

5 Beginner-Intermediate Blues Techniques

1. How to Play a 1.4.5 in Every Key

The primary chord progression of the blues genre is the 1.4.5, which can be determined in any key by establishing the 1st, 4th, and 5th notes of a given major scale, which can then be converted to chordal form. For example, the 1st, 4th and 5th notes of the A scale are A, D, and E which can be used as the roots of a Amaj, Dmaj, Emaj progression (add the flatted 7th note relative to each chord for an authentic blues feel.)

A D E A5 D5 E5 A7 D7 E7

2. How to Play a 12 Bar Blues

Now that we can determine what chords are in a 1.4.5 in all 12 keys, let's put those chord changes to work and learn the structure that has been used in countless blues songs.

A7 D7 A7 E7 D7 A7 A7 E7

A5 D5 A5 E5 D5 A5 A5 E5

3. How to Shuffle - Open Position + Power Chords

One popular rhythmic element of the blues genre is the shuffle pattern. In this example, each chord in the 1.4.5 progression can be represented using this classic riff, which can then be applied to a 12 bar blues. Let's begin with shuffling using open strings, before learning to transpose the technique using power chords

A D E

A5 D5 E5

4. How to Perform a Percussive Strumming Pattern

There are many different rhythms used within the blues genre, but one that has a lot of mileage would be the "bass, up, chuck, up" pattern. In this example, let's learn to apply this tried and true rhythm over a blues in E. Can you determine what the 1.4.5 progression in E would be?



E7

A7 **E7**

B7 **A7** **E7** **E7** **B7**

5. How to Perform a Basic Lead + Turnaround Using the Blues Scale

A C D Eb E G A C D Eb E G A C

Complete Practice Solo - Key of A

A7 **D7**

A7 **E7** **D7** **A7** **A7 E7**