

TRIADS - Defined & Application

A triad is a three-note chord which can be utilized in any style of music and appears often in blues and rock. The triad is the 1st, 3rd, and 5th of the scale for the chord you are playing over. Triads can really spice up your playing and give birth to all kinds of new sounds for lead and rhythm guitar.

Triads are awesome as they can help you create a musical theme or melody. Melody is critical in most styles of play. Great guitar solos are much, much more than just a bunch of licks strung together. The most memorable of solos seem to be the ones that are very melodic and singable.

There are four main types of triads - major, minor, augmented, and diminished. For this lesson and the video lessons we will focus on minor and major triads. We will be examining triads on the top three strings but know you can put triads together on all the strings all over the neck.

A minor triad is made from the intervals 1,b3,5. These are the notes that make up a minor chord. The notes that make up a chord are also called chord tones. Emphasizing and resolving to these strong chord tones can really make your solos memorable. Practice targeting chord tones while jamming over a practice track. When you hit those strong chord tones you will instantly hear the magic they can bring to a solo.

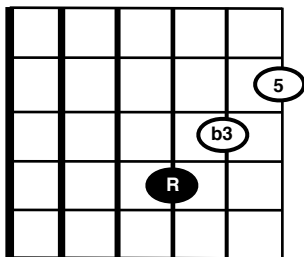
First, memorize the minor and major triad shapes below. These are all moveable shapes with the root note illustrated by the black oval. You may recognize these as parts of chords that you already know. Get creative with them as they will open all kinds of soloing opportunities.

Incorporate these triads into your scale and arpeggio studies and try to find these triads inside their respective pentatonic and/or minor and major scales.

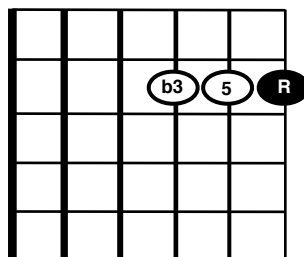
As an exercise, loop a simple three or four chord progression with both major and minor chords and practice playing triads over its respective chord and listen to the sounds. Then build some licks and melodic motifs.

Try to repeat and slightly vary your musical ideas to build themes within your solo. Change triads as the chords change and land on strong chord tones to make strong, memorable solo statements. Let your ear guide you and think in terms of melody.

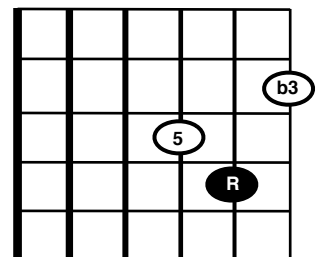
minor triad root position



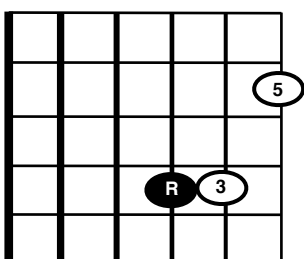
minor triad first inversion



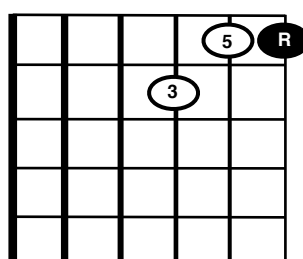
minor triad second inversion



major triad root position



major triad first inversion



major triad second inversion

