

Rhythm, Timing, & Technique

Why do I need to learn these exercises?

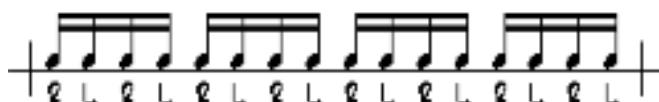
The purpose of these exercises is to give students a logical and applicable approach to learning the basics of rhythm, timing, and technique. Each exercise develops an understanding of a particular rhythm or ability to use a particular technique.

Most exercises start with the right hand and use the right-hand lead system, which has become the standard sticking system in modern percussion playing. Exercises that use accents should be played with varying stick heights for the accents and taps, such as: 6"/3", 9"/3", 12"/3", or 12"/6".

How do I use these exercises?

Lines labeled with letters:

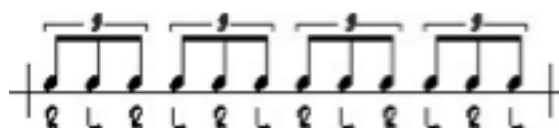
In the following pages you will find two types of exercises. The first type consists of lines that are divided up into groupings that are labeled with letters. This type of exercise may be practiced using two different methods. The first method utilizes *check patterns*. A check pattern is a rhythmic grouping that includes a repetitive sticking. These check patterns are played at the start of each exercise as well as in-between each letter of a specific line. There are two basic check patterns that are used to practice these lines: a sixteenth note based rhythms, and a triplet check pattern. A sixteenth note check pattern would be played with a line of sixteenth note based rhythms, a triplet check pattern would be played with a line of triplet based rhythms. One way to use the check pattern, for example, in a sixteenth note based line, is to take a grouping of sixteenth notes, using alternating sticking, and play it four times:



This pattern would be played at the start of the exercises. Then you would play any letter from a particular line 4 times as well. This is called the 4x4 method. For example, if you were to apply this approach to line 3, letter A, it would be played like this:



This process would be repeated for letters B, C, and D of line 3 as well. This same approach can be used for the triplet based lines, replacing the sixteenth note check pattern with eighth note triplets with alternating sticking. This triplet check pattern is shown below:



Check patterns may be played in groupings other than 4, such as 3, 2, or even 1. We would label these 3x3, 2x2, etc. Accents and flams may also be added to check patterns to develop even more facility in rudimental playing.

Rhythm, Timing, & Technique (continued)

The second method for practicing these exercises is the *grid* system. The most common grid is the *4-2-1 grid*. With this system, each letter of a particular line would be played 4 times, then 2 times, and then 1 time. The last time (or 1 time) is repeated to round off the exercises. The 4-2-1 grid for line 3, for example, would look like this:



Exercises with repeat signs:

The second type of exercise in this packet consists of 4 or 8 measure phrases with repeat signs. These exercises are to be repeated 1 time unless otherwise instructed. If an exercise is played more than 1 time, a tap-off is used to separate the repetitions. Regarding tap-offs, it is important to remember that a 2 measure tap-off is used to start an exercise, and a 1 measure tap-off is used to separate the repetitions of the exercise.

How do I practice flams?

Some of these exercises do not have flams, but can be used to practice them. For example, line 4 can be played with flams where accents occur, as shown below:



The same approach can be applied to other lines as well, including some of the triplet based lines. For the adventurous player, diddles can be applied on the flam or after the flam to work on chesses, flam drags, or flam fives. You can also practice short and long buzzes, as well as buzz rolls, by substituting a buzz stroke for any double-stroke or accent in the packet.

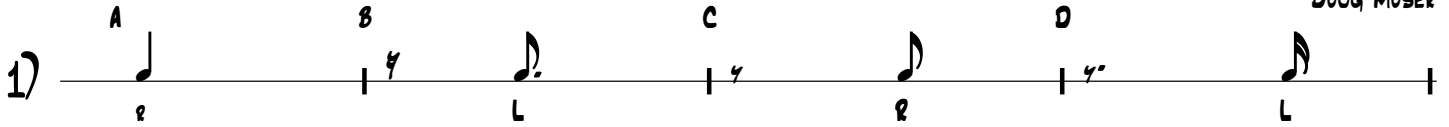
Is that it?

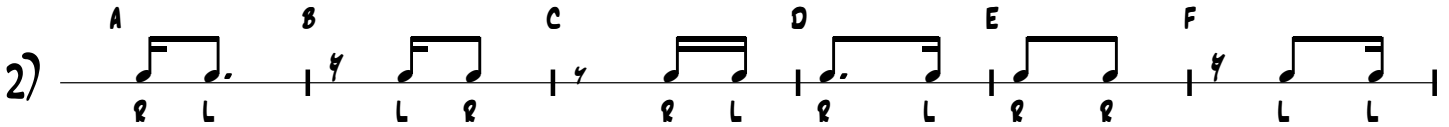
No! Remember, practicing these exercises with a *metronome* is crucial! The metronome is not just a source of consistent tempo; it is an accuracy-checker. If you cannot successfully play a line or exercise at a given tempo, set the metronome to a slower tempo that you can handle, and then gradually set the metronome higher. Increments of 2-5 beats per minute usually work best. Practicing without a metronome is the common cause of poor technique and execution. Be sure to always use correct body posture, stick position, and bead placement when working on a drum or practice pad.

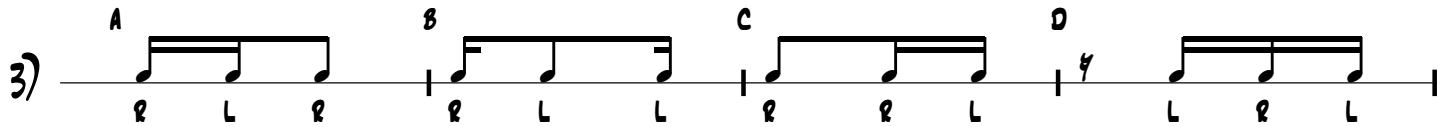
You can also use these methods to practice other fundamentals as well. Try using the check pattern method to practice rudiments from your rudiment sheet, or try gridding different combinations of rhythms. Marching tenor players can try to make splits for some of these exercises too, if they have mastered the exercises at all tempos on Drum 2 first. Remember to work out these exercises with all heights and varying tempos to fully develop a specific skill. You can also practice this packet with one or more individuals to develop listening skills. Using these tools will develop the necessary “chops” needed to make any drumline and will lead any serious percussionist to excellence.

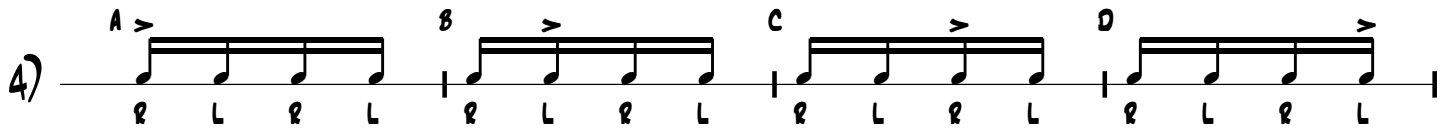
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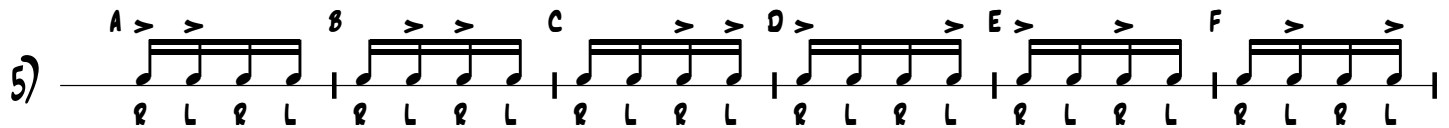
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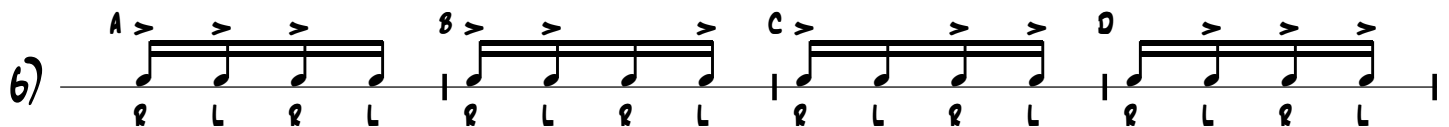
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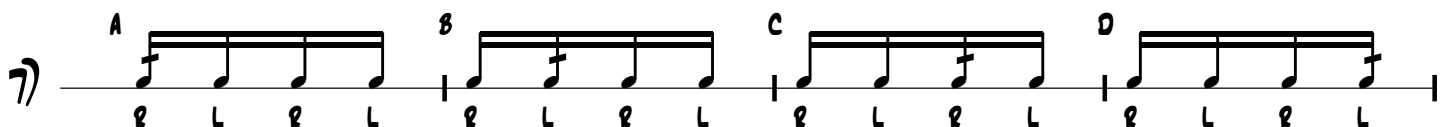
2) 

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4) 

5) 

6) 

7) 

8) 

