

Major Key Soloing

You want to get comfortable soloing in both minor key and major key. If a progression is in major key one choice is you can usually solo using Major Pentatonic scales over ALL the chords.

So major pentatonic over major key should be a default setting just like minor pentatonic over minor key. As soon as you hear major key, you know one option is to solo over all the chords with Major Pentatonic, as it “*relates to all*” the chords.

Major pentatonic produces that sweet, bright, major sound. Be sure to play the scale and listen to the sounds created. Its a very different sound than the bluesy Minor Pentatonic scale. Like I always say, its all about the sounds and mood.

MAJOR KEY I-IV-V blues, shuffles, and swings:

You will hear these rhythms all the time in blues music. If a progression is a major key I-IV-V blues, swing, or shuffle there are MANY avenues to utilize when soloing and improvising, it's wide open.

You can solo with what “*relates to all*” and also by treating each chord as a “*separate event*”. Here are some suggestions to try over these type very common progressions:

1. Try **Minor Pentatonic & Blues** scales over all the chords in the key of the progression. This yields that dark, bluesy, minor sound. (Minor Pentatonic & Blues – 1,b3,4,b5,5,b7)
2. Try **Major Pentatonic** scales over all the chords in the key of the progression. This produces that sweet major sound ala BB King/Allman Brothers. This will be a totally different sound than Minor Pentatonic. (Major Pentatonic – 1,2,3,5,6)
3. **Mix Minor Pentatonic & Blues and Major Pentatonic.** You will hear this a lot in the lead playing of Eric Clapton and BB King. The switching and mixing of Minor and Major Pentatonic is an awesome sound. (Minor & Major Pentatonic 1,2,b3,3,4,5,6,b7)
4. Try the **Dorian Mode** over all the chords. Dorian is the second mode of the major scale. It is considered more of a minor mode but it's intervals have elements of both minor, (b3, b7), and major (2nd, 6th). Dorian works great in any situation where you know both Minor Pentatonic and Major Pentatonic will work. Give it a try over I-IV-V blues progressions, its killer! (Dorian Mode – 1,2,b3,4,5,6,b7)
5. Try the **Mixolydian Mode** as it works great over dominant chords like 7th and 9th chords. Try to play this mode over each chord independently in the key of the chord. (Mixolydian Mode is the fifth mode of the major scale – 1,2,3,4,5,6,b7).

Major Pentatonic Scale applications:

1. Over all chords when in a major key.
2. Over any major type chord when treating each chord as a separate event. (especially dominant 7th chords in blues jams - very popular choice).
3. Over all the chords in major key I-IV-V blues jams, swings, and shuffles.
4. Over all the chords in rock major sounding jams and especially major ballads.

Soloing in major key:

Be careful as there is not as much room for error in major key and “sour” notes will really stick out. You can at times combine major pentatonic with minor pentatonic to produce hybrid scales with elements of both minor and major.

