

Hand Drumming Crash Course: Part Three

by Mark Powers

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In Part Two, we combined our *Bass*, *Open* and *Slap* strokes to create several fun hand drum rhythms. We have so far been using only quarter-notes and 8th-notes. This month, let's also incorporate some 16th-notes and 16th-rests, allowing for even more interesting patterns!

Since we are now adding more subdivisions to each beat, our counting will need to change as well. Instead of the previous 8th-note flow (1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &), these 16th-note based rhythms are now counted: 1 E & A 2 E & A 3 E & A 4 E & A

Don't initially concern yourself with speed. Relax, begin *so* slowly that you can play without making mistakes, count *out loud*, focus on producing even, clear and consistent stroke sounds, and practice each pattern over and over and over again. Repetition is key- it takes time for your mind, ears and body to memorize a motion and its resulting sound. No matter how complex it may first seem, once you have played any pattern *correctly* enough times, muscle-memory will set in. You'll then eventually be able to play the rhythm without much thought or effort at all, as if on autopilot, and will have all the speed you need. And remember, practice doesn't *always* make perfect. If you allow your practicing to be tense and sloppy, that's exactly how you will train yourself to sound as a player . . . tense and sloppy. And I would assume that none of us are aspiring toward that. Instead, I suggest adopting this slightly amended maxim: *Perfect* practice makes perfect.

Notation Key: B = *Bass* tone O = *Open* tone S = *Slap* stroke - = rest

Example #16

O	O	O	O	B	-	-	-	O	O	O	O	S	-	S	-
R	L	R	L	R	-	-	-	R	L	R	L	R	-	L	-
1	E	&	A	2	E	&	A	3	E	&	A	4	E	&	A

O O O O B O O O O S S
R L R L R R L R L R L

Example #17

B	B	O	O	S	S	B	B	O	O	S	S	B	-	-	-
R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L	R	-	-	-
1	E	&	A	2	E	&	A	3	E	&	A	4	E	&	A

B B O O S S B B O O S S B
R L R L R L R L R L R L R

Example #18

S	S	O	O	-	-	S	S	O	O	-	-	-	-	B	-
R	L	R	L	-	-	R	L	R	L	-	-	-	-	L	-
1	E	&	A	2	E	&	A	3	E	&	A	4	E	&	A

S S O O S S O O B
R L R L R L R L L

Example #19

B	B	O	-	S	S	O	-	B	-	B	-	O	-	S	S
R	L	R	-	R	L	R	-	R	-	L	-	R	-	R	L
1	E	&	A	2	E	&	A	3	E	&	A	4	E	&	A

B B O S S O B B O S S
R L R R L R R L R R L

Example #20

S	-	O	O	-	O	O	O	B	-	B	-	S	-	O	O
R	-	R	L	-	L	R	L	R	-	L	-	R	-	R	L
1	E	&	A	2	E	&	A	3	E	&	A	4	E	&	A

S O O O O B B S O O
R R L L R L R L R R L

Example #21

B	B	-	S	-	O	O	B	B	-	O	-	-	-	-	-
R	L	-	R	-	L	R	L	R	-	L	-	-	-	-	-
1	E	&	A	2	E	&	A	3	E	&	A	4	E	&	A

B B S O O B B O
R L R L R L R L

As you can probably imagine by now, the possibilities are absolutely endless! Have fun creating your own combinations and make sure to catch the next lesson, where we will add some new *Heel* and *Toe* strokes into the mix. See you then!

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