

Everyday Bass Practice Routine (30 Minutes Total)

Warm-Up & Fretboard Mapping (5 Mins):

Pick one key from the Circle of Fifths. Find the root note in at least two different positions on the neck.

Run the major scale in both locations using a metronome at 60 BPM to orient your fingers and check your tone.

Scale & Arpeggio Mechanics (10 Mins):

Alternate daily between your Major/Minor scales and basic Triad 7th arpeggios. Play through the shapes slowly, focusing on clean fretting, hand position, and letting each note ring for its complete duration.

Rhythmic Subdivision Drills (10 Mins):

Lock onto a single root note with a metronome at 60–80 BPM.

Cycle smoothly through the rhythmic pyramid:

Whole notes - Half notes - Quarter notes - 8th notes - 16th notes - Triplets.

Focus on timing precision and consistent plucking dynamics.

Application & Grooving (5 Mins):

Put on a simple drum loop or backing track (iReal Pro or YouTube) in your key of the day. Use only the chord tones or scale notes you just drilled to create a functional Bassline.

Reading Music - Optional but Highly Recommended!

Learn to read standard notation, it's not hard, but takes time and repetition. It helps with learning the fretboard, Rhythmic understanding, Harmonic understanding, and you learn the written language of music which has been around for hundreds of years. It will benefit you forever!

How to Practice: Execution Guidelines

Practice Element

Pacing

What to Do

5 to 10 minutes of targeted work daily is better than a 3-hour weekend grind.

What to Avoid

Skipping days and trying to make up for lost time in one long session.

Metronome Use

What to Do

Lock each note directly onto the click. Focus on micro-adjustments if you fall ahead or behind.

What to Avoid

Rushing tempos before the physical movement is smooth and relaxed.

Tone & Articulation

What to Do

Strive for a full, clean note every time. Hold notes for their full value until the next beat.

What to Avoid

Letting string buzz, fret clack, or early muting shortchange the note.

Mindset

What to Do

Keep exercise practice completely separate from casual song play or noodling.

What to Avoid

Counting casual play toward your focused practice routine.

How to Practice: Environment, Setup & Intent

Before you even touch a string, your practice environment dictates whether you will have a productive session or get distracted. If your bass is zipped up in a gig bag in the closet, you've already created friction.

Skill building requires removing every barrier between your intention to practice and the physical act of playing.

1. Setting Up Your Dedicated Practice Space

You need a permanent or semi-permanent command centre where everything is ready to go at a moment's notice. Eliminate setup time entirely.

- **Bass on a Stand:** Your instrument should always be out on a stand, plugged in or ready to plug in. Seeing your bass staring at you when you walk into the room is half the psychological battle.
- **Gear Integration:** Have your amp, headphones, and a reliable audio setup permanently wired. If you need to spend ten minutes hunting for cables, finding power strips, or untangling adapters, your motivation will evaporate.
- **Monitoring & Playback:** You must have a seamless way to hear your bass clearly alongside a metronome and backing tracks. Whether through monitor speakers or a dedicated headphone rig with an auxiliary input, your tone needs to sit comfortably over your click and tracks.
- **The Practice Tool of Choice:** For daily backing tracks and functional harmony drills, **iReal Pro** is an indispensable tool. It allows you to instantly generate clean, editable jazz, pop, and blues backing tracks in any key or tempo without the clutter of full-band recordings.
- **Resources Close at Hand:** Keep your notebook, manuscript paper, and a pencil right at your station. When inspiration hits or you need to log your daily key from the Circle of Fifths, you shouldn't have to leave your chair.

2. Ergonomics: Playing Standing and Sitting

Physical comfort directly impacts your endurance and technique. Whether you practice sitting down or standing up, your physical posture must remain consistent.

- **Consistent Strap Height:** If you practice sitting on the couch all week and then strap your bass down to your knees for a gig, your fretting hand mechanics will fall apart. Set your strap height so that the bass hangs in the exact same physical position whether you are standing or sitting.
- **Left-Hand Freedom & Right-Hand Pocket:** Avoid hunching over the fretboard. Keep your wrists relaxed and your thumb centred behind the neck to prevent repetitive strain injuries.

3. The Golden Rule: Practice vs. Playing

This is where most developing musicians fail. You must draw a hard line between **intentional, deliberate practice** and casual enjoyment.

- **What Practice Is:** Working on fundamental mechanics, timing, fretboard mapping, and harmonic theory and new concepts. It is the gym work that conditions your hands and brain.
- **What Practice Is NOT:** Dedicated practice does **not** include learning your cover songs, noodling around, or jamming along to your favourite albums.
- **The Routine Boundary:** Casual song play, jamming, and creativity are vital, but they are your *reward*, not your practice routine. Counting casual playing as practice is like eating dessert and calling it a balanced diet. Keep your skill-building routine entirely separate so you can measure real, incremental progress over time.