Hey, Get Off The Root!

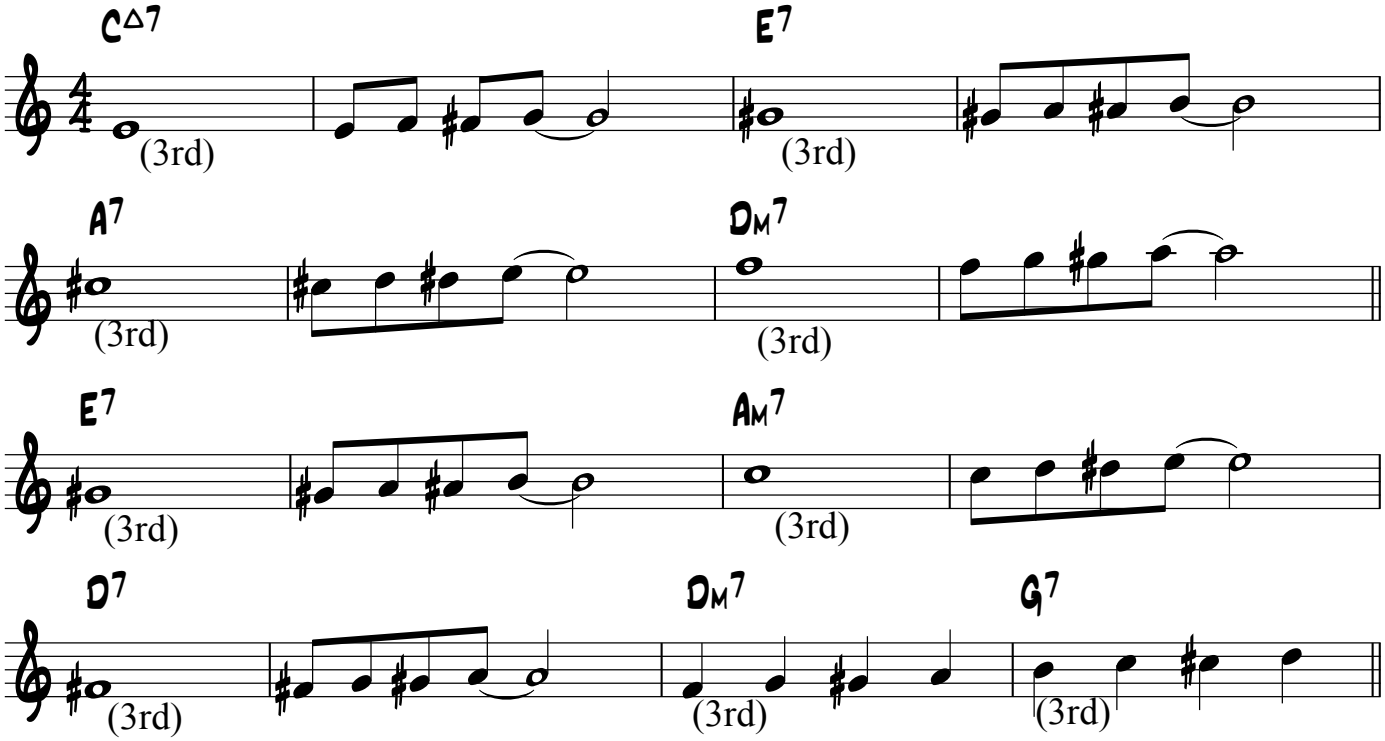
From Digging Deeper Jazz Videos #70

As we begin working on our soloing, we use the root of the chord a lot. It's a developmental thing - when we see an E7, the first thing we think of is an E. Then, we try to play that E on our instrument, hopefully in time. And that is great. But, after not too long, we want to get a bit deeper inside the chords. We want to have an E7 give us other thoughts, other than "E."

This is good soloing advice for all of us, but most especially for bass players. The roll of the bass player is, when they see an E7, to play the note E pretty quickly. So it's not surprising that most novice bass players begin 95% of their solo lines on the root. It's what they are used to. Today's the day that we admit that we have a "Root Problem," and make a plan!

Here, we'll choose the 3rd as our point of departure. When the 3rd becomes second nature for us (after week or months), do the same exercise with the 5th, or the 7th, or the 13th, or the b5 to begin each chord. This will help you to REALLY get to know your way around your instrument, and to REALLY be comfortable with the chords you are playing.

All Of Me (beginning on the 3rd of each chord)



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