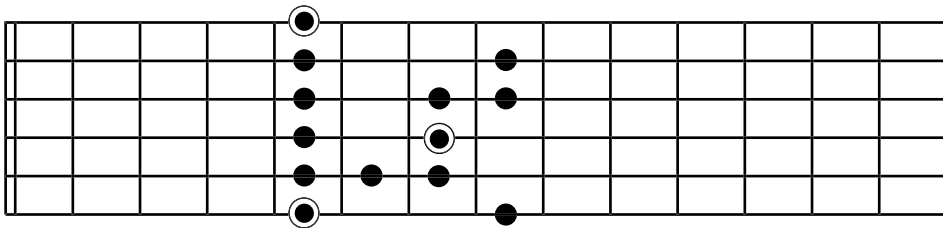


# It All Starts with the Blues

(From the book *A Guide to Blues/Rock Guitar Soloing* by David Grissom.)

The foundation of rock soloing is the blues. Most of the great rock soloists of the last 30 years can trace their styles back to blues influences. Thousands of rock songs have been written using a standard 12-bar blues framework. The simplicity and emotion in a great blues solo is also a great place for us to start making some music. Let's begin with the blues scale in A. Here's a diagram of the fretting.



Play this scale below starting on A (the tonic) on the 5th fret of the 6th string. Try playing it with all downstrokes, and then with alternate picking. Go as slowly as you have to in order to play it cleanly. Practicing both picking methods will give your fingers a good workout and let you hear the different sounds of each method. On the CD, I play this using all downstrokes, which to me sounds more aggressive.

## AUDIO CLIP

T  
A  
B

5 8 5 6 7 5 7 5 7 8 5 8 5 (5)

Now let's try a basic lick in A using the scale. It starts with your third finger at the 7th fret. When you get to the fourth note of this lick (Eb), notice that I bend into it from the previous note (D). I pick the Eb just as I bend the string the appropriate length (half step). The next two notes are not actually picked—I let the string bend back down to D (still with my 3rd finger) and pull off my 3rd finger to make the C sound. I use downstrokes here. If you are just starting out, you can play this lick without any bends or the pull-off.

