LEAD GUITAR WORKSHOP

Fundamentals Of Rhythm

Suke Cerulo

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Fundamentals of Rhythm

By; Michael Suke Cerulo

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Chapter 1

Rhythm is the heartbeat of music. It's probably as old as human kind and has been used to communicate and connect people since the beginning. Rhythms are everywhere in nature and our world. Rhythm is it's own language and can exist without our 12 notes and chords. You can have music without melodies and music without harmonies, but it is impossible to have music without rhythm. Rhythm is time and time is always moving. Rhythm involves physical coordination and balance.

Rhythm is the secret weapon to sounding great, you don't need a lot of scales and you don't need fancy chords. With a strong rhythmic feel you will sound like a master with whatever notes and chords you know.

I started playing guitar at 12 years old and practiced all the time, hours a day. I took lesson starting the day after I got my first guitar until I graduated Berklee College of Music. When I graduated I knew all of the notes in all 12 keys, I could name any scale and spell any chord. I knew them all over my guitar and could see every note on my fretboard. I had completed and mastered everything I was told to do from 12 years old till graduation. I thought that at this point I would sound like the musician I always wanted to be, ...but I didn't. It wasn't until I met my drummer that I played with for over 20 years to show me how deficient I was in understanding and playing rhythms. I was bummed and amazed I made it so far with such a rudimentary level of rhythmic awareness. That has changed and I've become the guitar player/musician that I wanted to be. Without hesitation I can say it was because of my study and understanding of rhythms that did it. If you are good at rhythm then *anything* you play will sound great.

Beat, BPM, Bars and Time Signatures

Beat-Quarter Note

The beat in music is the base rhythmic unit that all other rhythms revolve around. The beat is a steady pulse that we feel throughout music. The beat can be slow or fast and it can change during a song. All rhythms are relative to this beat.

A beat is also known as a *quarter note,* you can think of a quarter note as a foot tap

This is a melodic quarter note, it shows rhythmic duration and note indication when on the music staff

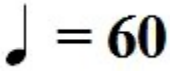
This is a quarter note represented with a slash. It only shows rhythmic duration no pitch/note indication

BPM-Beats per minute

We measure the frequency of the beats using the number of times per minute.

We call this the *tempo* of the music.

A tempo of 60 bpm is the same a beat once per second. It would be written

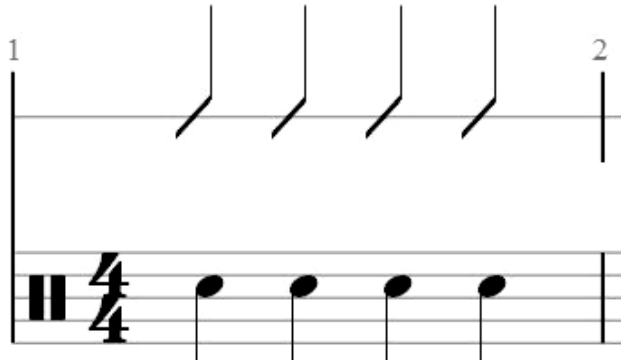


Bar/Measure

Once the tempo is established we start to group the number of beats into a measure. Most commonly we use 4 beats per measure. Traditionally we use the music staff to show notes and rhythms. We can ignore note information and just use the rhythm. Initially it was thought that you would draw 2 bar lines and the space in between was the measure. Nowadays the term measure and bar are used interchangeably

Below is 2 examples of 4 quarter notes in 1 measure.

- The top is using rhythmic slashes
- The bottom is the music staff with a percussion clef



Time Signatures

Most western music uses a count of 4 to pace our music (when we change chords etc). There are many situations where there would be a count different than 4. The next common count would be 3. You can have 5 or more too.

We use a time signature to tell how many beats we are using and even what type of beat (i.e. quarter note). There are times when we use other note values as a base to count with (i.e. eighth notes)

- The number on top represents the *number* of beats *per bar* (4)
- The bottom number represents the *type* of beat being *used* (Quarter note)

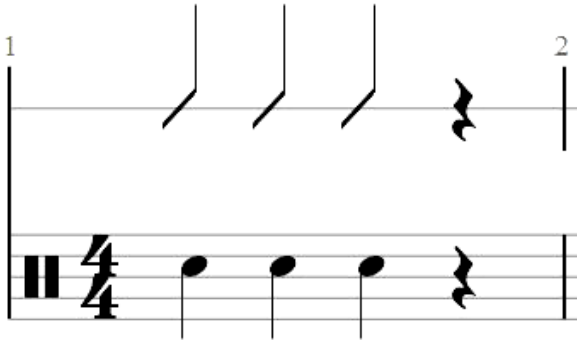
Whole, Half and Quarter-Notes and Rests

Rests

In rhythm for every rhythmic value we have an equal value that represents silence.

Below is a Quarter note rest

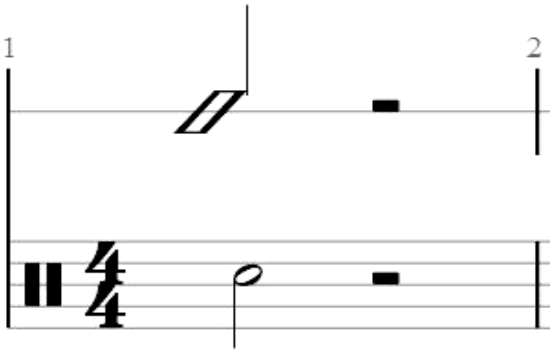
Here is 1 measure of rhythm with attacks on beats 1,2,3 and a rest on beat 4



Half Notes

When we add the value of **2** quarter notes together they create a *Half Note.* This means that *one* attack (or note) should last for *two foot taps.*

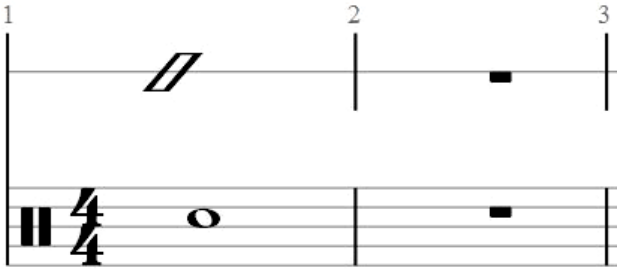
Below is 1 measure with a *half note* on beats 1 and 2
and a *half note rest* on beats 3 and 4



Whole Notes

When we add 4 quarter notes (or 2 half notes) we create a *Whole Note.* This means with *one* attack (or note) it should last for *four foot taps*.

Below is 2 measures,
the first with a *whole note*
and the second with a *whole note rest*



General Ideas

- Rhythms are named by the time they take in a bar of 4/4 (Whole note=whole bar, quarter note=quarter of the bar etc.)
- *GET A METRONOME!* Sorry to yell, but it's essential to have one. There are a ton of free apps for your smart phone. Keep it simple, you just need a steady click (beat). I like *ProMetronome by EUMLab.*
- A metronome is like having a drummer play the simplest drum beat.
- Using a metronome engages your ear and brain to listen outside of your self, one of the key elements to being a great musician
- Remember that a rhythm is just an occurrence in time, it doesn't have to be an instrument. It's your heartbeat, you walking down the street, water dripping, a jack hammer, it's every where all the time.
- Some instruments sustain sound, like our voice, the guitar, saxophones, cymbals. They all can hold a sound for many seconds.
- Some instruments are percussive and don't sustain. Think of a hand clap, a snare drum or a shaker. Even though an instrument like this cannot sustain a sound for a whole note, they still follow the rhythm as if it could.
- *You can always be rhythmic any time of day no matter where you are, that is so awesome!*

Exercises

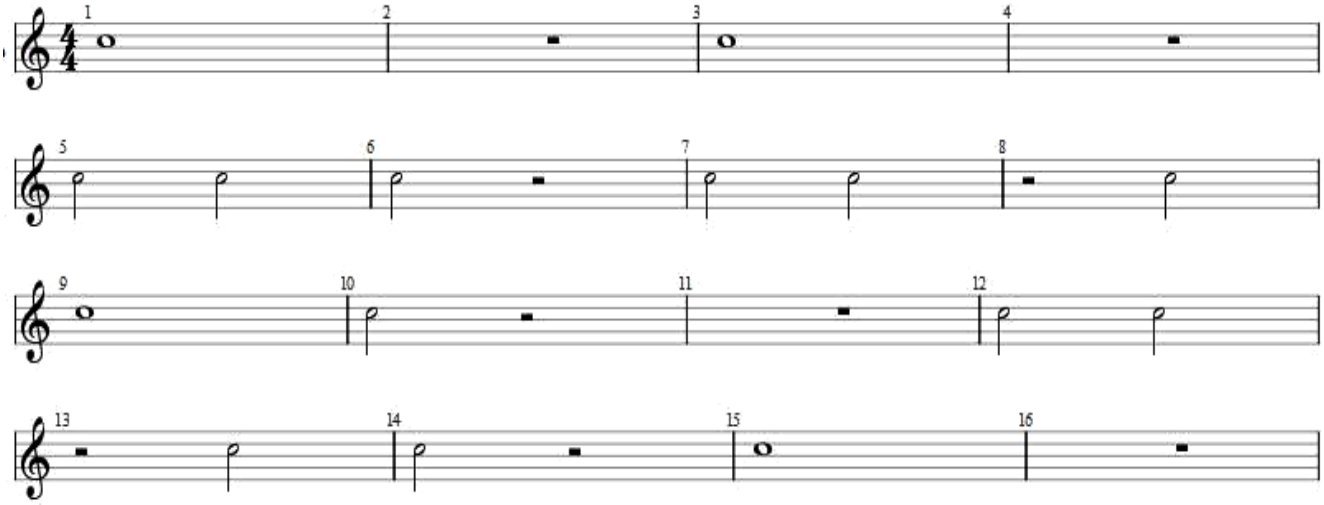
Beats and Tempo

- Play any music you have and find the quarter note by tapping or clapping. If you are not sure where the beat is, imagine you have to count off the song to someone.
- After finding the beat of the song, use your metronome app and use the “TAP” function to tap the quarter note in time and find the BPM of your song. Most apps have a TAP function. It's only as good as your timing is, so tap evenly.
- Set your metronome to 60 BPM and start tapping your left foot with it. Once you've done it for 30 seconds switch to your right foot. Then do the same with you left hand on your left thigh and then right hand on the right thigh.
- Do the same as above but set your metronome to 90 BPM, then do it again at 120 BPM and finally 150BPM

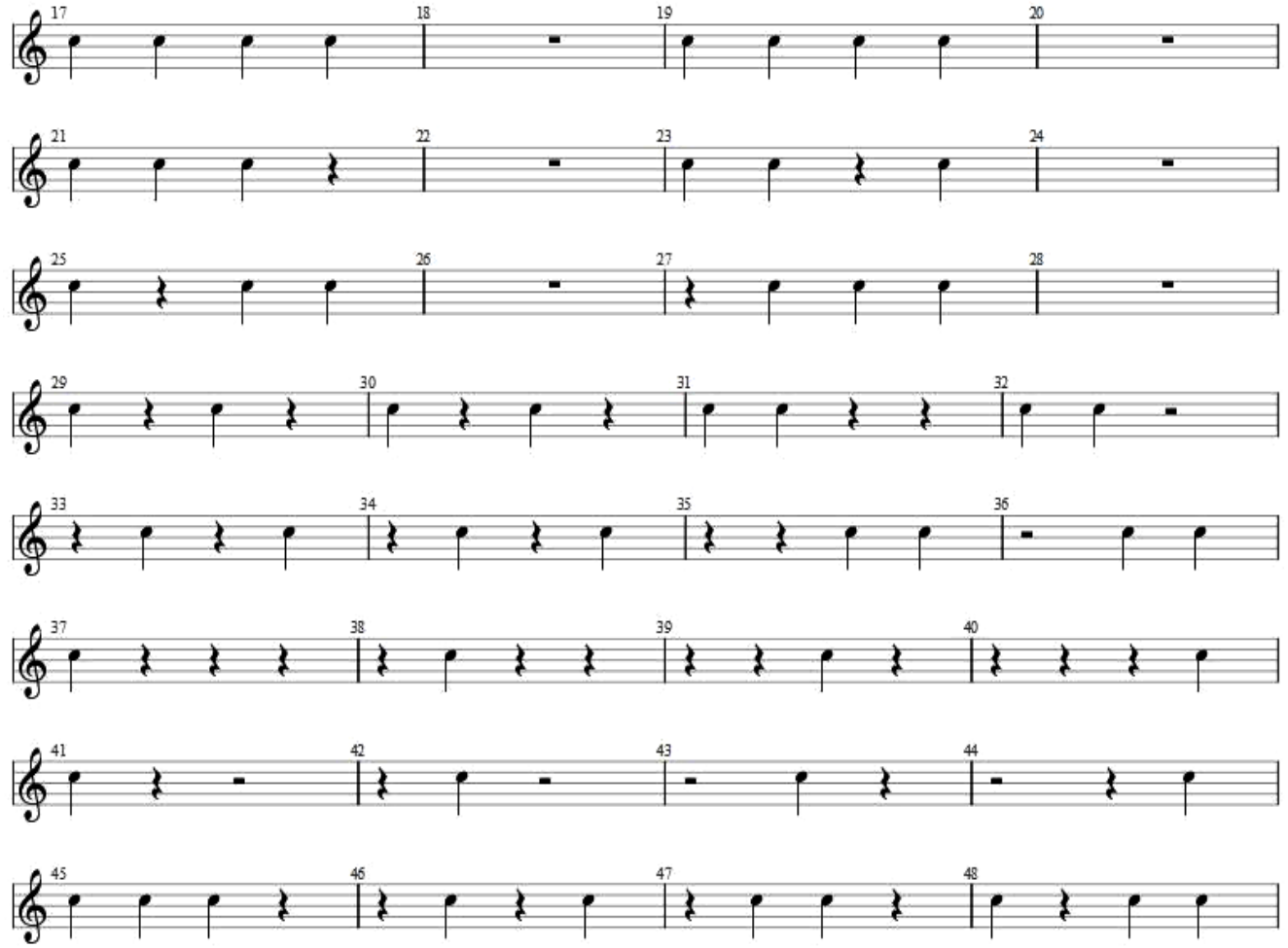
Play Along Exercises

- Start metronome at 60bpm
- You must tap your foot and count every beat (1,2,3,4)
- For every *rest* you must silence the guitar (use you right palm to stop strings)
- **CLAP-** Clap every rhythm. Even though a clap does not sustain, you still clap as if it did. For example: if you have a whole note you would clap on beat 1. You would also tap your foot and count for all four beats.
- **OPEN STRING**- Pluck an open string for every rhythm. For example, pluck your low E string for every rhythm while tapping and counting every beat (quarter-note)
- **STRUM**- Pick *one* chord (G or Em, anything) and strum for every rhythm. Tap and count every beat.
- **ARPEGGIATE**- Pick *one* chord (G or Em, anything) and pluck each note of the chord for every rhythm. Tap and count every beat.
- **PENTATONIC SCALE**- Play pattern #1 of the pentatonic scales (open position (G/Em) or any key) and pluck each note of the scale, in order for every rhythm. You can ascend or descend the scale (or both if exercise is long enough)

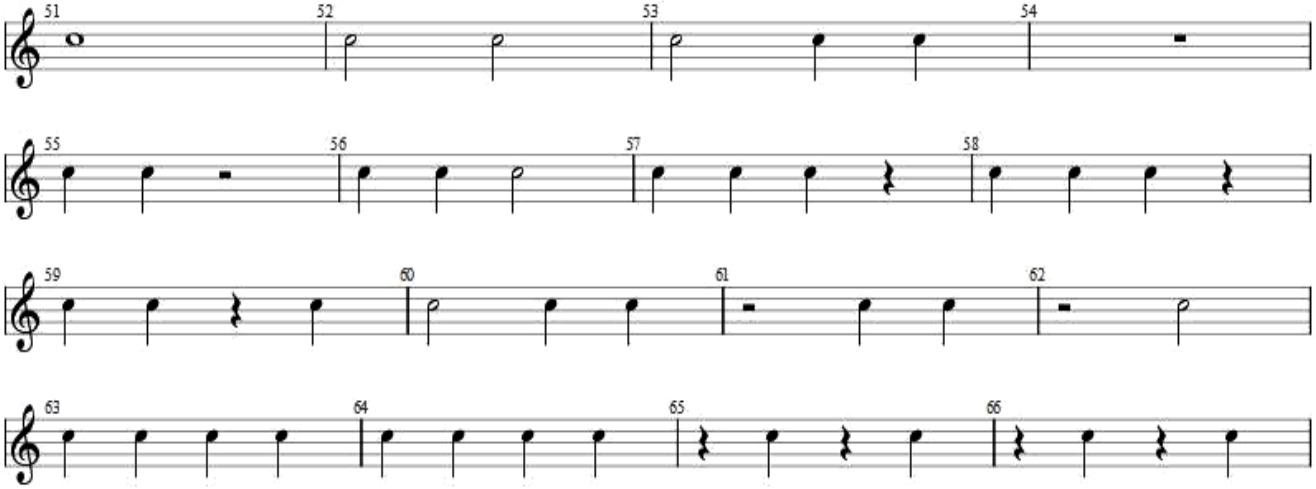
Whole and Half-notes



Quarter-notes



Whole, Half and Quarter-notes



General Ideas

- Be patient and make sure you count and tap every beat.
- You must use a metronome. It can be your friend.
- The metronome just needs to be a steady click, nothing too complicated.
- Start slow at 60bpm. If you need, you can slow it down.
- For some folks this is brand new to do but it is so helpful to becoming a better musician.
- Repetition is important, keep doing the exercises until they are very comfortable and then speed up the tempo 5-10 bpm.
- Remember that rhythm is independent of any notes and instrument, they are just occurrences in time.
- Rhythm is with you all the time and is everywhere around you.

Fundamentals of Rhythm

Chapter 2

Whole, Half and Quarter-notes

It's important to get a solid foundation of following quarter-notes in music and being able to tap and count. Quarter-notes create an underlying grid that gives a reference to all the other rhythms.

Play Along Exercises

- Start metronome at 60bpm
- You must tap your foot and count every beat (1,2,3,4)
- For every *rest* you must silence the guitar (use you right palm to stop strings)
- **CLAP-** Clap every rhythm. Even though a clap does not sustain, you still clap as if it did. For example: if you have a whole note you would clap on beat 1. You would also tap your foot and count for all four beats.
- **OPEN STRING**- Pluck an open string for every rhythm. For example, pluck your low E string for every rhythm while tapping and counting every beat (quarter-note)
- **STRUM**- Pick *one* chord (G or Em, anything) and strum for every rhythm. Tap and count every beat.
- **ARPEGGIATE**- Pick *one* chord (G or Em, anything) and pluck each note of the chord for every rhythm. Tap and count every beat.
- **PENTATONIC SCALE**- Play pattern #1 of the pentatonic scales (open position (G/Em) or any key) and pluck each note of the scale, in order for every rhythm. You can ascend or descend the scale (or both if exercise is long enough).

Whole, Half and Quarter-notes

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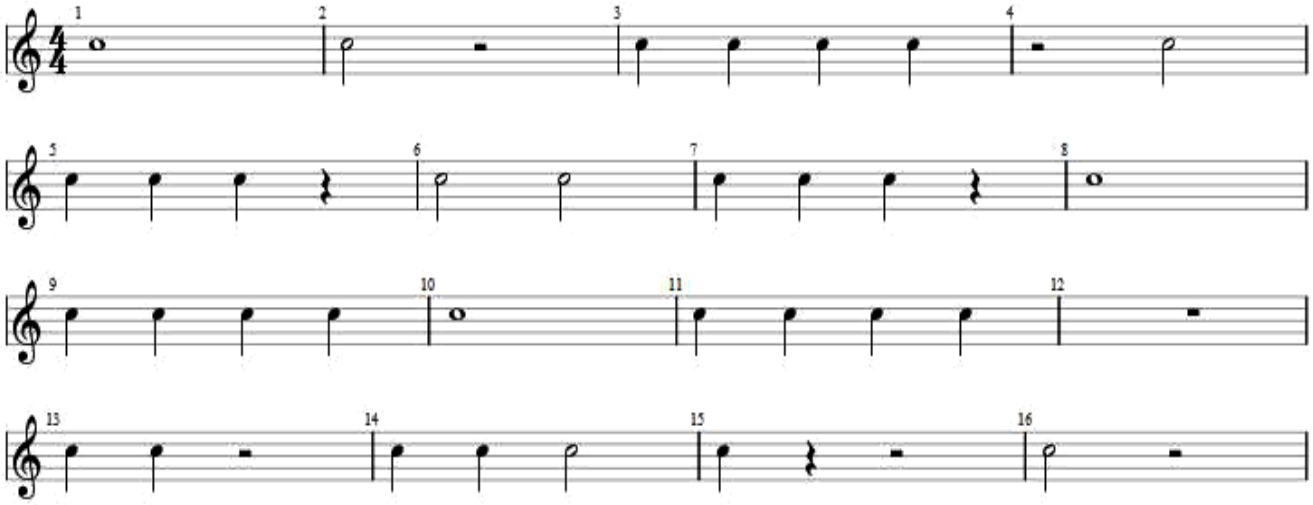

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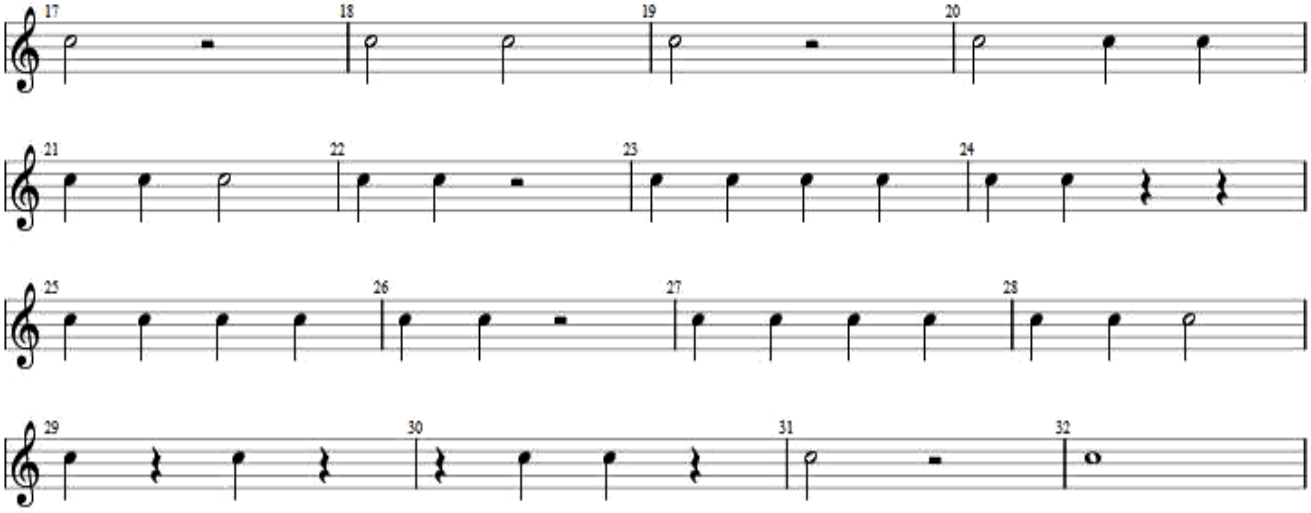

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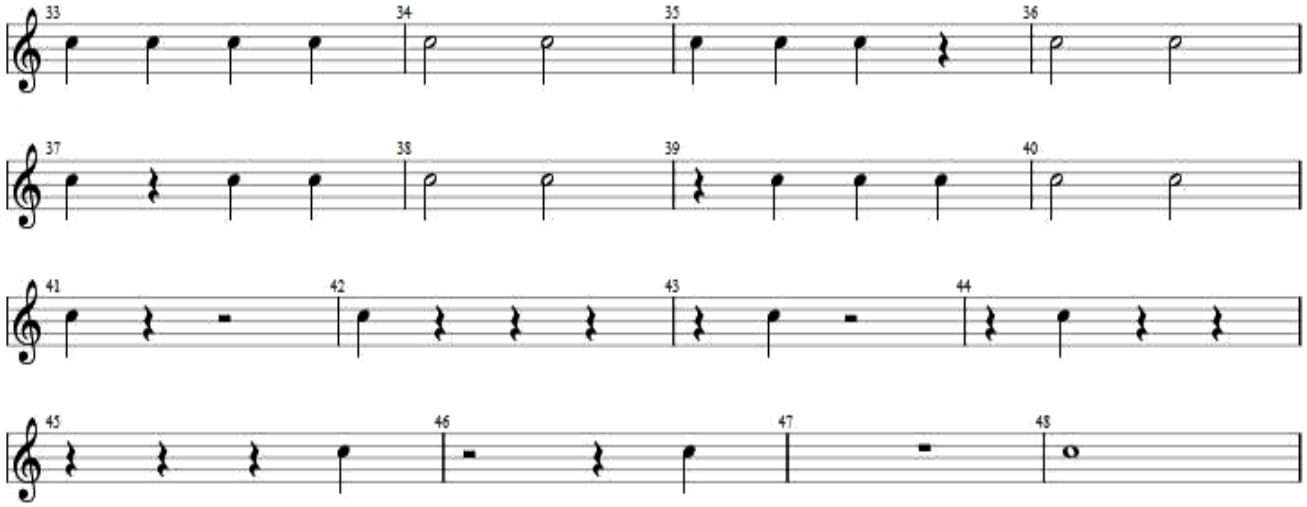
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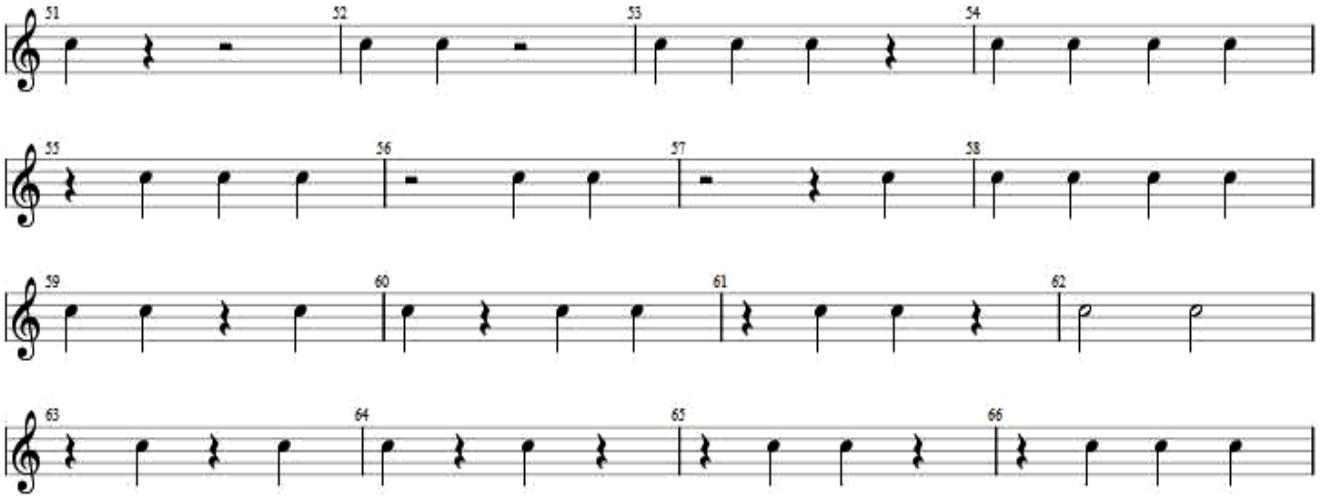
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Fundamentals of Rhythm

Chapter 3

Eighth-notes

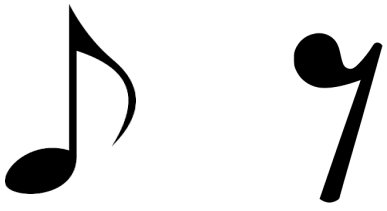
We know that a *whole note* last for all 4 beats of a measure, a *half-note* lasts for 2 beats (half) of a measure and the *quarter -note* last for 1 beat.

The *quarter-note* is the beat and is the measurement for beats-per-measure (BPM). The *quarter-note* is equivalent to a foot tap.

Once we have the *quarter-note* we can now divide that in half. Remember, that a rhythm is just an occurrence in time. It has nothing to do with notes or chords.

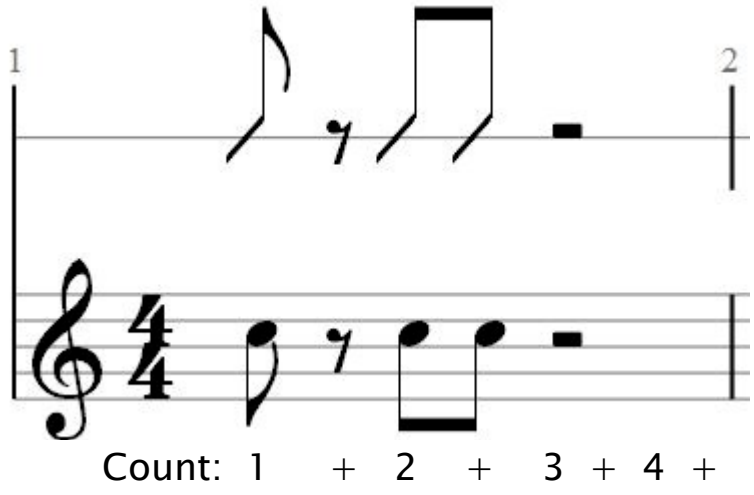
Often we refer to a rhythm as an *attack*. For example a *quarter-note* is one attack per foot tap. The attack can represent a clap, a pluck of a string, a chord on a piano, a stick on a snare drum or a sound/note coming from your voice.

If I set a metronome to 60BPM and clapped on every beat I would be clapping *quarter-notes*. If I then started clapping twice per beat (evenly) I would then be clapping *eighth-notes. Eighth-notes* can be thought of as half of a beat. Here is an *eighth-note* and an *eighth-note* rest. Each one equals half of a beat.



Below is a bar of music with a combination of *eighth-notes*.

- Beat 1 is an *eighth-note* and *eighth-note* rest
- Beat 2 is two *eighth-notes* beamed together. Beams don't change the role or sound of the rhythm but they make it easier to read. Usually you wont see more than 4 eight-notes beamed together
- Beat 3 and 4 are a *half-note* rest.

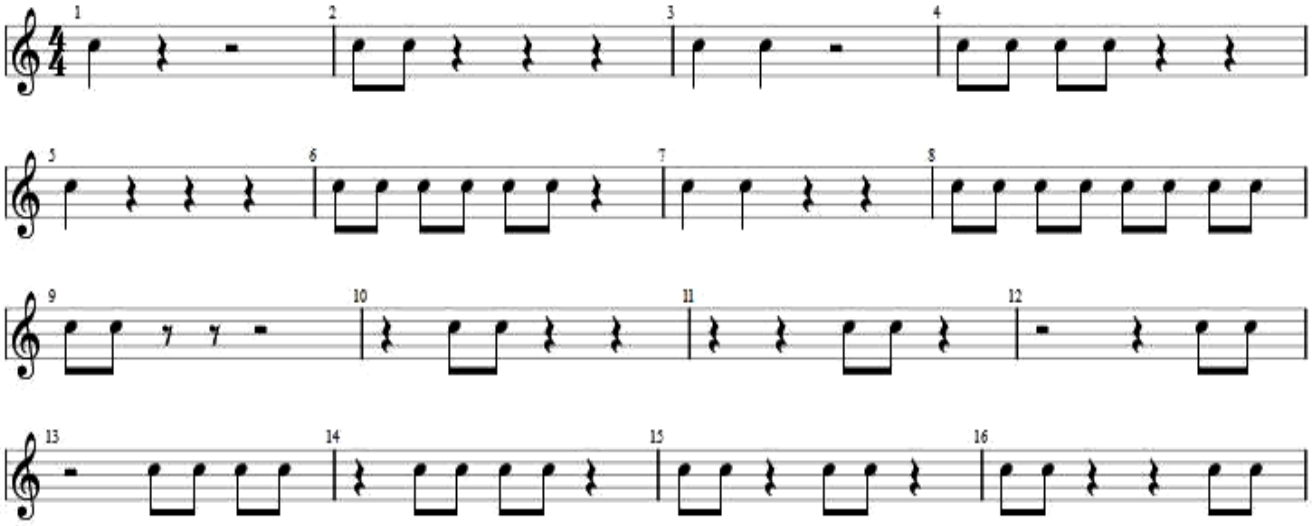


We count this as 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and. The "and" is called an upbeat or offbeat and is represented with a + sign. Remember, **rest = silence**

Play Along Exercises

- Start metronome at 60bpm
- You must tap your foot and count every beat (1,2,3,4)
- For every *rest* you must silence the guitar (use you right palm to stop strings)
- **CLAP-** Clap every rhythm. Even though a clap does not sustain, you still clap as if it did. For example: if you have a whole note you would clap on beat 1. You would also tap your foot and count for all four beats.
- **OPEN STRING**- Pluck an open string for every rhythm. For example, pluck your low E string for every rhythm while tapping and counting every beat (quarter-note)
- **STRUM**- Pick *one* chord (G or Em, anything) and strum for every rhythm. Tap and count every beat. Alternatively you can pick more than 1 chord, changing a chord on every bar. Remember to silence the rests.

#1



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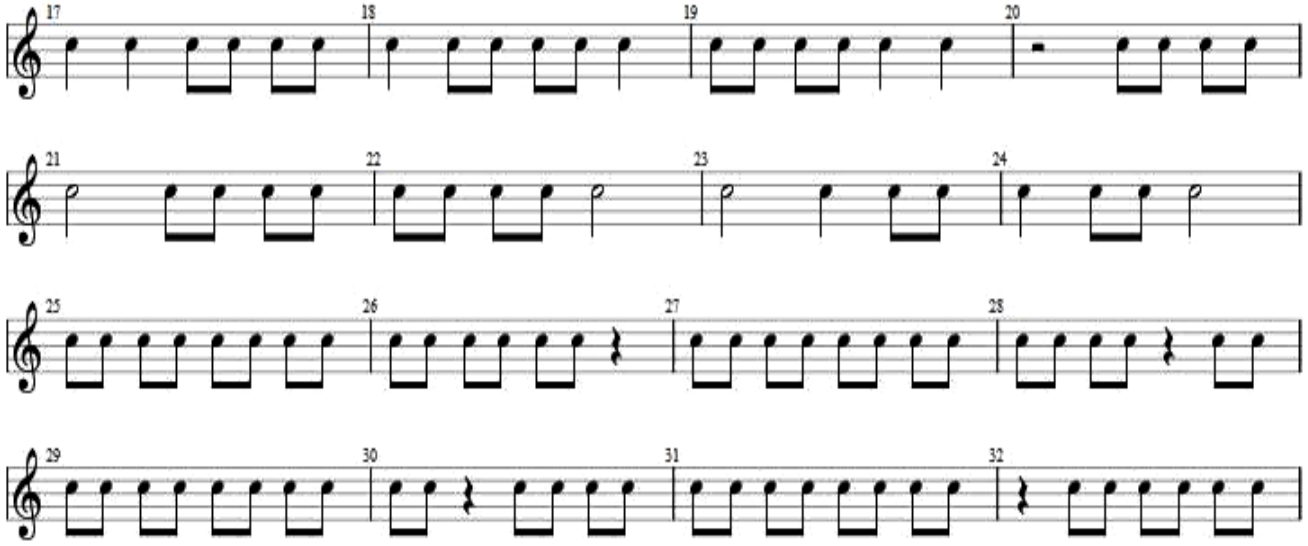
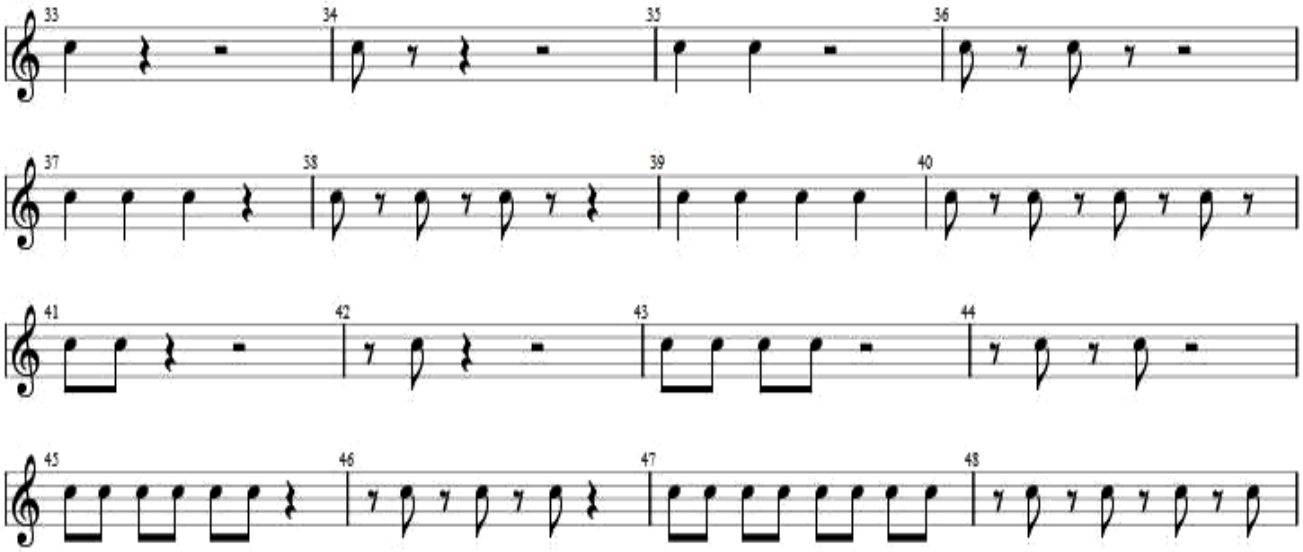


#3 Eighth-notes and Eighth-note rests



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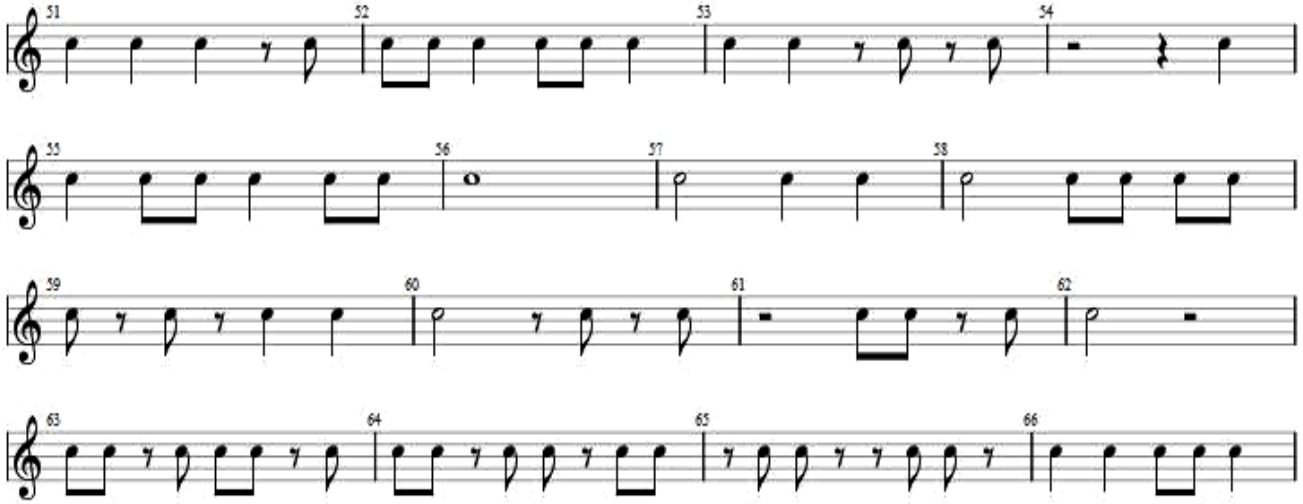
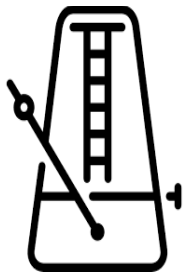




Fundamentals of Rhythm

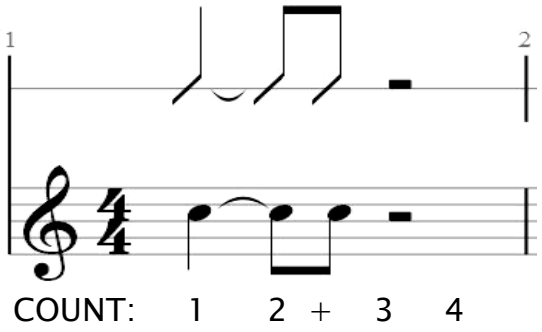
Chapter 4

Dots and Ties

Dots and Ties are used in rhythms to help achieve different combinations of rhythms that we can't get other wise. They combine the rhythmic values we have to create a unique rhythm.

Ties

A *tie* is a curved line that connects two rhythmic values to create a larger one that is the sum of the two. Below is a bar with a quarter-note being ties to the first eighth-note of beat 2.

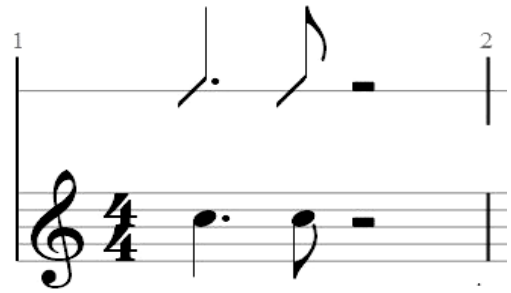


It's important that you play beat 1 and then let the note sustain until you attack it again on the upbeat of 2 (the and of 2). You do not re-attack on the downbeat of beat 2 because it is tied to beat 1.

Dots

Dots have a similar function as *ties* as the help elongate a rhythmic value to create a combination that we don't have a symbol for. *Dots* are a little more confusing to think about.

A dot next to a rhythmic value adds 50% of that beat to itself. A dot next to a *quarter-note* would add the value of an *eighth-note* to itself, creating a value that is 1 and ½ of a beat, as in the example below. This sounds **identical** to the one above.

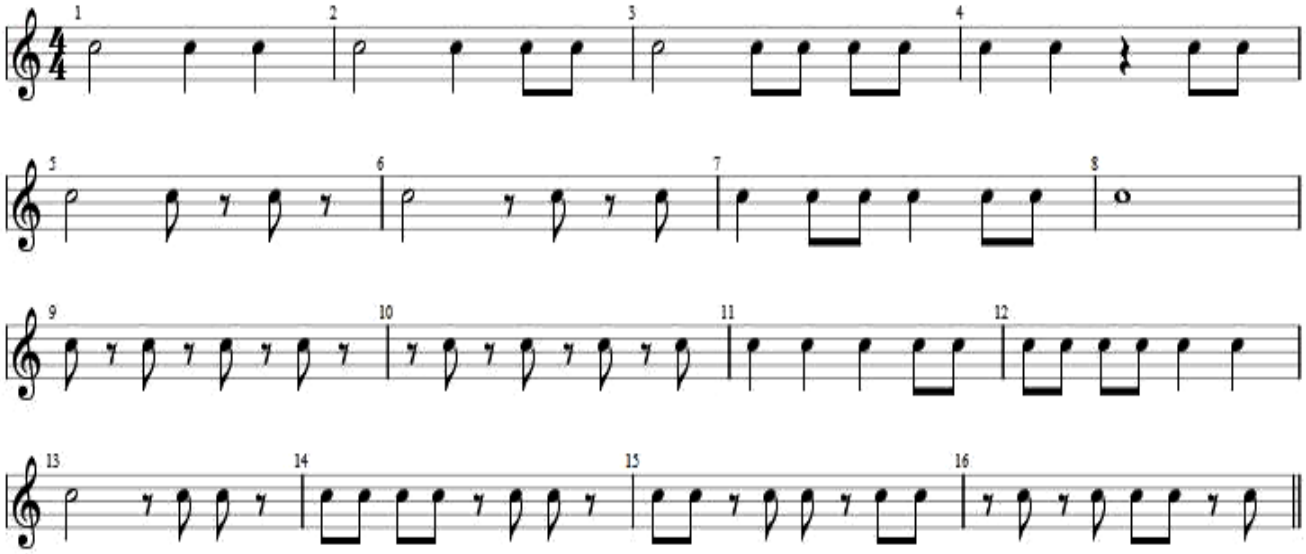


COUNT: 1 + 2 + 3 4

Play Along Exercises

- Start metronome at 60bpm
- You must tap your foot and count every beat (1,2,3,4)
- For every *rest* you must silence the guitar (use you right palm to stop strings)
- **CLAP-** Clap every rhythm. Even though a clap does not sustain, you still clap as if it did. For example: if you have a whole note you would clap on beat 1. You would also tap your foot and count for all four beats.
- **OPEN STRING**- Pluck an open string for every rhythm. For example, pluck your low E string for every rhythm while tapping and counting every beat (quarter-note)
- **STRUM**- Pick *one* chord (G or Em, anything) and strum for every rhythm. Tap and count every beat. Alternatively you can pick more than 1 chord, changing a chord on every bar. Remember to silence the rests.

#1 Eighth-note and eighth-note rests review



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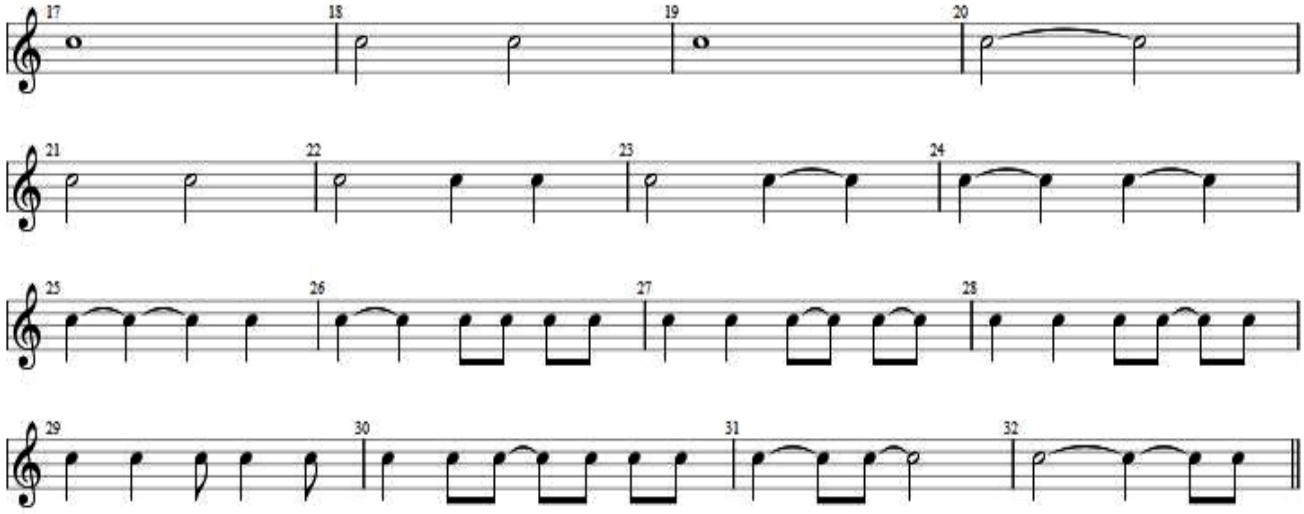
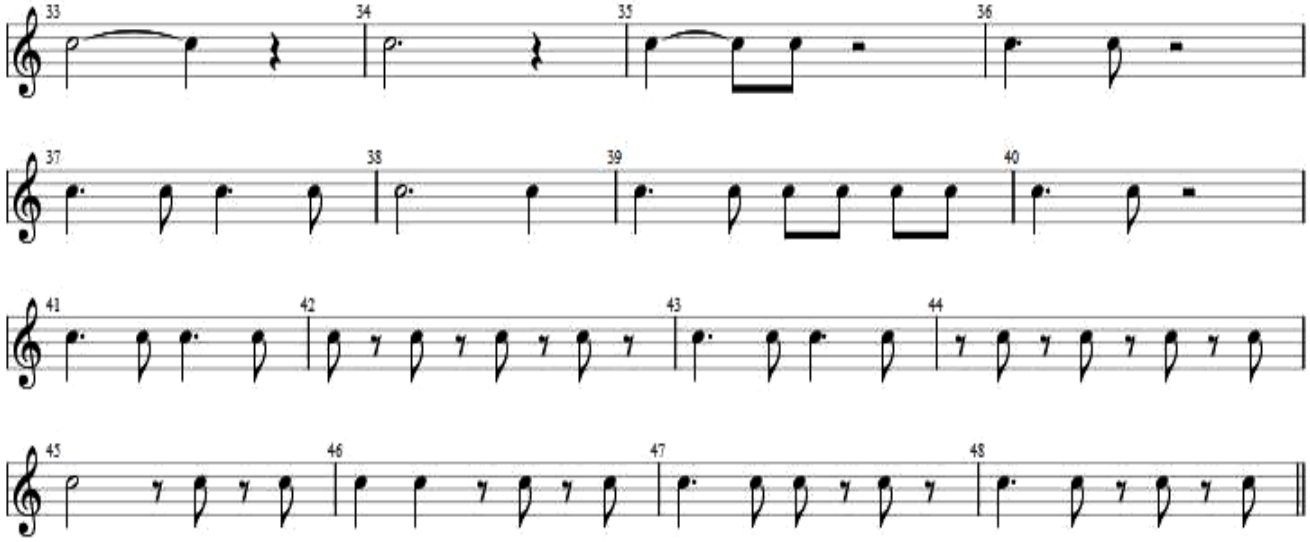


#3 Dots



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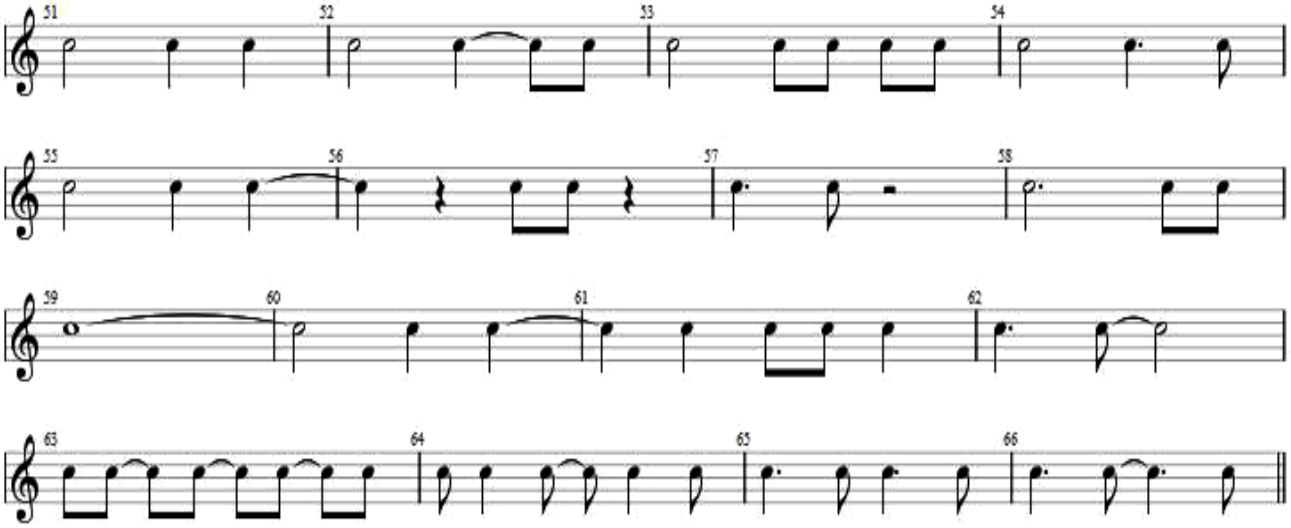
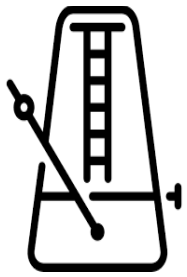




Fundamentals of Rhythm

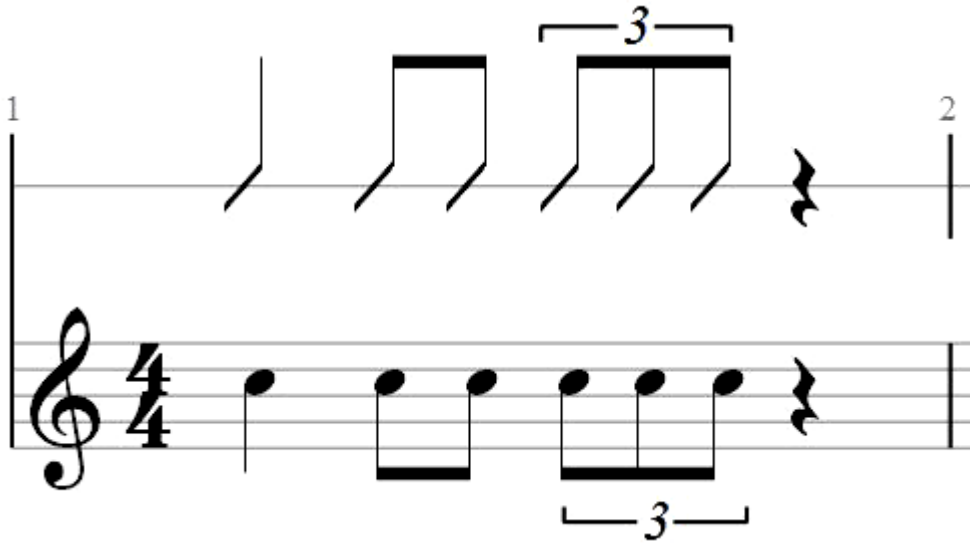
Chapter 5

Triplets (eighth-note triplets)

When A *quarter-note* is equally divided into thirds we call this an *eighth-note triplet*, often simply referred to as *triplets.* This seems confusing but there are other types of triplets, *quarter-note triplets* and *sixteenth-note triplets*. Below is a picture of a group of *eighth-note triplets.* The symbol for a rest for one of the triplets is an *eighth-note rest* but still within the bracket of 3 notes. *Triplets* are often played with all 3 attacks but sometimes there is a rest used within the group, or a tie between the first 2 to represent a shuffle feel.

On the following page a bar with a combination of *quarter-note*, *eighth-note* and *triplets.*

- Beat 1 is a *quarter-note*
- Beat 2 is two *eighth-notes*
- Beat 3 is three *eighth-note triplets*
- Beat 4 is a *quarter-note rest*



COUNT: 1 2 + 3-trip-let 4

Play Along Exercises

- Start metronome at 60bpm
- You must tap your foot and count every beat (1,2,3,4)
- For every *rest* you must silence the guitar (use you right palm to stop strings)
- **CLAP-** Clap every rhythm. Even though a clap does not sustain, you still clap as if it did. For example: if you have a whole note you would clap on beat 1. You would also tap your foot and count for all four beats.
- **OPEN STRING**- Pluck an open string for every rhythm. For example, pluck your low E string for every rhythm while tapping and counting every beat (quarter-note)
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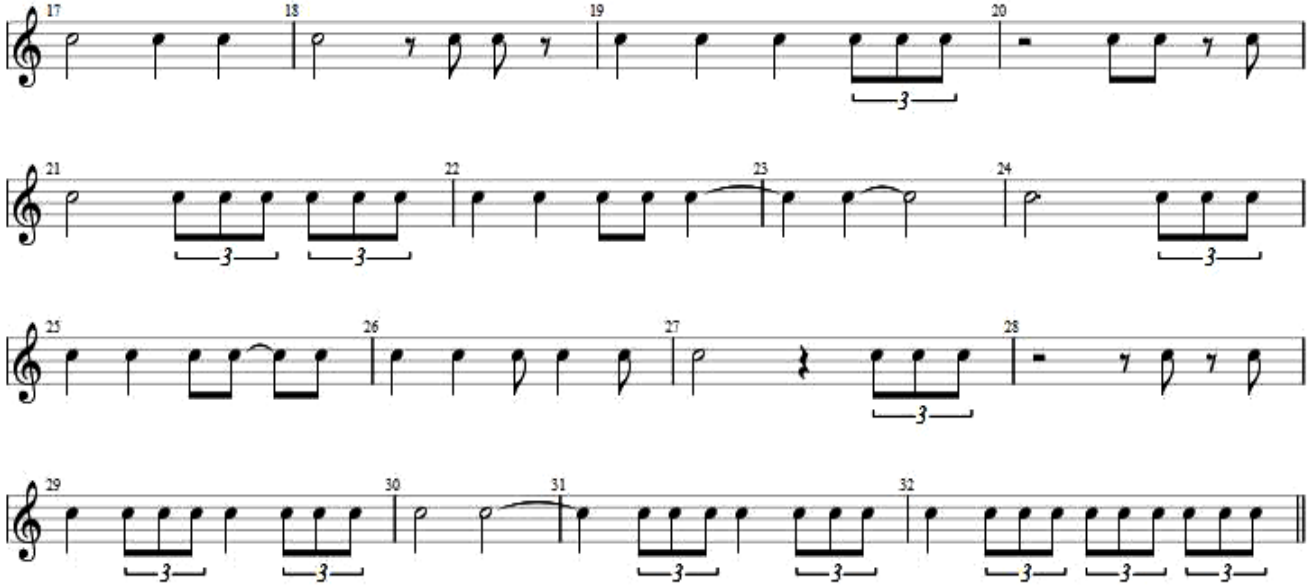
#1



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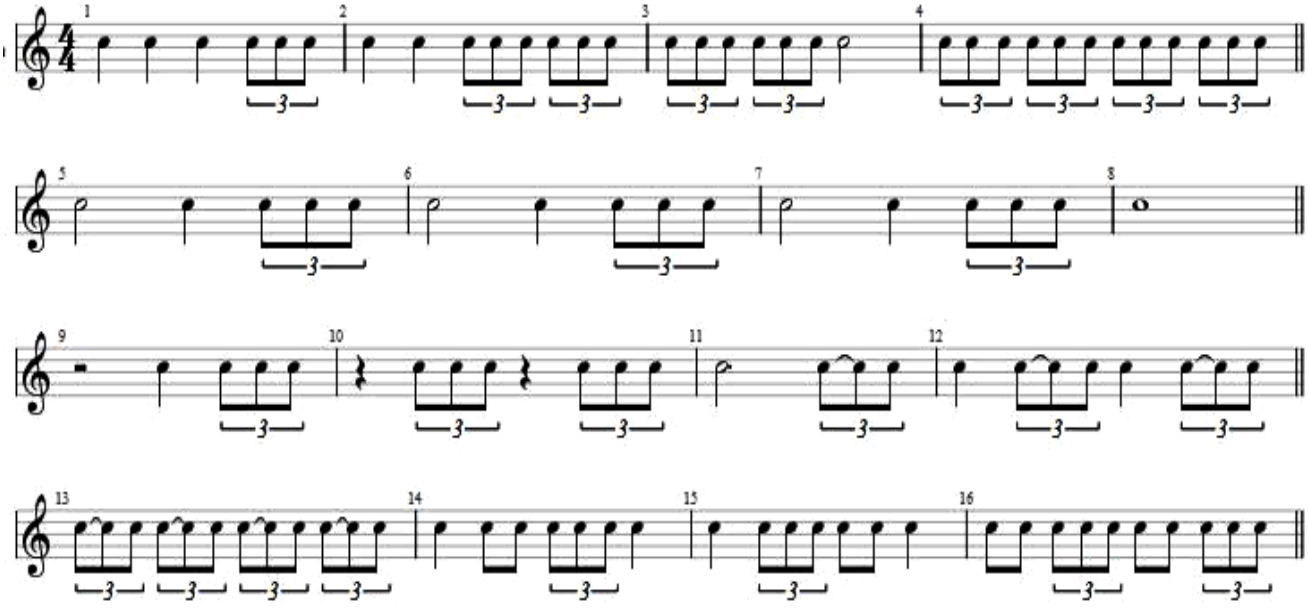


Basic Drum Beats

Knowing basic drum beats can help any musician and can translate to all elements of music including strumming patterns, bass lines, percussion and even when two guitars are playing in the same band and need to find a way to play complimentary parts.

The core of a drum beat (and even a drum kit) is three parts:

1. The **Kick drum** (the boom) the grounding factor (aka the bass drum)
2. The **Snare drum** (the chick) the opposing/counter part
3. The **High Hat** (HH) the constant rhythm that ties the kick and snare together

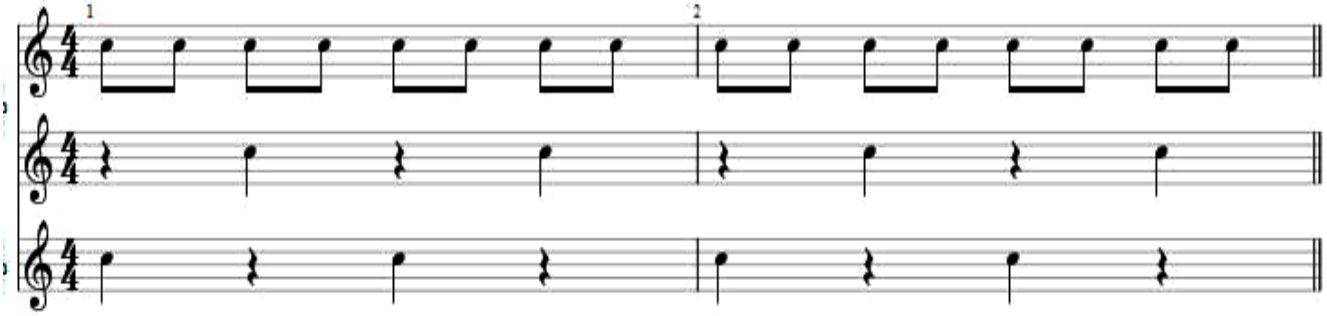
The following drum beats are written as three parts.

- The top is to represent the High Hat
- The middle is for the Snare drum
- The bottom is the Kick drum

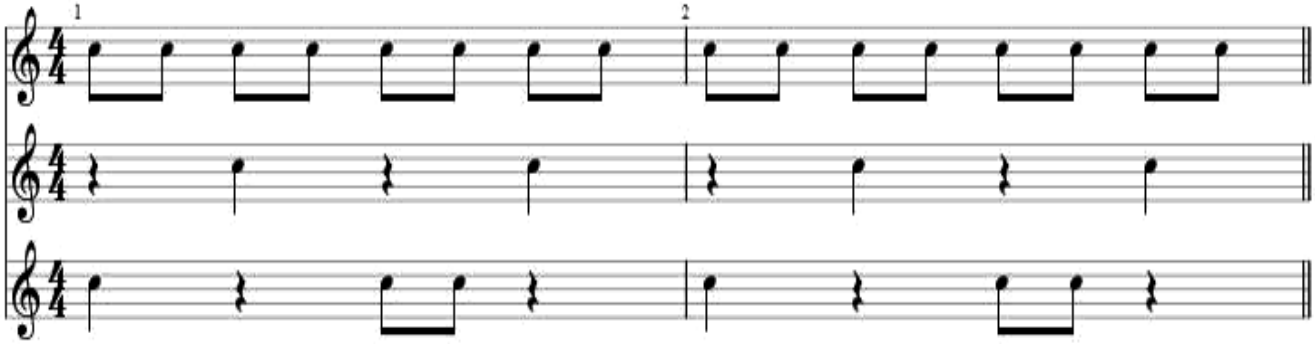
Exercises

- Set your metronome to 60 bpm
- If you are playing by yourself you will use your foot stomp as the kick drum
- Use your right hand for the High Hat
- Use your left hand for the Snare drum
- Even though the Kick and Snare are written with quarter-notes you often play them as eighth-notes to create a tighter feel
- When you play guitar you can use the bass note of a chord for the Kick drum, the higher sounding part of the chord as the snare (ala bass strum style) and use small mutes/scratches for the High Hat. Imagine holding a bar chord and letting go of the pressure, you can strum the thick strings to get the scratch
- If you play with other people, decide on who is going to take which of the three parts and how to play each chord.
- Be creative! There are no wrong ways to play it, only whether you like it or not.

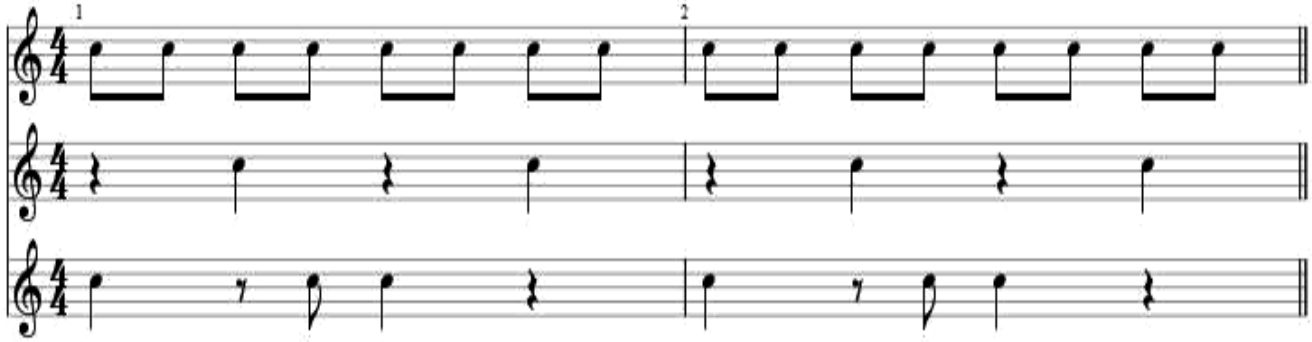
Drum Beat #1



Drum Beat #2



Drum Beat #3



Fundamentals of Rhythm

Chapter 6

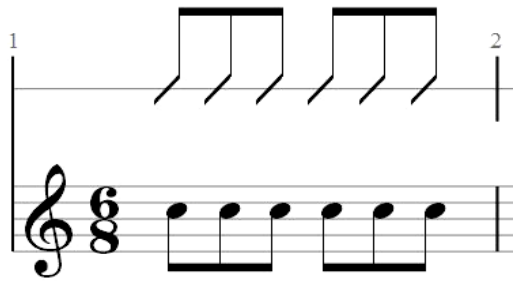
Time Signatures

We know that a time signature helps us with the pacing of music. It determines when the chords and melody changes.

- The top number represents the number of beats per bar
- The bottom number represents the type of beat being counted
- A bar of 4/4 means that there will be the value of four quarter-notes for each measure. This is the most common time signature in the western world
- A bar of 5/4 means that there will be the value of FIVE quarter-notes per measure. You can find an example of this in the theme from "Mission Impossible" the theme from the movie "Halloween" and "Take Five" by Dave Brubeck.

$$\frac{6}{8}$$

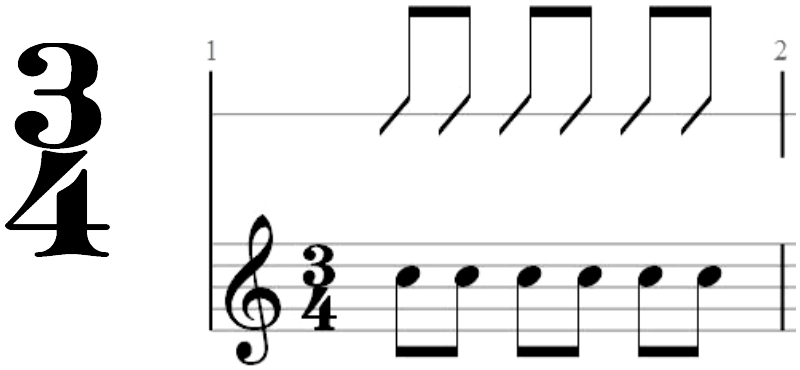
- A time signature of 6/8 is very common but a little tricky to think about.
- The top number means there will be 6 notes counted per bar
- The bottom number means we are counting eighth-notes
- 6/8 has a triplet feel and creates a pendulum feeling of the music moving left and right compared to up and down. Think "Hide Your Love Away" by the Beatles, "Old Woman Behind the Counter" by Pearl Jam.
  This is a very common time signature and is found in most types of music. A lot of traditional Irish songs are in 6/8



COUNT: **1** 2 3 **4** 5 6

Tap Tap

We tap our foot on beat **1** and beat **4**. This make an emphasis happen for every third note. This creates the side to side feeling when you hear it. It sounds and feels like a measure of 2/4 in triplets



COUNT: **1** + **2** + **3** +

Tap Tap Tap

We tap our foot on beats 1,2 and 3. This creates a straight ahead feel instead of the side to side feel of 6/8.

Although both of these time signatures are mathematically the same they are very different in how we feel them.

Play Along Exercises

- Start metronome at 60bpm
- You must tap your foot and count every beat. For 6/8 you tap on 1 and 4. For 3/4 you tap on 1,2, and 3.
- For every *rest* you must silence the guitar (use you right palm to stop strings)
- **CLAP-** Clap every rhythm. Even though a clap does not sustain, you still clap as if it did. For example: if you have a whole note you would clap on beat 1. You would also tap your foot and count for all four beats.
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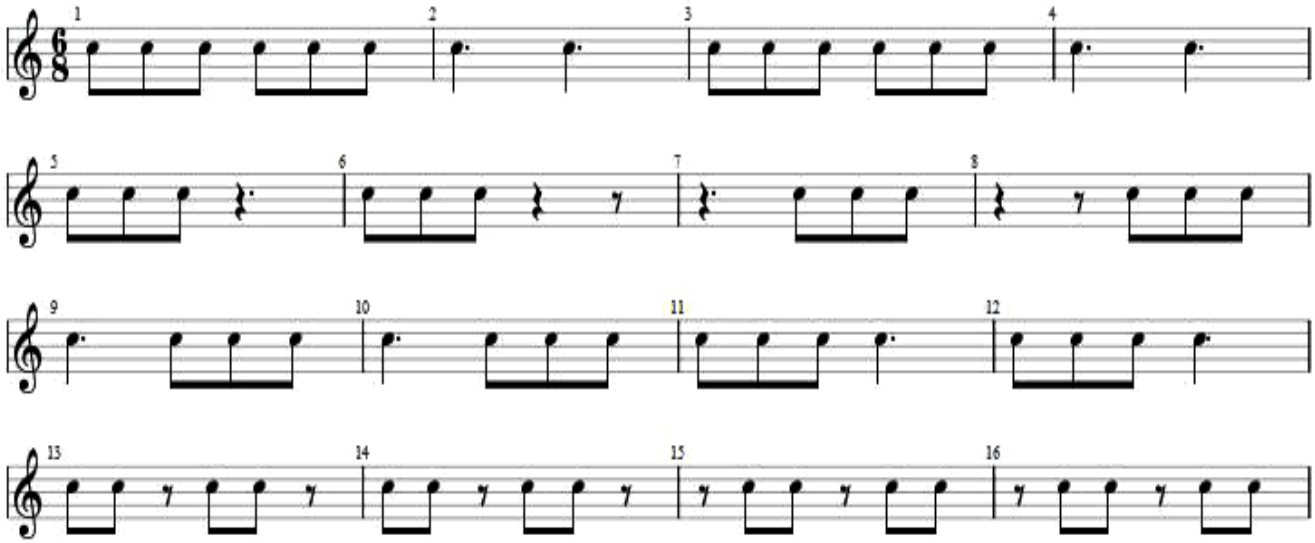
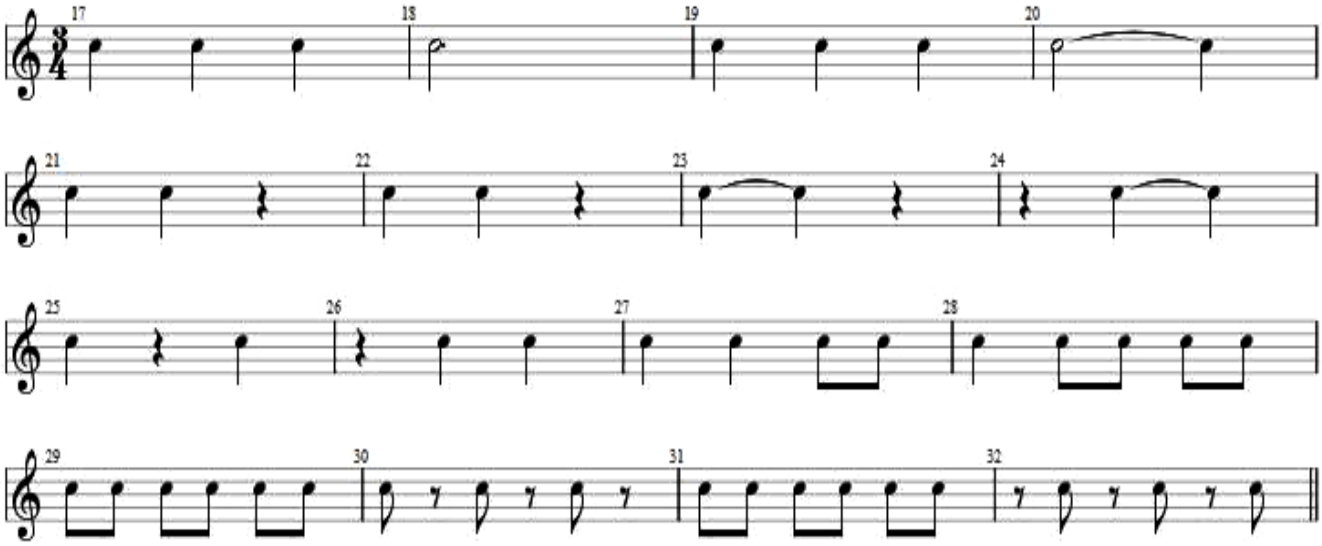
#1 6/8



#2 3/4



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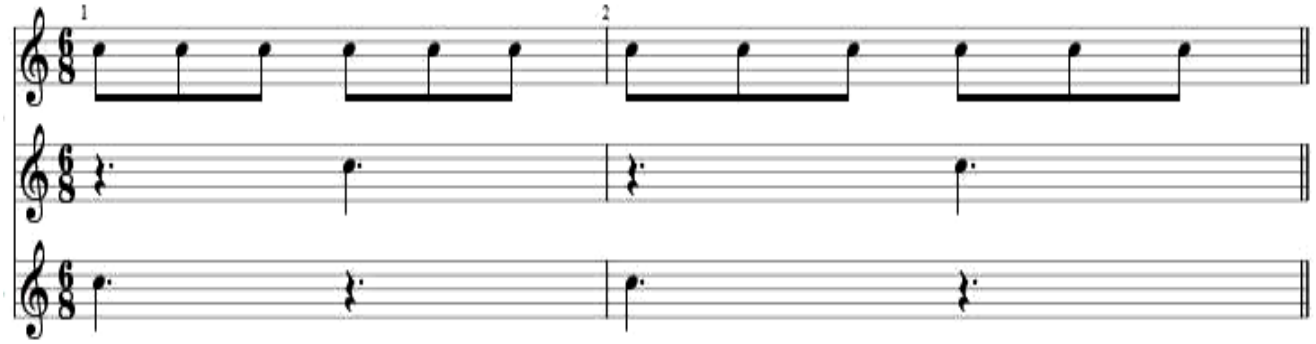
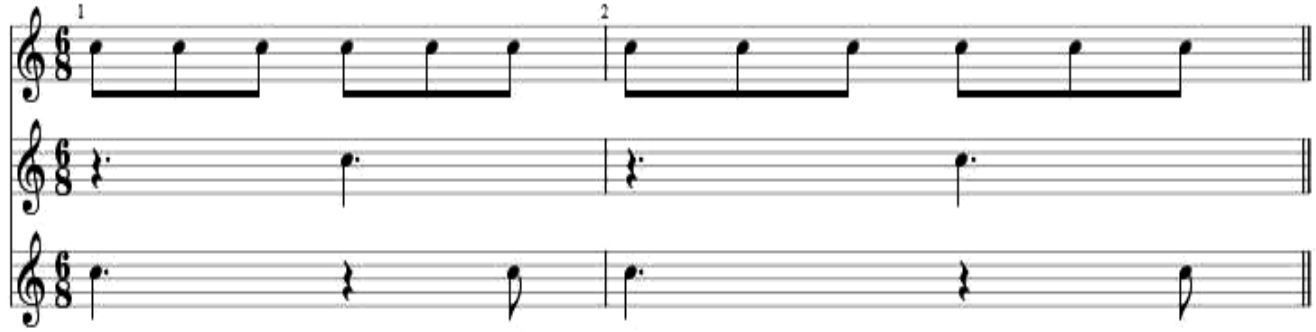
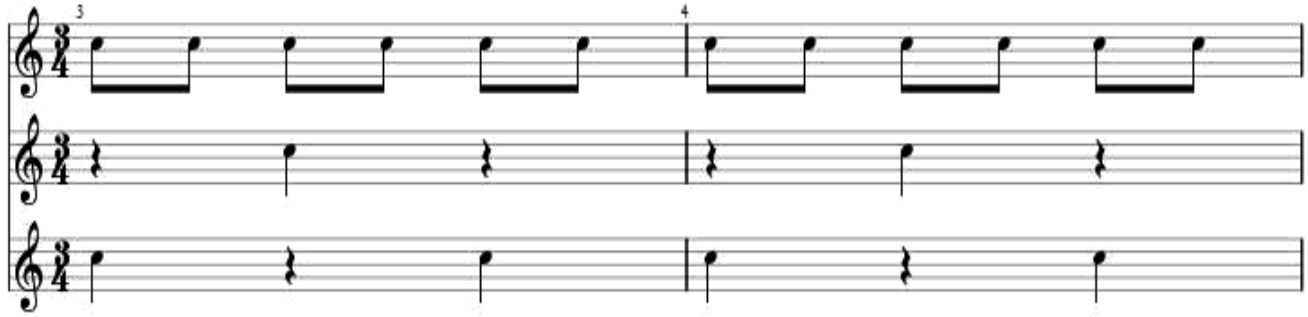
Drum Beat #1-6/8



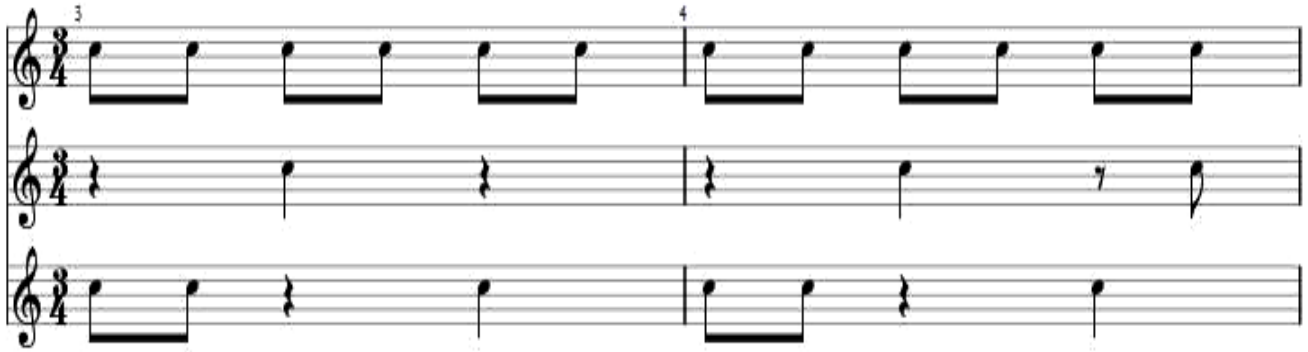
Drum Beat #2-6/8



Drum Beat #3-3/4

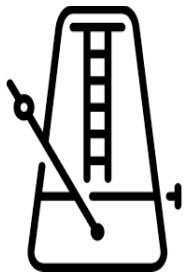


Drum Beat #4-3/4



General Ideas

- The fundamental difference between 3/4 and 6/8 is that 3/4-has two downbeats of three eighth-notes and 3/4 has three downbeats of two eighth-notes. A “two” feel versus a “three” feel
- The bpm for 6/8 is usually noted as dotted quarter-note equals bpm. This represents the three eighth-notes as one foot tap
- 6/8 usually has a side-to-side feel as opposed as to a forward feel of 3/4
- Songs in 3/4-Aretha Franklin's “I Never Loved a Man”, Jimi Hendrix “Manic Depression”, Neil Young “Only Love Can Break Your Heart”
- Songs in 6/8-Metallica “Nothing Else Matters” Beatles “Hide Your Love Away” John Lennon “So This Is Christmas”.



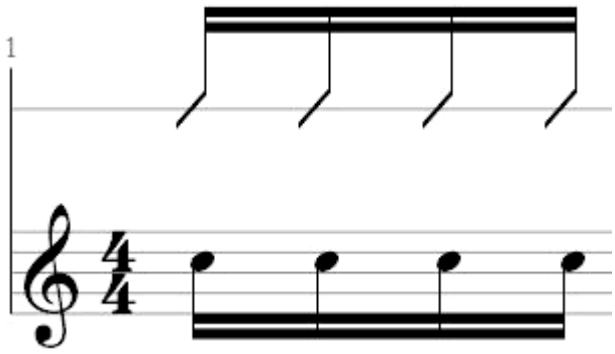
Fundamentals of Rhythm

Chapter 7

Sixteenth Notes

So far we have talked about *whole-notes, half-notes, quarter-notes, eighth-notes* and *triplets*. Each describing a unit in time. We know that the *quarter-note* is the basis of rhythm and we looked at it's subdivisions of *eighth-notes* (two/*quarter-note*) and *triplets* (three/*quarter-note*).

When you evenly divide a *quarter-note* into four parts they're called *sixteenth-notes.*

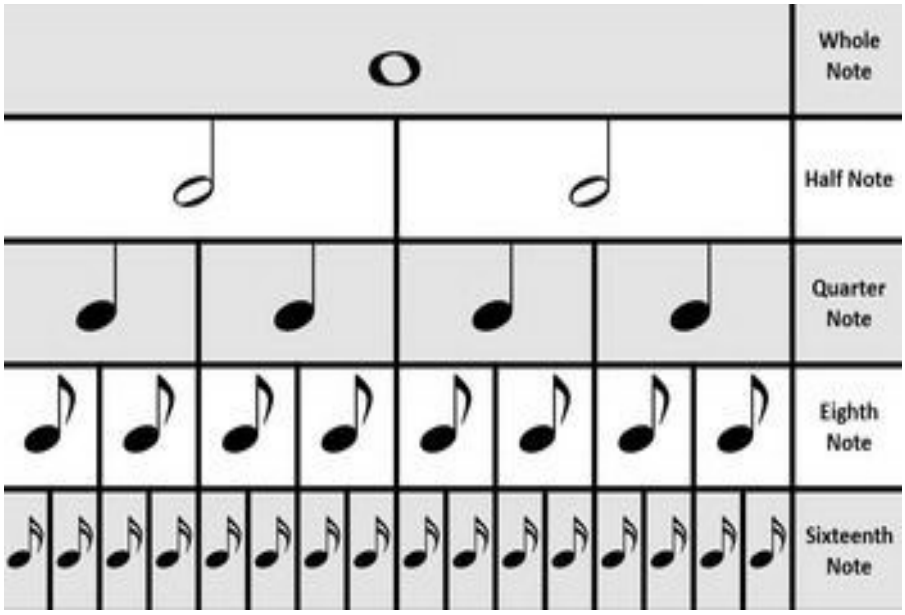


COUNT: One eee and aah

This is four sixteenth notes grouped under two beams. The double beam helps us recognize that these are *sixteenth-notes* and not four *eighth-notes*. These are four notes equally spaced out in the span of a *quarter-note*. You can think of each one as 25% of the *quarter-note*. You count these as **1 eee and aah**. When you count you change the first number to match the beat of the bar you are on.
For example:

1 eee and aah 2 eee and aah 3 eee and aah 4 eee and aah

Here is a chart of all of the even rhythms we have discussed so far. Sometimes this is referred to as a rhythm pyramid.



Play Along Exercises

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- You must tap your foot and count every beat.
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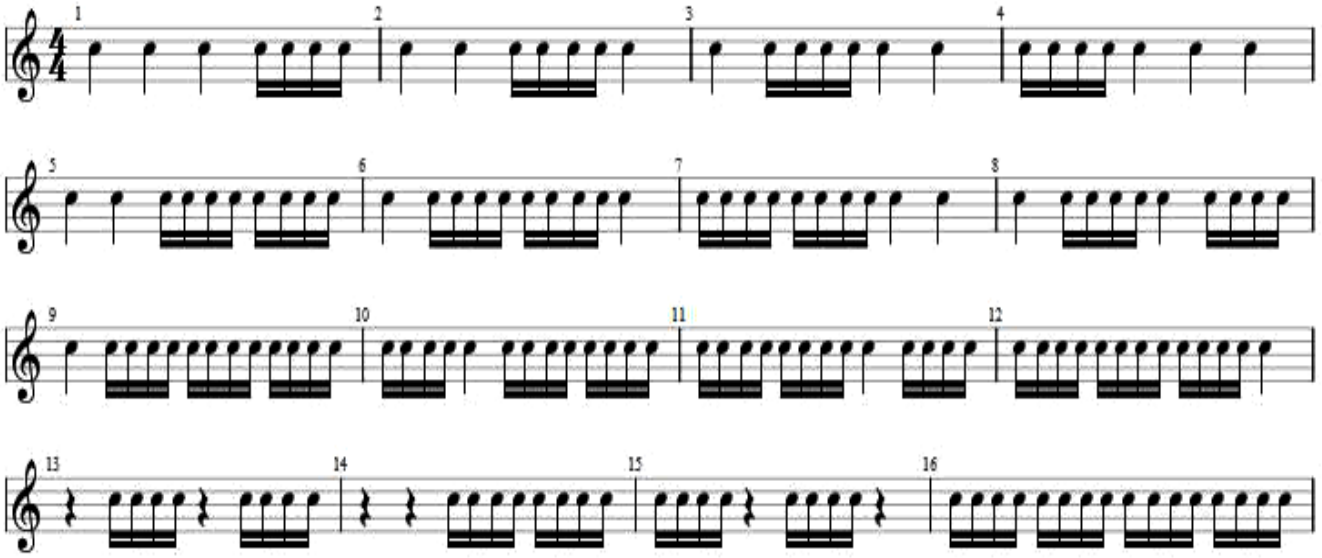
#1



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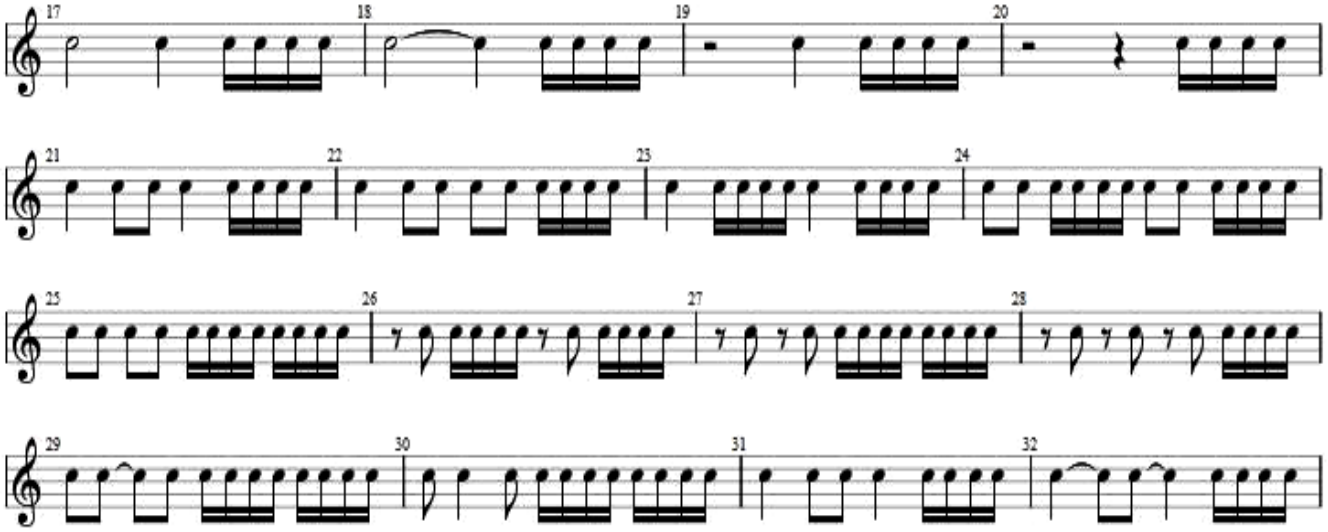
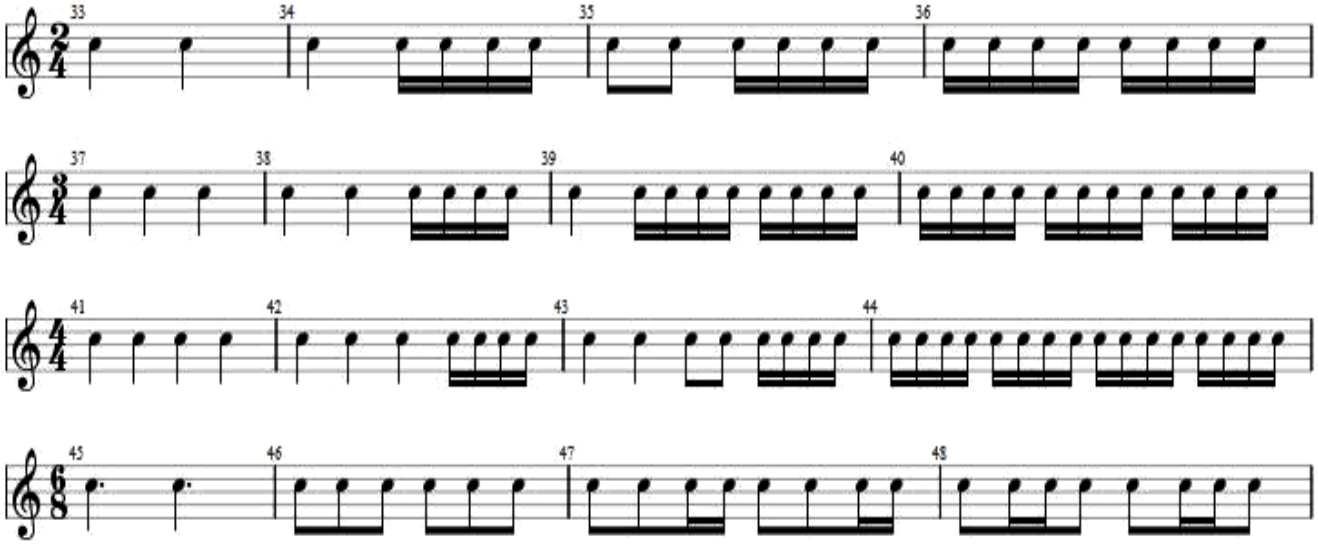
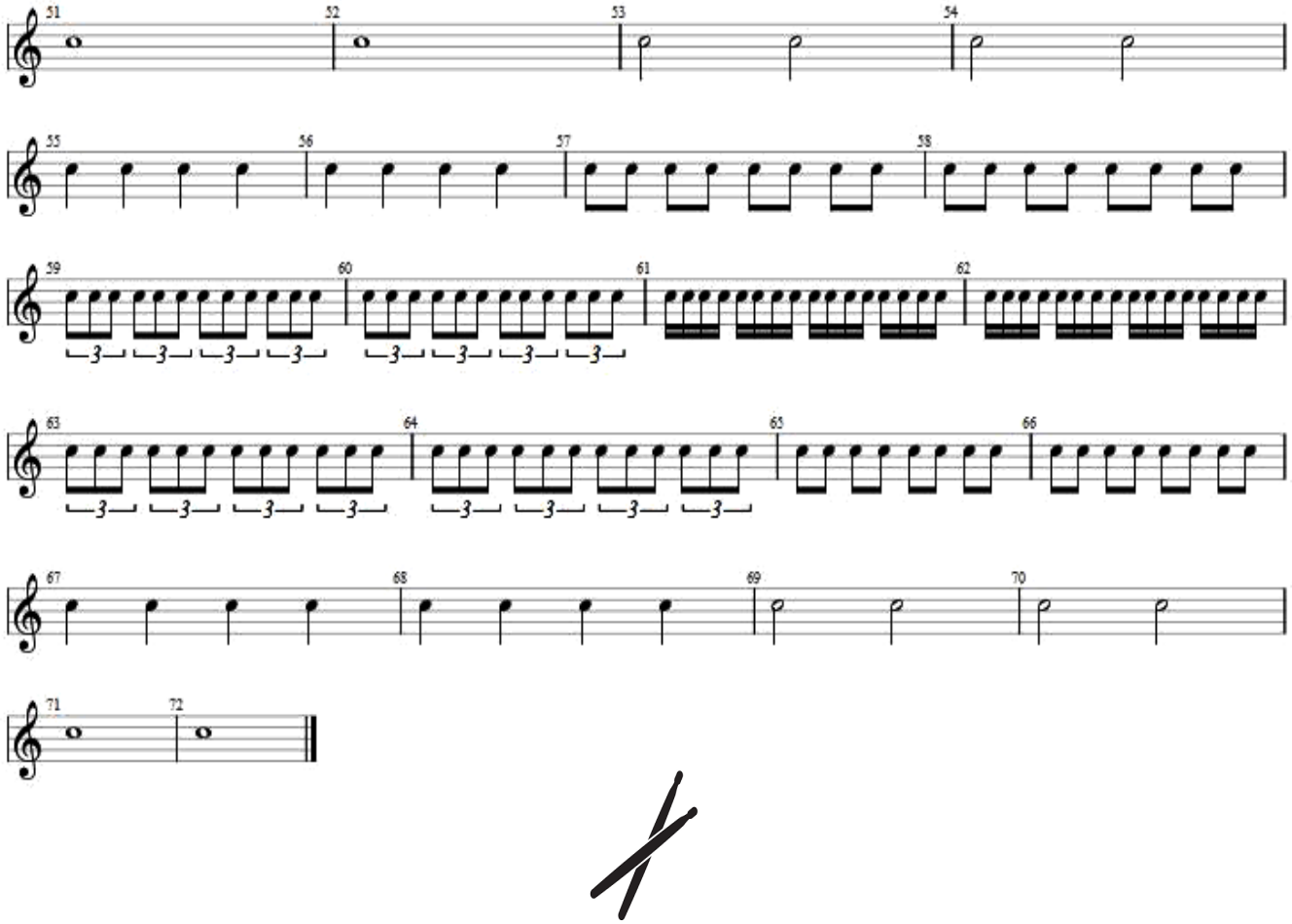
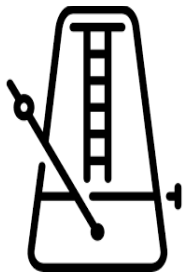


#3-Time Signatures



#4-Changing Gears





Fundamentals of Rhythm

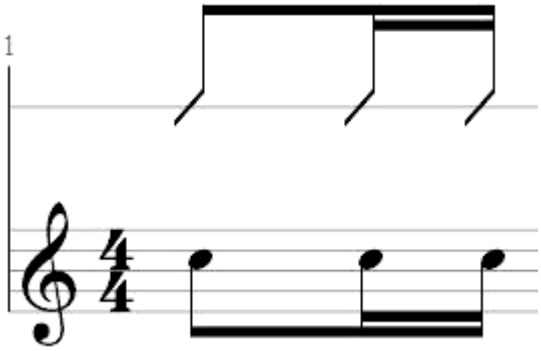
Chapter 8

5 Common Groups of Sixteenth notes

There are 5 common groups of sixteenth-notes that a musician must recognize by sight and by ear. It's easy to think of these groups as percentages of the beat.

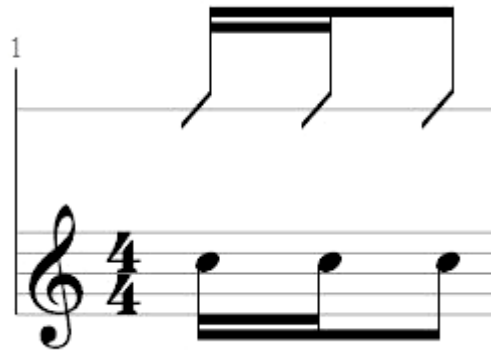
There are more variations which include sixteenth-note rests but it's important to understand these 5 groups first. These five make up a significant amount of music and once these are learned its easier to understand these same groups when they utilize rests.

#1-This group starts with an eighth-note on the down beat and finishes with 2 sixteenth-notes on the upbeat. You can visualize this rhythm as 50%-25%-25%. You don't re-attack the note is parenthesis.



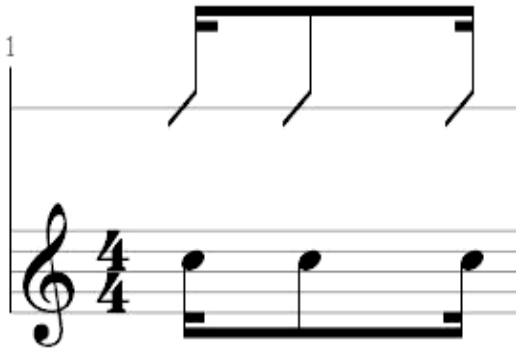
COUNT: **1** *(eee)* **and** **aah**

#2-This group is the same as above except that it is reversed. It starts with the 2 sixteenth-notes on the downbeat and finishes with 1 eighth-note on the up beat. 25%-25%-50%



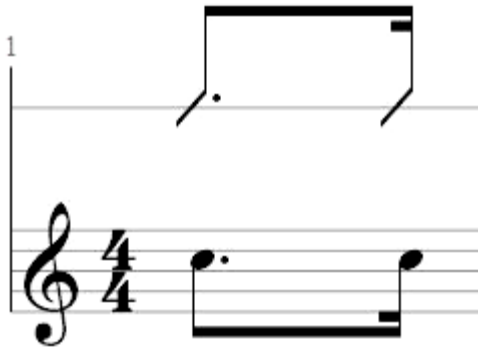
COUNT: **1 eee and** ***(aah)***

#3-This group is the trickiest. In the first 2 groups an eighth-note replaced either the first or last 2 sixteenth-notes. In this case, the eighth-note replaces the middle 2 sixteenth-notes. 25%-50%-25%



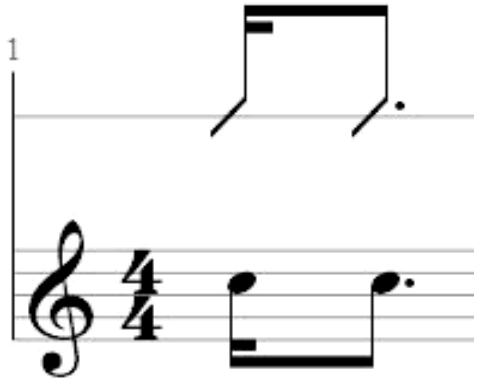
COUNT: 1 eee ***(and)*** **aah**

#4-The following two groups involve dotting the eighth-note to add half of it's own value (a single sixteenth-note) to itself. This one creates a 75%-25% combination



COUNT: **1** *(eee)(and)* **aah**

#5-This one creates a 25%-75%. This one sounds like a heartbeat



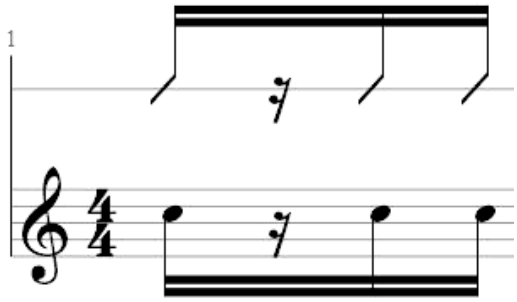
COUNT: **1** **eee** *(and) (aah)*

Sixteenth-note rest

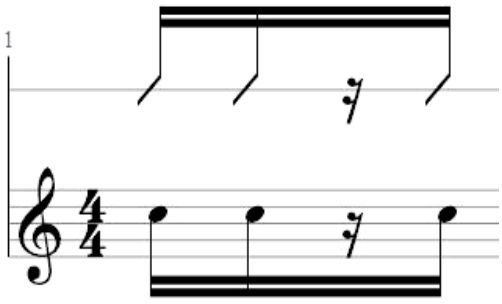
As with any rhythmic value we have a rest for the same duration. A *sixteenth-note* rest looks like an *eighth-note* rest but with the addition on the second beam.

We have to remember that a rest means silence, not just “don't play”. We have to stop our instrument from making noise for the duration of the rest.

Once rests are added/utilized in *sixteenth-note* groups the combinations increase a lot. You just have to count them out and try to visualize each of four *sixteenth-notes*. Here are some examples:



COUNT: **1** *(eee)* **and** **aah**



COUNT: **1** **eee** *(and)* **aah**

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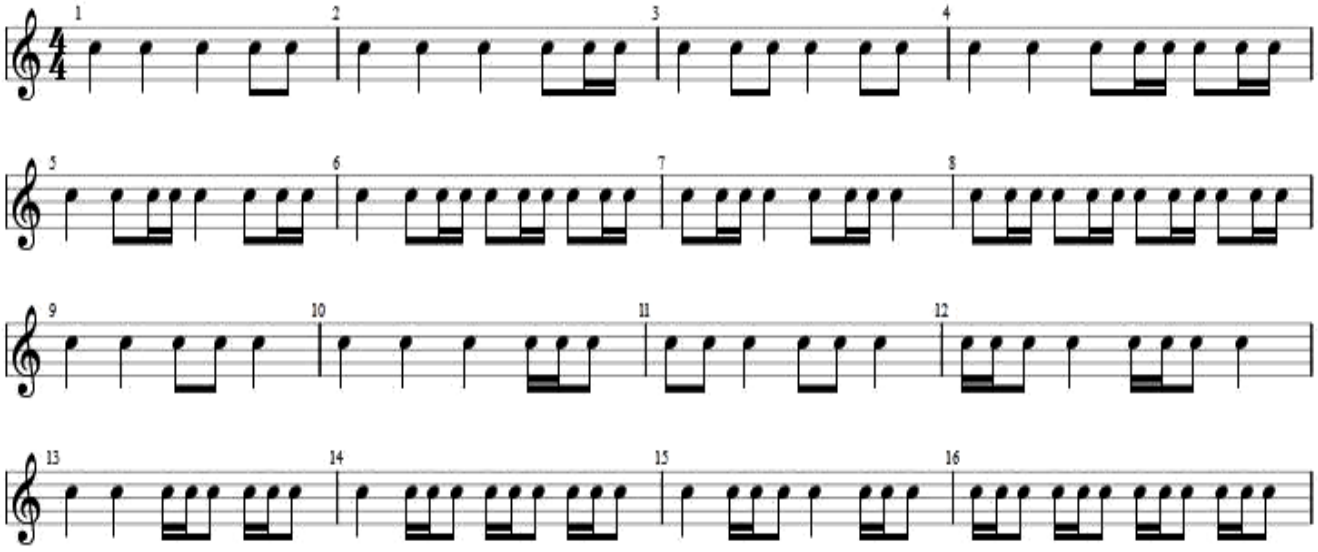

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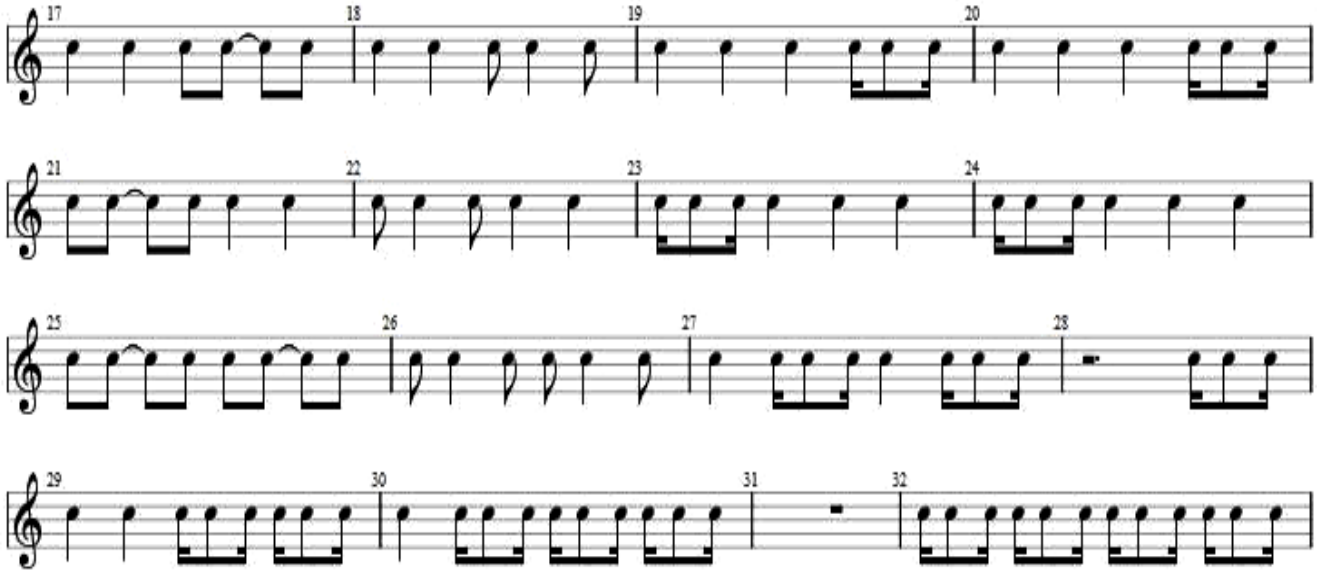
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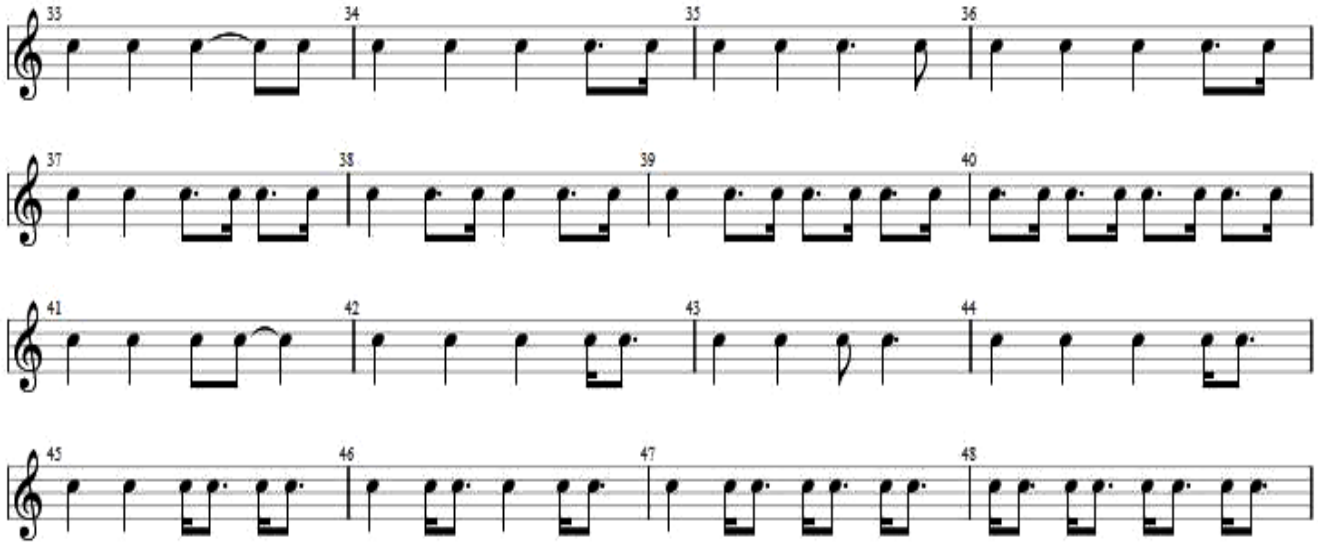
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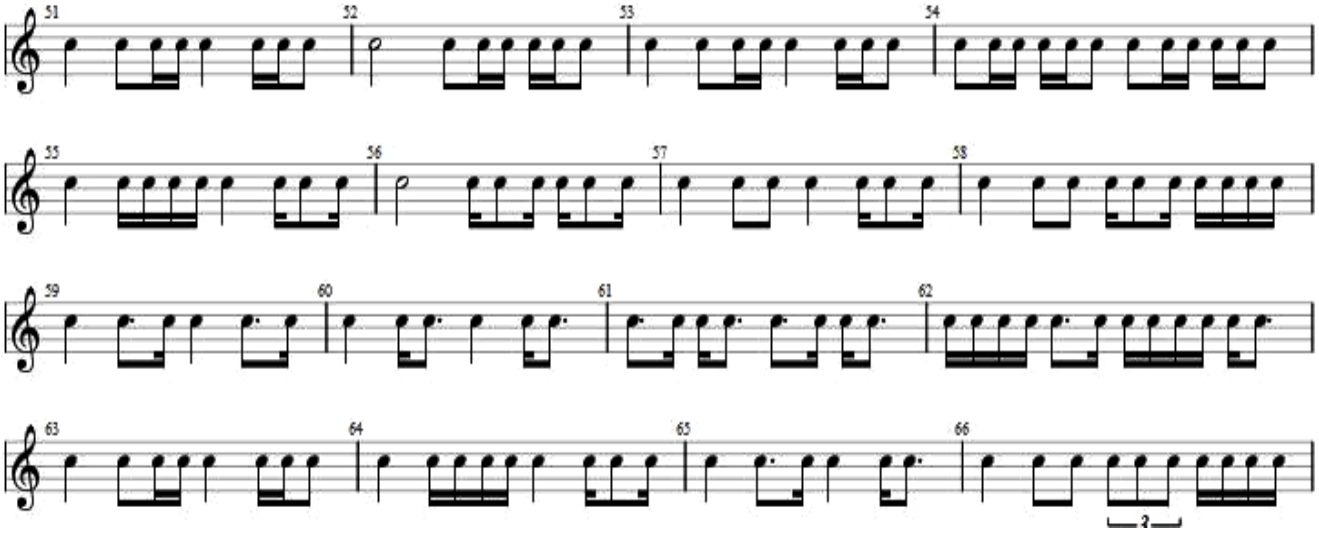
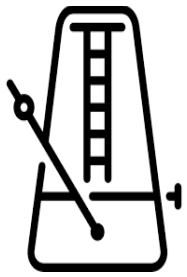
#4



General Ideas

- Sixteenth-notes are the hardest of the rhythmic groups to get, they need extra time to learn and to perform. Remember, all rhythms have to be in real time otherwise you might over analyze them and loose focus on what they sound like.
- Ideally you would find a song you know that uses these groups and use them as a reference to help you recall what each group sounds like.
- Practice slowly with a metronome and count them too. Once you can tap, play and count the rhythms you will own them.
- Sixteenth-notes are everywhere in our music, of all styles and instruments.
- Just like notes and music theory, once you know this information you know it. It hasn't changed in hundreds of years and won't any time soon.....
  (until the Aliens land on earth and show us something new).

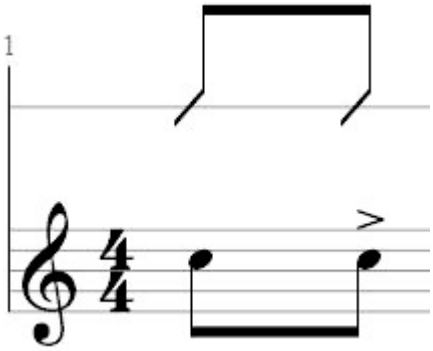


Fundamentals of Rhythm

Chapter 9

Accent

An accent is when a note or rhythm is played louder to bring attention to it. The symbol for an accent is a side ways “V” (or a “greater than” sign). Below there is an accent on the 2nd *eighth-note.*



Accents create another layer of rhythm. For example if you were playing constant *eighth-notes* and accented every down beat you would have the original rhythm of *eight-notes* while the accents created a *quarter note* feel.

Accents bring a lot of movement to rhythm that could otherwise feel stagnant. If your playing a steady flow of eight-notes, triplets, sixteenth-notes or even quarter-notes having accents in different places give the feeling of motion and momentum.

Imagine accenting every third sixteenth-note or every fourth triplet. This creates *syncopation. Syncopation* is defined as accenting notes that are normally unaccented.

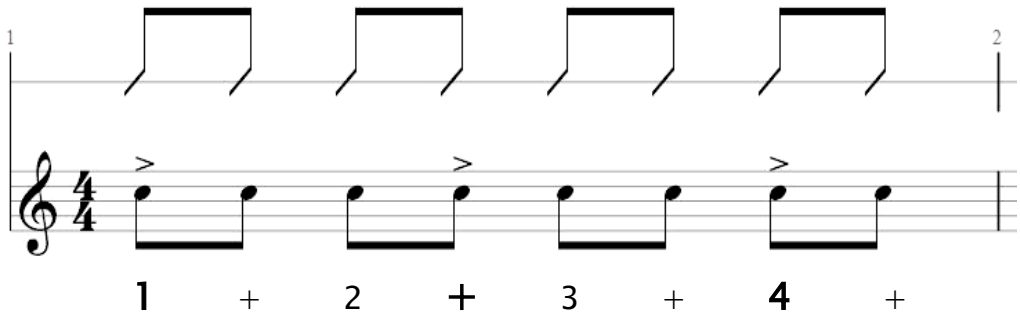
Subgroup

A subgroup is when we have a smaller group of notes/rhythms within a larger group of notes/rhythms.

If we think about a bar of all *eighth-notes* we normally think of this as two groups of 4 or four groups of 2. But you can further break down the *eighth-notes* into groups of 3's and 2's. One of the most commonly used subgroups is what I call

3+3+2

With accents it looks like this



You will notice that beats 1, the *and of* 2, and 4 are where the accents fall. 3 *eighth-notes* is the equivalent of a *quarter-note* tied to an *eighth-note* (*dotted quarter-note*).

You can rearrange the order of 2's and 3's. For example it could be

3+2+3

or

2+3+3

Additionally, you can do this with more than 1 bar of rhythm and create the popular

3+3+3+3+2+2

Play Along Exercises

- Start metronome at 60bpm
- You must tap your foot and count every beat.
- For every *rest* you must silence the guitar (use you right palm to stop strings)
- **CLAP-** Clap every rhythm. Even though a clap does not sustain, you still clap as if it did. For example: if you have a whole note you would clap on beat 1. You would also tap your foot and count for all four beats.
- **OPEN STRING**- Pluck an open string for every rhythm. For example, pluck your low E string for every rhythm while tapping and counting every beat (quarter-note)
- **STRUM**- Pick *one* chord (G or Em, anything) and strum for every rhythm. Tap and count every beat. Alternatively you can pick more than 1 chord, changing a chord on every bar. Remember to silence the rests.

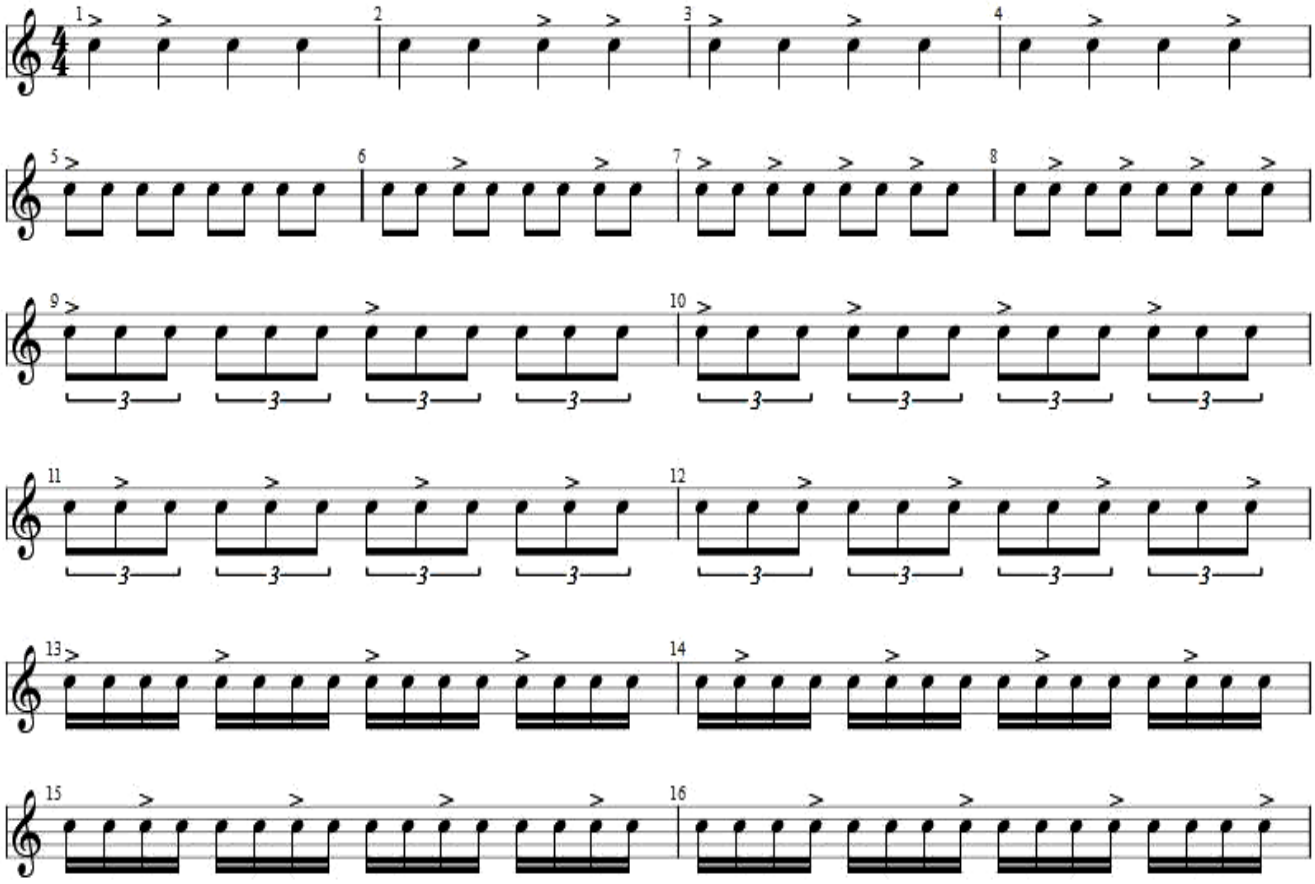
General Ideas about Accents

- Initially you need to "feel" the increments of each of the rhythmic groups.
- *Quarter notes* are either accented or not
- *Eight-notes* have 2 potential places to accent
- *Triplets* have 3 potential places to accent
- *Sixteenth-notes* have 4 potential places to accent
- Accents are reinforced when there coupled with a new chord or with or without palm muting
- put the metronome on at 60 and start clapping one of the rhythmic groups mentioned above and start accenting each one individually, starting with the downbeat. Then work through all potential place to accent a note

General Ideas about Subgroups

- Start with 332 as your basic subgroup to practice and get to know
- 332 can happen in different ways such as being the accents of eighth-notes or just being the hits (just 3 attacks per bar)
- the 3 attacks can be sustained or not

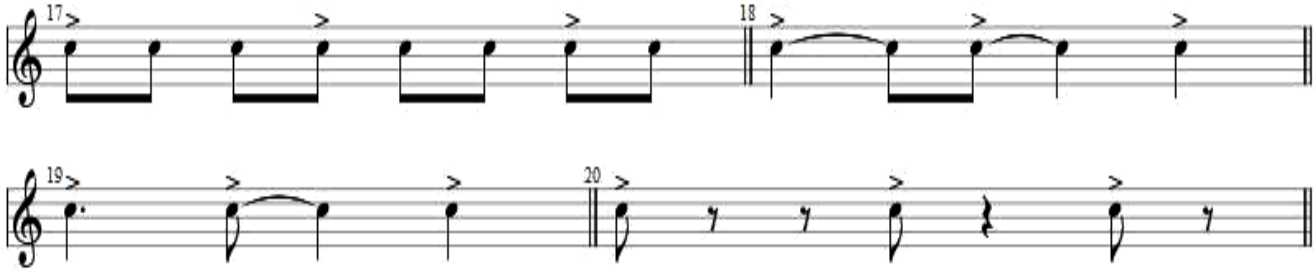
#1 Accents



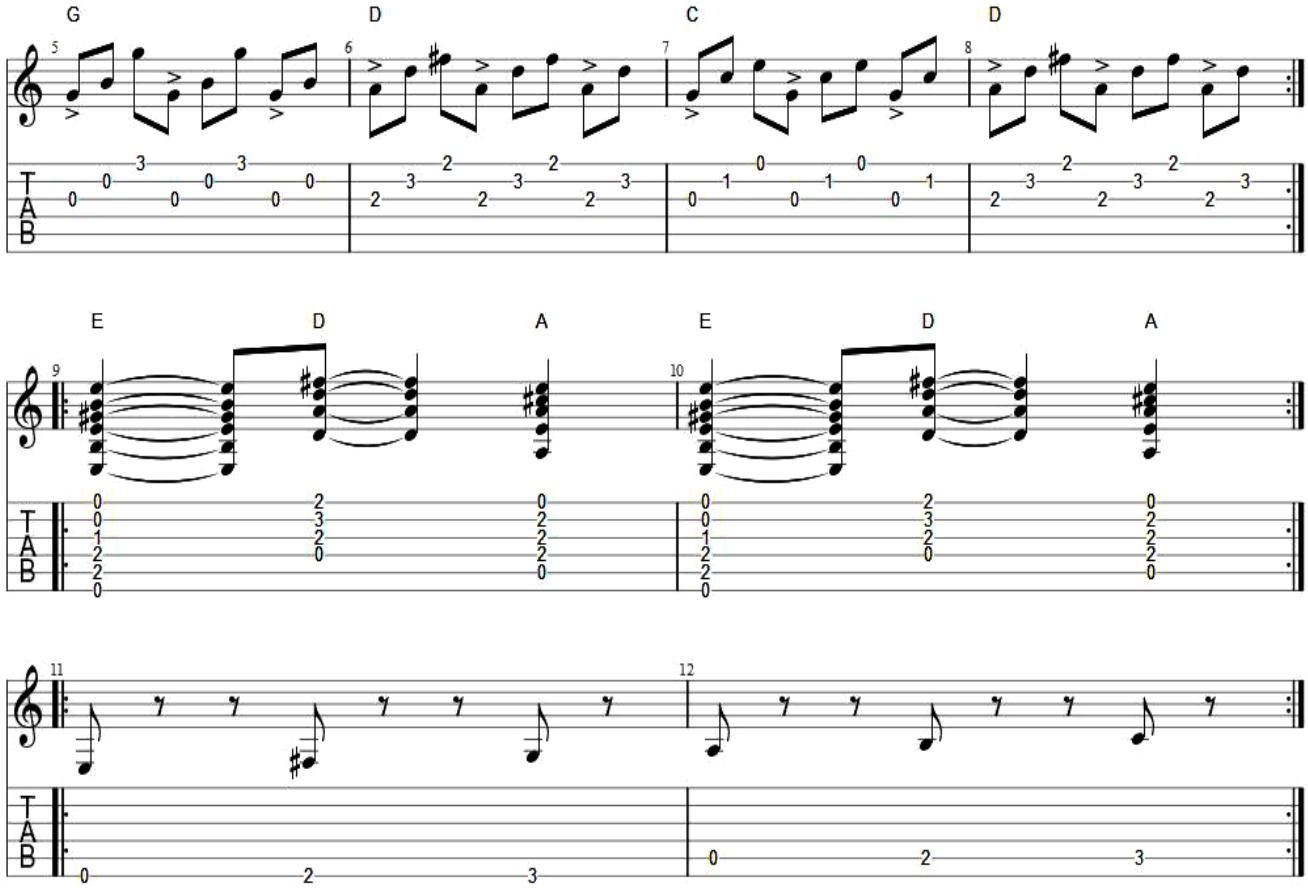
General Ideas

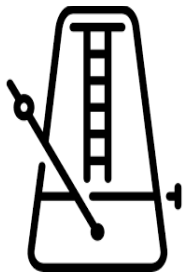
- Take your time and play 1 measure at a time.
- Start with clapping and tapping and count each one, it's important to verbalize the count.
- Play at a slow enough tempo that you can “own it”
- Accents can be reinforced musically with other chords/notes on the accent
- Accents happen all over music, listen for them in the music you listen to
- All instruments use accents, they are part of *Dynamics* in music, making music loud and quiet.
- Accents allow rhythm to breathe and flow.

#2- 332



#3-332 Rhythm guitar





Fundamentals of Rhythm

Chapter 10

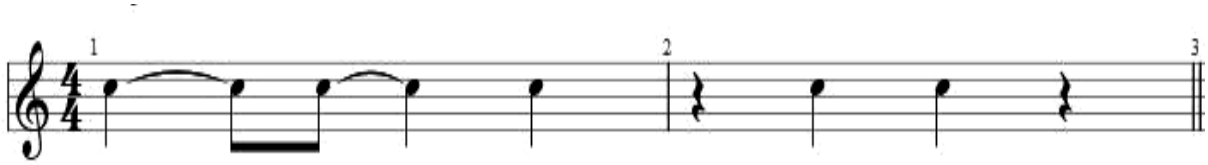
Clave

The Clave is a 5 note rhythmic pattern based in Afro-Cuban music and has made it's way into most styles of music. It's an important rhythmic figure and it's a very recognizable sound.

A lot of people, especially Americans know it as the “Bo Diddley beat”. It's been used on countless songs for decades.

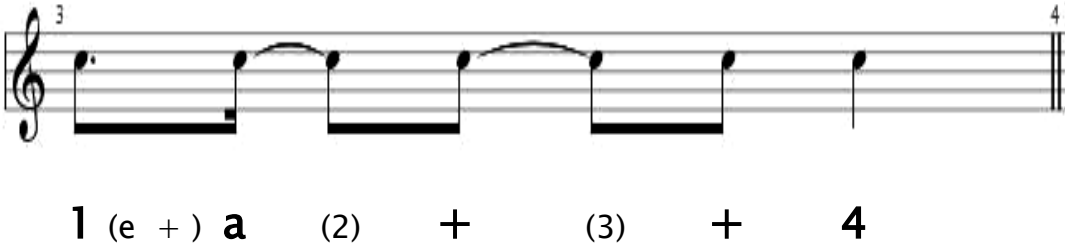
The 5 note pattern can be played as *quarter-notes* and *eighth-notes* lasting for 2 bars. The first bar has 3 notes in it and the second bar has 2 notes. It is often referred to as the 3-2 clave. It's original name is the “Son Clave”

Son Clave (3-2)



Note that the first bar is the 332 pattern we looked at last chapter.

The Son Clave is also played as *eighth-notes* and *sixteenth-notes*. It's the same rhythm but played twice as frequently. Remember that *quarter-notes* become *eighth-notes* and *eighth-notes* become *sixteenth-notes.*



Examples of songs that use the Clave

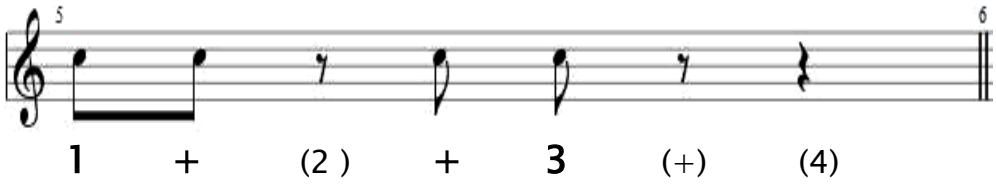
- “Bo Diddley” by Bo Diddley
- “Not Fade Away” by Buddy Holly
- “Willie and the Hand Jive” by Johnny Otis
- “I Want Candy” by The Strangeloves
- “Please Go Home” by The Rolling Stones
- “She Has Funny Cars” by Jefferson Airplane
- “Magic Bus” by The Who
- “Panic In Detroit” by David Bowie
- “She The One” by Bruce Springsteen
- “American Girl” by Tom Petty and The Heartbreakers
- “Hateful” by The Clash
- “Cuban Slide” by The Pretenders
- “Mr Brownstone” by Guns n Roses
- “Faith” by George Michael
- “Desire” by U2
- “Black Horse and A Cherry Tree” by KT Tunstall

Although rhythm is the foundation of all music it always amazes me how most rhythmic patterns don't have a formal name. All of our notes have names and chords have names as well as the individual rhythms (*quarter-notes* etc). But there are usually no names for common rhythmic patterns except for things like the Clave.

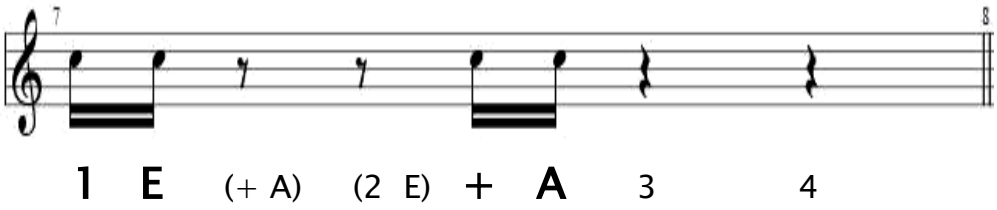
As a musician I'm constantly confronted with different rhythms and one of the most common patterns I see I call “duhdah duhdah” (I know, very sophisticated). It's just one of those patterns that people can feel and happens often.

Like the Clave, It is played as *eighth-notes* (#1) as well as *sixteenth-notes* (#2).

#1



#2



Some Song Examples

- “Sabotage” by Beastie Boys
- “Cheap Sunglasses” (outro) by ZZ Top
- “Super Bad” James Brown
- “Hotentot” by John Scofield
- “Those Shoes” by The Eagles

Summary

Rhythm is the most important part of music. Music can't exist without it. You can have music without melody, music without harmony but you can not have music without rhythm. Rhythm is time and time is always moving.

The better you are at rhythm the better you will sound, no matter what. It doesn't matter how many or few chords you know, being better at rhythm will make you sound better.

Rhythm is made up of a few different components. In this book we covered all of the fundamentals of rhythm. You should be familiar and comfortable with these elements.

- Tempo and BPM
- Bars and Time Signatures
- Whole, half, quarter, eighth, triplet and sixteenth-notes and their rests
- Dots and Ties
- Accents, Subgroups and the Clave

Rhythm and music are always a “real time” event and should be practiced and played that way. You must always think of a beat while playing and using a metronome is essential.

- Always play with a beat, using a metronome, drum machine, loop pedal or, another human being
- Clap your foot and be able to count aloud the rhythmic count.
- You don't need an instrument to play rhythms, anything is percussive
- Rhythm is with you all the time, listen for it and tap into it (pun intended)
- Be patient with it, most of us spent almost all of our music time focusing on melody and harmony and rhythm needs time to catch up.
- When music gets too much, sometimes its best to go outside and go for a walk.....and make note of the tempo that you walk, and your heart rate, rhythm is always with us, it's life.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Suke Cerulo has been playing guitar for 34 years and professionally for 25. He grew up in a musical family and graduated Berklee College of music. He has performed more than 2000 shows nationally with his band Schleigho. They recorded six albums, were on a label with the Allman Brothers for 5 years and toured with the Derek Trucks Band. For the last 15 years Suke has been teaching private lessons and classes in New York City to over 60 students a week. He continues to perform and teach full time in NYC, living there with his wife and son.

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