

# Making Your Own Exercises

## FROM TRANSCRIBED LINES

Here's a simple piece of a Sonny Rollins line from the album [Saxophone Colossus](#), the tune *St. Thomas*. It happens around 1:20. [Go to the article on Jazzadvice](#) to hear it.

Now, you can practice these exercise verbatim as they're definitely valuable, but, the eventual goal is to understand the process behind what we've done here; transcribing a line, extracting pieces of it to play over a particular chord, adding to it, applying creativity, and practicing it with some basic root movement.

Then, you can do the same thing with a line you transcribe and you'll learn a ton in the process. Enjoy!:)

### The original line



E-                      A7                      DΔ

A musical staff in treble clef with a 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of the following notes: F#4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), B4 (quarter), C#5 (quarter), B4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F#4 (quarter), E4 (quarter), D4 (half). Above the staff, three chords are indicated: E- above the first measure, A7 above the second measure, and DΔ above the third measure.

# Exercise #1

## Minor Madness



\*Uses this part of the line as inspiration

Here we've extracted the minor portion of the Sonny Rollins line, added a couple notes to the end to make it a more definitive phrase that exists on its own.

Understanding where to apply a line is also crucial. Other than the minor chord shown, where do you think this line could also work? The obvious one is the major chord up a minor third from the minor chord shown.

\*Makes it a more definitive line on its own



# Exercise #2

## Chromatic Resolution



\*Uses this part of the line as inspiration

\*Chromatic Resolution

The exercise consists of six staves of music, each showing a chromatic resolution line. A blue double-headed arrow is drawn above the first staff, indicating the chromatic resolution. The chords written above the lines are as follows:

- Staff 1: Bb-, Eb7, AbΔ, A-, D7, GΔ
- Staff 2: G#-, C#7, F#Δ, G-, C7, FΔ
- Staff 3: F#-, B7, EΔ, F-, Bb7, EbΔ
- Staff 4: E-, A7, DΔ, Eb-, Ab7, DbΔ
- Staff 5: D-, G7, CΔ, C#-, F#7, BΔ
- Staff 6: C-, F7, BbΔ, B-, E7, AΔ

# Exercise #3

## Killer ii V



\*Uses this part of the line as inspiration

Here's another ii V. It uses the natural 13th and 9th on the dominant chord. You hear a lot of pros use lines like this.

\*13 5 3 9 You hear pros use this sound a lot on dominant

The image displays six staves of musical notation, each representing a different ii-V progression. Each staff begins with a blue bracket over the first two notes of the ii chord. The chord symbols are handwritten and include natural 13ths and 9ths on the dominant chord.

- Staff 1:  $Bb-$   $Eb7$   $Ab^\Delta$  |  $A-$   $D7$   $G^\Delta$
- Staff 2:  $G^\sharp-$   $C^\sharp7$   $F^\sharp^\Delta$  |  $G-$   $C7$   $F^\Delta$
- Staff 3:  $F^\sharp-$   $B7$   $E^\Delta$  |  $F-$   $Bb7$   $Eb^\Delta$
- Staff 4:  $E-$   $A7$   $D^\Delta$  |  $Eb-$   $Ab7$   $Db^\Delta$
- Staff 5:  $D-$   $G7$   $C^\Delta$  |  $C^\sharp-$   $F^\sharp7$   $B^\Delta$
- Staff 6:  $C-$   $F7$   $Bb^\Delta$  |  $B-$   $E7$   $A^\Delta$

# Exercise #4

## Dominant Fluidity



\*Uses this part of the line as inspiration

In this exercise, we took the dominant part of the Sonny Rollins line and then moved it down by minor 3rds as shown. Practicing things in different root movements like this will help you gain facility that you would otherwise not attain. It's also great for ear training to try to hear the transposed line in your head before you play it. For help with ear training, you may want to check out [The Ear Training Method](#).

You can play lines in practically any root movement, either ascending or descending. Minor thirds up, major thirds down, the circle of fifth etc. Experiment and work on the ones that are difficult. Aim to not write the exercise out in all keys and do it all in your mind if you can. The key is to visualize the chords and the lines in your mind. If you're having trouble visualizing it, you will have trouble playing it.

The point of exercises like this is to be able to think quickly and to gain fluidity in all keys.

\*Move the line down in minor 3rds. There are 3 groups, each with 4 key centers

GROUP 1 A7 DΔ F#7 BΔ Eb7 AbΔ C7 FΔ

GROUP 2 Bb7 EbΔ G7 CΔ E7 AΔ C#7 F#Δ

GROUP 3 B7 EΔ Ab7 DbΔ F7 BbΔ D7 GΔ

# Exercise #5

## Major Madness



\*Uses this part of the line as inspiration

In this exercise, we extracted the major part of the Sonny Rollins line, and practice it around the cycle of fifths as shown. It's a really beautiful way to end a line like this on the 13th of the major chord.

\*Ending on the 13th gives the melodic unit a nice shape and sound

# Do you understand the Process?

1. Transcribe a line.
2. Extract pieces of it to play over a particular chord
3. Define a purpose for the exercise you're creating
4. Add to it/Remove from it or change it in some way if you like
5. Pick a root movement like half steps down, cycle of 5ths, etc.
6. Apply creativity
7. Now you have your own exercise. PRACTICE IT!
8. Try not to write it down in all keys. Do the transpositions in your head. This has to do with how well you can visualize in your mind. Check out the [Visualization eBook](#) for help.

## And then?

- Apply what you're learning in the exercises to tunes you're working on
- Figure out what other chords you can use each exercise on
- Experiment practicing with different root movements
- Transcribe another line
- Get more creative!

As always, stay tuned to [jazzadvice.com](http://jazzadvice.com) to get free tips, exercises, and inspiration!

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Something that helps greatly with playing lines in all keys around different root movements is visualization. Without it, you're seriously crippling your ability to play in all keys. [This eBook](#) will help you learn the process quickly.



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