

Using Pentatonic Scales

Getting sounds in our ears

The patterns and chord progressions below can be applied in a similar way to the way you're currently using diatonic patterns and progressions. These will help your singers develop an intuitive understanding of how to apply riffs, embellishments, and licks.

What are pentatonic scales?

Amazing Grace, Sir Duke, Billy Jean, Stairway to Heaven, and Shape Of You are all pentatonic melodies. The opening riff of *My Girl* is a pentatonic scale, and the melody is entirely pentatonic.

- Pentatonic scales are natural to people. A major pentatonic scale uses the scale degrees 1, 2, 3, 5, 6 (C, D, E, G, A). The natural minor pentatonic scale uses scale degrees 1, 3, 4, 5, 7 (A, C, D, E, G).
 - Warm up accompaniment can be played along with them, but they'll be better served if you simply play a major or minor triad once they know the pattern.
 - This minor pentatonic warm-up pattern is simple, flexible, and easy to apply. (Here is another pattern to try)
 - This is a warm-up using a major pentatonic scale that the person set to a beat. Setting these warm-ups to a beat is really helpful in integrating their application. I would suggest changing up the rhythms as soon as possible.

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- Once you and/or your client knows the pattern to play it, you can:
 - Do it with NVM principles in mind; Change vowel choices but keep the placement consistent.
 - Use both major and minor chords
 - Chord progressions allow singers to get the hang of how the scale fits into the harmonic structure. Try playing I - vi - VI - V as the singer sings the same minor pentatonic pattern.

Pentatonic Warm-up 1



Play over a chord progressions:

I-IV-V-I = C-F-G-C

I-ii-V-I = C-Dm-G-C

I-V-I = C-G-C

I-IV-I-V-IV-I = C-F-C-G-F-C

(refer to 12 bar blues)

I-vi-IV-V-I = C-Am-F-G-C

Pentatonic Warm-up 1 (minor)



Play over a chord progressions:

i-IV-V-i = Cm-F-G-Cm

i-V-i = Cm-G-Cm

i-vi^o -i-V7-iv-i = Cm-Fdim-Cm-G7-Fm-Cm

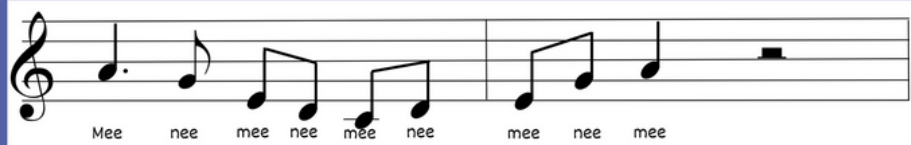
(refer to 12 bar minor blues)

i-vi^o-iv-V-i = Cm-Adim-Fm-G-C

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Pentatonic Warm-up 2



Play over a chord progressions:

I-IV-V-I = C-F-G-C

I-ii-V-I = C-Dm-G-C

I-V-I = C-G-C

I-IV-I-V-IV-I = C-F-C-G-F-C

(refer to 12 bar blues)

I-vi-IV-V-I = C-Am-F-G-C

Pentatonic Warm-up 3



Play over a chord progressions:

I-IV-V-I = C-F-G-C

I-ii-V-I = C-Dm-G-C

I-V-I = C-G-C

I-IV-I-V-IV-I = C-F-C-G-F-C

(refer to 12 bar blues)

I-vi-IV-V-I = C-Am-F-G-C