

## CONSTRUCTING A 12-BAR BLUES PROGRESSION IN 'E'

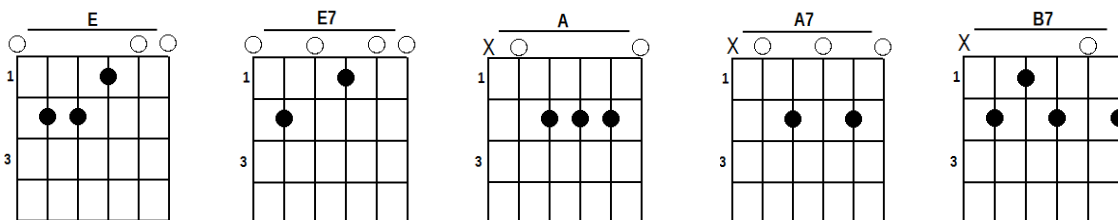
The 12-bar blues and its variations are among the most popular chord progressions in music, comprising thousands of songs. "The Blues" has a distinct structure and sound, making it also one of the most recognizable chord progressions. While the blues can be played in any key, it is invariably based on a simple I – IV – V progression. Let's take a look at a 12 bar blues example:

In the following example, we will use the key of 'E major', which if you remember from the major scale building exercises contains the notes: **E F# G# A B C# D#**

So, our 'one' (I) chord is **E**, our 'four' (IV) chord is **A**, and our 'five' (V) chord is **B**

Blues also allows for the use of a family of chords called *dominant chords*: **E7, A7, B7**

Play around with the different chord shapes until you can change comfortably from one to the next:



Now, let's look at the structure of a classic 12-bar blues progression:

*(The time signature is 4 / 4 or 4 beats per measure, so count each note for 4 beats)*

I	I	I	I	IV	IV	I	I	V7	V7	I	I
<b>E</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>B7</b>	<b>B7</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>E</b>

Try and sing or hum something along once you get the changes down, and you will very quickly recognize the sound and 'feel' of the progression, and will understand it's inherent simplicity. There are several other widely used variations of this pattern from the simple to the more complex, such as:

I	I	I	I	IV	IV	I	I	V7	V7	I	I
<b>E</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>B7</b>	<b>A7</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>E</b>

I	I	I	I7	IV	IV	I	I	IV7	V7	I	I
<b>E</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>E7</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>A7</b>	<b>B7</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>E</b>

I	IV	I	I	IV	IV7	I	I	V7	IV7	I	V
<b>E</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>A7</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>B7</b>	<b>A7</b>	<b>E</b>	<b>B</b>

I7	I7	I7	I7	IV7	IV7	I7	I7	V7	IV7	I7	I7
<b>E7</b>	<b>E7</b>	<b>E7</b>	<b>E7</b>	<b>A7</b>	<b>A7</b>	<b>E7</b>	<b>E7</b>	<b>B7</b>	<b>A7</b>	<b>E7</b>	<b>E7</b>

I6	I6	I6	I7	IV	IV7	I6	I6	V7	IV7	I6	I6
<b>E6</b>	<b>E6</b>	<b>E6</b>	<b>E7</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>A7</b>	<b>E6</b>	<b>E6</b>	<b>B7</b>	<b>A7</b>	<b>E6</b>	<b>E6</b>