



## Learning How To Use Fills Properly

One of the key things to learn when starting to use fills is where they should go so that they sound fitting and not distracting. This will make a big difference in helping you sound like a "polished" drummer. In order to understand this, it is important to understand how music is organized in groups of measures.

## Measures in Groups of 4 or 8

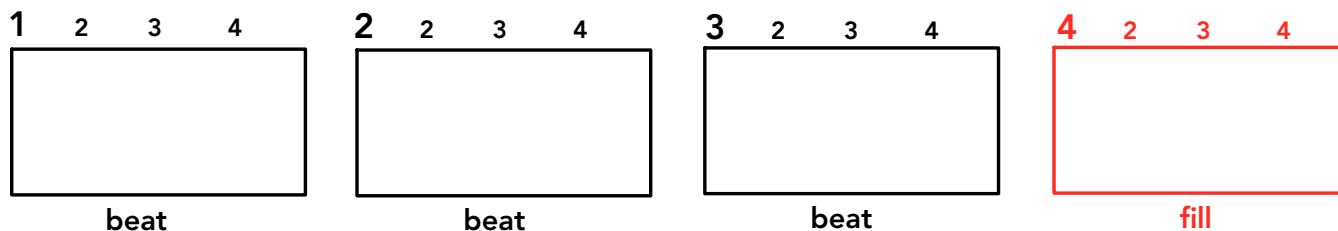
Learning where to play fills (and where not to) is all about understanding how songs are organized and constructed. It is extremely common to see music organized in groups of 4, 8 and even 16 measures. First, we will focus on groups of 4 measures and then expand this concept into groups of 8 measures a bit later.

## 4-Measure Pattern - "3 + 1" Pattern

A common practice in drumming, is to play a beat for 3 measures and then play a fill (or a cymbal crash) in the 4th measure. This is a guaranteed, safe pattern to follow that will have great results. The fill can be short or long and may or may not take up the entire measure (all 4 counts).

Below I have created an illustration of 4 rectangular boxes. Each box represents a measure, with the count for that measure shown on top of each.

## "3 + 1" Pattern (A Group of 4 Measures With a Fill at the End)



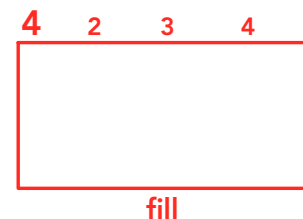


## Count Along

At first, it will be important that you count along to yourself as you are playing the beat and inserting fills, however, pretty soon the pattern will become so natural that you will just "feel" when it is time to put a fill and you won't have to count constantly.

## The "Fill Zone"

The 4th measure, colored red, is where the fill will be played (the "Fill Zone"). Soon we will learn different types of fills that will fit inside a measure, but for now, let's just get used to the pattern.



**Play the "3 + 1" pattern using an 8th note beat and trying a few fills you've learned.** Be sure to put the fills in the "fill zone" (4th measure). Each time you play the pattern, try a different fill. Be sure to count the measures!