

Lesson 3: The Root-fifth Pattern with Quarter Notes

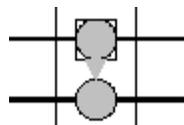
Almost all rock, pop or jazz tunes are based on chord **changes**. Chord changes define how long (how many bars) a chord is played. An example: Play 2 bars C major, 1 bar F major, then 1 bar G major (and then repeat). In the musical staff the chords are noted as upper-case letters above the respective bar (cf. the exercises below).

A bass guitar player should be able to come up with a bass line that fits given changes. In order to reach this aim you need to know which notes go well with a given chord. One note that always sounds good is the **root**, after which the chord is named. Thus C goes well with C major (or C minor), G with G major and so on. This lesson will provide you with another note that (almost) always fits well: The **perfect fifth** or, in short, the **fifth**. The fifth is an **interval**, i.e. a fixed distance to the root (namely five steps on the major scale or, in other words, the fifth note of the scale from which it comes, - never mind if you don't understand this now). The fifth can be played either above or below the root and we are going to practice both techniques.

Ex. 1:

Here are the notes you need for this exercise:

We play the root and the perfect fifth below the root. Above each bar you will find the respective chord.



For the fifth below simply play the same fret as the root, but on the lower string.

Play the exercise in the 8th position.

Similar to the last lesson you will find the following key signature:



This signature means that you have to play Bb instead of B. Key signatures and accidentals will be developed in greater detail at the end of this lesson.

a)

Three staves of musical notation in bass clef, 2/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The first staff contains four measures with chords F, F, G, and C. The second staff contains four measures with chords F, G, Bb, and C. The third staff contains four measures with chords F, Bb, G, and C. Each measure contains a bass line with quarter notes and rests.

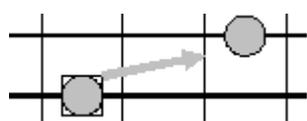
b)

Three staves of musical notation in bass clef, 4/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The first staff contains four measures with chords F, F, G, and C. The second staff contains four measures with chords F, G, Bb, and C. The third staff contains four measures with chords F, Bb, G, and C. Each measure contains a bass line with quarter notes and rests.

c)

Three staves of musical notation in bass clef, 2/4 time, with a key signature of one flat (Bb). The first staff contains four measures with chords F, F, G, and C. The second staff contains four measures with chords F, G, Bb, and C. The third staff contains four measures with chords F, Bb, G, and C. Each measure contains a bass line with quarter notes and rests.

Ex. 2



This time we play the fifth above the root. It is located 2 frets and 1 string higher.

We now have to **shift positions** within an exercise, ie. our left hand moves upwards to a new position and downwards again. The Roman numerals indicate the position in which the respective bar is played. We play the chords C and F in the 8th position, D and G in the 10th position.

a)

b)

c)

Theory: Accidentals and Key Signatures

By placing an **accidental** before a note you can raise or lower its pitch by a **semitone**.

You may, for example, lower the pitch of C: 

with a b to Cb (speak: "C flat"): 

and you can rise the pitch with a "number symbol" (#) to C# (speak "C sharp"): 

Refer to the notefinder in order to find out how these notes are played.

The accidental is always valid for all notes still to come in the respective bar. An example:



Of course the second C has to be played as C# (as it is marked with a #). The same rule applies to the third C in this bar, but not to the fourth C because it already belongs to the following bar.

If an accidental shall not be valid for one or more of the following notes in the same bar it is marked with a **natural symbol**. Here



the accidental is valid but for the second C since the third C in this bar is marked with a natural symbol.

In some cases, when notes are to be lowered or raised for the whole tune, the accidentals are written in front of the staff. This is what we call the **key signature**. An example for this are the exercises above which use the b. Here is still another example:



In all measures C# has to be played instead of C and F# instead of F. Again, the natural symbol indicates that the following note is not to be raised resp. lowered after all. Example:

