

# Scalewise Motion

Scalewise motion feels very natural for walking bass lines. It is like going up and down a flight of stairs. By using scale tones that occur in between the chord tones, the line takes on a very smooth, flowing motion. The example below shows the chord tones of an F7 chord (black) and the scale tones in between (white). When you play these notes in succession, you have the scale that is most commonly used for a dominant 7th chord. It is called the *mixolydian* scale. In this case, we have an F mixolydian. The structure of any mixolydian scale is R-2-3-4-5-6- $\flat$ 7-8.

**F Mixolydian Scale**

**F7 Chord Tones**

F R                      A 3                      C 5                      E $\flat$  7                      F 8

**Scale Tones**                      2 G                      2 B $\flat$                       6 D

Detailed description: A musical staff in bass clef showing the F7 chord tones and the F Mixolydian scale. The chord tones are marked as F (Root), A (3rd), C (5th), E-flat (7th), and F (8th). The scale tones are marked as G (2nd), B-flat (2nd), and D (6th). The notes are: F (black), G (white), A (black), B-flat (white), C (black), D (white), E-flat (black), F (black).

Below we have the B $\flat$  mixolydian scale. This is the common scale for a B $\flat$ 7 chord.

**B $\flat$  Mixolydian**

**B $\flat$ 7 Chord Tones**

B $\flat$  R                      D 3                      F 5                      A $\flat$  7                      B $\flat$  8

**Scale Tones**                      2 C                      4 E $\flat$                       6 G

Detailed description: A musical staff in bass clef showing the B-flat 7 chord tones and the B-flat Mixolydian scale. The chord tones are marked as B-flat (Root), D (3rd), F (5th), A-flat (7th), and B-flat (8th). The scale tones are marked as C (2nd), E-flat (4th), and G (6th). The notes are: B-flat (black), C (white), D (black), E-flat (white), F (black), G (white), A-flat (black), B-flat (black).

The next chord in the F blues is Gm $^7$ . This is a minor chord, so it will naturally use a minor scale. In this context, the Gm $^7$  will work best with a G Dorian scale (shown below). The structure of this scale is R-2- $\flat$ 3-4-5-6- $\flat$ 7-8.

**G Dorian Scale**

**Gm $^7$  Chord Tones**

G R                      B $\flat$  3                      D 5                      F 7                      G 8

**Scale Tones**                      2 A                      4 C                      6 E

Detailed description: A musical staff in bass clef showing the Gm7 chord tones and the G Dorian scale. The chord tones are marked as G (Root), B-flat (3rd), D (5th), F (7th), and G (8th). The scale tones are marked as A (2nd), C (4th), and E (6th). The notes are: G (black), A (white), B-flat (white), C (white), D (black), E (white), F (black), G (black).