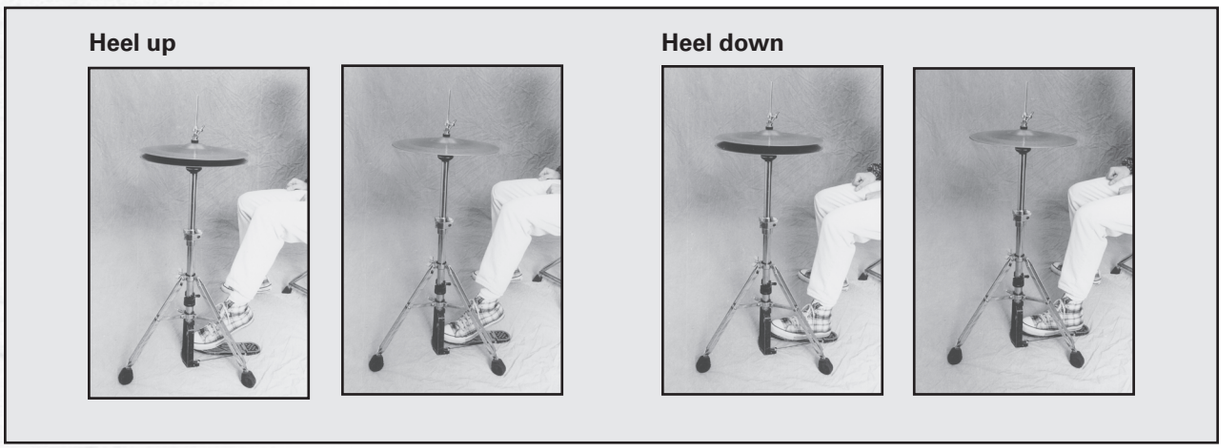
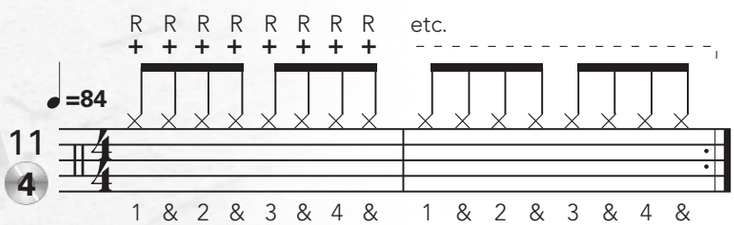
Introducing the Hi-Hat

For now, the hi-hat will be closed with the left foot pressing down on the pedal and played with the sticks. As with the bass drum, the hi-hat can be played either with the heel up or down. The following photos show both techniques with the hi-hat open and closed.

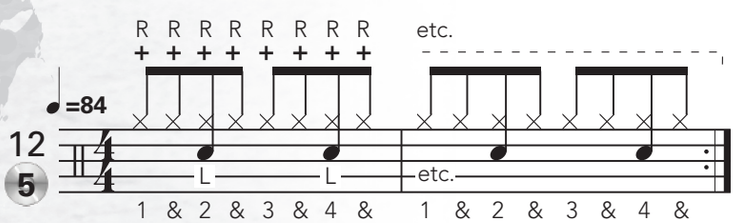


Eighth-Note Rock Beats

Let's start by playing eighth notes with the right hand on the closed hi-hat (left-handers can reverse this). Be sure to keep a good consistent pulse and count aloud 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &.



Once you feel comfortable with this, add the snare drum with the left hand on pulses 2 and 4. Every snare hit must be exactly in sync with a hi-hat hit. This is called rhythmic unison. As you learned on page 10, this beat is called a backbeat. Crossing the left hand with the right hand may feel strange at first but it can be mastered with practice.

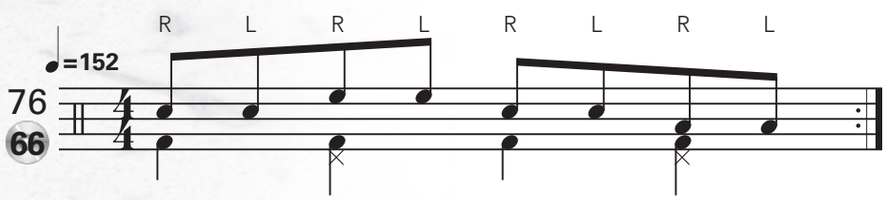


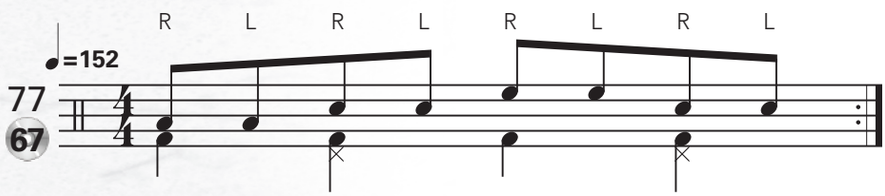
Fill Tips

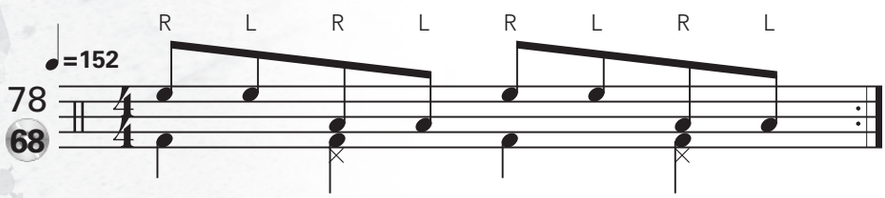
Fills are often the source of timing problems for the drummer. This is true for a number of reasons. One is that the drummer gets excited during the fill and "rushes" or speeds up the tempo. Another problem may be that the drummer doesn't know how to get out of the fill on time. It is important to remember as you are practicing that the tempo of a song must remain consistent no matter what fill you play. The time can't go out the window because the drummer decides to show off! A less complex but well-timed fill will go over better with the other musicians you are playing with. Practice your fills with a metronome and pay attention to how and where you finish your fills.

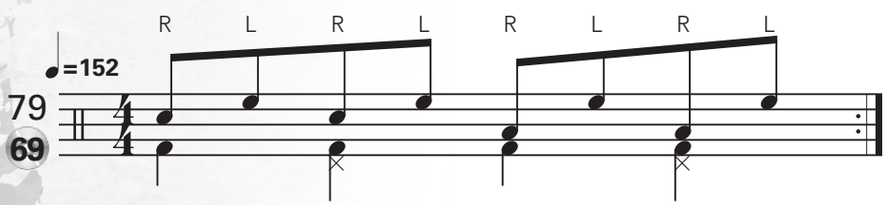
Getting Around the Set

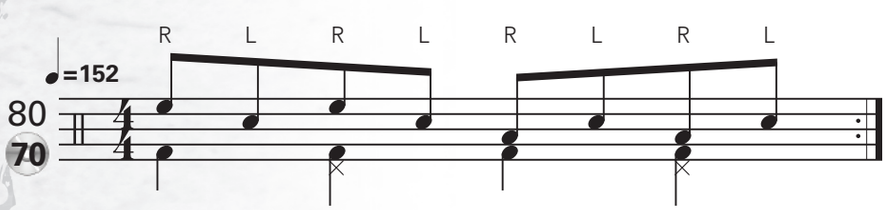
The following examples are ideas to be practiced around the drumset. They will give you fluidity in moving around the snare and toms, and should be practiced in a variety of tempos. Be careful not to tighten up your grip on the sticks when you play faster or louder. Let the sticks do the work for you. Play the bass drum on all four pulses and the stepped hi-hat on "2" and "4."











PRACTICE TIP

Practice the hands alone before adding the feet.