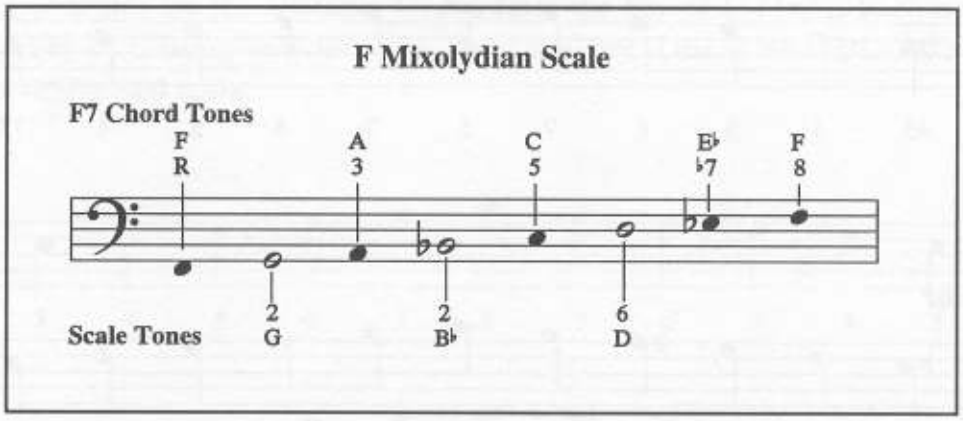
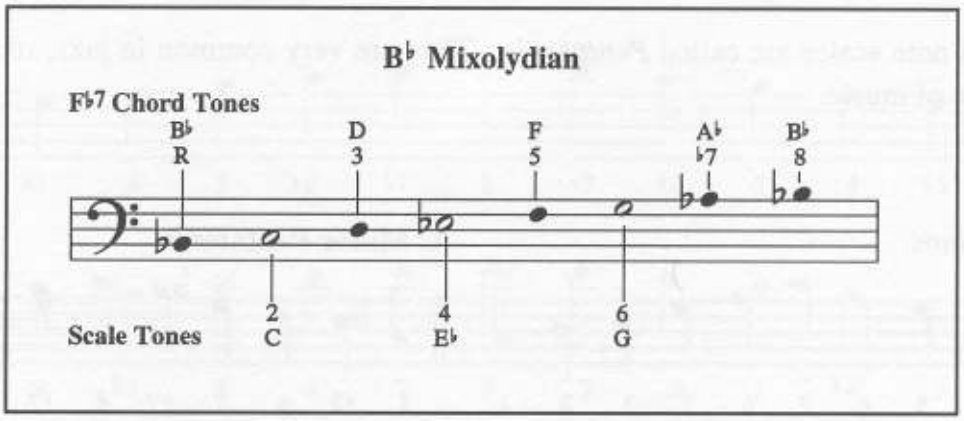
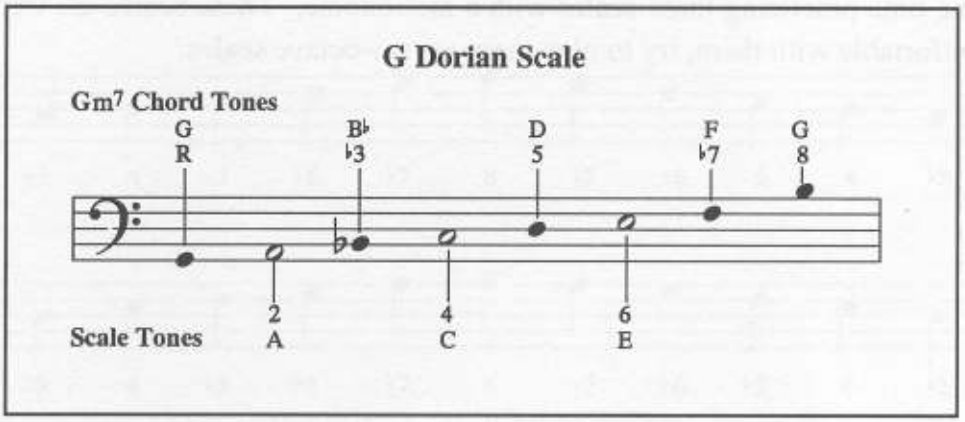
Scalewise Motion

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–♭7–8.



Below we have the B♭ mixolydian scale. This is the common scale for a B♭7 chord.



The next chord in the F blues is Gm7. This is a minor chord, so it will naturally use a minor scale. In this context, the Gm7 will work best with a G Dorian scale (shown below). The structure of this scale is R–2–♭3–4–5–6–♭7–8.