

Unit 1

The Six Primary Rhythms

Here are the six “root” or “parent” rhythms on which all the rhythmic studies in this book are based. Although these rhythms are the first you will learn, you will use them just as much as the more complicated rhythms, no matter how great your level of accomplishment becomes.

Notation: Because I want to show each part as clearly and distinctly as possible, I’m only presenting this set of rhythms in the form that shows each part separately.

Counting: Count evenly: 1-and-2-and-3-and-4-and-1-and-2-and-3-and-4-and-etc.

Pattern Drill: Hands alone, no bass drum. Right hand plays hi-hat, left hand plays snare drum.

Hi Hat

Snare Drum

Bass Drum (No Bass Drum on this Pattern Drill)

As soon as you are comfortable with the drill and can play it at various tempos, you are ready to learn the following rhythms in this unit. Be sure you have read and understand “How to Practice This Book.”

1

2

3

When rock was first developing, it came from “country” and “rhythm & blues” styles. The bass drum was usually played “4 to the bar.” This was the first rock beat and is still used extensively.

This rhythm was also derived from “country” and “rhythm & blues” styles. It can be traced back to the “two-beat” jazz style. It is still the most common rhythm in all of rock .

As rock drumming developed, drummers started doubling the bass player’s part on the bass drum, giving a heavier sound and feel to the music. The bass drum was now being clearly heard, rather than merely felt. Also, there is now a clear interplay between bass and snare drums.

4

This rhythm, though similar to #3, can be much more challenging to learn because the bass drum comes right after the snare drum. Be careful when learning this rhythm that you are playing it correctly.

5

This rhythm has a very full feeling to it, due to the bass drum playing on almost every eighth note not being played by the snare drum.

6

This rhythm is very challenging because there is never a bass drum played on beat 3, giving it a very syncopated feeling. It will seem as though there's a "hole" in the middle of the bass drum part.

Next, we'll see how we can create some simple variations on these rhythms by moving, adding, or eliminating a note here or there in the bass drum part.