



## Tips on Soloing

Listen to the music you want to play day in and day out. Swing timing is difficult to "study". Playing laid back is a feel, not a science. You can practice this laid back feel by using a metronome and timing your notes a little behind the beat. A better way is to play along with records in swing feel. Listen to the pros, "borrow" their licks and acknowledge them when you're playing their stuff. When playing rhythm, you can stimulate this feel by making the round circles described in the "Full Chords" sections.

Use you ears. Seems like an open door, but if you walk into the Monday Night Blues Session at the corner cafe, you'll know what I mean. Listen to what the other musicians do and complement that. Only one person at a time can have the solo slot, know when your turn comes and be a good accompanist till then. If you don't, it'll turn into deafening Dixieland.

Use clear rhythms in your accompanying; patterns of 1, 2, 4 or 12 bars. Repeating yourself gives the other guys and gals something to react to and build a solo on. Turn down when you're playing rhythm.

Start your solo with an obvious sentence, something like "once upon a time". Remember, we're trying to communicate and blabbing or running your mouth will make the audience run for the door, the bar or their gun. The Standard Riff could be a good opener, though don't overuse it. Use hooks in a solo, clear melody parts or chord rhythms with accents. You've got to take the listener by the hand and lead them through your story.

Sing with your solo, if you can at the same pitch. It makes your solo breathe, because YOU have to breathe. If you turn red while soloing, you're doing something wrong. Nothing like a monotonous, loud avalanche of notes to chase the audience away. In your practicing, listen to horn players. Their phrasing is often more natural than a guitar player's because they have to breathe.

A great way to learn phrasing is to play solo and accompany yourself. Play a simple chord rhythm of a half of a bar or so and then solo till the end of bar two, repeat that process for each pair of bars in a blues. You can also do this with a one-bar and a four-bar version. Tap the rhythm with your foot or have a metronome going.

Build your solos; start off at medium volume and medium speed, diminish your volume and pace your notes. At the end you can crank it and give it all you've got. End with a clear statement and a nod to the next soloist or singer. Don't give away all your licks in one song. Leave em beggin' for more.

Repeat yourself for climaxing purposes only. People will think you're really into it. Play a riff that fits over all chords using notes that the respective mixolydian scales have in common. The B.B. King position (3rd Blues Position) is made for this.

