

# Permutations: Bass Drum part 1

It may be true that there are no shortcuts to learning an instrument. If so, then permutation exercises must be the closest thing too it. The idea is to get comfortable playing every possible combination within a defined set of parameters before combining them to make music. It's a simple and really effective way to gain complete freedom to express oneself on the instrument.

In the following examples demonstrate the 8 possible 'places' that we could play a bass drum. Start by playing them seperately until you're **completely** comfortable before you attempt to play each one 8 times perfectly before moving to the next without stopping. repeat!

Try to pay attention to dynamics ie the relative volumes of the individual instruments. Remember, the hihats should be crisp and not too loud, the bass drums and snares strong and deliberate. Try not to bury the beater.

**NB** the interval between each **hihat must stay consistent** and of course start slowly at first. Aim to gain control, speed will come later.

The following grooves are just combinations of the above permutations. Try to identify problem areas and work out which permutations are involved (eg. Ex 4 below uses the bass drums from [1], [4] & [7] above). Repeat those particular permutations till they are comfortable and that should solve your problems

It's *really* important to make up your own examples. **Write them down!** Skipping this step is perhaps the no.1 mistake I see students making along their journey to being able to express themselves on the kit. Your writing doesn't have to be perfect, just make sure *you* can understand it. Remember: If you make a mistake, the drumming police aren't going to arrest you.

The following examples will help you to focus on the sound and feeling of playing bass drums at the same time as the hi hats vs. between the hi hats. They can really help to develop a lot of freedom between the right limbs.

NOTE: the first example here is only six 8th notes long.

The first example shows a 6/8 time signature. The top staff has six eighth notes marked with 'x' (hi hats). The bottom staff has a bass drum pattern consisting of six eighth notes, with the first three grouped together and the last three grouped together. The second example shows a 2/4 time signature. The top staff has four eighth notes marked with 'x' (hi hats). The bottom staff has a bass drum pattern consisting of four eighth notes, with the first two grouped together and the last two grouped together.

**Advanced Players:** This permutation concept works whenever you are trying to develop freedom with one or more limbs against an Ostinato. An ostinato is any repeating rhythmical figure eg the snare and hihat patterns on the previous page are all identical. Try to develop more right hand/right foot independence by practising all of previous examples and grooves with the following ostinatos:

The first row shows four ostinatos in 2/4 time. The first is '1/4 note accents' with two eighth notes on the hi hats, each with an accent (>). The second is ''off beat' accents' with two eighth notes on the hi hats, one on the first beat and one on the second beat, each with an accent (>). The third is 'Letter 'M' with 1/4 note accents' with two eighth notes on the hi hats, each with an accent (>). The fourth is 'Letter 'K' with 'off beat' accents' with two eighth notes on the hi hats, one on the first beat and one on the second beat, each with an accent (>). The second row shows three more ostinatos. The first is '1/4 notes only' with two eighth notes on the hi hats. The second is ''an's only' with two eighth notes on the hi hats, one on the first beat and one on the second beat. The third is 'the king kong pattern' with two eighth notes on the hi hats, each with an accent (>).