

Progress Checkpoint #3



Before we go any farther, it is important to take some time and evaluate your progress. The concepts we've learned so far are very important, and they are the foundation of everything that's coming next. Let's take a quick overview of the things you should know before moving on.

By Now You Should (Be Able To):

- Play beats using off-time kick patterns and grooves.
- Understand the different "sections" that make up a song; notice how most songs follow a similar format. Try to practice learning song arrangements and even mapping out songs.
- Play beats using off-time and alternate snare patterns and grooves.
- Be able to play a beat with a "Swingy 16" groove. Any fills played should match that groove.
- Find the count (either 4-count or 6-count) as you listen to a song. Some songs will be challenging, but give it a try! Even if you don't get it right, you're still learning.
- Play 8 measures of a single-handed sixteenth note hi-hat beat at 70 BPM. Play 8 measures of an alternating sixteenth note hi-hat beat at 90 BPM.
- Show development playing "drags" and "flams" on pad. Begin adding them into beats and fills on the Kit.
- Experiment playing half-time & double-time beats. Notice how affect the feel of the music.
- Play 16 measures of a beat. Using the "7 + 1" pattern, incorporate single cymbal crashes and short and long fills. Hi-hat "barks" and kick patterns should be used.
- Be able to play a triplet-style beat, including a "shuffle."
- Have a firm understanding of rests & accounting for time.
- Play sixteenth note double-stroke rolls and also sixteenth note Paradiddles at 150 BPM using stick rebound. Stick rebound should feel natural at this point allowing you to play faster notes with minimal effort.
- Show basic understanding and skill when playing triplets and sixteenth note triplets around the kit or on a practice pad.
- Understand and play through the possible combinations of sixteenth notes and triplets.

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Where Your Progress Should Be At This Point

In order to improve, you should be playing at least a little bit every day, even if only for a few minutes. Playing each day for fun (even if you aren't "practicing") will have HUGE impact on your progress! Playing eighth note and sixteenth note beats should feel pretty natural at this point. Continue experimenting with off-time kick and snare patterns, triplet-style beats and "swingy 16" grooves to push your coordination and creativity.

Fills should be a normal part of your playing. You should feel comfortable using short fills more often than longer fills and also regularly hitting crash cymbals to add excitement to your playing instead of using fills all the time. You should have a small collection of fills that you like at this point. As you experiment with fills, you should be aware of the more realistic pattern of 8 measures ("7+1"), yet realize that all songs are different and may not follow a pattern.

To add dynamics and make your playing sound more interesting, you should be very comfortable using a hi-hat "bark," cross-stick on the snare and using the ride cymbal.

Discipline with the practice pad, developing the rudiments you've learned so far can't be overstated. Daily repetition will start paying off and you'll be surprised at what you're starting to do. Though it may be awkward, push through and keep developing your "stick bounce" and rolls.

Playing Along To Recordings / Playing With Other Musicians

Putting on headphones (or earbuds) and playing along with recordings should be a common practice AT LEAST once or twice a week. This importance of this can't be overstated! If you aren't doing this, then you won't grow - it's that simple. Playing with other musicians is extremely beneficial if you have an opportunity!

Songs Have So Much To Teach You - Pay Close Attention

At this point, whenever music is playing (at home, in the car, etc.), you should be noticing the drums. Focusing on how professional drummers play will help you become better and help develop your creativity. Trying to figure out drum parts and fills from your favorite songs will keep you interested and growing.

When listening, notice the "groove" (kick and hi-hat patterns) as you try to figure out what is being played. Gradually you will find parts that you really like and add them to your personal collection of licks and beats. As you listen, try and also identify the song "sections" and start to pay attention to how most songs usually have similar arrangements.