

How to Create a Walking Bassline

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Level 1: Ones and Fives

Rule 1: Always start a new chord on the root.

Rule 2: Use roots and fives from the chord only.

F7

Bb7 F7

G-7 C7 F7

Level 2a: Two Beat, Add Approach Notes to Chord Changes

Rule 1: Always start a new chord on the root.

Rule 2: Use roots and fives until...

Rule 3: ...the half note before a new chord, which can be a half step above or below the upcoming new root.

F7

Bb7 F7

G-7 C7 F7

2

Level 2b: Four Feel with Repeated Notes

Rule 1: Use quarter notes exclusively.

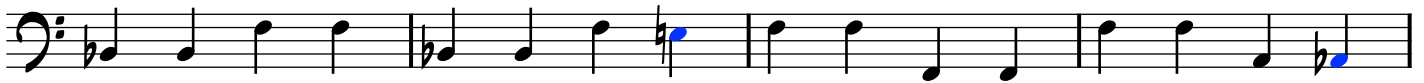
All other rules from 2a are still in place, except the approach note is now one beat instead of two.

F7



Bb7

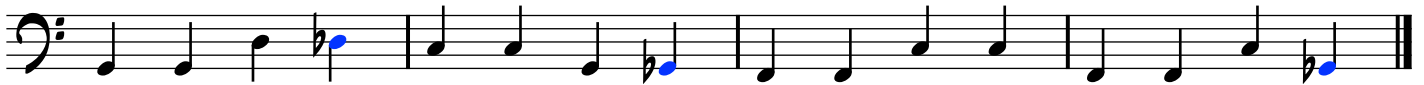
F7



G-7

C7

F7



Level 3a: Walking with arpeggios

Rule 1: Start each measure on the root.

Rule 2: Use any note from the 7th chord for the rest of the bar.

F7



Bb7

F7



G-7

C7

F7



Level 3b: Adding scale notes and passing tones

Rule 1: Always start each measure with the root.

Rule 2: Use notes from the key OR notes from the arpeggio for each measure, and mix it up.

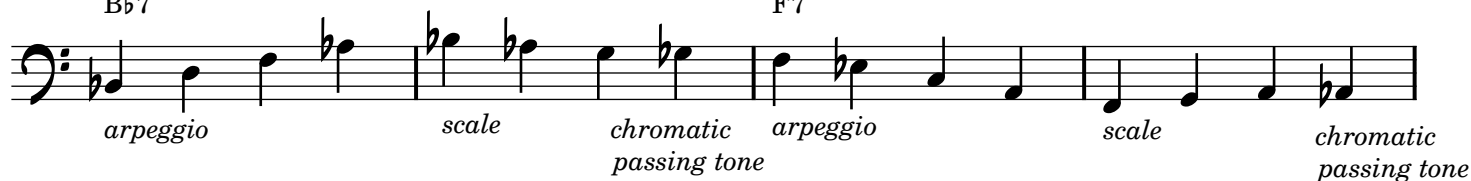
Rule 3: Add chromatic passing tones to approach new chords as desired.

F7



Bb7

F7



G-7

C7

F7

**Level 4a: Advanced Walking**

Rules

Use the rules from level 3b, but relax them - start some measures or chords on notes other than the root, switch between arpeggio and scale in the middle of a measure, and add more or less chromaticism. **REMEMBER:** The goal is to relax the rules, not to throw them out, so follow 3b sometimes, and add variety other times.

F7



Bb7

F7



G-7

C7

F7



Level 4b: The Real World - Paul Chambers on *Blue Spring Shuffle*

youtube.com/watch?v=L5SUVKVZNY8

F7 Bb7 F7

root, chord tones,
scale

passing tone 5
to C

builds direction
toward IV chord

Bb7 F7 A-7 D7

A is a passing tone

5

passing tone 5
to C again

envelopment
of A

chromatic
approach
to G

G-7 C7 F7 G-7 C7

envelopment
of E

note how PC delays the C
3 5 3 1

big octave change
to build direction

envelopment
of C

leading tone