



# Licks with Altered Scales

By Jason Kokoszka

Do you enjoy the exotic sound of altered scales? If so, you'll love the funky example below. For more information on altered scales, check out the current Theory Corner for an excerpt from Jody Fisher's new book, *The Total Jazz Guitarist*, where he breaks down some common altered scales.

Please note that the chord symbols given for each bar reflect the overall basic harmonic structure (when the examples for guitar, keyboard and bass are taken into account). Try these ideas out with your friends; complimentary parts for guitar, keyboard, bass and drums are included below. Dig in, and enjoy!

## Guitar

Let's try some altered sounds over a short chord progression in B $\flat$ . The non-diatonic harmonies and abundant sixteenth notes give this example a funky, jazzy flavor.

In bar 1, we have a lick based on the G Whole Tone scale. In bars 2 and 3, the licks are based on diminished scale patterns. In the last two measures, we return to an unaltered sound to end the example. Make it funky now!

The image shows two systems of musical notation for guitar. The first system covers four measures. The first two measures are under the chord symbol G7 $\sharp$ 5, and the last two are under Cmin7 $\flat$ 5. The notation includes a treble clef, a 4/4 time signature, and a key signature of two flats. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-4. Dynamics like 'P' (piano) are marked. The guitar tablature below the staff shows fret numbers for strings T, A, and B. The second system covers two measures under the chord symbols F7alt and B $\flat$ Maj7. It includes a treble clef, a 4/4 time signature, and a key signature of two flats. It features triplets and slurs. The guitar tablature shows fret numbers for strings T, A, and B.

# Keyboard

This keyboard part mainly provides harmonic support to the guitar licks above. The sixteenth notes in the left-hand part add rhythmic drive to this example. Try adapting this comping pattern to other chord changes when you want a funky feel.

The musical score is written for a grand piano in 4/4 time. It consists of two systems of music. The first system covers measures 1 through 4. The second system covers measures 5 through 8. The right-hand part (treble clef) focuses on chord voicings, while the left-hand part (bass clef) provides a rhythmic accompaniment with sixteenth notes and slurs. Fingerings are indicated by numbers 1-5.

**System 1 (Measures 1-4):**

- Measure 1:** Chord  $G7\#5$ . Right hand:  $G4, B4, D5, F\#5$ . Left hand:  $G2, B2$ . Fingering: 2, 1.
- Measure 2:** Chord  $G7\#5$ . Right hand:  $G4, B4, D5, F\#5$ . Left hand:  $G2, B2$ . Fingering: 3, 2.
- Measure 3:** Chord  $Cmin7b5$ . Right hand:  $C4, E4, G4, Bb4$ . Left hand:  $C2, E2, G2, Bb2$ . Fingering: 3, 2.
- Measure 4:** Chord  $Cmin7b5$ . Right hand:  $C4, E4, G4, Bb4$ . Left hand:  $C2, E2, G2, Bb2$ . Fingering: 2, 3.

**System 2 (Measures 5-8):**

- Measure 5:** Chord  $F7alt$ . Right hand:  $F4, Ab4, C5, Eb5$ . Left hand:  $F2, Ab2, C3, Eb3$ . Fingering: 5, 2, 1.
- Measure 6:** Chord  $F7alt$ . Right hand:  $F4, Ab4, C5, Eb5$ . Left hand:  $F2, Ab2, C3, Eb3$ . Fingering: 5, 3, 1.
- Measure 7:** Chord  $BbMaj7$ . Right hand:  $Bb4, D5, F5, Ab5$ . Left hand:  $Bb2, D3, F3, Ab3$ . Fingering: 5, 3, 1.
- Measure 8:** Chord  $BbMaj7$ . Right hand:  $Bb4, D5, F5, Ab5$ . Left hand:  $Bb2, D3, F3, Ab3$ . Fingering: 5, 2, 1.

# Bass

Who's gettin' funky? You are, when you play this little groove. The rhythms are the same from one bar to the next, but the pitches change. Make sure you play the notes on beats 1 and 2 staccato, or short, as this will enhance the funkiness of this bassline. Be sure to try this out the next time you find yourself in a funky jam!

G7#5 Cmin7b5

1 3 1 3 3 1 2 1 4 1 2 1 2 4

T 4 5 3 5 5 (5) 3 4 3 6 3 4 3 (3) 4 6

A 4 3

B 4 3

F7alt BbMaj7

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

T 3 3 2 0 (0) 3 0

A 3 5 1 2 3 (3) 4 0 1 1 3 0 1 1

B 4 0 1 1

## Drums

Check out the funky patterns below. Be sure to count the sixteenth notes carefully. If these rhythms are a bit tricky, start slow and gradually increase the tempo to completely master these grooves. Once you get these patterns down, show them off to your friends at your next jam.

The image displays two staves of musical notation for drums in 4/4 time. The first staff shows a rhythmic pattern with eighth and sixteenth notes. The second staff shows a more complex pattern with triplets and sixteenth notes.

For more on altered scales, be sure to check out advanced jazz lessons taught by Jody Fisher in the “Symmetrical Scales I” and “Symmetrical Scales II” courses. And of course, don’t forget about his book, *The Total Jazz Guitarist*.

Not a guitarist? Wait! We’ve got something we’d like you to see. Check out the Adult Refresher lesson “In Other Modes: Modal, Chromatic, Pentatonic and Whole Tone Scales,” taught by Leo Marchildon and Andrea Amos. Enjoy!