Good Times Bad Times - Solo Practice Tips

Jimmy Page is burning right out of the gate on this one. It's a short, powerful one-two punch of aggressive, well-articulated E minor pentatonic licks. Even though the solo is intense and quick, Page still lets the phrases breathe with well-placed longer notes and brief pauses. He then finishes with a burst of staccato, syncopated notes that gives the solo an exciting rhythmic ending.

As always, start slow, get the "lay of the land," so to speak. Check out the scale positions used and get the note sequences first, one lick or a ½ lick at a time. Next, get the "mojo"— the slides, hammer-ons, pull-offs, etc. Sometimes a faster lick may take me several days to work up to speed. If you want to learn it, don't get discouraged; just keep at it!

Speaking of working things "up to speed" an invaluable tool I have used for years is the "Amazing Slow Downer"

https://www.ronimusic.com/slowdown.htm. (This is not an advertisement, I have no affliation with this product)

You can slowdown and loop the smallest fractions of a lick, it can change the pitch if you're are playing a Hendrix, Van Halen, or SRV tune. Sliders control loop length, speed, pitch, etc, so it is very user friendly. I highly reccomned it!

Scales Used

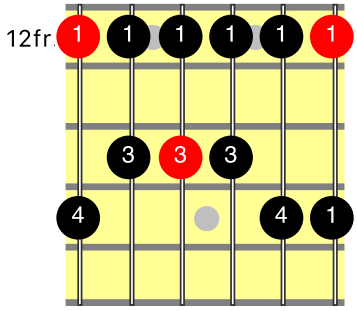
Every note in this solo comes directly from the E minor pentatonic scale-until the final phrase. There, you can hear and see Page hit a couple of G-sharps, the major third of E. Those notes briefly shift the color from minor toward major pentatonic, giving the solo a bright lift at the end.

Good Times Bad Times - The Scales

The Whole Scale

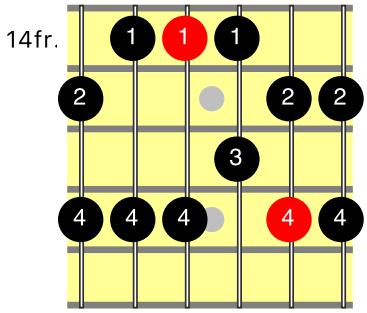
from the Root - E

12fr.



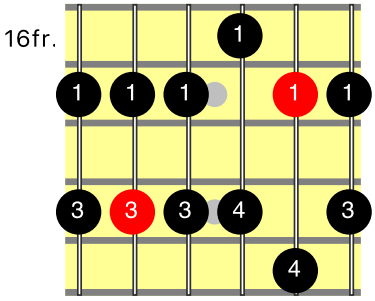
from the b3 - G

14fr.



from the 4th - A

16fr.



The Part Page Uses

from the Root - E

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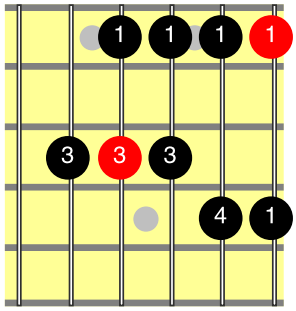

from the b3 - G

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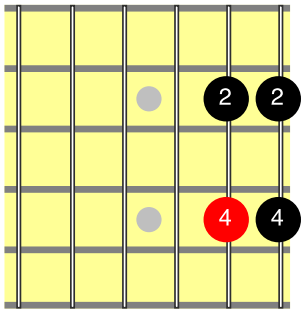

from the 4th - A

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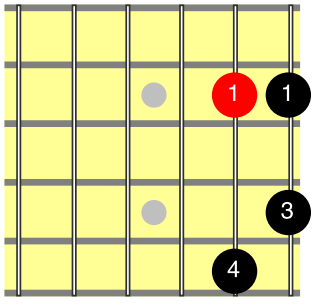


Essential Techniques

- The nice thing about the "Good Times Bad Times" solo is that, even at its fast pace, you can clearly map it out phrase by phrase. Before worrying about the bends, rapid-fire triplets, vibrato, and all the other details that give the solo its mojo and vibe, make sure you have each lick memorized and know exactly where your fingers are going.
- Move through the notes slowly. Once the fingering is memorized, begin adding the bends, slides, vibrato, and articulation. Unless you're a more advanced player, it is extremely difficult to learn the notes and all those expressive details at the same time.
- This is also where the Amazing Slow Downer can be incredibly helpful. When you slow the recording down, you can hear the vibrato more clearly, how quickly or slowly Page bends a note, whether he slides into a note or out of it, and all the subtle details that make the solo sound the way it does.

Phrase 1. This phrase is a powerhouse two-measure lick packed with rapid fire sixteenth notes.

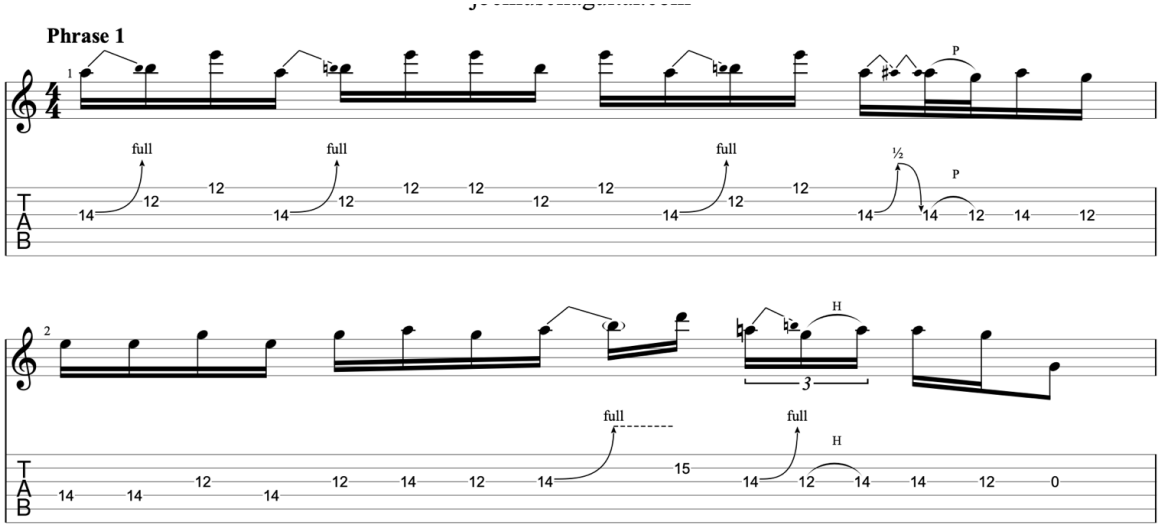
The first measure is fairly easy to understand once you break it into four repeated bends. Each bend starts at the 14th fret of the G string and is played with your third finger. The bend is followed by the 12th fret on the B string and the 12th fret on the high E string.

The pattern changes slightly each time:

1. **First bend:** Bend at the 14th fret, then play the 12th fret on the B and high E strings.
2. **Second bend:** Bend at 14, play the high E string twice, return to the 12th fret on the B string, and then play the high E string again.
3. **Third bend:** Repeat the same pattern as the first bend.
4. **Fourth bend:** Bend at 14, release the bend, and pull off to the 12th fret.

Very slow repetition is what pays off here.

The second measure continues with rapid-fire picking across the D and G strings, followed by a couple more bends at the 14th fret. Do not try to force the speed too soon. Slow and steady is the way to go.



Phrase Two - This awesome lick jumps up to the 17th fret. If you know the notes on the fretboard, use the E at the 17th fret of the B string as your target point.

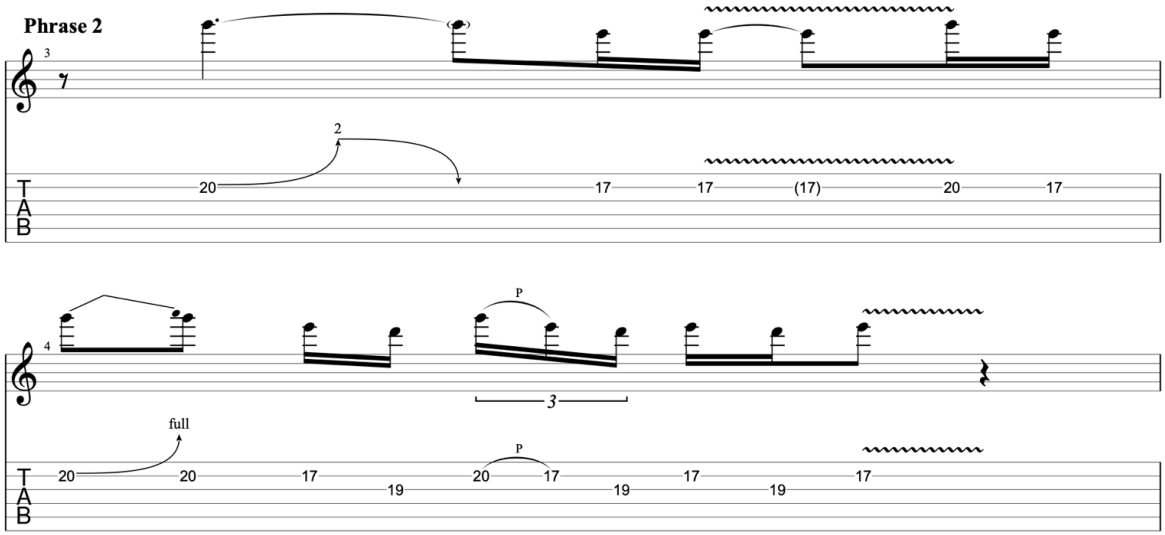
Your fourth finger plays an over-bend at the 20th fret, followed by a release and pull-off to the 17th fret. From there, jump to the 19th fret of the high E string for another bend, followed by more pull-offs from the 20th fret to the 17th fret on the B string.

This is a classic Jimmy Page lick that appears frequently, especially throughout the first two Led Zeppelin albums. You can hear variations of it in “You Shook Me,” “Dazed and Confused,” “Whole Lotta Love,” and “The Lemon Song.”

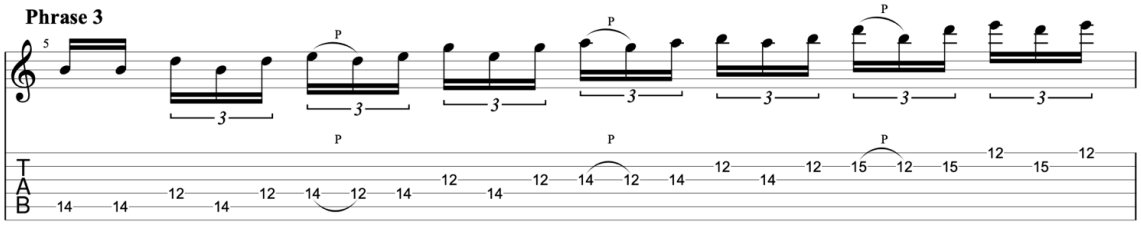
The key is locating the root note: E at the 17th fret of the B string. Everything revolves around four main notes:

- E at the 17th fret of the B string
- G at the 20th fret of the B string
- A at the 17th fret of the high E string

- B at the 19th fret of the high E string



Phrase 3 – This is the one students always get excited about because it sounds fast and flashy—and it is. Ironically, it may be the easiest lick to understand because it is built from a simple repeating pattern.



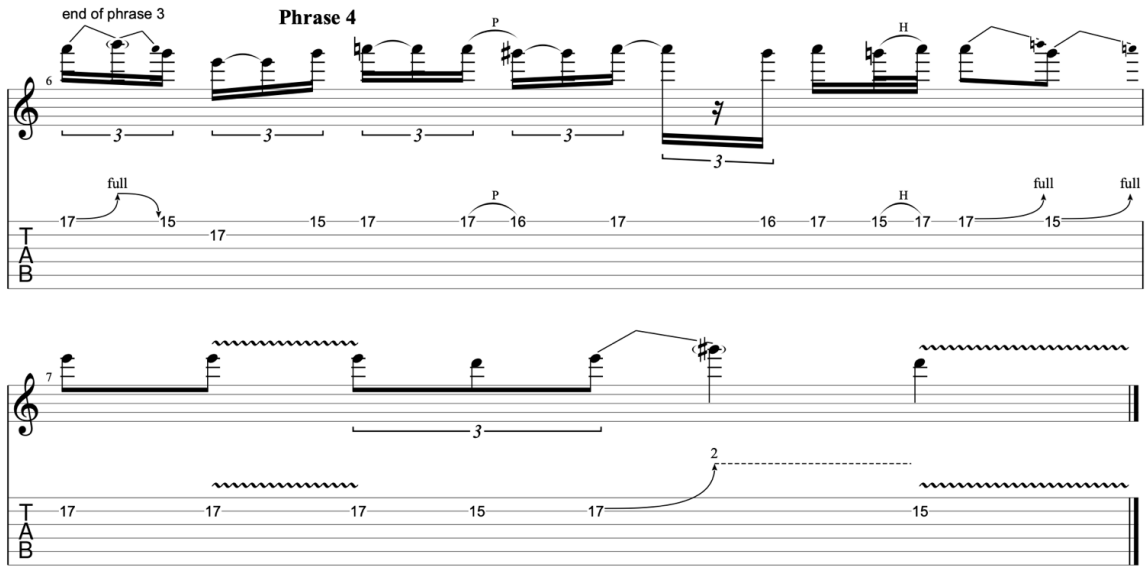
There are no bends here, just rapid-fire triplets moving straight across the E minor pentatonic scale in root position. Pay close attention to where the pull-offs occur. They help the phrase flow and capture the way Page plays it.

The lick is not so fast that it has to be played with pull-offs, though. You can also experiment with picking the entire phrase. Try it both ways and see which approach gives you the best combination of speed, clarity, and feel.

Phrase 4 - Phrase 3 melts directly into phrase 4. After Page finishes the rapid-fire triplets, the next measure begins with three notes that finished the triplet.

From there, he moves up to the 17th fret for the syncopated, staccato ending licks, with the major third added for a brighter sound. This as a new musical idea although there is not any space, so I call it phrase 4. Breaking it up this way makes it easier to hear and understand the difference between the flowing triplet run and the more rhythmic ending phrases.

This section can be tricky because of the syncopation. To play it exactly the way Page does, listen to it repeatedly and focus on where each note falls against the beat. He is playing tightly in the groove with syncopated eighth notes—the phrase is never just floating over the rhythm.



Phrase one is a powerhouse of sixteenth-note bends and rapid-fire picking. Phrase two moves higher up the neck and centers around the E root at the 17th fret of the B string, using a classic Page-style bending and pull-off idea. Phrase three races across the root-position E minor pentatonic scale with a flowing triplet pattern. That run melts directly into phrase four, where Page shifts to syncopated, staccato eighth-note ideas and adds the G-sharp—the major third of E—for a brighter lift at the end.

What makes the solo great is not simply its speed. Page clearly separates the phrases with longer notes, pauses, changes in articulation, and rhythmic contrasts. Even at this intensity, the solo breathes and stays completely locked into John Bonham's groove.

The best way to learn it is phrase by phrase. First memorize the notes and finger movements slowly. Once those are secure, add the bends, slides, pull-offs, vibrato, articulation, and rhythmic details. Slowing down the original recording will help you hear exactly how Page shapes every bend, connects each note, and places every phrase within the groove.

This solo may be short, but it already contains many of the ingredients that would define Jimmy Page's playing throughout Led Zeppelin: blues-based pentatonic vocabulary, explosive technique, major-and-minor tonal contrast, and rhythm that makes every lick feel exciting.

Good luck, ROCK ON!

Joe