

PLAY DRUMS IN JUST ABOUT ANY STYLE
WITH THESE SWEET BEATS

6 EASY DRUM GROOVES

.....

THAT YOU WILL ACTUALLY USE



BY JOHN OWENS

**SIX EASY DRUM GROOVES
THAT YOU WILL ACTUALLY USE**

BY JOHN OWENS, PH.D.

Six Easy Drum Grooves: That You Will Actually Use

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WHY SIX EASY DRUM GROOVES?

There are thousands of videos and articles that name the most important drum grooves, easiest drum grooves, and best drum grooves that every drummer should know. But as I have searched and viewed many of these videos, it seems like they are focused on only one or two genres. Or, they neglect to account for what drummers, especially young drummers, want to play.

In response, I have compiled Six Easy Drum Grooves that I believe every drummer should know. These include rhythms that are currently popular, some that serve as the foundation of modern drumming, and all are still played today. We will dig into the details of each groove in the following pages; but to start, I have listed the *Six Easy Drum Grooves: That You Will Actually Use* below.

1. Pop/Rock
2. Latin Pop
3. Dance
4. Hip-Hop
5. Shuffle
6. Swing

Let's get started by taking a few minutes to learn how to use this guide.

ELEVATE YOUR DRUMMING!

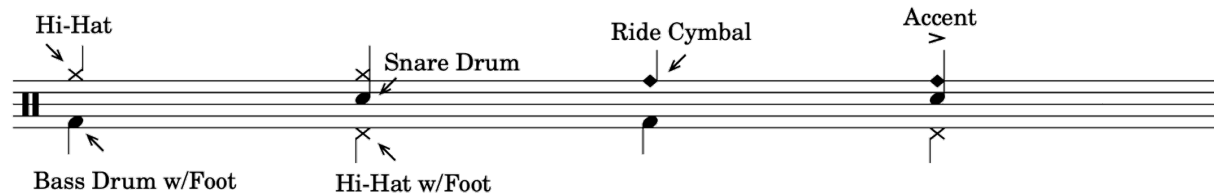
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HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

In this guide, you will learn how to play six easy grooves like a pro. Here is a brief description of how each groove will be broken down, which will help you master the rhythms and learn a little about each groove.

- **THE GROOVE:** Drum notation that breaks down each element of the groove.
- **ABOUT IT:** Some basic information about the groove, which includes details about the rhythms origins, use, and tips.
- **LEARN IT:** Step by step instructions on how to learn each part of the groove and put it together.
- **PRO TIP:** Sage advice on how to elevate the groove and make it sound awesome.
- **LISTEN TO IT:** List of sample tunes that use the groove. I highly recommend finding and listening to these recordings, as this will help you master the rhythm and feel.
- **WATCH IT:** Instructional video that shows you how to play the groove.

NOTATION



DRUMS YOU WILL NEED

To play the grooves in this book, all you need is a bass drum, snare drum, hi-hat, and ride cymbal. If you are right handed, this is the most common set up. If you are left-handed (lefty or southpaw), you can just flip the kit around or play “open face,” which is simply putting the ride cymbal on your left (this is a very common technique used by left handed players).

*Simple Drum Set
(Left to right: Hi-Hat, Snare Drum, Bass Drum, Ride Cymbal)*



BASS DRUM

Also known as the kick drum. This is the large drum that is played with a foot pedal, which is usually 22 or 20 inches in diameter. This serves as the foundation of each groove.

SNARE DRUM

Drum that is typically 14 inches in diameter, though other sizes are available. This drum will be used to play the backbeat of most grooves. It is called a snare because there are snares (strings or wires) across the bottom head that create the poppy “snare” sound.

HI-HAT

Pair of cymbals (usually 14 inches, though other sizes are used) that are controlled by a foot pedal, which are pressed together so they can be played “tightly” together or “loosely” apart. The reason it is called a hi-hat is because the original design (known as the “lowboy”) as on the floor; then, it was raised up and became known as the hi-hat.

RIDE CYMBAL

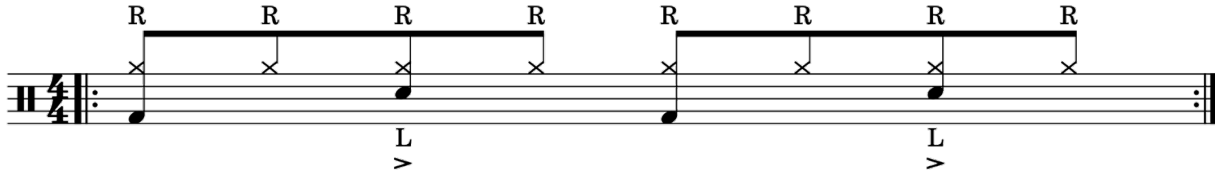
The large cymbal (typically 20 to 22 inches) on the right in the photo above is the ride cymbal. You can play any of the cymbal rhythms in the book on the ride cymbal, but this will be especially important when playing the swing groove.

STICKING

The sticking provided for each groove will make it easier to play the rhythms. The symbols used are *R* for right and *L* for left. I suggest using the recommended sticking, even if it seems difficult at first, as it will be beneficial in the long run. If you are a left-handed player (lefty) I suggest using the opposite sticking.

POP/ROCK

THE GROOVE



ABOUT IT

With origins in Rhythm & Blues from mid-1950s, the Pop/Rock groove can be heard driving millions of tunes. It is used in rock, pop, country, and other genres. It is also the first rhythm that I teach my students because it is easy to learn and allows them to play along with tons of music.

LEARN IT

1. Start by playing the right hand (hi-hat only).
2. Then, add two and four on the snare. A good way to think about this is right, right, together.
3. Once that has been mastered, play the right hand/hi-hat while playing one and three on the bass drum.
4. Once this has been grasped, put it all three parts together.
5. You can also play the bass and snare in isolation to get the feel of the groove.

LISTEN TO IT

- *Thunderstruck* and AC/DC
- *Billie Jean* by Michael Jackson
- *I Gotta Feeling* by Black Eyed Peas

PRO TIP

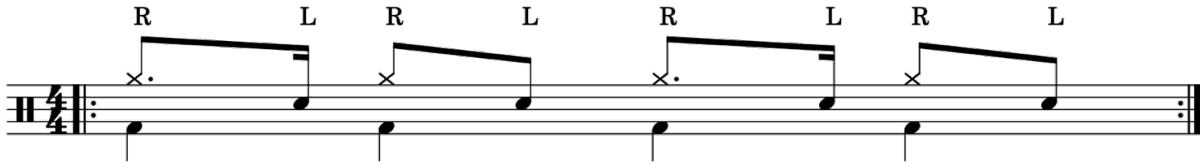
Make the bass and snare parts stand out by keeping the hi-hat lower in volume and accenting the bass and snare. The snare drum should especially stand out, as this is essence of the groove. I suggest really laying into the snare (hit it hard and in the center), as this is the part that makes your listeners move to the music.

WATCH IT

Find my Pop/Rock video demo at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ech9ZSdVPWU>

LATIN POP

THE GROOVE



ABOUT IT

Latin Pop is the fusion of Latin grooves from Caribbean, Central America, and South America with mainstream popular music. This groove is syncopated (rhythm that occurs off the beat) and makes people want to dance. The essence of this rhythm is the offbeat snare drum, which gives it a “Latin” vibe.

LEARN IT

1. Start by playing the hi-hat alone (this is just quarter notes). While doing this, listen to one of examples below to get the feel.
2. Add the bass drum, which lines up with the hi-hat.
3. Next, slowly play the hi-hat and snare parts together. Here it is important to use the sticking indicated above, as this will make it easier to apply to the drum set.
4. Once you have locked in hi-hat/snare drum rhythms, put together all three parts. Do this slowly at first; then, speed it up.

LISTEN TO IT

- *Despacito* by Luis Fonsi
- *Hips Don't Lie* by Shakira
- *La Cancion* by Bad Bunny

PRO TIP

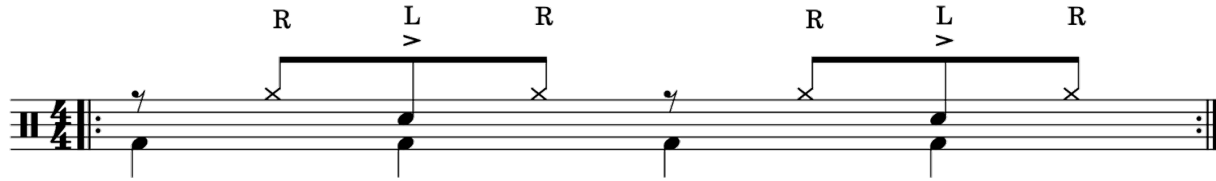
Emphasize the snare drum part (left hand) and relax when playing it. This groove feels best when it lays back, which means playing the snare drum part relaxed and just slightly behind the beat.

WATCH IT

Find my Latin Pop video demo at: www.youtube.com/watch?v=X3H7Yhzv_5w&t=5s

DANCE

THE GROOVE



ABOUT IT

Used in dance music for over fifty years, the Dance Groove is lifeblood of disco, EDM (Electronic Dance Music), and popular dance music today. This includes music from artists like Chic (1970s), Madonna (1980s), Daft Punk (1990s), Lady Gaga (2000s), Katy Perry (2010s), and Billie Eilish (2020s). The core of this groove is the offbeat hi-hat and pounding bass drum that makes people want to get up and dance.

LEARN IT

1. Start by playing the bass drum alone.
2. Next, play just the hi-hat with the bass drum. This will allow you to feel the syncopated nature of the groove.
3. Play just the hands, which is the hi-hat and snare drum rhythms. Pay special attention to the sticking.
4. Once you have mastered the hands (hi-hat/snare part), play the hi-hat/snare drum parts while maintaining the bass drum.
5. Finally, play it continuously.

LISTEN TO IT

- *Poker Face* by Lady Gaga
- *YMCA* by The Village People
- *Firework* by Katy Perry

PRO TIP

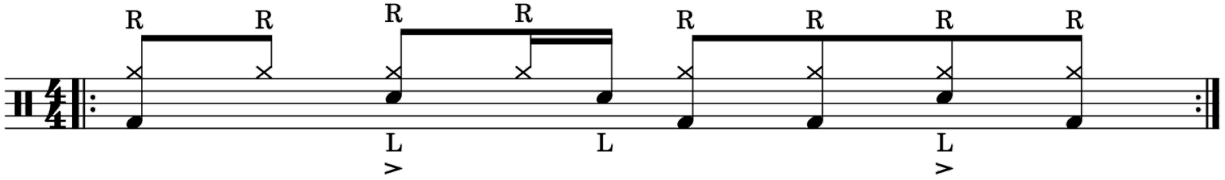
You can play the cymbal three different ways: (1) Tight closed hi-hat; (2) open hi-hat; (3) ride cymbal (I like it on the bell). When playing the open hi-hat you will want to get a short open hi-hat sound for this groove.

WATCH IT

Find my Dance Groove video at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gnMYL49PqdQ>

HIP-HOP/FUNK

THE GROOVE



ABOUT IT

Since hip-hop grooves are derived from funk, the essence of this rhythm is to make it syncopated and funky. Funk drum grooves from artists like Clyde Stubblefield (drummer for James Brown) are still sampled by modern rap artists, which serve as the foundation of their music. There are a ton of hip-hop/funk grooves, but this is one of the most common rhythms in the style. Plus, it is a blast to play and can be used with a number of hip-hop or funk tunes.

LEARN IT

1. To start, I suggest playing the bass and snare together, as this is the soul of the beat.
2. From there, play the hi-hat and snare part, this will require some coordination.
3. Now, play the bass drum and hi-hat rhythms together.
4. Once you get the hang of it, combine all three parts.
5. Remember, to emphasize the bass and snare parts to make this groove really funky and hip.

LISTEN TO IT

- *Impeach the President* by The Honey Drippers
- *X Goin Give it to Ya* by DMX (Explicit, but a clean version is available)
- *Barbie Dreams* by Nikki Minaj (Explicit, but a clean version is available)

PRO TIP

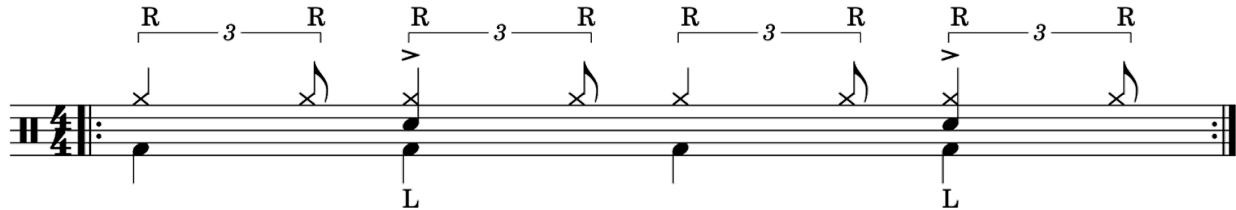
To really make this groove have character, be sure to keep the non-accented snare notes really low. These are called taps or ghost notes, which subtly add to the feel of the rhythm.

WATCH IT

Find my Hip-Hop/Funk video at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M4_07jZa6Qk

SHUFFLE

THE GROOVE



ABOUT IT

The shuffle is a classic groove that serves as the rhythmic foundation of the blues, rock, funk, hip-hop, swing, and some country music. This beat is the predecessor of straight eighth rhythm used in rock music. A good way to get the feel of this groove is to play the rock/pop groove; then, put a bit more space between the beats (making it swing). If you do that, you will be playing a shuffle.

LEARN IT

1. To learn this groove, start with the ride cymbal (right hand). The key is to let the “shuffle” rhythm feel like it bounces.
2. Once this is mastered, add the snare drum on 2 & 4, which is the part that makes people want to dance.
3. Last, add the steady bass drum.

LISTEN TO IT

- *Paying the Cost to Be the Boss* by B.B. King
- *Revolution* by The Beatles
- *Rock this Town* by Brian Setzer Orchestra or The Stray Cats

PRO TIP

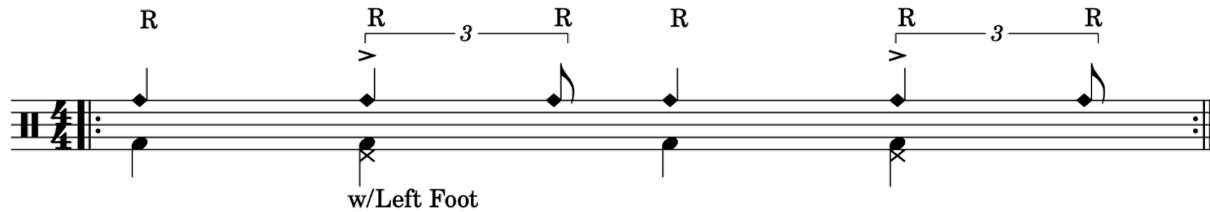
Accent the snare drum because this is the most important part of the groove. Also, try the bass drum at different volumes, as different shuffle styles require the bass drum to be played gently, moderately, or aggressively.

WATCH IT

Find my Shuffle video at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8_RYTpgh6vE

SWING

THE GROOVE



ABOUT IT

The soul of traditional jazz, big band, and straight-ahead jazz is the swing groove. In the early 1900s this stemmed from “ragging” the beat by street drummers in New Orleans, which meant to make the groove swing. In the 1930s and 1940s, this groove was the core of big band jazz, which was popular dance music. The key to playing this rhythm is accenting 2 and 4; plus, making the ride cymbal bounce/swing. Please note: This is the basic swing groove. To play jazz requires a few more elements, but every jazz drummer starts with this.

LEARN IT

1. Before adding the bass drum and hi-hat, which is played with the foot, I recommend mastering the ride/right hand pattern. This is the soul of the swing groove. Specifically, accent two and four with the ride, which will really give the proper feel.
2. Once this is grasped, add the left foot (hi-hat). This will stress 2 & 4 even more. Oh, be sure to keep the accent in the ride.
3. Last, add the bass drum, but lightly.

LISTEN TO IT

- *It Don't Mean a Thing if it Ain't Got That Swing* by Duke Ellington
- *Moanin'* by Art Blakey
- *One O'clock Jump* by Count Basie

PRO TIP

When playing the bass drum it is best to *feather it*, which means to play it very delicately. In this style, the ride cymbal is the essence, as it is the drummer's job to create the feel of the song. The bass drum simply supports the walking bass line, which is played by the upright or electric bass player.

WATCH IT

Find my swing video at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TAXip-d-BLw>

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