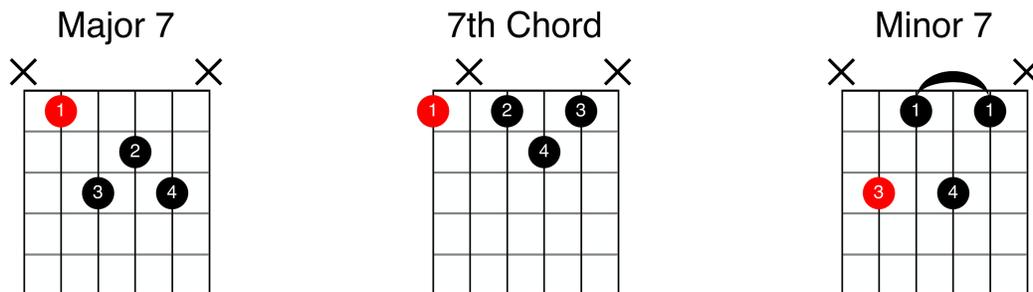


# Swing + Moving Bass Patterns

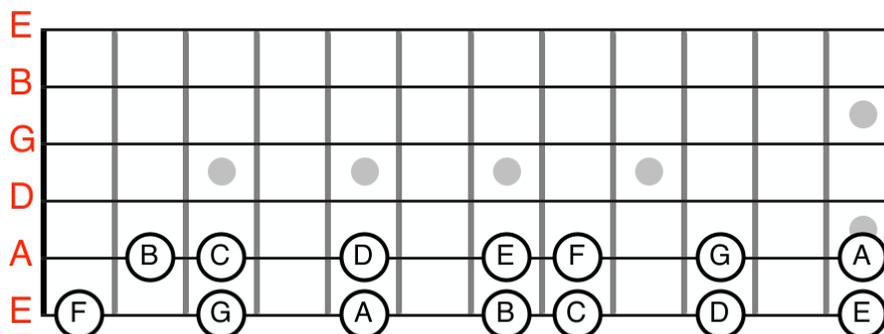
These are examples for a YouTube lesson in adding moving bass notes to a swing comping pattern. Here's a link to the video:  
<https://youtu.be/GTqXc7SZ0Cc>

These are the chord shapes used in this lesson.



- Use the Major 7 shape for the Cmaj7 chord, placing the **root note** (in red) on the C note, string 5, fret 3.
- Use the 7<sup>th</sup> Chord shape for the A7 and G7 chords. For the A7, place the **root note** on the A note, string 6, fret 5. For the G7, place the **root note** on the G note, string 6, fret 3.
- Use the Minor 7 shape for the Dmin7, placing the **root note** on the D note, string 5, fret 5.

Here's a map of the natural notes on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> strings so you can see where to place the **root notes**.



### The Basic Pattern

Learn this basic comping pattern first, and then we'll add moving bass lines.

Musical notation for a 5-measure comping pattern in 4/4 swing. The pattern consists of five measures with chords CMAJ7, A7, DMIN7, G7, and CMAJ7. The guitar part features a consistent rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The bass part includes fret numbers and picking patterns (e.g., 3-3-3-3, 5-5-5-5, 3-3-3-3) for each measure.

This pattern should be played with a swing feel. Use fingers or hybrid picking. If you have trouble with the rhythm, think of the overall rhythm you get when combining the thumb and fingers. The best way to learn this pattern is to hear it. I demonstrate it in the video. <https://youtu.be/GTqXc7SZ0Cc>

Musical notation for a CMAJ7 chord in 4/4. The guitar part shows a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with fingerings 1, 2, 3, 4. The bass part shows fret numbers 5, 4, 3, 5, 3.

This pattern sounds okay, but the bass line is static, so we're going to add some moving bass lines. The chord hits (with fingers) will stay the same. Only the bass notes will change.

## Alternate Between Root and Fifth

The easiest way to add movement to your bass lines is to alternate bass notes between the root of the chord and the 5th of the chord.

The image shows a musical exercise for bass guitar. The top staff is in treble clef, 4/4 time, and contains five measures of chords: C MAJ7, A7, D MIN7, G7, and C MAJ7. The bottom staff shows the bass line with fret numbers for each note. The bass line alternates between the root and the fifth of each chord. For C MAJ7, the notes are C5 and G4. For A7, the notes are A4 and E4. For D MIN7, the notes are D4 and A3. For G7, the notes are G3 and D3. For C MAJ7, the notes are C3 and G2.

Here's how to find the 5<sup>th</sup> of the chord.

- If the **root note** is on the **6<sup>th</sup> string**, the bass note will be **two frets to the right** on the **5<sup>th</sup> string**.
- If the **root note** is on the **5<sup>th</sup> string**, the bass note will be the same fret on the **6<sup>th</sup> string**.

Check out the video for a demonstration.

<https://youtu.be/GTqXc7SZ0Cc>

## Add a Passing Tone

You can add a passing tone between bass notes for even more movement. This example is identical to the alternating bass example on the previous page, except we're adding a chromatic passing tone in the bass immediately before we move to a new chord.

It's easy to get tripped up on the fingering. When adding a passing tone in the bass, a good rule of thumb is to play the bass notes with the same finger you'll use for the bass note of the upcoming chord. For example, play the last two notes of the 1<sup>st</sup> measure with your 1<sup>st</sup> finger, and play the last two notes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> measure with your 3<sup>rd</sup> finger.

This takes planning at first, but with enough practice, you'll automatically pick the right finger.

Check out the video for a demonstration.

<https://youtu.be/GTqXc7SZ0Cc>

## Chromatic Approach

You can alter the bass note right before the new chord so that it is either **one fret higher** or **one fret lower** than the root of the upcoming chord. This is called **chromatic approach**..

The image shows a musical exercise for chromatic approach on the bass. It consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef, 4/4 time, and contains five measures of chords: C MAJ7, A7, D MIN7, G7, and C MAJ7. The bottom staff shows the bass line with fingerings and a chromatic approach to the root of each chord. The chromatic approach is shown by moving the bass note one fret higher or lower than the root of the upcoming chord.

Sometimes it sounds best to approach the next chord from above. Sometimes it sounds best to approach it from below. Sometimes either direction works, and sometimes chromatic approach doesn't sound good at all. With enough practice and experience, you'll develop a sense of what works and what doesn't.

Check out the video for a demonstration.

<https://youtu.be/GTqXc7SZ0Cc>

## Two-Beat Chords

When the chords only last two beats, you already have a nice bass line built right into the pattern.

Chord progression: CMAJ<sup>7</sup> A<sup>7</sup> DMIN<sup>7</sup> G<sup>7</sup> CMAJ<sup>7</sup> A<sup>7</sup> DMIN<sup>7</sup> G<sup>7</sup> CMAJ<sup>7</sup>

Bass line: 3 3 5 5 | 5 5 3 3 | 3 3 5 5 | 5 5 3 3 | 5 5 3 3

But you can still change things up with the same ideas: **alternating bass notes**, adding **passing notes**, or **chromatic approach**.

Chord progression: CMAJ<sup>7</sup> A<sup>7</sup> DMIN<sup>7</sup> G<sup>7</sup> CMAJ<sup>7</sup> A<sup>7</sup> DMIN<sup>7</sup> G<sup>7</sup> CMAJ<sup>7</sup>

Bass line: 3 3 5 7 | 5 5 3 5 | 3 3 5 7 | 5 5 3 5 | 5 5 3 3

Chord progression: CMAJ<sup>7</sup> A<sup>7</sup> DMIN<sup>7</sup> G<sup>7</sup> CMAJ<sup>7</sup> A<sup>7</sup> DMIN<sup>7</sup> G<sup>7</sup> CMAJ<sup>7</sup>

Bass line: 3 3 4 5 | 5 4 3 5 | 3 3 4 5 | 5 4 3 5 | 5 5 4 3

Chord progression: CMAJ<sup>7</sup> A<sup>7</sup> DMIN<sup>7</sup> G<sup>7</sup> CMAJ<sup>7</sup> A<sup>7</sup> DMIN<sup>7</sup> G<sup>7</sup> CMAJ<sup>7</sup>

Bass line: 3 6 5 6 | 5 4 3 2 | 3 6 5 6 | 5 4 3 2 | 5 5 4 3

## Experiment

You can add quite bit of variety to a basic pattern with alternating bass, passing tones, and chromatic approach, especially when you begin to mix and match ideas.

The best way to make this a natural part of your playing is to try out ideas in your favorite swing tunes. See what works and what doesn't. At first, try playing these ideas as much as possible, just to get the moves under your fingers. Then start to dial it back. If you add too much moving bass, the "wow" factor wears off. I find these moving bass lines to be most effective when I play them every couple measures, or when there is an empty space in the melody that needs to be filled.

One last bit of advice: Even if you get really good at playing moving bass lines, don't use them if you are playing with a bass player.

Check out the video here.

<https://youtu.be/GTqXc7SZ0Cc>

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