Jazz Articulation

http://www.jazzadvice.com/scales-are-not-the-secret-short-cut-to-jazz-improvisation/

When you are practicing scales for technique, to get the most benefit from your time in the practice room, you want to focus on other aspects of the scale besides the notes themselves. Start to think about the musical aspects of a line that will aid in expression. Explore different types of articulation, accents, time signatures, and note groupings.

Remember, these exercises aren't just mindless activities to be drudged through in the practice room. If practiced correctly, they are a vital part of your practice routine that will greatly enhance your improvisation and musicality when you perform.

Articulation

Say you're practicing an F Major scale ascending in thirds:

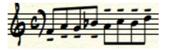


Once you have the notes and fingerings down, try using different articulations.

Slur the entire line:



Legato tongue every note:



Staccato tongue every note:



Use jazz articulation:



Get comfortable playing with any of these articulation styles or even a combination of them. When you're in the middle of a solo, you want to be able to articulate and express yourself in a number of different ways.

Odd note groupings and playing over the bar line

Besides working on different ways of articulating the scales that you're practicing, experiment with grouping and accenting the notes in new ways. Instead of playing every scale in eighth notes or emphasizing the downbeat of every measure, try using odd note groupings and accenting different parts of the measure to imply different meters.

For example, take the same F Major scale in ascending thirds:



Now put the scale into three note groups by slurring every three notes and accenting the first of each group of three:



By grouping the scale in this way, you are creating a dotted quarter note feel that extends over the bar line.

Now try this same concept, but with 5 note groups:



Try the same thing but in triplets this time:



The variations are endless, see what you can come up with. From the same scale you can create and develop some new skills that will incorporate interest into your solos.

Practicing these articulations and getting comfortable with this idea of grouping notes and implying different time signatures will improve the musicality of your improvisations. You don't have to play the exact scale exercise or articulation pattern as you improvise, but rather use these techniques in the lines that you are playing. All of these aspects will prove to be beneficial as you create lines on the fly during your improvised solos.