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VIDEO EXAMPLE

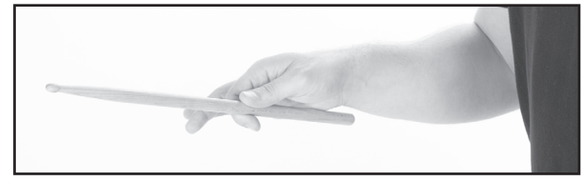
HOLDING THE DRUMSTICKS

In this section, we'll learn how to use the *matched* (or German) *grip*. This is the most common "modern" grip used by countless drummers, including Meg White (The White Stripes), John Bonham (Led Zeppelin), Joey Kramer (Aerosmith), Dave Grohl (Nirvana), and Tré Cool (Green Day), just to name a few.

1. Sit on the throne and let your arms hang freely straight down by your sides.

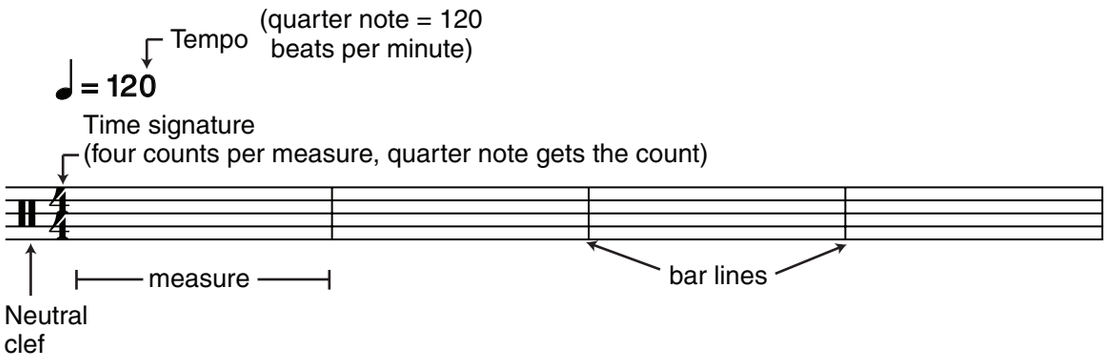
2. Maintain this upper arm position while raising your forearms until they are parallel with the floor. Make sure your palms are facing down towards the floor when you move into this position.

3. Now, loosely hold the drumsticks so that the forward two-thirds of each drumstick is showing. You want to grip the stick between your thumb and the first joint of your index finger. (The first joint is the first crease closest to your fingertip.)



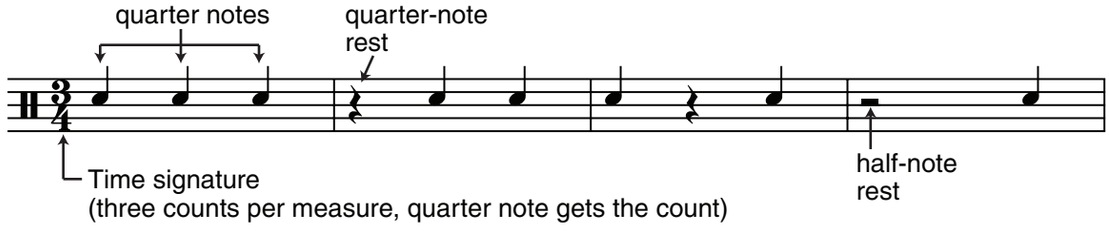
Putting It All Together

Here's how everything looks when it's all put together. This is the framework for music notation before all the notes and rests are written in.



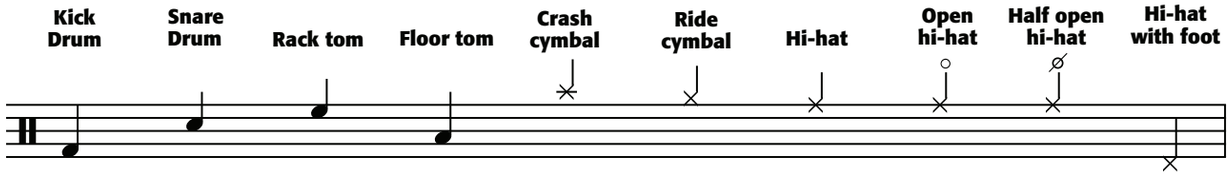
Writing in the Notes and Rests

Here's how music notation looks when notes and rests are added.



Drum Notation Key

Now that you know the basic music notation framework and terms used when reading and writing music, let's take a look at how drumset notation is written. Placing a note on a line or space of a staff shows the drummer which part of the drumset to play. A *drum notation key* is a map that shows which lines and spaces on the staff correspond to the various parts of the drumset. Use the following key for the music examples in this book.



Now you're ready to start playing your first beat.
Turn the page, and let's start drumming!

The Metronome

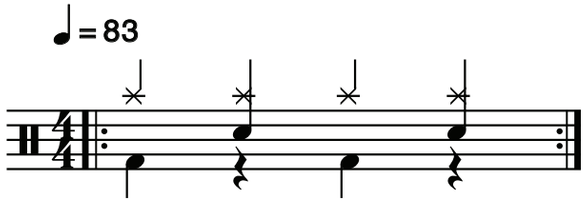
A *metronome* is a device used to determine tempos. Once you assign a tempo in BPM (beats per minute) into the device, the metronome will emit an audio and/or visual pulse at that tempo. A metronome is a great tool to use when practicing. It will help you develop a good sense of "time" which is one of the most important roles of a drummer. For your convenience, tempo markings have been indicated throughout this book by each example. Try practicing the lessons both with and without a metronome.

BASIC ROCK BEATS

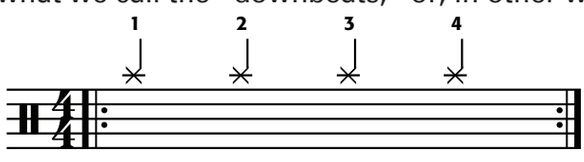
"Dead Leaves and the Dirty Ground" from The White Stripes' *White Blood Cells* (2001)

Meg White lays down a no-nonsense rock drum beat in the opening track of The White Stripes' third studio album, *White Blood Cells*. This song has a time signature of $\frac{4}{4}$, which means that there are four counts per measure, and the quarter note gets the count. Here's how the beat looks when it's written out using music notation.

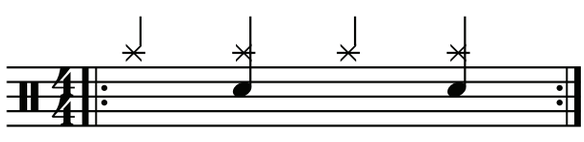
Original transcription (0:21):*



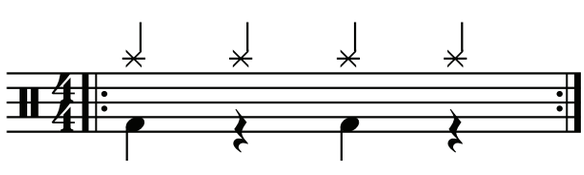
Let's start by striking the crash cymbal over and over using the drumstick in your right hand so you're playing quarter notes to the pulse of the music. Your stick should hit the cymbal on what we call the "downbeats," or, in other words, on beats 1, 2, 3, and 4 of each measure.



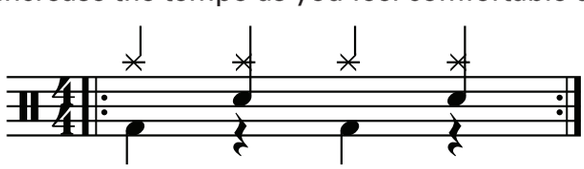
Now, let's continue to strike the crash cymbal on all four beats like the previous example, but this time, let's also strike the snare drum using the stick in your left hand on beats 2 and 4. Pay close attention to making sure both sticks hit their surface at exactly the same time.



Next, let's play the crash cymbal on all four beats, and this time, let's also play the kick drum, but only on beats 1 and 3. Again, pay special attention to making the kick drum and the right hand hit at exactly the same time on beats 1 and 3.



Finally, let's put it all together and play quarter notes on the crash cymbal, the kick drum on beats 1 and 3, and the snare drum on beats 2 and 4. Start slowly at first, and gradually increase the tempo as you feel comfortable until it matches the tempo of the recording.



Congratulations! You just played your very first rock beat!

* Use this to refer to the exact time the beat is played on the original recording.