

A FRESH APPROACH TO THE

DRUMSET



A DRUMMER'S GUIDE TO:

Rock Beats and Fills • Hand & Foot Technique • Coordination and Independence • Reading Music • Understanding Song Construction • R&B, Jazz & Latin Styles and more!

BY
MARK WESSELS
with **STANTON MOORE**

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A FRESH APPROACH TO THE DRUMSET

BY MARK WESSELS with STANTON MOORE

Introduction

When I set out to write this book, my number one goal was to include EVERYTHING a drummer needs to lay a solid foundation for future success. As any experienced drummer will tell you, becoming a great musician always comes back to the fundamentals – whether you want to play rock, funk, jazz, country, metal or Latin music!

In my own teaching studio, I had 5 or 10 methods that I used with my students, each containing some nugget of content that made it indispensable. But the frustration I had was in the planning and pacing of all that material. Each aspect of what I taught – technique, independence, musicianship, reading, grooves, fills, styles – could easily take over if I wasn't careful. The question really wasn't what my students needed to learn, but how much – and when?

That's why it's taken many years to plan and write this book. The goal since the beginning has been to successfully mix the building blocks of fundamentals with learning to play in all of the essential styles. Also, I wanted to have hip sounding "music-minus drums" tracks on each lesson that immediately applied the fundamentals to having fun playing music.

As you flip through the pages, I hope that you'll see that it's not just for beginners! There's enough material and concepts here to keep you busy well into the advanced stages of your drumming career.

I think you'll find that working through this book will be fun, motivating and rewarding. I wish you the best on your musical journey!

– MARK WESSELS

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The Rebound Stroke

Our last FREE video describes the Rebound Stroke. Scan the QR code to watch this important lesson!



The REBOUND stroke (also called the “FREE STROKE” or “NATURAL STROKE”) is named for how the stick is allowed to naturally rebound when it strikes the drum head. The rebound stroke is one of FIVE basic strokes for playing the drums.

Starting Without the Stick

Raise your arm to the playing position and pretend to dribble a basketball using a relaxed wrist motion. Keep the fingers, wrists and forearms completely free of any tension!



With the Stick

Starting in the playing position, raise the tip of the stick until it's perpendicular to the floor. Allow a little space between the palm of the hand and the back fingers.

As you “throw” the stick to the drum, allow it to rebound naturally back up. Watch yourself in the mirror as you play. There should be no stopping points in the path of the stick as it travels from up to down to up.



One Hand Exercise



To master the rebound stroke, you must train your muscles to respond in the same way every time – even when you're not thinking about it. We refer to this as “muscle memory.” Muscle memory can be good or bad depending on the habits you develop!

To train your muscles correctly on the rebound stroke, set a metronome on '60' and play right hand strokes for 2-5 minutes. Watch yourself in a mirror to constantly check your grip and path of the stick. Concentrate on the motion of the stick and make sure that there is NO TENSION in your arms, wrists, hands or fingers.

R R R R R R R R R R R R R R R R

Once you've played the “One Hand Exercise” with a metronome set on '60' (called “60 beats per minute” or “60 bpm”), increase the tempo to 70 bpm and play for another couple of minutes. Keep increasing the tempo until you reach 100 bpm. The play-along tracks “1-2 ; A-D” are metronome clicks at these 5 speeds.

MATCHED GRIP PLAYERS CAN SIMPLY REPEAT THIS EXERCISE ON THE LEFT HAND!



Watch yourself in the mirror to constantly monitor your grip and the path of the stick, making sure that you maintain good posture! Practice with the play-along tracks until you develop a consistent rebound stroke.

Lesson 3

Sticks on the Hi-Hat

To play the hi-hat with the sticks, start by depressing the pedal so the hi-hat cymbals are in the “closed” position. The hi-hat can be played with the tip or the shaft of the stick – each creates a unique sound (the tip is used for lighter sounds, the shaft for heavier sounds).

Most drummers play “right-over-left” on hi-hat/snare patterns, although playing the left hand on the hi-hat (called “open handed playing”) offers many advantages as well. Experiment with each hand on the hi-hat and find what works best for you.



Beginning Independence



Start by counting “1, 2, 3, 4” out loud while you play the top part (x) on the hi-hat, then add your opposite hand on the snare drum playing the bottom notes.

Next, try the bottom notes on the bass drum instead of snare drum. The play-along track alternates between the two: 4 times with hi-hat/snare, then 4 times hi-hat/bass.

1

X	X	X	X
●			

“1” “2” “3” “4”

2

X	X	X	X
		●	

“1” “2” “3” “4”

3

X	X	X	X
●		●	

“1” “2” “3” “4”

4

X	X	X	X
	●		●

“1” “2” “3” “4”

5

X	X	X	X
●	●	●	

“1” “2” “3” “4”

6

X	X	X	X
●		●	●

“1” “2” “3” “4”

Extra PRACTICE

For more practice on these exercises, you can split the parts between the feet – playing the top line with the left foot hi-hat. Then try playing with any combination of hands and feet: including both hands and both feet!

“ROCK STAR”



This rock beat is easy to learn – and it’s been played by some great drummers on countless hit records! The right hand will play steady beats on all four counts while you alternate between bass drum and snare drum beats.

Start slowly and count out loud as you play. Practice the groove over and over until you can play with steady relaxed strokes. After you can get a consistent sound and feel, try playing it with the play-along track.

HI-HAT	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
SNARE		●		●		●		●
BASS DRUM	●		●		●		●	
Count:	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4

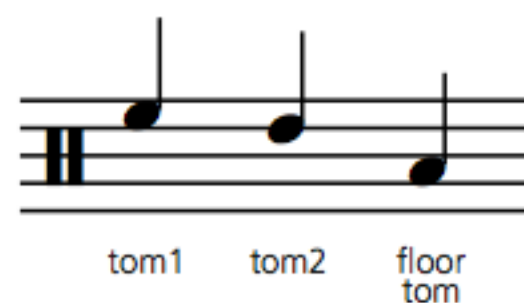
WHAT you play is not as important as HOW you play it. Even a simple groove like this, played in perfect time with conviction and a great sound can be all that a song needs to make the band sound great!

Lesson 7

The Toms



As you learn to play the toms, it's important to stay relaxed, using as little forearm motion as necessary. These exercises incorporate the first three RUDIMENTS around the snare and toms. Start slowly and practice with a metronome, striving for an even, relaxed stroke.



Singles



Doubles



Paradiddles

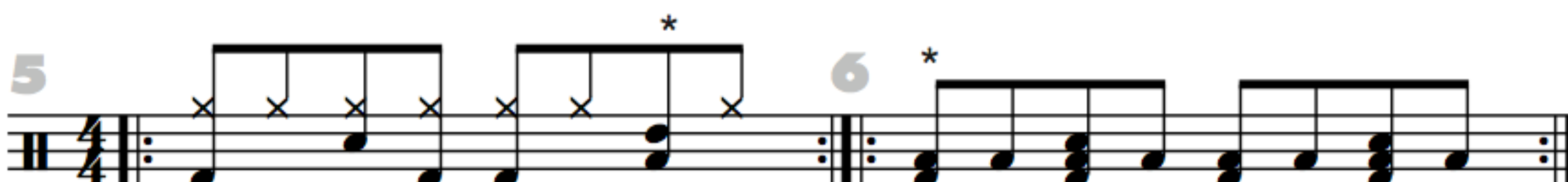
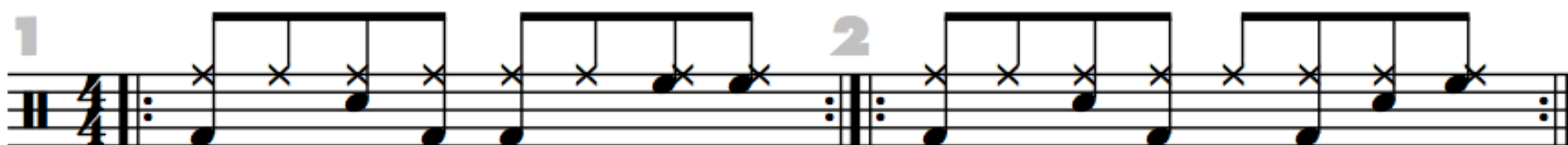


Extra PRACTICE

Practice each of the exercises above with foot "patterns" to help develop coordination and independence.



Beats Using the Toms



* RH moves from the ride to the floor tom

* RH plays the 8th note ride on the floor tom

Technique Focus: Multiple Bounce Roll

Learning to produce a multiple bounce on each hand is the crucial first step in learning to play a drum "roll."

In one motion, strike the drum and add a slight amount of pressure in the fulcrum to push the stick into the head. As the stick bounces, RELEASE the pressure to lengthen the bounce.



After you've developed long, sustained multiple bounces on each hand separately, play ALTERNATING bounces.

Start with slow 8th note bounces, making sure that the end of each bounce overlaps the beginning of the next.



"JUNGLE DRUMS"



In the first half of this tune, you'll "ride" on the floor tom while you move the left hand around the other drums. The second half is played with the shaft of the stick on the ride cymbal for a trashy-metal sound.



Music uses DYNAMIC MARKINGS to tell you how loud or soft to play. This tune uses two:

f – FORTE
(loud)

mf – MEZZO FORTE
(medium loud)

(A)

Play 3x's

mf

(B)

f

R L R R

Lesson 18

Syncopated 16th Note Beats



Adding left hand accents on the alternating 16th hi-hat pattern can create syncopated variations on the beats that you've learned in the previous lessons. To get a more syncopated sounding groove, keep the hi-hat soft and

snare drum accents loud. It may be helpful to practice with both hands on the snare drum so you can focus on playing strong accents and soft inner-beats.

Extra PRACTICE

To create hundreds more grooves like this, use an alternating 16th note ride pattern on the "16th Beat Combos" on the previous page.

To add a new sound to your syncopated 16th note beats, try moving your left hand to the snare drum. Also, try playing 8th note hi-hats with your left foot.

16th Open Hi-Hat Combos

Practice each of these patterns slowly until each limb hits precisely at the same time on the left foot closed hi-hat.

After you're comfortable, add each hi-hat combo on count one of these simple beats – then create your own!

Lesson 20

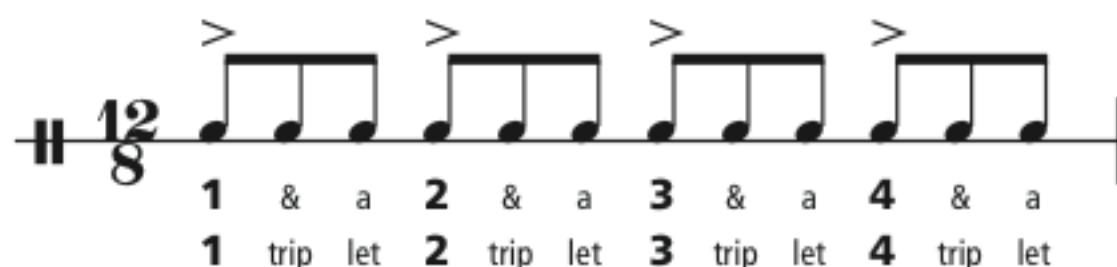
12/8 Time Signature

In 12/8 time, there are 12 eighth notes in each measure.



The most common way to count 12/8 is to keep four primary beats in each measure and subdivide each beat into 3 eighth notes instead of 2 (which we do in 4/4). Because each beat is subdivided into three parts instead of two, it is called a "compound" time signature.

Here are two common counting systems for 12/8 time. Try each one while placing an emphasis on each number.



12/8 Grooves



Start slowly and count the triplet subdivision out loud. Keep the hi-hat light, but remember that each grouping of 3 notes should have a slight emphasis at the beginning (but just an emphasis – NOT an accent)!



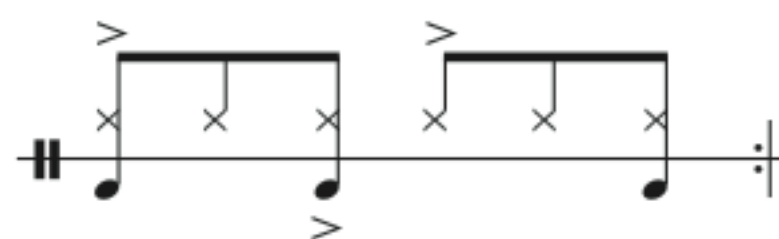
Technique Focus: Accented 3's

The relaxed technique you'll need to play the hi-hat on 12/8 grooves is similar to the controlled rebound that you learned in the previous lesson – only this time, without a space between each pattern.



Play a full stroke and allow the hand to "follow the stick" as it rebounds naturally. Use the Moeller motion on the 3rd stroke to lift the hand for the next accent.

Keeping the same flowing motion of the right hand hi-hat during 12/8 grooves while playing syncopated parts in the bass or snare is challenging. Practice this hi-hat pattern with both bass and snare:



12/8 Fills



3 bars time

2 count fill - J

3 bars time

4 count fill ----- J

2 Count Fills

4 Count Fills

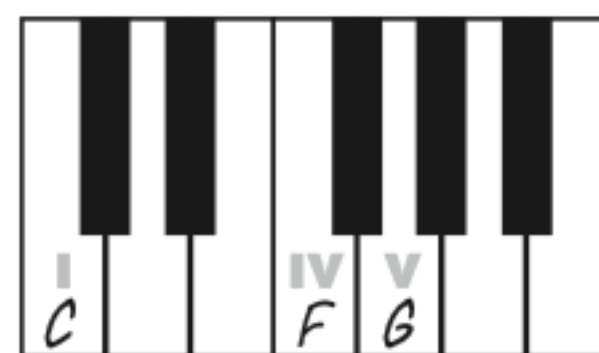
Remember that your fills should lead the music from one phrase to the next. Try starting softer and CRESCENDO through the last count or two of the fill.

Style Essential: 12/8 Blues



The "Blues" is considered to be the forerunner of many of today's popular styles – including jazz, R&B and rock.

Unlike the 8 or 16 bar form used in most pop music, the blues is typically played in a 12 bar form. Knowing the chord structure of the 12 bar blues will help you get comfortable with the phrasing necessary to master this style. See if you can pick out the notes on the keyboard and sing the blues progression along with the play-along track.



Intro

Count: 1 & a 2 & a 3 & a 4 & a

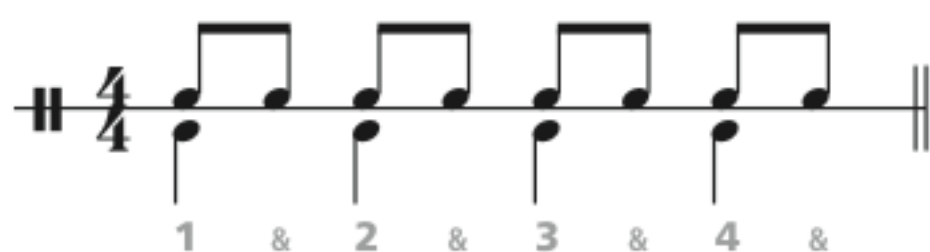
Lesson 23



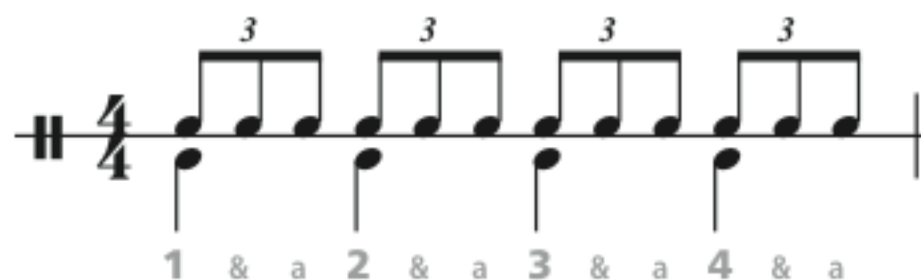
8th Note Triplets in Quarter Time

An 8th note triplet is defined as "three 8th notes in the space of two."

In quarter time, 8th notes subdivide the beat into two parts (there are two 8th notes per count):



8th note TRIPLETS would subdivide the beat into THREE parts (three 8th notes per count):



Practice this exercise to learn to space 8th notes and 8th note triplets evenly:



Style Essential: The Shuffle

The Shuffle, like the 2 beat, is a groove rhythm that has been adapted to many musical styles. The shuffle rhythm is built upon the 1st and 3rd note of a triplet:



Practice this exercise on your right hand, then with the left. As you speed up, "whip" the wrist for the accent.



Shuffle Grooves



The key to playing a great shuffle is in the feel – not the notes! The only way to master this style is to spend time listening to great shuffles by the masters! Shuffles by the legendary B.B. King are a great place to start.

"T-BONE SHUFFLE"



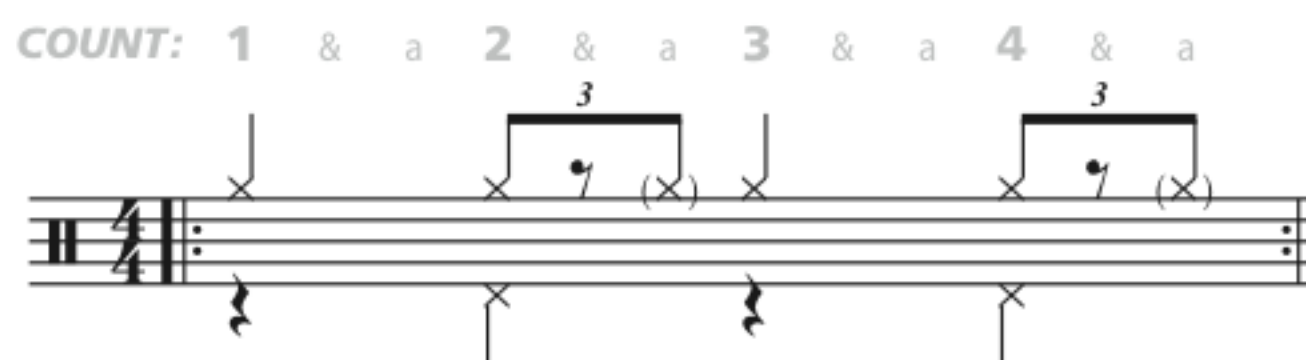
Lesson 25

Style Essential: Jazz Swing



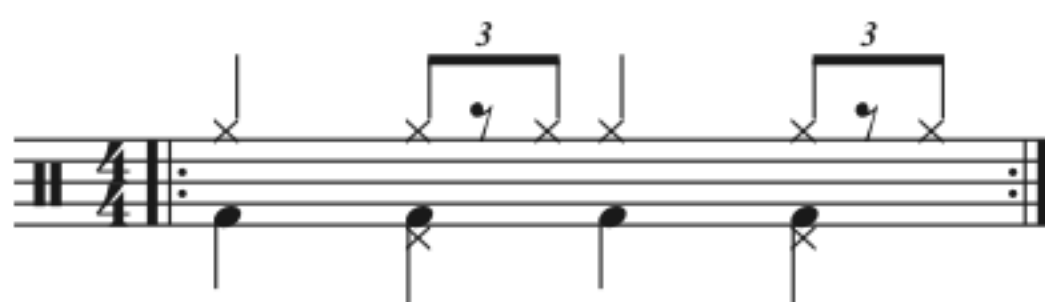
Jazz incorporates many different musical styles – from ragtime to bop. The swing style is fundamental to many other jazz styles and incorporates some of the most basic elements: a triplet feel, syncopation and improvisation. Developing a solid swing feel will improve all of your other feels and grooves!

- 1 Play quarters on the ride while you count triplets out loud. When you've achieved a consistent feel, add the left foot hi-hat, then the "skip" beat on the "a" of counts 2 & 4.



Jazz drummers often incorporate a "heel-toe" rocking motion with the left foot to play repetitive 2 & 4 hi-hat chicks. Another common technique involves bouncing the leg in the heel-up position.

2

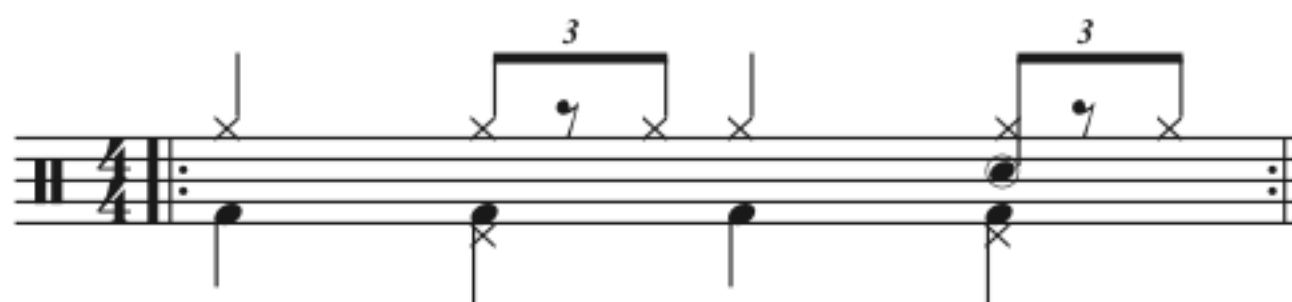


In a jazz style, very soft "feathered" bass drum quarter notes are sometimes used to reinforce the walking bass line. The bass drum should be only loud enough to be "felt, but not heard." Play heel down with an open tone.

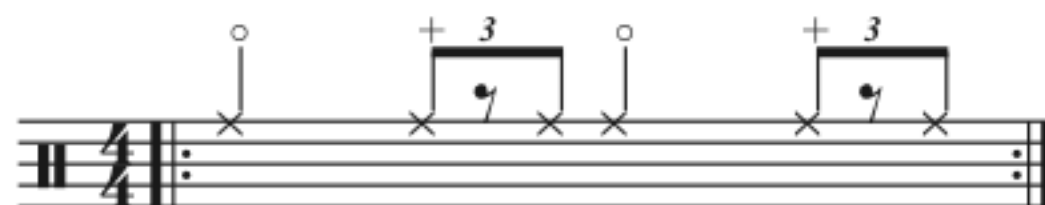
Practice the first two swing patterns with play-along track A until you can develop a relaxed sound and feel.

3

- 3 Sometimes jazz drummers add a count 4 cross-stick to reinforce the 2 & 4 feel.



4



Another common jazz groove uses an open hi-hat sizzle on 1 & 3, closing on 2 & 4. Play along with tracks B & C – 16 measures on the hi-hat groove, then move to the ride.

Technique Focus: Triplet Accent Patterns

Triplet accent patterns are useful for fills in the jazz swing style. Practice each measure separately until you're comfortable, then mix and match to create 4 or 8 count accent patterns.



Extra PRACTICE

- Add soft "feathered" bass drum quarters and a left foot hi-hat on 2 and 4.
- Play the accents around the drums
- More accent patterns are located on page 101.

Lesson 26

Jazz Comping Figures



An essential element of the jazz style is snare drum or bass drum “comping” underneath the ride cymbal and hi-hat pattern. Comping figures are used to compliment the other musicians in the band.

These exercises include a comping rhythm played with the jazz ride and hi-hat. Practice each measure separately with the slow play-along tracks until you develop a relaxed swing

feel – then play the comping figure on the bass drum. For more practice, move back and forth between snare and bass – or try playing the comping figure in the hi-hat.

! In jazz, the word COMP is short for “compliment” or “accompany.”

The musical score consists of 35 measures, numbered 1 through 35. Each measure is presented on a single staff. Above the staff, there is a set of rhythmic notation representing a ride cymbal and hi-hat pattern. This notation includes eighth and sixteenth notes, frequently grouped in threes (indicated by a '3' above the notes). Below the staff, there is a set of rhythmic notation representing a snare or bass drum pattern. This notation includes quarter and eighth notes, often with rests. The exercises are organized into seven rows, with five measures per row. Measures 18 and 19 feature a full measure rest in the snare/bass drum part, while the cymbal/hi-hat pattern continues.

Lesson 27

Setting Up Ensemble Figures



One key role of the drummer in a big band is to provide a “setup” to “kick” an ensemble figure. In these exercises, you’ll play a downbeat setup and kick the ensemble figure that follows with a bass drum and crash.

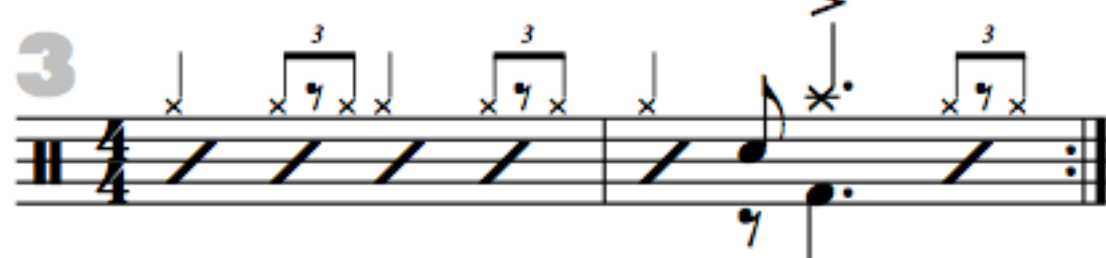
KICK & of 1:



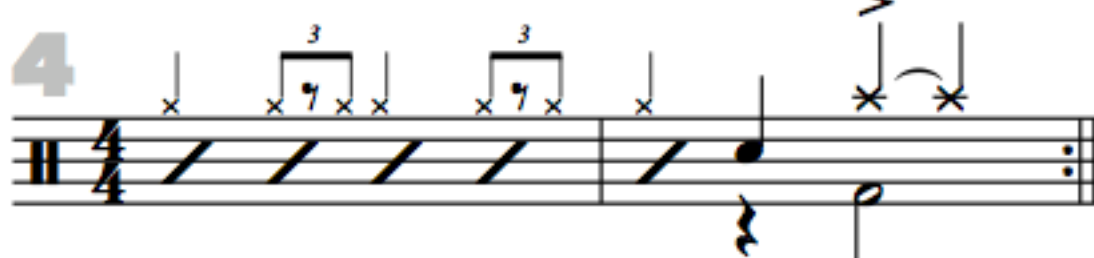
KICK 2:



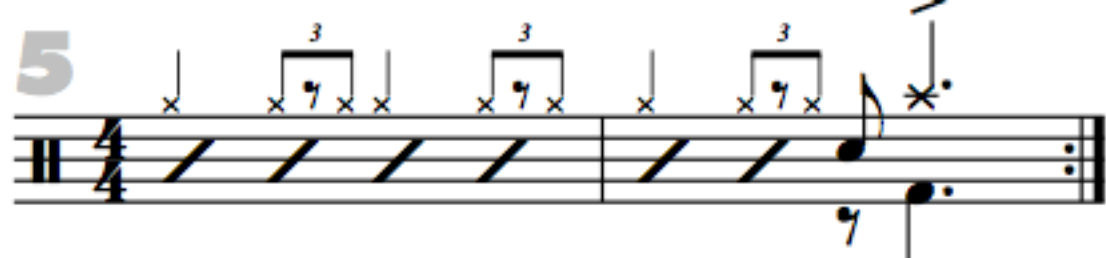
KICK & of 2:



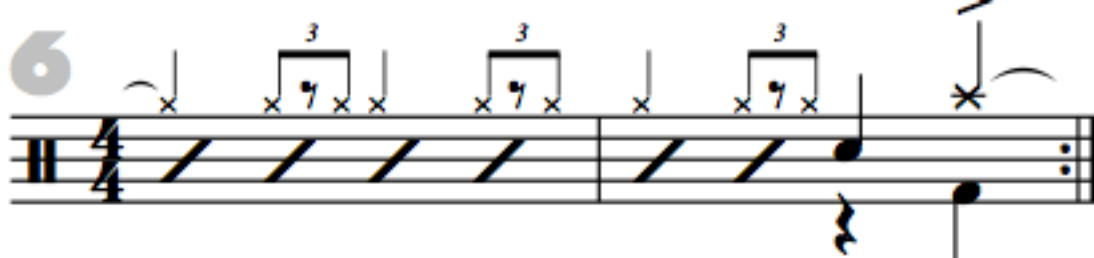
KICK 3:



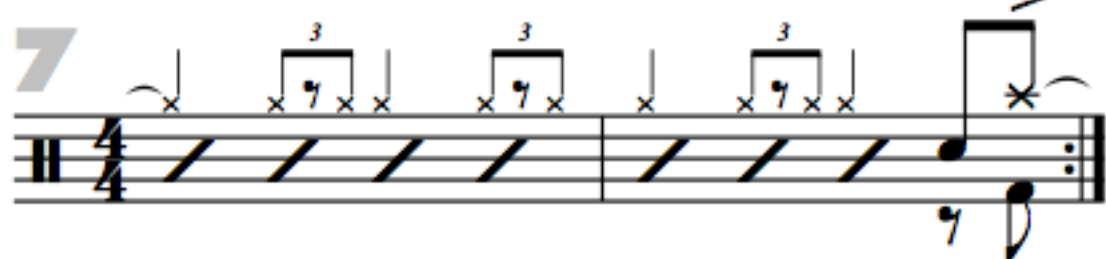
KICK & of 3:



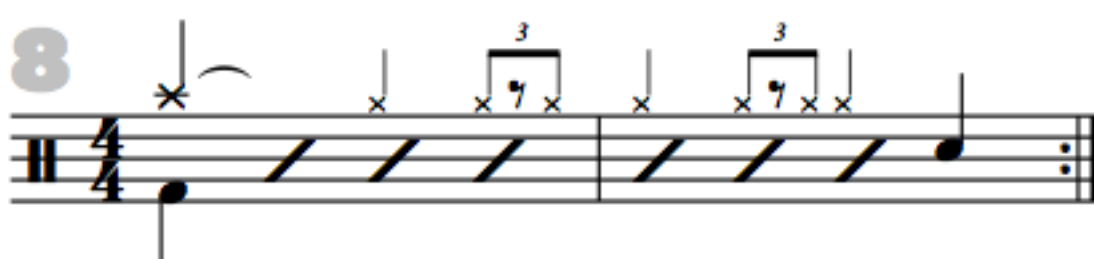
KICK 4:



KICK & of 4:



KICK 1:



Extra PRACTICE

Also play a bass drum setup with a snare kick (either along with a crash, or under the ride pattern).

Incorporating Fills

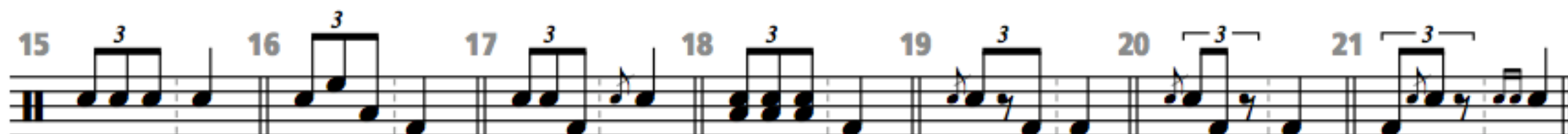
After you’ve gotten comfortable playing a single downbeat for the setup, you can begin to experiment with playing fills during the setup. Try these FLAMS AND DRAGS on the downbeat before the kick in each of the exercises above.



These sample fills add a “PICKUP” before the downbeat setup. Apply each to exercises 1–8 above.



ONE COUNT fills start one beat before the downbeat setup. Apply each of these sample fills to the exercises above.



Afro-Cuban Styles: The Mambo

The mambo is a rhythmically syncopated style of Afro-Cuban music. It relies heavily on the syncopation of the clavé rhythm as opposed to a distinct downbeat feel in the cha-cha.

Unlike the cha-cha, which has a 4/4 feel, the mambo has a 2 feel – therefore, it is usually written in cut time.

Cascara (pronounced "CAHS-cahra")



Cascara (meaning "shell") is a timbale rhythm played on the side of the drum. Since timbales are metal and the sticks are thin, a drumset player typically plays the cascara rhythm on either the rim of a drum or on the hi-hat.

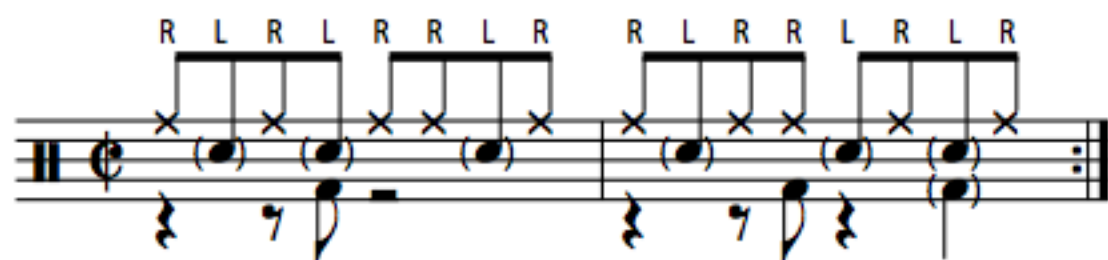
2:3 Cascara



With Bass Tumbao



Two common practices in Latin drumset grooves are to "fill in" the missing notes of the cascara, or to play clavé (example 2).



Conga Tumbao



In the mambo, the conguero will play slightly different parts in the verse and the chorus ("Montuno").

2:3 (Verse)



2:3 (Montuno)



Mambo Bell Pattern



In the Montuno (chorus) section of a salsa tune, a timbalero will switch from the cascara to a large/heavy mambo cowbell.

2:3 Mambo Bell Pattern (Montuno)



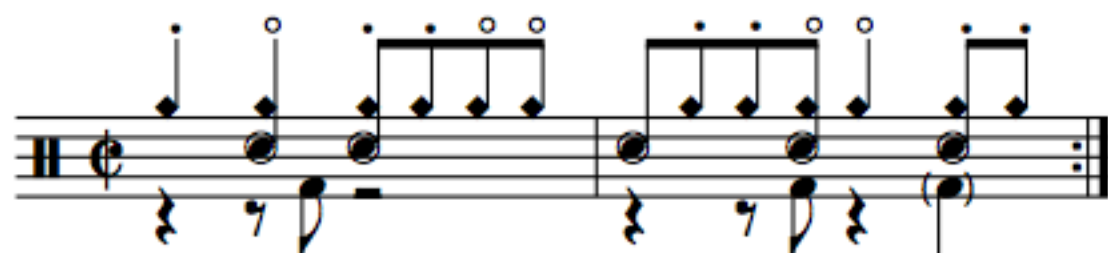
Extra PRACTICE

Practice each of the grooves on this page in 3:2 clavé by flipping the two measures.

Also practice the cascara pattern on the ride cymbal, adding downbeat or upbeat hi-hat chicks with the left foot.

The mambo bell pattern can be incorporated on the drumset on the bell of the ride cymbal, but generally is only authentic if it's played on a mambo cowbell. Here's a couple of afro-cuban groove variations that incorporate the mambo bell pattern:

2:3 Mambo Bell with Clavé/Bombo



2:3 Mambo with Conga Tumbao/Bombo



Lesson 34

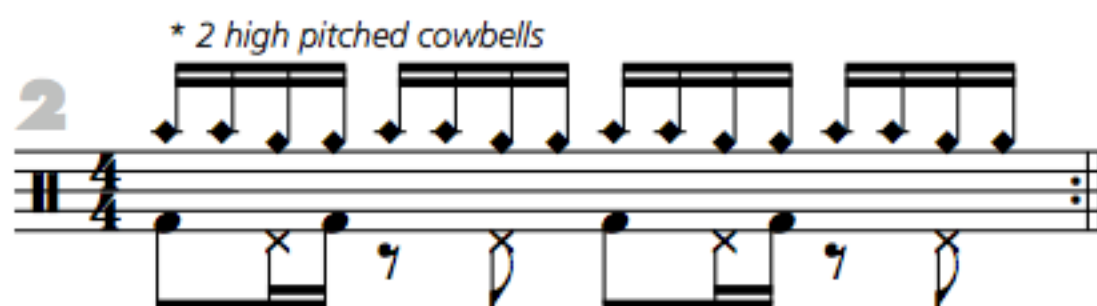
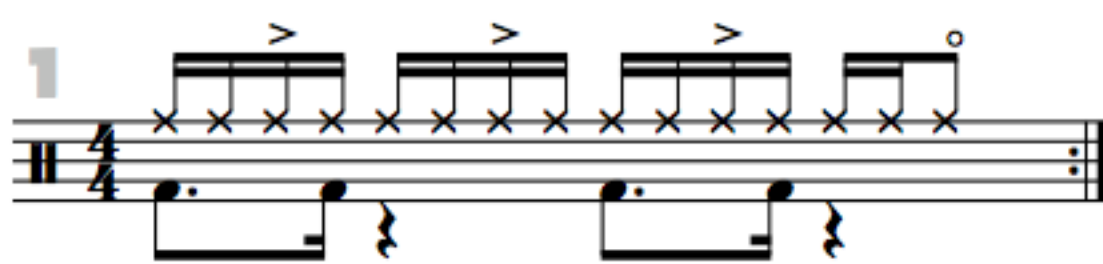
Caribbean Styles: Calypso



Calypso is a form of folk music which originated in Trinidad and was popular in the early 1900's throughout the West Indies. The style reached it's peak in popularity with Harry

Belafonte's recording of the Jamaican folk song "Day-O" (Banana Boat Song). Today, calypso is usually associated with steel drum bands, and "island" music.

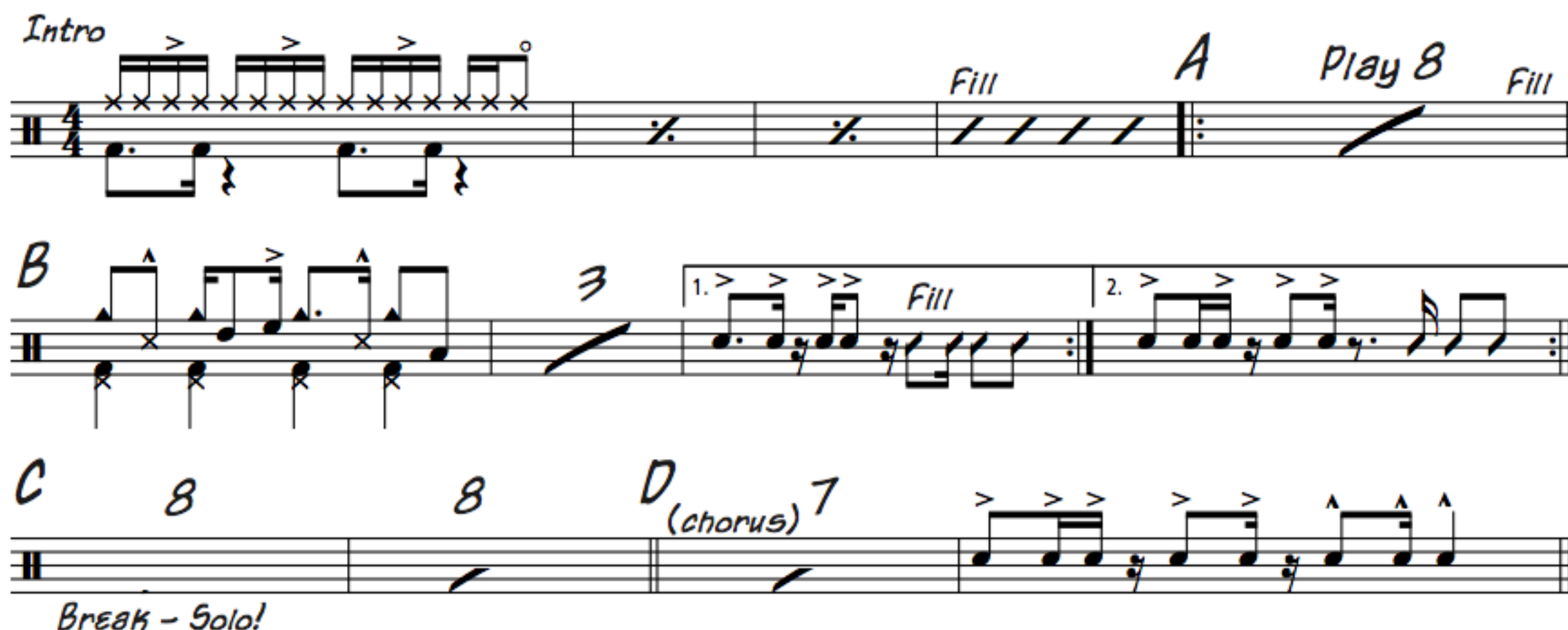
A calypso beat is very rhythmic in nature, but does not have any "authentic" pattern. Here are several calypso grooves that can be used in a variety of settings, but ultimately you'll need to use your ears to create a groove that works within a song.



"Caribbean Nights"



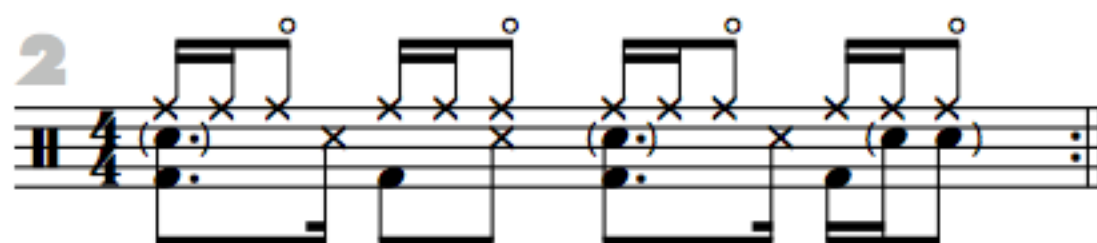
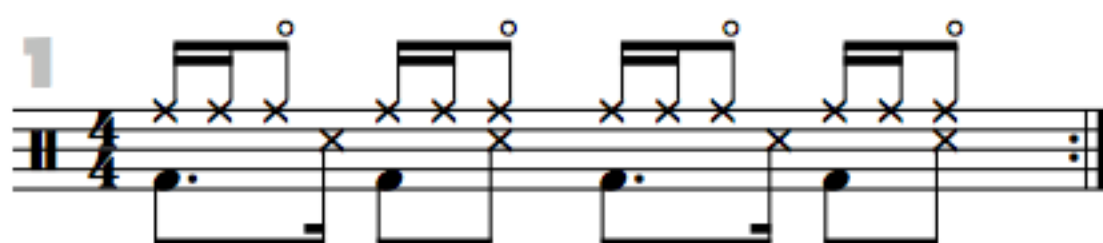
In addition to a standard ABA form with an intro, this calypso tune includes a solo during the BREAK at letter C. Experiment with different ideas during the solo – from laying down a groove with variations to more complicated fills.



Caribbean Styles: Soca



In the 1970's, the calypso style began to meld with the most popular "soul" style in the same decade: disco. The soca (named for the combination of Soul-Calypso) remains a popular dance groove for Caribbean style tunes. Groove #1 is a traditional soca – #2 adds some subtle complexity. In very fast socas, you may need to omit right hand 16ths.



APPENDIX

Reading

ISOLATED RHYTHMS

A B C D

E F G H

I J K L

M N O P

READING EXERCISE

2 SURFACE READING

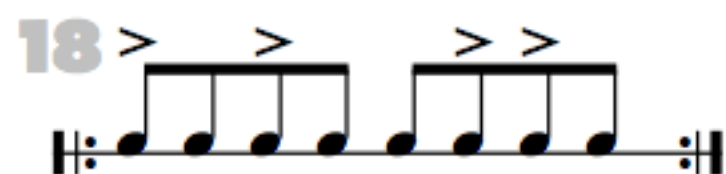
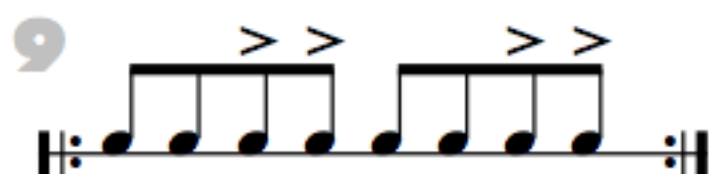
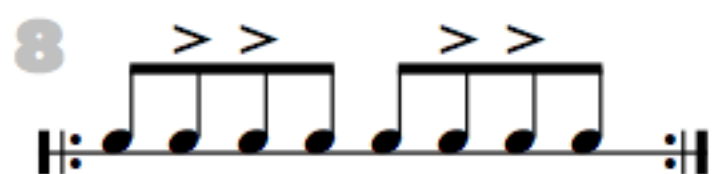
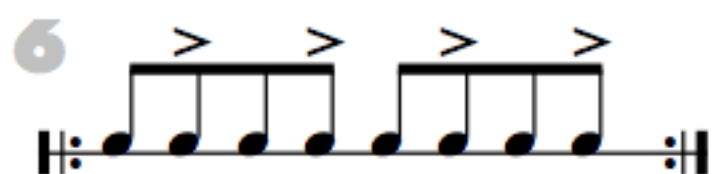
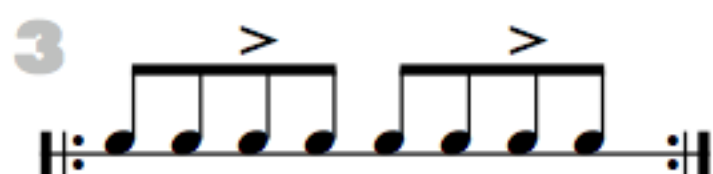
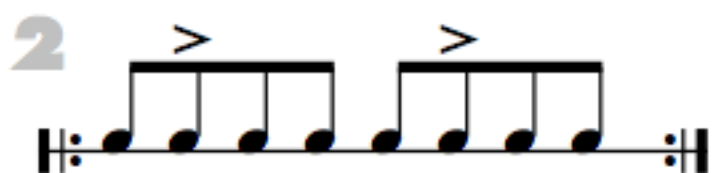
APPENDIX

Sticking Patterns



APPENDIX

Accent Patterns



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