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String Bending Exercise - Level 8

String bending is a vital part of playing lead guitar. It can add feel and emotion to sterile sounding scales. It seems easy at first, however to get it right you must make sure you are bending exactly to the correct note. The correct note is the next note in the scale that you are using. In a pentatonic you generally bend either a tone (2 frets apart) or a tone+1 (3 frets apart).

Technique is all important - however with that said there are several different ways that people use to bend strings so we will show you the one we use, but try different ways to achieve it. Control of the bend is vital so the following guide will help build up strength for maximum control in the bend.

Firstly we employ the thumb over the top of the neck to give extra purchase to the bend. We also add our fingers behind the finger we are using for extra leverage. We make sure the bend finger is as far up against the fret as possible. On the G, B and top E strings push the string upwards towards the middle of the guitar. On the low E, A and D strings pull them downwards again towards the centre of the guitar. Try to use the tip of your bending finger. If you are using the 3rd finger to bend with, keep your pinkie in front of the neck (not behind). Block off unwanted strings with your overhanging fingers where possible. And finally we use our ear to make sure we have the correct pitch in the bend.

This exercise gets you to use your 3rd finger to bend with. Bend up to the tone above then play that note by moving to it to make sure you have it exactly right in pitch (the same note). The 4>6 symbol means start without a bend and pick the 4th fret, then whilst the string is ringing bend it to the sixth fret without picking it again.



E|2-4>6-6-3-5>8-8-4-6-9>9-5-7>9-9-6-8>10-10-7-9>11-11-8-10>12-12-9-11>13-13|
B|-----|
G|-----|
D|-----|
A|-----|
E|-----|

Now try a similar exercise using your index on the lower note and pinkie to bend. Don't forget to put your fingers behind the pinkie to support it. Go through all strings as shown.



E|1-4>6-6-2-5>8-8-3-6-9>9-4-7>9-9-5-8>10-10-6-9>11-11-7-10>12-12-8-11>13-13|
 B|-----|
 G|-----|
 D|-----|
 A|-----|
 E|-----|

E|-----|
 B|1-4>6-6-2-5>8-8-3-6-9>9-4-7>9-9-5-8>10-10-6-9>11-11-7-10>12-12-8-11>13-13|
 G|-----|
 D|-----|
 A|-----|
 E|-----|

E|-----|
 B|-----|
 G|1-4>6-6-2-5>8-8-3-6-9>9-4-7>9-9-5-8>10-10-6-9>11-11-7-10>12-12-8-11>13-13|
 D|-----|
 A|-----|
 E|-----|

E|-----|
 B|-----|
 G|-----|
 D|1-4>6-6-2-5>8-8-3-6-9>9-4-7>9-9-5-8>10-10-6-9>11-11-7-10>12-12-8-11>13-13|
 A|-----|
 E|-----|

E|-----|
 B|-----|
 G|-----|
 D|-----|
 A|1-4>6-6-2-5>8-8-3-6-9>9-4-7>9-9-5-8>10-10-6-9>11-11-7-10>12-12-8-11>13-13|
 E|-----|

E|-----|
 B|-----|
 G|-----|
 D|-----|
 A|-----|
 E|1-4>6-6-2-5>8-8-3-6-9>9-4-7>9-9-5-8>10-10-6-9>11-11-7-10>12-12-8-11>13-13|