

# 4

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## Using Subdivisions For Fills



## Mixing combinations of Subdivisions

In our first three lessons, we have learned about quarter notes, eighth notes and sixteenth notes. These are often referred to as **subdivisions**, as they divide the beat into different divisions.

So far, we have used this knowledge to develop our ability to play both grooves and fills. This lesson develops a more sophisticated understanding of rhythm and helps you create more interesting fills around the kit.

Firstly, let's have a look at a series of exercises that mix quarter notes, eighth notes and sixteenth notes and see how we get on.

Each of the exercises are accompanied by multimedia files, so remember that you can slow the exercise down if it is too quick and build the speed up when you get more comfortable. Once you have listened to the play-along files a couple of times, practise playing along using your snare drum, or practice pad.

### Lesson Objectives

- Develop our rhythmic understanding by mixing quarter notes, eighth notes and sixteenth notes.
- Develop control of time, by playing quarter notes, eighth notes and sixteenth notes as fills.
- Develop reading simple **notation** using the **subdivisions** of quarter, eighth and sixteenth notes.

## Mixing Subdivisions – Snare Drum Study 1

There are 8 bars in this exercise and you can cycle it around and around if you wish.

Count out loud and keep strict time. To help with the note values, the rhythm is played on the bass and piano as **accompaniment**.

### Exercise 1: lesson004.idsusff.01

1 2 3 + 4 +    1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +    1 2 3 + 4 +    1 2 + 3 4 +

5 1 + 2 3 + 4 +    1 2 + 3 + 4    1 + 2 3 + 4    1 2 3 + 4

## Mixing Subdivisions – Snare Drum Study 2

The next example includes sixteenth notes, along with quarter notes and eighth notes.

### Exercise 2: lesson004.idsusff.02

1 2 3 + 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 e + a 4 e + a 1 2 3 + 4 e + a

1 2 e + a 3 4 + 1 + 2 e + a 3 + 4 e + a

1 2 e + a 3 + 4 e + a 1 e + a 2 3 e + a 4 1 2 3 e + a 4

## Playing Mixed Subdivisions as Fills – Kit Study 1

The next step is to play these new rhythms as fills. We need to do two things:

- Play a bar of groove and then,
- Play the rhythms around the kit.

The next exercise does exactly that. We have taken the bars from *Exercise 1* and in front of each bar we have put a simple groove. The rhythms have then been placed not just on the snare drum but around the kit, as we did in *Lesson 3*, utilising the snare drum, hi-tom, mid-tom and lo-tom in the fill.

Have a good look at the exercise.

## Exercise 3: lesson004.idsusff.03

1

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 + 4 +

3

1 2 3 4 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +

5

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 + 4 +

7

1 2 3 4 1 2 + 3 4 +

9

1 2 3 4 1 + 2 3 + 4 +

11

1 2 3 4 1 2 + 3 + 4

13

1 2 3 4 1 + 2 3 + 4

15

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 + 4

## Playing Mixed Subdivisions as Fills – Kit Study 2

This second exercise takes *Snare Drum Study 2* and places those rhythms around the kit, following a bar of groove each time. Accordingly, we are now playing fills with quarter notes, eighth notes and sixteenth notes.

### Exercise 4: lesson004.idsusff.04

1

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 + 4 +

3

1 2 3 4 1 + 2 + 3 e + a 4 e + a

5

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 + 4 e + a

7

1 2 3 4 1 2 e + a 3 4 +

9

1 2 3 4 1 + 2 e + a 3 + 4 e + a

11

1 2 3 4 1 2 e + a 3 + 4 e + a

13

1 2 3 4 1 e + a 2 3 e + a 4

15

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 e + a 4

## How to Practise your new Fills

The best way to develop your playing, is to play your exercises as often as you can. We have all heard the expression that '*Practise makes perfect*'.

The truth is that repetition makes us good at doing something. The reason being is that your brain and your body work together remembering how you do something and they use this information to understand when it feels good and when it feels wrong. It is often referred to as **muscle memory**, as our body seems to learn the movements.

The more often you practise kicking a ball against a wall, the better you get at it. Accordingly, the more often you go through your drum lesson exercises the better you will become at playing them.

However, always make sure that you are practising them correctly, otherwise you just get good at getting it wrong.

Make sure that you:

- Pay attention to the drum tracks on the multimedia files.
- Practise at slow tempos to begin with so you can check what you are doing.

Count out loud, so that you know where you are and that you are actually reading what you are playing.

Once you feel that you are getting it right, you can use your electronic drum kit to record your performance and check it back. You can save that file so that you can look back at a later date to see how much you have improved.

Also, it is a good idea to play along to your favourite CDs and see if you can play the grooves and fills in time with the songs. Don't worry that you are not actually playing what the drummer on the track is for the moment, just play along and see how you get on.

Remember that you can gradually develop your ability to play faster by increasing the tempo on your DrumXtractor. The play-along files on your DrumXtractor can change tempo, unlike CDs, so that is a good way of building up your speed so that you can play along with the faster tracks on your favourite albums.