

The Modes Of The Major Scale - Application 1

The key to understanding the modes is to look at the interval structure that defines each mode and then match them with corresponding chords and progressions. Let's discuss each mode and how to apply them.

With any mode or scale it's not enough just to know the scale, you also have to know how to use it and apply it in a musical situation.

Many of the modes are very similar in their structure. Some have just one interval difference. But these slight differences create unique moods and textures. Each mode has its' own unique mood and tone.

The table below shows each mode and its interval structure. The last column denotes which modes are considered major modes and which are considered minor modes.

Memorize which are the major modes, Ionian, Lydian, and Mixolydian, and which are the minor modes, Dorian, Phrygian, Aeolian, and Locrian. Knowing this will help guide you to utilizing the correct mode over a given chord or progression.

<u>#mode</u>	<u>name</u>	<u>intervals</u>	<u>type of mode</u>
1	Ionian	1,2,3,4,5,6,7	major mode
2	Dorian	1,2,b3,4,5,6,b7	minor mode*
3	Phrygian	1,b2,b3,4,5,b6,b7	minor mode
4	Lydian	1,2,3,#4,5,6,7	major mode
5	Mixolydian	1,2,3,4,5,6,b7	major mode
6	Aeolian	1,2,b3,4,5,b6,b7	minor mode
7	Locrian	1,b2,b3,4,b5,b6,b7	minor mode

*Dorian is considered a minor mode because it has strong elements of minor (b3, b7), along with major (2,6). However, it can be played in some major key progressions.

Dorian works great over all the chords in major key I-IV-V shuffle, blues, or swing type progressions. For those type progressions you can also use minor pentatonic for that minor bluesy sound, major pentatonic for that sweet major sound, or combine elements of both for the Dorian sound.

Phrygian can also be used in some major key progressions that have a b2 chord. So, there is lots of room for creativity with the modes.

Like with many lead guitar avenues, you have to use your discretion and find what sounds best to your ears. Experiment and be creative when utilizing the modes and practice over the jam tracks. Listen for which modes sound best to your ears and get creative with them!

KEY POINTS:

With any mode or scale it's not enough just to know the scale shape, you also have to know how to use it and apply it in a musical situation.

Memorize which are the major modes - Ionian, Lydian, and Mixolydian, and which are the minor modes - Dorian, Aeolian, Phrygian, and Locrian.

Each mode has its own unique mood and tone.

The Modes Of The Major Scale - Application 2

KEY POINTS TO APPLYING THE MODES:

1. **Understand your choices when soloing and improvising.** You can solo over the entire chord progression with what “*relates to all*”, or play over each chord independently, treating each chord as a “*separate event*”.

2. **Know and analyze the chords you are playing over.** The chords provide the complete roadmap to what you can utilize for soloing and improvisation. Just knowing the key signature is not enough. Know what chords are in the progression, and then analyze them to determine what scales, modes, and landing notes to utilize.

The “ACE” principle for modal playing:

Memorize these three steps for utilizing the modes, (the “ACE” principle):

1. **ANALYZE** the chords and/or the progression to get the roadmap for which modes you can utilize.
2. Once you determine which mode or modes to use, **CONVERT** that mode back to its mother or parent major key.
3. Play the mode using the parent major scale patterns but shift to and **EMPHASIZE** the root of the mode.

This is a very systematic and methodical approach to analyzing chords for determining soloing options. Over time your ear will take you to the right notes and this whole process will be more organic. However, at the start, there is value in analyzing chords and progressions while honing your skills to a sharp edge.

The above three steps are absolutely critical to your success playing in the modes. This will take a good amount of practice. So chip away a little each day and you will get it rocking very soon. Remember you are creating a mood - feel it!

KEY PRACTICE: At first try playing a mode over the whole progression or what relates to all the chords of a jam track.

Eventually you will want to try and treat each chord as a separate event and play a different mode over each chord. Get creative and give it a try.

Take your time, don't overwhelm yourself, and practice utilizing the jam tracks. Really hone in and listen for the chord changes and the moods you create with the different modes.

KEY POINTS:

Understand your options when soloing and improvising. Know and analyze the chords you are playing over.

To apply the modes just remember “ACE” – Analyze, Convert, Emphasize.

Remember that it's all about MOOD and EMPHASIS when playing in the modes.