



Improving Minor Pentatonic Scale – for players at intermediate level

by Joel Loh

Getting bored of the minor pentatonic sound?

If there was one scale that describes guitar players, as a race, it would probably be the minor pentatonic scale, which is *most* likely the first scale you had learnt when you ventured beyond the cowboy chords.

In fact, it is hardly surprising at all that many guitarists use this ubiquitous scale; it *JUST* sounds good over a variety of genres. Rock, blues, jazz, country; you name the genre, the minor pentatonic scale has been there and done that.

However, as they say, too much of a good thing can get boring, and somewhat clich  . Under such circumstances, you can add extra “colour” notes to this tried and tested scale and gain some pizzazz, and maybe even turn some heads at your next blues jam!

Adding the 6

In this article, our focus is on the colour note that works great in both the blues and jazz(-blues) idiom... the **6**, or the “la” in solfege.

Before we proceed, let’s take a step back and review some important-but-ever-so-boring aspects of music theory, in our second favourite key: “A”!

Table 1 shows the A major scale.

Please note that each box represents a fret distance. Observe how the notes line up with its solfege and degree value.

Table 1: A Major Scale

Degree	1		2		3	4		5		6		7	8
Solfege	do		ray		me	far		sol		la		ti	do
Note	A		B		C#	D		E		F#		G#	A



Table 2 shows the A minor pentatonic scale, with an added 6th degree. As shown in Table 1, we will be adding the corresponding note in A major, F#.

Table 2: A minor with added 6

Degree	1			b3		4		5		6	b7		8
Note	A			C		D		E		F#	G		A

P.S To my fellow music nerds out there:

Yes, adding the 6th degree does change the pentatonic to a hexatonic scale, but let's not let musical notation get in the way of us sounding cooler! 😊

Example of Guitar Licks

E.g. 1 below shows a “standard” A minor pentatonic lick. Juxtapose it against E.g. 2, where one of the G notes are swapped out for an F#.

Eg 1

Electric Guitar

Electric Guitar

Eg 2

Electric Guitar

Electric Guitar

Have fun playing guitar and try out the tips in the YouTube videos!

This is an accompanying article to the YouTube video:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FXW8weHUI6U&ab_channel=RitmoMusicStudio