

Soloing Over Dominant Sus Chords

Bb Key

Chord: Bb7sus

Approach #1: Major sound; think Ab/Bb

Scale: Ab Lydian (major w/ #4)

Ab - Bb - C - D - Eb - F - Gb - Ab

Approach #2: Minor sound; think Fmin7/Bb

Scale: F minor (Dorian)

F - G - Ab - Bb - C - D - Eb - F

Approach #3: Dominant sound; think Bb7

Scale: Bb dominant

Bb - C - D - Eb - F - G - Ab - Bb

Chord: Bb7sus (b9)

Approach #1: Dominant sound; think Db7/Bb

Scale: Db dominant

Db - Eb - F - Gb - Ab - Bb - Cb - Db

Approach #2: Implying the minor 3rd

Scale: Bb phrygian

Bb - Cb - Db - Eb - F - Gb - Ab - Bb

Approach #3: Implying the major 3rd

Scale: Eb harmonic minor

Eb - F - Gb - Ab - Bb - Cb - D - Eb

Written examples are in random keys.

Voicing examples for sus7 chord:

F7sus6 F7sus6 E7sus(b9)

Approach #1: Major sound

C7

Approach #2: Minor sound

A-7(b9)

Approach #3: Dominant sound

D7sus6

Notice that all three of these approaches have the same sound. The difference is only in the naming of each chord and how you approach it mentally. There is much freedom in a sus chord since you can choose to either play the 3rd or not play the 3rd. When you choose to omit the 3rd, you create a much more open sound where one can imply either the major or minor 3rd if they wish.

Solo concepts over Dominant-Sus chords

Major scale, diatonic: Treating the dominant-sus chord like it is a regular dominant-V chord allows you to play the major scale off its tonic; the same as playing the regular dominant scale (i.e. C maj or G7).

G7sus6

Major scale with a flat 6th: Add chromaticism to your lines by including the b6 in the tonic major scale (i.e. C maj w/ Ab).

G7sus6

Bebop scale: Use either the C major bebop scale or the G dominant bebop scale to add chromaticism and/or imply a V7-I resolution.

G7sus6

Triad pairs: Pick two triads out of the dominant-sus chord that do not share any common notes (i.e. F maj triad, G maj triad).

G7sus6

Implying ii-V's: Whenever you have a dominant chord (in this case, a dominant-sus chord), you can treat that chord as a V7 chord, which will ultimately resolve to I. You can go one step further and imply a ii-V7-I.

G7sus6 (D-7) (G7) (C)

Implying major and minor sounds simultaneously: Because a sus chord lacks the 3rd, a soloist can imply both major and minor 3rd sounds (i.e. G7 and Gmin7).

G7sus6