

Delta Blues Masterclass



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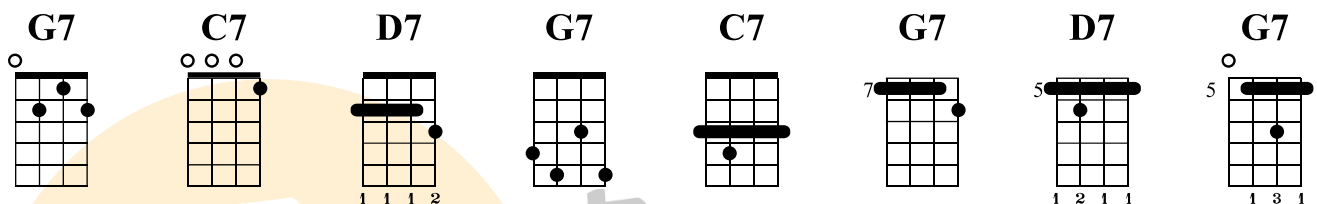
Key: G

Tempo: 75 BPM

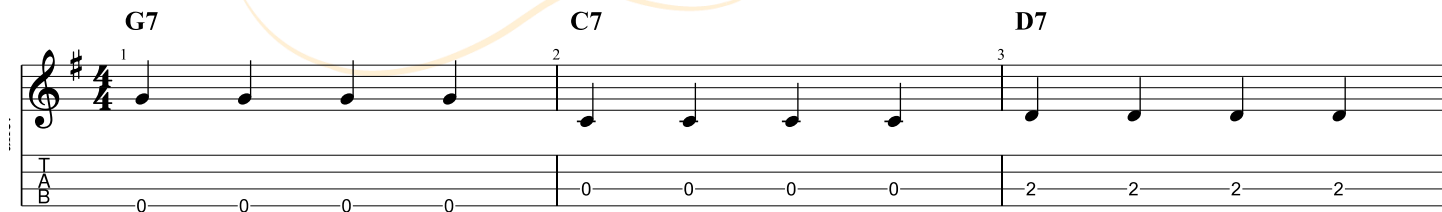
Chords needed: G7, C7, D7, D#7

Video Tutorial: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9edkU-kjysg>

Chord Shapes - [1:26](#)

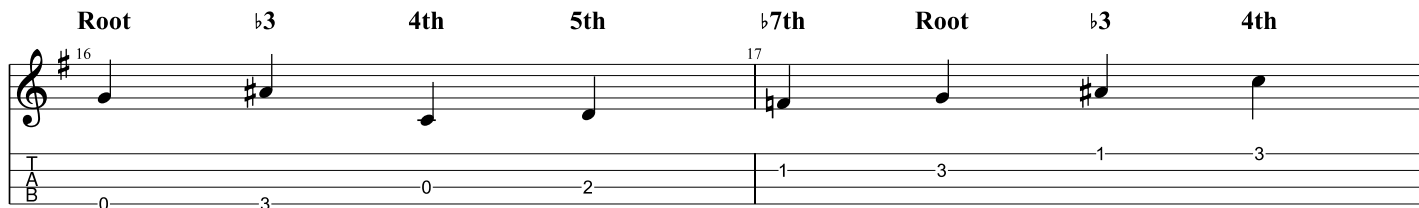


Monobass - [3:05](#) - One of the characteristics of the delta blues is that it is a fingerstyle of blues, meaning it isn't strummed. In addition, this particular style of fingerpicking has a bass playing over the root note on the $\frac{1}{4}$ notes, 1 2 3 4 that stays constant throughout the song, even when playing a riff or something. You want to practice this, a lot. If you are sitting around watching a movie grab the ukulele and just let your thumb play the bass while tapping your foot. You want to get to the point where it is so automatic that it feels separate from the rest of your hand and you are able to play scales, play riffs, etc, while the bass stays constant. If you have a low G add a healthy amount of palm mute, if you are playing with a high G still palm mute, just maybe a little less, you want to ensure that the bass note is audible.



Rhythms are created in the blues using the scale, and within the scale highlighting chord tones, we can use two different scales.

The minor pentatonic - [5:20](#) - When you add the $b5$ th interval this becomes the blues scale.



The major pentatonic. - [6:20](#)

The minor pentatonic can be used over all three chords, anywhere in the 12 bar sequence and the major pentatonic can only be used over the I and V chord meaning bars 1-4, 7-9, 11-12.

When turning the scale into a rhythm the idea is that you choose notes in the scale that are also chord tones. This doesn't have to be exclusive, but the more important notes, the more prominent notes, for example the last note of the riff, or the notes played on the 1, 2, 3 or 4 beats, you want to try and find notes that are in both the scale and the chord, this is how you make your very own delta rhythm.

Combining Scale and monobass to create rhythm - [7:43](#) - You will notice that the bass is playing on the 1 2 3 an 4, that is constant and should never break unless you are playing something else on the bass string or during the turnarounds.

12 bar progression review - G7 is your I7 chord, C7 the IV7 and D7 the V7

G7 G7 G7 G7
C7 C7 G7 G7
D7 C7 G7 D7

First 4 measures. [9:57](#) - Note, all of these ideas are interchangeable, what I play over a G7 on the 3rd bar you can move to the 1st measure, you can repeat it, you can play the first half or the second half. This is just to show you how I combine all these ideas and give you the foundation you need to do the same.

- The first measure really highlights the 3rd fret of the E note, this is a G note, the root note, and it really helps establish the G7 chord.
- The second chord also plays D and G notes on the 1 2 3, with F and Bb notes on the &s, the stronger chord tones are played on the ¼ notes because they are more stable in terms of note choice. Too much stability can be boring though, something to keep in mind.
- Measure three introduces a hammer on, ornamentation is a large part of this style.
- The 4th measure in this sequence introduces triplets and it also plays the b3rd interval and the b7th interval on the 2ns and 4th beats, highlighting less stable notes. Ideally you would give the 1st fret on the A string on the 2nd beat a ¼ tone bend, towards the B note but not all the way, to suggest the B note and imply the G major chord, this is known as a blues curl or quarter bend.
- Blues Curl Tutorial <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nk-F4t6747g>

Moving on to measures 5-8. [14:39](#)

The image shows musical notation for measures 8 through 11. Measure 8 is labeled C7 and measure 10 is labeled G7. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. Measures 8 and 9 show a C7 arpeggio (C4, E4, G4, Bb4). Measure 10 shows a G7 arpeggio (G2, Bb2, D3, F3) with a slide from the 4th to the 6th string. Measure 11 shows a triplet of notes (G4, Bb4, D5) with a slide and a hammer-on (H) on the 7th fret.

- Measures 5 and 6 are the same, there is no rule that says all measures must be different, in fact repetition is a good thing, it establishes a motif.
- The notes used from the scale here are actually all chord tones, so these measures function as full on C7 arpeggios. With the C, G, and Bb notes being played, only note missing is the E note to play all four notes in the C7 chord.
- Measure 7 sees us moving up the fretboard, this is easier to do when your mono bass tone is an open string. If it were the D note for example our range would be more limited but because we have the G note we can really go crazy on our way up the fretboard.
- This measure also mixes the major and minor scale as we see the 6th interval, the E note, from the major pentatonic scale, and the F note, the b7th, from the minor pentatonic scale.
- The 8th measure is the hardest in the whole 12 bar, feel free to replace it with any other measure that is playing over a G7.
- We have slides, triplet double stops, mixing major and minor by hammering from the minor 3rd to the major 3rd, this measure has a lot going on. Use your middle finger to slide from the 4th to the 6th string and hammer on the 7th fret with your ring finger from your middle finger, that should help keep things smooth. Take your time so you don't lose your tempo, you want it to be consistent.

The Turnaround - Remember you can replace this with any turnaround you know in the key of G - [20:03](#)

- Measures 9 and 10 are arpeggio ideas that are transposed down a full step. Your ear should notice right away that they are the exact same idea even if your eyes didn't catch it.
- Measures 11 and 12 are a classic turnaround, descending triplets into a minor/major 3rd lick and we finally approach the D7 from the D#7 with a cool old turnaround trick where you come down to the V chord instead of approach it from the IV chord and moving up.

The Full Play-along - [24:15](#)

You know what? You did a great job today and I, as your teacher, am very proud of you. I know this stuff isn't easy... but it sure is fun! That is why we do it. Anytime you do something hard like this take the time to pat yourself on the back because it isn't easy. You are keeping your brain healthy and being an example for other people in your circle showing them that you can learn an instrument no matter what age you start at, all you have to do is put in the work! ...well, that and learn with Tenthumbs! Ha! Great job, stay empowered friends, keep surprising yourself.