

Diminished Expansions

Mastering the Diminished Scale

Mike Dana

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mikedanamusic.com

Diminished Expansions

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Two diminished scales?

- The diminished scale (*series of whole- and half-steps*)
- The “other” one ☺ (*half-whole diminished, aka dominant 9-tone*)
- These are symmetrical, and they repeat the pattern every minor 3rd (*3 frets*)

The “regular” diminished scale (whole-half) (*Ex. 1*)

- Used for diminished chords (*Wave, Quiet Nights*)
- Also great for “tonic diminished” (I⁰(Ma7) chords (*Ipanema, Stella, Misty*)
 - The tonic diminished creates great tension-release

The “other” diminished scale (half- whole, aka dominant 9-tone) (*Ex. 2*)

- Used for dominant chords with a **b9, #9, #11, 13**
- A more contemporary, adventurous sound than other dominant scale choices
- **PRO TIP:** Think about the tune you’re playing, the other players, the surrounding harmony, the listener. Adventurous is fun for us, but might not always be the best choice.

Fingerboard (*See diagram handout*)

- The 4 string version is easiest
- There are two 6 string variations
- The vertical (up the neck) one is fun, can be flashy.
- **PRO TIP:** make sure you are clear on where the whole- and half-steps lie
 - Use the black note and white note approach on the handout to keep the W and H steps straight.

Theory

- The pattern is whole-half = minor 3rd = 3 frets. So, these repeat themselves every 3 frets.
 - This means that you learn ONE fingering for ALL diminished scales. You’re welcome! ☺
- Get used to some enharmonic gymnastics in the land of the diminished ☺
- **PRO TIP:** Memorize the 3 diminished “families”—they are interchangeable!! ☺

THE DIMINISHED “FAMILIES”			
C	E ^b	F [#] /G ^b	A
C [#] /D ^b	E	G	B ^b
D	F	G [#] /A ^b	B

Next Level

- You’ll want to learn some hip patterns. That’s OK... in moderation (*flashy, but it gets old IMHO*)
- DO work out some melodic ideas over dominant 7 chords, in context of tunes (*think ii V, secondary dominants*)
- If you do a deep dive, you’ll discover a world of major, minor, and diminished triads just begging to pair up (*talking triad pairs here!*)
- There really is gold here, you just have to dig a little for it. Totally worth it!

DIMINISHED EXPANSIONS

CORRECTED TAB

EX. 1: C DIMINISHED SCALE (W-H)



THIS IS A C DIMINISHED SCALE... AND ALSO Eb, F#, AND A DIMINISHED!

EX. 2: DOMINANT 9-TONE (H-W DIMINISHED SCALE)



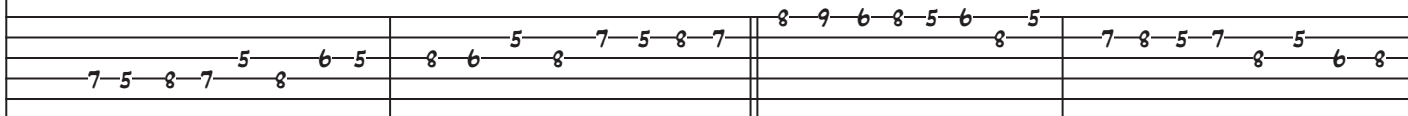
SEE HOW THIS WORKS FOR D7? AND HOW IT ALSO WORKS FOR F7, Ab7, AND B7?

MELODIC PATTERNS



EX. 3: STEP DOWN, ASCENDING

EX. 4: STEP UP, DESCENDING



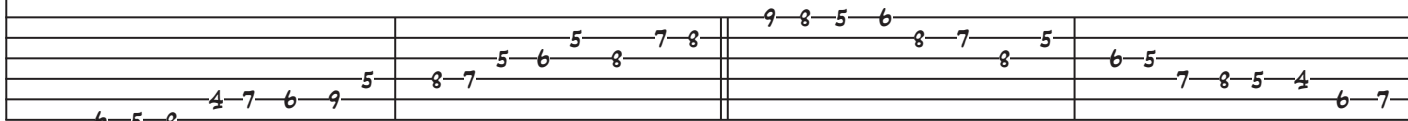
EX. 3: STEP DOWN, ASCENDING

EX. 4: STEP UP, DESCENDING



EX. 5: DOWN/UP, ASCENDING

EX. 6: DOWN/UP, DESCENDING



EX. 7: 4-NOTE, ASCENDING

EX. 8: 4-NOTE, DESCENDING



DIMINISHED EXPANSIONS - 2

EX. 9 - 13 ALL WORK OVER C7, Eb7, Gb7, AND A7 WITH A b9, #9, #11, OR 13 (IN ANY COMBINATION!)

Ex. 9: CLASSIC TENOR

Ex. 10: 3 OVER 4 MOVE IN MIN. 3RDS

Ex. 11: ANGULAR MA7 INTERVALS

Ex. 12: 3 OVER 4 ANGULAR MA7 INTERVALS

Ex. 13: SCO-ISH MA7 INTERVALS

Gmi7 C13(b9) FMA7

Ex. 14: OVER II V I

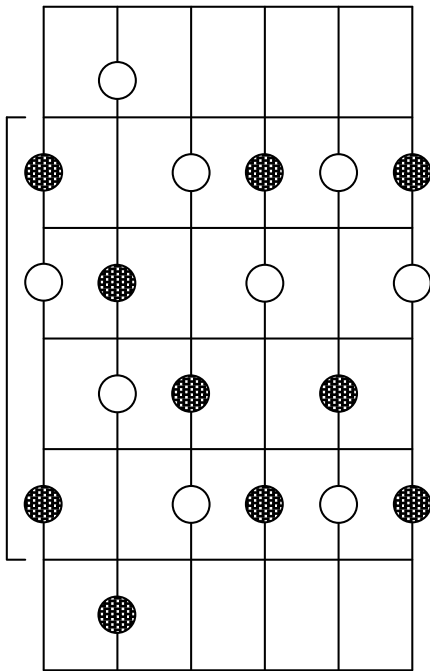
Gmi7 C13(b9) FMA7

Ex. 14: II V 5 w/ MA 7TH INTERVALS

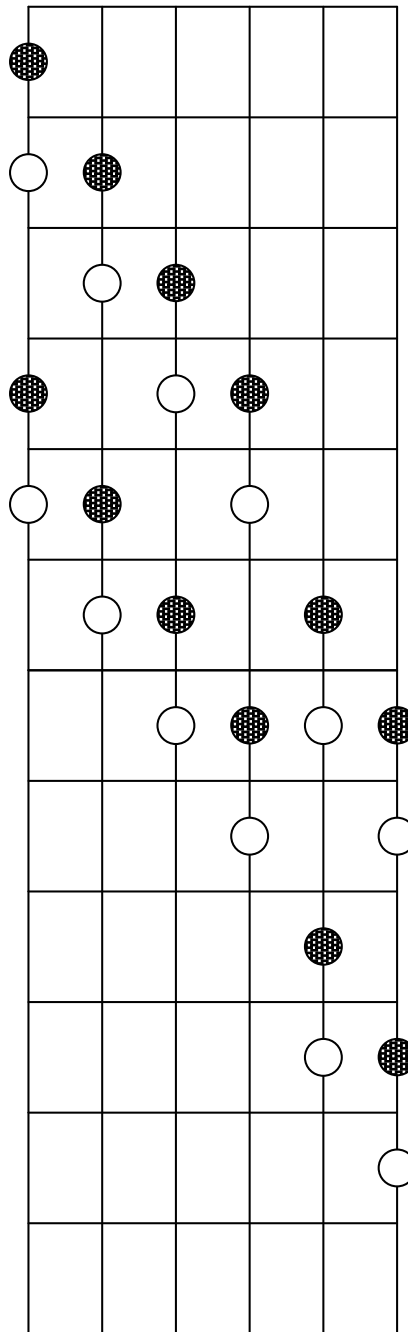
Diminished/Dominant 9-Tone Scale

Mike Dana, Fresno City College

In position



Up the neck [LH = 1-1-3-4]



Starting on ○ gives you whole- half steps, for the **diminished** scale.

Use this for dim. 7 chords.

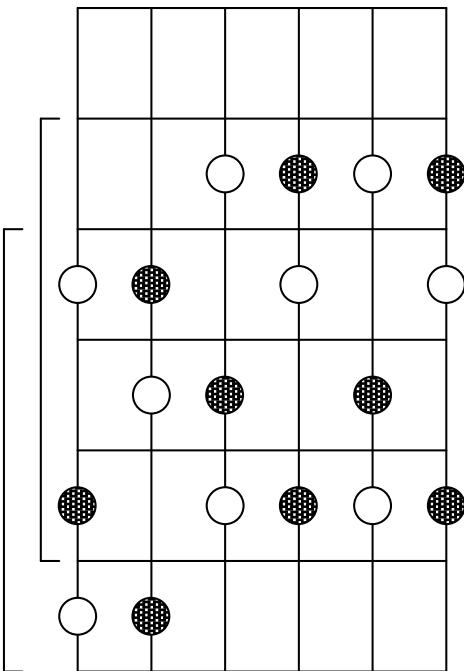
Starting on ● gives you half - whole steps, for the **dominant 9-tone** scale.

Use this for dominant 7 chords that contain **b9, #9, #11, 13**, or any **combination** of these.

ANY ○ can be considered the root of a diminished chord. Likewise, ANY ● can be considered the root of a dominant chord.

This means that, every 3 frets (minor 3rd) the fingering pattern repeats itself. It also means you must memorize which minor 3rds “go together” (see below.)

Some players like this better—only one position shift.



Related minor 3rds

C	E _b	G _b /F _#	A
C _# /D _b	E	G	B _b
D	F	A _b /G _#	B