

Explore The Floor pt1

Tighten Up Your Bass Drum Chops

By Lisa Lambert

As drummers we spend a lot of time doing things with our hands: practicing with our sticks on a pad, tapping a pencil on a desk, hand drumming on the kitchen table; our feet are often given less priority in our practice regime.

Well children, the time has come. I say to you... do not throw down those sticks, for you will need them; but let us rise together, and with focus as our guide and dedication as our companion, we will face with courage the challenge of..... the bass drum. Please be seated.

Bass drum control begins with mastering basic patterns and gradually increasing the density, and difficulty, of the pattern. Working within a framework of 16th notes, starting with simple patterns and moving onto pattern combinations, offers a great opportunity for progression.

Start with straight 8^{ths} on your hi hat and a solid backbeat (2 & 4) on your snare, while counting out 16th note time.

	1	e	+	a	2	e	+	a	3	e	+	a	4	e	+	a
HAT	x		x		x		x		x		x		x		x	
SNARE					●								●			

Divide the 16^{ths} into 4 groups: **number (#)**, **e**, **+** **a**. Now start adding your bass, one group at a time.

	1	e	+	a	2	e	+	a	3	e	+	a	4	e	+	a
	x		x		x		x		x		x		x		x	
					●								●			
BASS 1. #	●				●				●				●			
BASS 2. +	7	●			7	●			7	●			7	●		
BASS 3. e	7	●	●		7	●	●		7	●	●		7	●	●	
BASS 4. a	7	●	7	●	7	●	7	●	7	●	7	●	7	●	7	●

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Alternatively, try using 16^{ths} on the hi hat. When you're confident with these four groups, move onto some combinations. Here are some examples.

		1 e + a	2 e + a	3 e + a	4 e + a
HAT					
SNARE					
BASS	1.				
	2.				
	3.				
	4.				
	5.				
	6.				
	7.				
	8.				
	9.				
	10.				

These are just a few of the possibilities. Keep combining and counting. Our bodies memorize movement through repetition. Practise slowly and accurately and you'll teach your "kick" foot to respond on command. The more ability you have, the more confident you'll be, which leads to better feel and, ultimately, more fun. Can you say.... "Hallelujah!"

Questions? Email: pooki@shaw.ca