



Happy
BLUESMAN

Weeks 1 & 2
Blues College
Practice Plan

Major Pentatonic Practice (5 / 10 / 10 mins)

One of the most important elements of the CAGED system and why it is so popular is that it neatly connects chords, scale shapes and arpeggios together.

We can connect two of these elements - the chord and scale shapes without too much effort by practicing the major pentatonic scale shapes that correspond to the chord shapes we are working on.

Working through these scale shapes will help you to consolidate them, and also help you get warmed up for your session.

When you are practicing:

- 1.) Use a metronome
- 2.) Choose the scale that corresponds to the CAGED system shapes you're working on. For example, if you are practicing your C CAGED shapes, practice the C major pentatonic. If you are working on your A CAGED shapes, practice the A major pentatonic, and so on.

Play through the scales using alternate picking and focus on clean and precise technique. You can also increase the speed of the metronome over time to build speed and technique.

CAGED Chord Practice (15 / 20 / 30 mins)

Developing deep confidence with each of the five CAGED system chord shapes, and being able to apply them to the chords of C, A and G etc. is a big part of the focus in these first two weeks.

To build this confidence, grab a metronome and set it at a level that feels comfortable (70-80 BPM could work well as a starting point). Then go through the following steps:

- 1.) Start with the open position chord you're practicing (e.g. C, A, G, E or D)
- 2.) Play the chord and hold it for either 2 or 4 clicks of the metronome
- 3.) Move up through all of the CAGED shapes, and then move back down to the open position chord without stopping

If you find this challenging, then build confidence with the single chord before switching and repeating the process with a different chord. Otherwise you can move through various different chords in a single practice session.

If you are ready for more advanced concepts then as part of this section, practice the chord, and then play either the scale or the scale and arpeggio that appear in that position of the fretboard.

Don't rush the process here - focus on really consolidating each chord shape and position before moving on.

Clapton CAGED Practice (10 / 15 / 20 mins)

It's performance time!

Combine the CAGED rhythm work and major pentatonic / relative minor scale shapes to jam over Eric Clapton's pop ballad "Wonderful Tonight".

Take a "sandwich approach" as you do so - playing the rhythm part to begin with, then dropping into a solo, and then switching back to rhythm.

When playing rhythm, practice different CAGED shapes (even if they don't "work" over the track), and if you feel confident, arpeggiate the chords, rather than simply strumming them.

When switching to lead, try to then target some of the chord tones from these CAGED shapes by soloing in the same position of the fretboard where you were playing rhythm (or targeting arpeggios if you have been practicing them).

If you don't feel confident to do this, then focus on playing the major pentatonic scale in the same position.

Either way, focus on letting the notes and phrases breathe, and bringing simple note groupings to life through the use of technique, motifs and bluesy phrasing.