

JAM SESSION™ WORKSHOP HANDOUT

Blues Jam Survival Trilogy

The 3 Skills Every Jam Player Needs

This page connects the three survival skills every musician needs at a jam session.

1. Recognize the key fast
2. Solo safely over changes
3. Follow chord movement without panic

Master these three and most jam situations become manageable.

Skill 1 — Know the Key Quickly

Before playing anything, know the key.

Fast survival checklist:

- Look at the key signature or ask the bandleader.
- Find the I chord immediately.
- Listen for movement to IV and V chords.

Most blues and rock jams live on:

I - IV - V progressions

If you can hear and follow these, you survive most tunes.

Skill 2 — Solo Using Blues Survival Notes

When unsure what to play, use:

Root - ♭3 - ♭7

These notes work across many blues and rock progressions.

Example in key of A:

Root = A

♭3 = C

♭7 = G

Short rhythmic phrases beat long scale runs every time.

Groove first, notes second.

Skill 3 — Follow Chord Changes Without Panic

If chords start moving and you feel lost:

1. Listen for the chord change rather than guessing.
2. Move your line toward the new root.
3. Land phrases on strong beats.
4. Leave space instead of forcing notes.

Silence is better than wrong notes.

10-Second Jam Recovery Plan

When things go sideways:

1. Find the key again.
2. Lock into rhythm with drummer and bass.
3. Land on the root or ♭7.
4. Play fewer notes with stronger rhythm.

Confidence comes from groove, not complexity.

Guitar Player Survival Shortcut

If lost:

• Go back to your minor pentatonic box. • Watch the bass player's root movement. • Shift your box to match the chord root.

Simple moves save solos.

Jam Session™ Philosophy

Good jam players:

- Listen first • Play simply • Lock in rhythmically • Support the groove

Flash comes later. Groove comes first.

JAM SESSION™

Connecting Musicians & Community