

Today's blues scale riff focuses on a tried and true formula for the blues-rock sound, of which the minor blues scale is an essential component of. This involves playing over an E tonal center and using the open position E minor blues scale. Add some distortion, a few power chord punches and a heavy drum groove and the recipe is complete.

The E minor blues scale contains the notes E-G-A-B^b-B-D. Notice that all of these notes (except for the B^b) are the names of our open strings. Therefore, using this scale in the open position gives us an easy fingering, smooth hammer-ons and pull-offs, beefy power chords and resonant open ringing strings.

We will accentuate our single note scale riffs with some power chords to fatten up our riff. These chords (E5, A5, G5) are taken from the scale tones of the E minor scale that we are using (**E G A B^b B D**). For the G5 chord you will use your second finger on the sixth string, 3rd fret. This finger will also be responsible for leaning down against the fifth string and muting it out with the underside of the finger so that when you strum the sixth through third strings the fifth string is not heard. This technique is called left hand muting.

The musical notation consists of two systems. The first system is in the key of E minor (one sharp) and common time. The melodic line starts with a triplet of eighth notes (E, G, A) followed by a quarter note (Bb), a quarter note (B), and a quarter note (D). The guitar tablature below shows the corresponding fret numbers and fingerings. The second system is in the key of C# minor (two sharps) and common time. The melodic line starts with a triplet of eighth notes (E, G, A) followed by a quarter note (Bb), a quarter note (B), and a quarter note (D). The guitar tablature below shows the corresponding fret numbers and fingerings. Chord diagrams for E5, A5, G5, and E5 are shown above the corresponding measures.

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Practice Tip of the Day: If possible, have your guitar out and sitting in a guitar stand rather than in a case tucked away somewhere. By having the guitar out in plain sight and readily available it may help you to practice more by having the instrument at hand and ready to play at all times. If you're like most guitarists, just the sight of a guitar makes you want to pick it up and play it. In addition, an instrument stand helps keep the instrument safer from damage by having a secure place to rest the instrument rather than leaning it against something where it can get knocked over and damaged.