

Guitar Scale Patterns

Two-octave patterns, root to root. All shown in A; move the root to change key.

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Ionian (major)	2
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Ionian (major)

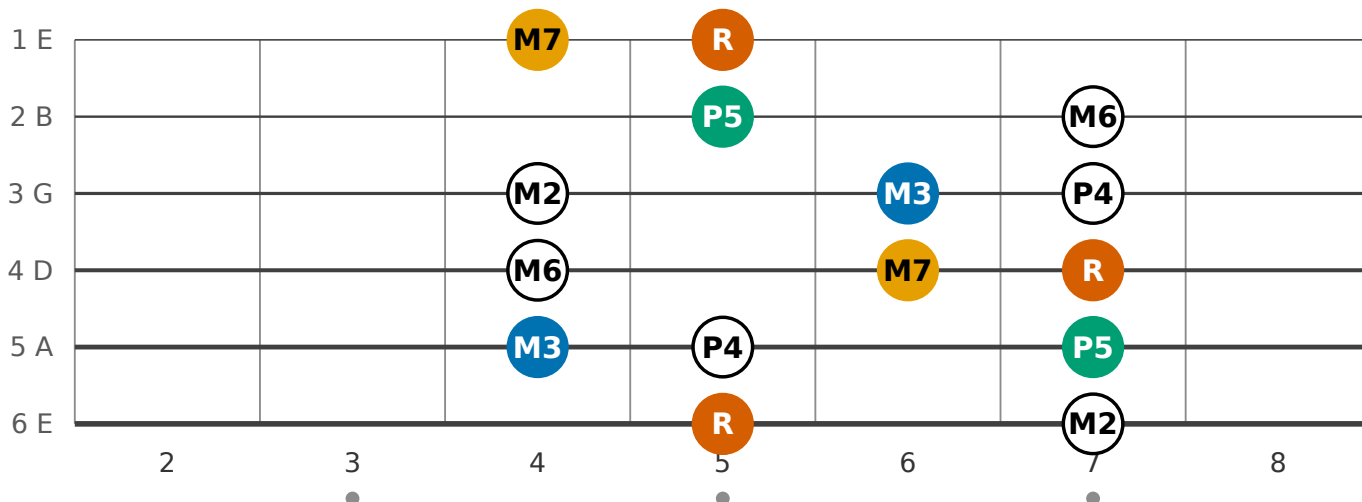
1st mode of the major scale

Formula: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

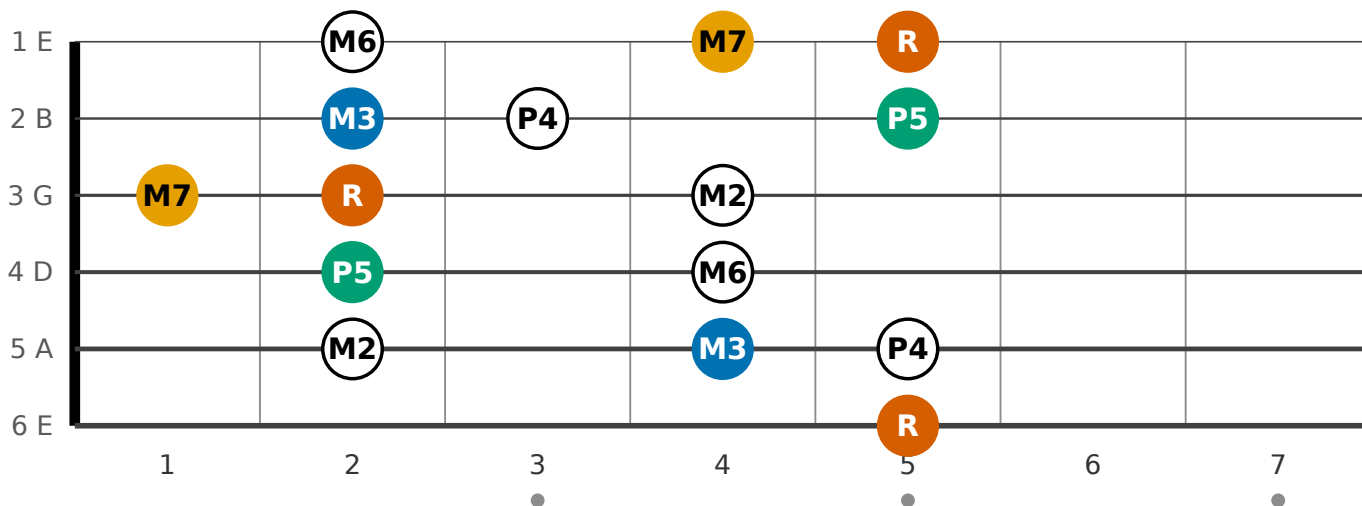
Steps: W W H W W W H

Bright, happy. Use over maj and maj7 chords.

Pattern 1 · root on 6th string, 1st finger (5th fret)



Pattern 2 · root on 6th string, 4th finger (5th fret)



Dorian

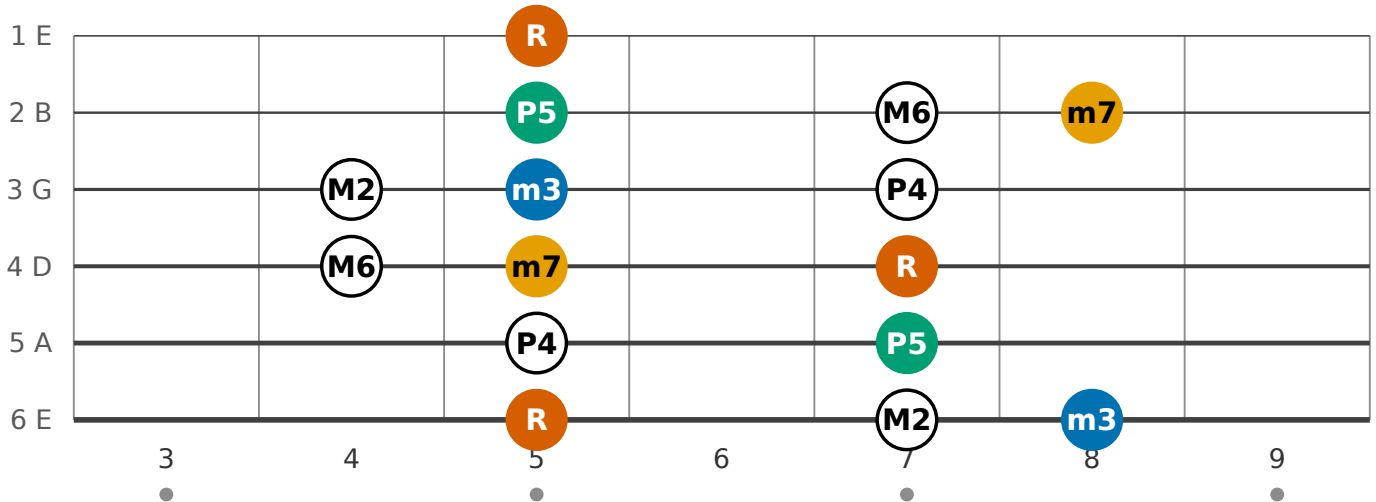
2nd mode of the major scale

Formula: 1 2 $\flat 3$ 4 5 6 $\flat 7$

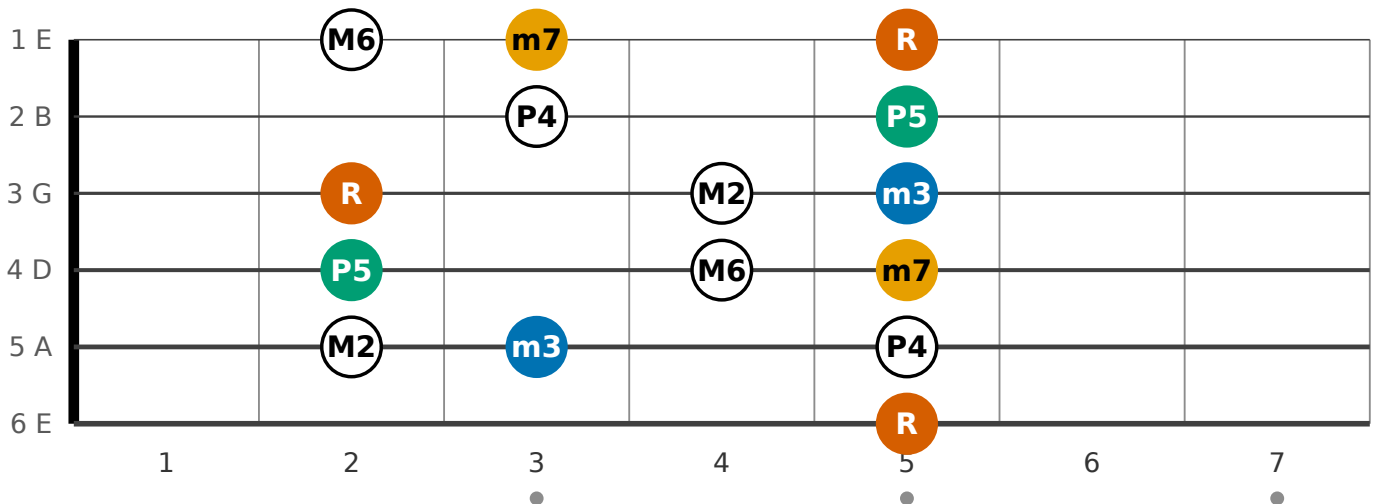
Steps: W H W W W H W

Minor with a bright 6th. Use over m7 chords. Jazz, funk, Santana.

Pattern 1 · root on 6th string, 1st finger (5th fret)



Pattern 2 · root on 6th string, 4th finger (5th fret)



Phrygian

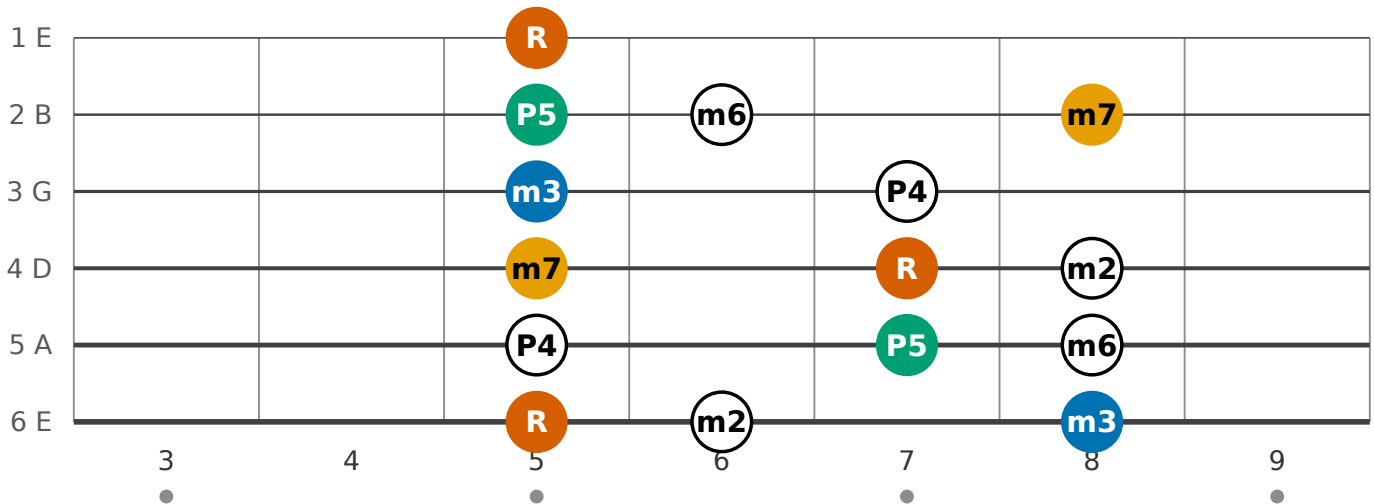
3rd mode of the major scale

Formula: 1 $\flat 2$ $\flat 3$ 4 5 $\flat 6$ $\flat 7$

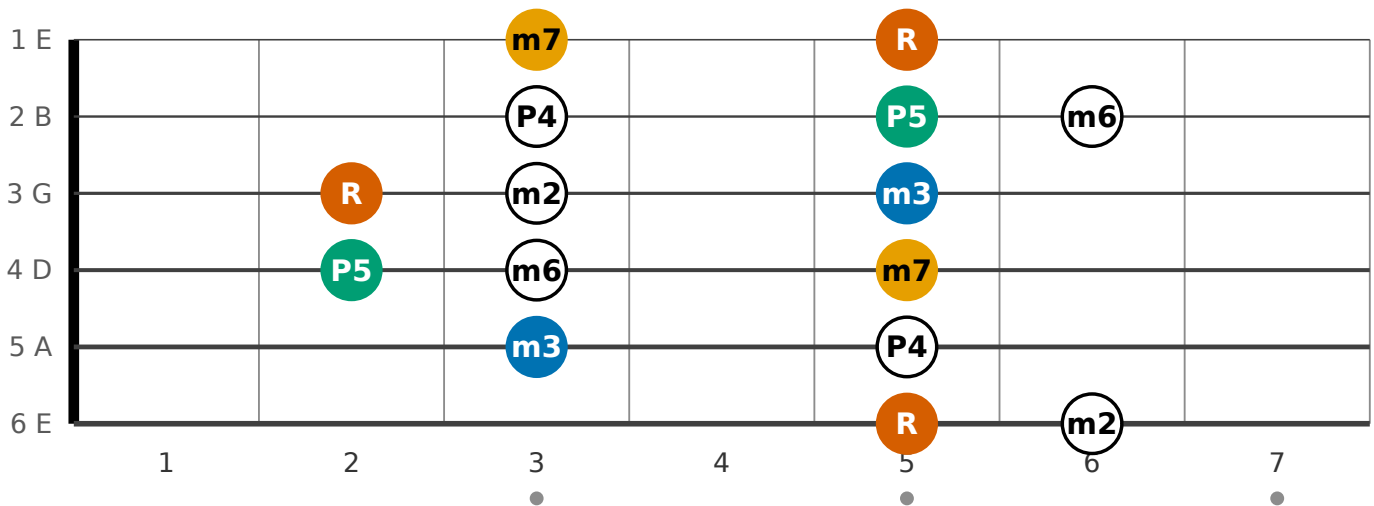
Steps: H W W W H W W

Dark, Spanish sound from the $\flat 2$. Use over m chords, metal.

Pattern 1 · root on 6th string, 1st finger (5th fret)



Pattern 2 · root on 6th string, 4th finger (5th fret)



Lydian

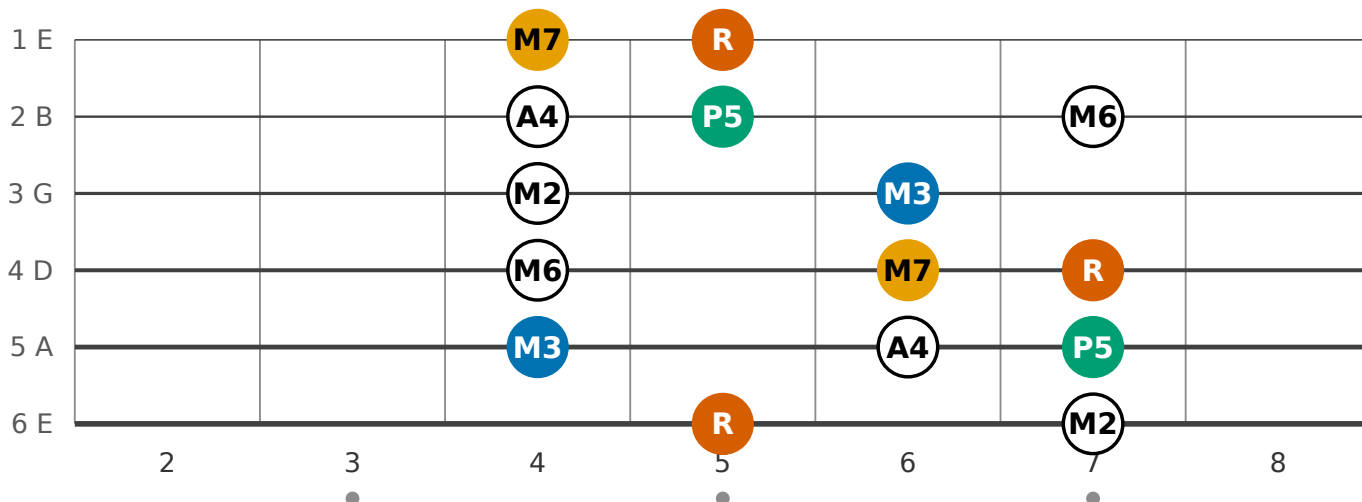
4th mode of the major scale

Formula: 1 2 3 #4 5 6 7

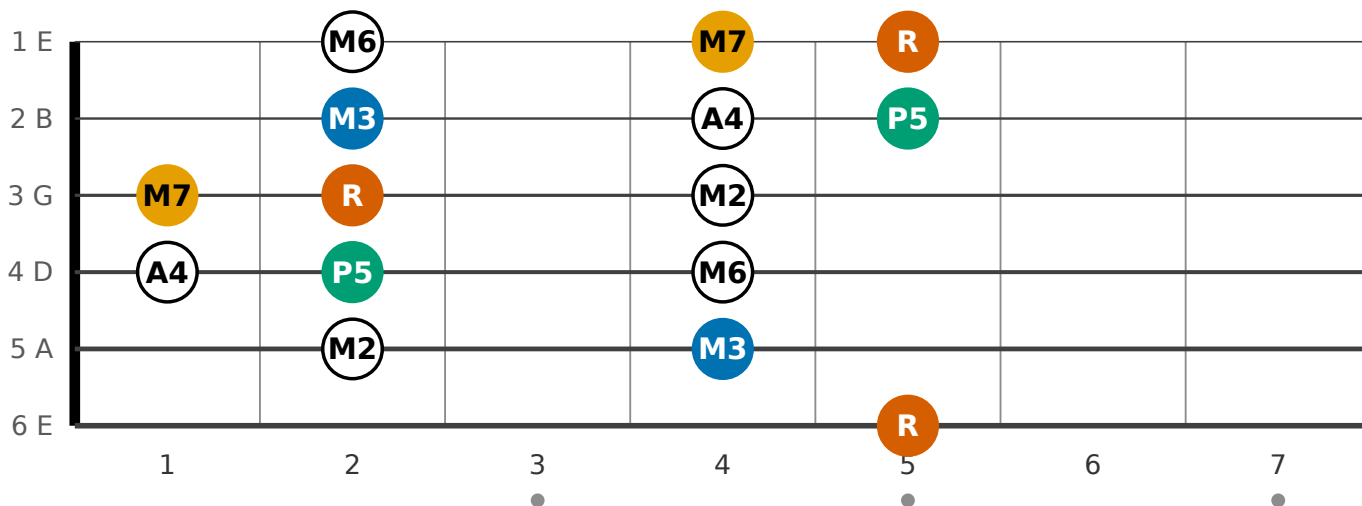
Steps: W W W H W W H

Dreamy, floating major from the #4. Use over maj7 chords.

Pattern 1 · root on 6th string, 1st finger (5th fret)



Pattern 2 · root on 6th string, 4th finger (5th fret)



Mixolydian

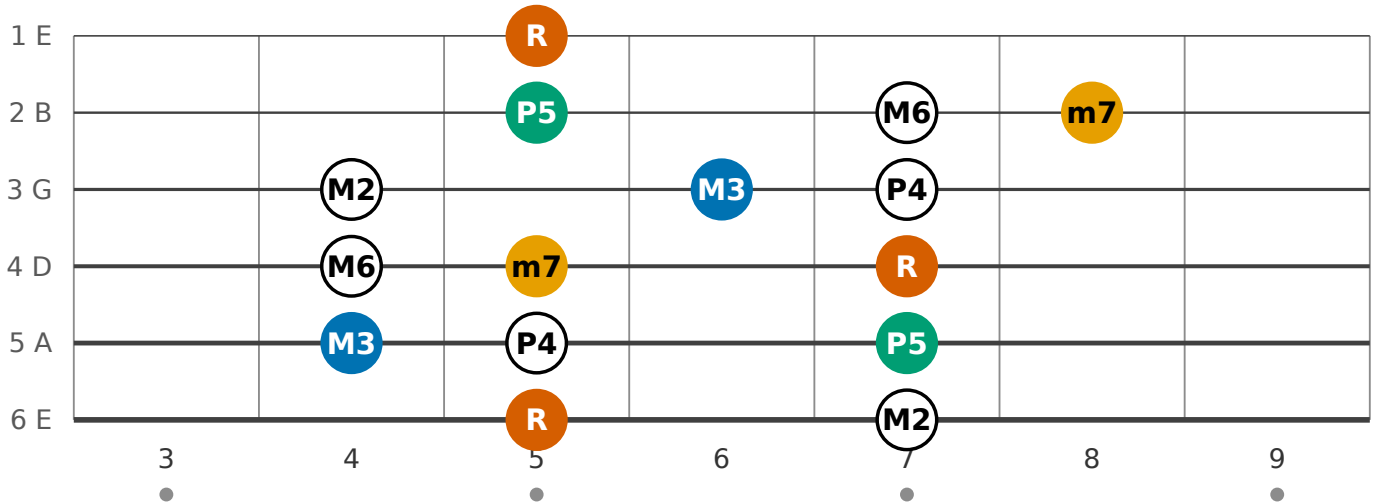
5th mode of the major scale

Formula: 1 2 3 4 5 6 $\flat 7$

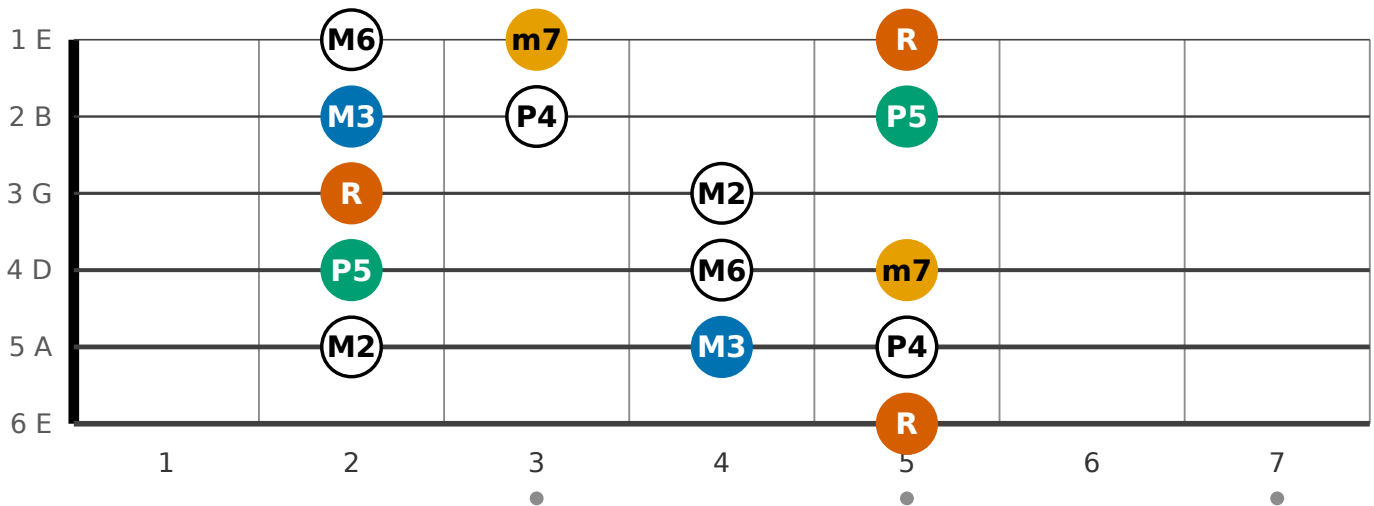
Steps: W W H W W H W

Major with a $\flat 7$. Use over dominant 7 chords. Blues, rock, country.

Pattern 1 · root on 6th string, 1st finger (5th fret)



Pattern 2 · root on 6th string, 4th finger (5th fret)



Aeolian (natural minor)

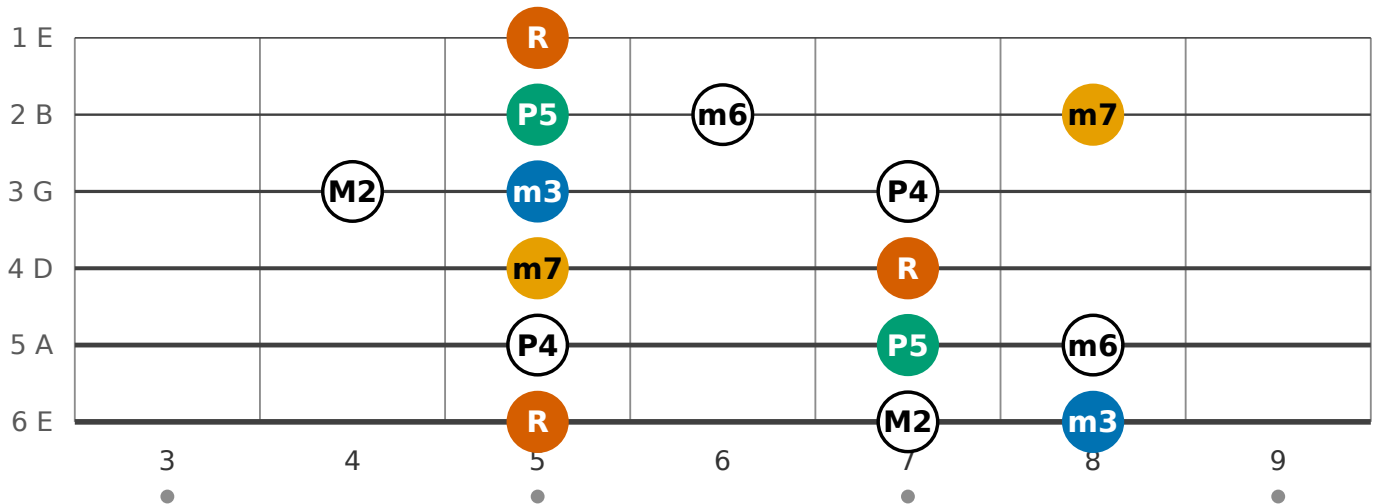
6th mode of the major scale

Formula: 1 2 $\flat 3$ 4 5 $\flat 6$ $\flat 7$

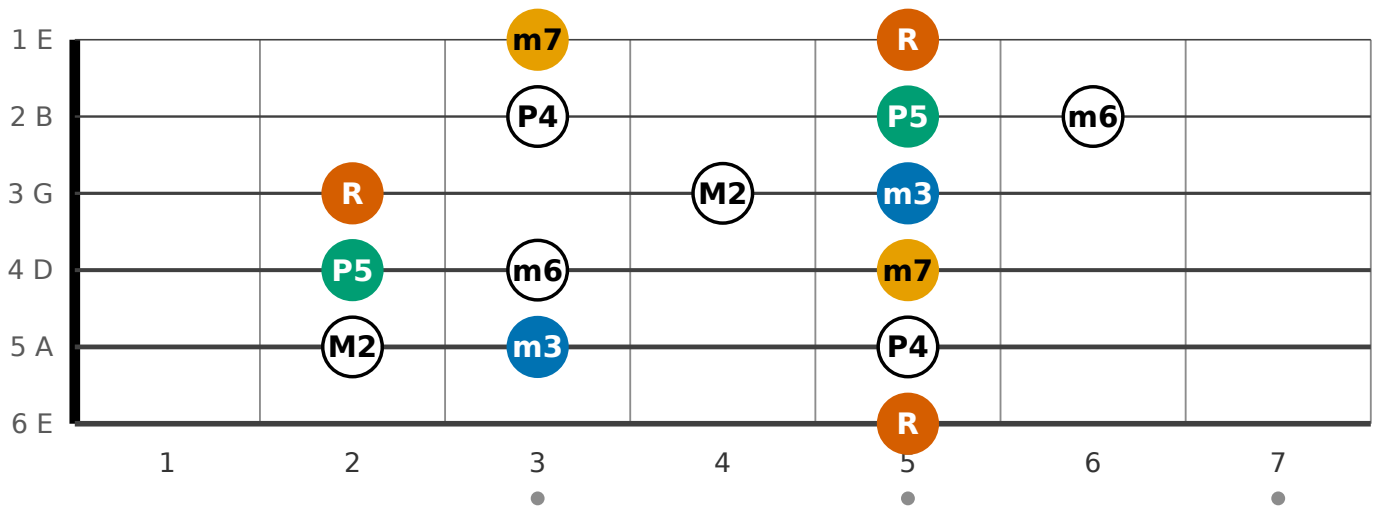
Steps: W H W W H W W

The standard minor sound: dark, sad. Use over m and m7 chords.

Pattern 1 · root on 6th string, 1st finger (5th fret)



Pattern 2 · root on 6th string, 4th finger (5th fret)



Locrian

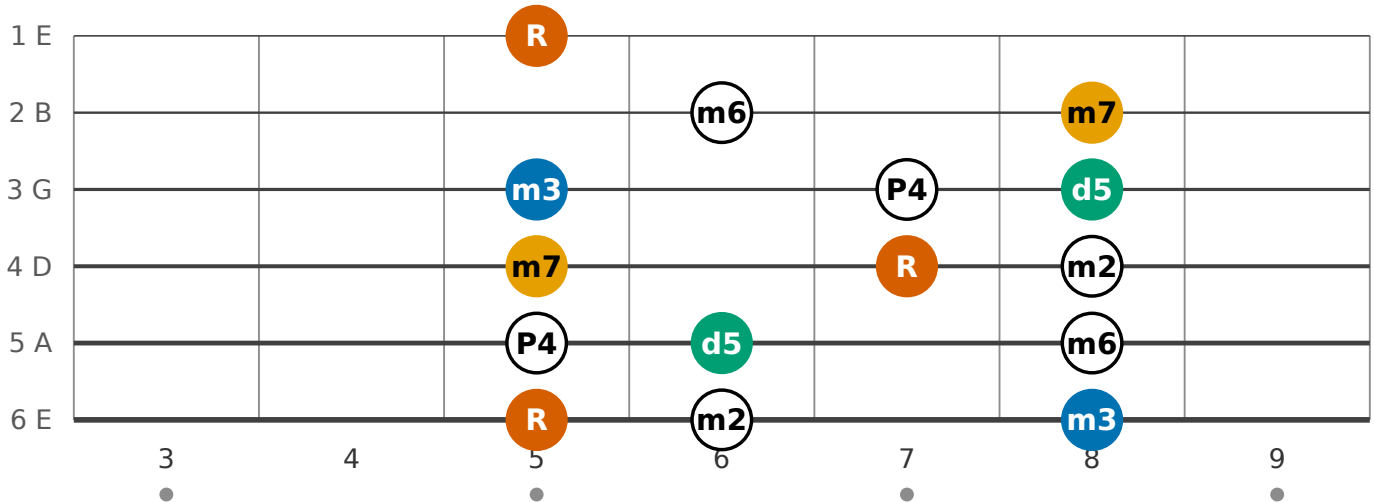
7th mode of the major scale

Formula: 1 $\flat 2$ $\flat 3$ 4 $\flat 5$ $\flat 6$ $\flat 7$

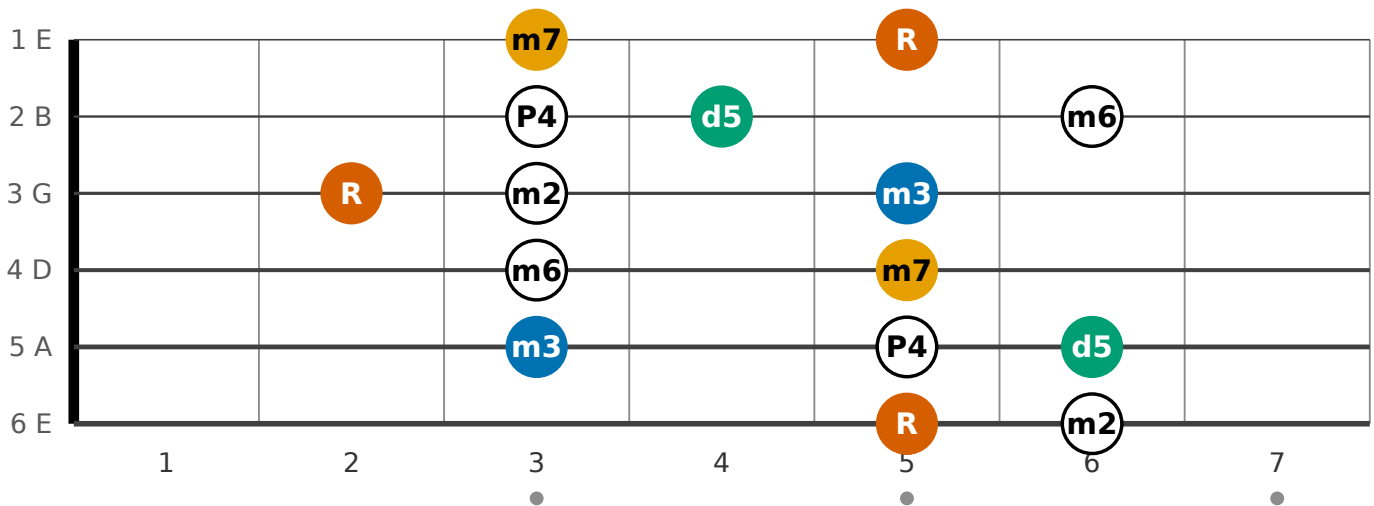
Steps: H W W H W W W

Unstable, tense. Use over $m7\flat 5$ (half-diminished) chords.

Pattern 1 · root on 6th string, 1st finger (5th fret)



Pattern 2 · root on 6th string, 4th finger (5th fret)



Ionian • 3 notes per string

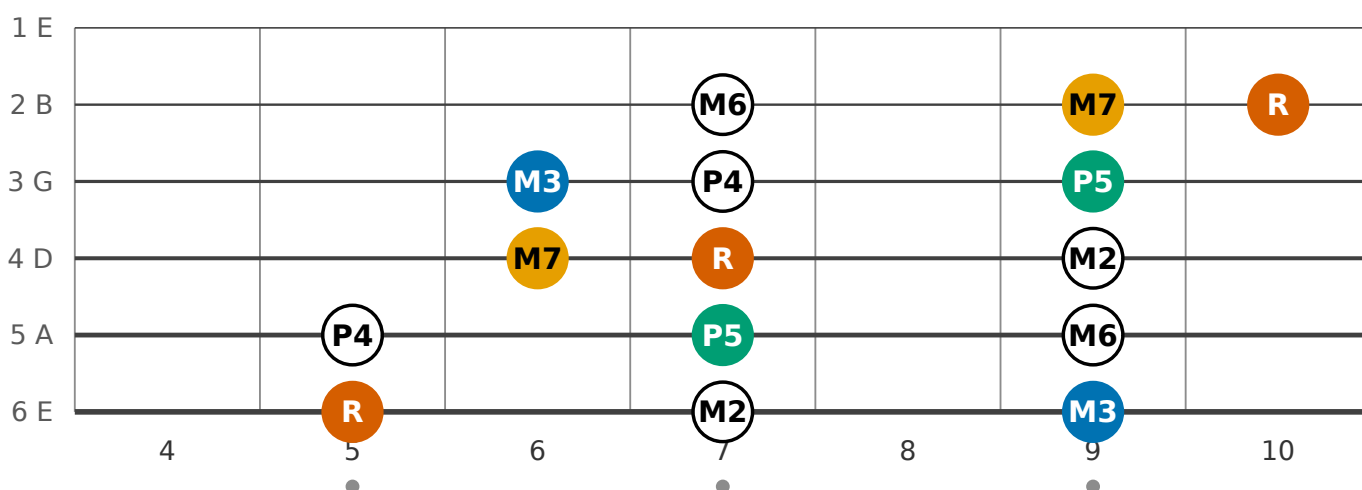
1st mode of the major scale

Formula: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

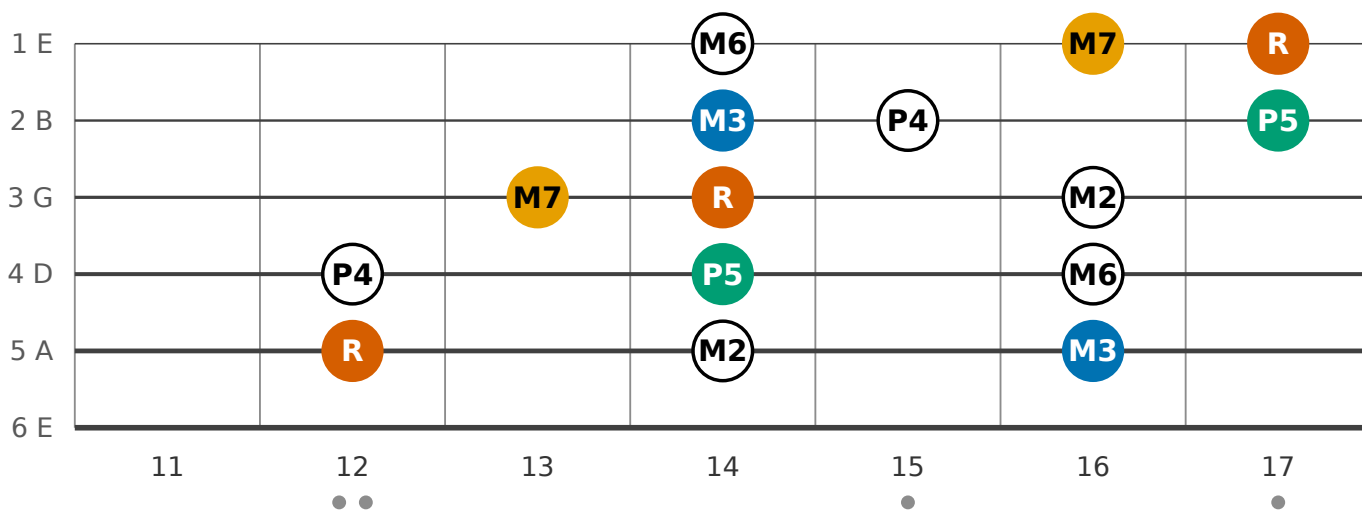
Steps: W W H W W W H

Bright, happy. Use over maj and maj7 chords.

Root on 6th string (5th fret)



Root on 5th string (12th fret)



Dorian • 3 notes per string

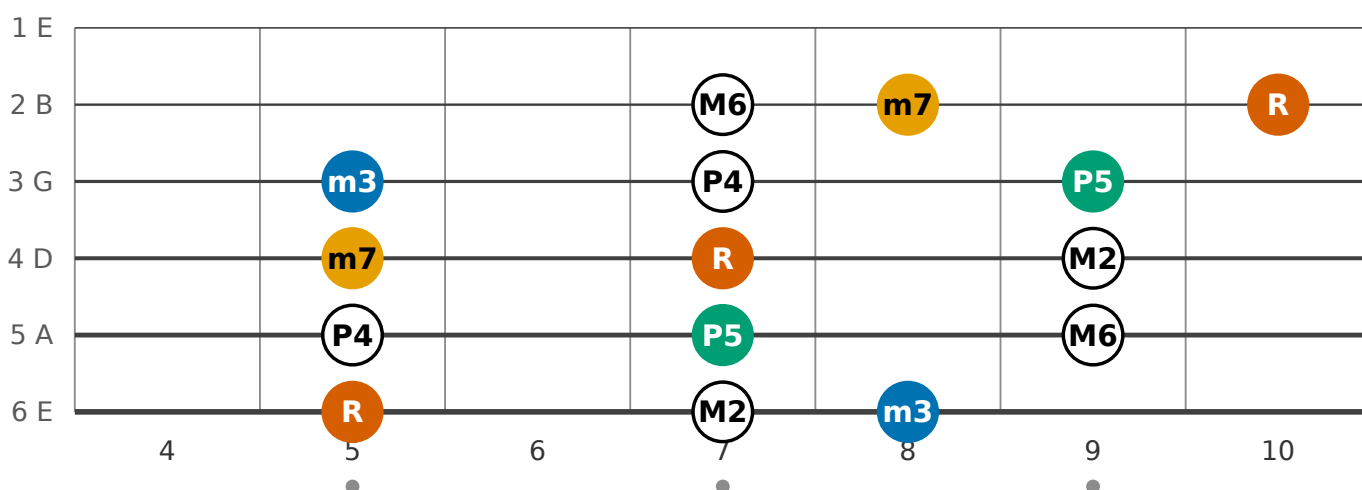
2nd mode of the major scale

Formula: 1 2 $\flat 3$ 4 5 6 $\flat 7$

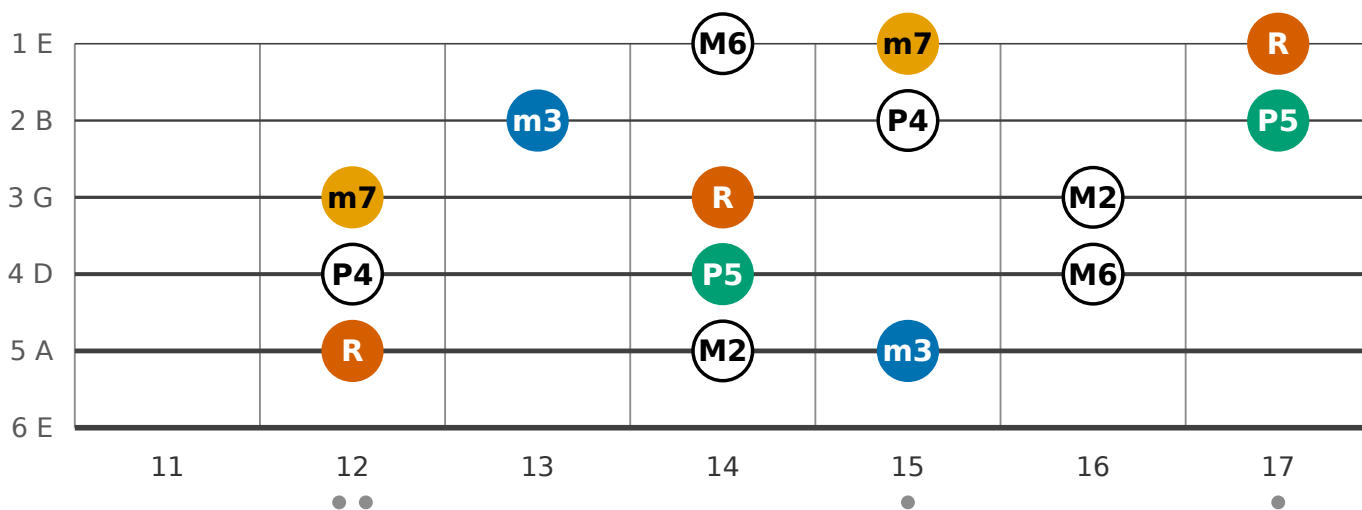
Steps: W H W W W H W

Minor with a bright 6th. Use over m7 chords. Jazz, funk, Santana.

Root on 6th string (5th fret)



Root on 5th string (12th fret)



Phrygian • 3 notes per string

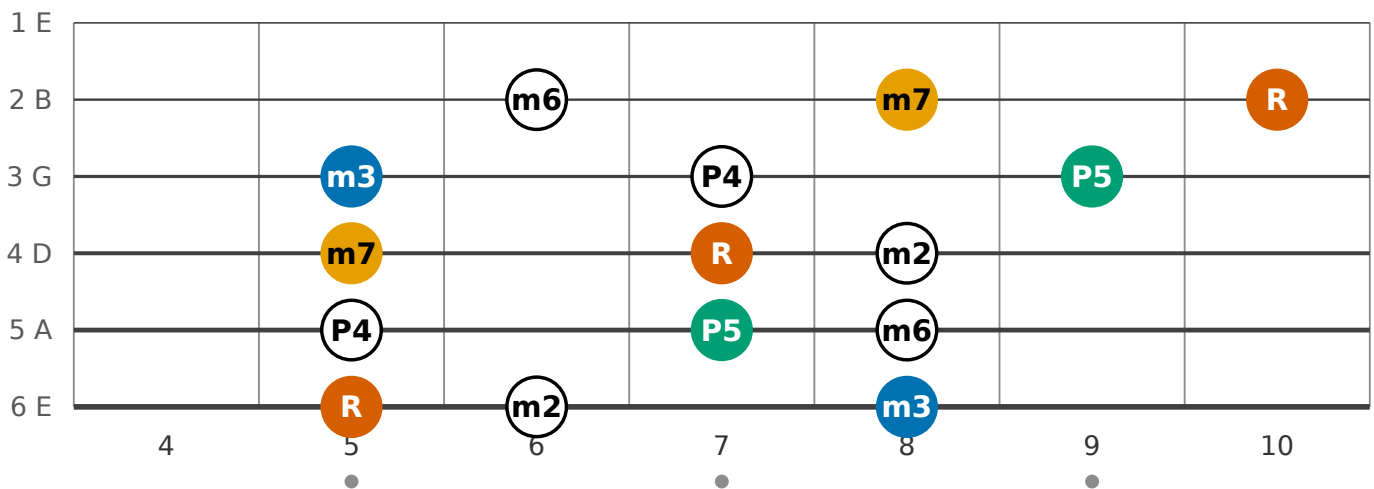
3rd mode of the major scale

Formula: 1 $\flat 2$ $\flat 3$ 4 5 $\flat 6$ $\flat 7$

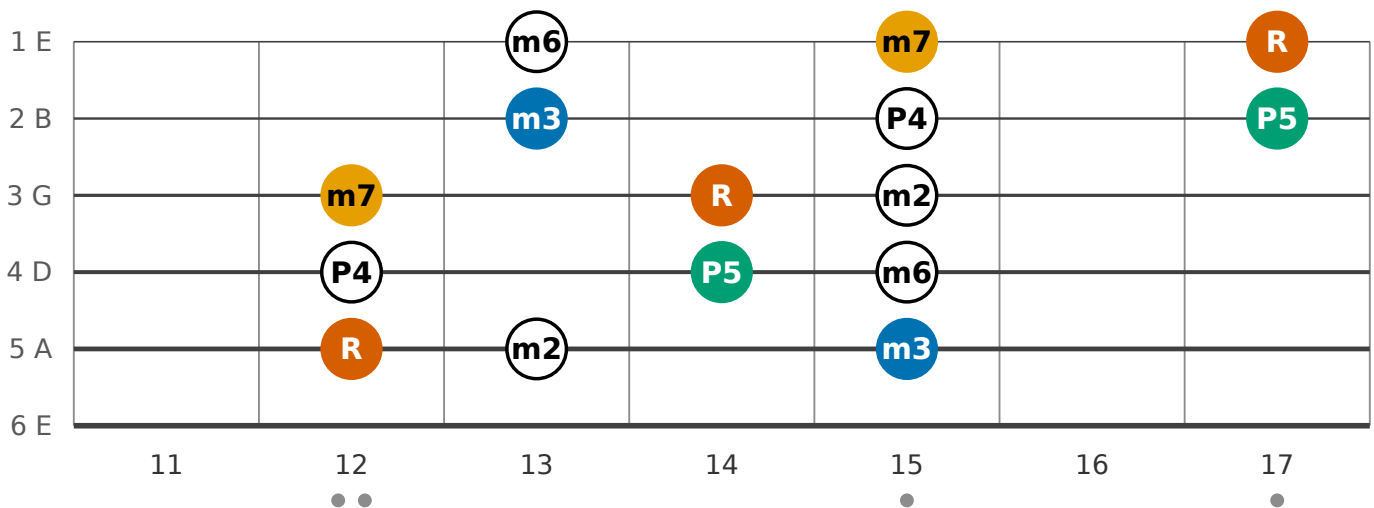
Steps: H W W W H W W

Dark, Spanish sound from the $\flat 2$. Use over m chords, metal.

Root on 6th string (5th fret)



Root on 5th string (12th fret)



Lydian • 3 notes per string

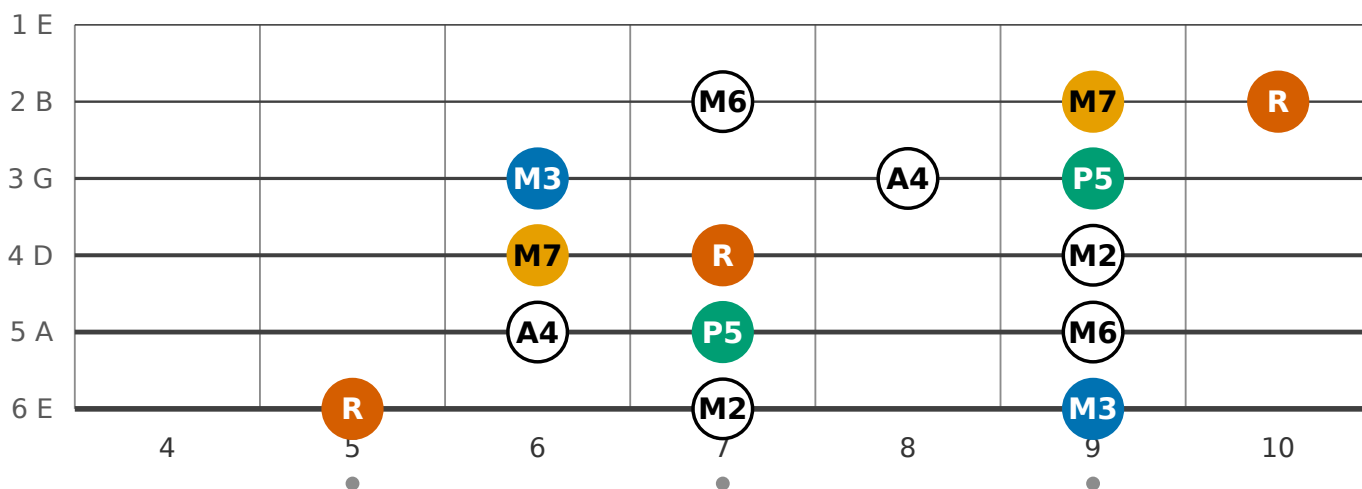
4th mode of the major scale

Formula: 1 2 3 #4 5 6 7

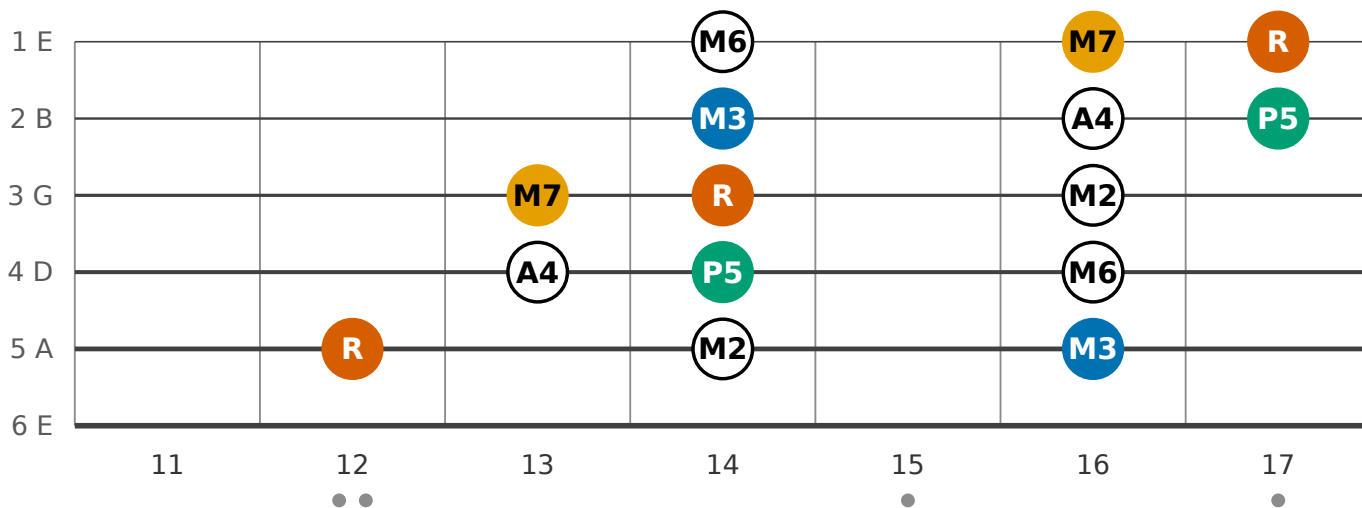
Steps: W W W H W W H

Dreamy, floating major from the #4. Use over maj7 chords.

Root on 6th string (5th fret)



Root on 5th string (12th fret)



Mixolydian • 3 notes per string

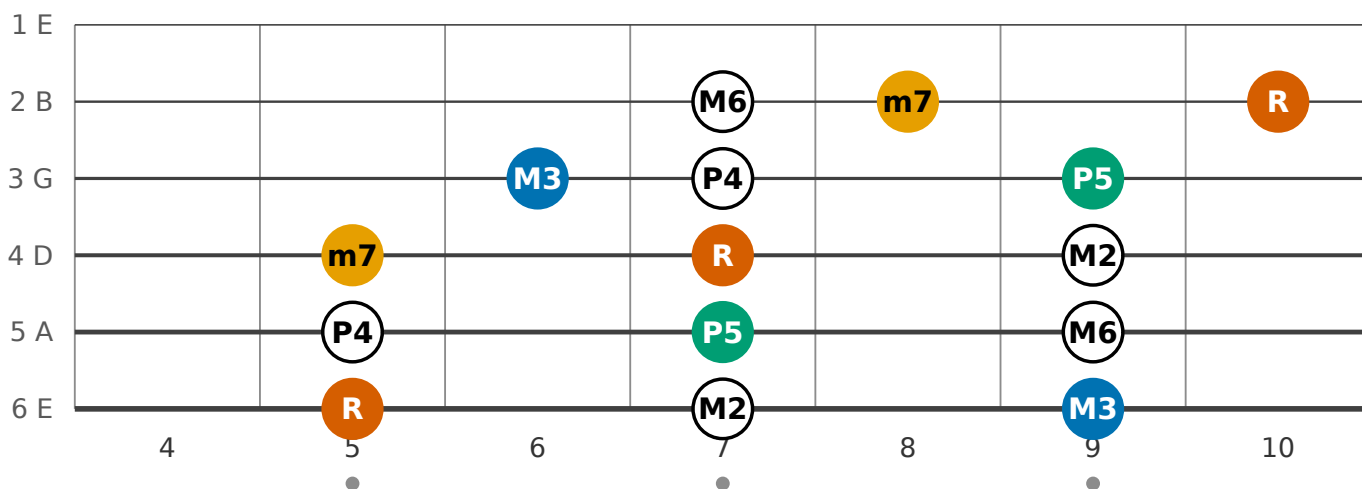
5th mode of the major scale

Formula: 1 2 3 4 5 6 $\flat 7$

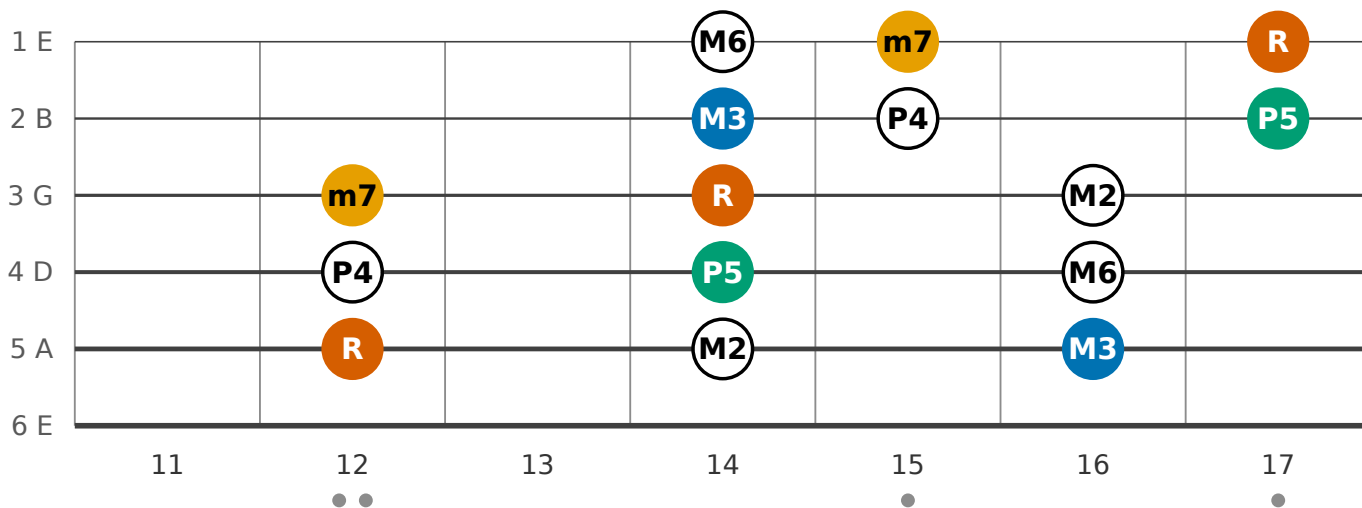
Steps: W W H W W H W

Major with a $\flat 7$. Use over dominant 7 chords. Blues, rock, country.

Root on 6th string (5th fret)



Root on 5th string (12th fret)



Aeolian · 3 notes per string

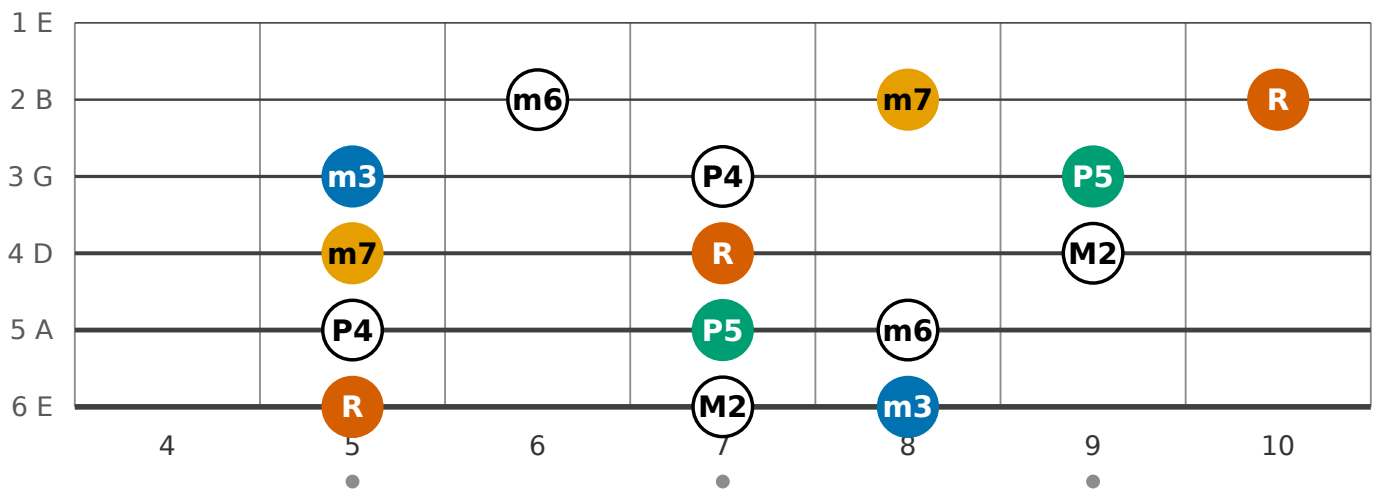
6th mode of the major scale

Formula: 1 2 $\flat 3$ 4 5 $\flat 6$ $\flat 7$

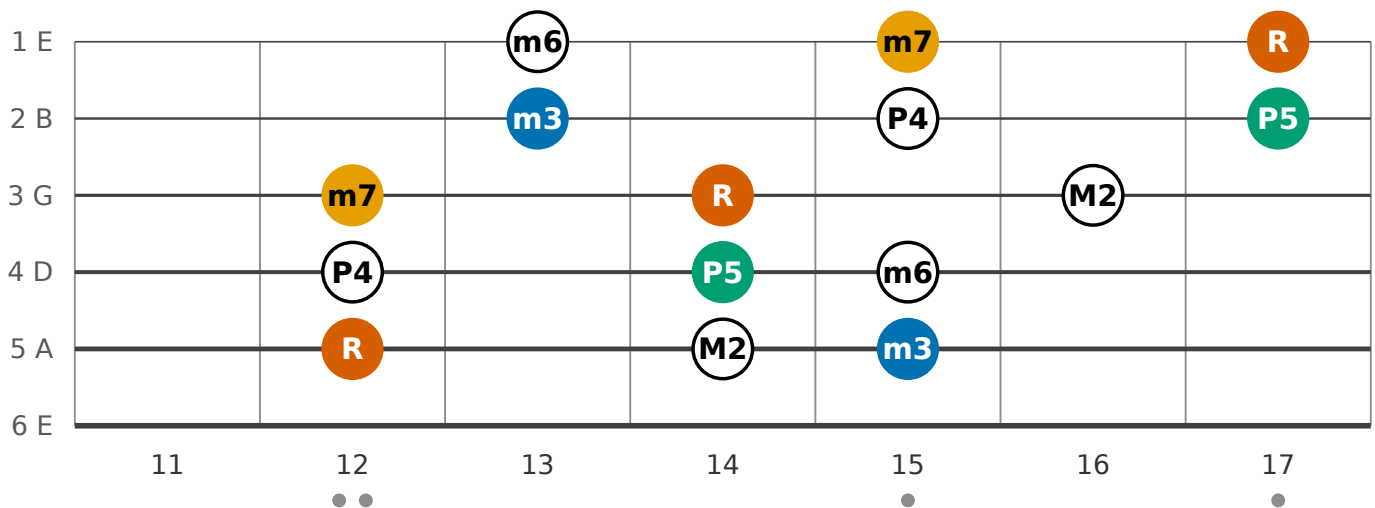
Steps: W H W W H W W

The standard minor sound: dark, sad. Use over m and m7 chords.

Root on 6th string (5th fret)



Root on 5th string (12th fret)



Locrian • 3 notes per string

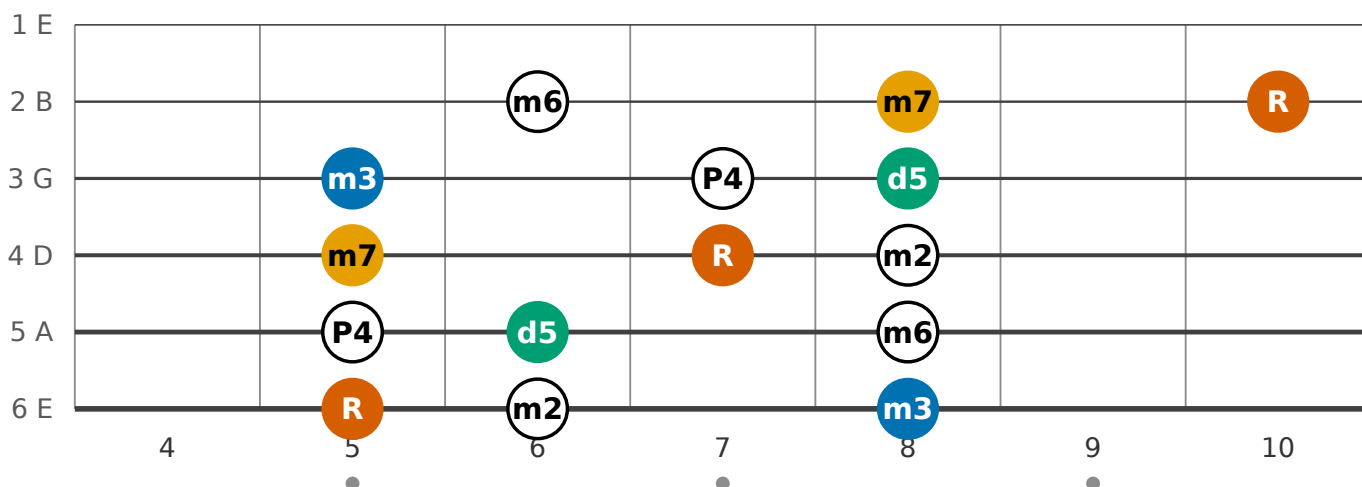
7th mode of the major scale

Formula: 1 $\flat$ 2 $\flat$ 3 4 $\flat$ 5 $\flat$ 6 $\flat$ 7

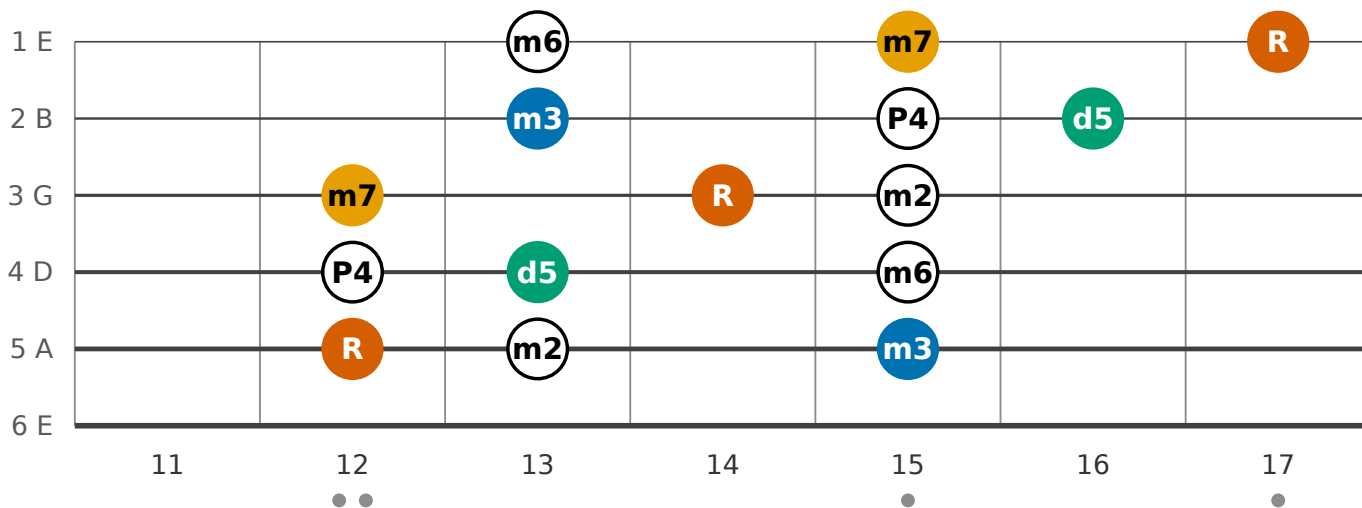
Steps: H W W H W W W

Unstable, tense. Use over $m7\flat 5$ (half-diminished) chords.

Root on 6th string (5th fret)



Root on 5th string (12th fret)



Harmonic minor

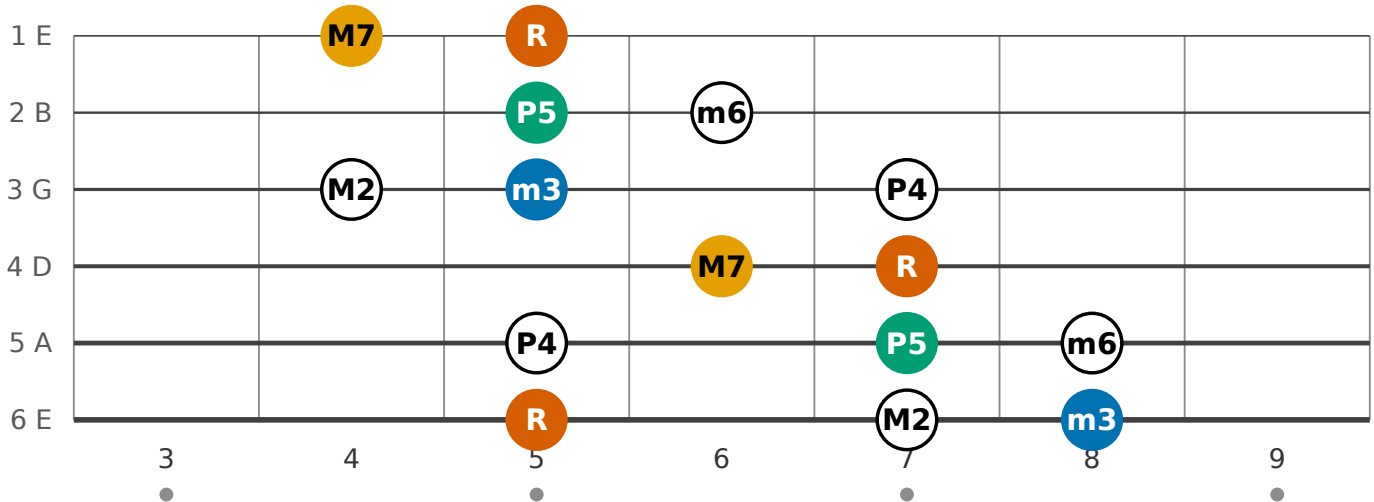
Natural minor with a raised 7th

Formula: 1 2 $\flat 3$ 4 5 $\flat 6$ 7

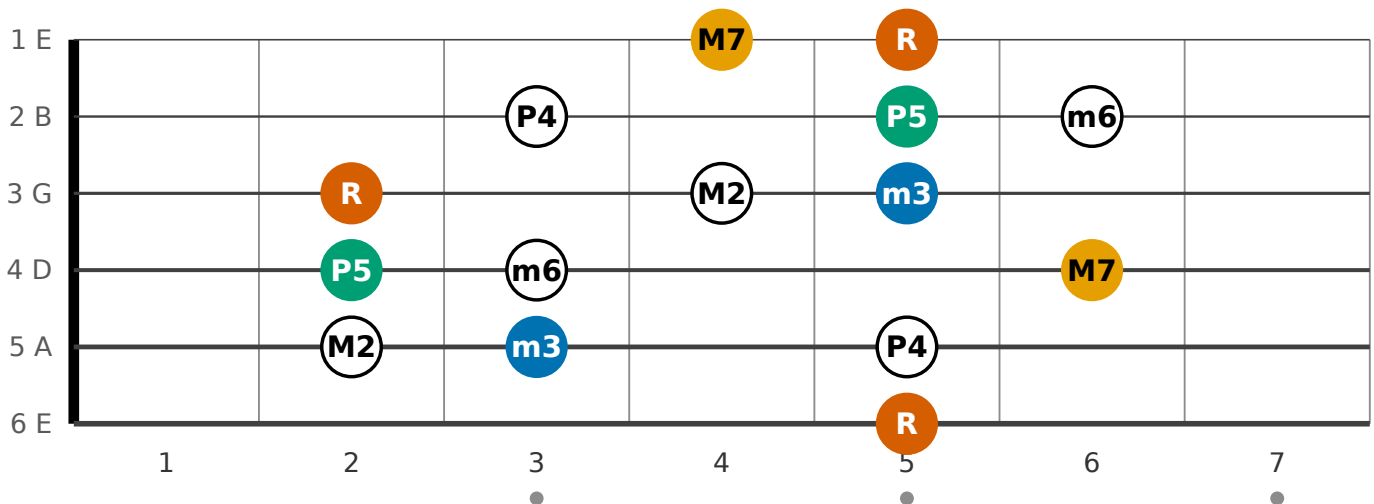
Steps: W H W W H W+H H

Classical, exotic. The M7 pulls hard to the root over V7-i.

Pattern 1 · root on 6th string, 1st finger (5th fret)



Pattern 2 · root on 6th string, 4th finger (5th fret)



Harmonic minor • 3 notes per string

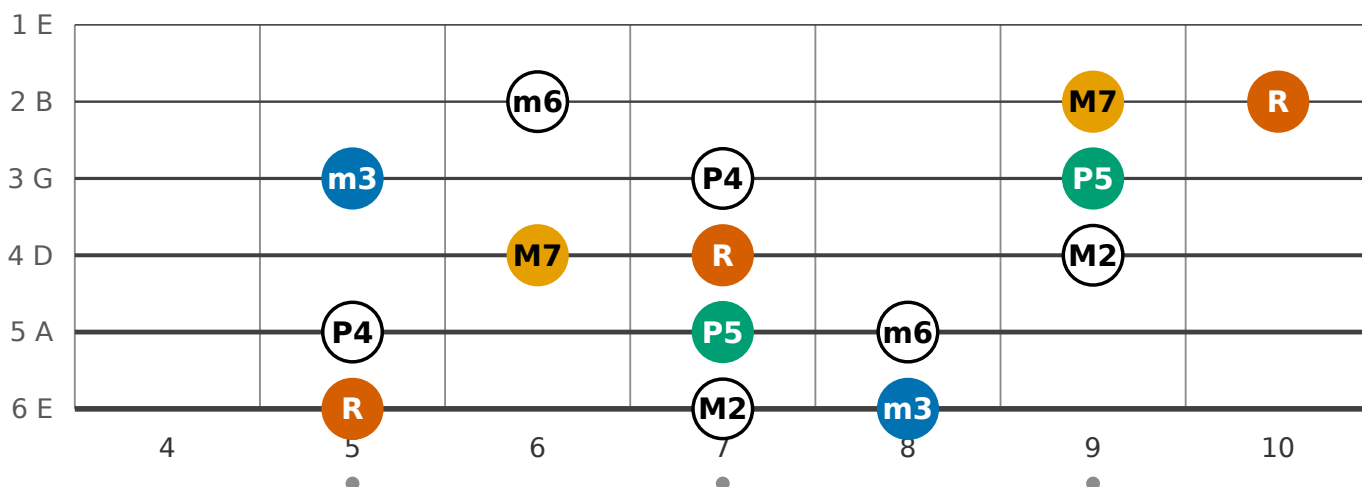
Natural minor with a raised 7th

Formula: 1 2 $\flat$ 3 4 5 $\flat$ 6 7

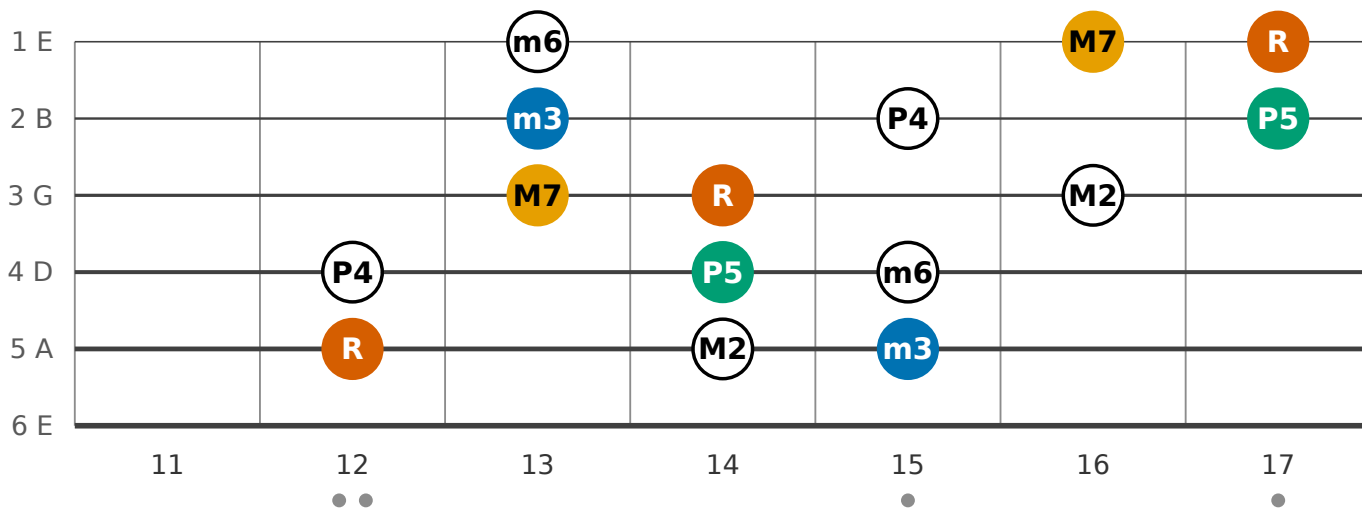
Steps: W H W W H W+H H

Classical, exotic. The M7 pulls hard to the root over V7-i.

Root on 6th string (5th fret)



Root on 5th string (12th fret)



Melodic minor (jazz minor)

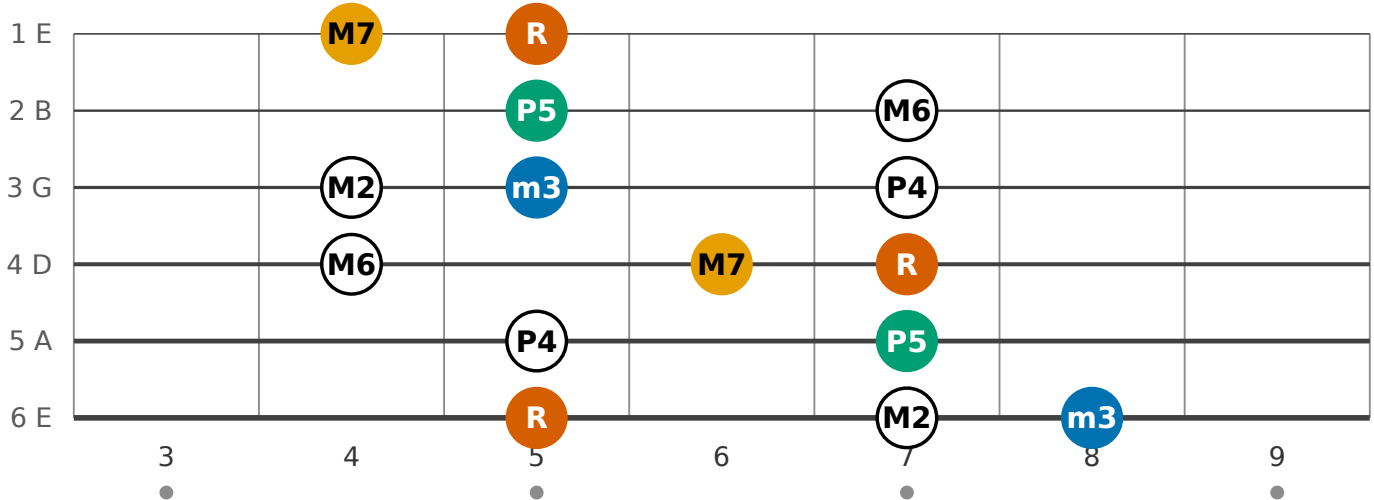
Natural minor with raised 6th and 7th

Formula: 1 2 $\flat 3$ 4 5 6 7

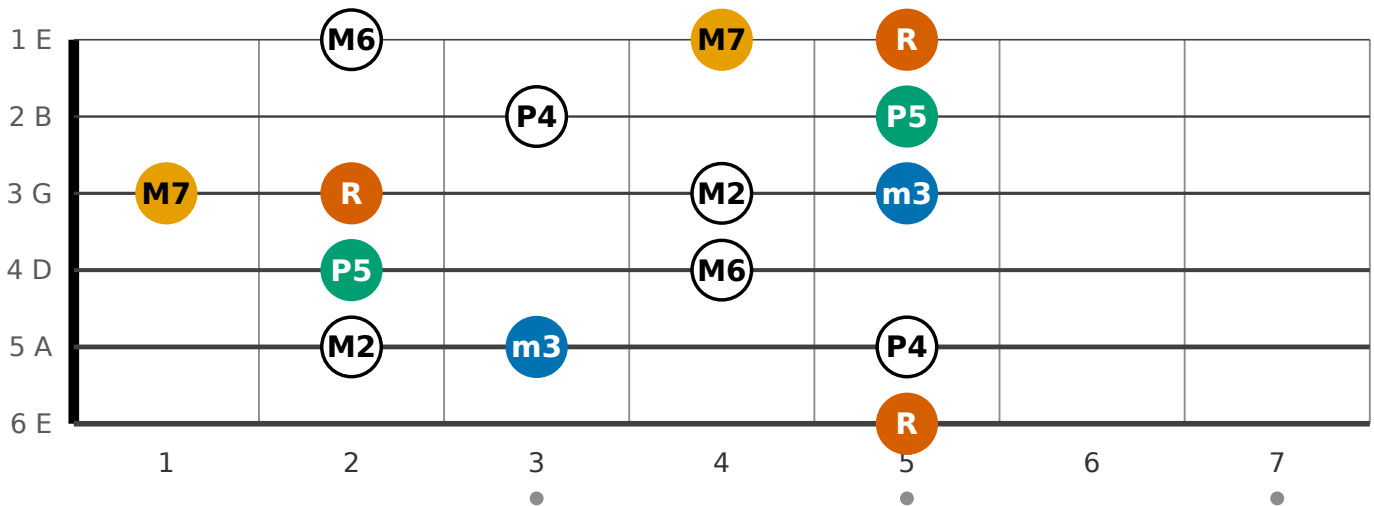
Steps: W H W W W W H

Smooth, jazzy minor. Use over m(maj7) and m6 chords.

Pattern 1 · root on 6th string, 1st finger (5th fret)



Pattern 2 · root on 6th string, 4th finger (5th fret)



Phrygian dominant

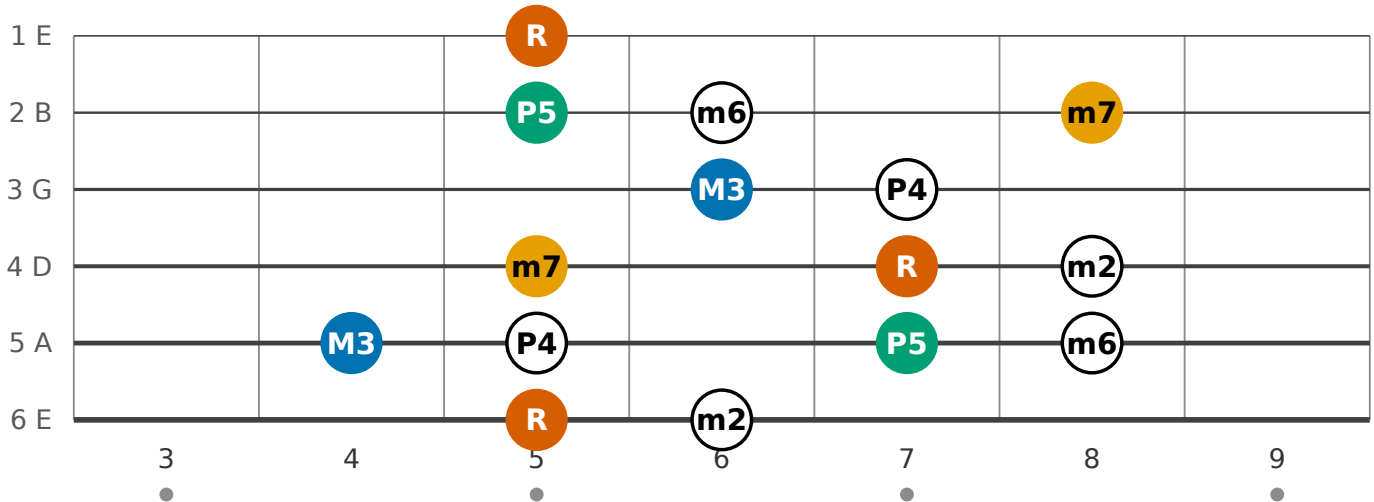
5th mode of harmonic minor

Formula: 1 $\flat$ 2 3 4 5 $\flat$ 6 $\flat$ 7

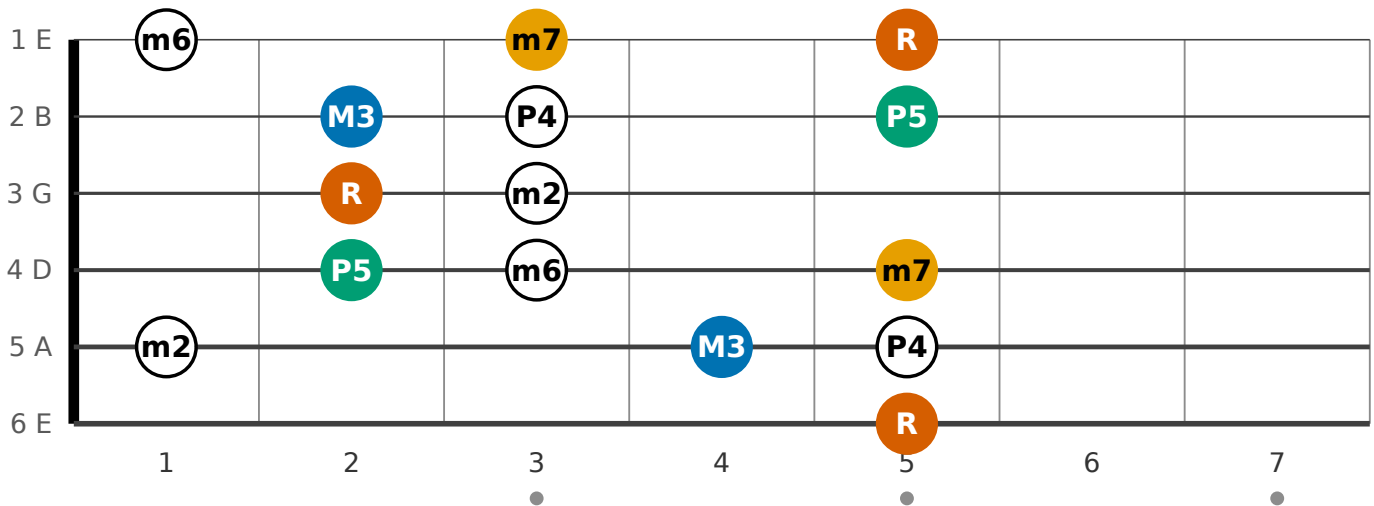
Steps: H W+H H W H W W

Middle-Eastern, flamenco, metal. Use over the V7 chord in a minor key.

Pattern 1 · root on 6th string, 1st finger (5th fret)



Pattern 2 · root on 6th string, 4th finger (5th fret)



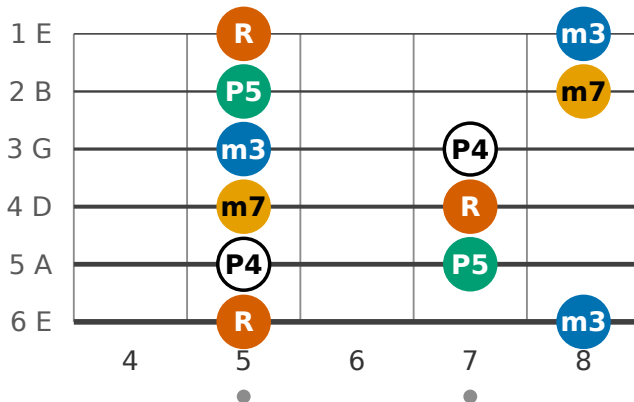
Minor pentatonic

5 positions. Same shapes as major pentatonic, different root.

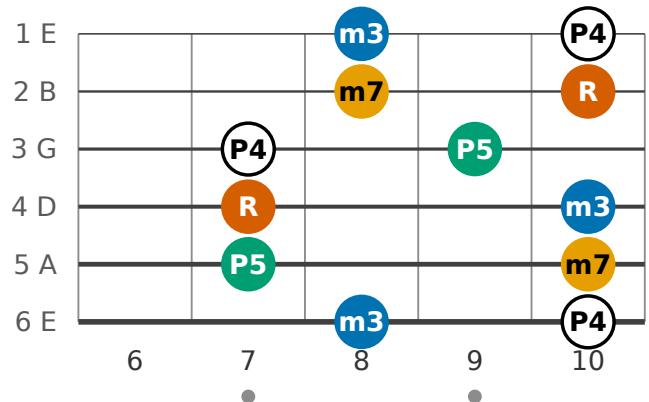
Formula: 1 $\flat$ 3 4 5 $\flat$ 7

The rock and blues workhorse. Use over m, m7 and dominant blues.

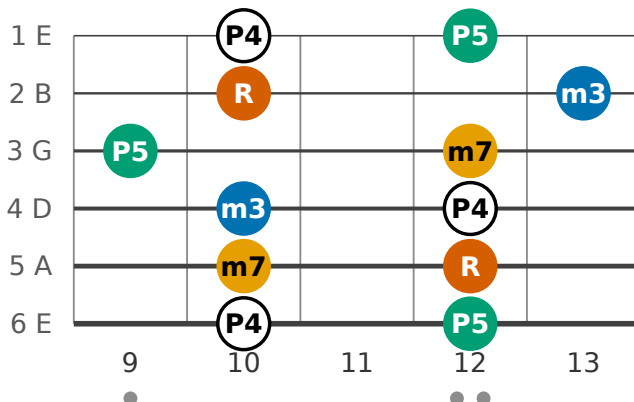
Position 1



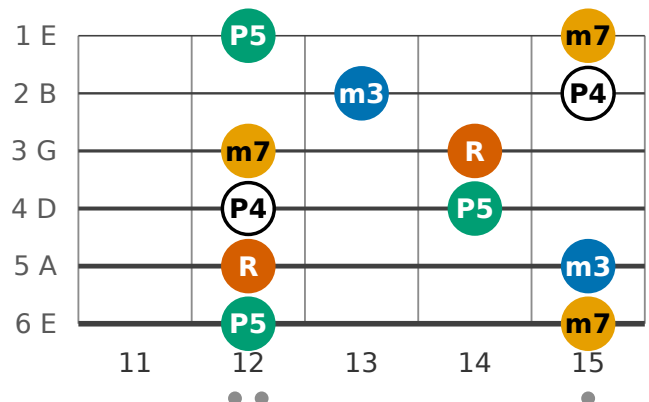
Position 2



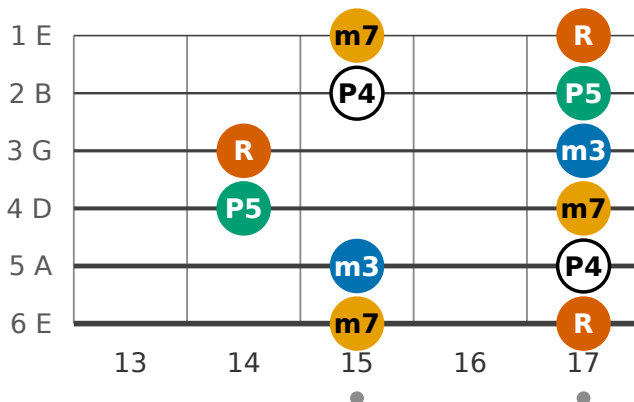
Position 3



Position 4



Position 5



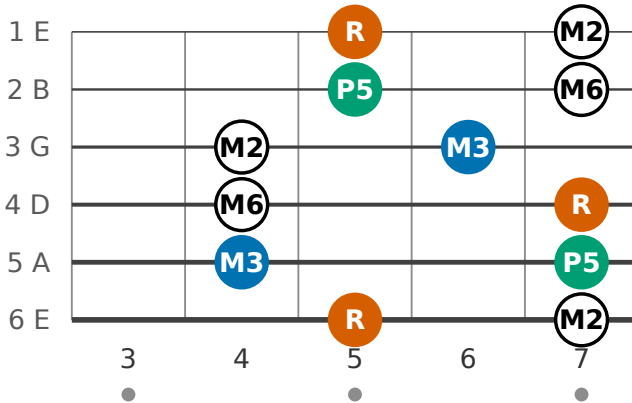
Major pentatonic

5 positions. Same shapes as minor pentatonic, different root.

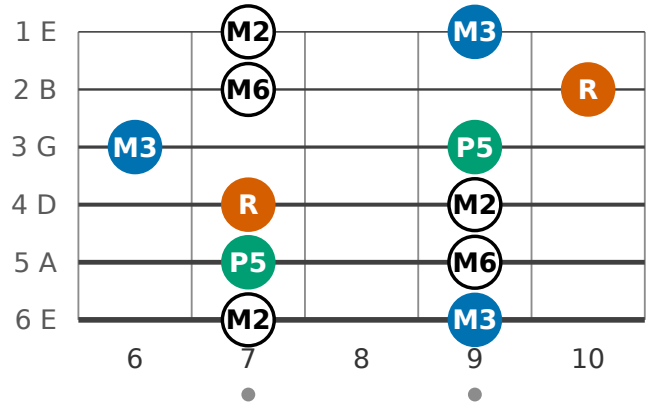
Formula: 1 2 3 5 6

Sweet, open sound. Country, southern rock. Use over major chords.

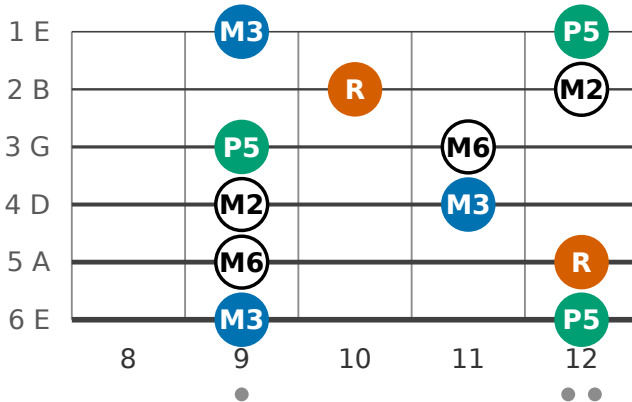
Position 1



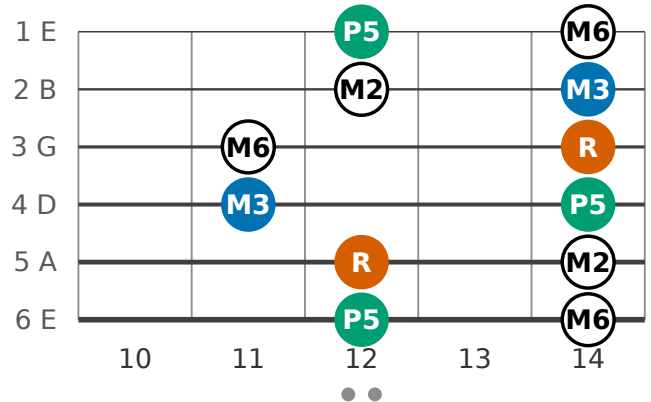
Position 2



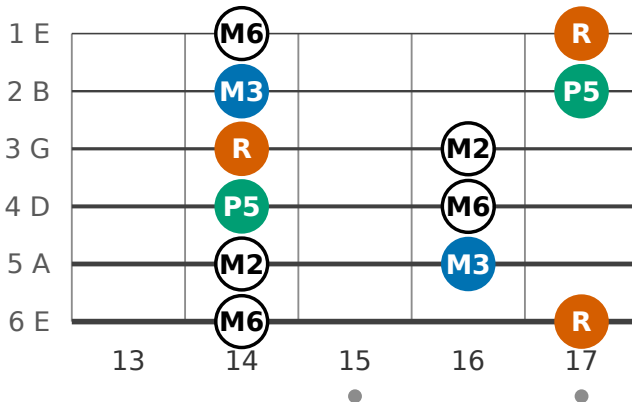
Position 3



Position 4



Position 5



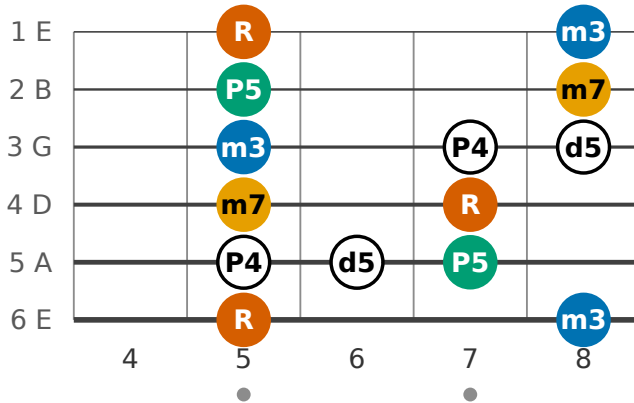
Blues scale

Minor pentatonic plus the $\flat 5$ (the blue note).

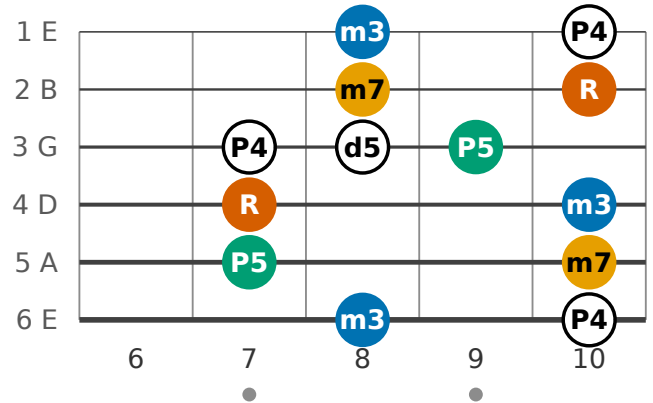
Formula: 1 $\flat 3$ 4 $\flat 5$ 5 $\flat 7$

Use the $\flat 5$ as a passing note between 4 and 5.

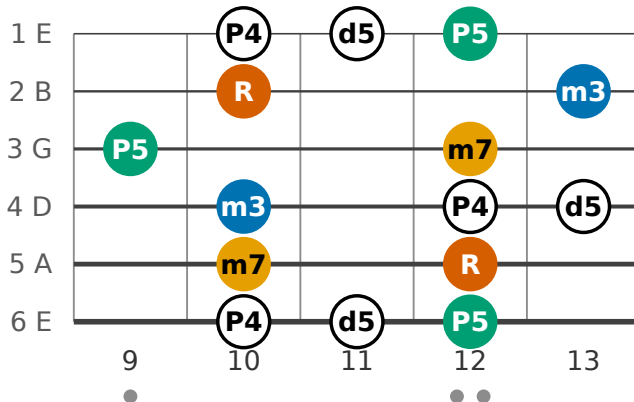
Position 1



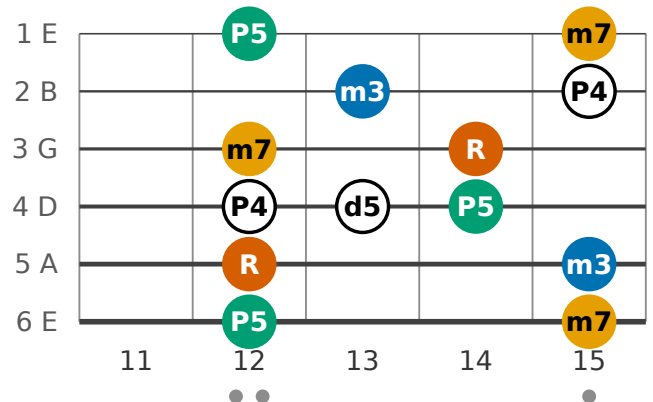
Position 2



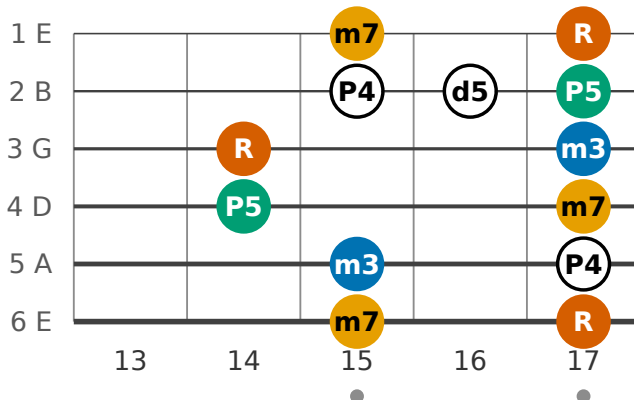
Position 3



Position 4



Position 5

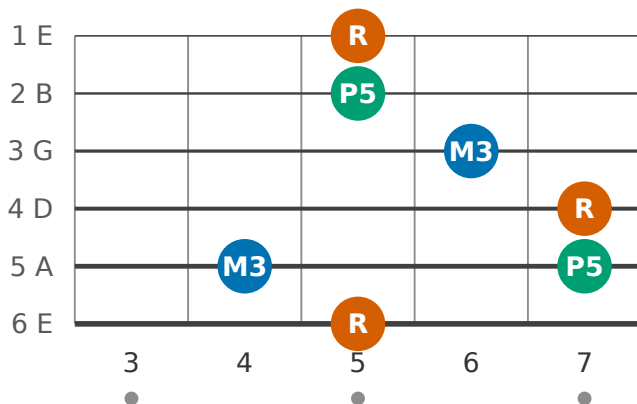


Arpeggios · root on 6th string

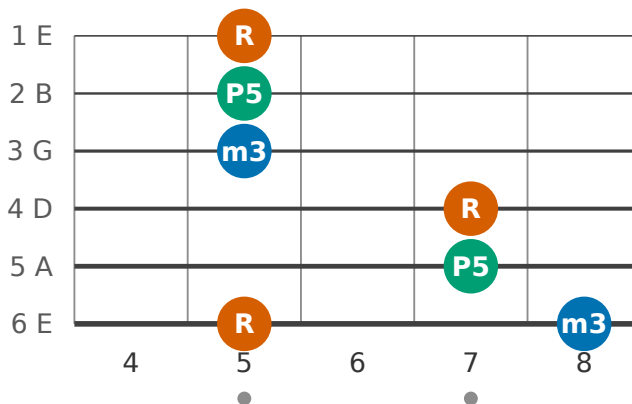
Chord tones only, root to root, 1st-finger position.

Play these over the matching chord so your lines land on chord tones.

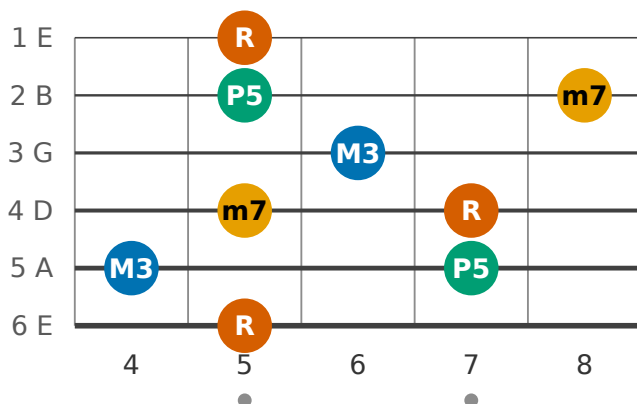
Major · R 3 5



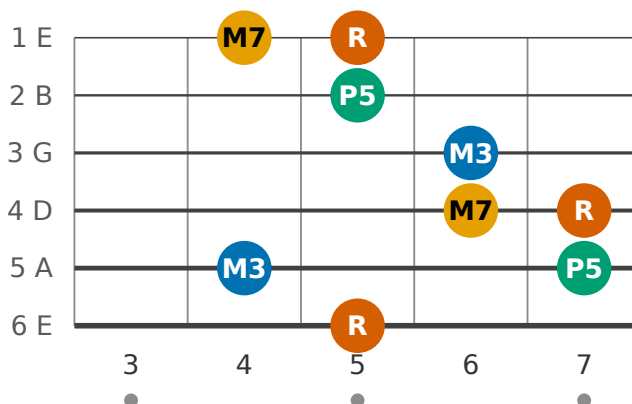
Minor · R $\flat$ 3 5



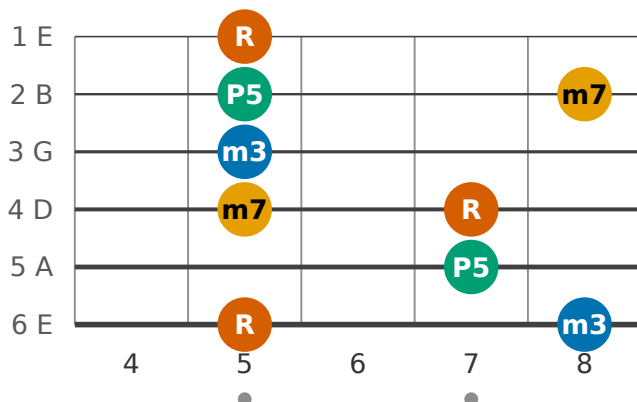
Dominant 7 · R 3 5 $\flat$ 7



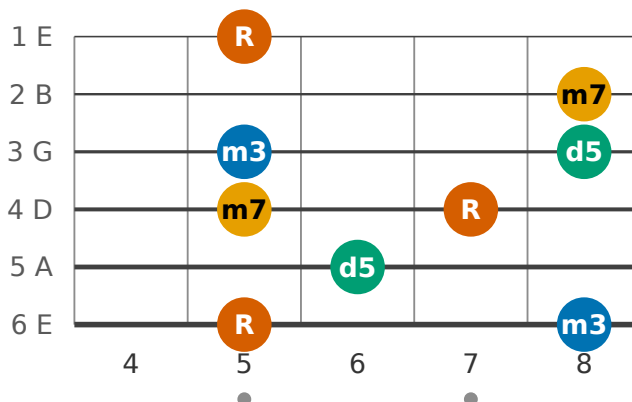
Major 7 · R 3 5 7



Minor 7 · R $\flat$ 3 5 $\flat$ 7



Minor 7 $\flat$ 5 · R $\flat$ 3 $\flat$ 5 $\flat$ 7

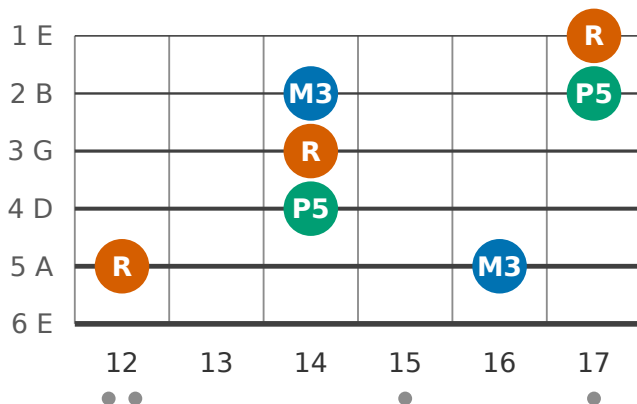


Arpeggios · root on 5th string

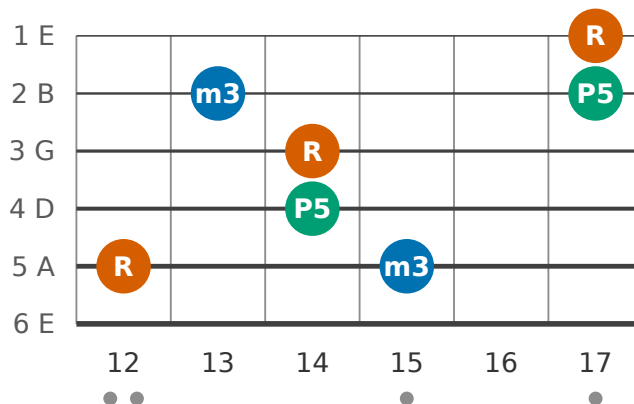
Chord tones only, root to root, 1st-finger position.

Play these over the matching chord so your lines land on chord tones.

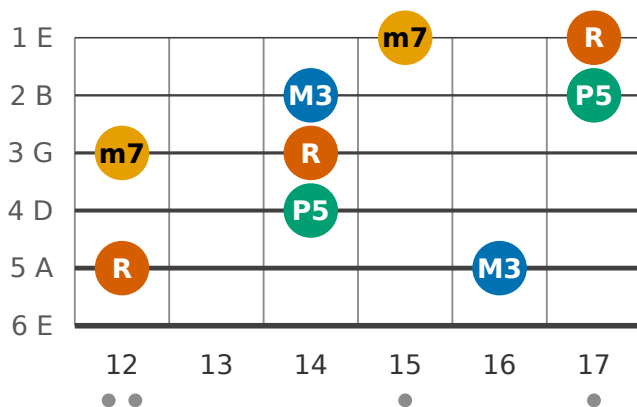
Major · R 3 5



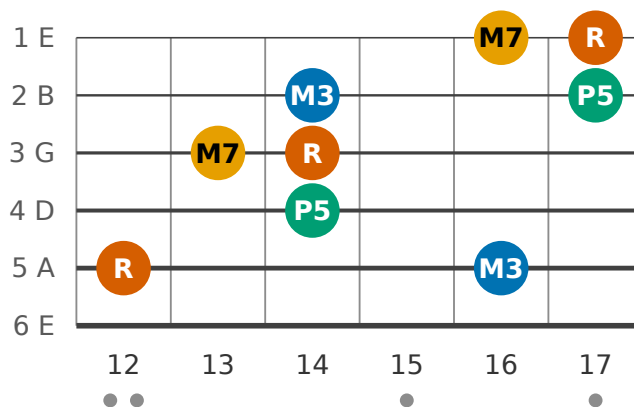
Minor · R $\flat$ 3 5



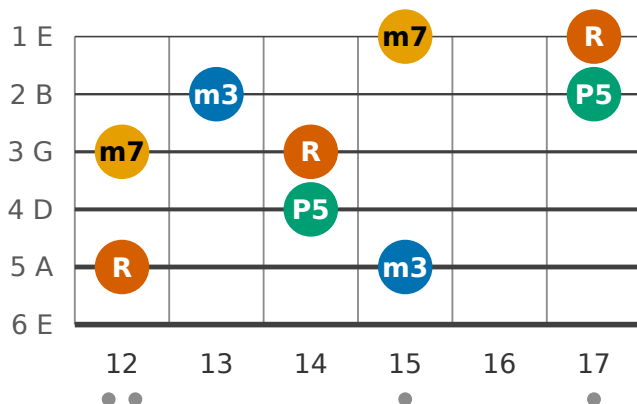
Dominant 7 · R 3 5 $\flat$ 7



Major 7 · R 3 5 7



Minor 7 · R $\flat$ 3 5 $\flat$ 7



Minor 7 $\flat$ 5 · R $\flat$ 3 $\flat$ 5 $\flat$ 7

