

The Idiot's Guide to Walking Bass

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IT'S EASY TO ENHANCE A PROGRESSION with a cool walking bass line: Simply approach each chord from a half-step above or below its lowest voice.

Ex. 1 illustrates various half-step approaches to different inversions of *Am7*. The half-step approaches fall on beats two and four, creating tension that's released by the chords on beats one and three. Examples 2 and 3 show half-step approaches for *D7* and *Gmaj7*. As you grab each chord, plan ahead so you have a finger readily available to fret the next bass note. Explore as many fingerings as possible.

Once you've got the hang of this, try walking through a *IIm7-V7-I* cadence. From the three examples, borrow a bar of *Am7*, a bar of *D7* and two bars of *Gmaj7*, and link them in a four-measure *Am7-D7-Gmaj7* progression. There

are many possibilities. Some combinations snap together; others require you to adjust beat four's approach note so you have a half-step move into the next chord. Experiment in different keys and then try walking through more complex progressions.

Ex. 1 Am7

T															
A	2		2		5		5		9		9		12		12
B	3	2	3	4	5	6	7	7	8	11	10	11	12	11	12

Ex. 2 D7

T															
A	14		11		7		7		5		5		2		2
B	12		10	8	7	7	7	4	5	6	5	2	3	3	2
B	15	11	10		9	7	8	4	5	6	5	2	3	3	2

Ex. 3 Gmaj7

T															
A	4		7		7		11		11		12		11		12
B	4		5	6	7	9	9	9	9	11	12	9	9	11	12
B	3	6	7	6	7	9	10	9	10	11	12	9	10	11	12