

AG113

## Blues and Beyond

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### Turnarounds and Endings

'All good things must come to a  
Turnaround'

Many many years ago I found a column on blues turnarounds.. how they baffled me! Years later and endless study of music and harmony and it almost baffles me more, only this time just how clever they are and how convincingly they can signal the return to the top, or take the listener to the end. It's all about tension and resolution you see? I'll touch on some theoretical nitty gritty, but mostly

just consider that it's the steps towards key notes that make endings and turnarounds work.

All exercises recorded at 100bpm. There isn't a huge technical focus as these licks aren't too difficult- today the focus is more on how and why these ideas sound so good!

## **Ex 1**

The classic turnaround heard in blues and country - if you don't know this, learn it! You never know when a gun will be held to you and you'll be forced to play at a blues jam. This is my favourite turnaround from a complexity stand point. When playing these dominant 7ths down chromatically, you're technically playing a 1-2-5-1- E7, F#7b9,

B7b9 and back to E, before playing leading notes into the B7. One can't help feel that this concept was stumbled upon by cotton pickers with no musical education whatsoever, and therein lies it's beauty and the truth about all things music - it does not have to be complex - it's just gotta sound good! In other words, you can forget everything I said above and pretend that didn't happen, like the time you ate chocolate dog biscuits because they looked so good. Cough.

## **Ex 2**

I love the way this turnaround descends almost chromatically, but jumps a tone to begin with - that's skipping a fret as you can see in the tab! The C natural is really tense before we play the open B,

all the while pedalling the open E string. It's almost like a prodigal son scenario, where we step out of key and then have the aural (listening) pleasure of the notes returning back to notes true to E. The obligatory B7 again gets us ready to go round again!

### **Ex3**

Exercise three is the same concept as exercise two, only in a lower register of the guitar and without the pedal note. At the end of this one, I've thrown in a fairly simple version of an E9, just to colour up the end chord. Note that I haven't used this as a turnaround, but instead an ending! Turnarounds are quite interchangeable with endings- simply resolve to E and stay away from the B7 or V (five) chord of the key. Alternatively,

take and ending and replace the last chord with the V chord. I'd like to stress that if anything in this column doesn't make sense, make friends with someone who's studied and ask them.

### **Ex4**

Again to expand and slightly vary the concept from the previous two exercises, I've moved it up the neck. Also note that the first note excluding the pedal note is a D natural- before we started on the root and worked our way down. The idea is to demonstrate that where you start can and will vary, but you can see we hit the B natural and stay on it for the little walk up to the E finale. I've given another variation on an E chord by playing a different voicing of an E7 up at the 12th fret.

## Ex5

This is a fun ending, probably more common in swing and jazz but used in blues nonetheless. I'm pretty sure it's legal any way. This lick starts on our root note, goes to the major third, walks chromatically up to the 5 and then follows the major, diatonic or naturally occurring steps back to E. This one is rhythmically a little challenging at first. You'll get there though. Just like Frodo getting to Mordor. Hopefully you don't lose a finger though, or get proposed to by your best friend. Awkward.

## Ex6

Here we work from the V chord's root, in this case B. B is the 5th note in the E scale and that's where this terminology keeps coming from, in case you're

wondering. We play the B, go back a step, and then make a run all the way back up to the E natural. Then, just to highlight how fantastic one fret steps are I tease your ear by playing an Eb9 and then our home plate - the E9. Tension and resolution folks! Push and Pull.. and then the door closes.

## **Summary**

Turnarounds and Endings are a testament to both the ingenuity and the innate sense of musicality that the human species has developed over the centuries. They are also very important to have in your vocabulary if you're a professional musician, and if you're not, they are a great way to drive your band mates crazy at the end of every song, whether they fit or make sense or not. I

am signing off with an E chord- there is  
no turnaround at this moment! Catch  
you next time



# Turnarounds and Endings

All good things must come to a turnaround

Standard tuning

♩ = 100

E-Gt

Ex 1

Ex 2

*mf*

T  
A  
B

4 3 3 2 1 0 0 0 5 5 3 3 2 2 1 1 0 2

4 3 3 2 1 0 0 0 5 5 3 3 2 2 1 1 0 2

0-1-2 0-1-2

Ex 3

Ex 4

T  
A  
B

7-7-5-5-4-4-3-3 2-4 1-2 2 0 12-12-12-12-12-12-12-12 12-14 11-12 12 13 12

Ex 5

Ex 6

T  
A  
B

0 4 0 1 2 4 1 2 2 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 6 7 5 6 6 7