

Rhythm by the Numbers

A Drummer's Guide to Creative Practicing

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CHAPTER 1 One Note in an Eight-Note Group

The exercises in this book will start more simply, and then move to more complex rhythms. By beginning with one note in an eight-note group, you will have time to think about how this note will be applied. In addition, you can focus on timekeeping and developing a good feel. Make sure to be aware of whether the note(s) in the rhythmic element is a downbeat note or an upbeat note. This will help you keep track of where you are according to the prevailing beat.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

CHAPTER 2 One Note in a Four-Note Group

The next step is to apply a single note in a four-note group. Obviously, there is half as much space between the notes, effectively changing the rhythmic flow of the element and how it moves across the beat and the bar line. Use the application procedures set forth on page 10 of Section 1, Even Groups.

For example, in $\frac{4}{4}$, a three-note melody will resolve in one and a half measures and, if continued, will resolve again after three measures. Two cycles of the melody will have been executed. Some of the rhythmic elements will seem easier than others because their resolution coincides with the beat and the bar. Others pose a greater challenge due to the polyrhythmic or poly-phrase effect. Each note of the rhythmic element can be voiced, or the entire rhythm can be applied to an instrument. The key is to look for new ways to apply the idea.

Start with the time feel in the right hand, and apply the rhythmic element with the left hand and bass drum. Then, perform the second approach (page 10, option B), which uses the rhythmic element as a rhythmic theme, or as target notes while you embellish or fill in around them. You can also create what sounds like a new time feel—in effect, a superimposed metric **modulation**: the secondary feel will sound as if a time modulation has occurred, only to resolve back to the original feel at some point. This is a great way to fool the listener into thinking that the music just took a left turn. Just don't fool yourself in the process. Refer to the DVD for examples of this approach.

1.

2.

3.

4.

