

andy thurston | drum tuition

Developing Double Strokes

This page is designed to develop and expand your use of double strokes. Most drummers know the standard double stroke roll pattern of RRLL, but by displacing the pattern and/or applying it to different rhythmic divisions we can open up a vast array of possibilities.

Let's start by looking at displacing the double strokes. Play the following exercise, at first, one line at a time. Once you are comfortable with each of the inversions individually, aim to play a bar of each pattern, moving to the next without hesitation. The accents are optional, but you should aim to be comfortable with or without the accents; they will help you keep track of the pulse and develop your ability to accent in double strokes.

The exercise consists of four staves of drum notation in 4/4 time. Each staff contains four bars of music, each bar representing a different displacement of the RRLL double stroke roll pattern. The patterns are as follows:

- Staff 1: RRLL, RRLL, RRLL, RRLL
- Staff 2: RLLL, RLLL, RLLL, RLLL
- Staff 3: LLRR, LLRR, LLRR, LLRR
- Staff 4: LLRR, LLRR, LLRR, LLRR

In each bar, the first stroke of the double stroke is accented (>).

If you become comfortable with these patterns, both with and without the accents written above, challenge yourself by accenting any rhythmic pattern within each of the roll patterns above. For example, this rhythmic pattern

The rhythmic pattern is: quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note. The second and fourth eighth notes are accented (>).

accented within the second double stroke inversion, would be played as

The notation is: RRLL, RLLL, RRLL, RLLL, RRLL, RLLL, RRLL, RLLL. The first stroke of the second double stroke (the first 'R' in the second 'RLLL') is accented (>).

andy thurston | drum tuition

Developing Double Strokes

Next, let's change the rhythmic division over which we play the double strokes. There are many possibilities here, but for the time being we will apply the patterns to eighth note triplets. As above, master one line at a time, and then build to playing through the four bar pattern non-stop.

Four lines of drum notation in 4/4 time, each showing a four-bar pattern of eighth note triplets. The patterns are: 1) R R L L R R L L R R L L; 2) R L L R R L L R R L L R; 3) L L R R L L R R L L R R; 4) L R R L L R R L L R R L. Each triplet is marked with a '3' and an accent (>).

In the above examples there are only accents on beats 1 and 3 of the bar. Adding accents on the 2 and 4 will create more of a challenge, as the accent varies from the first to the second stroke of the double, every beat. Again, apply rhythmic variation to the accent patterns to develop your flexibility and control.

Here is an example of a groove that applies double strokes. Though not double stroke *rolls* as shown in the displacement exercise above, the skills we gained from these exercises are evident.

In the groove played in the Jimi Hendrix track *Manic Depression*, the double strokes are employed by both hands, in a triplet-based (or swung) groove. There are a few variations, which again make good use of double strokes.

Drum notation for "Main Groove", "Variation A", and "Variation B" in 3/4 time. "Main Groove" shows a four-bar pattern with eighth note triplets and accents. "Variation A" shows a four-bar pattern with eighth note triplets and accents. "Variation B" shows a four-bar pattern with eighth note triplets and accents.