

Guitar inspiration

MELODIC SOLOING #2 *with CHORD TONES & TRIADS*

FULL TAB, NOTATION & PLAYING GUIDE
for the video

<https://youtu.be/NJ-klgETfik>

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thank you

Thank you for checking out this SECOND, FREE “MELODIC SOLOING” LESSON GUIDE



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I sincerely hope this detailed lesson guide & TAB will inspire you to continue to develop your guitar playing!

If you have any questions, you can leave a comment on my YouTube channel or e-mail me at maarten@guitar-inspiration.com

maarten

MELODIC SOLOING #2 with CHORD TONES & TRIADS

In this second melodic soloing lesson, I'll teach you a **16-bar melodic guitar solo** in A minor. I'll also show you my thinking process behind the solo.

Like the previous video – that you can find on the right – I'll explain how I use **chord triads** to visualize chord tones on the guitar neck. Together with the pentatonic scale, this helps me a lot to find meaningful, sweet notes to use in my solos.



If you're new to this topic, I recommend you watch my **previous video** first.



<https://youtu.be/lO7JvgZxDIk>

In part 1 of my 1st Melodic Soloing Lesson, I explain what chord tones and triads are. This second lesson video builds upon the same theoretical concepts. I won't revisit all the basic theory here though (see video 1), but rather stick to showing you the triads and scales that are relevant for this lesson.

In this lesson we'll use the triads over the **2nd, 3d and 4th strings (B-G-D)** - see diagrams on the right.

» Chords for the lesson track

In this video we'll play over a slow **ballad-style backing** track in 2 sections.

The track has common 4/4 time, so 4 beats per bar.

(A) ♩ = 67

5

9 (B)

13

RIFF

Don't worry if you find this to be a lot of chords. The track is quite slow, so we'll have time to think :-)
In fact you'll see that having more chords makes our work as a soloist easier, as the chords will do most of the work. Along the way I'll show you a few tricks that are helpful to play over any chord progression.

➤ The solo

♩ = 67

Am G

GENTLY

8 10 9 10 12 12 7 5

SL. SL. SL.

3

Dm G

7 7 5 7 9 7 5 7 5 4

SL. H SL. P SL. SL.

5

Am G

7 (5) 10 12 (10) 8 7 5

SL.

7

Dm E

7 9 7 5 7 7 5 7 7 5

SL. P SL. H SL.

2₉ F G Am

6 5 6 6/8 6 8 8/10 9 9 10 9 12

H SL H SL

11 C G Am

12 (12) 10-13 13/15 13-15 15 (15)

P SL H

13 F G F G Am G

17-18 17 13-13-15 14 13 15 17-13-15-13-12 14 14 13-15

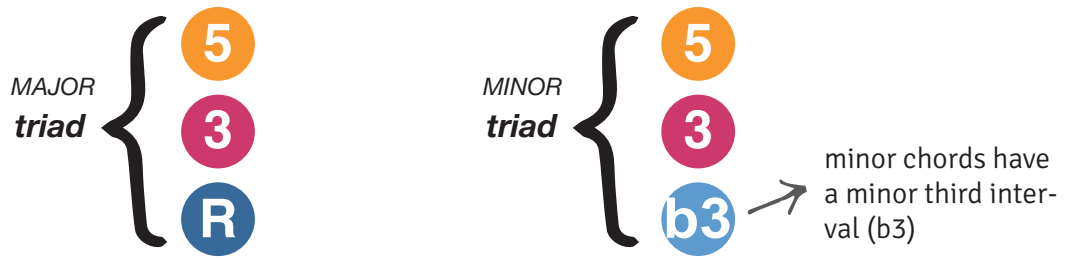
H SL H H H SL SL H

15 F E

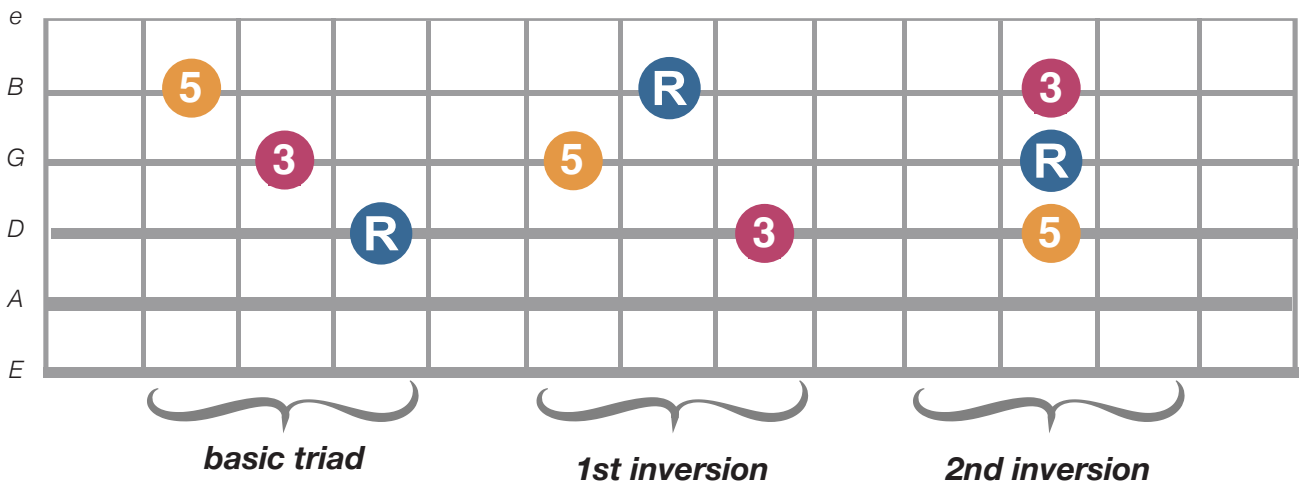
15 (15) 14 14 13 15 15

SL SLOW BEND

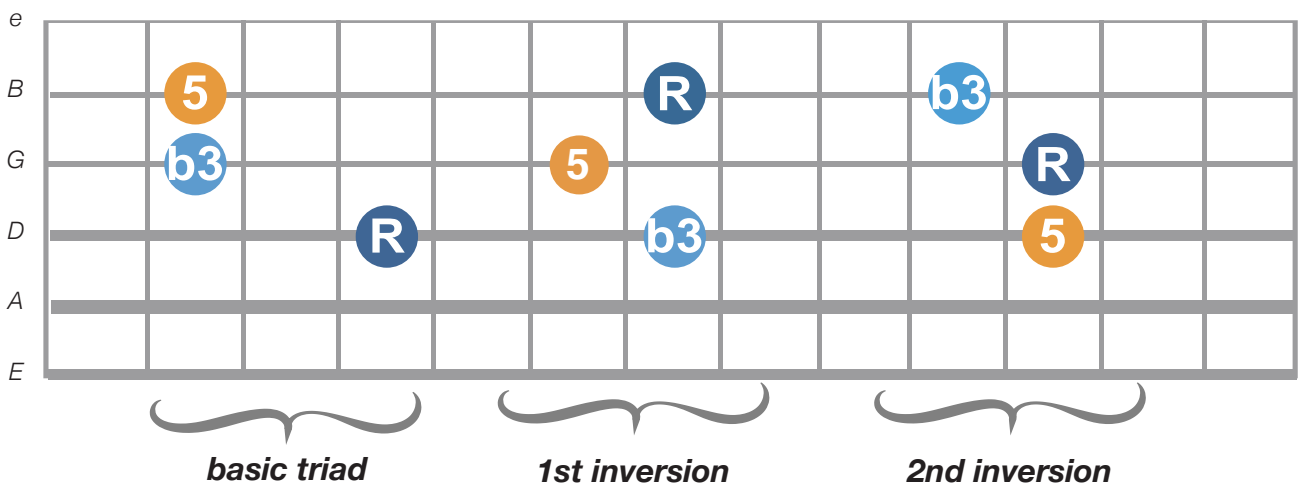
➤ Major & minor triads



MAJOR TRIADS (strings B-G-D)



MINOR TRIADS (strings B-G-D)



»» *Writing a solo*

For this lesson video, I challenged myself to write a guitar solo that only uses notes of the B-G and D emphasizing chord tones along the way. So the goal here was not to play fast, blazin' technical licks, but rather to practice restraint, deliberately choosing meaningful notes.

During this lesson, I'll explain to you my thinking process for each note & lick, always referencing the underlying chord triad. That way, the video will focus a more on harmony than e.g. on picking technique.

»» *Triads in this lesson*

First let's translate the chords of the track to triad patterns.

For each major chord, you can use the same major triad patterns.

For each minor chord, you can use the same minor triad patterns.

Am

G

Dm

note: these patterns repeat an octave up!

C

E

* = look at that: a G#! (not part of the key of A minor)

F

➤➤ Why think in triads?

Just like a scale, a triad is merely a ‘reference’ or ‘framework’, something to visualize when you’re playing. These triad shapes give you the basic chord tones for each chord.

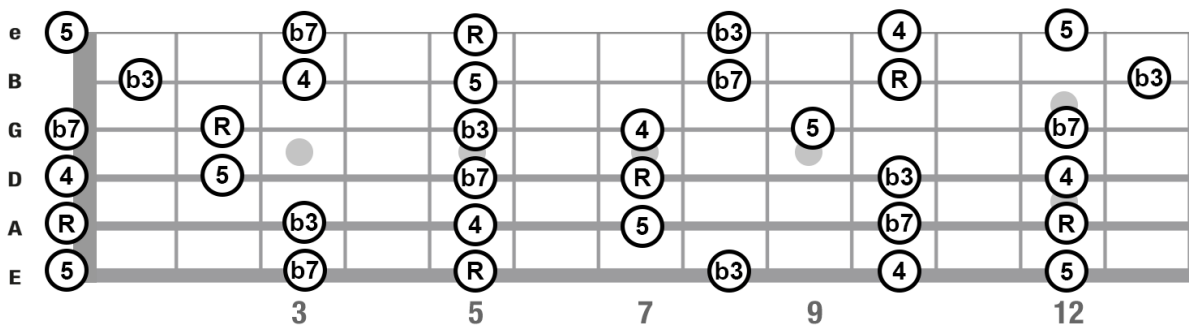
When I improvise, I see the triad shapes lighting up on a set of 3 strings, so I recommend **memorizing** and **visualizing** these patterns. It’s easier than learning all the notes, and you don’t have to think about scales or modes.

When playing triads on the B-G-D-strings I often play the second inversion, because this gives me the root note on top (on the B-string).

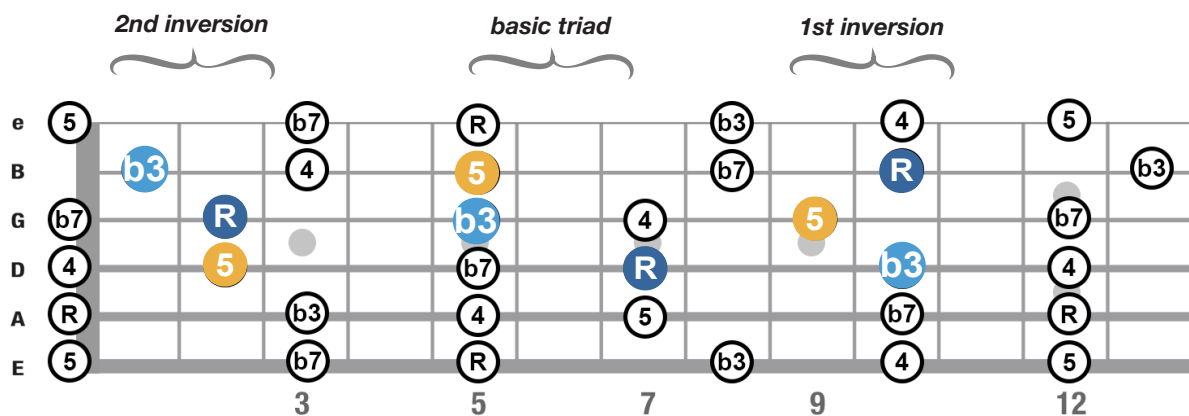
When improvising, I usually, start by visualizing a pentatonic scale as a ‘base layer’ and then put the triads on top as a ‘second layer.’ Most guitar players are more fluent in the pentatonic scale, but targeting a chord tone (by visualizing triads) is a powerful way of adding harmony & melody to your solos



Practice the triad patterns in this video with the original Jam Track for the solo. <https://youtu.be/9ReK36PHduM>



A minor pentatonic scale (basic layer)



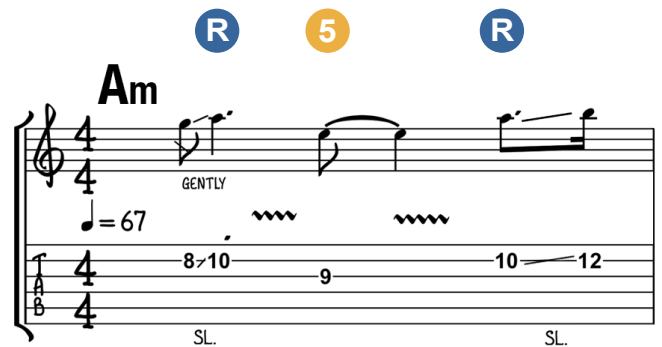
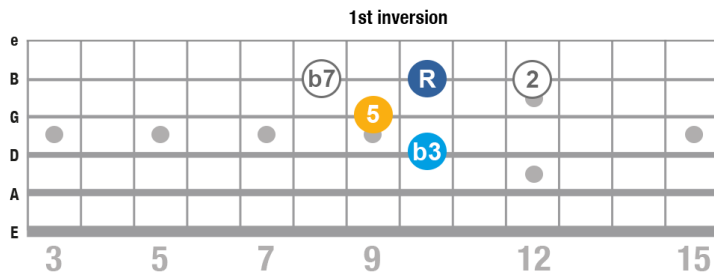
Triad patterns for Am (second layer) on top of the A minor pentatonic (basic layer)



(!) Important to mention is that these triad patterns **change with each chord**, whereas a pentatonic scale is often applicable over the entire chord progression. So you do have to remain aware of the chord progression.

SOLO ANALYSIS - PART A

BAR 1



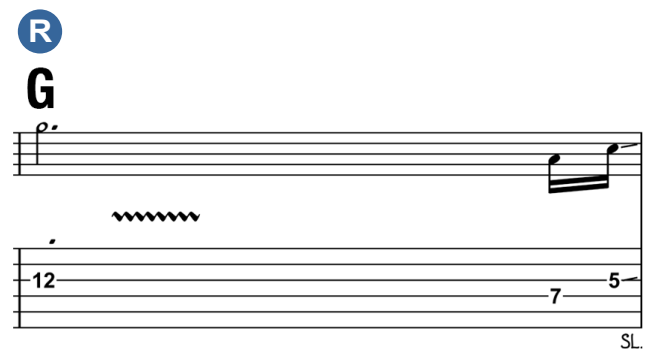
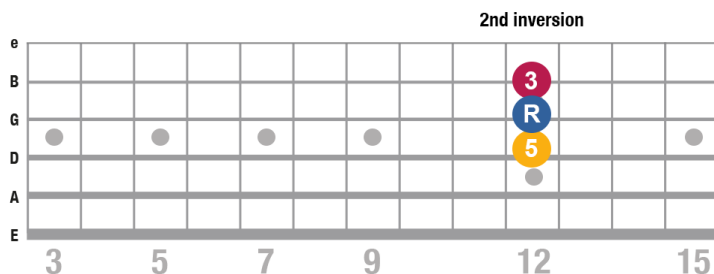
We're opening the solo by quickly sliding from the **8th** to the **10th** fret of the B-string (3d finger).

The **10th** fret is the A, the root of our first chord, A minor. Look where it lies in the second inversion A minor triad.

By resting on that A, the solo starts with a strong chord tone. Also, the track is in the key of A minor, so this is a failproof choice. After that, play the **9th** fret on the G string (2nd finger), also part of that A minor triad.

At the end of bar 1, slide on from the **10th** to the **12th** fret on the B string, anticipating bar 2. Play this slide with your 3d finger.

BAR 2



Moving from Am to G, we must change the triad shapes to the major patterns to see where the chord tones for G (major) are.

By visualizing the triads of G, the meaning of the hammer-on at the end of bar 1 becomes apparent. It shows that the **12th** fret on the B-string is part of the second inversion G-triad: in fact, it's the major third of G.

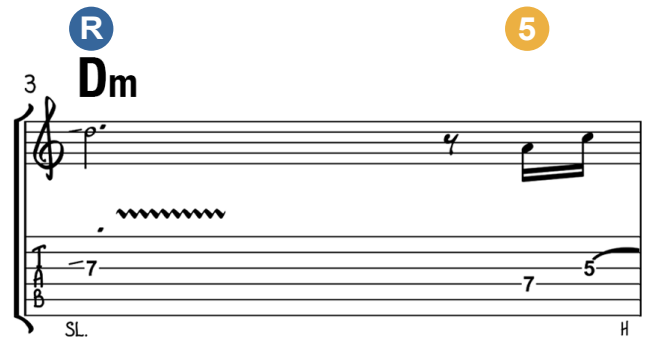
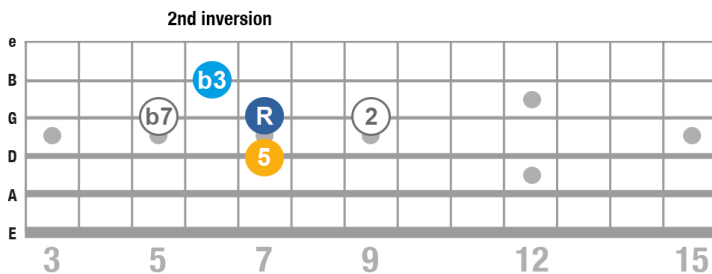
in bar 2, I'm choosing to land on the **12th** fret of the G-string, the root of the chord. Play this note with your 2nd finger. Note that, by playing this note, we're repeating a similar descending pattern (between the B- and G-strings) of bar 1.

So in bar 1 & 2 we're not doing too much, just establishing the lead guitar in the mix with a few notes that are part of the underlying triads.

At the end of bar 2, I'm anticipating the next chord, which is D minor. In bar 3, we're going for the root, D, on the **7th** fret of the G-string in - again - the second inversion triad.

While improvising this part, I instinctively thought of the A minor pentatonic to connect to this root note. Play the **7th** fret on the D-string, then the **5th** fret on the G-string, and THEN slide the **7th fret** on the G-string. Don't rush this slide; it's not a grace note (like the slide in bar 1), but a slide between two eight notes.

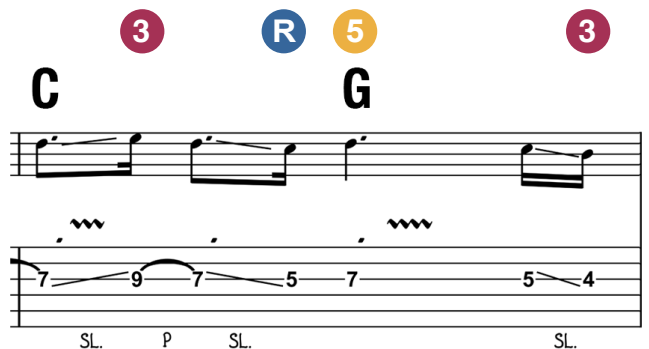
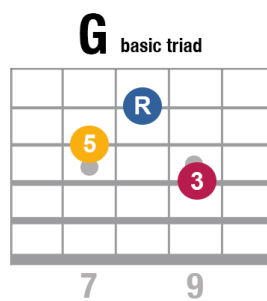
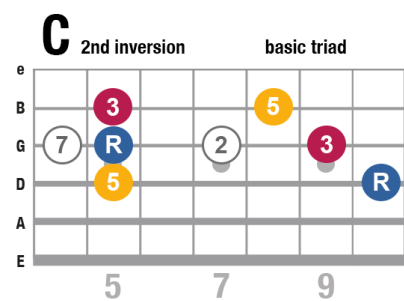
BAR 3



Like mentioned, in bar 3, we're resting on the **7th** fret of the G-string. In hindsight, you could consider the connecting notes (at the end of bar 2) as part of a Dm7 chord, but that was not how I thought. In my mind, I was just playing the A minor pentatonic. By the way: the three connecting notes between bar 2 & 3 will form a little motif that we'll repeat & expand on in the following bars.

Bar 3 ends just like bar 2, with the 7th fret on the D-string and the 5th fret on the G-string. This time with a hammer-on back to the D, the **7th** fret on the G-string, in the beginning of bar 4.

BAR 4



So in bar 4, we're - again, landing on the D, but this time it's not a chord tone. Relative to the C, this is the 2nd degree (or 9th of the scale), implying a **Cadd9**-chord.

Although we're playing the same lick leading into the D, it now 'sounds' different because the underlying chord has changed from Dm to C. Playing non-chord tones creates more tension, and I especially like the sound of the **9th** over any minor or major chord.

Melodically, we'll continue circling around this D, first sliding to the **9th** fret on the G-string (3d finger), pulling off to the **7th** fret (1st finger), then sliding to the **5th** fret on the G-string (1st finger), before landing back on the D on beat 3 of bar 4 (3d finger). Do not rush the slides & pull-offs here, take your time play each note.

Halfway bar 4, the chord changes back to G. Note that the G major triad does have a D in it, so the meaning of the D has changed again, back to a chord tone (the fifth).

At the end of bar 4, I decided to play a descending lick: slide from the **5th** to the **4th** fret with your first finger. This descending lick is anticipating the Am-chord in bar 5.



A static melody

R

Bar 3 & 4 have a **static melody**: notice how I play the D three times, while the underlying chords changes. With each chord change, the meaning of the D changes from root (over D), to color tone (9th, over C), back to chord tone (5th, over C). Staying on the same note while the chords change is a very effective melodic tool. Knowing your triads give you easier access to this technique..

In essence, this is the basic **(simplified) melody** in bars 3-4:

This concludes **our first melodic phrase**, because in bar 5 the chords circle back to A minor.



Remember what you play ;-)

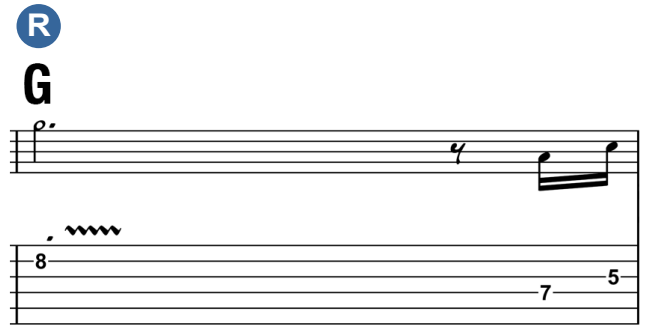
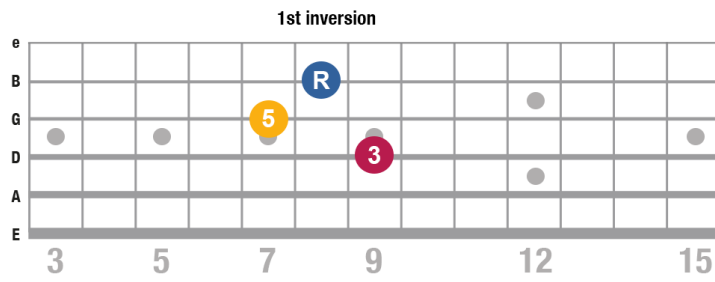
When improvising, after a first phrase, I try to remember some of the things I played, looking for fragments to repeat in the second round of the same chords. When repeating certain motifs, I try to bring some variation without introducing too many new things.

BAR 5

Our first melodic phrase ends in bar 5, on the **7th** fret of the D-string. Now it's time to start a second one! Just like the chord progression is back to Am, we're starting our second melodic phrase in the same spot as the first: the 1st inversion triad of A minor.

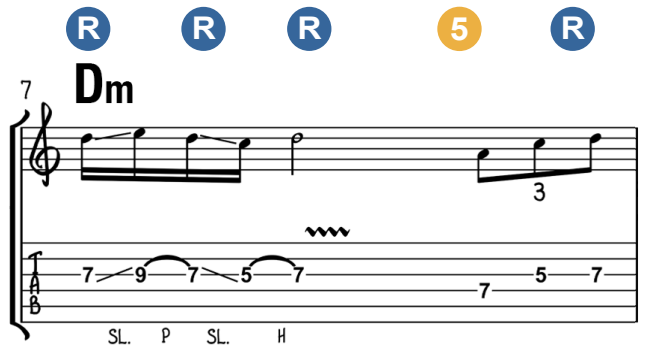
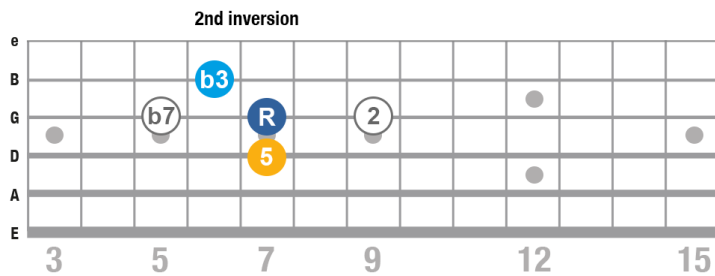
Slide your 3d finger quickly from the **5th** to the **10th** fret on the B string. After that, perform a pre-bend here, bending the B-string a full step up (without picking it!). Bend with 3 fingers and then slowly release back to the **10th** fret. This – again – firmly establishes the root, A, as the start of our second melodic phrase.

BAR 6



Bar 6 is very similar to bar 2. The only difference here, is that we're playing the root G on the **8th** fret of the B-string (in the 1st inversion). To me, it feels better playing it here, after that pre-bend & release in bar 5. Play it with your first finger. At the end of bar 6, play the **7th** fret on the D-string and the **5th** fret on the G-string, thus repeating the little motif from bar 2.

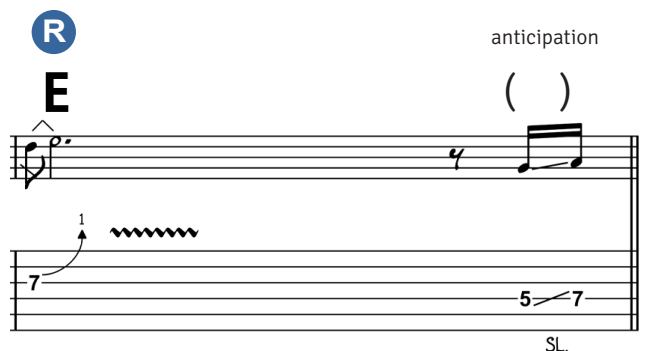
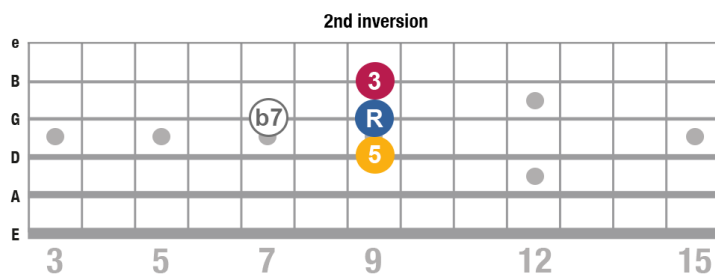
BAR 7



Bar 7 is a variation on the lick in bar 4. Again, I'm circling around the root D in the second inversion triad, much like I did in bar 4: slide from the **7th** to the **9th** fret on the G-string (3d finger), pull-off back to the **7th** fret (1st finger), slide to the **5th** fret (1st finger) and then hammer-on back to the **7th** fret. Note that only the rhythm is different in this variation, as I'm not resting on the first note. The sequence of notes is the same as in bar 4.

At the end of bar 7 is also a rhythmic variation of that little pentatonic lick, now played as a triplet. Play the **7th** fret on the D-string (3d finger), **5th** fret on the G-string (1st finger), **7th** fret on the G string (3d finger).

BAR 8



Our second melodic phrase ends in bar 8, not on the Dm-chord, but on the E-chord. This chord propels into the second part of the solo. **The E chord is not in the key of A minor, because it has a G# in it.** When improvising, it's always better to be aware of this. But before you start scratching your head where the G# is located on the guitar neck; if you can just visualize the major triads for the E-chord, you don't really have to think about the notes that make up the chord.

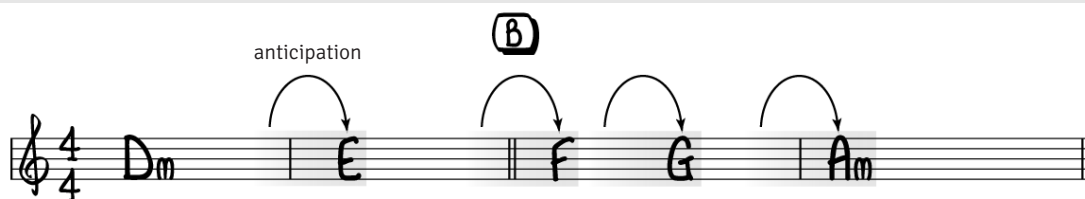
We're keeping it easy in bar 8, as we're just bending from the **7th** fret on the G-string, a full step up to the E (the root). Bend slowly, with 3 fingers for extra strength.

Before moving on; consider the concept of **anticipation**:



Anticipation

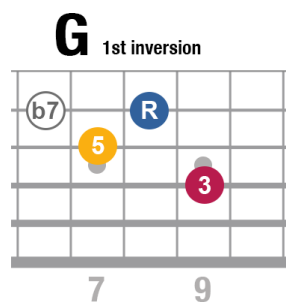
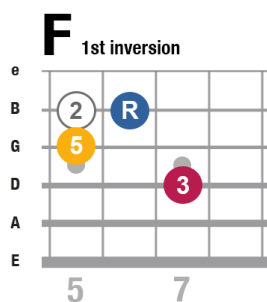
In a slow solo, I'm often anticipating the next chord with a little pickup lick at the end of the previous bar. These licks cross barlines and end on a chord tone. This concept is very present in this lesson. That way, as a soloist, I'm staying ahead of the chord changes, creating a feeling of control & authority.



SOLO ANALYSIS - PART B

The energy-level of part B is a bit higher. The chords move faster, there's a distorted guitar, drummer uses more cymbals and there a synth enters the mix. It's important to react to these things, so you'll notice that the melody moves up into a higher register and expands its contours by jumping around a bit more.

BAR 9



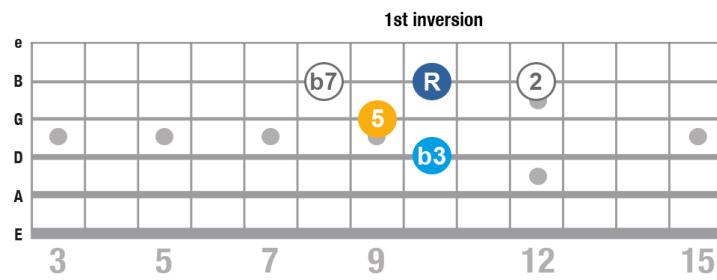
Bar 9 was already anticipated in bar 8 by the slide from the **5th** to the **7th** fret on the D-string. Play the **5th** fret with a downstroke and slide with your 3d finger. That way, we're enter-ing the second inversion F triad.

In bar 9, play the **6th** fret on the B-string (the root F), with your 1st finger and an upstroke.

Next, we're going to follow the second inversion triads by their roots on the B-string. After a hammer-on from the **5th** to the **6th** fret on the B-string (1st & 2nd finger), slide from the **6th** to the **8th** fret on that string (2nd finger). This is the root G, again in the 2nd inversion triad. So we're mimicking the movement in the chords.

End bar 9 with a hammer-on from the **6th** to the **8th** fret on the B-string (1st & 3d finger).

BAR 10



In bar 10, we're still moving up, root by root on the B-string. Quickly slide from the **8th** fret to the **10th** fret (3d finger). This is the A, the familiar spot where we started the solo: the 1st inversion A minor triad.

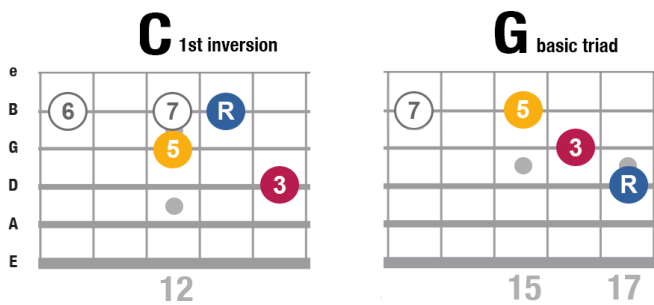
Repeat the descending move to the **9th** fret on the G-string again. And now we'll use this note as a **pedal point** in the rest of bar 10, where we'll play another anticipating lick to the C, the chord in bar 11.

Play the **9th** fret on the G-string (with a downstroke, 1st finger), the **10th** fret on the B-string (with an upstroke, 3d finger); bouncing back to the **9th** fret on the G-string (downstroke), to **12th** fret on the B-string (upstroke). This B on the 12th fret is the 9th of the Am chord, implying Am9. Rhythmically, the last three notes form a triplet.

This melodic lick is inspired by John Petrucci, and it's a great connecting lick between chords.

I suggest you play the **12th** fret on the B-string with your 3d finger, so you're ready to play the bend in bar 11.

BAR 11



The C chord in bar 11 is a major chord that is very similar to the Am-chord. The comes somewhat as a surprise in the progression, so I really want to emphasize it. At the same time, I'm repeating the rhythm from bar 9.

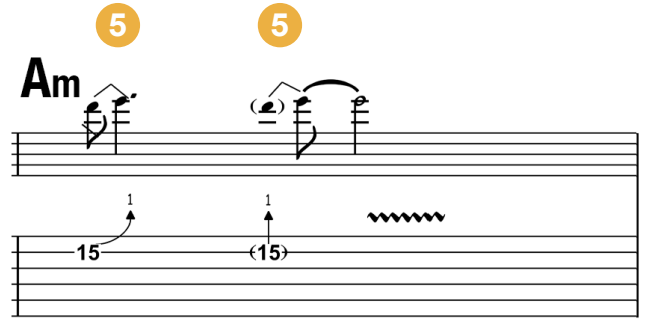
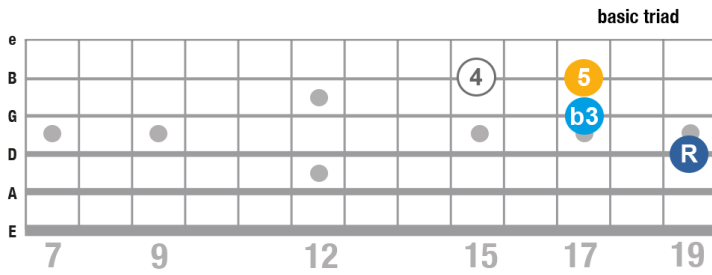
Bend the **12th** fret on the B-string a half step up and - after a short hold - release it back to the 12th fret. The bent note is a C, the root of the chord, in the 1st inversion triad.

After a hammer-on from the **10th** to the **13th** fret on the B-string (1st & 3rd finger), slide from the **13th** to the **15th** fret on that string (3rd finger). This is the fifth of G, in a basic G major triad.

Note that these licks are also A minor pentatonic in origin. But again, thinking about the triads gives a clear indication of where you can rest the melody for a while.

End bar 11 with a hammer-on from the **13th** to the **15th** fret on the B-string (1st & 3d finger), anticipating the Am in bar 12.

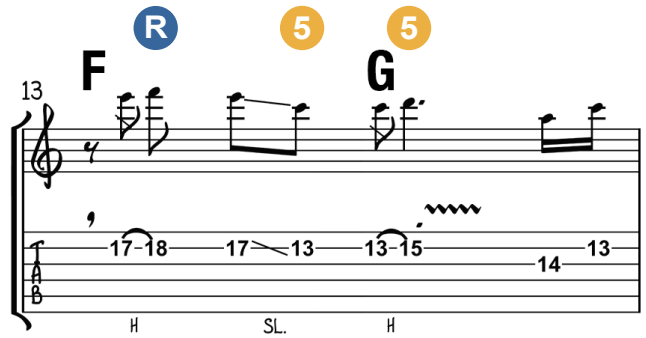
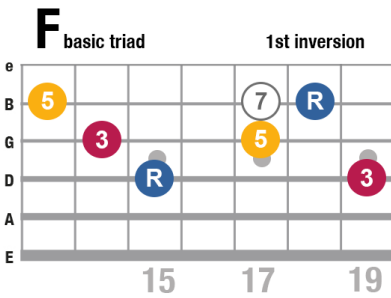
BAR 12



In bar 12, bend the **15th** fret on the B-string a full step up, towards the C, the fifth of the A minor chord, that we find in the basic A minor triad.

Play this note two times, a give it some vibrato.

BAR 13



In bar 13, our ascending melodic line has come to an end. By the way: did you notice, there is **no anticipating lick**, leading into bar 13? Bar 13 starts with a little rest, a little breath so to speak, and this time we're playing behind the chord change.

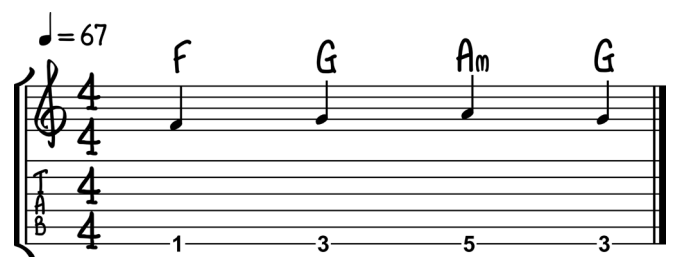
Hammer-on quickly from the **17th** to the **18th** fret (1st & 2nd finger); this is the root F in the basic triad. Then slide back from the **17th** fret on the B-string to the **13th** fret with your first finger. This slow, eight note slide brings us back to the basic triad. I know you can play this note as the **15th** fret on the G-string too, but I really wanted to do a slide here.

When the chord changes to the G, quickly hammer-on from the **13th** to the **15th** fret on the B-string (1st and 3d finger). That brings us back to the G major (basic triad)

At the end of bar 13, we do have another anticipating lick, preparing us for the F-chord in bar 14. Play the **14th** fret on the G-string and the **13th** fret on the B-string.

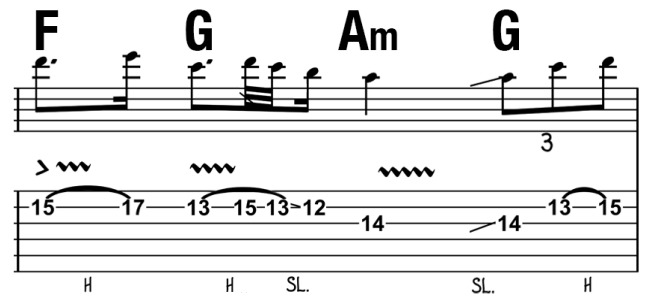
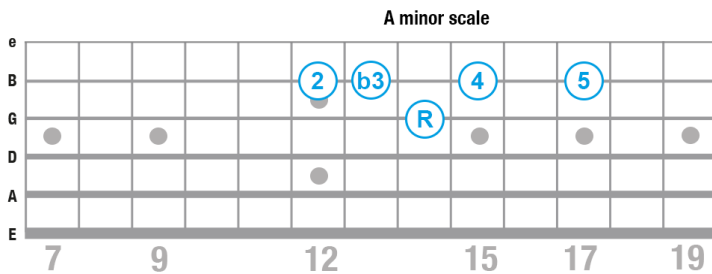
BAR 14

Bar 14 is a special case, because each beat has a different chord. This corresponds with the following-4 note guitar riff:



Because of the fast chord changes, it's more challenging to think in triads here.

To be honest, when I was improvising over this riff, I let go of the triads and started thinking of the **full A minor scale**, creating this descending melody to oppose the upward motion of the riff. My goal was to land on the A on beat 3, the root of the A minor chord:

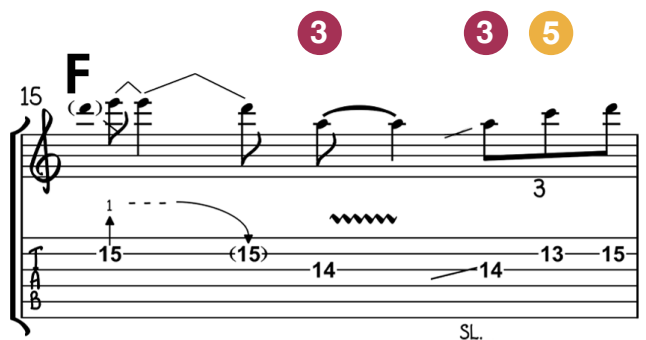
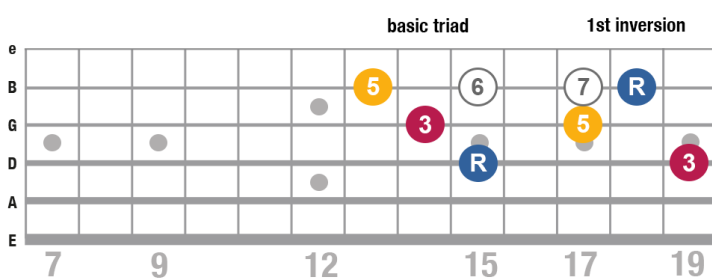


Play the **15th** fret of the B-string with your first finger (that's a dotted quarter note) and hammer-on to the **17th** fret of the B-string (1st & 3d finger). Next is a similar hammer-on from the **13th** to the **15th** fret, followed by a pull-off to the **13th** fret & a slide to the **12th** fret. Emphasize the first note of each note group, and give it a little bit of vibrato if you can. On beat 3, play the **14th** fret of the G-string, thus reaching our goal of playing the A over the Am chord.

Rhythmically, this is the same pattern as in bar 4 (dotted eight + sixteenth note). Like I mentioned in bar 4, don't rush these hammer-ons. Steadily move the melody along with the rhythm of the chord changes.

Bar 14 ends with another triplet of notes from the scale: slide to the **14th** fret of the G-string (2nd finger), the **13th** fret of the B-string (1st finger), and then hammer-on to the **15th** fret of the B-string.

BAR 15

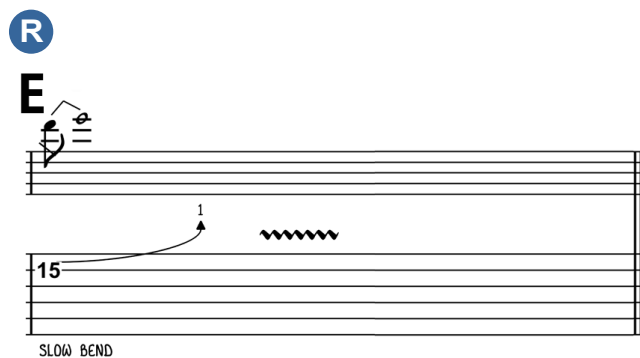
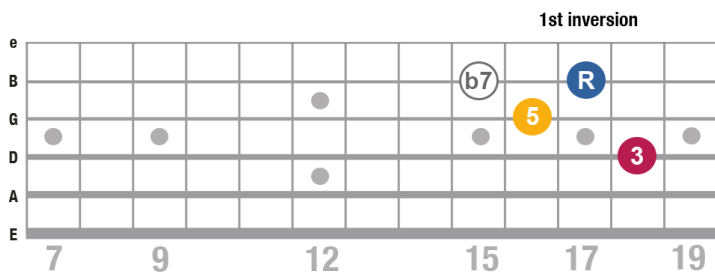


In bar 15, we're playing a full step bend from the **15th** fret on the B-string. Again, play the bend with 3 fingers, hold it for a little while and then gently release back to the 15th fret. The note we're aiming for here is an E at the 17th fret of the B-string.

This is a pitch I chose intuitively, but when you look at the triads, you'll see that the note we're playing here isn't part of an F major triad. It is part of the A minor pentatonic (and full minor) scale though, so I guess that's where my choice came from. When you analyze it a bit more, you'll see that this note implies an Fmaj7 chord (=F triad + E on top), and I really like the sound of that chord.

Bar 15 ends with the same triplet as in bar 14 slide to the **14th** fret of the G-string (2nd finger), the **13th** fret of the B-string (1st finger), and then play the **15th** fret of the B-string (no hammer-on this time).

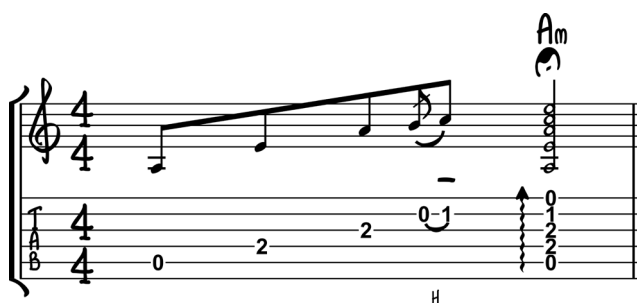
BAR 16



Bar 16 has the E chord, the final chord of our progression. This means we're in a similar situation as in bar 8.

Again, I'm bending the **15th** fret on the B-string a full step up (just like in bar 15). Because the underlying chord is now E, the bend hits the root of the chord in the 1st inversion triad again. Another example of how the meaning of a note changes when the underlying chord changes. Playing that same bend in bar 15 created a lot more tension because the underlying chord was 'F'. Here the same note fits perfectly over the E-chord, creating a feeling of 'resolution'. Note how I bend very slowly to delay this feeling of resolution.

After an abrupt stop at the end of bar 16: the acoustic guitar finishes the video by playing a basic arpeggio:



Conclusion

I hope that, with this second melodic soloing lesson, you're even more convinced of the power of finding chord tones by visualizing triads.

Also, I would like to repeat this is just a framework, and not some magical mathematical formula to write solos. After all, playing a solo is still a creative artform. But if you practice these triads, by themselves or over a backing track, you'll start internalizing their sound and you'll gravitate towards them, even when you're not consciously thinking about them. So in my view, it's an excellent tool to get familiar with the chord tones.

I would encourage you to give this concept some time, e.g. print the triad patterns & stick 'em to your wall, and you'll notice too it will inspire your playing.

Keep on playing that guitar!

maarten
december, 2022