

## SHREDDED METAL

### FEELING THE CHANGES

If you're in a metal band of any genre, it's very common that the solo section will just be a riff to play over (usually in the same key that the song is in). However, when you do get some chord changes, it can be very effective to outline the progression instead of just blasting a scale across it. This is a more jazz-like way of approaching metal solos, and for this column, I'd like to show you a few simple exercises to help develop this concept.

#### EXERCISE 1

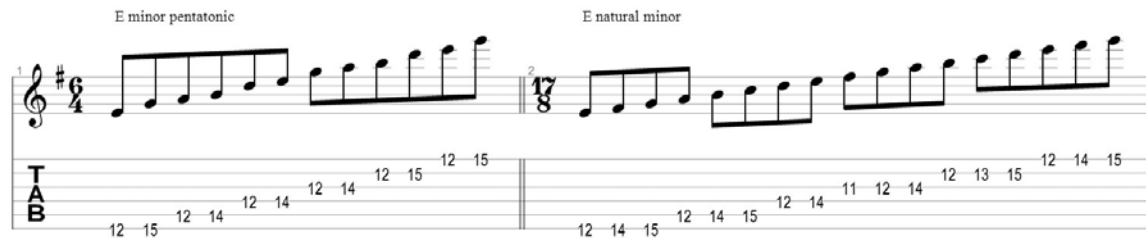
Here's the chord progression I've chosen to look at. It's a basic I<sub>m</sub>-bIII-IV<sub>m</sub>-VI progression in the key of E minor. Take note of the tempo (very slow). Although I play the full major/minor chords here with a clean tone, you could very easily substitute root-fifth power chords and use distortion – so that it sounds more 'metal'.

Slowly ♩ = 60



#### EXERCISE 2

Since the progression is in the key of E minor, the most common soloing method would be to just use an E minor pentatonic or E natural minor scale over the whole thing (without thinking too much about the underlying chords). Here are basic 'box' patterns for these scales in 12th position (practice ascending/descending).



#### EXERCISE 3

While the above mentioned approach will always work and sound fine, it can be cool to go a little bit deeper – by outlining the chord progression via arpeggios. I've notated arpeggio shapes for each of the chords (Em-G-Am-C) in roughly the same position as the two previous scales. Practice these shapes ascending and descending. Once you have these arpeggios (as well as the E minor scales) under your fingers, there are lots of useful exercises to try. These include:

- With a backing track (or a buddy), try improvising over the chords using only notes of the arpeggios (making sure you change at the right time).
- It may help to start by just using strict quarter notes (or even half notes) before changing up the rhythmic values.
- Make sure the notes flow and connect smoothly to each other (in other words, don't jump all over the place).
- Try alternating between a bar of just the arpeggio notes, and then a bar using one (or both) of the E minor scales.
- Mix the arpeggios with the scales to form the one lick (making sure you're always playing the right arpeggio shape over the chord).

Eventually, the arpeggios and scales will start to flow together to form more sophisticated phrases that outline the chord progression and highlight the chord tones. Ultimately, you want to be able to feel the chord changes and hear them in your head, so that even if you're playing unaccompanied, the different chords will still come through.

The image shows a musical exercise in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of four measures, each with a different chord: Em, G, Am, and C. The melody is written in the treble clef, and the bass line is written in the bass clef with fret numbers. The melody consists of quarter notes: E4, G4, A4, B4 in the first measure; G4, A4, B4, C5 in the second; A4, G4, F#4, E4 in the third; and C5, B4, A4, G4 in the fourth. The bass line consists of quarter notes: 12, 15, 14, 12 in the first measure; 10, 15, 14, 12 in the second; 12, 15, 14, 13 in the third; and 12, 15, 14, 13 in the fourth.

#### EXERCISE 4

This is a simple example that puts some of the above ideas into practice. If you listen to the audio at [www.australianguitarmag.com.au](http://www.australianguitarmag.com.au), you'll hear that although I play this lick with no backing track, you can still very clearly hear the tonality of the different chords as they change. I can't stress enough what an important concept this is!

The image shows a musical exercise in 4/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a tempo marking of 60. It consists of four measures, each with a different chord: Em, G, Am, and C. The melody is written in the treble clef, and the bass line is written in the bass clef with fret numbers. The melody consists of quarter notes: E4, G4, A4, B4 in the first measure; G4, A4, B4, C5 in the second; A4, G4, F#4, E4 in the third; and C5, B4, A4, G4 in the fourth. The bass line consists of quarter notes: 0, 3, 7, 10 in the first measure; 12, 15, 14, 12 in the second; 12, 15, 17, 12 in the third; and 15, 12, 13, 14 in the fourth. There are also some slurs and dynamics like 'full full' in the bass line.

One of the all-time great metal solos that perfectly highlights how to outline chord changes, is Marty Friedman's classic 'Tornado of Souls' solo (from Megadeth's classic 'Rust in Peace' album). Check it out!