

# Introduction to Jazz Drumming

## Goals and Waypoints

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### ► Goal

Learn the rhythms in the first three parts of the series. These are the absolute basic skills you need to play with a jazz band, sit in at clubs and play with friends.

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### Part One: The Basic Pattern

- Be able to play slowly while counting out loud.
  - Be able to play the pattern at 120 beats per minute.
  - Be able to play the pattern along with a bass line at 120 beats per minute.
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### Part Two: The Jazz Shuffle

- Be able to play slowly while counting out loud.
  - Be able to play the pattern at 120 beats per minute.
  - Be able to play the pattern along with a bass line at 120 beats per minute.
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### Part Three: Basic Left Hand Patterns

- Be able to play all three patterns slowly, counting out loud.
  - Be able to play all three patterns at 120BPM
  - Be able to play along with a bass line at 120 beats per minute.
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### Waypoint

If you have come this far, great work! Most people who tackle a new instrument give up after trying the basics. You are through the first major barrier and you can play. Try playing along with the song Moanin' by Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers. That will allow you to apply what you've learned and give a little preview of the next lesson. This is also a great song to know if you want to sit in at a jam session. Usually the guest calls the song the band will play. Everyone knows Moanin' so it's always a good call.

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## ► Goal

Learn to improvise while keeping time and learn to play drum solos. Improvisation and soloing are big parts of jazz. They can be intimidating at first, but if you master a few phrases and keep it simple, you will sound great.

“Comping” is a term for improvising on the snare drum while keeping time with the ride, hi-hat and bass drum. You will learn six standard comping phrases in part four.

You will learn four basic solo phrases in part five. When you solo, you are no longer serving as the time keeper for the band—although you will still keep time for yourself. You can leave the ride cymbal and move to the drums. At first you’ll want to keep the hi-hat and bass drum steady to ensure you are in time.

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### Part Four: Comping Phrases

- Be able to play all six phrases slowly, counting out loud.
- Be able to play all six phrases at 120 BPM.
- Be able to play each phrase along with a bass line.
- Be able to alternate one measure of the basic pattern with one measure of each comping phrase.
- Be able to play along with a bass line, keep the basic pattern and insert comping phrases at will.

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### Part Five: Solo Phrases

- Be able to play all four phrases slowly, counting out loud.
- Be able to play all four phrases at 120 BPM.
- Be able to play each phrase along with a bass line.
- Be able to alternate one measure of a simple triplet roll with one measure of each solo phrase.
- Be able to "trade fours." Alternate four measures of the basic time pattern with four measures of solo phrases.

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## □ Waypoint

If you've come this far, you are well on your way to sounding great with a jazz band. To get the most out of your hard work, focus on taking what you can do and making it sound good. If you can play everything you've learned with a steady groove, you will be far ahead of many more experienced players who've skipped building a solid foundation.

This is a major achievement. Few people will tackle an instrument and get to this level. You'll want to apply everything you've learned. Play along with music, play with other people if you can, take a jazz ensemble class or sit in with other musicians at local jazz jam sessions. Go out and see other drummers play and get involved in your community locally and online. Put your skills to work so they become part of your vocabulary at a deep level and so you don't forget what you've worked hard to achieve.

Try playing along with So What by Miles Davis on the album Kind of Blue. This is another great standard to have under your belt for jam sessions and gigs. Here you get to test your wings and speak freely on the snare drum. You will notice comping phrase A is played during the melody at the beginning and end of the piece. Notice Jimmy Cobb's subtle use of comping phrases behind the soloists. I would recommend listening to the track once through before playing along so you can really hear what is happening.

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## ► Goal

Learn to improvise while playing in 3/4 time. Learn to play drum solos in 3/4 time.

Now that you have a working skill-set in 4/4 or “common” time, it is time to expand your repertoire with the “jazz waltz.” Every performance includes at least a few songs in 3/4 time.

You’ve already worked through the coordination basics so you are in a great position to start accumulating new rhythms. The next priority is to be able to play in 3/4.

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### Part Six: Comping Phrases in 3/4

- Be able to play all six phrases slowly, counting out loud.
  - Be able to play all six phrases at 120 BPM.
  - Be able to play each phrase along with All Blues by Miles Davis starting at 1:50 when Jimmy Cobb switches to the ride cymbal.
  - Be able to alternate one measure of the basic pattern with one measure of each comping phrase.
  - Be able to play along with All Blues, keep the basic pattern and insert comping phrases at will.
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### Part Seven: Solo Phrases in 3/4

- Be able to play all six phrases slowly, counting out loud.
- Be able to play all six phrases at 120 BPM.
- Be able to play all six phrases along with All Blues.
- Be able to alternate one measure of a simple triplet roll with one measure of each soloing phrase.
- Be able to “trade fours.” Alternate four measures of the basic time pattern with four measures of solo phrases.

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## □ Waypoint

You now have the ability to keep time and improvise in the two most common time feels you will encounter on a jazz gig. As you have familiarized yourself with the inner workings of the drum set, you've developed your own personal tactics for assimilating new material. As you notice the relationships between new and old rhythms, you may find you are more comfortable with the learning process. You can settle into strengthening your current abilities while tackling new material with confidence.

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## ► Goal

Learn to play the Brazilian Bossa Nova. The next priority is to add Latin rhythms to your repertoire. The Bossa Nova is an excellent starting point because of its deep influence on jazz drum-set technique and frequent application in jazz standards. After learning this groove you will have the basic skills to cover most of what you will encounter on a standard jazz gig.

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## Part Eight: The Bossa Nova

- Be able to play the feet alone.
- Be able to play the feet with the ride cymbal on 8th notes.
- Be able to play the hands alone.
- Be able to play both patterns slowly while counting out loud.
- Be able to play both patterns at 120 BPM.
- Be able to play both patterns along with a bass line.

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## Waypoint

If you've reached this point, your efforts will be greatly rewarded. You have the skills required to play the three most common time-feels encountered on a gig. There will be a snowball effect where material becomes easier and easier to learn. New skills will relate back to what you've already worked through, boosting the rate at which you accumulate new ideas. At the same time, you will discover that jazz is a lifetime study in which you can continue to grow late into your years.

You now have access to playing opportunities in a community that reaches beyond age, level and nationality. These skills will be with you wherever you go and give you an inside into a community that extends throughout the world.

You have a solid foundation on which to begin developing your own style, guided by your ear and personal taste.