

5 Simple Tricks To Make Your Basslines Sound PRO

Trick 1: Lock in with the kick

The first trick is simple enough but you'd be surprised how many bassists I see who forget this golden rule of bass playing - lock in with the kick.

Let's say you've got this groove right here:

5 Tricks Groove

The musical score for "5 Tricks Groove" is presented in two systems. Each system consists of a Drumset staff and an Electric Guitar staff. The key signature is two flats (Bb and Eb), and the time signature is 4/4. The drumset part features a consistent kick drum pattern: a quarter note on the first beat, a quarter note on the second beat, a quarter note on the third beat, and a quarter note on the fourth beat. The electric guitar part plays a bassline that locks in with the kick drum, using the root notes of the chords: C-7 (C), F-7 (F), D-7b5 (D), G7 (G), and C-7 (C). The chord progression is indicated above the staves: C-7, F-7, D-7b5, G7, C-7. The first system ends with a double bar line, and the second system begins with a measure rest labeled '5'.

The very first thing I'd do is listen and internalize the kick drum rhythm, and then just play the root notes of the chord progression, using the exact rhythm that the kick drum plays:

3 3 3 | 8 8 8 | 5 5 5 | 3 3 3 3 | 3 3 3 | 8 8 8

7

5 5 5 3 | 3 3 3 3

Trick 2: Leave space for the snare (pay attention to note lengths)

Ironically the second trick is almost the exact opposite of the first. It often sounds really great to leave space for the snare because it allows the backbeat to be emphasized even more strongly.

3 3 3 | 8 8 8 | 5 5 5 | 3 3 3 3 | 3 3 3 | 8 8 8

7

5 5 5 3 | 3 3 3 3

Trick 3: play less during the melody

As much as we all love BASS, in 99% of songs we're playing a supportive role and making the lead instrument or vocalist sound as great as possible.

So one of the biggest mistakes you can make is playing all of your favourite crazy jazz licks that don't really support the singer and just confuse the listener.

But most melodies have rests and that's where it's ok and often even encouraged to play some more complex stuff.

The image displays two systems of musical notation for a jazz ensemble. The first system includes a Drumset part with a 4/4 time signature and a key signature of two flats. The Electric Guitar part features a melodic line with rests and a solo section. The Bass Guitar part provides a rhythmic accompaniment with specific fingering and dynamics. The second system continues the same parts, with the Electric Guitar part showing a more complex melodic line and the Bass Guitar part providing a steady accompaniment. Chord progressions are indicated above the staves: C-7, F-7, D-7b5, G7, and C-7. Performance instructions such as 'activity' and 'space' are placed above the Bass Guitar staff to guide the player's dynamics and phrasing.

Drumset

Electric Guitar

Bass Guitar

C-7 F-7 D-7 \flat 5 G7 C-7

activity space

5

D. Set

El. Guit.

B. Guit.

space activity space space

C-7 F-7 D-7 \flat 5 G7 C-7

Trick 4: Double up one or two melodic moments

This trick is more of an icing on the cake, but band leaders will love it if every now and then you play one of their more interesting melodic parts on your bass at the same time.

Not only does it sound cool and make everything a bit more cohesive, it shows the melody player that you're listening closely and you respect what they're doing.

5 Tricks Groove

The musical score for "5 Tricks Groove" is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). It features three staves: Drumset, Electric Guitar, and Bass Guitar. The piece is divided into two systems, each with five measures. The first system includes a drumset part with a consistent groove, an electric guitar part with a melodic line, and a bass guitar part with a complex line. The second system continues the same parts. Chord progressions are indicated above the staves: C-7, F-7, D-7b5, G7, and C-7. A green circle highlights a specific melodic moment in the bass guitar part of the first system, where the bassist plays a triplet of eighth notes (3-3-3) followed by a quarter note (1/2), a quarter note (1/2), and another quarter note (1/2).

Chord Progression: C-7 F-7 D-7 \flat 5 G7 C-7

Drumset

Electric Guitar

Bass Guitar

5

D. Set

El. Guit.

B. Guit.

Trick 5: Use different technique/articulation to match the energy level

Now we're getting into some really pro stuff.

If you can think about your bass lines with this much care and detail, you're gonna stand out from the pack.

One of the amazing things about bass is the absolutely massive range of techniques we have available to us.

And the great thing is, all these techniques give us the ability to convey totally different moods and energy levels.

Most songs have at least a couple of different energy levels, and sometimes it can sound great to emphasize those with a change of technique.

Listen to the full track and pay attention to when I start slapping halfway through, and how it raises the energy level of the song.

You might have noticed a common theme with all of these was that you have to be listening very carefully. That's probably the most important rule of being a musician - you have to listen to what everyone else is doing, and play whatever is gonna help make the song as powerful as possible.

Exercise: Try writing your own bass line!

Use these tricks to write your own bass line to accompany the guitar, keys and drums! Play it along with the backing track!

5 Tricks Groove

C-7 F-7 D-7 \flat 5 G7 C-7

Drumset: 4/4 time signature. Measures 1-4 show a consistent drum pattern with eighth notes and rests. Measure 1 has a snare on the 2nd beat and a bass drum on the 1st and 3rd beats. Measures 2-4 continue this pattern with variations in the snare and bass drum placement.

Electric Guitar: Treble clef, key signature of two flats (Bb, Eb). Measure 1 starts with a whole rest on the 1st beat, followed by eighth notes on the 2nd and 3rd beats. Measure 2 has a whole rest on the 1st beat, followed by eighth notes on the 2nd and 3rd beats. Measure 3 has a whole rest on the 1st beat, followed by eighth notes on the 2nd and 3rd beats. Measure 4 has a whole rest on the 1st beat, followed by eighth notes on the 2nd and 3rd beats.

Bass Guitar: Treble clef, key signature of two flats. Measure 1 has a whole rest on the 1st beat, followed by eighth notes on the 2nd and 3rd beats. Measure 2 has a whole rest on the 1st beat, followed by eighth notes on the 2nd and 3rd beats. Measure 3 has a whole rest on the 1st beat, followed by eighth notes on the 2nd and 3rd beats. Measure 4 has a whole rest on the 1st beat, followed by eighth notes on the 2nd and 3rd beats.

5 C-7 F-7 D-7 \flat 5 G7 C-7

D. Set: Drumset notation for measures 5-8, showing a consistent drum pattern with eighth notes and rests.

El. Guit.: Electric guitar notation for measures 5-8. Measure 5 has a whole rest on the 1st beat, followed by eighth notes on the 2nd and 3rd beats. Measure 6 has a whole rest on the 1st beat, followed by eighth notes on the 2nd and 3rd beats. Measure 7 has a whole rest on the 1st beat, followed by eighth notes on the 2nd and 3rd beats. Measure 8 has a whole rest on the 1st beat, followed by eighth notes on the 2nd and 3rd beats.

B. Guit.: Bass guitar notation for measures 5-8, showing a consistent bass line with eighth notes and rests.

9 C-7 F-7 D-7 \flat 5 G7 C-7

D. Set: Drumset notation for measures 9-12, showing a consistent drum pattern with eighth notes and rests.

El. Guit.: Electric guitar notation for measures 9-12. Measure 9 has a whole rest on the 1st beat, followed by eighth notes on the 2nd and 3rd beats. Measure 10 has a whole rest on the 1st beat, followed by eighth notes on the 2nd and 3rd beats. Measure 11 has a whole rest on the 1st beat, followed by eighth notes on the 2nd and 3rd beats. Measure 12 has a whole rest on the 1st beat, followed by eighth notes on the 2nd and 3rd beats.

B. Guit.: Bass guitar notation for measures 9-12, showing a consistent bass line with eighth notes and rests.

13 C-7 F-7 D-7 \flat 5 G7 C-7

D. Set: Drumset notation for measures 13-16, showing a consistent drum pattern with eighth notes and rests.

El. Guit.: Electric guitar notation for measures 13-16. Measure 13 has a whole rest on the 1st beat, followed by eighth notes on the 2nd and 3rd beats. Measure 14 has a whole rest on the 1st beat, followed by eighth notes on the 2nd and 3rd beats. Measure 15 has a whole rest on the 1st beat, followed by eighth notes on the 2nd and 3rd beats. Measure 16 has a whole rest on the 1st beat, followed by eighth notes on the 2nd and 3rd beats.

B. Guit.: Bass guitar notation for measures 13-16, showing a consistent bass line with eighth notes and rests.