With this in mind, I would try all of this stuff all over the fretboard. Get a feel for how each scale tone sounds against the root in every register of your bass. I like setting up a looped drone and exploring every note of the chromatic scale against it all over my fretboard.

I see my fretboard like a grid. I see scales and arpeggios as shapes and patterns. I also know every note on my fretboard, so I can adjust patterns to match tonality. This is important! You must know your fretboard inside and out before you will ever be able to play freely. Shapes alone won't cut it. This is why the following method works for me. If you have a different perception of tonality, your fretboard and scales, this may or may not work for you. I think it is worth exploring, however because, at the very least, it may spark an insight or idea of how you might further explore tonality using your own methodology!

I have found that a nice place to start is playing chord scales over changes from the fifth degree of each chord. The 5 works well for me because I arpeggiate quite a bit when I improvise, and when we arpeggiate from the fifth degree, we get: **5 7 9 11 13 R 3**

This means that when we play our standard patterns and shapes, we are now likely to land on upper-structure harmony instead of just chord tones. It also means that when we resolve to our root, we'll actually be resolving to the 5, which is usually a pretty consonant sound, depending on the chord type.

When exploring these ideas, play as you normally would over the given scale or chord type. Keep it natural but explore how different it can sound when you do it from a scale degree other than the root.

Instead of breaking these up one scale tone at a time, you will find a reference table for many chord types and a selection of preferred scalar substitutions below. If I choose a new root and scale type that alters the sound of the original chord type, I have added that to the right of the table.

My preferred chord scale substitutions for various chord types

Original chord type	New root	Chord scale	When altered, makes the original scale…
Major	5	Major	Lydian
Dominant	5	Minor pentatonic	
	5	Dorian	
	5	Melodic minor	Lydian dominant
Minor	5	Minor	Dorian
	♭7	Major	Dorian
Half-diminished	♭7	Minor	(ø7 with a ♭9)
A pure -7(♭5) scale with a nat. 9 is the sixth mode of Melodic minor	♭5	Lydian	(ø7 with a ♭9)
	♭3	Melodic minor	(ø7 with a nat. 9)
	♭7	Mixolydian ♭6	(ø7 with a nat. 9)
	♭7	Harmonic minor	(♭9, nat. 13)

Original chord type	New root	Chord scale	When altered, makes the original scale…
Sus4	Root	Mixolydian	
Altered dominant	Root	Mixolydian ♭9, ♭6	Fifth mode of Harmonic minor
The altered chord has so many available tensions that in essence, every note is available to you. The context of the line you play is what will determine whether it works or not.	Root	Half-whole sym. dim.	Symmetrical diminished scale
	♭6	Mixolydian ♭6	Mixo ♭6 is the fifth mode of melodic minor. This scale, played from the ♭6, hits most available tensions.
	Root	Super Locrian	(Seventh mode of melodic minor)
Diminished	Root	Whole-half sym. dim.	Symmetrical diminished scale
It is possible to conceive of the diminished scale as just the altered scale starting from the ♭9. This only literally applies to the symmetrical diminished scales, but using this logic, experiment with the altered scale of your choice, using the natural 7th as your starting point. Some work better than others. Explore!			
Δ7(#5)	6	Harmonic minor	
	6	Melodic minor	Adds #11
-(Δ7)	Root	Melodic minor	The use of either the harmonic or melodic minor scale is common.
	Root	Harmonic minor	
	5	Mixolydian ♭6	Melodic minor
	5	Mixolydian ♭9, ♭6	Harmonic minor
7(#11)	Root	Lydian dominant	These are all variations on melodic minor harmony
	5	Melodic minor	
	2	Mixolydian ♭6	
7(#5)	Root	Whole-tone	
Sus7(♭9)	♭7	Melodic minor	

Here are a few things to keep in mind when deciding on your chord scale options (or building your own chord scales).

• ANY altered tension implies the use of a #11
• A #9 implies a ♭9, and vice-versa
• You can add a #11 to any chord (major, dominant, augmented, etc.) with a major 3rd

If an altered dominant chord is written with the "Alt" symbol, it is generally assumed that *every* tension will be altered, making Super Locrian the preferred scale choice. Otherwise, use the notated extensions to guide you in your choice of preferred chord scale.

You can break any rule, but make sure you understand the rule before you abandon it altogether. In the end, it's about what sounds good to you, which will indeed evolve and change as you evolve and change as a player. Don't get too stuck in your ways. Always explore alternatives to what you know when you practice. I find it useful to pick tunes out of the *Real Book* and make scale-study charts out of them. Let's take a few tunes and use the chart above to mark down some scalar options.