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Minor Pentatonic & Blues - The Expanded Shapes

Expanding minor pentatonic & blues scales to cover more neck territory is one of the fastest ways to get out of playing solely in that one basic box shape. In this lesson we will expand the blues scale two frets in each direction thus combining three box shapes and doubling the playing area. These expanded scales will get you playing ACROSS the neck and eliminate the “stuck in the box” scenario.

We are still going to play the same six-note scale. However, the expanded scale exudes a much more fluid sound and sets up more additional runs and licks than just staying solely in one box shape. These expanded scales really open the pathways and lead guitar avenues. You will find yourself using these expanded scales all the time – they are invaluable.

When analyzing the expanded scales illustrated below you can see part of the box patterns encapsulated within the longer shapes. The shape is expanded two frets in each direction combining three adjacent boxes. The expanded I scale combines boxes 5, 1, and 2 while the expanded II scale combines boxes 3, 4, and 5.

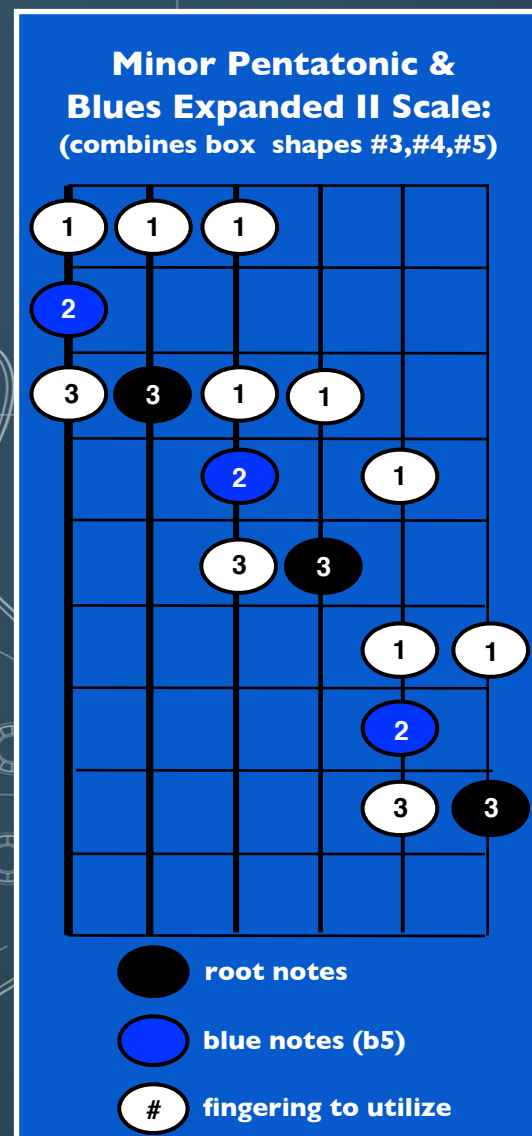
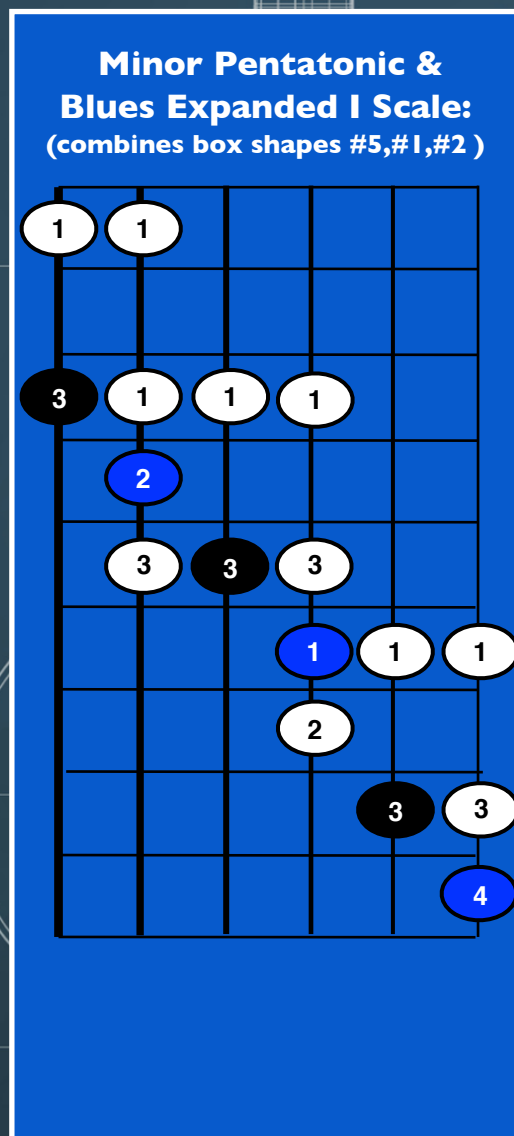
Like box patterns the expanded scales are moveable. The root note determines the key.

To play these scales in the proper key first find the low root notes. For example, to play the expanded I scale in E minor, start with your third finger on the 12th fret of the low E-string and play the shape from there. That 12th fret low E-string is a E note.

To play the expanded II scale in E minor, start with your third finger on the 7th fret of the A-string and play the shape. The 7th fret A-string is an E-note.

To locate these scales fast find the low root note. The expanded I uses 3rd finger root on the low E-string and the expanded II uses 3rd finger root on the A-string. Find the root notes and blast away from there!

Practice in all keys and over jam tracks. Have fun and remember that your playing is an evolution.



- root notes
- blue notes (b5)
- # fingering to utilize