

B Locrian mode 7 of the C major scale

B Locrian sounds unresolved on purpose: the b2 leans into the root from a half step above, and the b5 removes the one interval that would make it feel settled. It is less a key to live in and more a tension to control, and that is exactly what makes it worth practicing.

[Open this scale in the fretboard explorer](#)

THEORY

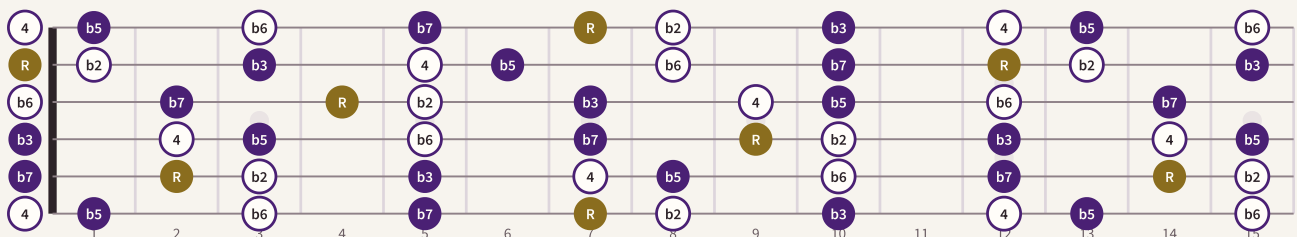
Formula: 1 b2 b3 4 b5 b6 b7

Degree	1	b2	b3	4	b5	b6	b7
Note	B	C	D	E	F	G	A
In skeleton	yes		yes		yes		yes

Locrian uses the same seven notes as C major but treats B as home, and that single choice changes everything. Compared with a minor scale it flattens two more degrees: the 2nd becomes C, a half step off the root, and the 5th becomes F, a tritone off the root. Those two notes, b2 and b5, are the color of the mode, and the missing perfect fifth is why Locrian almost never works as a stable key center. Where it genuinely shows up is over half diminished chords: Bm7b5 is the ii chord of an A minor ii-V-i, so every time you solo through a minor ii-V you have a real, practical use for this scale. It also appears in metal and film music as pure tension, a sound that demands resolution somewhere else.

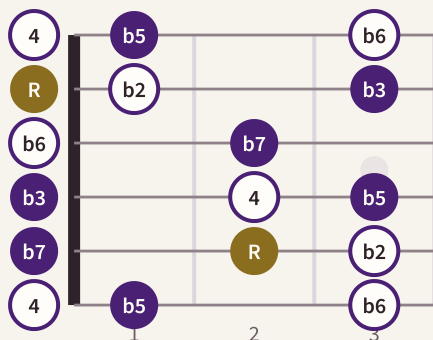
To hear it honestly, loop two chords: Bm7b5 (x2323x or 7x776x) for two bars, then Cmaj7 (x32000) for two bars. The Bm7b5 bar is where Locrian lives; the Cmaj7 bar gives your ear the resolution the mode itself refuses to provide. Genuine Locrian songs are rare, and most lists of them are wrong, so I will name just one confident example: the main riff of "Army of Me" by Björk, whose bassline leans on the b2 and b5 against its root. Treat that rarity as information: this is a chord scale and a tension color, not an everyday key.

WHOLE NECK (FRETS 0 TO 15)

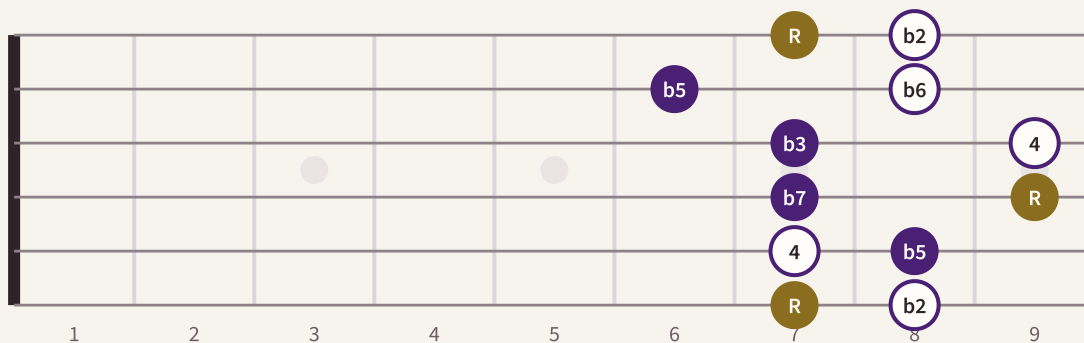


Gold dot = root. **Solid** = the Bm7b5 arpeggio, the skeleton you already know. **Hollow** = the color tones this mode adds.

POSITION 1 (FRETS OPEN TO 3)

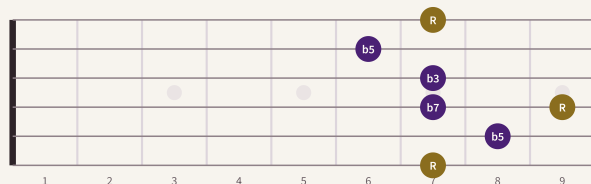


POSITION 2 (FRETS 6 TO 9)

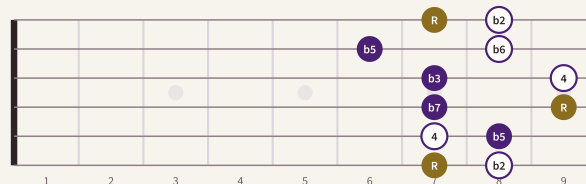


THE PENTATONIC INSIDE

There is no major or minor pentatonic on B inside this mode, because both of those shapes need a perfect fifth (F#) and Locrian only offers F. The skeleton you lean on instead is the Bm7b5 arpeggio: B, D, F, A. Learn that four-note shape in both positions first, because it is the safe landing crew, and then hear the mode as three color tones hung around it: C (the b2) a half step above the root, E (the 4th) between D and F, and G (the b6) a half step above F. Practical rule: resolve phrases into arpeggio tones, and use C and G as the half-step neighbors that give the line its Locrian bite.



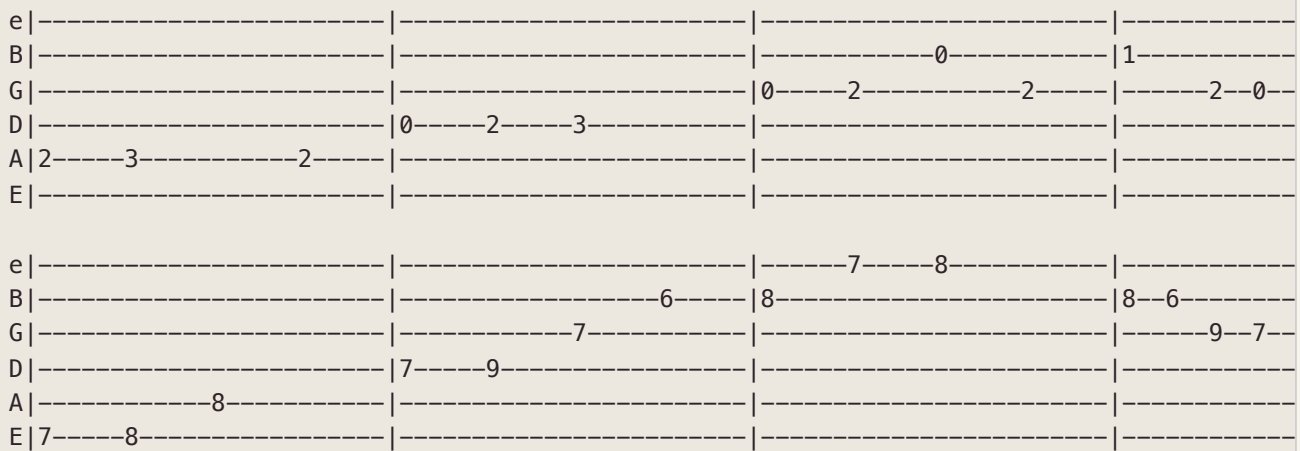
the Bm7b5 arpeggio alone



B Locrian: the skeleton plus the color tones

ETUDE (72 BPM)

Also generated as `7-locrian-etude.gp` : open it in the course player for playback, tempo control, and looping.



PRACTICE PLAN

1. Learn the etude slowly

Play the etude at 60 bpm with a metronome, one four-bar phrase at a time, and sing the top line as you go. Bars 1 to 4 sit in open position (frets 0 to 3) and bars 5 to 8 sit at frets 6 to 9, so practice the position shift at the bar 4 to 5 boundary on its own. Move on when you can play the whole piece three times in a row at 60 bpm with no stops and no buzzed notes.

2. Memorize the two positions

Away from the etude, play B Locrian up and down in open position, then at frets 6 to 9, from memory, root to root, at 70 bpm in quarter notes. In each position also play the Bm7b5 arpeggio (B, D, F, A) and name the three color tones C, E, and G out loud as you pass them. Move on when you can start either position from the root without looking anything up and reach 80 bpm cleanly.

3. Sequences and speed

Run a three-note sequence (B C D, C D E, D E F, and so on) through each position in eighth notes, starting at 80 bpm and adding 4 bpm each clean pass, up to a target of 100 bpm. Then do the same with the arpeggio, playing B D F A ascending and descending through both positions. Move on when the sequence holds together at 100 bpm and the etude itself is clean at its written 72 bpm.

4. Improvise over the vamp

Loop two bars of Bm7b5 and two bars of Cmaj7 at 80 bpm and improvise using only the notes of the mode. Over the Bm7b5 bars, deliberately land C or F on beat one, then resolve into an arpeggio tone; over the Cmaj7 bars, let the line settle on C, E, or G so the tension releases. You are done when you can play four choruses in a row where every phrase lands its color tone on purpose rather than by accident.