



TalkingBass

Simple Steps To Walking Bass

Course Breakdown
and FAQ



Simple Steps To Walking Bass

Get On Your Feet & Walk That Bass

It's Easy When You Take Simple Steps!

"Walking Bass can just seem so difficult! For the first few years of playing I never understood how Jazz players could effortlessly improvise a melodic walking bass line through a chord progression. It seemed so advanced and above my level of understanding and without guidance I was constantly asking 'where do I start?!'

Enrolling in music school changed all that when I was assigned to playing in a jazz ensemble. The band leader gave me enough guidance to stumble through the songs and over time I began to understand all of the skills and practice needed for developing a walking vocabulary.

Now, twenty five years later, through a career of professional playing and teaching, I've developed a simple, step by step path to success that builds from a solid foundation so you never have to feel inadequate or overcome by what can seem a mountainous task.

Simple Steps To Walking Bass guides you along a clear and easy path to improvising great melodic lines through any chord progression all over the fretboard"

Mark J Smith (Creator of Talkingbass)

Simple Steps To Walking Bass is just that! Mark leads you steadily towards your goal with a carefully constructed course that tells you what you need to know and how to use it.

I'd happily recommend this course to anyone wanting to start out learning how to play bass in a jazz environment!

Neil Birrell – UK

Mark has thought very carefully about the stepwise learning process of walking bass lines. The student is taken through various exercises slowly and methodically and everything is explained in great detail.

The process works and I am now on the way to playing walking bass lines with a jazz band!

Paul Jenkins - UK

Simple Steps To Walking Bass

Course Breakdown

Module 1: Laying The Foundation

Lesson 1-0: Intro

In this introductory lesson we look at the course concepts and how we should approach our journey into walking bass lines

Lesson 1-1: What Is A Walking Bass Line?

In this lesson we look at what a walking bass line actually is and the components we need to practice

Lesson 1-2: Tone

Let's take a look at the physical aspects of walking in terms of tone and note duration. These factors are an important foundation in developing the correct feel.

Lesson 1-3: Chord Tones

Chord tones are the framework upon which we build all bass lines. Let's look at what chord tones are and how they work in a walking line.

Lesson 1-4: Intervals

The first step in developing a basic knowledge of chord construction is an understanding of intervals. The building blocks of music.

Lesson 1-5: Triads

Triads are the foundation on which all other chords are built.

Lesson 1-6: Cycle Of Fourths

The cycle of fourths will be an important tool in developing a good practice routine.

Lesson 1-7: Seventh Chords

Now we have an understanding of triads, let's take the next step into seventh chords

Lesson 1-8: Chords In A Major Key

Now we have a knowledge of the most basic chords, let's look at the chords available to us within a major key

Lesson 1-9: Two Feel

The two feel is a great starting point for developing walking bass lines in application. In this lesson we look at what the two feel is and how to play through a chord progression in this style.

Lesson 1-10: Root Note Targeting

In this course we'll constantly refer to targeting of notes. This is how we look ahead and plan our journey through the chord progression. Targeting in a two feel is a great start in applying this concept

Lesson 1-11: Root-Fifth

The root and fifth of a chord will be our starting point in developing a strong two feel

Lesson 1-12: The Fifth Below

The fifth of a chord can be played both above and below the root note. Let's try this concept in application

Lesson 1-13: Guided By The Journey

Now we have a few notes to play with, let's look at how simple decisions can be influenced by our musical journey on the fly.

Lesson 1-14: Alternative Fingerings

Understanding the alternative fingerings for various intervals can aid in moving and staying in certain areas on the fretboard

Lesson 1-15: The Third

Next, let's add another chord tone into the mix. The third.

Lesson 1-16: Dropping To The Third

Dropping down to the third can feel a little odd at first but can provide some interesting melodic motion

Lesson 1-17: Mixing It Up

Now let's try mixing up all of the concepts covered so far.

Lesson 1-18: Targeting The Third

The third can be used as an interesting alternative to the root note and provides us with an inversion that allows for more variety in the line.

Lesson 1-19: Sevenths

The seventh is not as obvious a chord tone for use in a two feel but, as you'll see, it can still be used very effectively

Lesson 1-20: The Minor 7 Flat 5

The minor 7 flat 5 is an important chord to discuss when looking at the two feel, especially when making use of the fifth

Lesson 1-21: Rhythmic Variation

In this lesson we'll look to change up the rhythm and move away from that rigid two feel on beats 1 and 3.

Lesson 1-22: Approach Notes

Approach notes are a great melodic device when applied to walking lines and work well with our concept of targeting

Lesson 1-23: Chromatic Approach

Let's expand on approach notes by progressing into the world of chromatic notes

Lesson 1-24: Ghost Notes and Skips

Ghost notes and skips are a great way of adding some rhythmic variation, flair and momentum into our walking lines

Lesson 1-25: Second Position

So far, we've stayed in a safe low area of the bass. In this lesson we make the move up into some higher positions

Lesson 1-26: Applying Positions

In this lesson we take a look at how we can apply our first and second positions in a bassline

Lesson 1-27: Position Shifting

Shifting is the key to making use of the various positions on the fretboard and it's important to learn this skill with the two feel before progressing into a full walk.

Module 2: Get On Your Feet & Walk

Lesson 2-1: A Basic Walking Line

In this lesson we'll learn a simple walking bass line through a popular chord progression and break down the basic components we're going to be covering.

Lesson 2-2: The Walking Journey

In this lesson we'll expand on the targeting concepts we looked at in module 1 and look a little closer at that overall walking journey.

Lesson 2-3: The Elements Of Walking Bass

In this lesson we'll look at the three main melodic elements of a walking bass line

Lesson 2-4: Seventh Chords

The seventh chord arpeggios we covered in module 1 may now be put to good use when applied as four notes to the bar

Lesson 2-5: Core Triads

Every seventh chord contains a core triad and this is important to understand when working through a progression

Lesson 2-6: Alternative Arpeggios

Every arpeggio may be played in multiple ways. This will help with playing through chord changes in a single position

Lesson 2-7: Applying Positions

Let's try applying our alternative arpeggio patterns within a progression

Lesson 2-8: Descending Chord Tones

We generally play arpeggios in ascent but walking bass lines move in all direction. Learning to descend through chord tones may be tougher than you think!

Lesson 2-9: The Simple Walking Hack

In this lesson we look at an age old hack for walking through a progression that can also provide an insight into some of the melodic devices we'll be looking at.

Lesson 2-10: Scales & Modes

Chord tones are an essential framework in walking through a progression but scalar motion provides smoother melodic possibilities. Let's look at how scales fit into this framework.

Lesson 2-11: Applying Scales

Now we have more scalar knowledge let's put those scales to the test

Lesson 2-12: Scale Positions

Scales may be played in multiple fingering position just like arpeggios. Let's delve further into this useful application.

Lesson 2-13: Descending Scales

Earlier in this module we descended through arpeggios in our walking line. Now let's apply the same principles to our scales.

Lesson 2-14: Minor Scales and Modes

Now let's take a look at the various Minor scales and some of the important aspects of the Minor Key.

Lesson 2-15: Chromatic Notes

Chromatic Notes are the next step in our melodic journey. Let's take a look at how they also work around the chord tone/scale framework.

Lesson 2-16: Applying Chromatics

Chromatic notes can be applied to our walking lines by using a variety of melodic devices. Let's apply some of them in a basic chord progression.

Lesson 2-17: Vocabulary

Improvisation is all about developing a musical vocabulary. Let's look at how you can work on speaking through the bass.

Lesson 2-18: Progressive Practice

All of the concepts covered in this module may seem a little tough to digest all at once. Let's take a look at how you might develop your skills in a more progressive, step-by-step manner.

Lesson 2-19: Two Chords Per Bar

Walking through two chords in a bar has to take place in a much smaller rhythmic area. Let's look at some common devices for moving through quick chord changes.

Lesson 2-20: Moving Around The Fretboard

In previous lessons we learned about the various positions over the neck. Now let's put these to good use in our walking lines.

Lesson 2-21: Aiming For The Third

We can target the third of a chord in order to create or imply inversions and a less root oriented line.

Lesson 2-22: Walking Over Multiple Bars

Walking a single chord over multiple needs a little more forethought and vocabulary development. In this lesson we look at some simple ways of prolonging our lines.

Lesson 2-23: Skips

Ghost notes and skips are a great way of adding propulsion to a walking line.

Lesson 2-24: Triplets

Triplets are another way of adding rhythmic momentum to a line.

Lesson 2-25: Walking In Three

Walking in 3/4 is similar to walking in four but it may be surprising how that single beat difference can throw your vocabulary into disarray. Let's work on developing some 3/4 lines.

Lesson 2-26: Simplifying Jazz Chords

Complex extended chords are very common in even the most simple of jazz standards. In this lesson we look at simplifying those chords.

Lesson 2-27: Static Chords

In styles such as modal jazz it's common to find a single chord spanning many bars or even an entire tune. This requires a slightly different approach that we'll address in this lesson.

Lesson 2-28: Basics Of Functional Harmony

Functional Harmony is an essential aspect of studying jazz and walking bass. In this lesson we'll look at the basic foundation you can built upon in your future studies.

Module 3: Improving Your Standards

Lesson 3-1: Introduction

In this module we'll be breaking down the chord progressions from a selection of popular jazz standards and looking at a sample bass line in each case

Lesson 3-2: Progression #1 – Autumn Leaves

Lesson 3-3: Progression #2 – All Of Me

Lesson 3-4: Progression #3 – Jazz Blues

Lesson 3-5: Progression #4 – Rhythm Changes

Lesson 3-6: Progression #5 – Someday My Prince Will Come

Lesson 3-7: Progression #6 – So What

Lesson 3-8: The Next Step

In this final course lesson we look back over the concepts we've learned and look forward to the practice needed in developing a walking bass vocabulary

Simple Steps To Walking Bass

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Simple Steps To Walking Course?

Simple Steps To Walking Bass is a step by step approach to improvising walking bass lines on bass guitar.

It is a multimedia course using a combination of video lessons, PDF workbooks and MP3 backing tracks to provide the most comprehensive, step-by-step approach to sight reading available today.

What level of player is the course aimed at?

The course is aimed at any player looking to get started with walking bass lines. Even some advanced players lack the skills or experience needed to walk fluently through chord progressions so the level of the player is all relative to their stylistic experience.

What Will I Learn?

After completing the course you will have the knowledge and ability to improvise a walking line through any chord progression using a variety of chord tones, scales and chromatic devices.

How Long Are The Lessons?

The lesson length's vary but the complete course contains over 13 hours of video content.

How is the course presented? Do I Download Anything?

The course is hosted on the Talkingbass website so there are no video files to download.

There is a Dropbox folder for each module containing a Course Workbook and any relevant practice tracks.

Is There A Time Limit On Taking The Course?

No. You can take as long as want. There are no time limits

Do I Have Lifetime Access To The Course?

If you purchase the course then yes, you have lifetime access to the course and its material. If you are an All Access Pass member, then you obviously only have access for the duration of your subscription.