

Part ONE

1. Chord Scales

In this first chapter, learning chord scales is the main objective. Every chord has its appropriate chord scale and knowing these scales without having to think about it is a prerequisite for the improviser. To know a scale “inside out” means that you know a scale starting anywhere in the scale, both ascending and descending. The first exercise is to play the entire chord scale from the root ascending to the 7th of the scale.

Example: 1 - 7



If you are a more advanced player you can do the following exercises playing 16th notes rather than 8th notes. When you play the scales with 16th notes you play from the root ascending to the 9th of the scale.

Example: 1 - 9



Playing through to the 7th or the 9th of the scale provides a destination or target note, which lands on the beat. Practicing the scales in this way facilitates one's awareness of all the scale tones.

Example: Exercise #1 on a C minor blues (ascending 1 - 7)

C-6⁹ C7^{b9b13}
 F-7 C-6⁹
 Ab7^{#11} G7^{b9b13} C-6⁹ G7^{b9b13}

Example: Exercise #1 on a C minor blues (ascending 1 - 9)

C-6⁹ C7^{b9b13} F-7 C-6⁹ Ab7^{#11} G7^{b9b13} C-6⁹ G7^{b9b13}

3 - slow



4 - fast

TUNE 1 - Blues in B \flat

C Instruments

Chord progression for C Instruments:

Staff 1: B \flat 7 | E \flat 7 | B \flat 7 | %

Staff 2: E \flat 7 | % | B \flat 7 | G7 \flat 9 \flat 13

Staff 3: C-7 | F7 | B \flat 7 | F7

TUNE 1 - Blues in B \flat

B \flat Instruments

Chord progression for B \flat Instruments:

Staff 1: C7 | F7 | C7 | %

Staff 2: F7 | % | C7 | A7 \flat 9 \flat 13

Staff 3: D-7 | G7 | C7 | G7

TUNE 1 - Blues in B \flat

E \flat Instruments

Chord progression for E \flat Instruments:

Staff 1: G7 | C7 | G7 | %

Staff 2: C7 | % | G7 | E7 \flat 9 \flat 13

Staff 3: A-7 | D7 | G7 | D7

10 - slow



11 - fast

TUNE 4 - Tell Her to Hold Tight

C Instruments

E-7^{b5} A7^{b9b13} C-7 F7

F-7 Bb7 EbΔ A7^{#11}

BbΔ E-7^{b5} A7^{b9b13} D-7 Bb-7 Eb7

FΔ G-7 A-7^{b5} D7^{b9b13}

G7^{alt.} C-7

A7^{#11} BbΔ

E-7^{b5} A7^{b9b13} D-7^{b5} G7^{b9b13}

C-7^{b5} F7^{b9b13} BbΔ

Altered scales have no avoid notes. Dominant 7#11 or Lydian b7 scales have no avoid notes.

When there are two chords per bar the 16th-note rhythm described for these exercises doesn't fit within the four beats. So when that situation occurs try playing 1 - 7, 3 - 9, 5 - 11, or 9 - 3, 11 - 5, or 13 - 7. Here are some examples:

The image displays seven musical examples of 16th-note scales for E-7^{b5} and A7^{b9} chords. Each example consists of two measures of music in treble clef, 4/4 time. The scales are written as eighth-note pairs. The examples are as follows:

- Example 1: E-7^{b5} (1, 7) | A7^{b9} (1, 7)
- Example 2: E-7^{b5} (3, 9) | A7^{b9} (3, 9)
- Example 3: E-7^{b5} (5, 11) | A7^{b9} (5, 11, 3) with a note resolution from 11 to 3.
- Example 4: E-7^{b5} (5, 11) | A7^{b9} (5, 11)
- Example 5: E-7^{b5} (9, 3) | A7^{b9} (9, 3)
- Example 6: E-7^{b5} (11, 5) | A7^{b9} (11, 5)
- Example 7: E-7^{b5} (13, 7) | A7^{b9} (13, 7)

There could be many other possibilities regarding starting and ending points so as not to make this too exhaustive we will leave it as such.

Exercise #9

Play all chord scales on the following tune.

12 - *slow*13 - *fast*

TUNE 5 - Tone Down

E♭ Instruments

Chord progression for Exercise #10 (Tune 5 - Tone Down):

Row 1: C#-7, F#7, BΔ, C-7, F7

Row 2: B-7, E7, AΔ, Bb-7, Eb7

Row 3: A-7, D7, GΔ, CΔ

Row 4: C#-7, D7, GΔ, C7#11

Each chord is represented by a staff with diagonal lines indicating the notes to be played.

Exercise #10

Go through all of the tunes thus far and do exercise #5. Start with playing only one note per bar, then two notes, and continue until eight notes per bar, always being aware of where you are in the chord scale.

Example:
Major Blues

Major Blues in C major, 12 bars. Chords: B \flat 7, E \flat 7, B \flat 7, E \flat 7, B \flat 7, G7 \flat 9 \flat 13, C-7, F7, B \flat 7, F7.

1 3 5 \flat 7 9 #11 13

Minor Blues

Minor Blues in C minor, 12 bars. Chords: C-6⁹, C7 \flat 9 \flat 13, F-7, C-6⁹, A \flat 7#11, G7 \flat 9 \flat 13, C-6⁹, G7 \flat 9 \flat 13.

Here is an example of approaching the third of every chord on a B \flat blues.

Chord progression for the first example: B \flat 7, E \flat 7, B \flat 7, E \flat 7, B \flat 7, G7 \flat 9 \flat 13, C-7, F7, B \flat 7, F7.

Here is another example playing targets off the beat.

Chord progression for the second example: B \flat 7, E \flat 7, B \flat 7, E \flat 7, B \flat 7, G7 \flat 9, C-7, F7, B \flat 7, F7.

Exercise #1

Using approach one, scale above to chromatic below, approach every chord tone (one at a time) through a B \flat blues.

Exercise #2

Approach random (meaning a different target choice in each bar) tones, one per bar through a B \flat blues. Play through many choruses. Notice that the approach notes were written as pick-ups to beat one. Starting on beat four precipitates the next chord but you can also start on beat one, two or three.

Example: B \flat 7 chord

Exercise #3

Approach random chord tones followed up with a tag note. Tag notes are improvised notes of your choice. Try to be aware of the shapes you create with different tags, try to use a variety. Once you have played through a B \flat blues adding one tag note, repeat the exercise adding two tag notes and then three.

Example: approaching targets with three note tags

Exercise #4

Approach two chord tones per bar.

Exercise #5

Play 3/4 over 4/4 and you will have started approach notes on all beats. In the example below the target falls on beat one, then beat four, then beat three, then beat two, and then beat one again.

Example:

The target falls on beat 1, 4, 3 and 2, then 1 again

Exercise #6

Mix it all up! Also notice that approach notes can sound very good starting on the up beat.

Approach 2: chromatic from below to scale tone from above

Example: D-7

D-7

D-7

Try doing the six exercises above for approach one using approach two. Also try playing through different tunes with the same exercises using both approaches.

Approach 3: double chromatic from below

Example: D-7

D-7

13 11 9 b7 5 3 1

Approach 4: double chromatic from above

Example: D-7

D-7

Notice that in the last example, non-diatonic notes such as the F# and C# really stick out when they occur on down beats as double chromatic notes from above. This could sound offensive depending on the situation.

All twelve tones of the chromatic scale are usable on any given chord if they are used in the right way. There are no wrong notes, only right notes used the wrong way.

Approach 5: chromatic from below, simple but very effective!

CΔ

13 #11 9 Δ 5 3 1

To a major scale:

CΔ

Approach 6: scale from above

CΔ

CΔ

To a C scale:

CΔ

Three-Note Approaches

Approach 7: double chromatic from below to scale tone from above

D-7

To a C scale:

Approach 8: double chromatic from above to chromatic from below

To a C scale:



Very often, double scale from above is substituted for double chromatic from above when the notes are non-harmonic, as with the F# and C# on the first example above. The G replaces the F# and the D replaces the C# in the example below.



It's okay to live on the wild side.

Approach 9: scale from above to double chromatic from below (similar to approach 7)

To a C scale:



14 - slow



15 - fast

TUNE 6 - My Time to Shine

B \flat Instruments

Chord progression for B \flat Instruments:

14 - slow

15 - fast

Chords: D Δ , B-7, E-7, A7

Chords: D Δ , B-7, E-7, C \sharp -7 \flat 5, F \sharp 7 \flat 9

Chords: B-6, G \sharp -7 \flat 5, C \sharp -7 \flat 5, F \sharp 7 \flat 9

Chords: B-7, E7, E-7, A7

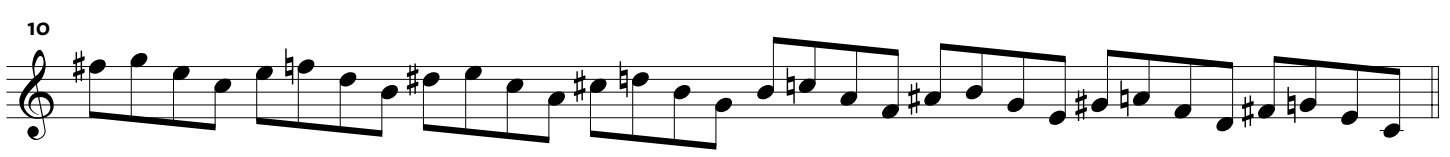
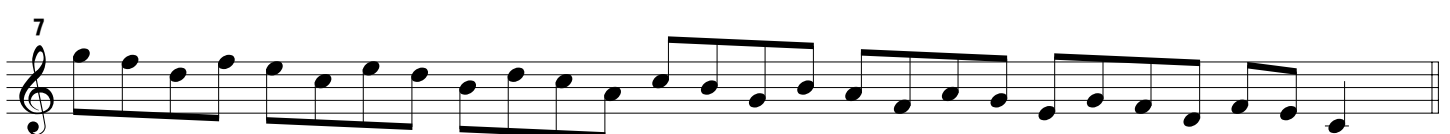
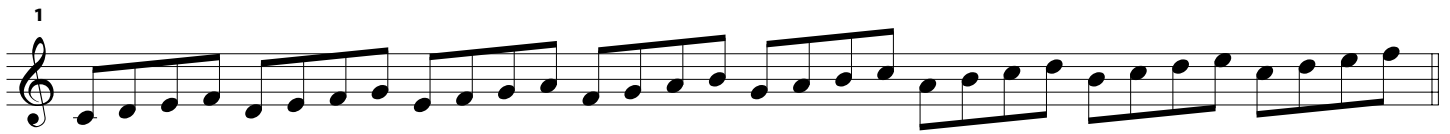
Chords: A-7, D7, G Δ

Chords: G-7, C7, D Δ , B7 \sharp 9, E-7, A7

Chords: D Δ , D \flat 7alt., C7 \sharp 11, B7 \flat 9 \flat 13

Chords: E-7, A7, D Δ , B7, E-7, A7

Scale Motives or Modal Sequences



Dominant Lines G7

The image displays seven musical staves, each representing a different starting degree for a G7 dominant line. Each staff begins with a treble clef, a common time signature (C), and a G7 chord symbol above the first few notes. The notes are quarter notes, and the lines are connected by a thick black line. The starting notes for each line are: 1. G (root), 2. A (9th), 3. B (3rd), 4. C (11th), 5. D (5th), 6. E (13th), and 7. F (7th).

The lines above all fit a G7 chord or a D-7 to G7 progression. There are seven lines, one starting on every degree of a G7 Mixolydian scale. There is a line starting on the root, the 9th, the 3rd, the 11th, the 5th, the 13th, and the 7th. Each line is a G7 or D-7/G7 sound bite. If you prefer, you can write out seven of your own lines which might intrigue you more to use for the following exercises.

Exercise #1

Play each line in all keys. Try playing them in the cycle of 5ths as in the progression below.

Notice that Eb7 is the first key and once you get through some of the more challenging keys the lines seem to get easier.

On another day, try playing these lines moving up or down in half steps. After getting used to playing them in all keys, try singing each line starting from random notes. Play a note on your instrument and sing line number 7 for example starting from that note. Play another note and have that be the starting note of line number 4 etc. Remember, this is all ear training.

Exercise #2

Sing the lines in one key at a time starting on the numbers in the grid below. If you can play a chord on the piano or guitar to sound the chord as you sing. It might be helpful but not necessary.

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 4 | 7 | 3 | 6 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 5 | 2 | 6 | 3 | 7 | 4 |
| 2 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 7 | 2 | 7 | 5 | 3 | 1 | 6 | 4 |
| 3 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 4 |

Each number represents the starting note of the line. For example, here it is on G7.

Other lines:

G7

G7

G7

G7

G7

G7

G7

G7

G7

G7

G7

G7

G7

G7

G7

G7

G7

G7

6. Motivic Lines and Shapes

Take one of the prototype lines that you have been working on and play it in a scale sequence or modal sequence.

Example:

G7

When lines have accidentals within them you can either treat them as approach notes or make adjustments to fit the scale.

Example: The first two notes of this line are a double chromatic approach to the ninth of G7.

G7

Here is how you can play that line in a scale sequence:

G7

Here is another example, which requires adjustments.

G7

Harmonic Devices

1. Guide Tone Playing

The ability to really delineate the sound of the changes is an invaluable tool. Guide tone playing is a skill that involves playing a melodic line through the changes that clearly defines what the chord changes are. Playing guide tone melodies, thirds and sevenths is an easy way to achieve this result and it offers a great contrast to the oblique sounding player. (Before attempting to sound oblique or nebulous it's a good idea to be able sound the changes.) Being able to play a melody through a tune without accompaniment that doesn't sound academic and can be easily recognized by the listener is a great objective.

Example: On the tune *Fangs from Afar*

The melody need not be all eighth notes and need not get to the target note by step. You can also use skips.

Example:

3. Upper Structure and Middle Structure Triads

The most common of all of the upper structure triads is the triad built on 9, 11, and 13. On major and dominant chords, 9 - #11 - 13 forms another major triad built on the step above the root.

Example:

Musical notation showing two triads on a treble clef staff. The first triad is labeled $F\Delta$ and consists of notes 9, #11, and 13. The second triad is labeled $F7$ and consists of notes 9, #11, and 13.

On a minor chord the upper structure triad is a minor triad built on the step above the root.

Example:

Musical notation showing a triad on a treble clef staff labeled $F-7$. The notes are 9, 11, and 13.

On a minor 7^b5 , it is either a major triad starting a half step above the root or it is a diminished triad starting a whole step above the root.

Example:

Musical notation showing two triads on a treble clef staff labeled $F-7^b5$. The first triad is labeled $F-7^b5$ and consists of notes $b9$, 11, and $b13$. The second triad is labeled $F-7^b5$ or and consists of notes 9, 11, and $b13$.

On a diminished 7th chord, it is a diminished triad starting a step above the root.

Example:

Musical notation showing a triad on a treble clef staff labeled $F^\circ7$. The notes are 9, 11, and $b13$.

On a dominant 7 with $b9$ and $b13$ or a dominant altered, it is a sus4 triad starting a half step above the root.

Example:

Musical notation showing a triad on a treble clef staff labeled $F7^b9^b13$ and $F7^{alt.}$. The notes are $b9$, #11, and $b13$.

5. II-7 V7 Substitutes Against the Chord

These next three substitutes are used against the chord. They do not take the place of the chord but instead have an almost approach note like effect. There is a tremendous rub against the original chord and it can then be resolved into the original.

Over:

| | | | | |
|-----|----|--|------|-----|
| D-7 | G7 | | C#-7 | F#7 |
| | | | Eb-7 | Ab7 |
| | | | F#-7 | B7 |

Any one of these substitutions are far from the original and so they create an intervallic effect. These may be substituted for the II-7 or the V7.


Example:

| | | | |
|------|-----|-----|----|
| C#-7 | F#7 | D-7 | G7 |
| D-7 | | G7 | |




or:

| | | | |
|-----|----|------|-----|
| D-7 | G7 | C#-7 | F#7 |
| D-7 | | G7 | |



Again, the substitutions don't need to begin at the beginning of the bar, they can happen between bars.

| | | | |
|-----|------|-----|----|
| D-7 | C#-7 | F#7 | G7 |
| D-7 | | G7 | |



By trying these different substitutions over and over again you get an ear for it and make it one of your harmonic tools. It would be wise to spend a lot of time on each individual substitution rather than grouping them all together and skimming over the top.

As well as trying substitutes for and against the chord on the tune *Underdog*, try them on the modal tune *What Up?*. This intervallic approach is a great tool for the improviser as melodies are played adjacent to the original mode, up or down in half steps, major thirds and tritones.

Exercise #3

Next, anticipate by 1 1/2 beats. Of course, anticipating on every chord would sound monotonous, so play it as you like it. For the sake of the exercise you can over do it.

Example:

or

Exercise #4

Anticipate the changes by 2 beats.

Example:

or

Exercise #5

Anticipate by 2 1/2 beats.

Example:

Over a minor or dominant modal situation, the II-7 can replace the first IΔ.

Example:

A-7 Bb7 EbΔ F#7 BΔ D7 D7
D7

A-7 Bb7 EbΔ F#7 BΔ D7 A-7
A-7

Example: over a II-7 - V7 - I

A-7 Bb7 EbΔ F#7 BΔ D7 GΔ
D7 D7 GΔ

Example: over a minor II-7 - V7 - I-6⁹

D-7 b5 Eb7 AbΔ B7 EΔ G7b9 C-6⁹
D-7 b5 G7b9 C-6⁹

or:

F-7 F#7 BΔ D7 GΔ Bb7 C-7
D-7 b5 G7b9 C-6⁹

Sometimes you might want to imply the three-tonic system without actually playing it out, or you might just play a segment from the progression.

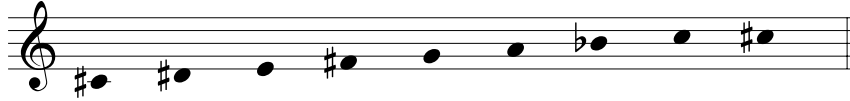
Example:

D-7 Eb7 AbΔ G7 CΔ
D-7 G7 CΔ

10. Diminished Scales

A symmetric diminished scale ascends by a whole step, half step, whole step, half step pattern through the octave.

Example:

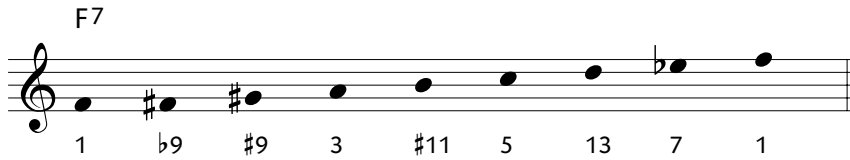


There are three diminished scales as each one covers four keys. The scale in the example above fits C# diminished, E diminished, G diminished and Bb diminished. This scale also fits four dominant chords:

| | | | |
|-------|--------|--------|-------|
| C#°7 | E°7 | G°7 | Bb°7 |
| C13b9 | Eb13b9 | F#13b9 | A13b9 |

A diminished chord is like a dominant without its root. Since dominant chords are used more frequently than diminished, it is important to know how to use the diminished scales over the dominant chord. When spelling a diminished scale over a dominant chord, the scale ascends beginning with a half step, then whole, half, whole, etc. There are eight notes to a symmetric diminished scale and they are the root, b9, #9, 3, #11, 5, 13 and 7 of the four related dominant chords.

Example:



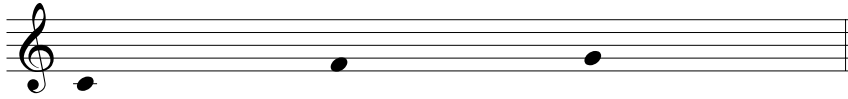
Again, anytime the dominant chord is resolving down a fifth, the improviser has a lot of artistic leeway. Try playing these scales on a blues.

Bb13b9

14. Tri-Tonics

As with pentatonic scales, tri-tonics refers to a system of grouping three notes. Of course, any three notes can be considered a tri-tonic, but here we are addressing a very common three-note grouping, which is 1, 4, 5.

Example:



These notes create a very open sound that can fit over many different chords. It is easy to visualize common tri-tonics between chords and when you use these common tones moving from one chord to another, it can give your improvising a seamless sound, a kind of over the bar line quality. On a major or a minor chord there can be five tri-tonics.

Example:

CΔ



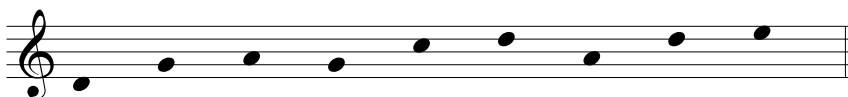
C-7



On a dominant (Mixolydian) there are three, and on dominant altered there are also three.

Example:

C7

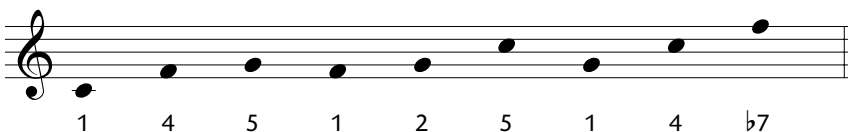


C7alt.



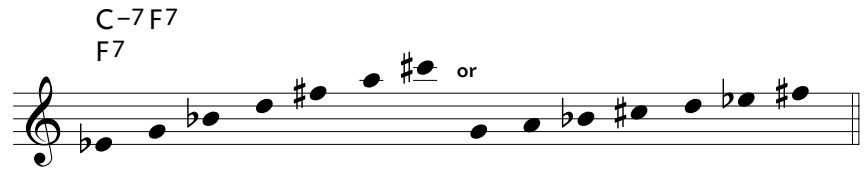
If you take the tri-tonic 1, 4, 5 grouping and play these notes in different inversions, you now have tri-tonic 1, 2, 5 or 1, 4, 7.

Example:

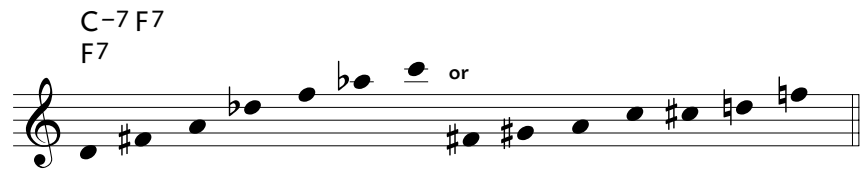


Using just two triads and adding one extra note forms a double harmonic minor scale which you can play over a V7 or even a II-7 V7.

Example 1: The extra note in this example is the C#.



Example 2: The extra note in this example is a C natural.



There are also other places on the chord from which you can build tonal expansions. Aside from the triads starting on 7 and 13, as well as, 13 and b13, you can use triads starting on b9 and root, #9 and 9, or #11 and 11.

17. Augmented Symmetric Scales and Uses

The augmented symmetric scale consists of a minor third interval followed by a half step ascending pattern. It is comprised of two augmented triads a half step apart.

Example:



There are only four augmented symmetric scales, as the one starting on E is the same as the one starting on C, etc.

18. Nine-Note Symmetric Augmented Scales

The 9-note symmetric augmented scale starts with a whole step, then 1/2 step, 1/2 step, whole, 1/2, 1/2, whole, 1/2, 1/2.

Example:



This scale lends a chromatic exotic sound, however it has many avoid notes when played over various chords. Like the six note symmetric augmented scale, it fits over the following chords:

| | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| C Δ | E Δ | A $b\Delta$ |
| C Δ $\sharp 5$ | E Δ $\sharp 5$ | A $b\Delta$ $\sharp 5$ |
| A-7 | D7 | F \sharp 7 |
| F \sharp -7 $b 5$ | B7 $b 9$ | E b 7 $b 9$ |
| | C \sharp -7 | F-7 |
| | B b -7 $b 5$ | D-7 $b 5$ |
| | | B b 7 |
| | | G7 $b 9$ |

This scale consists of a whole-tone scale plus an augmented triad starting on the minor 3rd.

Example:



The 9-note augmented symmetric scale is also comprised of three augmented triads a half step apart.

Example:



Note that this scale contains many fifth intervals:



19. Piano Voicings for Improvisation

Today the modern day improviser plays off of the piano voicing of the chord rather than the symbol itself. On any given set of chord changes the interpretation of how to voice the chords can vary greatly. For this reason, it's a good idea to have some knowledge of piano voicings. This book is not intended for a complete study of piano voicings but here are a few basic ones spelled out in a linear fashion.

Example:

The example consists of six musical staves, each showing a different piano voicing for the D-7, G7, and CΔ chord progression. The chords are labeled above each staff. The voicings are as follows:

- Staff 1: D-7 (F2, A2, C3, E3), G7 (B2, D3, F3, A2), CΔ (E3, G3, B2, C3)
- Staff 2: D-7 (F2, A2, C3, E3), G7 (B2, D3, F3, A2), CΔ (E3, G3, B2, C3)
- Staff 3: D-7 (F2, A2, C3, E3), G7 (B2, D3, F3, A2), CΔ (E3, G3, B2, C3)
- Staff 4: D-7 (F2, A2, C3, E3), G7 (B2, D3, F3, A2), CΔ (E3, G3, B2, C3)
- Staff 5: D-7 (F2, A2, C3, E3), G7 (B2, D3, F3, A2), CΔ (E3, G3, B2, C3)
- Staff 6: D-7 (F2, A2, C3, E3), G7 (B2, D3, F3, A2), CΔ (E3, G3, B2, C3)

22. Diatonic Playing

Try improvising solos without using any chromatic approaches. Stick to playing only the notes within the appropriate chord scale. When you play within the chord and chord scale, it lends a particular sonority that is very recognizable.

23. Parallel Key Centers

Try choosing several bars of a tune (perhaps four) and as you play through a few choruses, play in another key for that segment. Often, the further away the key is from the original, the more convincing it sounds as it seems more intentional. Half steps, minor or major thirds and tritones work well.

Example:

The example shows three staves of musical notation, each representing a different key center. The first staff is in C major, the second in A major, and the third in E-flat major. Each staff contains four measures of chords, with a repeat sign in the second measure of each staff. The chords are as follows:

- Staff 1 (C major): C-6⁹, G-7, B-7/C7, E7
- Staff 2 (A major): AΔ, FΔ, A-7/F-7, D7, F-7/Bb7, Bb7
- Staff 3 (E-flat major): EbΔ, Eb-7, Ab7, DbΔ, D-7/b5, G7/b9

24. Moveable One Playing

Rather than playing a usual 4/4 tune and thinking four beats of one chord to four beats of the next chord, try moving the chords and dividing the 4/4 into three plus five beats or two plus six, or even one plus seven.

Example: Fangs from Afar

The example shows three staves of musical notation, each representing a different key center. The first staff is in F major, the second in B-flat major, and the third in E-flat major. Each staff contains four measures of chords, with curved lines indicating overlapping durations. The chords are as follows:

- Staff 1 (F major): F-7, Bb-7, Eb7, AbΔ
- Staff 2 (B-flat major): F-7, Bb-7, Eb7, AbΔ
- Staff 3 (E-flat major): F-7, Bb-7, Eb7, AbΔ

Melodic Devices

1. Shapes

Limiting one's playing to only three-note melodies (not including repeated notes) creates melodies with different shapes. There are four possible directional shapes. After playing the first note, the melody can move either

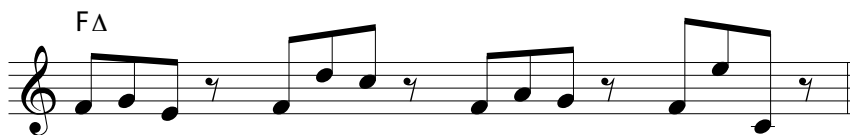
- A) up, up ↑ ↑
- B) up, down ↑ ↓
- C) down, down ↓ ↓
- D) down, up ↓ ↑

Example: three-note shapes



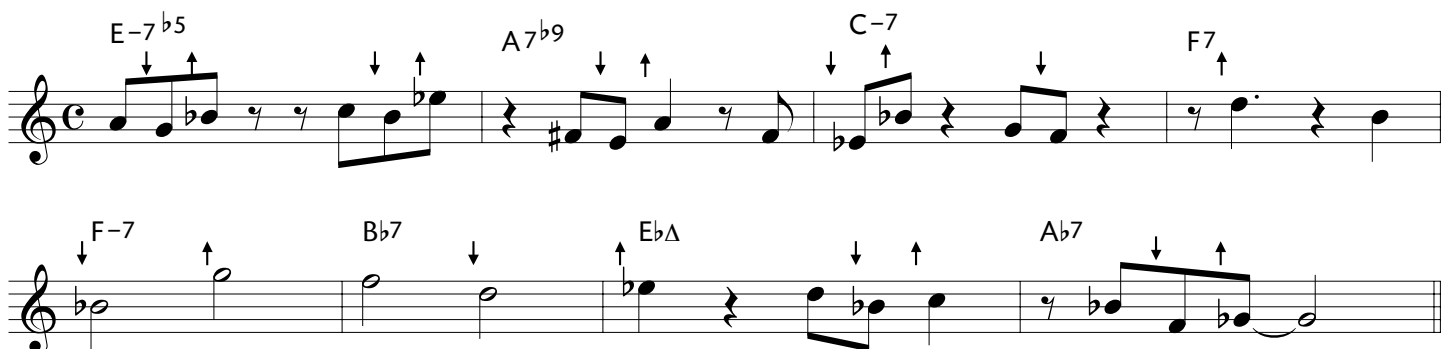
These directions are loose guide lines lending a lot of leeway to the creative improviser. The following example shows how differently the B up, down option can be played. Note that the last note can be above or below the first.

Example: B) could look like this



Along with the great variety of shapes you can create using only three notes, when you add the element of rhythm the possibilities become infinite.

Example: using shape D with varying rhythms (*Tell Her to Hold Tight*)



Example: Tell Her to Hold Tight

The musical notation consists of two staves of music in 4/4 time. The first staff contains four measures of music. Above the notes are the following chord shapes: E-7^{b5} Shape Y, A7^{b9} Shape BB, C-7 Shape Y, and F7 Shape BB. The second staff contains four measures of music. Above the notes are the following chord shapes: F-7 Shape Y, B^b7 Shape BB, E^bΔ Shape Y, and A^b7 Shape BB. The notes are primarily eighth and quarter notes, often grouped together to form the specified shapes.

Longer shapes have slightly increased difficulty. Practicing these shapes of 3, 4, 5, 6, or 7 or more notes, the improviser begins to retain the sound of each grouping and this helps with motivic playing. Being familiar with the sound of a five-note shape, for example, allows you to place that grouping within smaller or larger spaces of time. Playing five notes in two beats, three beats, or four beats can lead the way to some polyrhythmic playing. You can figure it out!

Here are some suggestions for practicing shapes:

1. First, play consecutive eighth notes to get used to the shape while leaving rests between each shape.
2. Be sure to play the shape starting on a downbeat and also on an upbeat.

Example:

The musical notation shows two measures of music in 4/4 time. Above the first measure are two upward-pointing arrows (↑ ↑) and a downward-pointing arrow (↓). Above the second measure are a downward-pointing arrow (↓) and a rest symbol (z). The notes are eighth notes.

3. Play the shape without rests. Playing 3, 5, 6, or 7-note shapes without rests will give way to over the bar line phrasing in 3/8, 5/8, 6/8, or 7/8-phrases.
4. Play the shape with different rhythms. You can change the duration of each note although it isn't necessary.

Example:

The musical notation shows two measures of music in 4/4 time. Above the first measure are four upward-pointing arrows (↑ ↑ ↑ ↑). Above the second measure are three upward-pointing arrows (↑ ↑ ↑) and a triplet bracket (3) over three notes. The notes are quarter notes.

5. Try disconnecting the shape.

Example:

The musical notation shows two measures of music in 4/4 time. Above the first measure are four downward-pointing arrows (↓ ↓ ↓ ↓). Above the second measure are four upward-pointing arrows (↑ ↑ ↑ ↑). The notes are quarter notes.

6. Try anything else you can think of. You make the rules and set the parameters.

7. Sparse Melodies

Creating sparse melodies gives the rhythm section the opportunity to interact. This is a great device for pacing and developing a solo as each phrase seems to have more impact when left uncluttered.

8. Angular Playing

Try playing angular, creating a jagged effect with large intervals, starts and stops and unusual shapes. It is more challenging than it sounds. This technique can really stand out against a conservative rhythm section.

Example: Table Stakes



9. Pointillistic Playing

Pointillistic playing is also a contemporary classical technique that has a great impact as it draws attention to itself. It seems to say, “listen to me”. This device usually employs short notes with jagged rhythms.

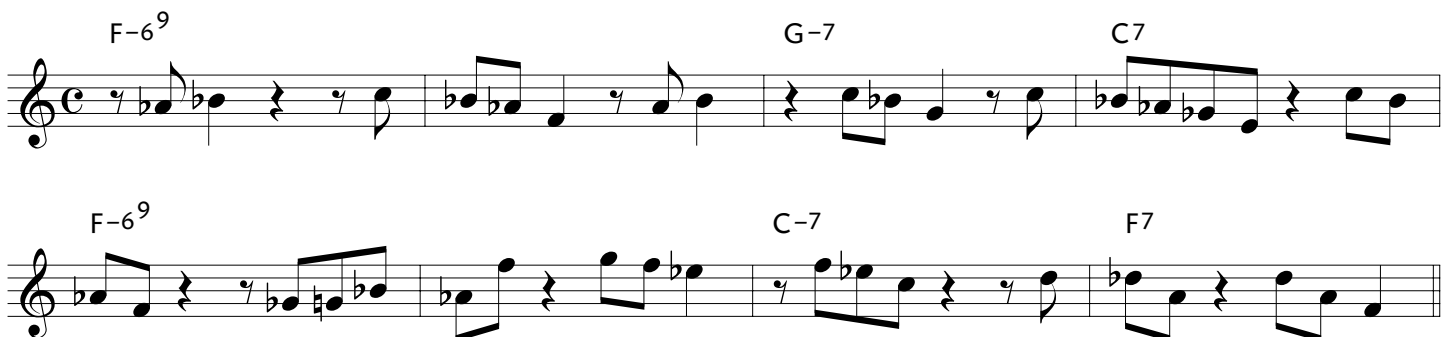
Example: Table Stakes



10. Short Phrases, Short Rests

Creating short phrases and short rests has impact when played at every entrance to a new phrase. You can use anywhere from one to five notes followed by a short space.

Example: Underdog



This technique has a teasing effect; the listener might be prompted to say “out with it!”.

24. Rhythmicizing Scale Sequences

Try taking a simple scale sequence and rhythmicize it by playing it with different rhythms, leaving notes out, inverting it, or skipping some notes. This technique can add continuity to a melodic line and its possibilities are infinite. Try whatever you think works, you're writing the book!

Example: G7

The example shows three variations of a G7 scale sequence. The first staff is the original sequence: G4-A4-B4-C5-D5-E5-F#5-G5, with a G7 chord indicated above. The second staff shows a variation with a dotted quarter note on G4, eighth notes on A4 and B4, a quarter note on C5, eighth notes on D5 and E5, a quarter note on F#5, and a quarter note on G5. The third staff shows a variation with eighth notes on G4, A4, and B4, a quarter note on C5, eighth notes on D5 and E5, a quarter note on F#5, and a quarter note on G5.

25. Octave Displacement

Take a melody and try to displace some of the octaves.

Example:

The example shows a melody starting on D4. The original melody is labeled 'Original' with a D-7 chord above. The displaced version is labeled 'Octave displacement' with a D-7 chord above. The displaced version starts on D5, which is an octave higher than the original. The G7 chord is also shown above the displaced melody.

Example: octave displaced scale sequences

The example shows two scale sequences. The first is the original scale sequence starting on D4. The second is an octave displaced version starting on D5.