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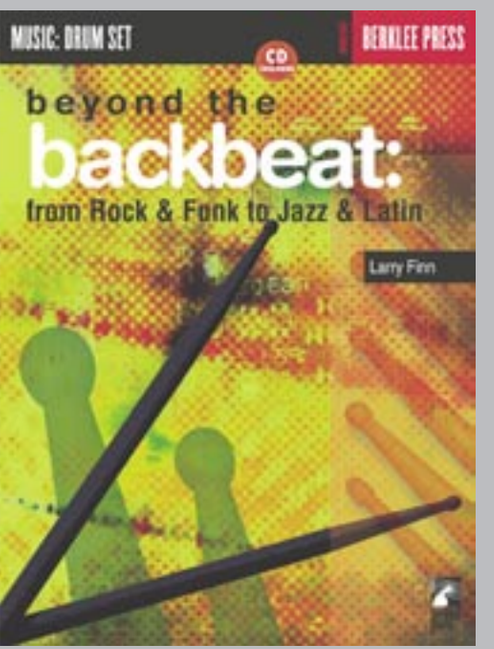

Beyond the Backbeat:
From Rock & Funk to Jazz & Latin
Larry Finn

Introduction
Basic Beats

Click CD icons to listen to
CD tracks from book.
Press ESC to cancel sound.

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INTRODUCTION

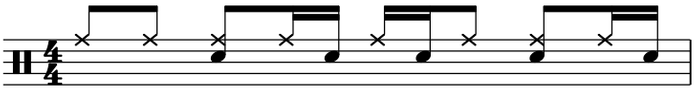
Basic Beats

Learning a New Beat

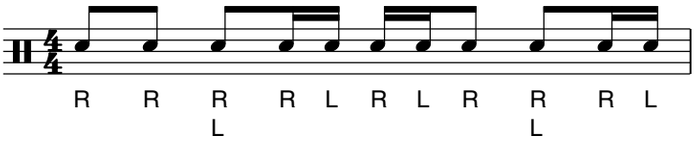
Whenever you are learning a new beat, whether it is by reading it or by listening to it, follow these guidelines.

1. Practice slowly. Working at a slow tempo helps you to develop muscle memory.

2. Break the beat down. Try just the ride cymbal and kick drum together, and see how they relate. Play the right-hand and left-hand parts on a single surface. For example, you might see this beat:



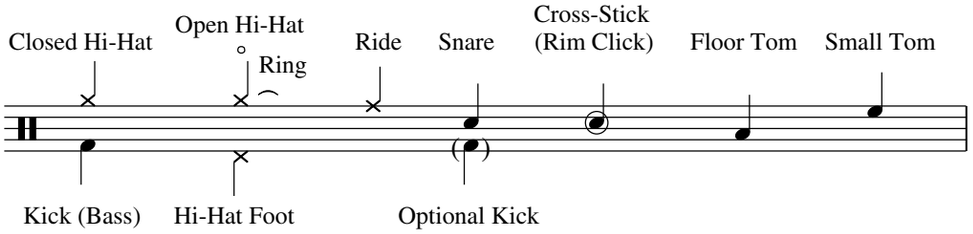
Simplify the part by playing both parts on a single surface (in this case, the snare):



3. Put all the elements of the beat together, and repeat it, over and over. Practice the beat without any added fills until it is very solid.

Notation Key

The notation examples in this book follow the Percussive Arts Society standard. Notes with stems pointing upwards are played by your hands, those pointing downwards by your feet. Parentheses ( ) indicate optional notes.



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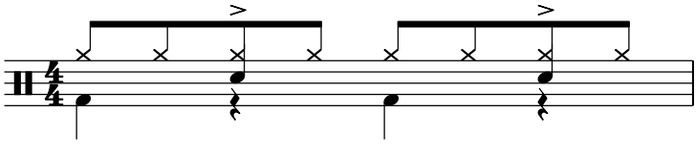
Rock/Funk

Play a basic rock/funk beat at ♩ = 60–120.

1 **Basic Rock/Funk**



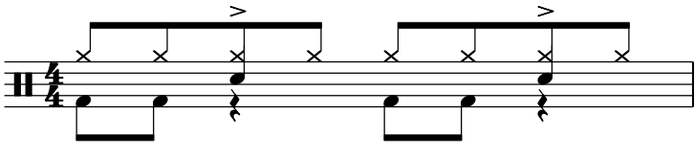
This beat can be used for either rock or funk.

> Style depends on the whole band, not just the drummer. If the bass plays a driving eighth-note line, the basic rock/funk beat will sound more like rock. If the bass plays a lighter, sixteenth-note feel, the same beat will sound more like funk.

Rock

Rock can be more raw and less syncopated than funk. It often has an even-eighth-note feel. Play a basic rock beat at ♩ = 60–120.

2 **Basic Rock Beat**



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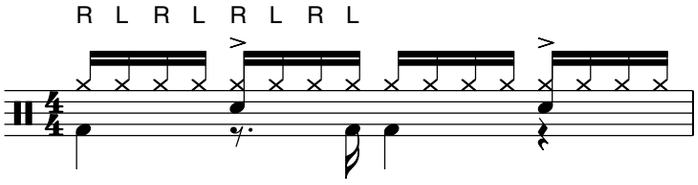
Funk

Funk is often approached with more finesse than rock. It often has a sixteenth-note feel. Play a basic funk beat at ♩ = 60–108.

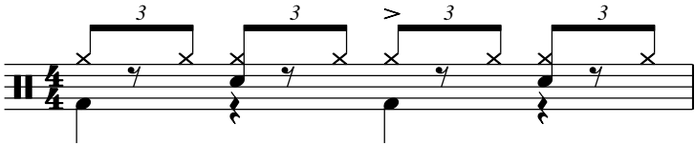
3 **Basic Funk**



Rock Shuffle

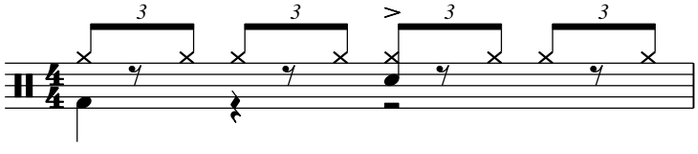
Shuffle beats are usually based on an eighth-note triplet feel. Play a basic rock shuffle at ♩ = 80–144.

4 **Basic Rock Shuffle**



Play a half-time shuffle at ♩ = 80–144.

5 **Half-time Shuffle**



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Further Towards Rock/Funk

Inter-dynamics

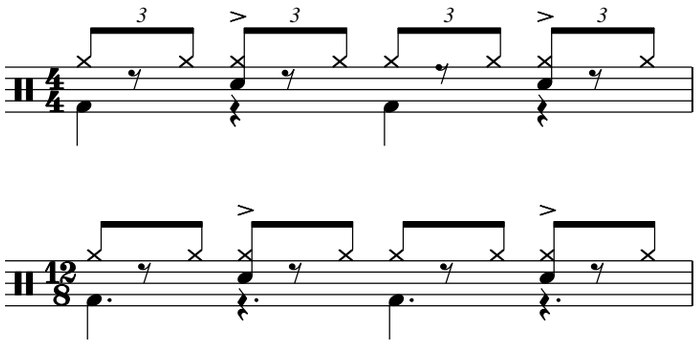
Not all rock/funk tunes are loud. What matters more than the number of decibels is the *inter-dynamics*—the relative dynamics of each drum compared to the rest of the kit. In rock, the snare is often louder than the hi-hat, whether in a soft rock ballad or a hard, driving tune. In other styles, the snare is often relatively quiet. In rock, the hi-hat tends to be more open and more "driving" than in funk. Funk generally has a tighter, quieter hi-hat.

Mastering the inter-dynamics between your drums is the key to playing a wide stylistic range.

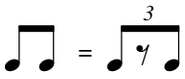
Notation: $\frac{4}{4}$ vs. $\frac{12}{8}$

Shuffles may be notated in either $\frac{4}{4}$ or $\frac{12}{8}$. They are played exactly the same either way.

Basic Rock Shuffle

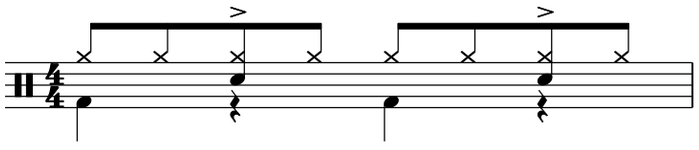


If music in $\frac{4}{4}$ is marked "shuffle," play eighth notes as triplets

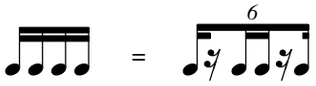


This beat sounds the same as the other Basic Rock Shuffle, but is is written as straight eighth notes.

Basic Rock Shuffle



Similarily, if you see "hip-hop," "go-go," or "swing sixteenths," play sixteenths with this feel:



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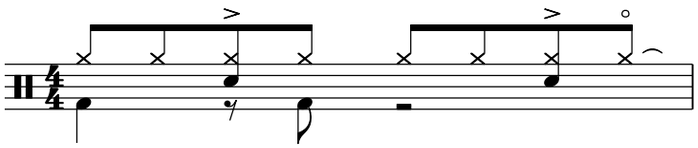
Variations

Rock/Funk

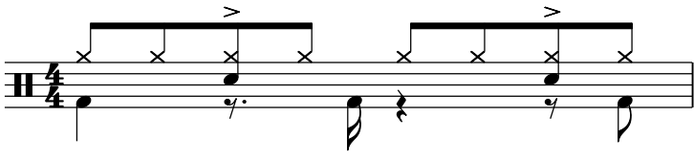
Practice these beats beginning at ♩ = 60. Gradually increase the tempo.

6

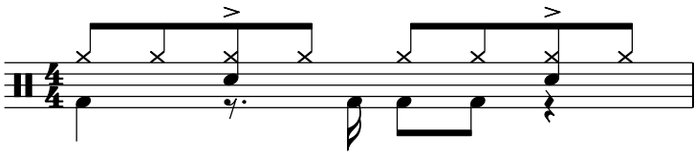
1. Rock/Funk 1



2. Rock/Funk 2

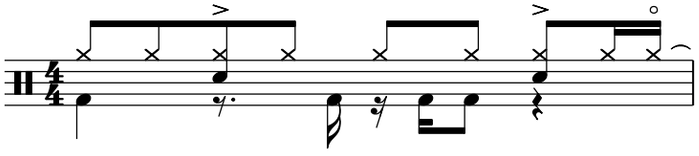


3. Rock/Funk 3

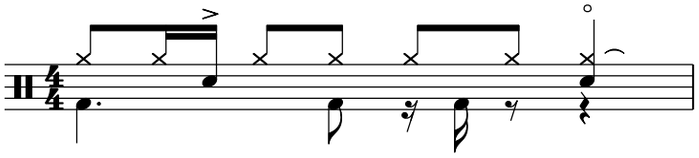


7

4. Rock/Funk 4



5. Rock/Funk 5



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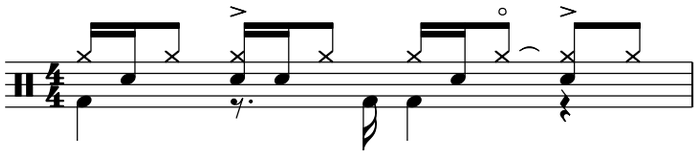
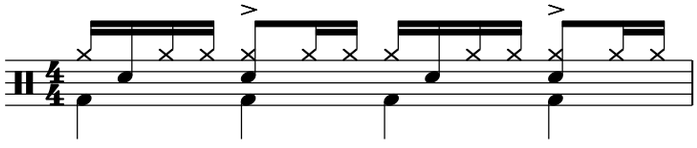
6. Rock/Funk 6

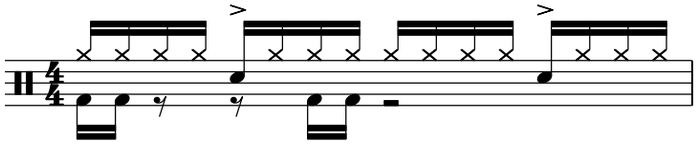


Practice these beats at ♩ = 60–120.

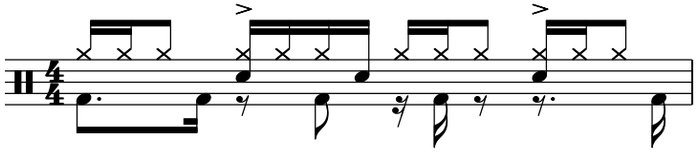
7. Rock/Funk 7



8. Rock/Funk 8

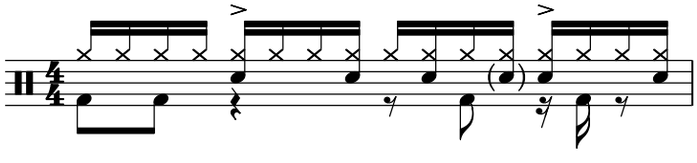


9. Rock/Funk 9



Practice these beats at ♩ = 60–120.

10. Rock/Funk 10



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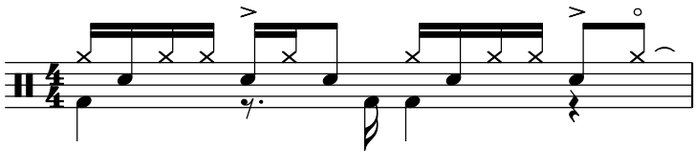
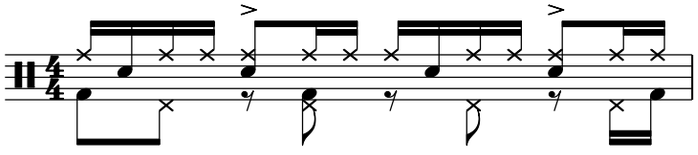
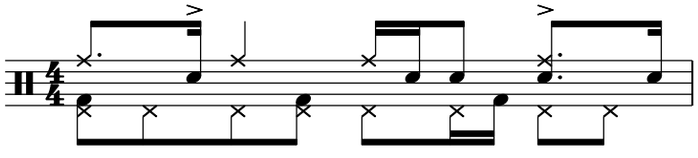
11. Rock/Funk 11



12. Rock/Funk 12



10 **13. Rock/Funk 13**



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