5/4 Time Chord Exercises

Now that you know how the song is built, you begin your studies of Take Five by working exercises in 5/4 time.

As was noted earlier, the harmony to this song isn't too difficult, but the time signature often catches people off guard.

The exercises in this chapter introduce you to comping chords in 5/4 time, as well as provide variations for comping.

Go slow, count, and use a metronome before applying these ideas to the backing track to build your confidence with chords in 5/4.

Plucked or Strummed Chords

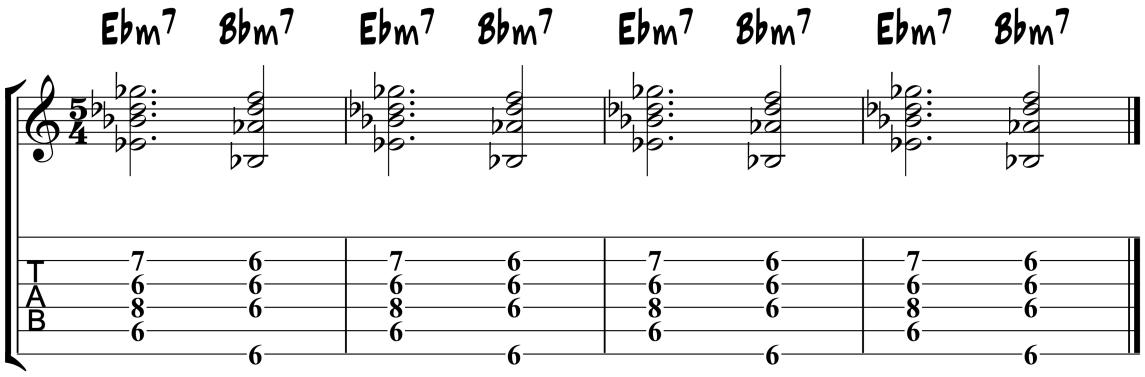
The first chord exercise introduces chord shapes to your playing and focuses on a basic rhythm to get the 5/4 time in your ears.

Go slow with this pattern, work it with a metronome, and count along if needed.

Though it's just one shape per chord, and a static rhythm, playing anything in 5/4 is tough at first.

So, take your time, and once you're fully confident with this exercise move on to the B section below.

Audio Example 1

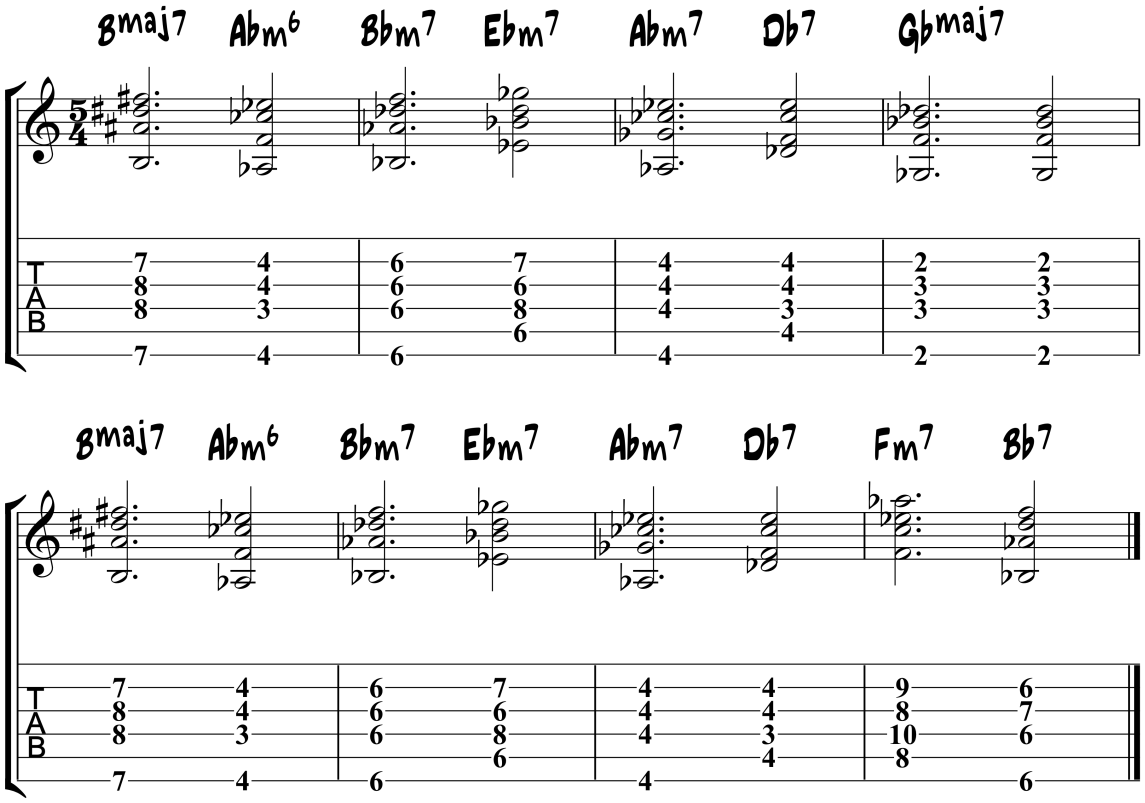


Here's that rhythmic pattern over the B section to the tune.

Once this is comfortable, mix it with the A section to cover the entire tune in your comping workout.

From there, begin to alter the rhythms as you expand upon these chord shapes in your studies.

Audio Example 2



Bringing Out the Bass

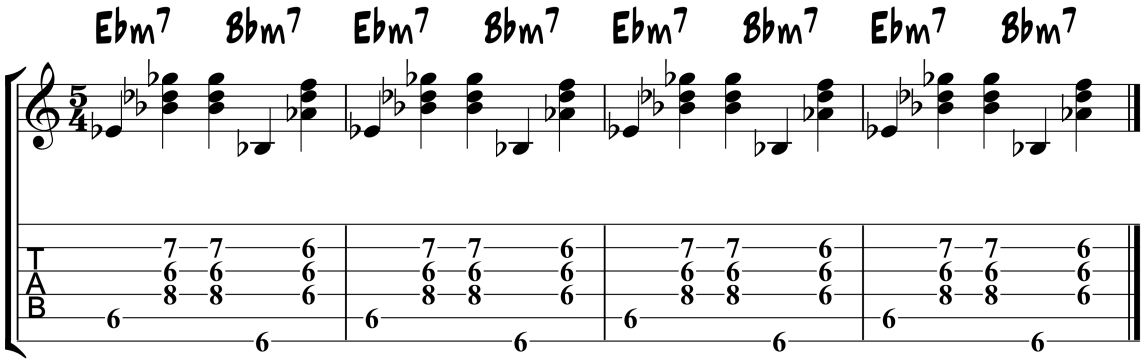
You now separate the bass note from the top notes in the chord as you outline the changes in your comping over the tune.

Here's that pattern over the A section to get you started.

Go slow, count, and listen to the sample audio to make sure you're nailing this rhythm in your comping.

When that's comfortable, move on to the B section version of this pattern below.

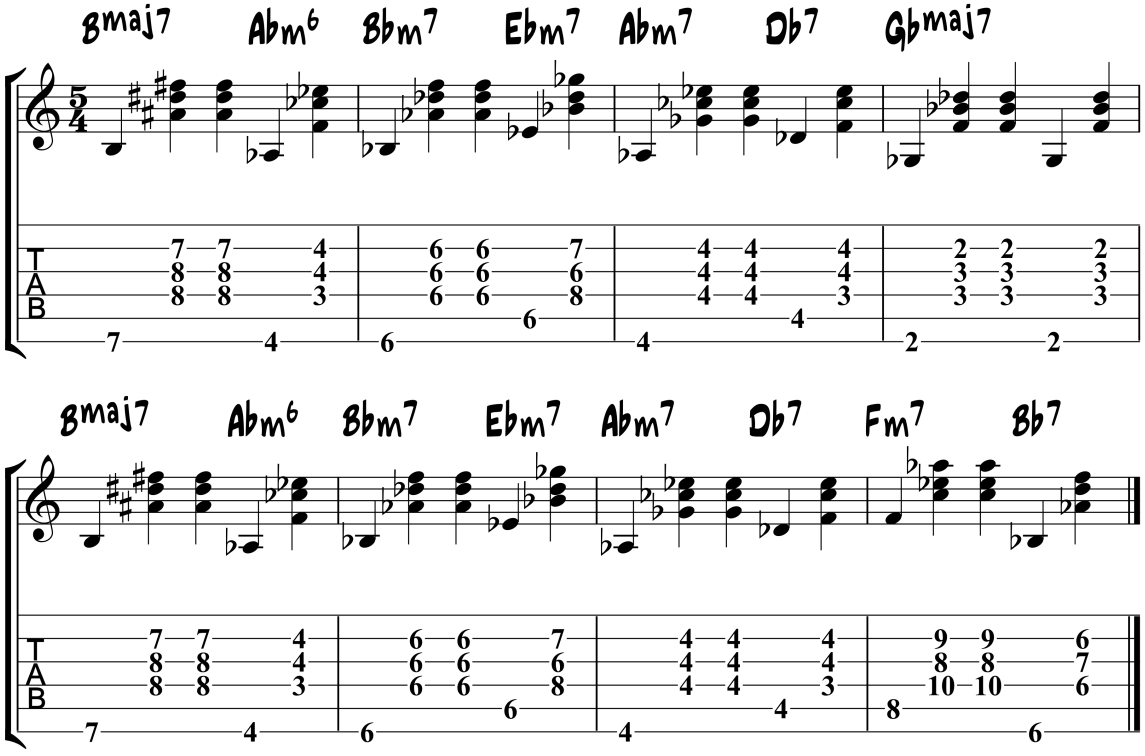
Audio Example 3



Here's the bass first pattern applied to the B section of the tune.

After you have this section down, apply it to the entire song.

Audio Example 4



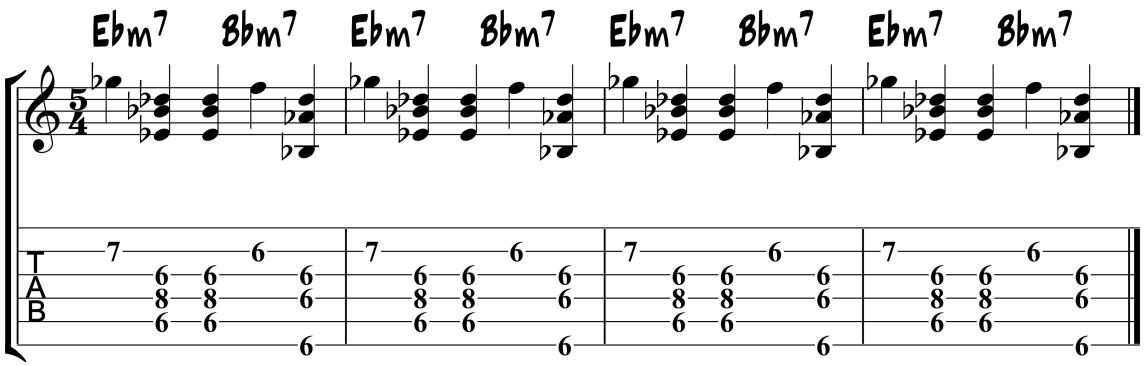
Melody Note First Pattern

You now bring out the melody note of each chord shape, the highest note, as you expand your comping in 5/4.

Here's that pattern over the A section to get you started.

Go slow, use a metronome, and keep counting until you're comfortable enough to run this pattern automatically.

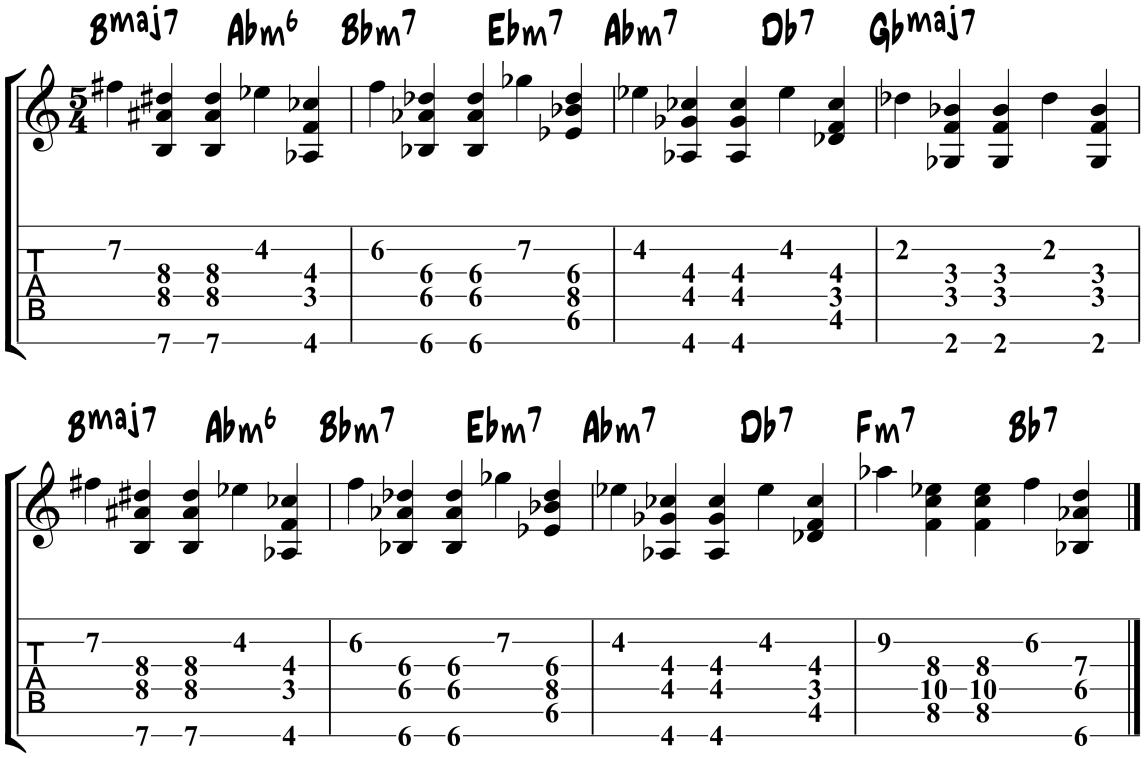
Audio Example 5



Here's the melody first pattern over the B section of the tune.

When this is comfortable, combine it with the A section pattern to run it over the entire tune.

Audio Example 6



Fingerpicking Pattern

The final chord exercise features a 5/4 fingerpicking pattern to expand your comping and comfort with this time signature.

Here's that pattern applied to the chords in the A section.

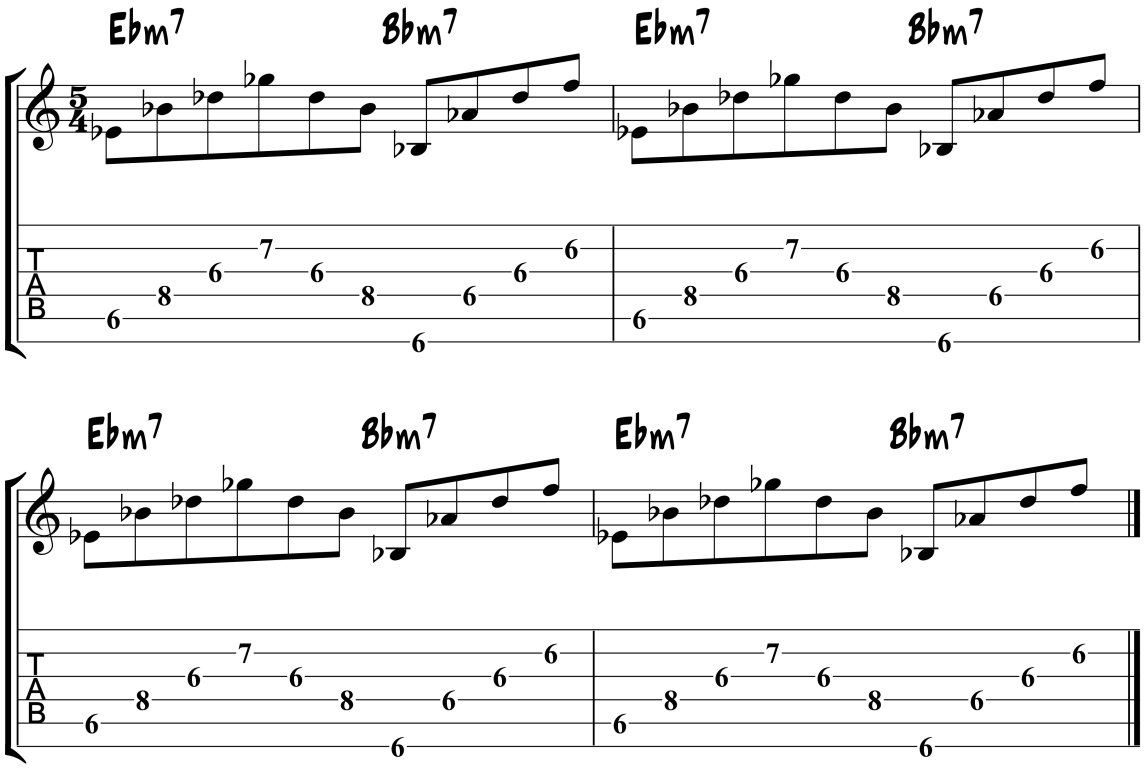
Go slow, start with a metronome, then when you've got it up to tempo, use it over the backing track.

Eventually you want to vary the rhythms and order of the pattern in your comping, but start with this until it's solid.

Because 5/4 takes a lot of focus in the beginning, repeated patterns like this allow you to focus on the time and not only on the notes.

Once the time needs less focus, then you can switch focus to the chords and fingerpicking pattern as you begin to vary those items.

Audio Example 7

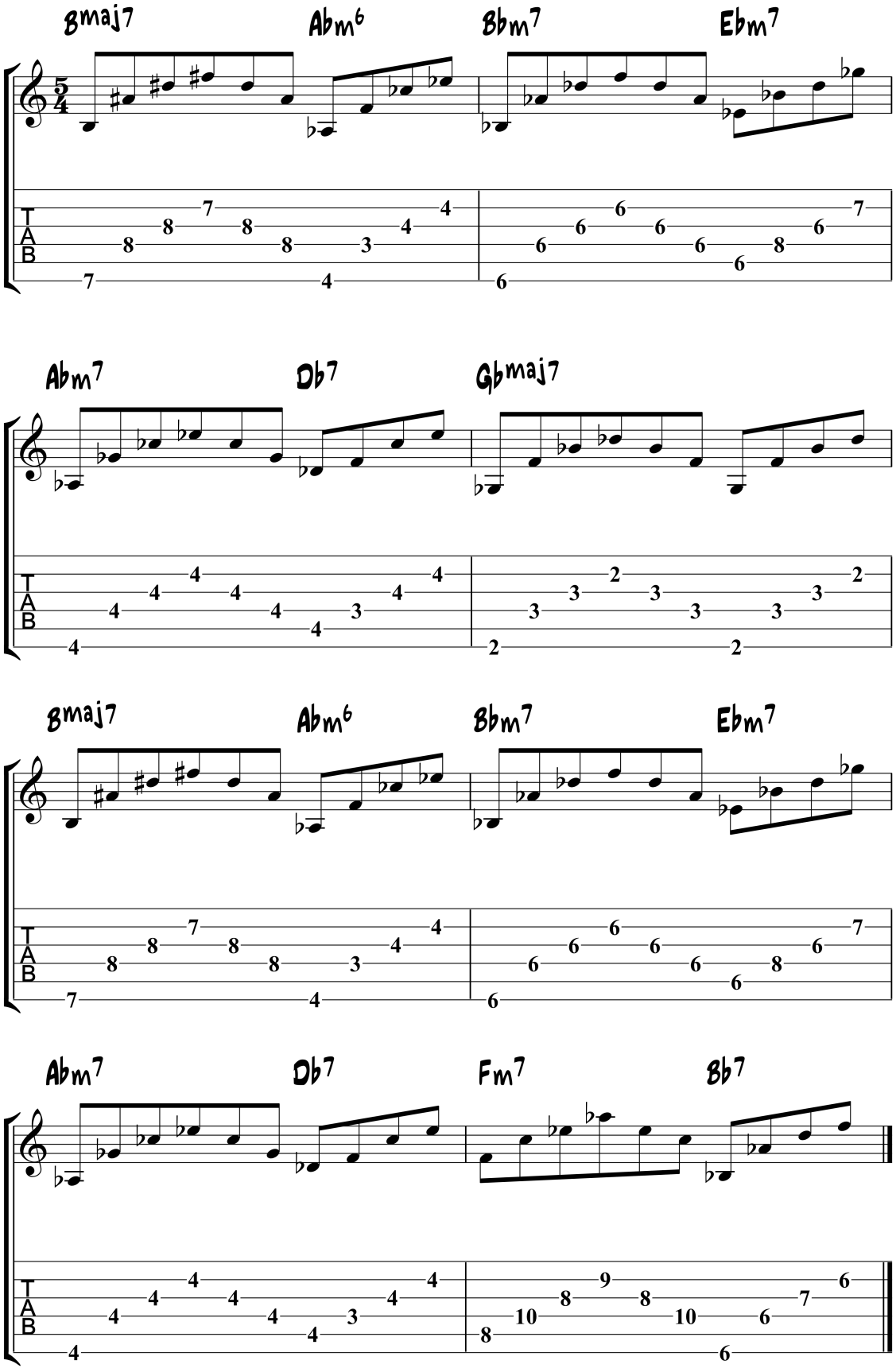


Here's the fingerpicking pattern applied to each chord in the B section to cover the whole tune in your studies.

When you can play this section, combine it with the A section pattern over the backing track to outline the whole tune.

Then, when you're ready, start to alter the rhythms as you apply variations to this pattern in your comping over Take Five.

Audio Example 8


Bmaj7
Abm6
Bbm7
Ebm7
Abm7
Db7
Gbmaj7
Bmaj7
Abm6
Bbm7
Ebm7
Abm7
Db7
Fm7
Bb7