

ANIKA NILLES

# PAD BOOK

FUNDAMENTAL WORKOUTS

SUBDIVISION STUDIES

METRIC MEASURES

PERCUSSION PATTERNS

INDEPENDENT

INTERNATIONAL  
EDITION



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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Photo © by Marius Mischke

**ANIKA NILLES** is a German drummer, composer and educator. She studied drums and music business at the POPAKADEMIE in Mannheim (Germany) with **Udo Dahmen, Jost Nickel** and **Claus Hessler**.

Anika has appeared on stage with several artists and bands, and made her online debut in 2013 with her own **YouTube** channel, featuring videos of her unique compositions and inimitable playing style. With almost 20 million video views in recent years, she has made a name for herself as a much sought-after drummer and educator. To date, Anika has released two albums; *Pikalar* and *For a Colorful Soul*, and several singles.

As a well-known clinician she has toured in Asia, North America, Australia and Europe, and participated in high profile drum events such as PASIC (USA), the LONDON DRUMSHOW (UK), the DRUMEO FESTIVAL (Canada), the RALPH ANGELILO DRUMFEST (Canada) and the BAG SHOW (France) and many more.

For her work as a clinician and educator she has won numerous prestigious awards including:

2015 Modern Drummer Readers Poll for *Up And Coming Artist*,

2016 DRUM! Magazine *No. 1 Rising Star*

2017 UK Drummies Awards *No. 3 Best Educator*

2018 UK Musicradar *No. 1 Best Clinician*

2019 UK Musicradar *No. 3 Best Clinician*

Anika teaches at the Popakademie – the University of Popular Music and Music Business – in Germany, and at the Nexus ICA (UK). She is also guest instructor at DRUMEO (Canada).

In addition to her work as educator, clinician, author and composer, she regularly plays with her own band project NEVELL and is in high demand as a freelance drummer.

As an author she writes workshops for several magazines like *drums & percussion* (Germany) and *DRUM!* (USA). Her **PAD BOOK** – published by Alfred Music – is her debut as a book author.

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## CREDITS

photo © by Friedrich Günther



Anika definitely represents the new breed of 21st century drummers in many different ways. With this first book she opens the conceptual vault of how she organizes her practicing, creates drumset applications out of pad exercises, unfolding new possibilities to create musical vocabulary. And make no mistake: She really practices and uses all of them!

I am proud to call her a long time alumni and see some of my input shimmer through and put towards different directions at the same time. Enjoy the journey, embrace the ideas and make them yours!

### CLAUS HESSLER

drummer, educator, author, and President of the German drummers community 'Percussion Creativ e.V.'



photo © by drumeo

It's rare that a drummer is both a world class educator and artist. Anika is the exception to the rule, she embodies both at the highest level. It has been an honour to work with her at Drumeo on multiple occasions and I'm excited to experience how her contributions will continue to help millions of drummers for years to come.

### JARED FALK

drumeo founder and CEO

photo © by Kana Tarumi



Anika is like a sister to me, I remember the 1st time she came to my Drum Studio; Blew me away. She is so Dedicated, Methodical, Thoughtful, & VERY Tasteful. I'm proud of who she has become today.

### CHRIS COLEMAN

drummer with Prince and Beck a.o.

photo © by Gerhard Kihme



When I met Anika she was my student. I am glad that she wrote this book so that I can learn from her now. She is one of my favorite drummers and I highly recommend digging into her book.

### JUST NICKEL

drummer with Jan Delay, author and composer



photo © by Arthur Bauer

With her book, Anika Nilles, using a variety of examples, closes an important gap for creative practice with the pad: Workouts and warm-ups, which serve selectively to develop the ears and the independence between right and left hand. Mental practice on the pad without a drumset speeds up the process of implementation on the set, especially when

one of the most innovative drummers of the new generation makes their work routines accessible to the public. This book covers everything a standard workout has to deliver for all drummers.

### PROF. UDO DAHMEN

Artistic Director and CEO of 'POPAKADEMIE – University of Popular Music and Music Business' (Germany), Vice President of 'German Music Council', drummer and author

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## THANKS TO:

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**SLAPKLATZ** Gunnar Birk Kristiansen

[www.anikanilles.com](http://www.anikanilles.com)



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Anika Nilles: pp 14, 17, 21, 28, 45, 52, 80, 101, 115,  
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## ABOUT THE BOOK

The idea of writing this **PAD BOOK** started when I was travelling a lot. It took me a while to understand how to practice on the road without a drumset. But it is always important to me not 'just' to keep my level, but to improve my playing. So I started to delve deeper into the options of practicing on a pad.

After a while, I created more specific exercises for the pad. I mainly focused on working on the weaker hand and exploring rhythms, timing, precision and coordination from a different perspective. These pad workouts brought me to a point where I felt very focused in a completely different way than when I sit at a drumset. Having just the one sound source available meant that I could completely concentrate on the foundations of rhythm and playing. I realized that there was a continuing progression in playing, internalizing time, stickings, rhythms and concepts. When I was back at the drumset, I felt that I could immediately start working on more musically relevant things like orchestrations and dynamics.

Playing on a pad does not replace the musical work and practice on a real drumset, but is a great way to expand your skills and enhance your knowledge in the most important area, the fundamentals. These build the stable base and the ability to play this instrument.

My **PAD BOOK** is a collection of workouts and work methods that I personally use and also explain my system of how to break things like subdivisions or hand coordination down into individual work steps. Another use is to apply these workouts to the drumset. You can transfer a lot of this book directly to the drumset and really get creative with orchestration and variations of the exercises.

To use this book well, you should already have an understanding of reading notation, values, rudiments and stickings. Some of the exercises require a certain degree of hand technique to achieve a satisfying result. Therefore, I would recommend working with a local drum teacher on some of those topics. I would also recommend taking a look at the following books.

- Stick Control** by George Lawrence Stone
- Accents and Rebounds** by George Lawrence Stone
- It's Your Move** by Dom Famularo with Joe Benjamin
- Advanced Techniques for the Modern Drummer** by Jim Chapin

It is important to know that it is not necessary to go through all the chapters and segments of this book chronologically in order to see results. It is designed for you to decide where to start and depend upon your level of interest. The goal is not necessarily to be able to play everything you can find in the book. It is much more important to find an introduction for you and to filter out which topics appeal to you and which individual exercises are primarily interesting for you and your playing. The main idea is to practice these exercises intensively until they are easy to handle in order to creatively integrate them into your drumset playing.

In general, my **PAD BOOK** is written for all drummers who want to strengthen and expand their fundamental skills, work out weaknesses, improve strengths and deepen their knowledge. On top of this, it is particularly useful for those who wish to improve their skills, although they are unable to sit down at the drums regularly because they are travelling a lot or have neighbors with sensitive ears.

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# SUBDIVISION STUDIES

## PRACTICE SYSTEMS 1-3



### PRACTICE SYSTEM 1

Play the basic exercise by using one and the same building block [1] to [8] to fill for each quarter note in bar 2. So choose one building block from the eight options from [1] to [8].

Basic exercise

Example 1

Example 2

Example 3

*etc.*



## PRACTICE SYSTEM 3

Play the basic exercise by combining four different building blocks of [1] to [8] for each quarter note in bar 2. So choose four different building blocks from the options [1] to [8].

Basic exercise

The basic exercise consists of two measures. The first measure is a steady pattern of four quarter notes, each with a triplet bracket above it. The second measure is a quarter rest followed by four quarter notes, each with a triplet bracket above it. To the right, eight building blocks are shown, each a quarter note with a triplet bracket above it, labeled [1] through [8].

Building blocks [1] to [8] for quarter bar

Example 1: steady pattern followed by building blocks 1, 2, 3, and 4. [1] [2] [3] [4]

Example 2: steady pattern followed by building blocks 2, 3, 4, and 5. [2] [3] [4] [5] etc.

Example 3: steady pattern followed by building blocks 3, 6, 2, and 5. [3] [6] [2] [5]

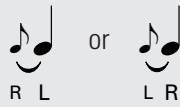
Example 4: steady pattern followed by building blocks 7, 4, 8, and 3. [7] [4] [8] [3] etc.

# FLAMS

This workout features a variation of the moving accents by *adding a flam* to each accent stroke.



## HOW TO PLAY A FLAM:



You are using the first of both notes as a *grace note*. Both notes are almost simultaneous strokes just playing the grace note very quickly.

Sticking options for all building blocks and the basic exercise. Choose a sticking:

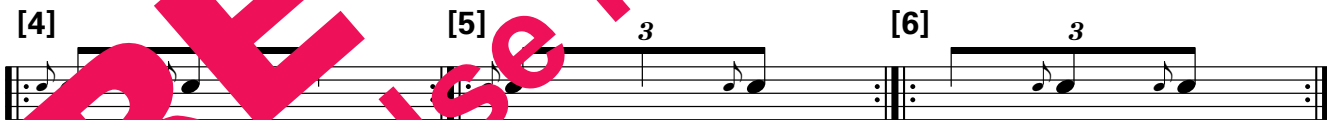
[A] R L R L R L

[B] R R L

[C] R L L

[D] R R R L L

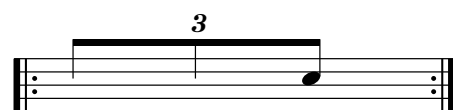
### Basic exercise



### options for steady pattern



VARIATION A

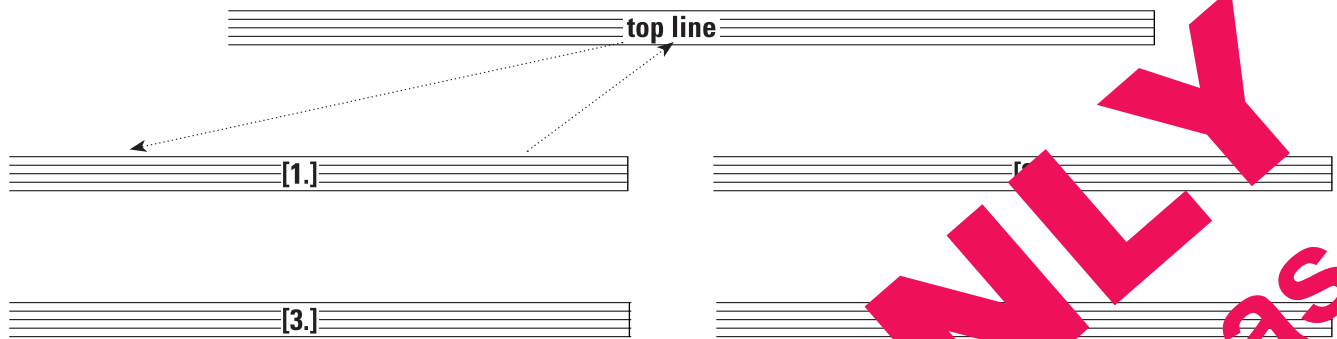


VARIATION B



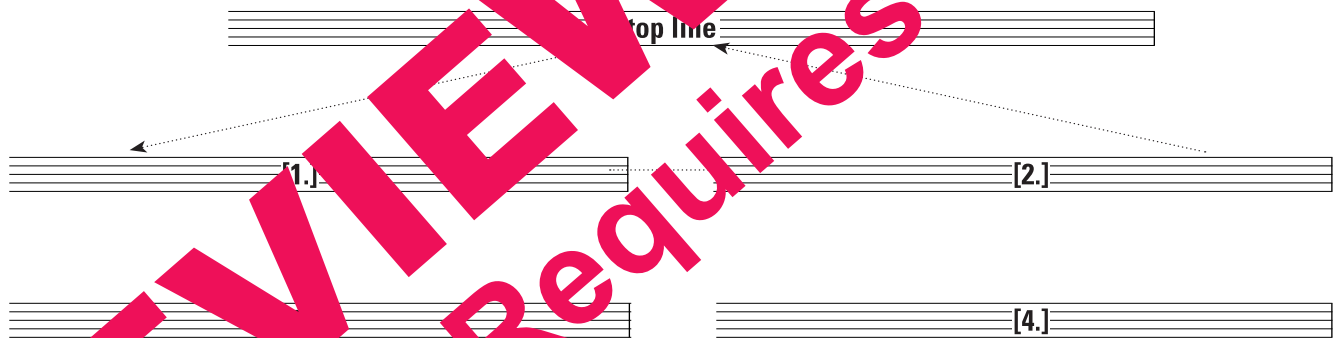
### Practice System A

Alternating between the top line and **each** exercise separately.



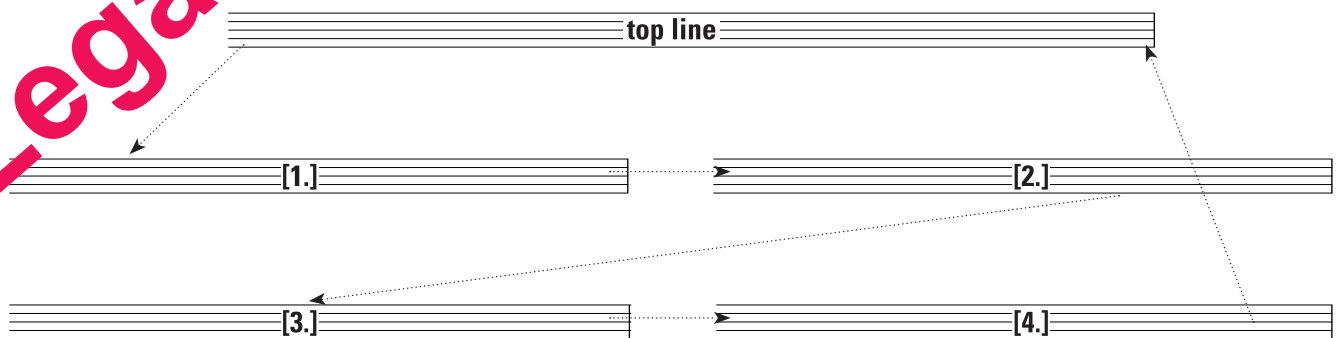
### Practice System B

Alternating between the top line and **two** exercises separately.



### Practice System C

Alternating between the top line and **all four** exercises sequentially.





### Switching Sticking 5

top line   
 RLRL R LRLRL R LRL R LRLRL

[1.]   
 R L L R R L L R R L R R L L R R L L R L L R R L L R R L L R R L L

[2.]   
 R L R R L L R R L R L R R L L R R L R L R R L L R R L R R L R R L

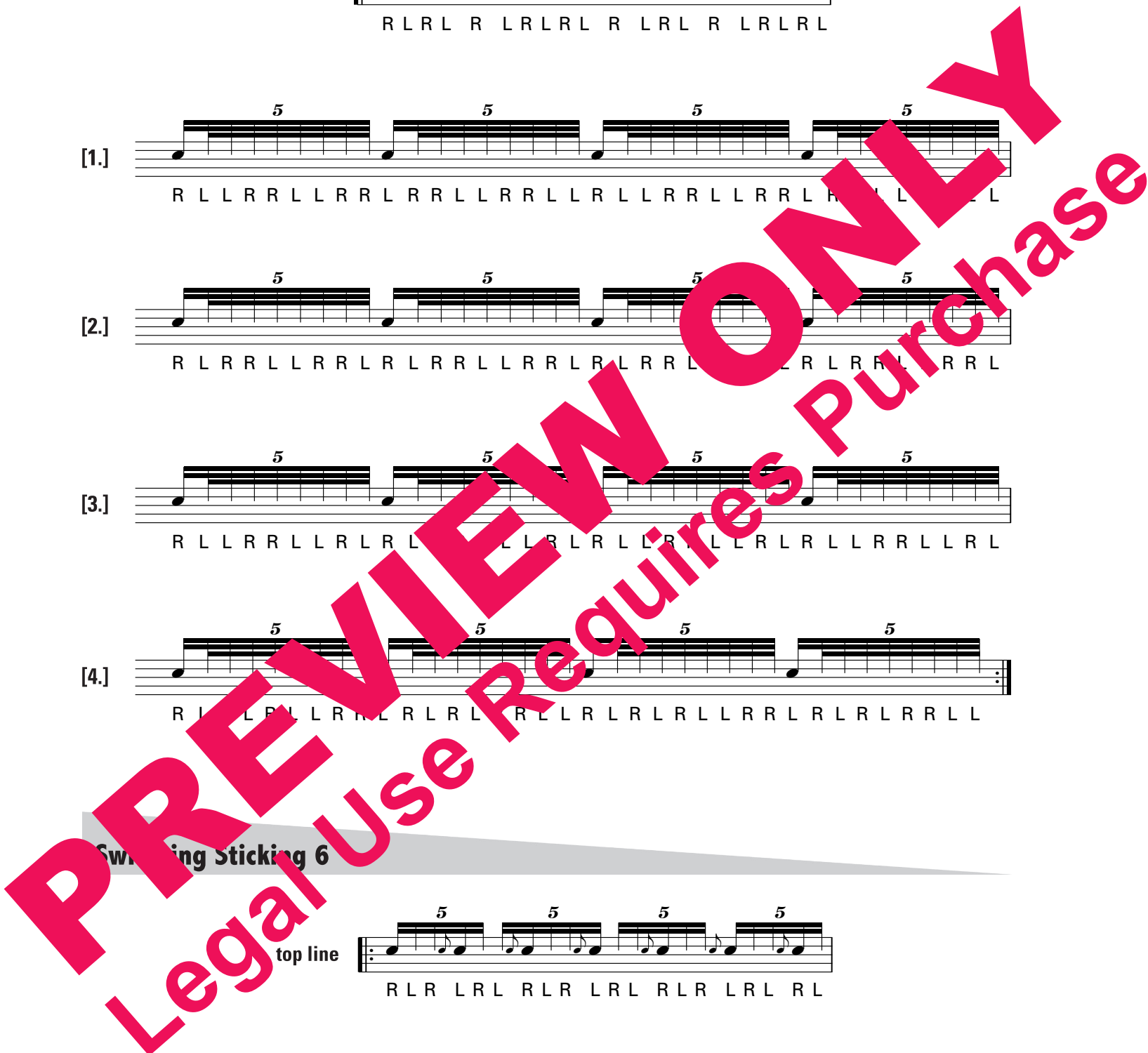
[3.]   
 R L L R R L L R L R L L R L R L L R L R L L R L R L L R R L L R L

[4.]   
 R L L R L L R R L R L R L L R L R L R L L R R L R L R L R R L L

### Switching Sticking 6

top line   
 RLR LRL RLR LRL RLR LRL RL

[1.]   
 RLLRLRLRLRLRLRLRLRLRLRLRL RLLRRLRLRLRLRLRLRLRLRLRLRLRL



## ACCENTS in Patterns and Groupings 6

These patterns are interpretations of *Clave* and *Cascara* figures on quintuplets.

top line

R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R

### 3/2 SON CLAVE

R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L

### 2/3 CLAVE

R L R R L R L R L R L R L R L

### 3/2 RUMBA CLAVE

R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L

### 2/3 RUMBA CLAVE

R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L

### CASCARA

R L R L R R L R R L R R L R L R L R

## GROUPING COMBINATIONS

Once you have practiced each grouping individually with several stickings, you can start to combine them over a bar of **sextuplets**. Choose one of the three sticking options shown on *pages 14 to 16*. With such grouping combinations, you create many new rhythms in a structured and systematic way. It is a great tool for composing rhythmical melodies and fitting them to songs or other instrumental rhythms. Once confident in these combinations, you can give them a go on the drumset and orchestrate them through snare, toms and cymbals. The following exercises will help you to understand the system and the rhythms you need to be prepared for a fluid translation to the drumset.

IMAGINE A BAR OF SEXTUPLETS ...



... AND PLAY ACCENTS LIKE IN THE FOLLOWING GROUPINGS:

**COMBINATION OF 4-4-2-4-2-4-4**

group of 4    group of 4    group of 2    group of 2    group of 4    group of 4

R L R R L R L R L R L R L R L L R L R L

**COMBINATION OF 5-7-3-3-5 +1**

group of 5    group of 7    group of 3    group of 3    group of 5    +1

R L R L R L L R L L R L L R L R L L R

**SINGLE-STROKE STICKING ON COMBINATIONS OF 4-4-2-4-2-4-4**

group of 4    group of 4    group of 2    group of 4    group of 2    group of 4    group of 4

R R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L

**SINGLE-STROKE STICKING ON COMBINATIONS OF 5-7-3-3-5 +1**

group of 5    group of 7    group of 3    group of 3    group of 5    +1

R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L

# MIXED METERS

## INTRODUCTION



*Chapter II* deals with the so-called **mixed meters**. Basically, this means the handling of different time signatures such as – for instance – changing between  $\frac{5}{4}$  time and  $\frac{3}{4}$  time. The time signatures are the "large musical framework", which can be divided into other smaller meters, just like different subdivisions (note values). It can be "even note values" (*binary*) or "odd" (*ternary, quinary, etc.*).

In this chapter you will find a range of exercises from very basic to more complex which will expand your ability in rhythmic combinations. The main idea is to feel the quarter-note pulse and fill in the space in between with as many notes as the note values requires. On the following pages, this approach will help you feel the pulse in a  $\frac{4}{4}$  time signature even if the note values are a mix of straight and odd subdivisions.

Here are the **major goals** for this chapter:

- ➔ Train your ears to hear and understand each note value and how their sounds compare to each other.
- ➔ Become fluid in switching between different note values and catching up the exact tempo immediately.
- ➔ Become fluid and flexible within each note value in use of different stickings.
- ➔ Train your sense of time and feel the micro time of each note value (all notes/strokes which occur between the quarter-note pulse).
- ➔ Train your hands and ears to hear rhythmic melodies through accents and accent patterns.

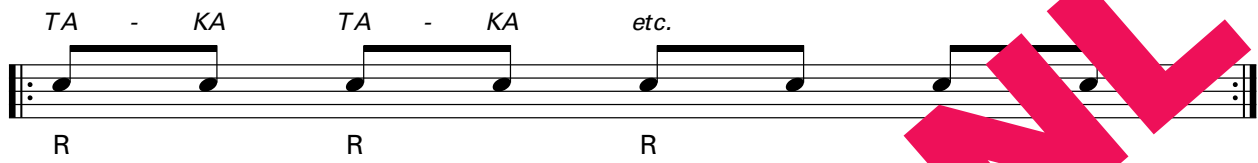
### TIPS

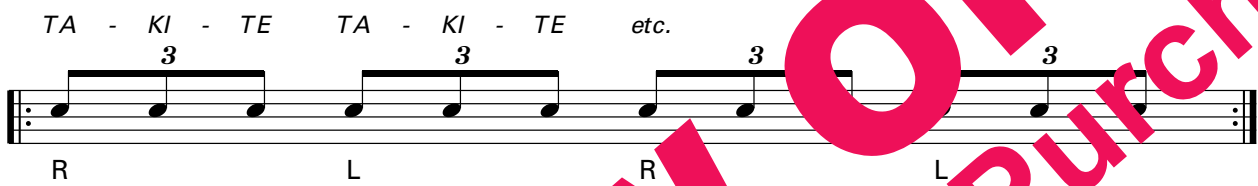
*Practice slowly on the following pages to internalize the time and feel of each note value. It is not about playing fast, it is more important to create and develop a feel for each subdivision and their combinations.*



**SECTION A**  
**THE PYRAMID: SINGLE STROKES**

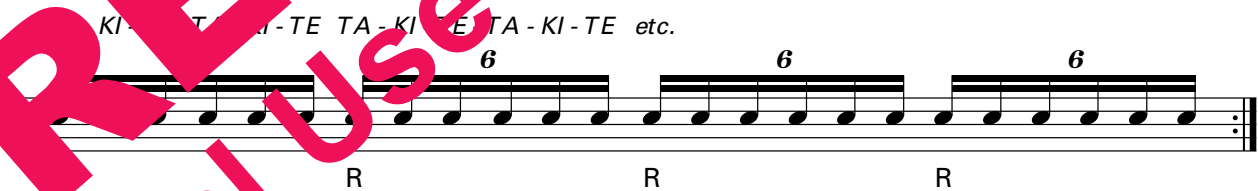
top line 

[1.] 

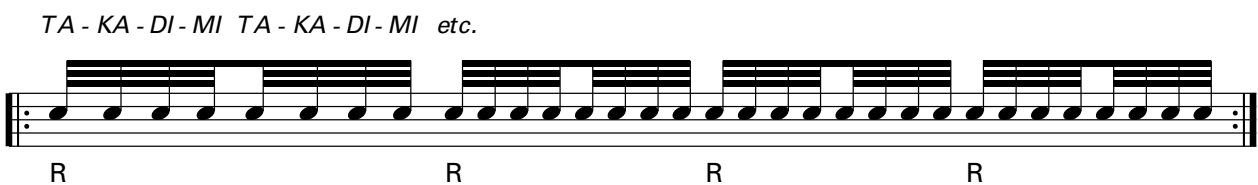
[2.] 

[3.] 

[4.] 

[5.] 

[6.] 

[7.] 

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## HALF & HALF 2

Sticking: [A] Single strokes only [B] Double strokes only

♩ = 55 – 65 bpm (Easy) | 65 – 80 bpm (Mid) | 80 – 100 bpm (Tough)

[1.] 

[2.] 

[3.] 

[4.] 

[5.] 

[6.] 

[7.] 

## ACCENTS 1 – 4

Add some accent strokes to the rhythm of the following exercises. These make each pattern appear much more melodic and sound great when you translate them to a fill on the drumset. Some of those subdivisions require to turn the leading hand from right to the left and vice versa from left to the right.

Sticking: Single strokes

♩ = 55 – 65 bpm (Easy) | 65 – 80 bpm (Mid) | 80 – 100 bpm (Tough)

### ACCENTS 1

Exercise 1: [1.]  $\frac{5}{8}$   $\frac{5}{8}$   $\frac{6}{8}$   $\frac{6}{8}$  | [2.]  $\frac{6}{8}$   $\frac{5}{8}$

Exercise 3: [3.]  $\frac{5}{8}$   $\frac{5}{8}$  | [4.]  $\frac{7}{8}$   $\frac{5}{8}$   $\frac{3}{8}$

Exercise 5: [5.]  $\frac{7}{8}$  | [6.]  $\frac{6}{8}$   $\frac{5}{8}$   $\frac{5}{8}$

Exercise 7: [7.]  $\frac{5}{8}$   $\frac{5}{8}$  | [8.]  $\frac{7}{8}$   $\frac{3}{8}$   $\frac{5}{8}$   $\frac{5}{8}$

### ACCENTS 2

Exercise 1: [1.]  $\frac{7}{8}$   $\frac{6}{8}$

Exercise 2: [2.]  $\frac{5}{8}$   $\frac{6}{8}$   $\frac{5}{8}$   $\frac{5}{8}$

Exercise 3: [3.]  $\frac{5}{8}$   $\frac{5}{8}$

Exercise 4: [4.]  $\frac{7}{8}$   $\frac{5}{8}$   $\frac{3}{8}$

Exercise 5: [5.]  $\frac{7}{8}$   $\frac{5}{8}$

Exercise 6: [6.]  $\frac{6}{8}$   $\frac{5}{8}$   $\frac{6}{8}$

Exercise 7: [7.]  $\frac{5}{8}$   $\frac{6}{8}$   $\frac{5}{8}$   $\frac{5}{8}$

Exercise 8: [8.]  $\frac{7}{8}$   $\frac{3}{8}$   $\frac{5}{8}$

**WARM-UP 7: RAPTOR**

♩ = 55 – 70 bpm (Easy) | 70 – 80 bpm (Mid) | 80 – 95 bpm (Tough)

top line

R R R R L L L L

5 5

R L R L L R L R L L

6 6

R L R L R R L R L L

7 7

R L R L L R R L R L R R L L

L R L R R L L R L R L L

**WARM-UP 8: RAPTOR PAD**

♩ = 55 – 70 bpm (Easy) | 70 – 80 bpm (Mid) | 80 – 95 bpm (Tough)

top line

R R L L R R L L

5 5

R L L R R L L

6 6

R L R R L L R L R R L L

7 7

R L R R L L R R L L R R L L

R L R R L L R R L R L L R R L L

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## HAND INDEPENDENCE & UNISONS

### HAND COORDINATION



This chapter is all about developing stable and clean hand independence. One of the most challenging things on the drums is to synchronize or separate hand movements. Therefore, I have set down my personal coordination system. This approach is very systematic and a great tool to quickly perceive your strengths and weaknesses.

When practicing hand independence, I suggest to use two sound sources, one for each hand, so you can listen to both hands separated. Furthermore, I would advise listening to the exercises from three perspectives:

1. Left Hand 'melody'
2. Right Hand 'melody'
3. combined 'melody'

To hear the right – or left – hand 'melody' clearly, you can play with the opposite hand on a quiet sound source such as the mute area on the front tom. To allow your left hand to simply fall, you can simply let your left hand fall in the air. You still play the full exercise but you put your right hand in focus.

Concentrate on the following while practicing the exercises on the next pages:

#### Accuracy



When both hands play at the same time, you should take care of the timing of both hands. Try to play both hands simultaneously. Try to avoid playing flams (two strokes followed by the other).

#### Practice in slow tempos!



It is not about playing fast and sloppy, it is about training your ability in accuracy when it comes to unisons. Practicing in slower tempos helps to get your ears trained in accuracy and timing of both hands.

#### Movements of both hands!



Pay attention to how to play the patterns in each hand. Try to recognize simultaneous movements of both hands and implement those consciously. Try to understand alternate movements and play them consciously.

#### Repeat exercises over several weeks!



In order to internalize and memorize such movements into your long term muscle memory, repeat the workouts you have chosen for yourself over a period of time. You will feel when you make progression and when it is time to change exercises.

You will find exercises and workouts on all note values in this section. If you struggle with one of the subdivisions you have chosen, return to *Chapter 1* and work on some of the basic exercises of this note value.

## 2-LINE READING A

### Ostinato with groupings

This coordination workout gives you an idea of how to work with groupings as ostinato patterns, while the other hand is playing various rhythms. For the following examples, LH is constantly playing each 4th stroke, while RH is playing various rhythm patterns. You can also give it a try switching the hands around and leading the ostinato with RH, while LH is playing various patterns.

#### GROUPS OF 4 – LH OSTINATO

[1.]

[2.]

[3.]

[4.]

[5.]

[6.]

**3 AGAINST 4**

**POLYRHYTHM BASIC FORM**

**GROUPING APPROACH** This polyrhythm consists of 8th-note groups of 4 and 16th-note groups of 4.

**GROUPS OF 4 OVER 8TH NOTES**

⇒ **USE PRACTICE SYSTEM – Y**

**GROUPS OF 4 OVER 16TH NOTES**

⇒ **USE PRACTICE SYSTEM**

**MAIN RHYTHM** 3 against 4

**COUNTER RHYTHM** 4 against 3

### 3 AGAINST 5

#### POLYRHYTHM BASIC FORM

#### GROUPING APPROACH

This polyrhythm consists of 8th-note triplets and quintuplets.

##### GROUPS OF 5 OVER 8TH-NOTE TRIPLETS

⇒ USE PRACTICE SYSTEM – Y

##### GROUPS OF 3 OVER 5-NOTE QUINTUPLETS

⇒ USE PRACTICE SYSTEM – X

#### MAIN RHYTHM

3 against 5

#### COUNTERRHYTHM

5 against 3