The Essential Guide To Walking Bass
For Bass Guitar Players
By James Eager
**The Essential Guide To Walking Bass**  
*For Bass Guitar Players*  

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The Essential Guide To Walking Bass For Bass Guitar Players By James Eager
Introduction

Dear fellow Bass Lover,

I can remember it well.

Back in 1994 my bass guitar teacher Dave pulled out the piece of music we were going to be studying for the lesson that day. It was titled ‘Satin Doll’ and he’d composed a walking bass line, in standard notation, which we worked on. It piqued my interest but I didn’t know quite why.

Later that week I was in a High School Jazz Band Rehearsal and the same piece came out. This time it was from a book called ‘The Real Book’ and all it contained was a set of chords and the melody written in a very distinctive handwritten style.

This triggered a question in my mind: ‘Are these two pieces of music related and how on earth do I go about creating a bass line just using the chord symbols?’ The next lesson I took the Real Book Chart back to my teacher.

As I discovered, the two were highly related! So much so, the chords which Dave had written over the top were virtually the same as the ones I’d discovered at the Jazz Band rehearsal. Then the next thing that happened blew my mind... he told he could improvise a bass line just using the chords!

Dave then proceeded to play the Satin Doll chord changes but the bass line was completely different to the written bass line he had previously given me. What’s more he seemed to use every single note of his 6 string fretless bass. One moment he was playing in the lower register and the next moment he was right up high. He seemed to know every inch of that neck.

What I didn’t realise at the time, that moment kick-started a fascination with Walking Bass, that’s lasted the best part of 25 years (so far!).

I saw the sheer understanding, knowledge and command of the instrument he got in a flash and knew this was something I wanted to ‘get down’. This was the ‘light bulb’
moment where I went from just copying other people’s bass lines to starting to understand how bass lines were created and how the fingerboard really works.

Since that moment Walking Bass has become an essential part of my arsenal as a bass player. Learning it was pivotal for me and I know it can be for you too.

Subsequently I’ve approached it from so many different angles and in this book, I want to share with you all of the ‘best stuff’ I’ve discovered.

The number one thing which intimidated me when I started learning Walking Bass was getting overwhelmed with the endless possibilities.

Where on earth does one even start?

Having spent countless hours analysing Walking Bass I’ve created the 3M System for Walking Bass which distills Walking Bass into 3 Core Methods. These 3 Core Methods will give you a simple place to start and you’ll soon discover that playing Walking Bass isn’t as hard as it often looks.

I do not claim to have invented every single concept in this book... after all, Walking Bass first came to prominence in the time of Bach, which was at least 250 years before my time!

So I want to take this moment to credit my teachers Dave Harvey, Simon Wolfe, Steve Watts & Paul Westwood and legendary books players such as Ed Friedland, Ray Brown & Rufus Reid. The concepts in this book are unquestionably a distillation of the amazing knowledge these guys have passed on, along with countless hours spent with a CD player transcribing and analysing the greats.

One last thing before we hit the ground running... there is a very specific structure to this book, which is designed to work hand in hand with the Essential Walking Bass Video Course at eBassGuitar.Com. You can find the course in the Bass Lab PLUS Membership—make sure you take the FREE 14 Day Trial so you can experience the video lessons and see if they are for you.
I’ve held nothing back in this book and these concepts have the power to transform your bass playing, especially if you’re just starting out with this Walking Bass.

I’m openly dyslexic and I know for me experiencing information in multiple modalities (with the audio and visual explanations) is hugely helpful. Seeing these concepts from multiple perspectives is a great way of maximising the important ideas in this book.

Also, don’t forget to download the audio examples that come with this book so you can hear each example in context. You also get backing tracks too. Here’s the link: ebassguitar.com/audio

Good luck and see you on the other side!

James

eBassGuitar

P.S. Look out for the ‘trade secret’ I reveal right at the end of this book ;-)
1.1 Why Learn Walking Bass, Who Is This Book For & Essential Listening

Why Learn Walking Bass?

Learning Walking Bass, I have often cited as the number one thing I studied that made the biggest difference to my bass playing. You may have heard of the Pareto Principle or ‘80:20 Rule’: That is 80% of your results come from 20% of your work.

For me learning Walking Bass was the ‘80:20’ of all my studies... hence it’s the number one thing I recommend every single student should learn when they are ready and there are two fundamental reasons for this.

The two reasons are it will improve your:

1. **Harmonic Knowledge:** It will allow you to understand and create bass lines over even the most complicated chords.
2. **Fretboard Knowledge:** It will allow you to gain confidence playing in every single position on the neck.

You might have noticed in those two points there was something potentially missing? Yes, the word ‘Jazz’.

Many would have expected me to say ‘it’ll allow you to play Jazz’ and of course that is 100% true.

But... learning Walking Bass is so much more than that.

I believe Walking Bass is the secret to playing every single style of music well. Rock to Funk, Folk to Country, Latin to Soul... and of course Jazz!

Just think about what it will be like to have a true understanding of the musical possibilities when presented with any chord sequence because you have an in-depth knowledge of harmony. Just think about what it will be like to have confidence to use every single note
on the fingerboard.
So many students end up limited because they don’t have complete clarity when it comes to what notes will work over what chords and just revert to stock phrases or riffs. Equally many get stuck just playing in one position or area of the neck and get ‘musical vertigo’ when they venture into areas of the fingerboard they do not know.

There’s an exciting road ahead. As you work through this book pay close attention close to the impact it’s having on every other style of music you play—I guarantee it will be profound!

**Who is this book for?**

This book is designed for any bass player who feels they are intermediate or entering the early-intermediate phases. This book definitely isn’t for the complete beginner but one thing I have noticed over the years is many students can get intimidated by Walking Bass and avoid starting to study it. So if you are in that position... just give it a whirl and see what happens. I guarantee you’ll be surprised by the results!

As a benchmark I would recommend gaining a good working knowledge of Blues Bass first of all because this will unquestionably lay the foundation for what’s coming up.

*(Check out the Rookie Blues Bass Intensive in the Bass Lab PLUS if you feel you’d like to brush up on your Blues Bass Playing - [ebassguitar.com/trial](http://ebassguitar.com/trial)*

Back to Walking Bass... if you are looking to learn Walking Bass from day one you are in the right place. We’re leaving nothing to chance and starting right from the beginning.

By the end of the book you’ll have all the skills in place to create Walking Bass Lines over the most common jazz structures and chord sequences.

**Essential Walking Bass Players & Recommended Listening.**

Jazz has a vast ‘aural’ tradition associated with it. So much of the music is passed from musician to musician without it even being written down. You can learn a huge amount by ‘osmosis’ by just listening and enjoying Walking Bass. The old cliche of ‘music being a
language’ is completely true in this instance. I believe soaking up the music of the great jazz musicians and bass players made a massive difference to my Walking Bass and general musicianship. I encourage all of my students to do this because it starts getting the sound of these bass lines into the subconscious.

There are thousands of records out there that contain amazing walking bass lines. Here are 10 seminal albums to get you going:

- **Oscar Peterson** - We Get Requests
- **Count Basie** - The Atomic Mr Basie
- **Herbie Hancock Trio** With Ron Carter & Tony Williams
- **Ella Fitzgerald** - The Incomparable Ella
- **Hank Mobley** - Soul Station
- **Ray Brown, Shelley Mann, Barney Kessell** - The Poll Winners
- **Frank Sinatra** - Songs For Swinging Lovers
- **Duke Ellington & Ray Brown** - This One Is For Blanton
- **Bill Evans Trio** - Portrait In Jazz
- **Miles Davis** - Kind Of Blue

An important part of understanding this style of music is to check out musicians in their own right. Over the years they have often played for multiple bands or artists. Again to get you going, here are 10 bass players I recommend listening to:

- **Ray Brown**
- **Ron Carter**
- **Christian McBride**
- **Paul Chambers**
- **Charles Mingus**
- **Scott LaFaro**
- **Milt Hinton**
- **John Patitucci**
- **Charlie Haden**

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• Dave Holland
• Oscar Pettiford

This is just the beginning! I encourage you to go on your own journey discovering more and more bands and artists. Whenever you get a new CD make sure you check out the credits to discover the musicians who are performing on the album, then explore who else they have played for. (That's how I got such a vast CD collection!)

Always be curious and soak up the genre. Growing up I was lucky because my Dad was a semi-pro musician and his dad (my grandpa) was a pro musician in the 1920s. This meant in a pre-internet time I was surrounded by music.

We live in an age where music is so accessible by services such as Spotify and YouTube which is making learning and discovering music easier than ever.

One last point, you may notice in the list of bass players above are largely Upright, Stand-up or Double Bass Players. For me this is where you hear Walking Bass in its purest form. You’ll discover beautifully-crafted clear bass lines over ‘jazz standards’ which make the style much simpler to learn.

It’s harder (but not impossible) to find records with simple Walking Bass played on the bass guitar because often the bass guitar ends up being used more in Jazz-Fusion music which is often technically more complex.

You’ll also find the great Jazz Bass Guitar Players will have listened and studied the great Jazz Double Bass Players regardless of whether they even play the instrument. The two are completely interlinked.

My personal ‘walking bass hero’ is the great Ray Brown and in my view it doesn’t get much better than him!
The 3M System For Walking Bass

Just before we get stuck in, I’m going to be referring to an idea called the ‘3M System’. Over the years I’ve been studying Walking Bass I’ve spent hours distilling everything I’ve discovered into 3 simple, overarching methods:

1. The Chord Tones & Interval Method
2. The Chromatic Method
3. The Scalic Method

You'll hear me referring to the ‘3M System’ right from the early lessons of this book. You'll also discover each method is heavily interlinked too.

Let's get playing!

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1.2 Creating The Jazz Blues

The ‘Jazz Blues’ is the most important chord sequence you can learn when you are starting out playing Walking Bass. First of all, it is important to discover how it differs from a ‘Rock ‘N’ Roll 12 Bar Blues’ which there’s a good chance you will have already played before.

If you are not familiar with the foundations of blues bass guitar and the 12 Bar Blues, I encourage you to check out The Rookie Blues Bass Intensive, also in the Bass Lab PLUS.

I recommend jumping on Spotify and searching to following tunes to start listening and internalising the sound of the Jazz Blues:

- Now’s The Time
- Billie’s Bounce
- Tenor Madness
- Straight No Chaser
- Sandu

Simple 12 Bar Blues

Here is the simplest form of the 12 bar blues that you’ll find in Rock ‘N’ Roll Music:

||: F7 | % | % | % |
| Bb7 | % | F7 | % |
| C7 | Bb7 | F7 | C7 :||

‘Quick IV’ 12 Bar Blues

We can develop this Rock N’ Roll Blues by adding a ‘Quick IV Chord Change’ into bar two:

||: F7 | Bb7 | F7 | % |
| Bb7 | % | F7 | % |
| C7 | Bb7 | F7 | C7 :||

Roman Numeral / Nashville Number System

You may also want to look at this using the Roman Numeral or
Nashville Chord System:

||: I7   | IV7   | I7   | %   |
| I7    | %     | I7   | %   |
| IV7   | %     | I7   | %   |
| V7    | IV7   | I7   | V7  :||

If you need help understanding Roman Numeral Chord System make sure you check The Complete Guide To Music Theory For Bass Players also available at eBassGuitar.Com.

Creating The ‘Jazz Blues’

Jazz musicians took the classic 12 bar blues sequence and developed it by giving it some more involved chords. The changes to the sequence create the ‘Jazz sound’ and also give a richer foundation to improvise over.

To make this into a typical ‘Jazz Blues’ here are basic alterations we need to make:

||: F7   | Bb7   | F7   | %   |
| F7    | %     | F7   | %   |
| Bb7   | %     | C7   | F7   Dm7 | Gm7   C7 :||

Again, you may also want to look at this using the Roman Numeral or Nashville Chord System:

||: I7   | IV7   | I    | %   |
| IV7   | %     | I    | %   |
| IIm7  | V7    | IIm7 | V7  :||

It’s important to appreciate that two very common jazz chord progressions get added to the original ‘Rock N Roll’ chord sequence to add more harmonic variety and interest:

- Bars 9 - 11 = A II-V-I chord sequence replaces the standard V-IV-I chord sequence. (Gm7 - C7 - F7)
- Bars 11-12 = We have added a I-VI-II-V chord sequence. This part of the blues sequence is known as the ‘Turnaround’. The Turnaround has two chord changes per
bar. (F7 - Dm7 - Gm7 - C7)

Both the II-V-I and the I-VI-II-I are exceptionally important to understand when you are playing Walking Bass or Jazz... and they both feature in the Jazz Blues.

We are in the key of F in this example and all of the Roman Numerals directly relate to the F major scale:

```
F   G   A   Bb  C   D   E   F
I   II  III IV  V   VI  VII  VIII
```

**Example 1 (Audio Track 01)**

The first thing to do is to get comfortable playing the sequence with just ‘whole notes’ that last for 4 beats (except for the turnaround where you play ‘half’ or 2 beat notes because there are two chord changes per bar). We are just using the root note of each chord to begin with.

It’s important to get the ear ‘tuned in’ so you really start to instinctively hear the shape of the sequence, particularly at the beginning and end of the form.
Example 2: *(Audio Track 02)*
Throughout the whole of this course I strongly encourage you to start learning every position of the neck. To start as we mean to go on, try playing the blues sequence on just ONE string at a time.

This has 3 major benefits:
- It encourages you to use notes and positions on the fingerboard you wouldn't ordinarily use and will start to alleviate ‘fretboard fear’ right from the word go.
- You'll learn where each of the chords or root notes for the blues is on each string.
- It encourages you to make unusual physical jumps on the neck, which in turn helps you to gain confidence when position shifting. This also improves your muscle memory in the process.
Here’s the F Blues played just on the E String, again just using root notes.

Example 3: *(Audio Track 03)*

In this next example we are going to play the blues sequence on just the A string. You may find the tab helpful to identify where each note can be found.

This is example is written out at the top of page 15.
Example 4: (Audio Track 04)
Here's the blues sequence on the D string!
**Example 5:** *(Audio Track 05)*

Last, here is the blues sequence played on the G string. This will probably be the most challenging example so far as we venture into the upper register of the fingerboard.

![Blues Sequence](image)

**Challenge:** Try playing any notes you find at fret 12 as open strings down the octave if you want to take this concept a step further.

**Example 6:** *(Audio Track 06)*

In reality, it's unlikely you will ever play this blues on just one string, but it's a great device to improve your fingerboard knowledge. You are more likely to play it across two strings to begin with. Example 1 covers doing this using the E and A strings. Here is an example using the A and D string. Notice how you now venture up into the mid register of the neck.
Example 7: (Audio Track 07)
Here is the same concept using just the D and G strings.
1.3 Discovering The Two & Four Feel

In Lesson 3 we are going to look at the **Two Feel** and **Four Feel**.
As the name suggests the Two Feel uses two notes per bar and the Four Feel uses 4 notes per bar. The 4 feel is what we typically associate with Walking Bass.

However, the Two Feel is equally important. It provides musical ‘light and shade’ when you switch between both feels. The two feel notes are placed on beats 1 and 3 and this generally gives a lighter, more bouncy sound.

The Two Feel is most often used when the ‘Head’ or the melody is played at the start and end of a jazz tune.

**Example 1: (Audio Track 08)**
Here is the Two Feel notated:
Example 2: (Audio Track 09)
Now try playing this as a ‘Four Feel’ when a note is played on each beat of the bar.

Example 3: (Audio Track 10)
Switching between the Two & Four Feel
Now try switching between playing the Two and Four Feels. You will find out that there is a distinct change in energy when you hit the Four Feel (after playing the two). In fact, this one change can change the whole musical attitude of every musician in the band.
So you can discover how this feels and sounds, make sure you listen to the audio examples that come with the book. You’ll discover two ‘choruses’ of the Two Feel and then two ‘choruses’ of the Four Feel. This then loops.
A ‘Chorus’ is another term used for a jazz chord progression or sequence that is often repeated multiple times in a jazz piece. Typically a Chorus can be anywhere between 8 and 32 bars long... sometimes even longer! In this case it’s 12 bars.

Tip: The drummer will also be changing from the two and four feel. Make sure you listen the Ride Cymbal and Hi Hats of the drum part... these are the most important parts of the band to ‘lock in’ with.
1.4 Adding Octaves

In this last lesson of Module 1, we are going to look at adding our first interval - the Octave. Adding the same ‘letter name’ note one octave up is the perfect first step to developing a bass line which more than just root notes.

Octaves are part of ‘Chord Tones & Octaves’ found in the 3M System An Octave has a very distinctive basic shape on the neck. I think of the as an ‘L Shape’. The chances are you have discovered these in other styles of music. They are hugely important in Walking Bass. The Octave works very well with both the Two and the Four Feel.

Example 1: (Audio Track 11)
The simplest way to integrate the ‘octave’ is to play the root note on beat 1 and the octave on beat 3. Just shift the ‘L Shape’ around and the notes will fall under your hand quite easily.

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Example 2: (Audio Track 12)
In this next example we are going to play the ‘4 Feel’ using Roots and Octaves.

Example 3: (Audio Track 13)
The next idea you should try is ‘inverting’ each bar so you start with the octave and then move to the root for each chord.

The reason for this is it’s often more natural for us players to start off ‘low note’ and then ascend, however, walking bass often requires us to do exactly the opposite. This concept will give more command of the instrument.

The two feel is written out at the top of page 22.
Example 4: (Audio Track 14)
Here is the Four Feel:

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**TIP:** With both of these ‘inverted’ examples you can try playing the turn around one octave higher. The notes 'up the octave' will work perfectly.

**Example 5: (Audio Track 15)**

Next, try moving our ‘octave' walking lines up into the middle register of the neck. So instead of using frets 1-5 we are now going to use frets 6-12.

The important thing to appreciate is that if you see an ‘F’ chord (for example) any ‘F’ on the fingerboard can act as the ‘root’.

In this next example, notably the F chord has moved up the octave and the Bb chord is the same note pitch, but we play it on the E string instead of the A string.

All too often players can get stuck in one area of the neck and learning the same concept in two areas of the neck can dramatically start opening up the fingerboard.

The tab will tell you the new note positions if you are unsure.
Example 6: (Audio Track 16)
Once you start becoming comfortable in the middle register of the bass, try inverting your octave bass lines like we did in the previous examples.

Example 7: (Audio Track 17)
To finish off this Module I want to show just how powerful octaves can be and how many variations can be created. In this example I’m going to mix up the idea of inverting octaves and using both the lower and middle of the bass. Plus, I’m also going to change octaves on every note in the turnaround.
This is example is written out at the top of page 25.
CHALLENGE: How many variations can you create based on the simple root and octave ideas contained in this module? Try writing a few down... I think you'll be surprised how many you can create!

MORE RESOURCES & VIDEO LESSONS

To get the audio examples and backing tracks that accompany this book visit 
[ebassguitar.com/audio](http://ebassguitar.com/audio)

To try out the Essential Walking Bass Video Course FREE For 14 Days visit 
[ebassguitar.com/trial](http://ebassguitar.com/trial)
2.1 Creating The 5th

This module is all about adding the next most important interval to your bass lines - the 5th. The 5th is a chord tone and is part of ‘Method 1’ from the 3M System. It’s the backbone of so many styles of bass lines, most notably Country and Latin music, and of course, walking bass.

There are some very distinctive shapes that the 5th creates on the neck and understanding this interval is the moment you will feel your walking lines coming alive... especially in lesson 5, when you learn the ‘Turnaround Riff Pack’.

As always, this is 100% real world stuff. Let’s get straight down to it!

How to work out the ‘5th’ from any note

It’s very straightforward to work out the 5th note of each chord. At this stage I recommend using a combination of these two ideas:

- **Count up 4 notes from the root.** This will give you the ‘letter name’ of the note you are looking for. Here are 3 examples eg:
  
  - R (2) (3) (4) 5
  - C (D) (E) (F) G
  - F (G) (A) (B) C
  - Bb (C) (D) (E) F

- **Use the ‘mini L shape’.** This is 1 string down, two frets along. It’s very similar to the octave shape. This is an integral part of the ‘box shape’ that is often talked about. Please be aware this shape changes very slightly if we have flattened or sharpened 5ths. Here’s is a fingerboard diagram:
You can also use the major scale as a basis for this, but I don’t want to get too bogged down in musical theory at this stage.

**Example 1 (Audio Track 18)**

In this first example we are going to add the 5th of each chord, ascending, from the root using the ‘2 feel’.

This is an extremely common note choice when playing the ‘2 feel’ and is also extensively used in Latin Music.
**Example 2 (Audio Track 19)**

This next example is exactly the same as the first example but we are going to play it with the 4 feel instead.

Make sure you really ‘lock in’ with the drummer’s ride cymbal and hi hat and focus on creating a strong pulse (or good ‘time’). When we start adding more notes into the equation it’s easy to let the rhythm start to become unstable. Using a metronome or the backing tracks that come with this book will really help.

![Musical notation]

**Example 3 (Audio Track 20)**

In this next example we are going to move the examples we covered above into the ‘mid positions’ of the neck.

This is example is written out at the top of page 29.
Example 4 (Audio Track 21)

Let's try the same thing again but with a 4 Feel.
2.2 Building The Upper & Lower 5th

In this next lesson we are going to look at how to develop using the 5th. So far the 5th has always been above the root note. We can also get it below the root note too. We’re going to refer to this as the ‘Upper 5th’ (U5) and ‘Lower 5th’ (L5) respectively.

This creates, yet again, a very distinctive shape on the neck. The Lower 5th uses the same fret but on the string directly below.

So if you’re playing a C at fret 3 on the A string, you’ll find the lower 5th (G) directly below at the 3rd fret on the E string. It’s important to appreciate that both 5ths have the note pitch ‘G’.

**Example 1 (Audio Track 22)**

Here’s the Blues using the Lower 5th throughout for each chord of the Jazz 12 Bar Blues.

The example is written out at the top of page 31.
Example 2 (Audio Track 23)

Let’s take this concept up into the Mid Position of the neck. I advise using the tab to double check you are playing the right notes, on the right string because the notation is identical to example 1.
2.3 Creating Walking Bass Lines With Shape

In this next lesson we are going to look at how to add ‘shape’ or ‘contours’ to our walking bass lines. Rather than looking at each bar as an individual entity we can now start creating lines that span over several bars.

Example 1 (Audio Track 24)

In the blues sequence there are 3 opportunities where we stay on one single chord for two bars. These are shown with a bracket above. This is the perfect moment to craft ‘shape’ and musical variety to our bass lines. Using bars 3-4 as an example: This can be achieved by instead of hitting the root note (a low Bb) on beat 1 of bar 4, we can play the octave (high Bb at fret 3 on the G string) instead. Even if you don’t read musical notation, you can clearly see the ‘wave shape’ it creates on the stave. This creates a very pleasing or musical sound to our ears. This concept works on both the F7 and Bb7 chords really well and you’ll clearly see the concept of the ‘lower 5th’ creeping in if you look at bars 4, 6 and 8 in isolation.
Example 2 (Audio Track 25)

There are also other opportunities where we could add in the lower 5th to create more variation. Here is an example where I have added the lower 5th into bars 2 and 10 on beat 3.

It’s worth noting that at this stage, it’s completely up to you as a bass player and musician if you want to use these variations. This is where you can start making your own musical choices and gain a sense of what it’s like to start ‘improvising’ your own bass lines.

It creates a huge sense of freedom once you start to know what choices are available...
2.4 Developing The Turnaround

So far in this module we haven’t looked at developing the turnaround (bars 11-12). this is where things kick up a gear yet again!

When we play two chord changes per bar you will discover that beats 1 & 3 are naturally the ‘strong’ beats of the bar. Beats 2 & 4 are ‘weaker’ and provide the perfect opportunity to add ‘passing notes’.

The 5th is a great passing note to use in the early stages of learning Walking Bass. Here’s the turnaround just using the 5th of each chord on beats 2 & 4.

**Example 1 (Audio Track 26)**

![Musical notation](image)

Once we have got this down we can start using the idea of ‘contouring’ that we discussed in the previous lesson, to smooth out the bassline and create more shape.

We can also use a concept here called ‘voice leading’. This is where we look at the chord we are moving to as our ‘target note’ (on beats 1 & 3 of each bar).

To get strong ‘voice leading’ the important thing is to get the 5th (either upper or lower) as near as possible to the target note. This will create the smooth ‘contours’ we are looking for..
Example 2 (Audio Track 27)

To make things clear I’ve written if we are using an Upper 5th or Lower 5th below each note on the stave. Notice how the ‘5th’ is in this case, is either one note above or below the target note.

Practise this as a loop going round and round to begin with.

2.5 The Turnaround ‘Riff Pack’

If you have taken any other eBassGuitar courses before you will have discovered that I like to use ‘riff packs’ to show how you can take a concept and develop it. To continue the idea I have created a ‘Turnaround Pack’. Here are 10 turnarounds using the concepts we have discussed in this module.

Please loop them one by one with the Turnaround Backing Track.

Turnaround 1 (Audio Track 28)

Turnaround 2 (Audio Track 29)
Turnaround 3 (Audio Track 30)

Turnaround 4 (Audio Track 31)

Turnaround 5 (Audio Track 32)
Turnaround 6 (Audio Track 33)

These next two turnarounds are designed to start in one octave and continue on in the next octave above or below.

Turnaround 7 (Audio Track 34)

Turnaround 8 (Audio Track 35)

These last 3 turnarounds are designed to be played in the upper positions of the bass guitar neck. Notice how we are really starting to explore the whole range of the bass guitar fingerboard now!
Turnaround 9 (Audio Track 36)

```
F7    Dm7   Gm7   C7
    L/5    L/5    L/5    L/5
```

Turnaround 10 (Audio Track 37)

```
F7    Dm7   Gm7   C7
    L/5    L/5    L/5    L/5
```

---

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3.1 Exploring The Lower Chromatic Turnarounds

In module 3 we are going to start exploring the ‘2nd Method’ of the ‘3M System’ by adding chromatic notes. In my opinion these are the number one tool we have to start creating the classic ‘walking bass’ sound. What’s even better chromatics are very straightforward to start implementing because there’s very little music theory required.

You will now discover this is the point where the options really start multiplying and this course would start getting incredibly long and overwhelming if I were to go through every single combination of chromatics.

I encourage every student to really understand the core concepts then go on their own journey of discovery. It’s entirely possible to start creating your own exercises and studies to further practice these ideas.

Lower Chromatic Approach Note

The first chromatic we are going to learn how to use is the ‘Lower Chromatic Approach Note’. The Lower Chromatic (LC) can be found a half step or 1 fret below your target note. So if your target note is a ‘C’ your Lower Chromatic Approach Note will be a ‘B’.

The first sequence I suggest you build out is a 1-6-2-5 Turn Around (initially discussed back in Module 1). As there are two chord changes per bar you can place your approach notes on beats 2 & 4.

For the 1-6-2-5 Turn Around in F, here are the approach notes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach Note</th>
<th>Target Chord</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>F7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C#</td>
<td>Dm7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F#</td>
<td>Gm7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>C7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Turnaround ‘Riff Pack’

Here are 5 turnarounds using the Lower Chromatic Approach Note. Take these apart slowly and really make sure you have absorbed the concepts. Once you are comfortable, start expanding these ideas across the whole neck using the Turnaround backing track.

**Lower Chromatic Turnaround 1 (Audio Track 38)**

```
\[ F7 \]
\[ Dm7 \]
\[ Gm7 \]
\[ C7 \]
```

**Lower Chromatic Turnaround 2 (Audio Track 39)**

```
\[ F7 \]
\[ Dm7 \]
\[ Gm7 \]
\[ C7 \]
```

**Lower Chromatic Turnaround 3 (Audio Track 40)**

```
\[ F7 \]
\[ Dm7 \]
\[ Gm7 \]
\[ C7 \]
```
Lower Chromatic Turnaround 4 (Audio Track 41)

Lower Chromatic Turnaround 5 (Audio Track 42)
3.2 Adding The Upper Chromatic

The next step once you have learnt the Lower Chromatic Approach Note is to learn the Upper Chromatic Approach Note. The concept is exactly the same except rather than approaching from a half step below, you approach from a half step above (or one fret).

For the 1-6-2-5 Turn Around in F, here are the approach notes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approach Note</th>
<th>Target Chord</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gb</td>
<td>F7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eb</td>
<td>Dm7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eb</td>
<td>Gm7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Db</td>
<td>C7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here are 5 turnarounds that demonstrate how to use the Upper Chromatic Approach Note:

Upper Chromatic Turnaround 1 (Audio Track 43)

![Upper Chromatic Turnaround 1](image1)

Upper Chromatic Turnaround 2 (Audio Track 44)

![Upper Chromatic Turnaround 2](image2)
Upper Chromatic Turnaround 3 (Audio Track 45)

Upper Chromatic Turnaround 4 (Audio Track 46)

Upper Chromatic Turnaround 5 (Audio Track 47)
3.3 Supercharging Chromatic Turnarounds

The next step is to start combining Upper and Lower Chromatic Approach Notes. You can combine them any way you wish!

What you will discover is that some patterns will fall ‘under your hands’ more easily than others and be easier to finger. Over a period of time you will build up a set of ‘stock patterns’ or ‘lines’ that will really suit the way you play and what feels comfortable.

You can identify Upper Chromatics by the letters ‘U/C’ and Lower Chromatics by the letters ‘L/C’.

**Lower & Upper Chromatic Turnaround 1 (Audio Track 48)**

![Chromatic Turnaround 1](image1)

**Lower & Upper Chromatic Turnaround 2 (Audio Track 49)**

![Chromatic Turnaround 2](image2)

**Lower & Upper Chromatic Turnaround 3 (Audio Track 50)**

![Chromatic Turnaround 3](image3)
Lower & Upper Chromatic Turnaround 4  (Audio Track 51)

These 5 Turnarounds are just the tip of the iceberg. I hope these have ignited your curiosity and you'll go on a journey learning these all over the neck!

The wonderful thing is already the patterns and combinations are practically limitless.
3.4 Installing Chromatics Into The Blues Sequence

Once you are comfortable constructing turnarounds using Chromatic Approach Notes, (using 2 chord changes per bar), the next step is to look at how to use them with just one chord per bar.

The concept of the strong beats of the bar being 1 & 3 and the weaker beats of the bar being beats 2 & 4 remains identical. Digging back into Module 2 let’s take the Blues sequence with a 4 feel, using roots and 5ths as our basis.

First, let’s focus on beat two of the bar. This means our target note is beat 3 of the bar. In this instance the 3rd beat of every bar will be the 5th of the chord. So our chromatic approach note will be a half step (or 1 fret) below the 5th.

To give an example using bar 1:

The chord is F > So our target note is the 5th of the chord which is a C on beat 3 > This means our Lower Chromatic Approach Note will be a B.

Example 1 (Audio Track 53)

Here’s is the Jazz Blues Sequence using the Lower Chromatic on beat 2 of the bar.

(The example is written out at the top of page 47)
**CHALLENGE:** Try this sequence again but change the Lower Chromatic to an Upper Chromatic and see what effect it has to the sound of the walking bass line and the fingering on the neck of the bass.

**Example 2 (Audio Track 54)**

Once you are comfortable adding a Chromatic Approach Note on beat 2 of the bar try to adding one to beat 4 of the bar.

To keep things interesting, let’s make it an Upper Chromatic Approach Note. This means our target is going to be beat 1 of the next bar.

To give an example using the first bar:

We are playing an F7 chord > Our target note is Bb from beat 1 of bar 2 > this means our approach note is a B, which is one fret above.
Here's the sequence with a Lower Chromatic on beat 2 and an Upper Chromatic on beat 4.

**CHALLENGE:** Try the sequence with an Upper Chromatic on Beat 2 and a Lower Chromatic on beat 4.

There a many different variations you could try with this concept. Once you are super comfortable try improvising using these ideas... and see what happens ;-)
3.5 The Chromatic Turnaround Challenge

As I’ve said many times in videos at eBassGuitar.Com and in the Essential Walking Bass Course, Walking Bass is the perfect vehicle to start improving your fingerboard knowledge and confidence. Once you start getting familiar with the basic concepts you can start devising your own exercises to learn the neck.

Already in the first 3 modules there are so many other variations you could try. I encourage you to challenge yourself and really start exploring areas of the neck you wouldn’t normally play in and see what happens!

Example 1 (Audio Track 55)

Here is an example of an exercise I developed to learn the 1-6-2-5 turnaround across the whole neck:

If you have a 5 string bass you can put the final C chord down the octave.
Example 2 (Audio Track 56)
Here is the same exercise adding in a Lower Chromatic Approach Note.

Example 3 (Audio Track 57)
Why not try it with an Upper Chromatic Approach Note?

Here a few other ideas on ways to vary this exercise and make it more challenging:

- Vary where you play the notes on the neck. There are many more ways of fingerling the same notes.
- Use a combination of Upper & Lower Approach Notes
- Using 5ths (from module 2) as your passing notes.
- When you repeat, try playing the sequence up an octave, so your first note is an F (Fret 3 on the D string), then continue on upwards.
- Start at the top and come down backwards.
- ...and of course try it in different keys too.

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Module Wrap Up

Hopefully you can see there are many, many more variations on all of the exercises in this module. I encourage you to start exploring, using these ideas and make up your own!

This module has created the foundation of the Chromatic Method, an integral part of the 3M system.

IDEA: Try making a short video of yourself playing these exercises. I’d love you to share the video in the Bass Lab PLUS Group on Facebook... Here’s the link BassLabGroup.Com

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4.1 Understanding The II-V-I

In module four we are going to be looking at two very important concepts:

- Understanding the II-V-I chord sequence.
- Constructing bass lines using triads, arpeggios and chord tones.

Triads, arpeggios and chord tones are an integral part of ‘Method 1’ found in the ‘3M System’. We’ve already discussed using Roots & 5ths (which are found in triads, arpeggios & chord tones) in Modules 1 & 2... now we’re going to be kicking it up a gear again! This is where things get very interesting...

Understanding The II-V-I (2-5-1)

The II-V-I is one of the most common chord sequences you will find in ‘jazz standards’. It is the backbone of tunes like Autumn Leaves, All The Things You Are & Perdido... to name a few. You will also find this sequence extends into many, many other genres of music.

One of the alterations we make to create a jazz blues (from a standard rock ‘n’ roll blues) is to add a II-V-I chord sequence between bars 9-12.

Let’s look at this further:

The theory behind this whole concept is based on the harmonisation of the major scale. We can build a chord off every note of the scale. This is what it looks like in the key of F, using an F major scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>F</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>Bb</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>II</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>IV</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>VI</td>
<td>VII</td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We can then build a chord by creating a triad off each degree of the scale. We do this by ‘stacking thirds’ or playing every other note. As
the name suggests a triad has 3 notes.

This is what you get if you stack a triad off each degree of the scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Root</th>
<th>Third</th>
<th>Fifth</th>
<th>Resulting Chord</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>F Major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Bb</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>G Minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>A Minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bb</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Bb Major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>C Major</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>D Minor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Bb</td>
<td>Em Flat 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This concept is also the basis of the ‘Nashville Numbers System’. The II-V-I chord sequence sequence looks like this:

|| Gm || C || F || % ||

Creating Bass lines using Triads, Arpeggios & Chord Tones

These 3 notes are very powerful concepts when creating walking bass lines. This is because they perfectly outline the chord and have all the important notes needed to give a sense of the overall harmony. When used correctly, you may not even need to book a guitarist or piano player!
**Example 1: (Audio Track 58)**

In this first example we are going to create a walking bass line using just triads:

![Musical notation image]

To fill out all 4 beats of the bar we return to the 2nd note of the triad on beat 4.

**Example 2: (Audio Track 59)**

Once you are comfortable with creating triads over the II-V-I, this can be extended into a 1 octave arpeggio.

There are a few different ways musicians define the term ‘arpeggio’. In this context I think of an arpeggio as the Root, 3rd, 5th and octave.

So to create an arpeggio all you need to do is add the octave to the previous example.

The perfect place to do this is on beat 4 of the bar:

![Musical notation image]

Notice in bar 4 I’ve added some ‘shape’ or ‘Contouring’ to create a more musical and interesting bass line.
4.2 Building Bass Lines Using Triads

Here are 5 examples of II-V-I patterns built using the triad concepts from lesson 1.
Before we start, notice how arpeggios can also descend below the root of a chord. Bar 2 of example 1 is a great demonstration of this. Often bass players only view arpeggios and triads ascending from the root.

Example 1 (Audio Track 60)

Example 2 (Audio Track 61)

Example 3 (Audio Track 62)
Example 4 (Audio Track 63)

Example 5 (Audio Track 64)

CHALLENGE: Try and create 3 of your own!
4.3 Completing The Chord Tone System

Now it’s time to complete the Chord Tone System. Chord Tones are where we use the Root, Third, Fifth AND Seventh to create our bass lines. The Third and Seventh of the chord are widely regarded as the notes that give the real ‘character’ to a jazz chord. The Root & Fifth tend to give the foundation.

Add the 7th (from the Chord Tone System) as the name suggests will create a 7th chord. This is very simple to create - all we need to do is stack another 3rd on top of the 5th.

Here are the chords / arpeggios you can create from the F major scale:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Root</th>
<th>Third</th>
<th>Fifth</th>
<th>Seventh</th>
<th>Chord</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chord I</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>E</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chord II</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Bb</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chord III</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chord IV</td>
<td>Bb</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chord V</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Bb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chord VI</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>A</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chord VII</td>
<td>E</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>Bb</td>
<td>D</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please note in the context of the blues, major 7 chords are often made into standard 7th chords because it suits the music better. Hence we will modify chord I so in this case it is a 17 chord or an F7. This will give the notes F - A - C - Eb
Example 1 (Audio Track 65)
Here is a II-V-I going straight up the chord tones or 7th arpeggios.

CHALLENGE: Try playing 2 octave arpeggios for each of the chords in the II-V-I so you can experience the chords tones over the whole of the bass guitar neck.
4.4 Using Chord Tones In Practice

Here are 5 examples to show how chord tones can be used effectively. Remember you don’t have to use every chord tone in each bar. It can sound great just using 2 or 3 of them.

Example 1 (Audio Track 66)

Example 2 (Audio Track 67)

Example 3 (Audio Track 68)

Example 4 (Audio Track 69)
Example 5 (Audio Track 70)

CHALLENGE: Try creating 3 of your own 2-5-1 patterns. Why not explore the middle and upper registers of the neck too?

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5.1 Making Scales Work For Walking Bass!

In Module 5 we are going to integrate the ‘3rd Method’ of the 3M System’ - Scales.

In Module 4 we studied how to create Walking Bass Lines using chord tones or arpeggios. I strongly recommend ensuring you have mastered that first, because chord tones contain all the fundamental notes of the chord. Scales effectively fill in the missing notes ie: 2nd, 4th 6th.

Chord Tones spell out the quality of the chord and have a more ‘vertical’ nature to them. Scales lead the ear from one chord to the next and have a more ‘linear’ nature to them.

First, I’m going to show you how to create the scales for the II-V-I sequence we used in the previous module. This is the moment where we start using the modal scales which you may have come across before.

CHORD I

Here is our fundamental F major scale which everything relates back to:

```
F G A Bb C D E F
```

![Diagram of F Major Scale](image)

The technical name for this is the ‘Ionian mode’.

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CHORD II
We can create the scale for the G minor chord by simply taking the F major scale and playing all of the notes starting on a G:

G A Bb C D E F G

We have created the ‘Dorian Mode’ and this scale is called ‘G Dorian’

CHORD V
Creating the scale for chord V or the C7 chord works in exactly the same way by taking the F major scale and playing all the notes starting on a C.

C D E F G A Bb C

We have created the Mixolydian Mode and this scale is called C Mixolydian.

Making Chord 1 ‘Dominant’
As we have spoken about before we often tweak a few of the chords in the blues so they become dominant or 7th chords. This means we have to adjust the F major scale (or F Ionian scale) so it has a flattened 7th.
This is what the scale looks like now:

```
F7
```

Effectively this becomes an ‘F mixolydian scale’.

It’s possible to build scales off every degree of the major scale which can be both exciting and confusing. This is where names like Phrygian, Aeolian, Locrian come in. For the purposes of creating bass lines over this II-V-I the 3 scales above are all we need.

**The Challenge With Scales**

One of the challenges we face is that a standard major scale only has 7 individual notes in it (we don’t count the octave here). In many common Jazz Chord sequences this means we often get to our target note a beat early. In the notation below the arrows show the problem notes:

```
Gm7
```

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**Example 1 (Audio Track 71)**

If we get into a situation where going directly up the scale lands us on the target note a beat early, we can add a chromatic note in. This gives a classic II-V-I walking bass line and creates a much stronger sounding bass line.

![Musical notation](image)

In bars 3 and 4 we can come directly down an F Mixolydian scale and it works perfectly because our next target note is a G.

**Example 2 (Audio Track 72)**

In this example we have inverted what we created in the previous example so it descends. There's no need to add extra chromatic notes in.

![Musical notation](image)

In both examples notice the 'linear' nature of the lines and the shape that has been created in the notation. The first two bars go one direction and the last two bars go the other. This 'wave shape' naturally creates a really strong-sounding walking bass line.
**Example 3 (Audio Track 73)**

In this last example I’m going to show you how you can build this out over 8 bars. 4 bars ascending and 4 bars descending.

Building out walking bass lines over longer bar counts is a great way of learning the upper positions of the neck and gaining confidence on the fingerboard. You may wish to experiment with some different ways of fingering or fretting this on the neck.
5.2 Playing Real World II-V-Is

Next I am going to demonstrate how you can start to build out 5 further walking bass lines using scale-based ideas. Whilst you will see other elements of the 3M System such as chromatics and intervals in these lines, the one thing they all have in common is they are ‘linear’ in nature.

**Example 1 (Audio Track 74)**

![Example 1](image1)

**Example 2 (Audio Track 75)**

![Example 2](image2)

**Example 3 (Audio Track 76)**

![Example 3](image3)
Example 4 (Audio Track 77)

Example 5 (Audio Track 78)
5.3 Discovering The Modes & Modal Jazz

So far in this course we have explored the 3 Methods of the ‘3M System’ in relation to the 12 Bar Jazz Blues. In the early days of playing walking bass at jazz jam sessions there is another ‘sequence’ that you are highly likely to encounter. Jazz tunes like ‘So What’ by Miles Davis are described as ‘modal’ and often sit on one chord for an extended period of time.

Modal Jazz became popular in the 1950s & 1960s and has a far simpler, more spacious sound and approach. It’s the antithesis of the crazy Be-Bop of the 1940s where musicians were pushing the boundaries of their respective instruments. Hence there were often complex chord sequences and very fast tempos.

Students often see the simplicity of Modal Jazz as being easier because there are not so many chord changes to deal with, but in reality I think it can be just as hard. This is because we need more ideas, concepts and understanding to keep our bass lines interesting and creative.

The A section of the tune ‘So What’ is based on the scale of D Dorian or Dm7 Chord:

\[ D \quad E \quad F \quad G \quad A \quad B \quad C \quad D \]

The Dorian mode is the second mode of a C major Scale.
The important notes to appreciate are the flat 3rd (which makes it minor) and the flat 7th.

**Example 1 (Audio Track 79)**

Here’s a basic walking bass line where we just go straight up the dorian scale and back down again. It works fine, if we repeat the octave half way through because there are no chord changes.

**Example 2 (Audio Track 80)**

In this example I've added in a chromatic note so we don't have to repeat any notes. The basis of what we are playing is still fundamentally D Dorian but the chromatic notes start to create a more interesting bass line, that always leads to the root note on bar 1 and bar 3.
5.4 Using The Dorian Mode In Practice

Here are 10 x 2 bar walking bass lines based on the Dorian scale for you to try out with the backing track.
Examples 1-5 use purely the Dorian scale. Examples 6 - 10 add in chromatics.
I recommend trying the following approach:

- Looping each example one by one.
- Playing each example twice then moving on to the next one with no break
- Playing each example once, then moving on to the next example with no break.

When you start stringing these example lines together you create interesting and varied bass lines. Over time you’ll start to then improvise your own once you have internalised the sound of these lines.

Example 1 (Audio Track 81)

![Example 1](image1)

Example 2 (Audio Track 82)

![Example 2](image2)
Example 3 (Audio Track 83)

Example 4 (Audio Track 84)

Example 5 (Audio Track 85)

Example 6 (Audio Track 86)
Example 7  (Audio Track 87)

Example 8  (Audio Track 88)

Example 9  (Audio Track 89)

Example 10  (Audio Track 90)
**CHALLENGE:** Try and write out the ‘intervallic name’ below each note to check your understanding of each of these walking bass lines.

Then try playing them in the key of Eb minor—all you need to do is each bass line up a half step. You’ll then have everything you need to play the modal jazz tune ‘So What’ from beginning to end.

You can get the chord chart for this in the iReal App which I discuss in the next chapter.

---

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6.1 Introducing The 32 Bar Jazz ‘Chorus’

Welcome to the final module of the Essential Guide To Walking Bass book!

In this module we’re going to start tying together everything you have learned so far. This is where the fun really starts happening.

We’re also going to introduce 3 new concepts:

- How to play over 32 bar forms
- The minor 2-5-1
- Transcription

The 32 bar form is probably the most common structure you’ll find when playing a jazz standard. Typically it is split into 8 bar sections and given letter names.

The most typical format is A-A-B-A. There is a total of 2 sections and The A section is repeated 3 times and the B section played once. The whole structure then repeats.

Playing once through the 32 bar form is also commonly known as a ‘chorus’. An example of a song that uses this structure is Take The A Train By Duke Ellington.

**Introducing Autumn Leaves**

For this module we are going to look at one of the most performed jazz standards ever and a brilliant chord structure from an educational perspective called Autumn Leaves. I virtually guarantee you will see this on any educational jazz course or jazz jam session.

Autumn Leaves has the structure A-A-B-C.

On the next page you will find the chords for Autumn Leaves taken from the iReal Book App. One of the things you will discover is there are often multiple subtle chord variations for each jazz tune depending what book or publication you read them from.

The iReal Book App is fast becoming a ‘standard’ source for chords

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because of smartphone technology and it is highly likely you may see this version if you ever go to a jazz jam session.

Hence I’ve chosen to include the most common version you will find on the iReal Book Iphone App if you search ‘Autumn Leaves’. The Chords on the next page are presented identically to how you will find them in the app and are in the most common key of G minor.

To begin with just try playing root notes so you get used to the 32 bar structure and appreciate how it is split into four sections 8-bar sections.
Notes:

- Please be aware you may often see slightly different chords in the 'C' section of Autumn Leaves between bars 27-30 depending which Real Book you choose to use.
- The Triangle symbol (eg: BbΔ7) is another way of writing a Bb Major 7 Chord.
- The Dash symbol (eg: C-7) is another way of writing a C minor 7 chord.
- Autumn Leaves is strongly based on a concept called the 'Circle of 5ths' or 'Cycle of 4ths'. If you’d like further study I recommend looking it up because you’ll see it time and time in Walking Bass.
6.2 Discovering Minor Harmony & The Minor II-V-I

In this lesson we are briefly going to look at Minor Harmony and how to play the minor 2-5-1 chord sequence.

Minor Harmony can be very challenging at times. So to make things super simple I’m going to give you the 3 modes and arpeggios / chord tones I would use to play over this chord sequence for Autumn Leaves.

It’s worth mentioning this is my way of thinking about Minor Harmony. As I said, Minor Harmony can be very complex and the chances are you will see other musicians come at it from different angles.

Here is a minor 2-5-1 in the key of G minor:

|| Am7b5 | D7 | Gm6 | |

CHORD II - Am7b5

Over the Am7b5 I would use the Locrian mode which is based off the 7th degree of the major scale or the chord tones written on the second line:

A Locrian Scale

Am7b5 Arpeggio / Chord Tones

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CHORD V - D7

Over the 5 chord I would use the Mixolydian mode which is based off the 5th degree of the major scale or the chord tones. Ignore the b13 extension you see in the chord chart in lesson 1 to begin with.

D Mixolydian Scale

D7 Arpeggio / Chord Tones

CHORD I - Gm6

Over chord 1, I would use the Dorian mode from the second degree of the major scale. This is because Autumn Leaves uses Gm6 Chord at the end of the 2-5-1.

G Dorian Mode

Gm7 Arpeggio / Chord Tones

Important: If you find these music theories here confusing, please just learn the 3 arpeggios and focus on the content of the next two lessons. Minor harmony has the potential to be VERY confusing ;-)
6.3 Combining The 3M System To Play The Changes

In this lesson we’re going to look at the first 16 bars of Autumn Leaves and create our walking bass line using ‘Intervals’ (roots & 5ths in this case) and scale from the 3M System. Remember to try this out with the backing track that just has a loop of the A section to begin with.

Example 1 (Audio Track 91)

Notes:
- Try each of these ideas 8 bars at a time then play it as a 16 bar sequence.
- Once you are comfortable try and apply some of the ideas from earlier in the book.
**Challenge:** Try and create a bass line using Chromatics. Take the Roots & Fifths concept from section A and try adding lower and upper chromatics on beat 2 & 4.

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### 6.4 Completing The 32 Bar Jazz Chorus

In this lesson I’m going to pull everything together. We’re going to look at the B and C section of Autumn Leaves and combine ideas from the whole of the 3M System.

Try and identify the chord tones, intervals chromatics, and scales. Look out for the Octave interval idea bars 3 & 4 of the C section. This is very simple and effective walking bass line.

Remember there is a backing track for each section AND the B & C section combined.

**Example 1** *(Audio Track 92)*
Once you are completely comfortable with lesson 3 and 4 try both examples over the whole 32 bar form. This will give you a great walking bass line you could play at a jazz jam session!

**CHALLENGE:** Try writing a 32 bar walking bass line for Autumn Leaves which uses completely different note choices to the lines I’ve written the last two lessons. The 3M System should give you an endless section of possibilities.
6.5 Transcription - Discovering The Real Magic

To finish the book, I want to share one last concept that I am extremely passionate about and that is transcription.

Transcription in a nutshell is the process of listening to another bass player and deciphering exactly what he or she is playing note by note. Some players will just learn and memorise what they discover at this point. Personally I recommend writing everything down because I believe this process with further help you internalise what you learn and you can refer back to it at a later date.

Transcription is the number one way of discovering the secrets of how the greats construct walking bass lines. Over a period of time transcribing their work will allow many of their bass lines to sink in to your playing via osmosis.

The aim is to always go into as much detail as you possibly can - even down to precise note length and the position a note is being player on the fingerboard.

Transcription really is one of the best ways to learn and discover the nuances of different bass players’ individual styles and approaches.

To finish this book, I have transcribed 3 choruses of me playing the blues ‘Now’s The Time’ from the Essential Walking Bass Course Video Course. This is completely improvised and will allow you to discover the lines I would naturally play.

First try playing my bass line from the first 3 chorus then I challenge you to transcribe another 3 - 4 choruses yourself! I’ve left several staves of manuscript and tab to get you going.

Once you have transcribed my bass line I recommended you transcribing one of the greats. Christian McBride’s bass line from his tune Ham Hocks & Cabbage is a great place to start this journey. You’ll not only find the bass lines are wonderfully constructed but his double bass is also brilliantly recorded which makes transcription a lot easier.
Example 1 *(Audio Track 93)*
Final Thoughts & A Trade Secret...

Congratulations! You have made it to the end of the Essential Guide To Walking Bass and now have a great working knowledge of the 3M System For Walking Bass.

You literally have all the tools you need to create rock solid Walking Bass Lines. Now is the time to take everything you have discovered and try it out for real at a Jazz Jam Session or with other musicians.

Getting out there and dropping yourself in the deep end and playing with real musicians is the number one way of developing the concepts in this book. A couple of hours jamming and experimenting can often be worth many, many hours of 'shedding' (or practicing) in the practice room—and it's often a lot more fun too!

To conclude this book I just want to answer one more question I often get, especially when bass players get to the stage of playing with other musicians:

**What if I get lost and don't know where I am?**

First of all don’t worry... this happens to every single musician, even top professionals... The first thing to do if you get lost is to keep the pulse going. **DON'T STOP!**

Now I’m going to share the trade secret: This often means just playing any note (even if it’s completely wrong!) to ensure the pulse remains strong. In my experience, other musicians will notice an issue with the pulse far earlier than if there are duff notes.

The second and most important thing is to ‘open your ears’, relax, and really start listening hard. You want to be listening for the beginning and ends of sections. One of the reasons we covered the Blues Sequence in such depth in this book is because the form is so strong and distinctive. Listen out for the start of the sequence again and it’s a straightforward place to ‘reset’ and pick up again. This can equally work for the 8 bar sections in the AABA or AABC forms we discussed too.
Also, don’t forget absolutely everything in this book will feed directly into every other style of music you play. Understanding Walking Bass will enable you know how to approach virtually any chord or chord progression. It’s so powerful!

Make sure you download the audio examples which are included and grab the FREE 14 day trial for The Bass Lab PLUS, to try out the video course that runs in parallel with this book.

I wish you all the best and hope that learning Walking Bass is a transformative experience for you like it was for me.

James

P.S. I’m here to help and answer questions... you can always contact me over at eBassGuitar.Com.

MORE RESOURCES & VIDEO LESSONS

To get the audio examples and backing tracks that accompany this book visit ebassguitar.com/audio

To try out the Essential Walking Bass Video Course FREE For 14 days visit ebassguitar.com/trial

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