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## The Shuffle Feel

In a shuffle, the eighth notes feel uneven due to the long-short-long of the implied eighth note triplets. The emphasis is on the first and last of the triplet, for each of the four beats in a bar.

The shuffle has a “swing” feel and is often accompanied by a walking bassline, like in jazz.

Always remember that no matter the tempo, shuffles have to swing.



### EXAMPLE 1



Let's start with the most common rhythm guitar part in shuffles of any style, form, or tempo: the “boogie.” Most blues tunes are derived from the same three chords, the I-IV-V chord progression. The Roman numerals refer to scale degrees. In the key of E, the I chord is E; the IV chord is A; and the V chord is B. Because in blues a  $\flat 7$  is present or implied for each chord, the I, IV, and V are typically seen as dominant seventh chords.

E7 = E, G#, B, D

A7 = A, C#, E, G

B7 = B, D#, F#, A

Example 1 is fragmented into double-stops involving the root and 5th and then the root and 6th of each chord in the progression.

Play this example at varying tempos using pick-hand palm muting to taste.

The musical score for Example 1 is presented in four systems, each corresponding to a measure of the 4-beat shuffle progression. The key signature is E major (one sharp), and the time signature is 4/4. The progression consists of four measures: E7, A7, B7, and A7. Each measure is shown with a treble clef staff and a guitar tablature staff. The tablature uses numbers 0-4 to indicate fret positions on the strings. The first three measures (E7, A7, B7) are marked with a *sim.* (sustained) instruction. The progression is: E7 (measures 1-2), A7 (measures 3-4), B7 (measure 5), and A7 (measures 6-7).

# Major Pentatonic Forms

The major pentatonic scale, a.k.a the “country blues scale,” has its roots in American and European folk music from long ago. In the 1920s, Lonnie Johnson\* leaned heavily on this scale and the Mixolydian mode, which in turn profoundly influenced T-Bone Walker and B.B. King and, naturally, the next generations of players.

The major pentatonic scale is the other side of the mood spectrum in blues. With the presence of the major 3rd and major 6th intervals, this five-note counterpart to the minor pentatonic scale can be thought of as a major scale (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7) without the 2nd and 4th degrees. When played over the dominant seventh chord, it brings a lighter, sweeter tonality and contrasts nicely with the serious mood of the minor pentatonic. Those two sounds are the yin and yang of the blues, if you will.



EXAMPLE 75

You will notice that the five forms of the major pentatonic are exactly the same forms as the minor pentatonic ones, only rearranged. As with the minor pentatonic, the forms are based on five notes of the scale. Start by getting a handle on the forms, always being mindful of where the roots and 3rds are found. Use those notes as landmarks.

G MAJOR PENTATONIC:	G	A	B	D	E
INTERVAL:	1	2	3	5	6
FORM:	I	II	III	IV	V

Form I (from R)                      Form II (from 2)                      Form III (from 3)

R 2 3 5 6 R 2 3 5 6 R      2 3 5 6 R 2 3 5 6 R      3 5 6 R 2 3 5 6 R 2 3

3 5 2 5 2 5 2 4 3 5 3      5 7 5 7 5 7 4 7 5 8      7 10 7 10 7 9 7 9 8 10 7

Form IV (from 5)                      Form V (from 6)                      Form I (repeats 8va)

5 6 R 2 3 5 6 R 2 3 5      6 R 2 3 5 6 R 2 3 5 6      R 2 3 5 6 R 2 3 5 6 R

10-12 10-12 9-12 9-12 10-12 10      12-15 12-14 12-14 12-14 12-15 12      15-17 14-17 14-17 14-16 15-17 15

\* Lonnie Johnson is credited with introducing the flat pick to urban blues guitarists. His technique (especially his vibrato) combined with his jazz-flavored style set the pace for what was to come.