



# FREDDIE GREEN JAZZ CHORD VOICINGS



## *Are you ready to swing?*

For 50 years, the late, great Freddie Green played guitar for the legendary Count Basie Orchestra.

Even though he rarely took a solo, his approach to playing jazz guitar revolutionized guitar playing and to this day it is common to see a guitar part with the notation “a la Freddie Green.”

The Freddie Green approach to Jazz guitar accompanying relies on a rhythmic approach complementing the drum set. As he is attributed to saying... “It’s like the drums are playing a Dm or a G7th.”

**In this lesson you will learn how to play these easy and great sounding Jazz chords.**

This technique uses a relaxed quarter note rhythmic strum in swing time emphasizing beats 2 and 4 with the chords moving often – sometimes every beat.

The chord shapes span across 4 strings, yet often skip a string making a 3-note voicing using the root, third and seventh. The root or 5<sup>th</sup> is in the bass.

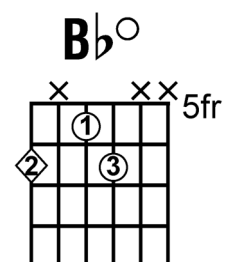
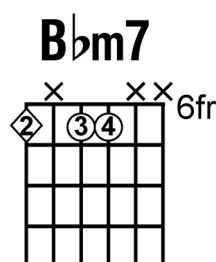
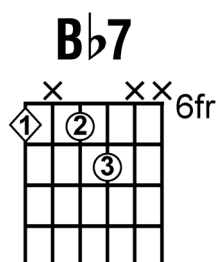
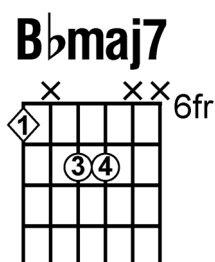
There are 8 primary chord shapes.

Have fun!!

## The Chord Shapes: 6<sup>th</sup> String Root

Shown here in the key of Bb, there are four main chord shapes. Notice how the 5<sup>th</sup> string is not used. Simply mute the 5<sup>th</sup> string by letting the finger on the 6<sup>th</sup> string gently touch (but not fret) the 5<sup>th</sup> string.

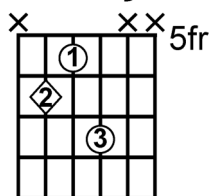
The diamond indicates the root which can be moved to build chords in other keys.



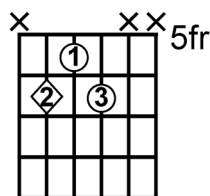
# The Chord Shapes: 5<sup>th</sup> String Root

Shown here in the key of Eb, there are four main chord shapes. Notice how the 6<sup>th</sup> string is not used. Simply mute the 6<sup>th</sup> string by letting the finger on the 5<sup>th</sup> string gently touch (but not fret) the 6<sup>th</sup> string.

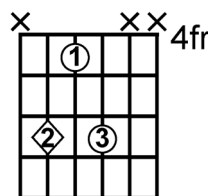
**Ebmaj7**



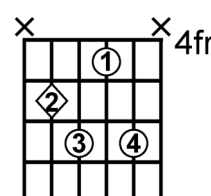
**Eb7**



**Eb m7**



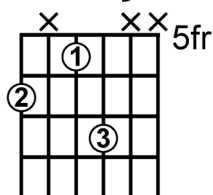
**Eb°**



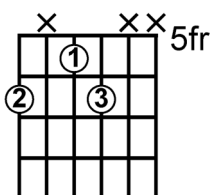
# The Chord Shapes: 5<sup>th</sup> String Root with 5<sup>th</sup> in Bass

Often the above voicings are played with the 5<sup>th</sup> in the bass creating a ROOTLESS voicing of a chord. In other words, you can have an Ebmaj7 chord shape without having an Eb note in it.

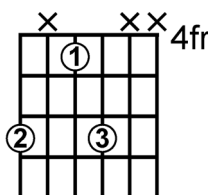
**Ebmaj7/Bb**



**Eb7/Bb**



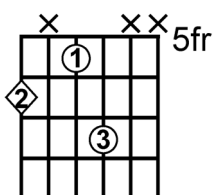
**Eb m7/Bb**



# The 6<sup>th</sup> Chord Shape

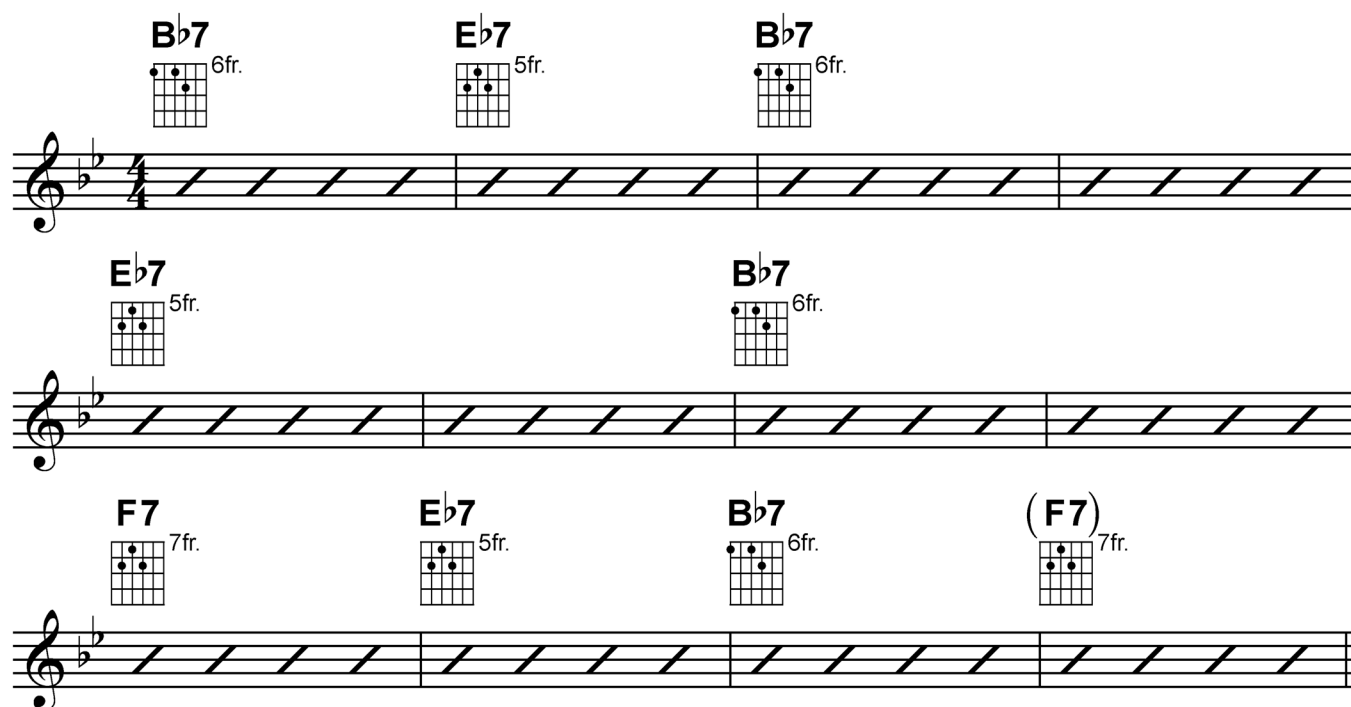
One last shape that is used is the 6<sup>th</sup> chord. A 6<sup>th</sup> chord can be used with or in place of a maj7 form.

**Bb6**



Now that you know the forms, let's practice them in a 12 Bar Blues. Strive for a relaxed strum on the quarter notes with a slight triplet swing feel.

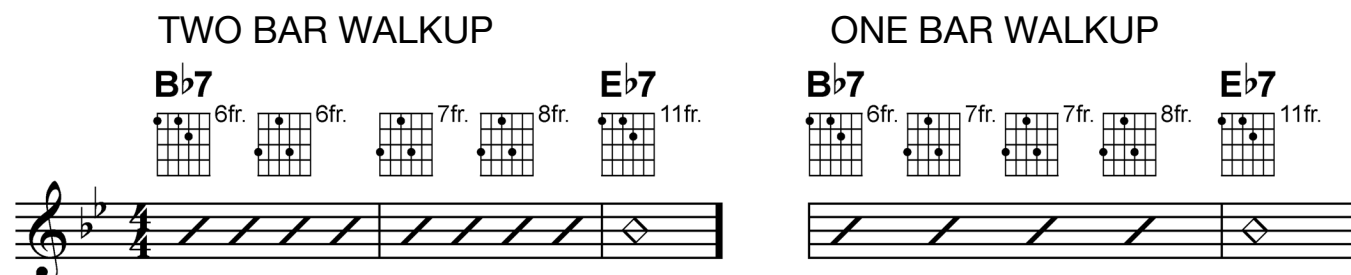
## Bb Blues Progression



The 12 Bar Blues progression for Bb Blues is shown across three staves, each with a 4/4 time signature. The first staff contains measures 1-4: Bb7 (6fr.), Eb7 (5fr.), Bb7 (6fr.), and a fourth measure with a slash. The second staff contains measures 5-8: Eb7 (5fr.), Bb7 (6fr.), a measure with a slash, and a fourth measure with a slash. The third staff contains measures 9-12: F7 (7fr.), Eb7 (5fr.), Bb7 (6fr.), and (F7) (7fr.). Each measure includes a guitar fretboard diagram showing the chord voicing.

## The Dominant 7<sup>th</sup> Walkup

In order to create movement a common walkup in this style would be this. Shown below as a two bar or one bar walkup. This works well when going from the I (one) to the IV (four) chord. Or from the V7 (five) to the I (one).



The Dominant 7<sup>th</sup> Walkup is shown in two variations: Two Bar Walkup and One Bar Walkup. Both are in 4/4 time. The Two Bar Walkup shows a sequence of five fretboard diagrams: Bb7 (6fr.), Bb7 (6fr.), Bb7 (7fr.), Bb7 (8fr.), and Eb7 (11fr.). The One Bar Walkup shows a sequence of five fretboard diagrams: Bb7 (6fr.), Bb7 (7fr.), Bb7 (7fr.), Bb7 (8fr.), and Eb7 (11fr.). Each diagram is accompanied by a musical staff with a diamond symbol indicating the final chord.

# Bb Blues Progression with Walkups

Diagram illustrating the Bb Blues Progression with Walkups, showing three staves of music with chord voicings and fret numbers.

**Staff 1:**

- B $\flat$ 7 (6fr.)
- E $\flat$ 7 (5fr.)
- B $\flat$ 7 (6fr.)
- Walkup to E $\flat$ 7 (6fr., 7fr., 8fr.)

**Staff 2:**

- E $\flat$ 7 (11fr.)
- E $\flat$ 7 (5fr.)
- B $\flat$ 7 (6fr.)

**Staff 3:**

- F7 (7fr.)
- E $\flat$ 7 (5fr.)
- B $\flat$ 7 (6fr.)
- F7 (7fr.)
- Walkup to B $\flat$ 7 (2fr., 3fr.)

## ii-V7 Combinations

The iim-V7 progression is common in Jazz. Shown below are several ways to play this common chord progression using Freddie Green voicings.

Diagram illustrating the ii-V7 progression using Freddie Green voicings (Cm7, F7, Cm7, F7, B $\flat$ maj7).

Chord voicings: Cm7, F7, Cm7, F7, B $\flat$ maj7 (6fr.).

Diagram illustrating the ii-V7 progression using Freddie Green voicings (Cm7, F7, Cm7, F7, B $\flat$ maj7).

Chord voicings: Cm7, F7, Cm7, F7, B $\flat$ maj7 (6fr.).

(using 5<sup>th</sup> in bass voicing)

Diagram illustrating the ii-V7 progression using Freddie Green voicings (Cm7, F7, Cm7, F7, B $\flat$ maj7).

Chord voicings: Cm7 (8fr.), F7 (7fr.), Cm7 (8fr.), F7 (7fr.), B $\flat$ maj7 (6fr.).

Diagram illustrating the ii-V7 progression using Freddie Green voicings (Cm7, F7, Cm7, F7, B $\flat$ maj7).

Chord voicings: Cm7 (8fr.), F7 (7fr.), Cm7 (8fr.), F7 (7fr.), B $\flat$ maj7 (6fr.).

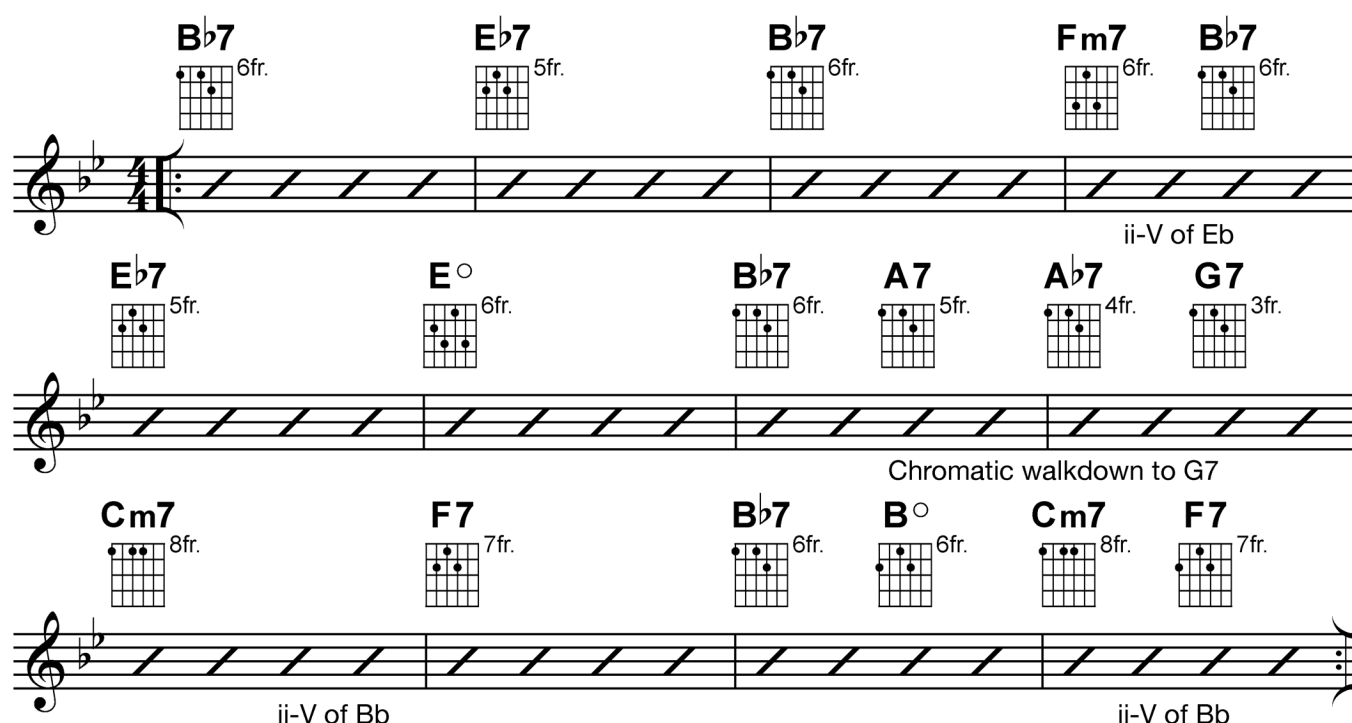
(using 5<sup>th</sup> in bass voicing)

# Bb Jazz Blues Progression with ii-V's

A Jazz blues progression adjusts the standard 12 bar blues in a few ways.

It is common to have a chromatic walkdown in the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> bar to the V7 of the ii. Bars 9 and 10 become a ii-V of the I.

In this progression, a diminished chord is used in bar 6 as an alternate chord for the IV and in bar 11 as a passing chord between the Bb and the Cm.



The diagram shows a 12-bar blues progression in Bb major, organized into three systems of four bars each. Each bar includes a guitar fretboard diagram and a musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats (Bb major). The progression is as follows:

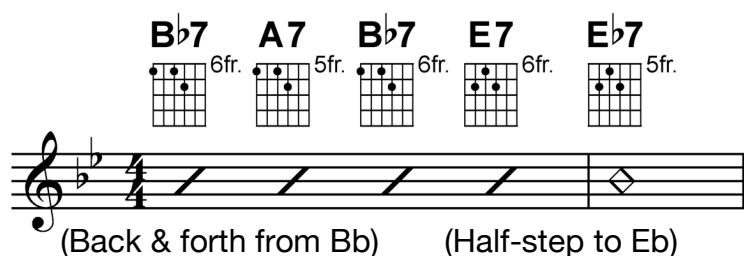
- Bar 1:** Bb7 (6fr.)
- Bar 2:** Eb7 (5fr.)
- Bar 3:** Bb7 (6fr.)
- Bar 4:** Fm7 (6fr.) and Bb7 (6fr.)
- Bar 5:** Eb7 (5fr.)
- Bar 6:** E° (6fr.)
- Bar 7:** Bb7 (6fr.)
- Bar 8:** A7 (5fr.)
- Bar 9:** Ab7 (4fr.)
- Bar 10:** G7 (3fr.)
- Bar 11:** Cm7 (8fr.)
- Bar 12:** F7 (7fr.)

Annotations include "ii-V of Eb" above bar 4, "Chromatic walkdown to G7" above bar 8, "ii-V of Bb" below bar 11, and "ii-V of Bb" below bar 12.

## Moving Chords by Half-Steps

In this Freddie Green style, it's common to have lots of movement in the chords. In order to create the illusion of movement often chords will be preceded by a half step up or down.

For example, the first two bars of the blues using half step motion might look like this...



The diagram shows the first two bars of a blues progression in Bb major, using half-step motion. Each bar includes a guitar fretboard diagram and a musical staff with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats (Bb major). The progression is as follows:

- Bar 1:** Bb7 (6fr.)
- Bar 2:** A7 (5fr.)
- Bar 3:** Bb7 (6fr.)
- Bar 4:** E7 (6fr.)
- Bar 5:** Eb7 (5fr.)

Annotations include "(Back & forth from Bb)" below bar 1 and "(Half-step to Eb)" below bar 5.

Now, let's put all of these concepts to work in a blues using half-step motion, ii-V's, and walkups to create a Jazz blues in the Freddy Green style.

## Bb Jazz Blues Progression

**Bb7 A7 Bb7 E7 Eb7 E<sup>o</sup> Bb7**

6fr. 5fr. 6fr. 6fr. 5fr. 6fr. 6fr. 7fr. 8fr.

**Fm7 B7 Bb7 E7 Eb7 Eb7/Bb E<sup>o</sup> A7**

6fr. 7fr. 6fr. 6fr. 5fr. 5fr. 6fr. 5fr.

**Bb7 A7 Ab7 G7 Db7 Cm7 Gb7**

6fr. 5fr. 4fr. 3fr. 3fr. 2fr.

**F7 Bb7 Ab7 G7 Db7 C7 Gb7 F7 A7**

2fr. 3fr. 6fr. 4fr. 3fr. 3fr. 2fr. 2fr. 5fr.

**Bb7 Walkup**

**ii-V of Eb with 1/2 Step Motion**

**1/2 Step Motion to Bb**

**Chromatic Walkdown to G7**

**1/2 Step Motion to F**

**Preceding Each Chord by Half-Step**