

# Learn to solo like... Angus Young (AC/DC)

## PART 1 / 4 : Minor and major pentatonic scales

One of the key components in the music of AC/DC are the instantly recognizable, crazy guitar solos. Angus Young has got a few tricks he will constantly use to achieve this classic hard rock sound.

In part 1, we will look at the kind of scales Angus uses to improvise and write solos.

The most common scale used in rock (and in many more styles of music) is the minor pentatonic scale, which you probably already know. In many songs, Angus would often switch between the minor pentatonic and the major pentatonic, often at regular intervals (half a bar in major, half a bar in minor for example)

Let's have a look at this lick using the G major and minor scales:

### Lick 1

Standard tuning

♩ = 133

E-Gt

mf

full

full

(8)

8 9 8 10 10 10 (8) 10 8

3

7

#

#

full

(8) 11 (11) 11 8 9 8 8

T  
A  
B

Now, let's highlight the notes from the major pentatonic in pink and the notes from the minor pentatonic in blue:

# Lick 1

Standard tuning

♩ = 133

The image shows the musical notation for Lick 1. It consists of two systems of notation. The first system is for the E-Guitar (E-Gt) and includes a standard staff and a TAB staff. The E-Gt staff is in 4/4 time, starting with a pickup measure (7) and a first measure (8). The second measure contains notes G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, with a 'full' annotation above the E5 note. The third measure contains notes D5, C5, B4, A4, G4, with another 'full' annotation above the B4 note. The TAB staff for the first system shows fret numbers: 8, 9, 8, 10, 10, 10, (8), 10, 8. The second system also includes an E-Gt staff and a TAB staff. The E-Gt staff starts with a triplet of notes G4, A4, B4, followed by notes C5, D5, E5, D5, C5, B4, A4, G4. The TAB staff shows fret numbers: (8), 11, (11), 11, 8, 9, 8, 8. There are 'full' annotations above the 11th fret notes in both systems.

To create licks following this kind of logic, we can take 2 pentatonic scales, one major and one minor, in the same area of the neck, and improvising using notes from either the major or the minor pentatonic. Here are the 2 positions the example above uses:

## G Major pentatonic

Standard tuning

♩ = 133

The image shows the musical notation for the G Major pentatonic scale. It consists of an E-Guitar (E-Gt) staff and a TAB staff. The E-Gt staff is in 4/4 time, starting with a pickup measure (7) and a first measure (7-10). The second measure contains notes G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, with a '2' above the C5 note. The third measure contains notes D5, C5, B4, A4, G4, with a '3' above the G4 note. The TAB staff shows fret numbers: 7-10, 7-10, 7-9, 7-9, 8-10, 7-10-7, 10-8, 9, 7, 9-7, 10-7, 10-7.

# G Minor pentatonic

Standard tuning

♩ = 133

E-Gt

*mf*

T  
A  
B

8-10 8-10 8-10 7-10 8-11 8-10-8 11-8 10 7-10-8 10-8 10-8 10-8