

Take Note Online Jazz Workshops – Series 2

Episode 4: Understanding Blues Chords

What are bass notes?

Bass notes are the first note in the chord, also known as the tonic or '1'

What are guide tones?

Guide tones are the 3rd and 7th in chords. These are the really important sounds in chords as they are the ones that change if it is major/minor/dominant.

What is voice leading?

Voice leading is a technique used to move smoothly between different chords, generally focusing on the guide tones.

What notes can I hear in this video?

1 ROOT NOTES

The image displays three staves of music, each representing a sequence of bass notes (the tonic or '1' of the chord) for different chords. The first staff shows four measures with bass notes for Eb7, Eb7, Bb7, and Bb7. The second staff shows five measures with bass notes for Eb7, Eb7, Bb7, Dm7, and G7. The third staff shows five measures with bass notes for Cm7, F7, Bb7, Cm7, and F7. The notes are written on a treble clef staff with a key signature of one flat (Bb) and a 4/4 time signature.

2 GUIDE TONES - 3RDS AND 7THS

Exercise 2: Guide Tones - 3rds and 7ths. The exercise is in B-flat major and consists of three lines of four measures each. Each measure contains a 3rd and a 7th of a chord. The chords are: Eb7, Eb7, Bb7, Bb7 (Line 1); Eb7, Eb7, Bb7, Dm7, G7 (Line 2); Cm7, F7, Bb7, Cm7, F7 (Line 3).

3 GUIDE TONE LINE #1 - STARTING ON THE 3RD

Exercise 3: Guide Tone Line #1 - Starting on the 3rd. The exercise is in B-flat major and consists of three lines of four measures each. Each measure contains a 3rd and a 7th of a chord. The chords are: Eb7, Eb7, Bb7, Bb7 (Line 1); Eb7, Eb7, Bb7, Dm7, G7 (Line 2); Cm7, F7, Bb7, Cm7, F7 (Line 3).

4 GUIDE TONE LINE #2 - STARTING ON THE 7TH

Staff 1: $Bb7$ $Eb7$ $Bb7$ $Bb7$

Staff 2: $Eb7$ $Eb7$ $Bb7$ $Dm7$ $G7$

Staff 3: $Cm7$ $F7$ $Bb7$ $Cm7$ $F7$

More Practice Ideas:

- Practice root notes and guide tone lines unaccompanied
- Practice root notes and guide tone lines with a metronome (put it on 2 & 4)
- Practice root notes and guide tone lines with a play along of a Bb blues
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wHVxf2M20gQ&t=18s>
 Always be aware that when you are playing with a backing track some of the chords can be a little different
- Try in a different key!