

Ultimate Baritone Blues Breakdown



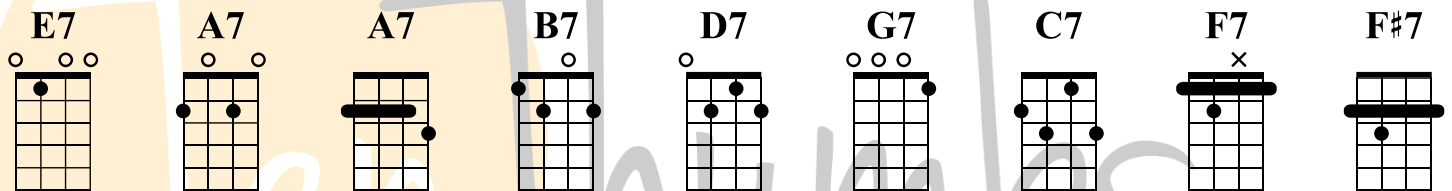
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Key: All

Tempo: Any

Video Tutorial: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wl0jmgPVX-w>

Chord Shapes: These are the chord shapes for all the must know keys. Every blues player should be able to strum through a blues in C, D, E, F, G, A and B, all the keys that don't have a sharp or flat in the title, once you master these you move on to the E Flat Blues for example, but start here.



Strum Pattern Throughout Tutorial

1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & |
D D U U D U |

What is a 12 bar blues?

A bar is a measure of music, in blues 4/4 and 12/8 are the two signatures used. While that information is more valuable for the drummer it is a good to have a general understanding of time signatures. In general, a strum pattern is almost always one measure of music, so if you strum the strum pattern 12 times, you will have played 12 bars.

The 12 bar blues also follows a specific chord progression that looks like this.

I7 I7 I7 I7
IV7 IV7 I7 I7
V7 IV7 I7 V7

If you are able to identify the I, IV and V chords for a key you can play the blues in any key.

Mayor Keys	I	ii	iii	IV	V	vi	vii
C	C	Dm	Em	F	G	Am	Bdim
G	G	Am	Bm	C	D	Em	F#dim
D	D	Em	F#m	G	A	Bm	C#dim
A	A	Bm	C#m	D	E	F#m	G#dim
E	E	F#m	G#m	A	B	C#m	D#dim
B	B	C#m	D#m	E	F#	G#m	A#dim
F#	F#	G#m	A#m	B	C#	D#m	E#dim
C#	C#	D#m	E#m	F#	G#	A#m	B#dim
F	F	Gm	Am	Bb	C	Dm	Edim
Bb	Bb	Cm	Dm	Eb	F	Gm	Adim
Eb	Eb	Fm	Gm	Ab	Bb	Cm	Ddim
Ab	Ab	Bbm	Cm	Db	Eb	Fm	Gdim
Db	Db	Ebm	Fm	Gb	Ab	Bbm	Cdim
Gb	Gb	Abm	Bbm	Cb	Db	Ebm	Fdim
Cb	Cb	Dbm	Ebm	Fb	Gb	Abm	Bbdim

This is a key chart, you will see the key on the left in yellow and the columns are represented by roman numerals up top. If you go the key of E you will see the I chord is E, the IV is A and the V B, to make them blues chords you have to transform them into 7 chords.

So the previous pattern we say will now look like this. Note that you can do this with any key, find the I, IV, V chords and plug them into the 12 bar progression and viola, you are rocking.

E7 E7 E7 E7
A7 A7 E7 E7
B7 A7 E7 B7

There is a variation that you see sometimes where the second bar will become the VI chord, this is known as a quick turnaround blues and in the key of E it will look like this.

E7 A7 E7 E7
A7 A7 E7 E7
B7 A7 E7 B7

The next thing you want to do is add a turnaround. While the turnaround is the last 4 chords in the 12 bar progression the riff will last the last two. This is just one specific turnaround, but here there are thousands of options.

The musical notation shows a blues riff in 4/4 time. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The riff consists of 12 measures. The first measure has a quarter note E4. The next three measures are triplets of eighth notes: (F#4, G4, A4), (B4, C5, B4), and (A4, G4, F#4). The fourth measure has a quarter note B4. The fifth measure has a quarter note A4. The sixth measure has a quarter note G4. The seventh measure has a quarter note F#4. The eighth measure has a quarter note E4. The ninth measure has a quarter note D4. The tenth measure has a quarter note C4. The eleventh measure has a quarter note B3. The twelfth measure has a quarter note A3. The bottom staff shows the guitar fretboard with fingerings for the strings: 0, 4, 3, 0, 3, 2, 0, 1, 0, 0, 2, 2, 0, 0, 2, 0, 2, 1, 1, 1.

Strumming isn't the only way to play the blues, in fact fingerpicking the blues has essentially been the more popular way to play it since its inception, when you listen to any of the classics you will hear amazingly intricate blues patters that move with the music. Here are ideas for each chord in the key of E. Note this is as simple pattern that can be applied to any chord and it can also be modified by adding and moving notes on the off beat, giving the song more movement. Note you have two options for the E7 chord, the second one hammers on the first fret. That plays with the minor and major 3rd intervals, playing with this intervals is a common thing in blues music.

The scale, you need to know the scale. It is pretty simple, if the blues is in E you play the E minor pentatonic scale, if the blues is in C# you play the C# minor pentatonic, if the blues is in F... you guessed it! F minor pentatonic. This is the basic soloing 101 of blues, you can use other scales, but master this one first. If you add the flat 5th interval (which is easy to find as it is the note between the IV and V chords, so in E we have A and B, making the note the A#/Bb) than the minor pentatonic becomes the blues scale. For the blues scale you want to use that note in passing, meaning do not let it ring out. The best way to practice these ideas is shape by shape. The pentatonic has 5 shapes, learn them one at a time, solo with them, learn how to connect them. Go to youtube, search "Blues Backing Track in E" then just play with the solo for the full 12 minutes, that is the way to learn. Here is E minor pentatonic shape 1. Find a backing track and play with this over the top of the music.

The last element is learning to write your own blues song. This is fairly simply as blues verses are just one rhyme. For example.

I got the blues/
Ohhh I got the blues/
Everyday is more bad news

To learn to manage this you simple need to know where to play the last syllable of these rhymes. The last syllable of the first line, "blues" happens on the 1st beat of bar 3. The last syllable of the second rhyme, again "blues" happens on the first beat of bar 7. The last syllable of last line, "news" happens on the first beat of bar 11. Sometimes the word you are rhyming may have multiple syllables, Chi-ca-go for example, you would actually want "Go" to land on the first beat, something to keep in mind with more complicated rhymes.

There you have it Barri players, a complete introduction to blues music!

