected all the time, the audience can't relate to it. Really avant-garde music suffers from this problem. But, if you always play what's expected, the audience gets bored. This is the kind of music people call "derivative".

So let's treat your repertoire of pentatonic and blues licks as the "expected" part of your arsenal. The techniques and concepts shown here will help you start developing an "unexpected" repertoire. These are just some of the ideas I like to use. I hope that they inspire you to strike out further on your own.

So, got your guitar? Are you sitting somewhere comfortable? Let's get ready to rock!



STRING & NOTE SKIPPING

Compared to their diatonic counterparts, pentatonic scales have some pretty wide intervals. One fun thing you can do is take those wide intervals and make them *even wider*. The trick to doing this is skipping notes in the pentatonic scale. You can do this either with wide stretches, by skipping strings or by doing *both*.

Here's a lick that uses both strategies and is derived from these two minor pentatonic patterns in E (the third pattern is the “mega-pattern” combination of the two):

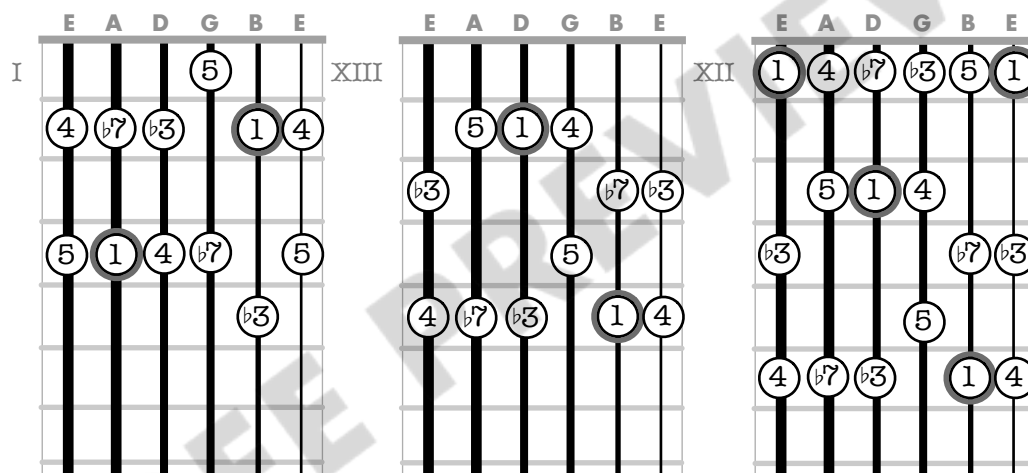


Figure 36

This lick starts on the 4th string, bounces to the 2nd string, back down to the 3rd string and up to the 1st string. Each string gets a wide two-note combination from the “mega-pattern”. Finally, the entire phrase is finished off with a comforting blues box lick to bring the whole thing home:



Figure 37

To my ear, this has a real Steve Vai kind of sound to it. The first measure sounds pretty wild with the giant interval leaps. The second measure brings the whole thing back to earth with something a little more familiar.

Even without the stratospheric interval leaps, you can still take advantage of string- and note-skipping in the same box. Here’s a lick in the A minor pentatonic box on the 5th fret that plays with this idea:

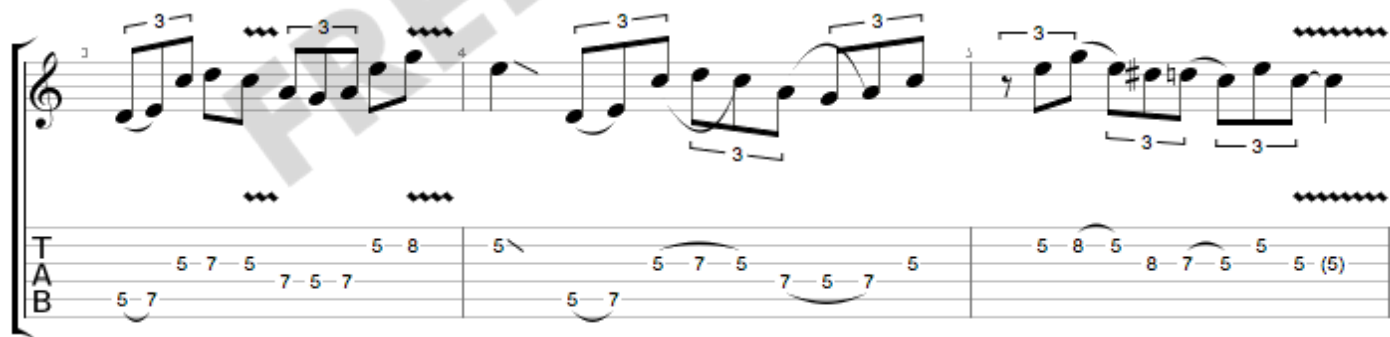


Figure 38