

A: What I have done here is to play a C scale up to the 9th note (D) and back down. Because D is the target, it “implies” a chord change, in this case to a G⁷. I put a chord on beat 1 to prime your ear for the chord change; be sure to play the chord. Once you’ve heard it in the context of chords, it will be hard to hear it any other way! Notice the scale is the same in both directions.

Since there are eight notes in a C scale—and eight 8th notes to a measure (where they get their name)—the unmodified C scale automatically implies the chord change on the downbeat of the next measure. If you don’t *want* the chord change, you have to modify the C scale.

B: Here I have modified the C scale; this is called a “Bebop” scale. I have simply added an extra chromatic note at the end of both measures, allowing the scale to “line up” with the target and remain a C scale in both directions. You can insert the extra note anywhere you have a whole step (between G and A for example), but at the end is the most common.

C: This next series of scales shows how to play from one G⁷ chord tone to its octave and back. Because I didn’t want a chord change, I used Bebop scales.

Theory side note: The G⁷ is the “Dominant” chord of the C Modal scale family; it “functions” in the key of C. Each scale degree has its own Modal name. C to C is an *Ionian* scale. I have used a different scale Mode in each of these G⁷ examples: G to G = G *Mixolydian*, B to B = B *Locrian*, D to D = D *Dorian*, and F to F = F *Lydian*. They are all Modes of the key of C (no sharps or flats). Every Dominant 7 chord in every key has four inversions and four corresponding scales.

D: Now I return to the C Ionian scale from **A** above, but this time I force the returning scale to imply a D⁷ by playing that chord on the target, and then make necessary scale modifications to reflect the key signature. D⁷ is the Dominant of the key of G, so it functions in that key (thus the key signature change). I then “resolve” it back to the key of C by landing on a G⁷.

Once you’ve jumped from the tonic (C) to another Dominant chord outside of the key (clockwise on the Circle of 5^{ths}), you must now return to the tonic by working counter-clockwise through the keys (C – D⁷ – G⁷ – C). Think of the first four chords of *Four-Leaf Clover*.

E: This time I go from C to A⁷, and resolve to D⁷.

F: C to E⁷ to A⁷. Think of the chord progression for *Five Foot Two* (C – E⁷ – A⁷ – D⁷ – G⁷ – C).

In the early days of jazz, players would play “chord to chord”: Play a C pattern here (break), a D⁷ pattern there (break), a G⁷ pattern here (break), and finally a C pattern. As players evolved, they learned to connect the patterns together into one seamless whole, using voice-leading. This in turn led to the advent of Bebop, and increasing “chromaticism” through the years.

You can do this same type of exercise with *any two* chords. It’s simply a matter of identifying a strong tone of whatever chord you want to resolve to (as illustrated in **C** above), and learning any modifications you must use to get there. Again, the scale is simply a “framework” for jazz improvisation. Scales are an easy introduction, and will lead you to an intuitive understanding of the mechanics of voice-leading (if practiced/internalized enough!).