

Soloing Over Dominant Sus Chords

Eb Key

Chord: F7sus

Approach #1: Major sound; think Eb/F

Scale: Eb Lydian (major w/ #4)

Eb - F - G - A - Bb - C - D - Eb

Approach #2: Minor sound; think Cmin7/F

Scale: C minor (Dorian)

C - D - Eb - F - G - A - Bb - C

Approach #3: Dominant sound; think F7

Scale: F dominant

F - G - A - Bb - C - D - Eb - F

Chord: F7sus (b9)

Approach #1: Dominant sound; think Ab7/F

Scale: Ab dominant

Ab - Bb - C - Db - Eb - F - Gb - Ab

Approach #2: Implying the minor 3rd

Scale: F phrygian

F - Gb - Ab - Bb - C - Db - Eb - F

Approach #3: Implying the major 3rd

Scale: Bb harmonic minor

Bb - C - Db - Eb - F - Gb - A - Bb

Written examples are in random keys.

Voicing examples for sus7 chord:

Three musical staves showing different voicings for a dominant-sus7 chord. The first two are labeled F7sus6 and the third is labeled E7sus(b9).

Approach #1: Major sound

Musical staff for Approach #1: Major sound, labeled C/O.

Approach #2: Minor sound

Musical staff for Approach #2: Minor sound, labeled A-7/O.

Approach #3: Dominant sound

Musical staff for Approach #3: Dominant sound, labeled 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).

Musical staff for Major scale, diatonic, labeled 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).

Musical staff for Major scale with a flat 6th, labeled 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.

Musical staff for Bebop scale, labeled 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).

Musical staff for Triad pairs, labeled 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.

Musical staff for Implying ii-V's, labeled G7sus6, (D-7), (G7), and (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).

Musical staff for Implying major and minor sounds simultaneously, labeled G7sus6.