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In this tutorial, we are going to have fun with a very particular kind of scale, the Melodic Minor scale.You'll find the most common fretboard patterns for playing this scale up and down the neck, with root on the three lowest strings.We'll also apply music theory to generate chords and modes from this scale, so let's begin!Use this tool to see various ways to play the Melodic Minor scale on the guitar:Melodic Minor Scale Fretboard PatternsHere below are the most common ways to play this scale.The examples provided are in the key of C, you can shift the shapes up or down the neck to play with another root. Melodic Minor Scale - Fretboard PatternsYou find more scale patterns across all the fretboard in my ebook Scales Over Chords | Learn How To Play The Right Scales Over Any Chord Natural, Harmonic and Melodic Minor Scale FormulasFor a better understanding of minor scales, you should know that actually there exist 3 main types of minor scales:They have apparently subtle differences but with a great impact on the overall sound.The Natural Minor scale is the relative minor of a major scale, this means that you can obtain a minor scale by playing all the notes in a major scale starting from its 6th degree instead from the root (A in the case of the C major scale).If we raise the b7 of a natural minor scale by one half-step, it becomes a major seventh (7) and we get a Harmonic Minor scale.I know what you are thinking: why the Harmonic Minor scale? Were the Natural Minor scale not enough?This answer is going to be complicated, basically, the Harmonic Minor scale allows to use of a leading tone in a natural minor scale context.You can safely ignore this stuff, just know that Mozart used this concept a lot.Do you see the big jump between the b6 and the 7 in the Harmonic Minor scale above?In ancient times, some music theorists noticed that 3 half-steps (or semitones, or frets) were a too difficult distance to sing, so they decided to raise the b6 by one sharp (6): the Melodic Minor Scale was born. Chords Created From the Melodic Minor ScalesLike for any other scale, we can generate chords from a scale by stacking its notes moving by third intervals.Let's take as an example the A Minor Melodic Scale:By stacking third intervals on any note of the scale, we obtain the following table:The cells in orange are the notes that belong to the A melodic minor scale (A, B, C, D, E, F#, G#); the cells in blue are the root and the thirds from that root: they are the tones in the chords.Depending on the distances in semitones between the chord tones, we have different chord qualities. For example, take the first chord, composed of A, C, E and G#:This chord in composed of the root, a Minor Third (3 half-steps from the root) denoted as b3, a Perfect Fifth (7 half-steps), denoted as 5 and a Major Seventh (11 half-steps), denoted as 7.This is a Am(maj7) chord, a particular chord that is of minor quality, but with a Major Seventh!If need help with intervals distances and names, check my freboard intervals tutorial.If we repeat this process for all the notes in the melodic scale, we finally obtain all the chords in this scale:A m(maj7)B m7C aug(maj7)D 7E 7F# m7/b5G# m7/b5G# (7)E (5)C (b3)A (1)A (1)F# (6)D (4)B (2)B (2)G# (7)E (5)C (b3)C (b3)A (1)F# (6)D (4)D (4)B (2)G# (7)E (5)E (5)C (b3)A (1)F# (6)F# (6)D (4)B (2)G# (7)That's a strange scale with very particular chords, such as the A m(maj7) or the C aug(maj7).Important: the chord construction process we have just seen, in which you stack thirds over any note in the scale, works exactly for all the scales. Yes, you can harmonize any type of scale with this process.Modes Of The Melodic Minor ScaleLike with the modes of the Major Scale (Ionian, Dorian, Phrygian, Lydian, Mixolydian, Aeolian and Locrian) we can generate modes from the Melodic Minor scale by playing all the notes in that scale starting from any note.Let's play the following note sequences:A, B, C, D, E, F#, G#, A: this is the A Melodic Minor scaleB, C, D, E, F#, G#, A, B: this is the B Dorian B2 scaleC, D, E, F#, G#, A, B, C: this is the C Lydian Augmented scaleD, E, F#, G#, A, B, C, D: this is the D Lydian Dominant scaleE, F#, G#, A, B, C, D, E: this is the E Mixolydian B6 scaleF#, G#, A, B, C, D, E, F#: this is the F# Aeolian B5 scaleG#, A, B, C, D, E, F#, G#: this is the G# Super Locrian scaleYou find the fretboard diagrams for playing these scales over the entire fretboard in my complete ebook Scales Over Chords | Learn How To Play The Right Scales Over Any Chord.Here's a recap table with the formula of the Modes of the Melodic Minor scale:For further reference, here are a table showing the notes in the Melodic minor scale for every key:12b34567CDEbFGABGABbCDEF#DEFGABC#ABCDEF#G#EF#GABC#D#BC#DEF#G#A#F#G#ABC#D#E#GbAbBbbCbDbEbFC#D#EF#G#A#B#DbEbFbGbAbBbCG#A#BC#D#E#F##AbBbCbDbEbFGD#E#F#G#A#B#C##EbFGbAbBbCDA#B#C#D#E#F##G##BbCDbEbFGAFGAbBbCDEMelodic Minor Scale: ConclusionWe have just seen the formula of the Melodic Minor scale, how to create chords on it, and the modes generated from that scale. Now you have a new option for your solos and improvisation.Be sure to check my complete ebook on guitar scale, and to play a bit with my interactive guitar scale finder tool, that allows you to experiment with any type of scale up and down the neck. This ends our adventures in minor scales; to download the free guitar resources and to stay updated, subscribe here. If we compare melodic minor with two other commonly used minor scales, natural minor and harmonic minor, we can see that they all share the same interval sequence up to the 5th degree. It's the 6th and 7th degrees that distinguish these scales from one another... Below are the three minor scales mapped out in E across the 1st string... Explore these minor scales over the E minor track below. Take some time to really feel them! So it's the combination of the major 6th (6) and major 7th (7) interval, formed around the minor triad (1 ♭3 5), that gives melodic minor its uniquely haunting minor sound.Start by exploring it across a single string against a minor chord track. For example, B melodic minor over B minor... Melodic Minor Chord Connection & Basic Patterns Like other minor scales, melodic minor's tonic or root triad is minor, so it will work over basic minor chords. Here I'm playing box patterns built around the familiar 5th and 6th string minor barre chord shapes (sometimes referred to as "A shape" and "E shape" respectively)... The scale's major 7th interval tells us it also connects to minor chords with a major 7th, also known as a minor major 7th chord (1 ♭3 5 7) e.g. Bm(maj7) or BmM7... Composers typically make a choice between harmonic and melodic minor over minor major 7th chords, as both scales use a major 7th, and are therefore sometimes used interchangeably. But melodic minor's natural 6th is often favoured for its brighter contrast against the dark, tense major 7th.It's a good idea to train your ears to this distinction so you can make your tone choices more consciously and evoke the desired feeling.We'll look more at connecting the scale to chords later. Over Minor Triads In Progressions There are instances of a basic minor triad whereby melodic minor offers us some additional colour. For example, in minor keys, melodic minor could replace the standard natural minor scale over the tonic chord.In this A minor key example, I play A melodic minor over the Am tonic and then change to A natural minor over the other chords (G and Dm)... While natural and harmonic minor are almost always used on the tonic position of a key, melodic minor can also be positioned on other degrees to good effect.For example, in major keys the 4 (IV) chord is often played as minor (iv), which we can complement with melodic minor.For example, in C major, F minor would be our modified 4 chord, and therefore we'd switch from the C major scale to F melodic minor over F minor... We'll look more at using melodic minor over chord sequences shortly. Melodic Minor Patterns Like other scales, melodic minor has a roadmap that can be broken up into various patterns.Here we have G melodic minor mapped out across the neck... Chord Shape Patterns From earlier, we can identify the two patterns built around the tonic minor chord shapes on the 6th and 5th strings. These are good initial reference positions for getting your bearings... "Box" Patterns We can also divide up the large roadmap into 4 condensed box patterns, which, once memorised can be used to link up different areas of the neck... Tip: When memorising these patterns, it's useful to identify where the root positions fall within them, to help link them up and find your bearings. 3 Notes Per String Patterns Some players prefer to divide up the neck into 3 notes per string patterns, which allow for wider sequential runs... 3nps 1 3nps 2 3nps 3 3nps 4 3nps 5 Start by taking them two strings at a time and come up with a sequence you like the sound of. For example (using the 2nd pattern from above)... Hexatonic Patterns Within the roadmap we can also visualise hexatonic patterns - repeating six-tone sequences that omit a tone from the complete scale.In this example the root is omitted, giving the scale a more outside sound. Again, think it terms of string pairings when navigating these... Pentatonic Patterns We can even form melodic minor flavoured pentatonic scales from the roadmap. Here I use the most important colour tones from the scale - 2, ♭3, 5, 6 and 7... Each of these pattern forms offer us different options for phrasing and sequential runs.However you choose to break up and navigate this roadmap, being aware of the defining tones of the scale, and how they interact with the backing chord, will help you to create the sound you want. Melodic Minor Modes Like the major scale and harmonic minor, melodic minor can be seen as the parent scale of six related modes, that can be used over a variety of chord types... Each of these modes can be thought of as starting on a related degree of melodic minor. So they all use the same melodic minor roadmap, and therefore any of our melodic minor patterns and licks can be used to play these modes.For example, F Lydian Dominant uses the same seven notes, and therefore the same roadmap, as C Melodic minor. As does B Altered. All we need to do is position our relative melodic minor patterns appropriately to cover these modes. Some examples... Lydian Dominant Lydian Dominant is the 4th mode of melodic minor, used over dominant 7th chords and distinguished by its raised 4th (♯4) degree.As it's the 4th mode, it starts on the 4th degree of its parent melodic minor scale. The intervals of melodic minor get transposed/adjusted based on this new tonic (1)... Therefore to play C Lydian dominant for example, we'd use a G melodic minor pattern, as C lies on G melodic minor's 4th degree... G Melodic Minor C Lydian Dominant Here I'm playing over the mode's tonic chord - C7... Inversely, you could also see the melodic minor scale as starting on the 5th of Lydian Dominant. Either way, once you know melodic minor's roadmap and patterns, you'll automatically have Lydian Dominant covered! Mixolydian ♭6 Similarly, we could use a melodic minor pattern to play its 5th mode, Mixolydian ♭6, a more tense alternative to regular Mixolydian over dominant chords.As its the 5th mode, it starts on the 5th degree of its parent melodic minor... Therefore to play D Mixolydian ♭6, we'd use a G melodic minor pattern... G Melodic Minor D Mixolydian ♭6 Here I'm playing it over D7... Tip: The run above was almost the same as earlier (over Gm). The only difference is I landed on D, reaffirming the D7 root. Same melodic minor pattern, different context! Altered Scale The 7th mode, commonly known as the Altered Scale, which is especially important in jazz music because of how it colours altered dominant chords (these are tense sounding dominant 7th based chords that typically include a flat 5th, flat or sharp 9th and/or flat 13th).An easy way to remember where to position melodic minor for the altered scale is one half step or fret up from the chord root you're playing over... Therefore to play F♯ Altered, we'd use a G Melodic Minor pattern... G Melodic Minor F♯ Altered Here I'm playing over F♯7♭13... Side note: The Altered scale is a strange one! It functions over augmented and altered dominant chords, typically in the 5 (V) position of a key, before resolving to the tonic. In order for it to work, it has to be compatible with the backing chord. We'll look more at this scale in more detail in its own lesson. Melodic Minor Harmony Finally, let's look at how harmony is formed from melodic minor, also known as scale harmonisation, starting with chords.Like the major scale and harmonic minor, melodic minor forms seven triads, each rooted on a degree of the scale. These can also be made into 7th chords... Tonic (I) We established earlier that the tonic triad of the scale, that is the chord built on its first degree, is minor. Therefore G minor would be the tonic or 1 chord of G melodic minor, for example... But we can also form more complex minor chords from melodic minor's tones.Here I'm playing some different minor based forms from the scale on the tonic position... m(maj7) m(maj7) m(maj9) m(maj9) m6/9 m6/9 m6/9 m6/9 m(maj13) Subdominant (IV) A common movement is to the 4 chord. In G melodic minor, that would be C major in its triad form, and C dominant 7 (C7) in its seventh form. But again, let's explore some additional colours on this 4 position using the scale's tones... C7♯11 C7♯11 C9♯11 C9♯11 C13 C13 C13 Let's try a simple movement between the 1 and 4 chords using G melodic minor. This is a good initial movement to train your ears to, especially for those interested in jazz harmony... IV and V In Blues Now, focusing on the seventh chords from the scale, you'll notice we get a dominant 7th chord on both the 4 and 5 positions... And we can extend these to dominant 9th chords as demonstrated here, again in the key of G (taken from G melodic minor)... You're probably familiar with this IV / V, dominant 7th/9th relationship in a blues context. Therefore melodic minor offers us a nice alternative to the standard minor pentatonic and blues scale over the 4 and 5 chords. In this example we'd switch to G melodic minor over C7 and D7... Three-Part Harmony As well as block chords, we can use our melodic minor roadmap to create flows of harmony that highlight the scale's unique colour. All I'm doing in this example is using the top three strings of our roadmap for a three-part harmony over G minor (along with its 4 and 5 chords, C7 and D7)... So when exploring scales, think about using the roadmap to create two-part (dyads) and three-part harmonies, as well as single-part melodies. In Summary... Melodic minor gives us both a melodic and harmonic system for accompanying minor chords and keys, plus three related modes (built on melodic minor's 4th, 5th and 7th degrees) for use over dominant 7th chords.Start by getting familiar with melodic minor's sound and patterns over single chord tracks (which I provided earlier on this page). You can then start to explore it through compatible chord changes.Enjoy your exploration of this wonderful scale and thank you for your time! FacebookXRedditPinterestEmail The melodic minor scale is a unique and versatile tool for guitarists, blending both major and minor tonalities. Unlike the natural minor scale, the melodic minor provides a distinctive sound, making it a favorite in genres like jazz, classical, and even fusion. In this blog, we'll break down how to use the melodic minor scale, how it applies to your guitar playing, and give examples of famous songs that utilize it. The melodic minor scale differs from other minor scales in that it raises both the 6th and 7th degrees when ascending, and reverts to the natural minor scale when descending. This creates a more melodic and smoother sound in ascending lines while maintaining a minor, darker feel when descending. For example, in C melodic minor: Ascending: C – D – Eb – F – G – A – B – C Descending: C – Bb – Ab – G – F – Eb – D – C (same as the natural minor). Many modern musicians, especially in jazz, use the ascending version both ways to maintain consistency in improvisation. SoloCraft is the ultimate guide to mastering guitar soloing, designed for players of all levels. Packed with step-by-step lessons, pro-level techniques, and real-world examples, SoloCraft teaches you how to navigate the fretboard, craft expressive solos, and unlock your full potential as a lead guitarist. Whether you're improvising, building speed, or adding emotion to your playing, SoloCraft gives you the tools to solo like a pro.Download Now The Melodic minor scale is used in many styles of music such as classical, jazz rock and even pop. There are quite a few large stretches in the scale that make it good for finger exercises. So, even if you don't actually use the scale in your own music, learning it will help you improve your finger dexterity and add spice to your playing. As with my other guitar scales lessons, the scale will be sliced up into 5 box patterns. I will use an animated GIF and guitar TABs to help you visualize how to play the scale patterns. Both the TAB and the GIF have suggested fingering and picking that I feel is the best way to learn the scale. Related Guitar scales Since the Melodic minor is a derivative of the Harmonic minor scale you should also check out my Learning the Harmonic minor scale lesson TL:DR The looped animated GIF and TAB for this lesson are down below. You just need to scroll a bit and you can't miss them. The Melodic minor scale The Melodic minor scale is derived from the Harmonic minor by raising the sixth scale degree by a half step. To make a long story short: Classical composers of long ago decided that the Harmonic minor was not as good for singing melodies. They decided to alter the Harmonic minor a bit. What they came up with was the Melodic minor scale. You can read more about the music theory involved with minor scales at this Wikipedia article. Comparing the Melodic minor to the Natural and Harmonic minor scales Just like in the Harmonic minor lesson, I will use the F# Melodic minor scale to help you see the differences. The rules in this lesson apply to all Melodic minor keys! Animated Guitar GIF Below is the animated guitar GIF showing the suggested fingering and picking of the 5 Melodic minor box patterns. Melodic minor scale Guitar TABs Moving to new keys is the same here as it is with all my other scale lessons. You change to new keys by sliding all 5 boxes as a whole to another position on the fretboard. The root note of the new key will always be two frets behind the first note of Pattern 1 on the Low E (6th) string. In the GIF the root notes are the red dots. See also the Moving to new keys section of the Major scales lesson. Summary Learning the Melodic minor scale can open up new ways to visualize the notes of the guitar. The long stretches are great for building hand strength and finger dexterity. Add the Melodic minor scale to your practice routine today...I guarantee you no harm can come from learning this awesome scale! Share a link to this guitar lesson with your friends (right click Permalink > copy or mobile long press > copy) Basic FingeringsAlternate FingeringsPosition ShiftingWarm-Up ExercisesScale PatternsMetronome PracticeChord ProgressionsMelodic SoloingCreating Your Own ExercisesInstructional BooksOnline LessonsGuitar AppsLearning a melodic minor scale on guitar can be a game-changer for your playing abilities. In this complete guide, we'll explore what a melodic minor scale is, its differences from the natural minor scale, and how to play it effectively on the guitar. With some practice and dedication, mastering a melodic minor scale guitar will enhance your skills and expand your musical horizons.Understanding the Melodic Minor ScaleBefore diving into the world of a melodic minor scale guitar, it's essential to understand the basics of this unique scale and how it differs from its counterpart, the natural minor scale. Let's start by defining the melodic minor scale and its formula.What is a Melodic Minor Scale?A melodic minor scale is a musical scale that consists of seven notes. It is derived from the natural minor scale but features a raised sixth and seventh note when ascending. When descending, the melodic minor scale reverts to the natural minor scale. This gives the scale a distinct melodic quality that's perfect for creating tension and interest in your playing.Difference Between Natural Minor and Melodic MinorHere are the main differences between the natural minor and melodic minor scales:Natural minor scale: Has a flat third, sixth, and seventh note compared to the major scale.Melodic minor scale: Has a flat third note like the natural minor scale, but the sixth and seventh notes are raised when ascending the scale. When descending, it becomes the same as the natural minor scale.This difference in structure results in a unique sound, making the melodic minor scale an excellent choice for adding variety to your guitar playing.Melodic Minor Scale FormulaTo build a melodic minor scale, you can use the following formula:RootMajor 2ndMinor 3rdPerfect 4thPerfect 5thMajor 6th (ascending)Major 7th (ascending)Minor 6th (descending)Minor 7th (descending)With this formula in mind, you're ready to start exploring a melodic minor scale guitar, including fingering and positioning techniques to make your playing smooth and effortless.Fingering and PositioningNow that you have a basic understanding of the melodic minor scale, let's move on to learn different fingering and positioning techniques. These will help you play a melodic minor scale guitar with ease and accuracy, allowing you to unlock its full potential in your playing.Basic FingeringsStart with these basic fingerings for a melodic minor scale guitar:Play the root note with your index finger.Use your middle finger for the major 2nd note.Play the minor 3rd with your ring finger.Use your index finger for the perfect 4th note.Play the perfect 5th with your ring finger.Use your index finger for the major 6th (ascending) or minor 6th (descending) note.Play the major 7th (ascending) or minor 7th (descending) with your pinky finger.Practicing these basic fingerings will help you gain muscle memory and make playing a melodic minor scale guitar feel more natural.Alternate FingeringsAs you become more comfortable with the basic fingerings, experiment with alternate fingerings to find what works best for you. Some guitarists prefer using their pinky for the major 6th and 7th notes when ascending, while others might use their middle finger for the minor 6th and 7th notes when descending. Try different combinations and see what feels most comfortable for you.Position ShiftingPosition shifting is essential for playing a melodic minor scale guitar across the entire fretboard. Start by practicing the scale in one position, then gradually shift to different positions to cover more frets. This will help you become more versatile in your playing and allow you to play a melodic minor scale guitar in any key or location on the fretboard.With these fingering and positioning techniques under your belt, you're ready to start practicing the melodic minor scale and incorporating it into your playing.Practicing the Melodic Minor ScaleOnce you have a good grasp of fingering and positioning, it's time to practice playing a melodic minor scale guitar. Consistent practice is essential to mastering this versatile scale. Here are some tips and exercises to help you get started.Warm-Up ExercisesBefore diving into practicing the melodic minor scale, it's important to warm up your fingers and hands. Here are some warm-up exercises you can try:Perform finger stretches to increase flexibility.Play chromatic runs using all four fingers on each fret.Practice basic major and minor scales to build finger strength and coordination.Warming up will help prevent injury and improve your overall playing technique, making it easier to play a melodic minor scale guitar.Scale PatternsPracticing different scale patterns is an effective way to master a melodic minor scale guitar. Here are a few patterns to try:Play the scale ascending and descending in one position.Practice the scale in different octaves and positions on the fretboard.Play the scale using sequences, such as thirds, fourths, or sixths.Experimenting with various scale patterns will help you become more familiar with the melodic minor scale and improve your overall playing technique.Metronome PracticeUsing a metronome while practicing a melodic minor scale guitar is crucial for developing good timing and rhythm. Start by setting the metronome to a slow tempo and gradually increase the speed as you become more comfortable with the scale. This will help you build speed and accuracy in your playing.By practicing the melodic minor scale consistently and incorporating these exercises into your routine, you'll be well on your way to mastering this versatile scale and elevating your guitar playing to new heights.Applying the Melodic Minor ScaleOnce you've practiced and become comfortable with playing a melodic minor scale guitar, it's time to apply it in various musical contexts. This section will help you incorporate the melodic minor scale into your playing, enhancing your guitar skills and creativity.Chord ProgressionsApplying the melodic minor scale to chord progressions is an excellent way to develop your understanding of harmony. Try experimenting with the following:Use the scale to create new chord progressions by harmonizing each note of the scale with different chords.Play the scale over common progressions, such as ii-V-I, to explore its unique sound.Improvise melodies using the melodic minor scale over backing tracks or your own chord progressions.By applying the melodic minor scale to chord progressions, you'll expand your harmonic vocabulary and discover new ways to express yourself on the guitar.Melodic SoloingSoloing with a melodic minor scale guitar can add an interesting and unique flavor to your improvisation. Here are some tips to help you incorporate the melodic minor scale into your solos:Use the scale to target specific chord tones in your solos, such as the major 7th or the raised 6th.Combine the melodic minor scale with other scales, like the major and natural minor, to create more diverse and interesting solos.Practice soloing over backing tracks that feature melodic minor chords and progressions.By incorporating the melodic minor scale into your solos, you'll unlock new melodic possibilities and add depth to your improvisation.Creating Your Own ExercisesDesigning your own melodic minor scale guitar exercises is a great way to further develop your understanding of the scale and its applications. Here are some ideas to get you started:Create unique scale patterns or sequences to challenge your fingers and expand your fretboard knowledge.Compose short melodies or riffs using the melodic minor scale.Combine the melodic minor scale with other techniques, such as tapping, bending, or sliding, to create more dynamic exercises.By creating your own exercises, you'll not only improve your technical skills but also gain a deeper understanding of the melodic minor scale and its many uses in music.Applying the melodic minor scale in various ways will help you unlock its full potential and enhance your guitar playing, adding a unique and versatile tool to your musical toolbox.Recommended ResourcesTo further enhance your understanding and mastery of the melodic minor scale guitar, it's beneficial to explore additional resources. Here are some recommendations for instructional books, online lessons, and guitar apps that can help you on your journey.Instructional BooksBooks can be a valuable source of information and inspiration for learning the melodic minor scale and its applications on the guitar. Consider these titles:The Guitarist's Guide to Scales Over Chords by Chad Johnson – This book covers various scales, including the melodic minor, and how to apply them over chord progressions.Modern Jazz Guitar Concepts by Jens Larsen – This book delves into the melodic minor scale and its use in modern jazz guitar playing.Guitar Scales Handbook by Damon Ferrante – This comprehensive guide includes the melodic minor scale and provides exercises for mastering it on the guitar.These instructional books can provide you with expert guidance and structured practice routines to help you master the melodic minor scale on the guitar.Online LessonsOnline lessons can offer personalized instruction and interactive learning experiences to help you master the melodic minor scale guitar. Some popular platforms to consider are:TrueFire – Offers a wide array of lessons and courses covering various scales, including the melodic minor, taught by professional guitar instructors.JamPlay – Provides in-depth lessons on the melodic minor scale and its applications in various musical styles, such as jazz and fusion.Guitar Tricks – Features comprehensive lessons on different scales and techniques, including the melodic minor scale, for guitarists of all skill levels.Online lessons allow you to learn at your own pace and receive instant feedback, making them an excellent resource for mastering the melodic minor scale on the guitar.Guitar AppsThere are numerous guitar apps available that can help you practice and apply the melodic minor scale. Some popular options include:Guitar Scales & Chords – This app offers a vast library of scales, including the melodic minor, and allows you to practice them in different positions and keys.iReal Pro – This app provides backing tracks in various styles that you can use to practice soloing with the melodic minor scale.ScaleBank – This app includes the melodic minor scale and various other scales, along with fretboard diagrams and practice tips.Guitar apps can be a convenient and engaging way to practice the melodic minor scale and incorporate it into your playing, whether you're at home or on the go.Utilizing these recommended resources will help you deepen your understanding of the melodic minor scale guitar and its applications, ultimately enriching your guitar playing and musical creativity.If you're interested in exploring the world of indie film composing and enhancing your storytelling through music, don't miss the workshop 'Indie Film Composing: Storytelling In Music' by Daisy Coole. This workshop will provide you with valuable insights and techniques to create captivating film scores that perfectly complement the narrative. If we compare melodic minor with two other commonly used minor scales, natural minor and harmonic minor, we can see that they all share the same interval sequence up to the 5th degree. It's the 6th and 7th degrees that distinguish these scales from one another... Below are the three minor scales mapped out in E across the 1st string... Explore these minor scales over the E minor track below. Take some time to really feel them! So it's the combination of the major 6th (6) and major 7th (7) interval, formed around the minor triad (1 ♭3 5), that gives melodic minor its uniquely haunting minor sound.Start by exploring it across a single string against a minor chord track. For example, B melodic minor over B minor... 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Over Minor Triads In Progressions There are instances of a basic minor triad whereby melodic minor offers us some additional colour. For example, in minor keys, melodic minor could replace the standard natural minor scale over the tonic chord.In this A minor key example, I play A melodic minor over the Am tonic and then change to A natural minor over the other chords (G and Dm)... While natural and harmonic minor are almost always used on the tonic position of a key, melodic minor can also be positioned on other degrees to good effect.For example, in major keys the 4 (IV) chord is often played as minor (iv), which we can complement with melodic minor.For example, in C major, F minor would be our modified 4 chord, and therefore we'd switch from the C major scale to F melodic minor over F minor... We'll look more at using melodic minor over chord sequences shortly. Melodic Minor Patterns Like other scales, melodic minor has a roadmap that can be broken up into various patterns.Here we have G melodic minor mapped out across the neck... Chord Shape Patterns From earlier, we can identify the two patterns built around the tonic minor chord shapes on the 6th and 5th strings. These are good initial reference positions for getting your bearings... "Box" Patterns We can also divide up the large roadmap into 4 condensed box patterns, which, once memorised can be used to link up different areas of the neck... Tip: When memorising these patterns, it's useful to identify where the root positions fall within them, to help link them up and find your bearings. 3 Notes Per String Patterns Some players prefer to divide up the neck into 3 notes per string patterns, which allow for wider sequential runs... 3nps 1 3nps 2 3nps 3 3nps 4 3nps 5 Start by taking them two strings at a time and come up with a sequence you like the sound of. For example (using the 2nd pattern from above)... Hexatonic Patterns Within the roadmap we can also visualise hexatonic patterns - repeating six-tone sequences that omit a tone from the complete scale.In this example the root is omitted, giving the scale a more outside sound. Again, think it terms of string pairings when navigating these... Pentatonic Patterns We can even form melodic minor flavoured pentatonic scales from the roadmap. Here I use the most important colour tones from the scale - 2, ♭3, 5, 6 and 7... Each of these pattern forms offer us different options for phrasing and sequential runs.However you choose to break up and navigate this roadmap, being aware of the defining tones of the scale, and how they interact with the backing chord, will help you to create the sound you want. Melodic Minor Modes Like the major scale and harmonic minor, melodic minor can be seen as the parent scale of six related modes, that can be used over a variety of chord types... Each of these modes can be thought of as starting on a related degree of melodic minor. So they all use the same melodic minor roadmap, and therefore any of our melodic minor patterns and licks can be used to play these modes.For example, F Lydian Dominant uses the same seven notes, and therefore the same roadmap, as C Melodic minor. As does B Altered. All we need to do is position our relative melodic minor patterns appropriately to cover these modes. Some examples... Lydian Dominant Lydian Dominant is the 4th mode of melodic minor, used over dominant 7th chords and distinguished by its raised 4th (♯4) degree.As it's the 4th mode, it starts on the 4th degree of its parent melodic minor scale. The intervals of melodic minor get transposed/adjusted based on this new tonic (1)... Therefore to play C Lydian dominant for example, we'd use a G melodic minor pattern, as C lies on G melodic minor's 4th degree... G Melodic Minor C Lydian Dominant Here I'm playing over the mode's tonic chord - C7... Inversely, you could also see the melodic minor scale as starting on the 5th of Lydian Dominant. Either way, once you know melodic minor's roadmap and patterns, you'll automatically have Lydian Dominant covered! Mixolydian ♭6 Similarly, we could use a melodic minor pattern to play its 5th mode, Mixolydian ♭6, a more tense alternative to regular Mixolydian over dominant chords.As its the 5th mode, it starts on the 5th degree of its parent melodic minor... Therefore to play D Mixolydian ♭6, we'd use a G melodic minor pattern... G Melodic Minor D Mixolydian ♭6 Here I'm playing it over D7... Tip: The run above was almost the same as earlier (over Gm). The only difference is I landed on D, reaffirming the D7 root. Same melodic minor pattern, different context! Altered Scale The 7th mode, commonly known as the Altered Scale, which is especially important in jazz music because of how it colours altered dominant chords (these are tense sounding dominant 7th based chords that typically include a flat 5th, flat or sharp 9th and/or flat 13th).An easy way to remember where to position melodic minor for the altered scale is one half step or fret up from the chord root you're playing over... Therefore to play F♯ Altered, we'd use a G Melodic Minor pattern... G Melodic Minor F♯ Altered Here I'm playing over F♯7♭13... Side note: The Altered scale is a strange one! It functions over augmented and altered dominant chords, typically in the 5 (V) position of a key, before resolving to the tonic. In order for it to work, it has to be compatible with the backing chord. We'll look more at this scale in more detail in its own lesson. Melodic Minor Harmony Finally, let's look at how harmony is formed from melodic minor, also known as scale harmonisation, starting with chords.Like the major scale and harmonic minor, melodic minor forms seven triads, each rooted on a degree of the scale. These can also be made into 7th chords... Tonic (I) We established earlier that the tonic triad of the scale, that is the chord built on its first degree, is minor. Therefore G minor would be the tonic or 1 chord of G melodic minor, for example... But we can also form more complex minor chords from melodic minor's tones.Here I'm playing some different minor based forms from the scale on the tonic position... m(maj7) m(maj7) m(maj9) m(maj9) m6/9 m6/9 m6/9 m6/9 m(maj13) Subdominant (IV) A common movement is to the 4 chord. In G melodic minor, that would be C major in its triad form, and C dominant 7 (C7) in its seventh form. But again, let's explore some additional colours on this 4 position using the scale's tones... C7♯11 C7♯11 C9♯11 C9♯11 C13 C13 C13 Let's try a simple movement between the 1 and 4 chords using G melodic minor. This is a good initial movement to train your ears to, especially for those interested in jazz harmony... IV and V In Blues Now, focusing on the seventh chords from the scale, you'll notice we get a dominant 7th chord on both the 4 and 5 positions... And we can extend these to dominant 9th chords as demonstrated here, again in the key of G (taken from G melodic minor)... You're probably familiar with this IV / V, dominant 7th/9th relationship in a blues context. Therefore melodic minor offers us a nice alternative to the standard minor pentatonic and blues scale over the 4 and 5 chords. In this example we'd switch to G melodic minor over C7 and D7... Three-Part Harmony As well as block chords, we can use our melodic minor roadmap to create flows of harmony that highlight the scale's unique colour. All I'm doing in this example is using the top three strings of our roadmap for a three-part harmony over G minor (along with its 4 and 5 chords, C7 and D7)... So when exploring scales, think about using the roadmap to create two-part (dyads) and three-part harmonies, as well as single-part melodies. In Summary... Melodic minor gives us both a melodic and harmonic system for accompanying minor chords and keys, plus three related modes (built on melodic minor's 4th, 5th and 7th degrees) for use over dominant 7th chords.Start by getting familiar with melodic minor's sound and patterns over single chord tracks (which I provided earlier on this page). You can then start to explore it through compatible chord changes.Enjoy your exploration of this wonderful scale and thank you for your time! The melodic minor scale is sometimes referred to as jazz minor scale or Ionian b3. It has a particular and unique sound, recognizable among all the other minor scales because of the mix of the minor third and the major seventh. This is a very important scale for every jazz guitar player who wants to explore new minor sonorities. The melodic minor scale is built this way : tonic (1), second (2), minor third (b3), fourth (4), fifth (5), sixth (6) and seventh (7). C Melodic Minor Scale C D Eb F G A B Formula 1 2 b3 4 5 6 7 Intervals W H W W W W H As you see in the chart below, the melodic minor scale contains the same notes as the Dorian mode except the seventh that is major instead of minor. C Dorian mode C D Eb F G A Bb Formula 1 2 b3 4 5 6 b7 C melodic minor scale C D Eb F G A B Formula 1 2 b3 4 5 6 7 The melodic minor scale and the harmonic minor scale are very similar. The only difference is that there is a minor sixth (b6) in the harmonic minor scale whereas there is a major sixth (6) in the melodic minor scale. C harmonic Minor C D Eb F G Ab B Formula 1 2 b3 4 5 b6 7 C melodic minor C D Eb F G A B Formula 1 2 b3 4 5 6 7 Theoretically the melodic minor scale is related to minMaj7 chords but it can also be used over minor chords as m6, m7, m9, m11, m6/9. Playing the minor melodic scale over a minor 7 chord creates a tension because of the major seventh present in it. You need to resolve you lick on a proper note to attenuate this tension. Here are two recommended guitar positions to play the melodic minor scale. To understand and hear correctly the melodic minor scale it is important to play these shapes starting from the tonic (1) represented in orange in the diagrams. Dont' forget to play these patterns in twelve keys by moving the tonic to the desired note keeping the same intervals. The two diagrams represent the Melodic minor scale on the guitar neck within the space of two octaves. Here are seven shapes starting on each step of the the G minor scale in order the cover the whole neck. Each shape contains 3 notes per string. Here are the seven chords built from each degree of the melodic minor scale. Triad chords are built with three notes stacked in thirds just as well quadrads chords that are made of four notes (stacked in thirds too). Let's take an example in the key of Cm : C minor(maj7), is built by stacking C, Eb, G and B respectively root (1), minor third (b3), perfect fifth (5) and major seventh (7). Once you have harmonized the melodic minor scale you get : Two dominant 7th chords on the fourth and the fifth degree. Two minor seventh chords (which on as a major seventh) on the first and second degree. One augmented major seventh chord (III). Two minor seventh flat fifth chords on degrees VI & VII. Remember that augmented chords are necessarily major and diminished chords are minor. Degrees I II III IV V VI VII C melodic minor scale C D Eb F G A B Triad chords Cm Dm Ebaug F G Adim Bdim Seventh chords C-maj7 D-7 EbMaj7#5 F7 G7 A-7b5 B-7b5 Here are the seventh chords built from each degree of the C melodic minor scale. Chords Notes Formulas CmMaj7 C-Eb-G-B R-b3-5-7 D-7 D-F-A-C R-b3-5-b7 EbMaj7#5 Eb-G-B-D R-3-#5-7 F7 F-A-C-Eb R-3-5-b7 G7 G-B-D-F R-3-5-b7 A-7b5 A-C-Eb-G R-b3-b5-b7 B-7b5 B-D-F-A R-b3-b5-b7 Arpeggios are chords whose notes are played individually. Arpeggios of the melodic minor scale are therefore built the in same way as the chords previously seen. The tab below show how to play them ascending.