

Happy
BLUESMAN

Week 12

Blues College

Practice Plan



Shuffle Practice (5 / 10 / 15 mins)

This week we shift our blues shuffle pattern into the open position.

We've also added more complexity into the mix over the weeks by extending the shuffle and now adding a greater number of notes into the shuffle.

Furthermore, there's no track to guide us this week.

All of this is to say – keep practicing the shuffle and all of the different variations you can now bring into the mix. As you do so, stay focused on those key elements we've been discussing so far: locking into the rhythm and using muting to accent certain notes and parts of it.

I'd recommend starting this with a metronome, and then try to establish that rhythm yourself by tapping your leg or bobbing your head.

A huge part of the complexity and interest this week comes from folding the new ideas in alongside the shuffle (the licks, chords, turnaround and a solo) so this section is a little shorter than it has been in previous weeks.

Building Complexity (15 / 20 / 25 mins)

From the strong foundation of our shuffle we want to start layering in complexity - bringing in some of the key elements covered in the lessons:

- Playing around with all of the different shuffle extensions and variations
- Adding licks into the shuffle
- Mixing chords into the shuffle
- Adding a turnaround (both in the progression and also as an intro, if you feel comfortable to do so)
- Practicing soloing unaccompanied
- Experimenting with different combinations of all of the above

Don't overwhelm yourself by trying to tackle all of this at once. Instead I'd recommend taking one or two ideas from the list in each practice session and rotating them across the week.

Especially to begin with, it's worth having a metronome clicking in the background to keep you in time. As you build confidence you can then drop the metronome out and test your sense of rhythm from there.

The Shuffle Challenge (10 /15/ 20 mins)

It's performance time!

Bring all of these concepts to life in a solo performance on either an acoustic or electric.

Work on tracking the shuffle, adding the extensions and extra note, throwing licks and chords into the mix (if you feel confident to do so), targeting a turnaround idea and then playing a solo.

There is so much here and without any backing track to guide you, everything becomes more challenging. So take your time, start slowly and focus on nailing 2 or 3 core ideas, rather than chasing all of them at the expense of clarity and precision.

As in previous weeks, continue with the "sandwich" approach we've been focusing on during the programme - playing the rhythm part for a few rounds through the chord progression, before soloing, and then dropping back into the rhythm part.

Without a backing track to strictly follow, this is the perfect opportunity for a bit of back-porch blues playing. Get lost and let the ideas flow!