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## Introducing Root And Fifth



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In *Lesson 6* we learned that an octave shape is created by playing up two frets and across two strings.

The octave shape is hugely helpful for playing the bass, as the shape is transferable to all notes and therefore helps us to play and create rock grooves.

There is another shape that is transferable around the fingerboard in a similar way to the octave shape and this is known as the **root and fifth**.

If you look at *Figure 1* below you will see that a root and fifth shape is created by playing up two frets and across one string.

### Lesson Objectives

- Introduce **root and fifth** note bass lines.
- Introduce the new bass note of E.
- Introduce the concept of note naming.
- Introduce the idea of a fifth below and a fifth above.

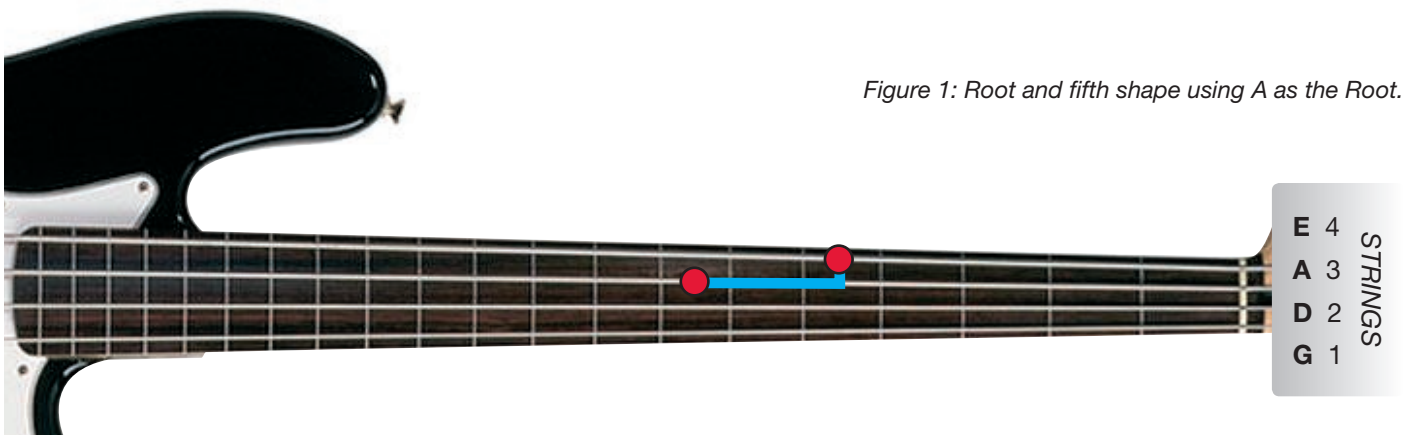


Figure 1: Root and fifth shape using A as the Root.

## Root and Fifth using A as our Root note

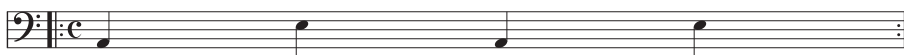
In the same way as the octave shape is transferable to all other notes, so is the root and fifth shape. However, we need to start with a practical example somewhere, so we shall start on the bass note of A.

In our first exercise we are going to play the bass note of A (E string 5th fret) with our first finger on our left hand. If we then move up two frets and across one string we can place our fourth finger on the bass note of E (A string 7th fret).

As usual, follow the exercise below using the multimedia files.

**Exercise 1**

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## Note Naming – Understanding the Concept of 5th

It is important to know the names of the notes you are playing. This was easier for the octave shape because both notes had the same name. In a root and fifth shape though there are two different notes.

Using the musical alphabet, it is easy to count up from the root to the fifth. Let me explain with the help of the following table.

Look at the table below. If we start with the bass note of A and take A as 1, then count to 5, you get E. If you follow the logic through you get to your octave.

*Figure 1 – Understanding the concept of a 5th above.*

<b>A</b>	B	C	D	<b>E</b>	F	G	A
<b>1st</b>	2nd	3rd	4th	<b>5th</b>	6th	7th	Octave

Therefore, from your starting note, you can use the 5th shape on the bass guitar to find your 5th. If you then apply the naming concept in our table above, you will also be able to name the 5th.

## Transferring the Root and Fifth Shape

Now that we have an idea of the root and fifth shape we should now practise playing different root bass notes to develop our ability to play different shapes.

Use the next exercise to become fluent in playing root and fifth patterns with A, G, C and D bass notes. You know the shape, you know where these bass notes are on your fingerboard... work them out and then play them.

The multimedia files are available as always and will help you check that you are right.

### Exercise 2

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Using the note naming method, we have now produced a table that shows you how to name the 5th for each of our 4 bass notes, A, G, C and D. You can refer to this table to check you have it right and it is useful to learn the relationships between notes for our future studies.

Root	2nd	3rd	4th	5th
<b>A</b>	B	C	D	<b>E</b>
<b>G</b>	A	B	C	<b>D</b>
<b>C</b>	D	E	F	<b>G</b>
<b>D</b>	E	F	G	<b>A</b>

## 5th above the Root

It is convenient now to introduce the bass note of E. We have discovered that it is found on the A string at the 7th fret (two frets up and one across from our root bass note of A).

You may recall that there is an open string called E — the fourth string and the lowest sounding string on the bass guitar. It is possible to use this low E as part of a root and 5th pattern as well as an octave pattern. Let me explain...

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## 5th below Root

So far we have only played a fifth above the Root. For example, E<sub>(5TH)</sub> above A<sub>(Root)</sub>. It is in fact possible and musically desirable to be able play the 5th below the Root.

Let's try the next exercise which incorporates playing a 5th below.

To play a 5th below our A Root note, we play A at the 5th fret on the E string, and then we play the fifth below, by playing the E string unfretted as an Open String.

Take a close look at the next exercise and follow the multimedia files. In bars one and three you will see that you play the Root and 5th below. In bar two you are playing the Root and 5th above. In the last bar of the exercise though, you need to play both a 5th above and a 5th below!

Take full advantage of the multimedia files to check your understanding and then play along.

### Exercise 3

lesson008.ibsirf.03



# Developing Root and 5th Shapes

As I am sure you can understand there are many different possibilities and as a bass player you need to develop the skill of being able to play root and 5th patterns combining many different root notes.

Here is a challenging study that combines not only different root notes, but also different note values. Make good use of the supportive multimedia files and work through the exercise slowly making sure you are getting it right. Build the speed as you become more comfortable with the exercise and the skills you are developing.

## Exercise 4

lesson008.ibsif.04

### A Half Note

In Exercise 4, you will see a note that is new to you. This is a half note.

### Worth 2 beats

1 2 3 4  
Count