You haven’t learned to Play Lead Guitar until you learn...

47 Licks You Must Know From GuitarTeacher.com

Licks, Phrases and Ideas to Super-Charge your Lead Guitar Playing

v. 1.0
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Foreword

Thanks for downloading my guitar eBook, 47 Licks You Must Know! In my 20 years of teaching guitar I have had the privilege of studying the solos of many great guitarists and working with many great students. My goal in writing this book is to introduce my guitar students to phrases, licks and ideas that I find common to many lead guitarists and solos. These licks are presented roughly in order of difficulty. Each has a short description to help explain why it is included in this collection.

First, let me say that licks, pre-rehearsed solo phrases, are just one component of improvising. True improvisation is playing something we have never played before on our instrument. This may be the greatest achievement in a guitar solo. However, many guitar solos we hear are composed or, at best, a spontaneous reorganization of previously learned phrases and material. If not essential, it is at least practical to know some pre-rehearsed licks for those times when we are not catching ‘lightning in a bottle’.

Second, are these licks truly must know? The only way to decide is to try them yourself. It all depends on your musical style and goals. No two guitarists are alike. Keep the licks you like here, throw out those you don’t. Many of my favorite guitarists mash-up different ideas and musical styles so I believe it an advantage to learn all that licks you can. At the very least, knowing the licks in this book can serve as ‘sign post’ points of reference. You will hear them in a guitar solo, sooner or later.

Lastly, in order to make the best use of this book, here are some quick thoughts:

- Learn the licks then transpose them to other scales and keys
- Try repeating the licks or sections of them to create new variations
- Re-order the notes in the phrases. Play them both ascending and descending
- Experiment with phrasing and timing variations
- Use these licks for ideas and create new licks of your own
- And most of all…

Have Fun!

Storm Stenvold
Founder/Instructor – GuitarTeacher.com
Licks 1-10

Lick #1 – Early Rock Cliché #1

This early-rock lick can be heard in guitar solos ranging in styles from rockabilly to punk rock.

Lick #2 – Early Rock Cliché #2

Another classic rock cliché, again shown in the key of A.

Lick #3 – Major Pentatonic Blues Openers

Although blues is known primarily for using the Minor Pentatonic scale, this lick demonstrates the ‘sweet’ sounding alternative that the Major Pentatonic scale has to offer.
Lick #4 – Albert King-isms

Albert King is a blues giant (figuratively and literally) who influenced Jimi Hendrix and Stevie Ray Vaughan, among others. Huge, finger-torturing bends figure prominently in his licks.

Lick #5 – Quarter-Step Bends

An important phrasing element in Blues is the quarter-step bend up of the minor 3rd to just shy of the major 3rd. Sometimes the resulting note is called the 'blues 3rd', here shown three ways.

Lick #6 – Minor Pentatonic Lick in A

Once you know scale forms you will want to avoid simply wandering up and down them. This lick is a good example of phrasing, rather than just running, the notes of the Minor Pentatonic scale.
Lick #7 – Double-stop Fun

Double-stops, two notes played at the same time, are one of guitarists’ great weapons in getting a big, beefy sound. The bends in bar 2 are executed with the 3rd finger fretting both strings.

Lick #8 – Simple Turnaround Lick

The last two bars of a blues progression are known as the ‘turnaround’. This simple turnaround lick in the key of G sets you up for the next 12 bars of blues fun.

Lick #9 – Turnaround in E

A classic blues turnaround in the key of E. Triple-stops, ninth chords, and open position patterns of both the Minor and Major Pentatonic scales are used.
Lick #10 – Single Note Turnaround

Another classic blues turnaround, this time in the key of A. A turnaround outlines a progression and it is very effective and important to be able to do this with single note lines.

Licks 11-20

Lick #11 – Lester Flatt Country Run

This is the most recognizable lick in Country lead guitar, shown here in two positions. Serious students will learn it in a dozen more.

Lick #12 – Pedal Steel Lick

This is another classic country lick. Here the idea is to emulate the sound of a pedal steel guitar by bending a note while holding another at pitch.
Lick #13 – Jazz Lick - I #idim ii V

A common jazz chord progression is outlined neatly in this single note phrase. Chord tones are targeted through each change with altered tones emphasized over the E7 chord.

Lick #14 – V – i minor Lick

A quick and easy jazz cliché lick over a minor key V-i (five-one) progression.

Lick #15 – Pull-off flash

Legato technique, the use of hammer-ons and pull-offs, is an easy way to add speed to your leads. This lick uses double pull-offs and a repeated open string in an ascending ‘ladder riff’.
Lick #16 – Open String Pull-off

Again an open string is used, incorporated into a pull-off lick. This time a scale along the 2nd string provides the note choices.

Lick #17 – Sliding Legato Single String

Here we combine a hammer-on/pull-off combination with sliding position changes to create a slippery sounding lick. Similar notes to the previous example.

Lick #18 – Single String Ascending Scale Lick

Coordinating the pick and fret hand is essential to making position changes sound clean. After the open string, the first finger initiates each 3 note phrase in this lick.
Lick #19 – Drone String Lick

An open string combined with a moving single-note line is a cool and easy way to achieve a big, ringing sound in your solo.

Lick #20 – Oblique Bends

Oblique bends combine a bent note with an unbent note. We saw this with our Pedal Steel lick. This lick uses a couple of common two-note oblique bend combinations.

Licks 21-30

Lick #21 – Unison Bending Lick

Bending one note to the pitch of a held note is called a unison bend. This lick features the most typical combinations across the 3rd/2nd and 2nd/1st string pairs.
Lick #22 – Octave Lick

Octave licks provide a full-bodied sound. They were a favorite of jazz great Wes Montgomery and are still used in many modern guitar solos.

Lick #23 – Sliding 6ths

Sixth intervals are great, open sounding note combinations that strongly imply chords. This lick uses notes diatonic to the G Major scale.

Lick #24 – Ascending 3rds in C

Another diatonic interval lick, this time using 3rd intervals in the key of C.
Lick #25 – Doublestop 3rds in A

3rd intervals played as double-stops are a great way to combine harmony and melody in your guitar solos.

Lick #26 – Major Pentatonic Doublestops

This lick harmonizes the notes of the G Major Pentatonic scale for a big sound. Licks like this have been used in many R&B guitar solos and by guitarists such as Jimi Hendrix.

Lick #27 – Country Lick

This country style lick features a lot of bending; a typical oblique bend in the first bar and some melodic bends in the second. Be sure to bend accurately to pitch.
Lick #28 – Pentatonic Smear Lick

A smear lick uses fast note combinations for stun-guitar effect, typically out of the Minor Pentatonic scale as in this example.

Lick #29 – Pentatonic Slurs

A slur is another name for a hammer-on or pull-off. This lick uses a repeating pattern slurred through the D Minor Pentatonic scale.

Lick #30 – Five Fret Minor Pull-offs

A big five-fret stretch is the signature move of this lick. Be sure to roll the first finger pressure from string 2 to string 1 for proper muting.
Licks 31-40

**Lick #31 – VH Tap**

This is the lick that launched a thousand imitators, very similar to the style of tapping lick used in Eddie Van Halen's 'Eruption' solo.

**Lick #32 – Crazy Train Tap**

Two-hand taps, pull-offs and hammer-ons can be executed in many combinations. This example demonstrates this, very similar to a pattern used by Randy Rhoads in the solo for “Crazy Train”.

**Lick #33 – Sequenced Pentatonic Lick**

A sequenced lick does not play straight up or down but rather repeats in a logical order or pattern. This Minor Pentatonic sequence is a classic example of this powerful idea.
Lick #34 – Tremolo Picking

(Tremolo picking means to rapidly repeat the same note with continuous picking. Eddie Van Halen and Carlos Santana utilize this often.)

Lick #35 – 16th note triplet pentatonic trill

(A trill is a rapid flutter between two notes. On guitar we most often do this with hammer-ons and pull-offs. This lick puts this idea within the Minor Pentatonic scale, key of A.)

Lick #36 – Descending 3rds Interval Sequence

(An interval is the distance between two notes. This lick uses 3rd intervals as the basis of a sequenced lick in the G major scale.)
Lick #37 – Pentatonic Sequence of 4s

This sequence is in the key of A minor and uses the Minor Pentatonic scale.

Lick #38 – Pentatonic Sextuplet Sequence

Here is a simple but heavy-duty shred sequence in the key of E minor. Try it with pull-offs in place of alternate picking. Try this lick ascending, as well.

Lick #39 – Descending Single String 4s

This single string lick involves precise coordination between both hands to keep all four note combinations clean. Kirk Hammett of Metallica is a master of this type of move.
Lick #40 – 3 Note per string in 6s

Three-note-per-string patterns are great for simplifying the coordination of the right and left hands. This lick uses typical 3-note-per-string string pairs in an ascending position-changing lick.

Licks 41-47

Lick #41 – Satriani 3-Note-Per-String Legato

Modern guitarists such as Joe Satriani use 3-note-per-string patterns extensively. This lick in G major uses hammer-ons and pull-offs for maximum speed.

Lick #42 – Gilbert 3-Note-Per-String Sequence

After every six notes, this lick jumps up a position. Then the process repeats, creating a cool lick that covers a lot of fretboard real estate.
Lick #43 – Pedal Point Lick

A pedal point lick consistently returns to a given note, here the high E note on the first string. This idea is common in many classical compositions.

Lick #44 – Triad Sweeps in G

This lick uses a reverse rake of the strings for speed and keeps all the notes confined to three-note shapes from the G Major scale.

Lick #45 – Five String Triad Sweeps

Sweep picking is using the same pick stroke direction when switching strings. It is very important to 'roll' the pressure of the left hand from note to note in order to sound each note individually.
Lick #46 – Six String Sweeps

Follow the picking direction in this lick. Some big stretches and position changes are needed to execute this one.

Lick #47 – Tapping Capo

Here is a cool two-handed idea. Tap the notes of a chord while fretting an inversion of that chord lower on the neck.
Moving On From Here

Congratulations on completing the 47 Licks You Must Know eBook! I trust you found some value in the time you have spent with it.

There is always something new to learn on the guitar. Here are some of my suggestions on where you could go from here:

1. If you have not already done so, I suggest that you get my free guitar tips sent to you by email. Just click the blue link and subscribe to the GuitarTeacher.com Play Guitar Better Newsletter.
2. If I used terms you don’t understand in this book, or if you have questions, contact me directly at storm{at}guitarteacher.com or on the GuitarTeacher.com Forum. I would be more than happy to help.
3. You might be interested in taking this farther by signing up with me personally for Online Guitar Lessons.
4. If these licks seem over your head and the time isn’t right for Private Guitar Lessons, you might want to review my recommended Guitar Course and my recommended Guitar Membership Site.

I hope this book and those tools will help you grow as a musician. Remember, playing the guitar is a journey and not a destination. There are many opportunities and resources you can use to increase your knowledge and understanding of the guitar - friends, books, teachers, videos, CDs, DVDs, magazines, and of course, the internet.

On your journey to becoming a better guitar player, I hope to see you again along the way!

- Storm Stenvold
- Founder/Instructor, GuitarTeacher.com