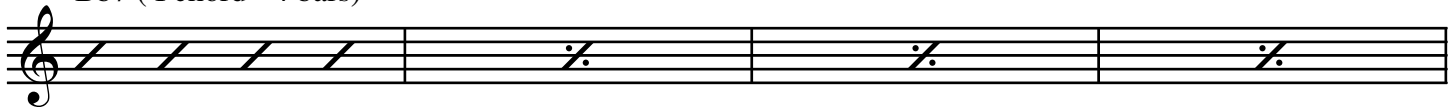


# The 12 Bar Blues


The twelve bar blues is one of the most basic chord progressions in jazz. What is a chord progression? It is how the chords progress. Basically, how do the chords change from start to finish. The blues progression has three chords, represented by the symbols I7, IV7, V7. They are all Dominant 7th chords.

By using roman numerals we are able to create a formula to compose the 12 Bar Blues Progression in any key. All we need to know is what key we want to play in and the major scales. We will first construct a Blues Progression in the Key of Bb, so our first chord is Bb7(I), our IV chord (fourth step in a Bb scale) is Eb7, and V chord is F7. Here is the Bb Blues Progression written out.


Bb7 ( I chord - 4 bars)



5 Eb7 ( IV chord - 2 bars) Bb7 ( I chord - 2 bars)



9 F7 ( V chord - 1 bar) Eb7 ( IV chord - 1 bars) Bb7 chord ( I- 2 bars)



When soloing use the Dominant 7th Scale (Mixolydian Mode). This scale is a major scale with a lowered (Dominant) seventh-D7.

You can also use the Blues Scale based on the first chord. This scale incorporates "blue tones," such as a minor 3rd and flat 5th. You can use this scale to solo over all the chords to give a real bluesy sound. It should be considered as a tool to improve your improvisation. Like all things, it should be used with moderation not to sound monotonous.

My Rule: Use it, Abuse it, then Lose it.

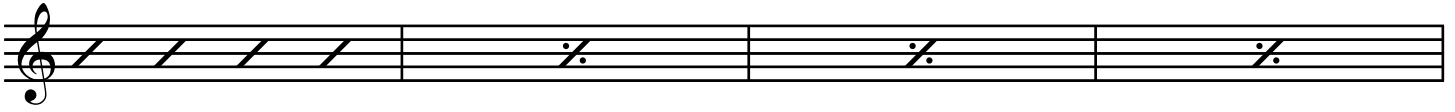
Bb Dominant 7th (Mixolydian Mode)



Bb Blues Scale



Write out the chords for a 12 Bar Blues Progression in the key of "Eb."



Write out the scales you would use to solo.

