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Modes

While the modes are contained within the major scale or key, they are also independent scales. They need not be connected with their related major scale at all.
This is done only to aid in learning them because it's assumed that most people know the major scale before they learn the modes.
The knowledge of modes is to help you find melody. That's all.

First just *forget (for now) the fact that D Dorian has the same notes as C Major*. Forget this because you need to start thinking about modes as either major or minor sounds. From this perspective, you will be able to use them in the real world of playing stuff.

In this case Dorian is actually a minor sound. So first you have to know the D minor scale sound and then apply the skills below to see that D Dorian is an altered minor scale that differs from D minor (aeolian) by one note (it has a #6). *So isolate and memorize your aeolian minor scales and Ionian major scales and get to a mode via this way INSTEAD of thinking in terms of a position in a major scale.*

Simple example is song that goes (Am, C, C, E7; Am, C, F, C; Am, E7, C)
These are actually all in the same key, A minor.
The only chord that's probably throwing you off is E7. This is V7 in A minor.

Secondly you might be wondering why E7 is there when A natural minor has no E7. **The V chord in *minor* keys is often changed to a dom7 chord (Em becomes E7).**
It creates a stronger pull to the i chord. It's been done for hundreds of years, and actually is the reason why harmonic and melodic minor scales came about.
In this entire progression you could play nothing but A aeolian and it would sound fine. The fact that E7 isn't in that scale won't make any difference.

If you wanted to fit in the E7 chord, simply change the note G of the A aeolian scale to a G#. (This would give you A harmonic minor by the way)

You could also pick different scales and modes to play on every single chord, but you don't need to do that either. Try playing the whole progression with just A natural minor and I bet it sounds fine. If you get good with that, then try adding some other things like the note G# on E7 to spice it up. Or try using A melodic minor on the A minor chords, or C Lydian on the C chords.

This song revolves around A, the C and F chords tell you it must be somewhere in the family of minor tonalities. Yeah, there's an E7 which means a G# in there somewhere we'll get back to that.

Let's grab the most basic of minor modes, start with the blues box. You probably have some feel for that, how the notes within it relate to each other and the chord progression. Now let's add in notes – like F and B, those are safe bets. Now you're looking at A minor. (we'll get back to the E7 thing)
The whole point of the E7 in the progression is to create a tension that wants to pull to the Am chord. Tension notes like F on E7 only heighten this effect. Sometimes it sounds better that way.

Yes it shares the same notes as C Major. So what! The song is in A and we don't care about that key since we aren't playing it. (There wasn't that simple). This is about music, not numerology.

So now you have a minor scale. Play with that. Feel how it crosses the chord progression and see what falls into place.

2) If you are playing one of these chords, then the "mode" that goes along with the chord will "fit" i.e., you play a D Dorian over a Dm7.

This is where a lot of people fall down...

Imagine the chord sequence: C - Am - F - G7 (yeah, it's cheesy, but it'll illustrate the point)

Now, as you know, all of those chords are formed from the C major scale, therefore you'll be able to solo over them using... yup, the C major scale.

Now, when you get to the Am chord, you're *not* playing in A minor, nor are you playing in F lydian when you reach the F chord. This is because the C major chord (and therefore the C root note) is still the "home" chord of the progression, so the progression as a whole is completely in C.
Wherever possible, we generally try to look at the progression as a whole, rather than isolating each chord.

To be soloing in A minor, sure, you'd be using the same set of notes/chords, but you'd have to find a way of making A the "home" chord...

Am - G F - Am - C G

If you're going to learn the whole lot (it's a big job) I'd recommend learning *parallel* modes (all the modes starting from a single root) rather than *relative* modes (all the modes sharing the notes of the same major scale.

With relative modes, it's harder for the beginner to distinguish at first - unless you know how to create suitable backing progressions, there's the danger that D Dorian or F Lydian will keep trying to resolve to the C root note (because the C major scale has such a familiar sound)

For instance, in your first progression (Am - C - C - E7), I'd start off using the A minor scale; when the E7 comes in, that scale should still fit pretty well, or you could make it fit even better by changing the G to a G# (which'd give you the A harmonic minor).

Part of the problem in trying to understand theory is that different people use different terms and it can be confusing. For example, although Bm7b5 is commonly used to describe a seventh chord on the seventh degree of the major scale (VII7), it is misleading because it implies that the chord is a minor chord with a flatted fifth: F# flatted to F natural. But there is no F# in the key of C major and the chord of the seventh in a major key is not minor. The chord CAN be called Bm7b5 in other contexts, for sure, but NOT if you are saying it is VII7. BTW, it can also be called Dm6.

This is in the key of Am (the relative minor to the key of C). The E7 has a G# that comes from the A harmonic minor scale. When soloing over this I would just sharp the G while the E7 is being played. I'm sure you'll find this sounds pretty cool.

Modes Discussion

The breakout of the ‘major vs minor modes’ is below. It is easy to get a modal sound using this mindset...
Let’s consider the E Dorian scale for now... Why do I not join the masses and explain how Dorian is this entity that is built from the 2nd note of the parent major scale and that you should play D major but start from the ‘E’ note? Because for one that is a tired and just idiotic way to think about modes.
Secondly what does this actually do to your thought process as a soloist? Well for one, it knocks your thought process out of E minor tonality (which is where you are at sonically) and puts you into having to do a useless conversion process to D major. Why? It’s not D major anymore: it’s E Dorian. You don’t need to do that because more than likely you’re

already using some form of E minor pentatonic and you just want to flavor up your solo with a new sound by adding a sharp 6. (So that's a sharp 6 in e minor again!! This means 'the sharp 6 would be C# because In E minor, the 6th is C). This means you must know your minor scales!!

FYI. For Dorian (since it is a 'minor' sound) it's very closely associated to the minor scale of the same tonic (in this case… E). So playing modes is rather easy once you know your major and minor scales all over the neck because you can keep your mind on using the same scale patterns but altering one note in general; much easier than switching your focus from the tonic you're in to a whole different scale.

FIRST A FEW REQUIREMENTS ARE NECESSARY You have to memorize or have at your disposal a list of all the major and relative minor scales (ex. C major and A minor are the same scale, so do this for all keys) and know all the accidentals. This is very important.
You have to know what chords are found in the major scale. Just start with triads. So all major scales have the same chord formula: C Major is: C major triad, D minor triad, E minor triad, F major triad, G major triad, A minor triad, B half diminished triad

Next organize the modes into two camps (major sounds and minor sounds). Now that you have memorized the major and minor scales, you will recognize all the modes as one of these major or minor scales just ordered differently... this means for ex. D Dorian (note below that I have listed out the easy formulas to get a mode) has the same notes as C Major; just use the chords from C Major.

THIS NEXT COMMENT IS THE MOTHERLOAD OF ALL THE INFORMATION I PRESENT.
So in our D Dorian example, if you want to really hear that mode in context, you use the 4 and 5 chord from the major scale the mode is from (C major) (4 and 5 are the only places in the major scale that has back to back major triads and these two triads work in a magical way to really lay out the modal sound when you play these two triads over the mode tonic base note .. in this case for D Dorian it is really C Major (F Major and G major are the 4 and 5 chords.

When you play a D base note over F major and G major, you get the D Dorian mode sound. Then you can play the D Dorian scale over those chord vamps. (This method of using 4 and 5 triads over the bass note of the mode works for all modes FYI).

Best to try using the 'A' style chords from the CAGED chord system and play your bass note on the 5th or 6th string.

D Dorian = DEFGABC
F major triad = F A C; DFAC = Dm7 | G major triad = G B D; DGB = G

HOW TO FIGURE OUT A MODE. A mode is effectively more of an "alternate major or minor sound". This really opened the floodgates for me and is just more intuitive. I hope it saves you a bunch of time and from a bunch of confusion

MODES MADE EASY Basically you have major and minor sounds. Here is the breakout:
Major sounds: Ionian Mixolydian Lydian Ionian major scale ←Again just memorize these.

Then to get these other two major sounding mode scales use the formula against the major scale you already know.
Basically, each of the other two major sounding mode scales has one note that is different when compared to the major scale so you can apply your knowledge of the major scales on the fretboard and just change one note to play modal Lydian scale ← Ionian scale with a #4

So if you have memorized the D major scale, then to play D Lydian you raise the 4th scale note like this: D major: D E F# G A B C#; D Lydian: D E F# G# A B C#
(So from the points above, you should be able to see that D Lydian is really the A major scale, so the 4 and 5 chords in A Major are D major and E major. Play these chords with a D in the bass to hear D Lydian and of course play D Lydian notes)

Mixolydian scale ← Ionian scale with flat7 D major: D E F# G A B C#; D mixolydian: D E F# G A B C (D mixolydian is really G major and the 4 and 5 chords in G Major are C Major and D major, so play these chords over a D bass note to hear D mixolydian and of course play D mixolydian. Do this kind of analysis for any mode and it should become second nature after a while.

Now for minor sounds you have four basic scales: Aeolian Dorian Phrygian Locrian Aeolian / minor scale ← just memorize these as they are just all the major scales starting on the 6th scale degree so if you know the major scales just be able to recite what the 6th degree is and that is your minor scale plus you will have memorized another interval.

So from the D major example above, B is the 6th scale degree B aeolian ← also known as the 'minor scale' there is one minor scale for each major scale (look at a circle of 5ths diagram) B aeolian: B C# D E F# G A Dorian ← same as aeolian scale with #6 B Dorian: B C# D E F# G# A. ← you may notice that B Dorian and D Lydian have the same notes but just realize this fact: D Ionian E Dorian F# Phrygian G Lydian A mixolydian B aeolian C# locrian are all the same scales just starting from a different note in the D major scale. So you should be able to work out that B Dorian and D Lydian are also from the same scale which is the A major scale. This will all make sense in time.

The best thing to do right now is to memorize all the major scales and then know which minor scales come from each major scale and memorize them. Phrygian ← same as aeolian scale with b2 B Phrygian: B C D E F# G A (So from the points above, you should be able to see that B Phrygian is G major so the 4 and 5 chords in G Major are C major and D major. Play these chords with a B in the bass to hear B Phrygian and of course play B Phrygian notes) Locrian ← same as aeolian scale with b2 and b5 B Locrian: B C D E F G A

So assimilate the modes by what is different from what you already know about major and minor scales is the best way as once you can recall the major and minor scales (all 12), you should be able to use the known scale patterns and adjust for the one note difference rather easily (two for Locrian).
As well by far the most useful chord vamp is the 4 and 5 chord from the major scale that the mode is from. All these other chord/mode explanations I have seen are serious overkill in my opinion and hardly of use in a musical context. Start easily and then as you build your base up of modal knowledge, you can dive back into some more complex chord/mode possibilities. or most Likely… NOT. ;)

Finally, why do the 4 and 5 triads/chord work so well? Through investigation you should see that the accidentals found on the 4 and 5 chords in any major scale really lay out the notes that make the mode(s) pop out (when you swap in different bass notes).
So B Dorian, the note that makes that mode pop is the G#. The 4 chord from A Major is D major (D F# A). The 5 chord is E major (E G# A) so you can see hopefully that you're implying B Dorian by vamping these two chords (when playing these chords over a B bass note) And this is why you will hear pop or rock songs using the 4 and 5 chords when you run across a modal song or modal section of a song.

1. Basic memorization of some basic musical material goes a LONG way in clearing up the haze that inhibits learning the fretboard.

a. Figure out and then, by hand, physically write out the spellings of the basic three note chords in all keys- major, minor, diminished, and augmented. Then their inversions. C major would be C E G- it's inversions E G C, and G C E. These are the chords that you're going to be seeing over and over and OVER again- may as well learn them and get that taken care of. They also are the building blocks of every other more complex chord you'll run across. After you write out the three note chords, figure out how they lay on the fretboard. Lay them across three strings- then two- then up and down a single string. Get familiar with where each note lays on the fretboard and how each note relates to the position of the other notes of the chord. Do this for every three note chord in every inversion, and in all keys.

b. Do the same as above, except this time apply it to the major scales in all keys. Eventually be able to "see" keys and the chords which comprise them as they lay on the fretboard. You'll be able to do this when you thoroughly learn your chord and scale spellings.

c. Be aware of the difference between chords that are diatonic and those that are not. Diatonic chords all fall within the category of a key signature. Non-diatonic chords (obviously) do not all fall into one key. You may have seen the roman numerals- I ii iii IV V vi vii. When a chord falls within this pattern, it is diatonic. Many simple tunes are wholly diatonic and learning how to approach these kind of chord progressions is fundamental in learning to improvise over chord changes. Make your life easier- be able to recognize a diatonic chord progression...

As all the diatonic chords to one key will contain different variations of the same 7 notes, those 7 notes will serve as the scale you can use over all of those chords. And the easiest way to think of those seven notes is as the ajor scale of the key. When I see the chord progression- | D A | Bm G | -I don't think "D major...A mixolydian...B aeolian...G lydian..." as the chords are going by. I can see that all these chords are diatonic to the key of D major and I can just use the D major scale as the basic pool of notes I can draw from. The most important tip I know of to actually be able to use scales musically, is to know your chord spellings and to be able to find and play in and around those notes within the framework of the scale it's derived from. Be able to nail the important chord tones as each chord is going by and you'll have it down. Then you can branch off and experiment with how tensions and non-diatonic tones sound against these chords. But first you have to get the basics down.

d. Group your three note chords into keys- ex. Cmaj Dmin Emin Fmaj Gmaj Amin Bdim- and learn them up and down the fretboard. All keys- all inversions. Be able to find the chord tones quickly and be able to "see" the scale they come from.

When it comes to playing over simple, diatonic chord changes, you really don't have to be concerned with scales other than the major scale. Knowing modes will help you tremendously in being able to play over more complex chord changes however. But even then, it still comes down to knowing the chord spellings and nailing the notes that you want to hear- whether they be chord tones or outside notes.

The first is to learn a scale in every position on the neck, if you don't already. I started with the pentatonic. once i got this, it was like a switch went off. even though it was still a pentatonic scale, because I learned where "all the notes were" in the scale all over the neck, it really helped open things up and break out of familiar patterns and licks. that, to me, has been the biggest thing.

I'm practicing leads in the Grateful Dead's "Eyes of the World". Part of the song modulates between Emaj7 and Bm. Right now we're only talking about the Emaj7 part.

Garcia is playing notes from the E major scale. They work fine. He leans on the D# for starting some runs and if you play a D# > Phrygian (which I see as a D# scale with a b2,b3,b6,b7) or, as I said, the same notes as the E major scale, just starting on D#, it sounds exactly right with the recording.

Garcia also starts some runs on the G#, still using the E major notes and I see this as _also_ a Phrygian, only G# Phrygian. (b2,b3,b6,b7) The alarm bell went off. Something looks wrong. Now the question is:
>
> Do the D# Phrygian and the G# Phrygian have the same notes? (the E major scale notes). How can this be? Why is this? or, what did I get wrong?

E major scale starting on D# is D# locrian, as Morten says. If you're playing D# phrygian, you have an A# in the scale, which means (interestingly) that your scale is B major which - over an Emaj7 chord - is effectively E Lydian: a very nice scale for a maj7 chord.

Remember, a mode derives from the scale and CHORD used. It doesn't matter where you start playing. So if you have an E chord, and play the E major scale (starting from G#, D# or anywhere) you have an E Ionian sound. Starting on (or focusing on) different notes in the scale will simply highlight that extension of the chord. So starting on G# stresses the 3rd of the chord; starting on D# stresses the maj7. **We hear harmonies with the root, IOW, not the relationships of subsequent scale notes with whatever note you began on.** You can call these harmony effects "modal" if you like, but you don't get the full effect of, say, G# phrygian, unless you're using the E major scale over a G#m chord (or G# bass). Then you'll get a G# phrygian sound wherever you start your phrases.

Yes, the A major scale will fit Bm. That will give you B dorian. You could also use D major (B aeolian) or G major (B phrygian), but they are further from E major, which is why dorian would fit better.

Remember, a mode derives from the scale and CHORD used. It doesn't matter where you start playing.

Where you start playing doesn't dictate a mode, I agree, but I don't think that the chord underneath does, either. Too much is made of the root of the current chord, I think, and a lot of this ideology comes from jazz-based modal theory. Most jazz music is comprised of many modulations, and players have learned to keep up with all these changes by using mode-to-chord mapping schemes.

Think of a simple C - F - G - C progression. You can say, mnemonically, that you can play F lydian over the F chord. Counting from F, you get R 2 3 #4 5 6 7, the lydian mode. The #4 in this case is B. Listen to what the B sounds like over the F chord. Then, during a C chord, play F#, which is the #4 counting from C. They sound completely different, even though they have the same relationship to the same type of chord. The fact that one chord is the tonal center, and the other is an excursion from it makes the notes sound completely different. By associating "lydian mode" with the sound of the notes of C major over the F chord, you have made it nearly impossible to take advantage of any of the benefits of association, because you have associated "Lydian mode" with something that isn't lydian mode at all, but rather, C major during a IV chord. A person thinking this way can very easily think that there is nothing more to learn about the modes, when in fact, they don't know the modes at all.

Tip (1): limit your choices. E.g., don't use a full 7-note scale. This is why pentatonics are so popular - they have an inherent structure of their own. If you ramble aimlessly on a pentatonic, it will sound (slightly) more coherent than rambling aimlessly on a full major scale. (Not that I'm advising rambling aimlessly as a desirable strategy...)

Tip (2): think in phrases. When you play a solo, imagine you're speaking, or singing lyrics. Leave breathing space. Use a limited range - e.g., around an octave - as singers do. Learn from the vocal melody of the tune you're soloing on. (With any song you want to solo on, you should be able to play the vocal tune first.)

Tip (3): use rhythmic tricks. As an experiment, limit yourself to just one note from a scale, and see how many different rhythmic patterns you can make throughout a sequence. (This will also highlight how a single note works differently over each chord.) Very the length and timing and speed of the phrases. Think about SPACE and DYNAMICS. Don't play any note you don't have to (!). Then try the same experiment with two notes...

This is obviously using a tiny part of the potential capacity of the guitar, but there's nothing worse than someone showing off how many notes he (it's always "he"...) can play in a second, or how high and low he can stretch. FOCUS your solos. Less is more. Think what B B
King can do with one note!

"Innate talent", BTW, is over-rated, if not non-existent. The more you work at it, the more you listen to stuff, the better you get. Most apparently talented people have either been doing it longer than you, and/or started younger, and/or are more obsessive.
JonR

C Ionian = C Major
C Dorian = B Major
C Phrygian = Ab Major
C Lydian = G Major
C Mixolydian = F Major
C Aolian = D Major
C Locrian = Db Major

IV	I	V		ii	vi	iii	vii.
Lydian	Ionian	Mixolydian		Dorian	Aeolian	Phrygian	Locrian.
1	3	5	7	9	#11	13	Lydian
1	3	5	7	9	11	13	Ionian (Odd numbers)
1	3	5	b7	9	11	13	Mixolydian
1	b3	5	b7	9	11	13	Dorian
1	b3	5	b7	9	11	b13	Aeolian
1	b3	5	b7	b9	11	b13	Phrygian
1	b3	b5	b7	b9	11	b13	Locrian.

G Ionian (Major) (G,A,B,C,D,E,F#,G) (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 1)
G Dorian (minor) (G,A,Bb,C,D,E,F,G) (1, 2, b3, 4, 5, 6, b7, 1)
G Phrygian (minor) (G,Ab,Bb,C,D,Eb,F,G) (1, b2, b3, 4, 5, b6, b7, 1)
G Lydian (Major) (G,A,B,C#,D,E,F#,G) (1 ,2, 3, #4, 5, 6, 7, 1)
G Mixolydian (Major) (G,A,B,C,D,E,F,G) (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, b7, 1)
G Aeolian (minor) (G,A,Bb,C,D,Eb,F,G) (1, 2, b3, 4, 5, b6, b7, 1)
G Locrian (diminished) (G,Ab,Bb,C,Db,Eb,F,G) (1, b2, b3, 4, b5, b6, b7, 1)

> Key = C major
> Subject = Playing over chord changes.
> Where I'm at:

> 1) In the key of C major, these chords go along:
> I - Cmaj7
> II - Dm7
> III - Em7
> IV - Fmaj7
> V - G7
> VI - Am7
> VII - Bm7b5
>
> 2) If you are playing one of these chords, then the "mode" that goes along with the chord will "fit" i.e., you play a D Dorian over a Dm7.
The C major scale itself, and any of its' modes (D dorian, E phrygian..etc.) will fit the chords as well.

Basic Approach
Learn music theory.
Start in the key of C
Learn major intervals
Learn minor intervals
Learn your pentatonic for the root - my third favorite
Learn your pentatonic for the relative
Learn the pentatonic for the IV
Learn the pentatonic for the V
Learn the blue notes for the pentatonics (become a blues player)
Learn the Dorian mode (sound more jazzlike) - my favorite
Learn the Mixolydian mode (rock on) - my second favorite

I think Sharpest to Flattest: Major Scale
Equivalent
G Lydian (Major) (G,A,B,C#,D,E,F#,G) (1,2,3,#4,5,6,7,1) D 5th (of G)
G Ionian (Major) (G,A,B,C,D,E,F#,G) (1,2,3,4,5,6,7,1) G 1
G Mixolydian (Major) (G,A,B,C,D,E,F,G) (1,2,3,4,5,6,b7,1) C 4th
G Dorian (minor) (G,A,Bb,C,D,E,F,G) (1,2,b3,4,5,6,b7,1) F 7th
G Aeolian (minor) (G,A,Bb,C,D,Eb,F,G) (1,2,b3,4,5,b6,b7,1) A# b3rd
G Phrygian (minor) (G,Ab,Bb,C,D,Eb,F,G) (1,b2,b3,4,5,b6,b7,1) Eb b6th
G Locrian (diminished) (G,Ab,Bb,C,Db,Eb,F,G) (1,b2,b3,4,b5,b6,b7,1) Db b5th

G Ionian (Major) (G,A,B,C,D,E,F#,G) (1,2,3,4,5,6,7,1)
A Dorian (minor) (A,B,C,D,E,F#,G,A) (2,3,4,5,6,7,1,2)
B Phrygian (minor) (B,C,D,E,F#,G,A,B) (3,4,5,6,7,1,2,3)
C Lydian (Major) (C,D,E,F#,G,A,B,C) (4,5,6,7,1,2,3,4)
D Mixolydian (Major) (D,E,F#,G,A,B,C,D) (5,6,7,1,2,3,4,5)
E Aeolian (minor) (E,F#,G,A,B,C,D,E) (6,7,1,2,3,4,5,6)
F# Locrian (diminished) (F#,G,A,B,C,D,E,F#) (7,1,2,3,4,5,6,7)

"Parallel Modes"
G Ionian (Major) (G,A,B,C,D,E,F#,G) (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 1)
G Dorian (minor) (G,A,Bb,C,D,E,F,G) (1, 2, b3, 4, 5, 6, b7, 1)

G Phrygian (minor) (G,Ab,Bb,C,D,Eb,F,G) (1, b2, b3, 4, 5, b6, b7, 1)
G Lydian (Major) (G,A,B,C#,D,E,F#,G) (1 ,2, 3, #4, 5, 6, 7, 1)
G Mixolydian (Major) (G,A,B,C,D,E,F,G) (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, b7, 1)
G Aeolian (minor) (G,A,Bb,C,D,Eb,F,G) (1, 2, b3, 4, 5, b6, b7, 1)
G Locrian (diminished) (G,Ab,Bb,C,Db,Eb,F,G) (1, b2, b3, 4, b5, b6, b7, 1)

The 7 modal formulas are:
For D: (Maj scale)
IONIAN - 0 sharps, 0 flats 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 1 Major D
DORIAN - 2 flats 1 2 b3 4 5 6 b7 1 Minor C
PHRYGIAN - 4 flats 1 b2 b3 4 5 b6 b7 1 Minor Bb
LYDIAN - 1 sharp 1 2 3 #4 5 6 7 1 A
MIXOLYDIAN - 1 flat 1 2 3 4 5 6 b7 1 Dom7 G
AEOLIAN - 3 flats 1 2 b3 4 5 b6 b7 1 Minor F
LOCRIAN - 5 flats 1 b2 b3 4 b5 b6 b7 1 m7b5 Eb

Grouping 7 modes into just two.

In C:
I Chord: CMaj7.
II Chord: DMin7.
III Chord: EMin7.
IV Chord: FMaj7.
V Chord: GDom.7.
VI Chord: Amin7.
VII Chord:Bmin7flat5.

Now if you remember, I said the I- III and VI chords are all tonic chords.
In a progression, these all function the EXACT same way.
They are resting chords, and any one can be substituted for the other.

In the Key of C, that means the I chord (CMaj7), III Chord: (E min7) and VI chord (Amin7) are all the same. You play the exact same lines over all of them.
If you learn jazz lines, you will see that over a CMaj7 chord, the lines almost always spell out not only Cmaj7, but E and A minor7 chords as well.

This is like grouping the C Ionian mode, E Phrygian mode, and A Aeolian mode all together!
They are the same scale, and mean the same thing. Forget them! Just learn all your maj 7 lines, and know they work on the I,III and VI chords.
This means all C maj lines, C blues licks and lines, and anything you can use as a color against C maj will work over those 3 chords as well. VERY simple.

Now that that is covered. We have 4 chords left, and they are all the same in that they are Dominant chords.
That is, they are pulling you back to the I chord, or the resting place.
These chords are the
II Chord (Dmin7)
IV chord (FMaj 7)
V chord (GDom7)
7 Chord (Bmin7flat5).

Now, since all of these chords are dominant, they can also be substituted for one another at any time as well.
Take the first chord in the dominant area, the II chord which here is D minor 7.
The scale which fits that chord here is the Dorian mode.
Now, all of your D minor Dorian lines licks etc, will fit over ALL of those dominant chords just as well!
That means D Dorian, F Lydian, G Mixolydian, and B Locrian can all be just thought of a D Dorian!

Once you start to memorize some of the jazz "rules", you will see this any way.
For example, a rule: "Over a Dom7 chord, go up a fifth, and play that min chord". We have that covered already!
Another "rule". Over a Dom7 chord, go up a 3rd and play over that min 7 flat 5 chord". COVERED!
Another "rule". Over a Dom 7 chord, go down a whole step and play that Maj 7 chord. COVERED!
SO, to simplify things, all you really need to know is your Maj scale and lines, and your Dorian scale and lines.
You can diatonically cover everything with this!

In a I-VI-II-V progression, here is a simple way to play over it.
The progression would be CMaj7 - A min7 - D min7 - G7.

Now look, the first two chords are both tonic. (C maj7 and A min7) Put them together and forget them. Just play all of your C maj lines.
Then the next two chords Dmin7 - G7. Both dominant chords. Put them together and forget about them. Just play D Dorian.
So we just made the entire progression 2 bars of C maj7 and 2 bars of D min 7. VERY simple!

Obviously you need to learn a variety of Tonic Maj and Dom Min7 lines, but this will ease you up and allow you to HEAR your way through, instead of trying to switch scales constantly.
This is also the way Joe Pass was able to play over everything and not even know what a "mode" is!
Ill follow this up with some Lydian ideas, and you will see how it is no harder, and you can use all of the same lines and licks you already know, with no new fingerings! This is also the way Pat Martino approaches things in his "convert to minor" way of thinking and playing. ill also go into altered ideas later. I hope this helps, and it really is SO easy!
No way to put that any shorter than I did. Sorry! If you follow along with what I said, and LISTEN and learn lines from jazz players, it should come together pretty quickly.

Learn an easy Standard that has a I-VI-II-V progression, and is not that fast. (Try Polka dots and Moonbeams. First one to come to mind)
I bet within 1-2 months you will start to play smoothly over it.
Learn some easy maj and minor lines from say Grant Green, and start to play them over a backing track of Polka Dots.

When you are learning the lines, pay strict attention to what chord the lines are being played over. If it is the II chord, remember, that line is dominant, and will NOT fit over a III chord! (Even though they are both min7 chords!)

Here's a hopefully simple "why" thing.

C I - Major
D ii - minor
E iii - minor
F IV - Major
G V - Dominant (7th chord)
A vi - minor
B vii - half diminished (don't worry about it now, think minor)

So we see that any minor chord *could* be a ii, a iii, or a vi.

D min7 could be:
the ii of C Major

the iii of Bb Major
or the vi of F major

So, even in the progression is in some other key, anything that treats the D as one of these other things will work, and bring out something cool.

To go further, if you look at a chord in a new way, *anything* that fits that whole scale will work.
So, for example, in the progression above, Dmin7 is the iv. In the context of the song, it's like we're in A Dorian (off the G major scale)

But we decide that when we're over the Dmin7 (the iv), We're gonna treat it like it's the 6th of F major. So we can play F major stuff.
But we can also play anything (chords, pieces of chords, arpeggios, scales, pentatonics, etc.) from the harmonized F major scale:

F I - Major
G ii - minor
A iii - minor
Bb IV - Major
C V - Dominant (7th chord)
D vi - minor
Eb vii - half diminished

So G minor, A minor, F Major, Bb Major stuff will all work over the Dmin7 chord.

Oh, and don't worry about memorizing the notes of the chords yet, just finger the major scale on the 2 low strings and figure it out from there.