drums

reading | technique | performance

TECHNIQUE 4

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DRUM TECHNIQUE 4

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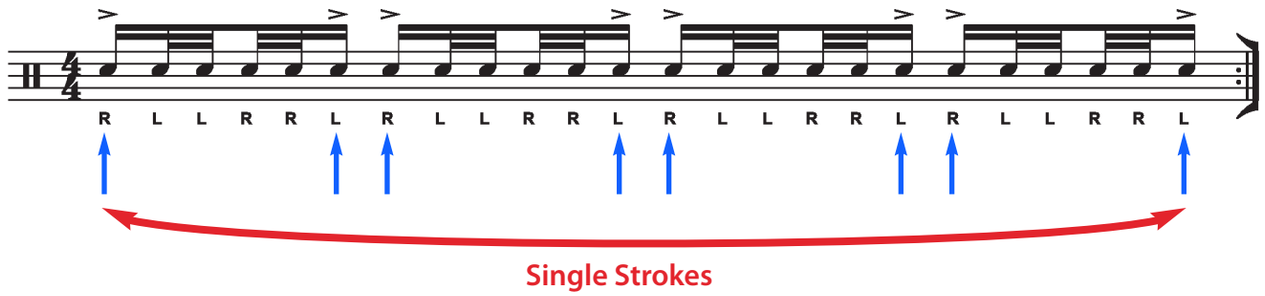
Chapter 1: Applying Accents to the Six-Stroke Roll

Accents are the nuances needed to make patterns take shape and propel rhythms. Just like being able to smoothly mix and transition from singles to doubles, a drummer must be comfortable with applying accents to an array of sticking and patterns. As you learned in Drum Technique 1, Unit 7 and Drum Technique 3, Unit 7, the six-stroke roll traditionally has accents on the two single strokes within the roll (traditional right-hand lead sticking) as follows:

Ex. 1.1

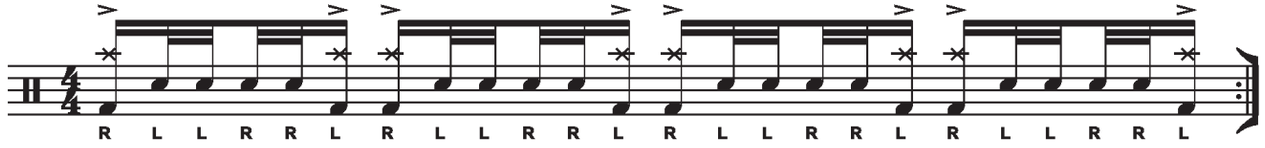


The six-stroke roll can also be played as sextuplets as follows:

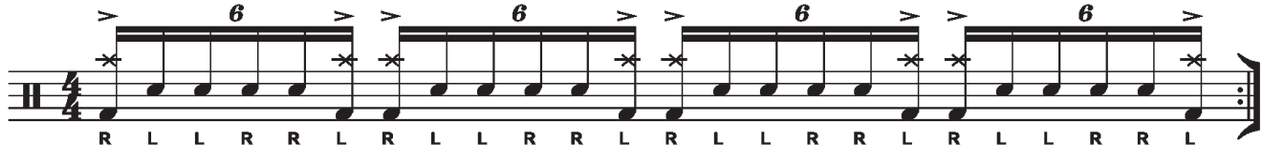
Ex. 1.2

These two versions of the six-stroke roll (Ex. 1.1 and 1.2) can be applied to the drum set. The two single strokes can easily be moved to tom toms and cymbals, like so:

Ex. 1.3



Ex. 1.4



Ex. 1.5

Ex. 1.6

Mix and match the above examples to create your own patterns.

Applying Accents to the Double Strokes within a Six-Stroke Roll

A great way to develop your ability to add accents to any pattern at will is to apply accents to the double strokes within a six-stroke roll. This technique takes you out of your comfort zone with six-stroke rolls, allowing you to create numerous combinations of sticking and accents.

To start you will play an unaccented six-stroke roll in order to not rely on the accented single strokes. Next, you will move one accent through every partial of a six-stroke roll as follows:
Ex. 1.7

1 **Be sure not to accent any note:**

2 **Add an accent to every down beat making sure not to accent the single left hand on the "ah" of every beat:**

3 **Add an accent to the first note of the left hand double stroke. You must throw the left stick downward to produce the accent but must immediately ease up to allow the rebound to fall gently after the accented note:**

4 **Add an accent to the second note of the left hand double stroke. You must snap your wrist after the first stroke of the double in order to produce the accent:**

5 **Add an accent to the first note of the right hand double stroke. You must throw the right stick downward to produce the accent but must immediately ease up to allow the rebound to fall gently after the accented note:**

6 **Add an accent to the second note of the right hand double stroke. You must snap your wrist after the first stroke of the double in order to produce the accent:**

7 **Add an accent to the "ah" of every beat making sure not to accent right hand single stroke on the downbeats:**

Next, apply the same series of accents from above (Ex. 1.7) to sextuplet six-stroke rolls, as follows:
Ex. 1.8

1 **Unaccented:**

2 **Accents on the downbeats:**

3 **Accents on the second partial:**

4 **Accents on the third partial:**

5 **Accents on the fourth partial:**

6 **Accents on the fifth partial:**

7 **Accents on the sixth partial:**

Chapter 2: Over-the-Bar Groove Technique

As you have learned from the Drum Performance series, a drummer must be able to interact and communicate (musically and visually) with the rest of an ensemble. While technique does not necessarily tell you what to play (how to interact appropriately with developed musical ideas), technique does provide you with the facility to be creative and play what comes to your mind in an instant.

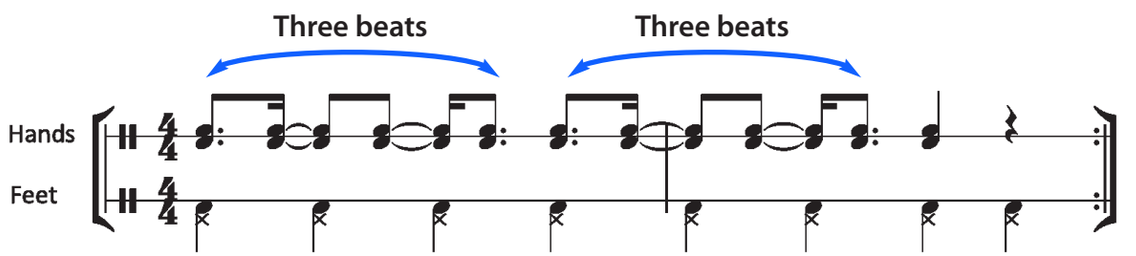
Common genres that allow for expansive interaction and creativity are jazz, funk, gospel, Latin and jam bands (Phish, John Scofield, String Cheese Incident and Widespread Panic). While a drummer must maintain a steady groove, they must also be able to interact without harming the integrity of the groove.

Over-the-Bar Patterns

To play "over the bar" means to play a repeated musical phrase (usually grouped in an odd amount of beats) against the grain of a groove template. Playing small groupings of ideas that do not land on beat 1 of a bar is a great technique to help you develop creative freedom.

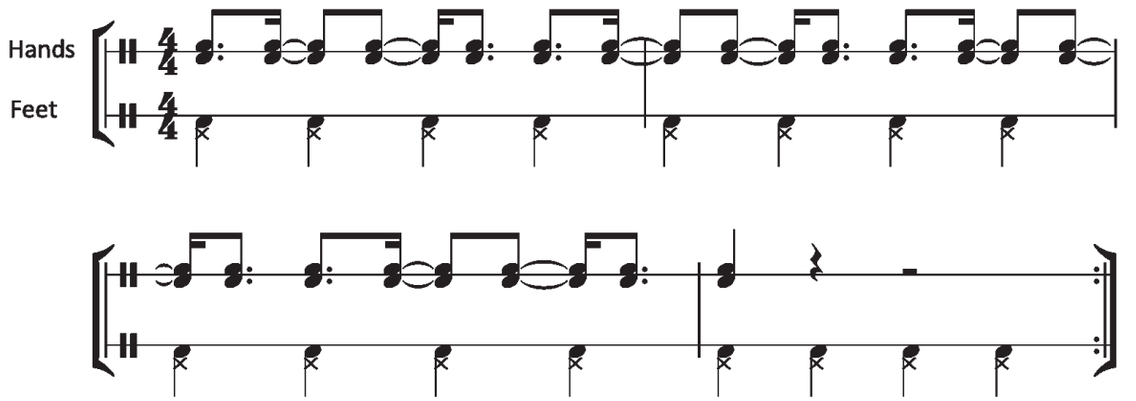
The dotted eighth note is a very useful rhythm to play in 4/4 that will help you begin to feel over-the-bar concepts. Play quarter notes with both feet while your hands play unison dotted eighth notes (or tied eighths and 16ths) between the floor tom and snare drum. The dotted eighth note is worth one and a half beats (or three 16th notes). Therefore, when repeated this pattern creates a three beat phrase which lands on a downbeat every three beats. To start, we will use a two bar phrase as follows:

Ex. 1.9



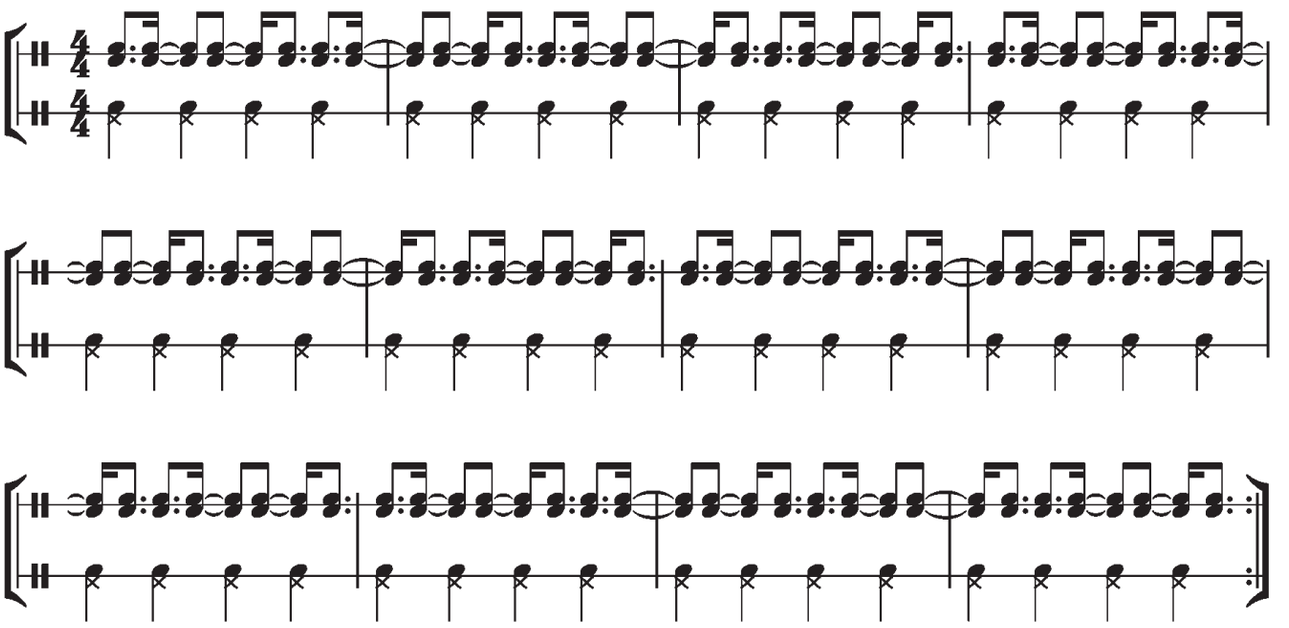
In the above example, the three-beat phrase repeats on beat 4 of the first measure, creating an over-the-bar phrase. To take this concept a step further, let's apply the same three-beat phrase to a four-bar phrase, as follows:

Ex. 1.10



One important rule to remember when developing over-the-bar ideas is to count out loud. By counting out loud you will maintain where beat 1 is in every bar—an essential key when improvising. The last thing you want to have happen is to proceed into a hip, over-the-bar phrase only to get lost within the phrase. Let's now play the three-beat, dotted-eighth pattern over 12 bars, where the entire sequence comes full circle. Count quarter notes out loud.

Ex. 1.11

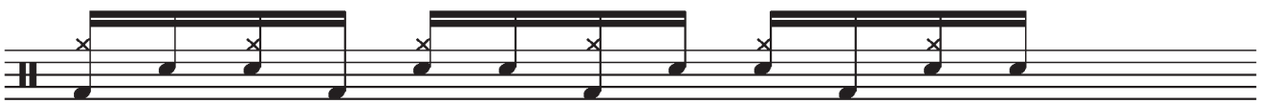


Grooving Over the Bar

As stated earlier, you must be able to interact creatively with the band while maintaining a steady groove. One way to develop this ability is to apply over-the-bar concepts to bass drum, snare drum, and hi-hat (or ride cymbal) combinations, thus creating small germs of groove ideas to use in improvisational settings.

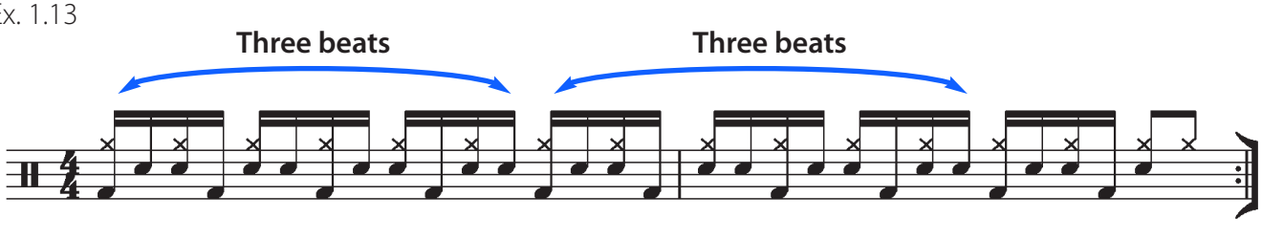
Now that you understand the dotted eighth note over-the-bar concept, this idea can be applied to the bass drum with the snare drum filling in the holes with 16th notes and the hi-hat playing eighth notes, maintaining a 4/4 feel. The basic idea is as follows:

Ex. 1.12



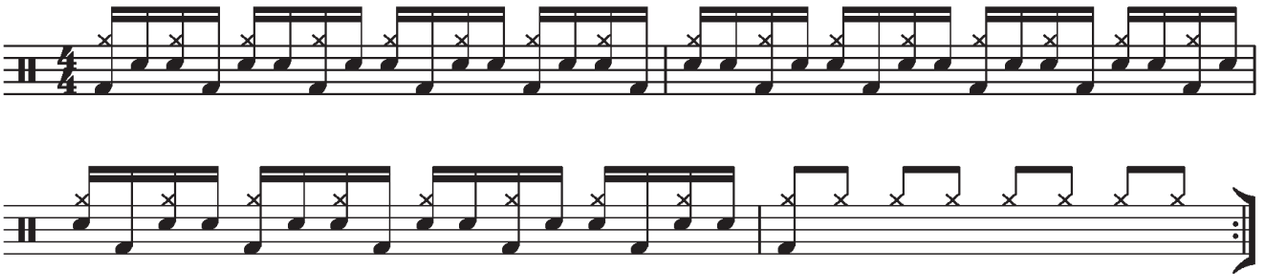
Be sure to play the bass drum with a consistent volume, the snare drum as ghost notes and the hi-hat evenly with no accents. The tendency is to feel this in 3/4, accenting every other group of two snare drum notes. It is essential that you do not fall into this trap and play all notes evenly while counting quarter notes out loud. Let's play a two-bar phrase utilizing this groove concept.

Ex. 1.13



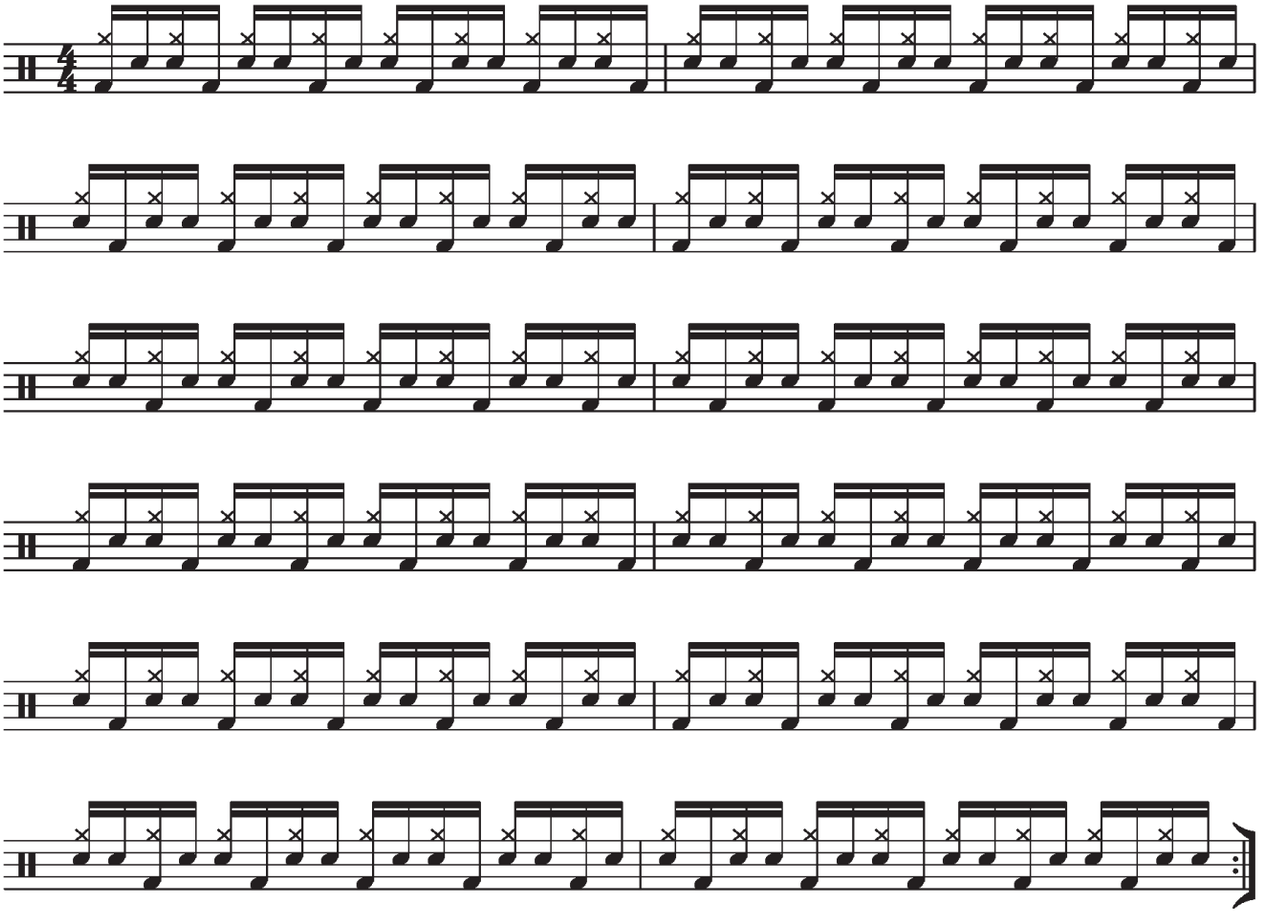
Next, play this idea as a four-bar phrase (while counting quarter notes out loud), stopping on beat 1 of bar 4 as follows:

Ex. 1.14



Finally, while counting out loud, play the three-16th-note grouping continuously over an entire 12-bar phrase, as follows:

Ex. 1.15



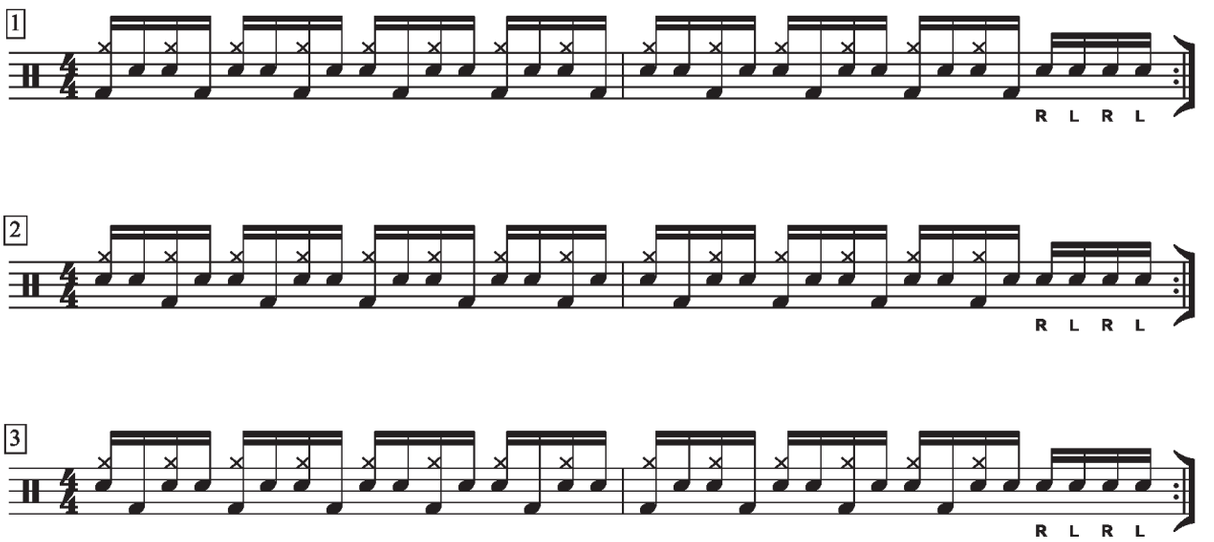
Phrasing

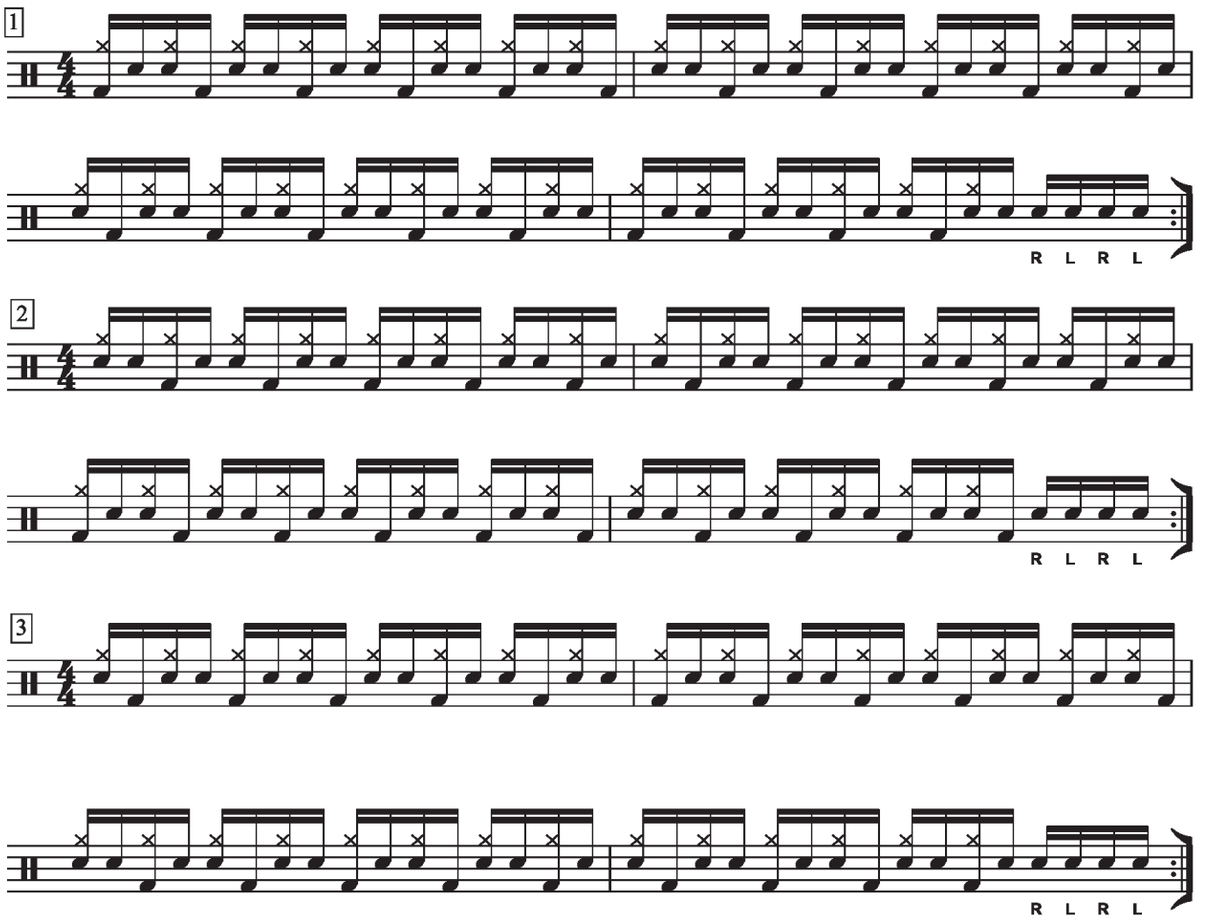
As stated earlier, you must count to keep from getting lost within an over-the-bar pattern. To avoid getting locked into an over-the-bar pattern, it is good practice to play a clear fill at the end of a phrase. The fill will help you (and the band) to reset and recover from an over-the-bar pattern.

In the following exercises you will play the repeated three-note grouping followed by a fill on beat 4 to help you feel how to exit over-the-bar patterns.

Two-bar phrases

Ex. 1.16



Four-bar phrases

Ex. 1.17