

# Introduction To Brushes

by Steve Hatfield

# Preface

The art of playing brushes can be mysterious to the uninitiated. Many drummers begin by learning a few patterns but are then faced with uncertainty when it comes to being able to improvise or react to the endless variations that often occur in live musical performance. My goal in writing this book is to address this dilemma by using the following three-step process.

- Step 1: Learn typical **patterns**.
- Step 2: Alter each pattern slightly to form **variations**.
- Step 3: Improvise and create longer phrases by combining the **patterns** and **variations**.

Using this system, both I and my students have been able to not only function, but thrive in a variety of musical settings.

As the title of this book suggests, this is not an all-encompassing text on the subject of playing brushes. Rather, it serves as a way to get up and running in a relatively quick fashion. For further study on this subject, I would recommend the following books: "Brushworks" by Clayton Cameron, "The Sound of Brushes" by Ed Thigpen, "Mastering the Art of Brushes" by Jon Hazilla, "Brush Artistry" by Philly Joe Jones, "The Complete Guide to Playing Brushes" by Florian Alexandru-Zorn, and "The Art of Bop Drumming" by John Riley.

There are also some great brush related DVD's including: "The Essence of Brushes" by Ed Thigpen, "Brushworks-The DVD" by Clayton Cameron, and "The Master Drummer" by John Riley.

Finally, and most importantly, listen to recordings of drummers known for being great brush players. Here are just a few: Papa Jo Jones, Shadow Wilson, Philly Joe Jones, Buddy Rich, Vernel Fournier, Shelly Manne, Ed Thigpen, Jeff Hamilton, Paul Motion, Mel Lewis, and Marty Morell.

Good luck and enjoy "Introduction to Brushes"

Steve Hatfield

# Documentation of Patterns and Variations

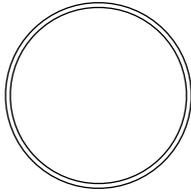
One of the most challenging aspects of studying brush technique is that there is no one accepted manner of notation. There seems to be as many styles of documentation as there are authors. This book uses a system that has worked well for myself and my students.

Looking at the patterns and variations on the following pages, you'll notice three different types of documentation: musical notation, diagrams, and written instructions. I first became aware of this layout through Jon Hazilla's excellent book "Mastering the Art of Brushes". The great Philly Joe Jones' book, "Brush Artistry", uses a similar theme. The reason why I have chosen to use this system is simple: different people learn in different manners. Through the years, I have had the opportunity to teach brushes to various types of students. In doing so, I have found that each one related to the patterns in different ways. For instance, one student might be able to see the musical notation and get it right away. Another might tend to relate to the shape of the pattern or diagram. Others, still, would have better luck with me simply explaining the pattern to them verbally. After a while, I gave up on trying just one approach and decided to use all three! This way, if the student couldn't grasp the pattern with one type of documentation, he or she could simply look elsewhere on the page and try another.

I believe that both the musical notation and written suggestions for each pattern and variation are self explanatory. However, the diagrams might, at first, seem a bit confusing. Therefore, on the next page, I have included a guide that explains the symbols found in each pattern's diagram. **It is important to note that all symbols written in black are to be played with your right hand (or left if you're left-handed) and all symbols written in gray are to be played with the left hand (or right if you're right-handed).**

**One more word about the diagrams.** Although you should strive to follow them carefully, don't feel like you have to play the shapes exactly the way they are shown. For instance, if the diagram shows a straight line and you feel more comfortable playing a slight curve, then so be it! As long as you get the basic concept and sound of the pattern, then all is well. In fact, these slight variations in motion are what give each of us our own sound and style!

# Diagram Guide



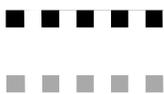
**Drum Circumference:** Represents the general playing area of the drumhead. This serves as a visual guide rather than an actual motion.



**Tap:** A vertical (up and down) motion. Similar to the normal stroke used for playing with sticks. This stroke creates a short, defined sound.



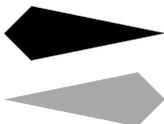
**Sweep:** A horizontal (flat) motion where the brush stays on the drumhead. This stroke creates a long, smooth sound.



**Silent Sweep:** A horizontal motion where the brush is actually OFF of the drumhead. Usually used to get from one spot to another without making a sound.



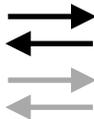
**Switch:** Simply changing from one direction to another on the drumhead without emphasizing a specific pulse. Often connected to a **Sweep**.



**Shaded Sweep:** Like the **Sweep**, however more pressure is applied to the brush as the line gets thicker. This adds a defined pulse to an, otherwise, smooth sound.



**Lift:** The brush is lifted off of the drumhead. This motion most commonly follows a **Sweep** in preparation for a **Tap**.



**Arrows:** Guides that show the general direction of the stroke they are nearest. These are NOT actual strokes.

All **Numbers** found in the diagrams show the approximate position of the brush in relation to the pulse.

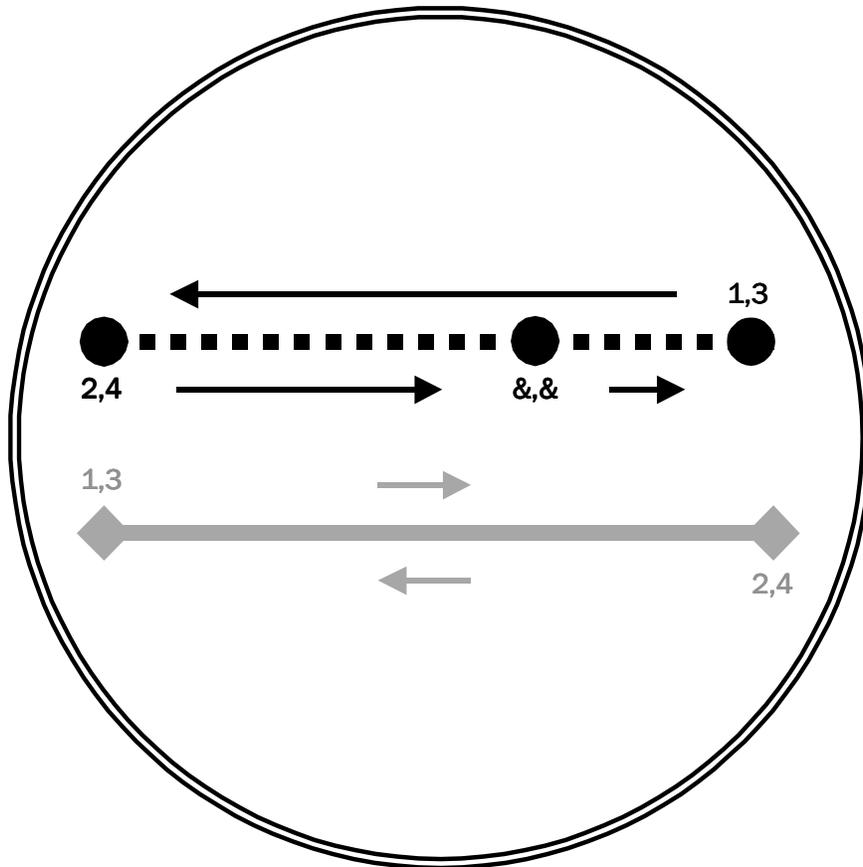
# Pattern 1: "Medium Swing"

(all 8th notes are "swung")

Tempo Range: ♩ = 96 - 232



Hi-hat plays beats 2 & 4



## Left Hand

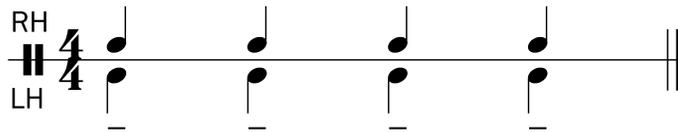
Starts at the left side of drumhead on beat 1, then slides toward the right side for beat 2. Repeat for beats 3 and 4.

## Right Hand

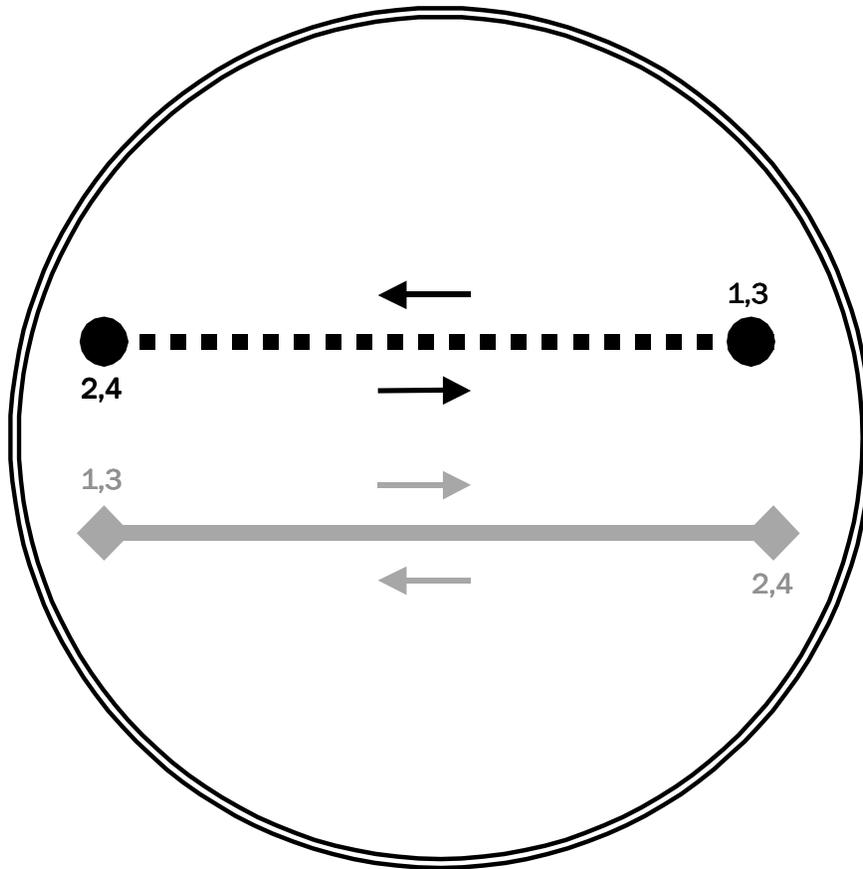
Plays a tap stroke on beat 1, then moves to the left side tapping beat 2. It then comes back to the right side of the drumhead pausing slightly to play a tap on the "&" of beat 2. Repeat for beats 3,4, and the "&" of 4.

# “Medium Swing”-Variation A

Tempo Range: ♩ = 96 - 232



Hi-hat plays beats 2 & 4



## Left Hand

Uses the exact same movements found in **Pattern I: “Medium Swing”**.

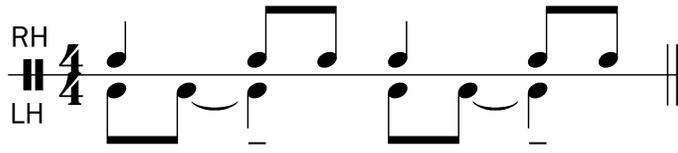
## Right Hand

Similar to the right hand motion in **Pattern I: “Medium Swing”**, but only plays beats 1,2,3, and 4. Leaving off the “&’s”.

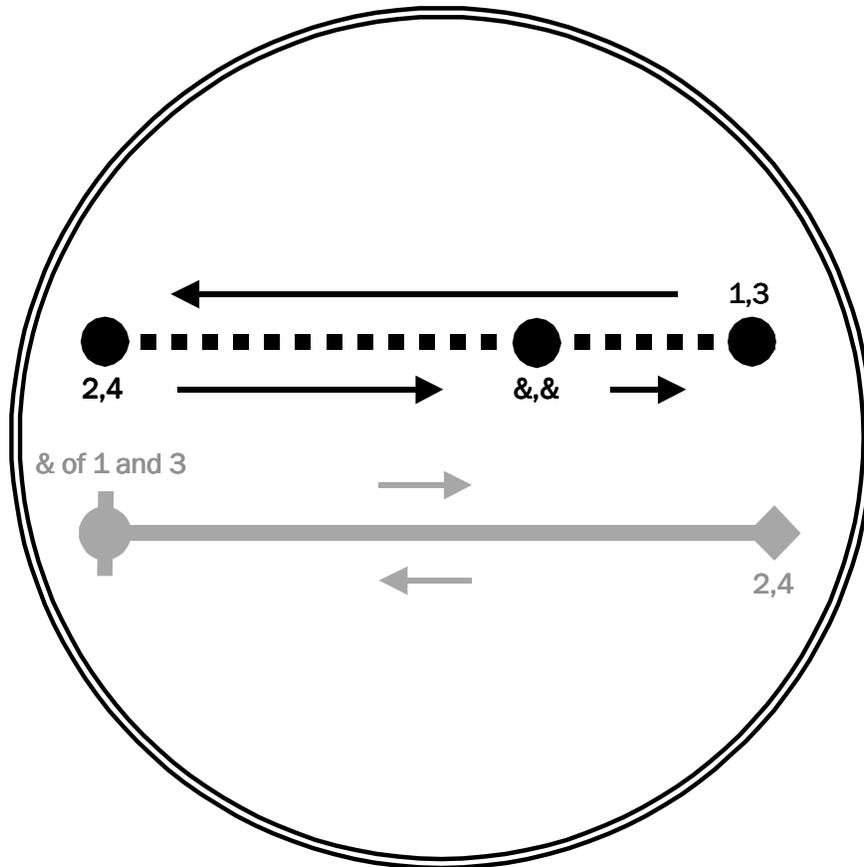
# “Medium Swing”-Variation B

(all 8th notes are “swung”)

Tempo Range: ♩ = 96 - 232



Hi-hat plays beats 2 & 4



## Left Hand

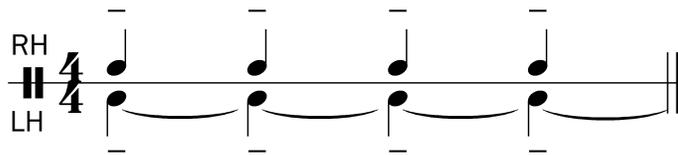
Uses the same basic motion from **Pattern 1: “Medium Swing”**, but lifts then lands back on the head to create an accent on the “&’s” of beats 1 and 3.

## Right Hand

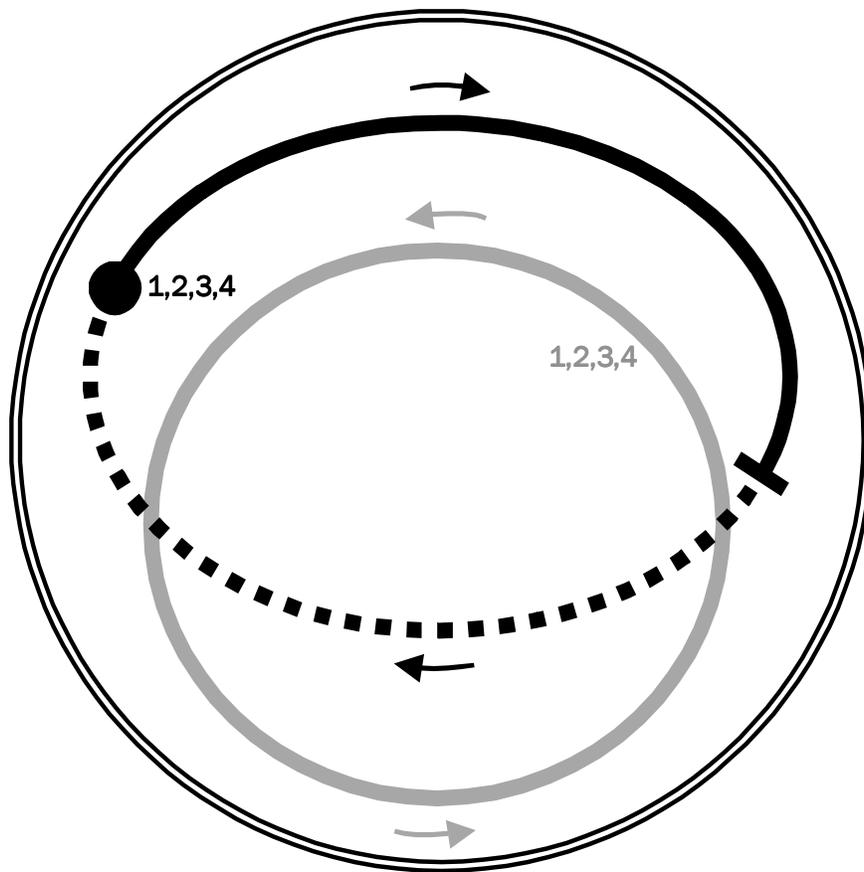
Plays the exact same movement and rhythm found in **Pattern 1: “Medium Swing”**.

# Pattern 2: "Ballad"

Tempo Range: ♩ = 44 - 92



Hi-hat plays beats 2 & 4



## Left Hand

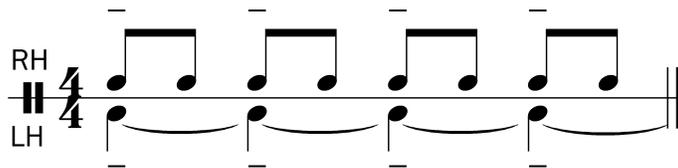
Counter-clockwise circle remaining on the drumhead the entire time.

## Right Hand

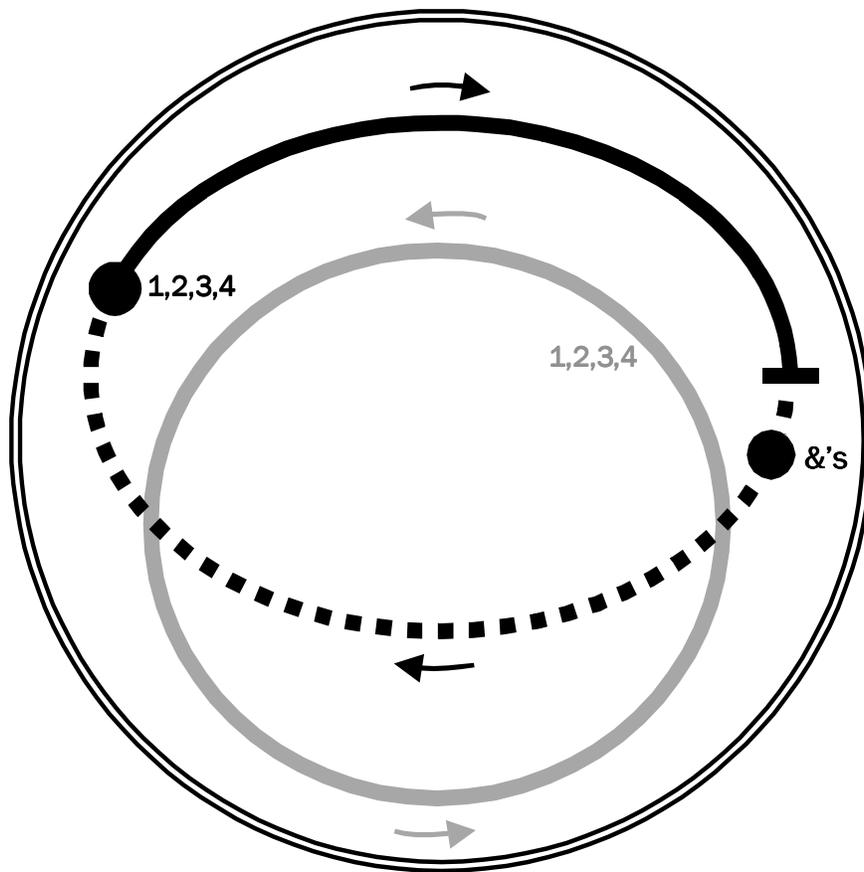
Clockwise semi-circle lifting just before colliding with the left hand. The right hand then lands back on the drumhead creating a thick pulse on each down-beat.

# “Ballad”-Variation A

Tempo Range: ♩ = 44 - 92



Hi-hat plays beats 2 & 4



## Left Hand

Plays the same motion and rhythm as in **Pattern 2: “Ballad”**.

## Right Hand

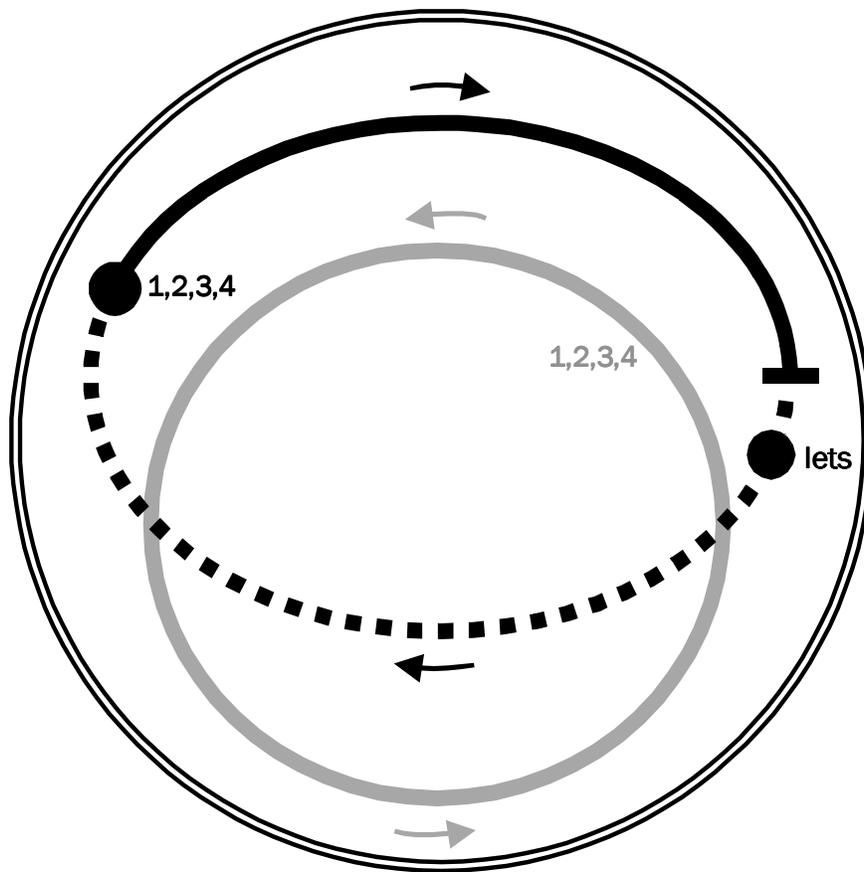
Uses the same shape as **Pattern 2: “Ballad”**, but lifts in order to play taps on the “&'s” of every beat.

# “Ballad”-Variation B

Tempo Range: ♩ = 44 - 92

RH  
LH

Hi-hat plays beats 2 & 4



## Left Hand

Plays the same motion and rhythm as in **Pattern 2: “Ballad”**.

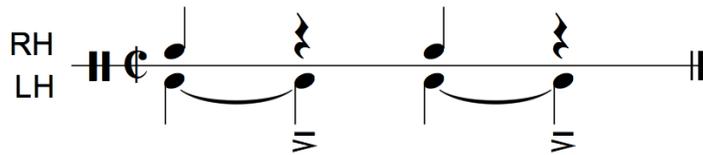
## Right Hand

Uses the same basic movement as **Pattern 2: “Variation 1”**, but instead of tapping on the “&’s”, it will tap on the third note of each triplet. (“1-trip-**let**” etc...)

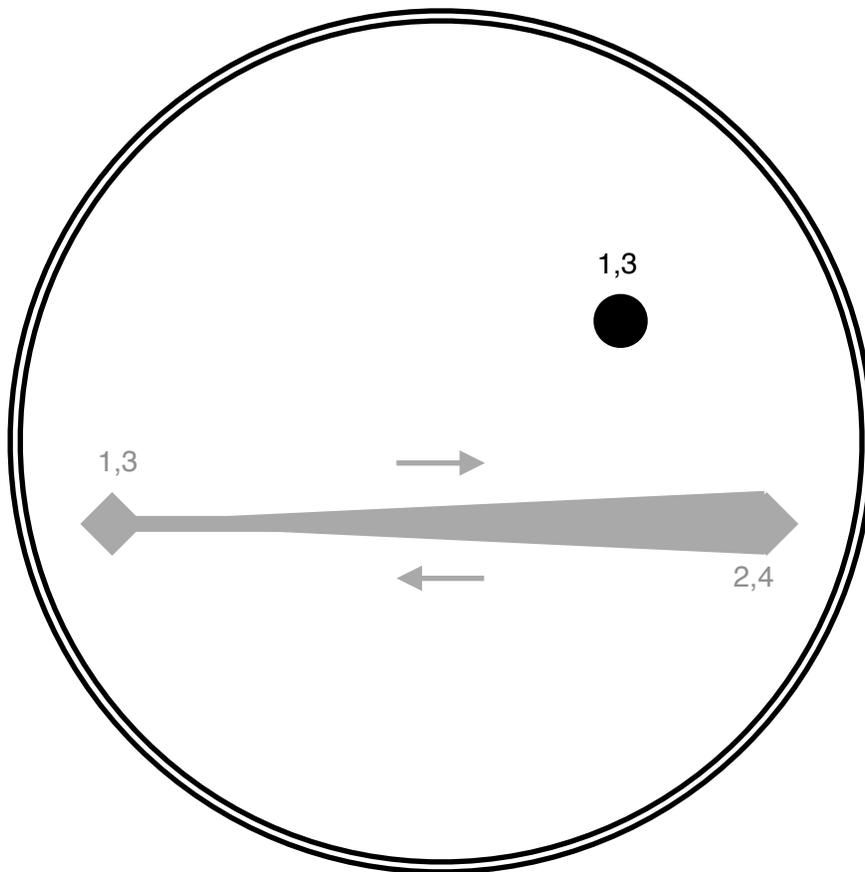


# “Fast Swing”-Variation A

Tempo Range: ♩ = 240 - 400



Hi-hat plays beats 2 & 4



## Left Hand

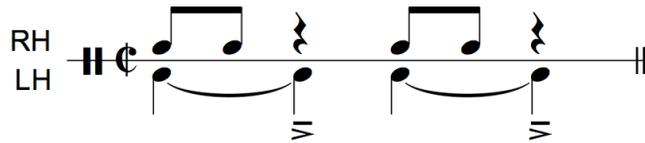
Uses the exact same movements found in **Pattern 3: “Fast Swing”**.

## Right Hand

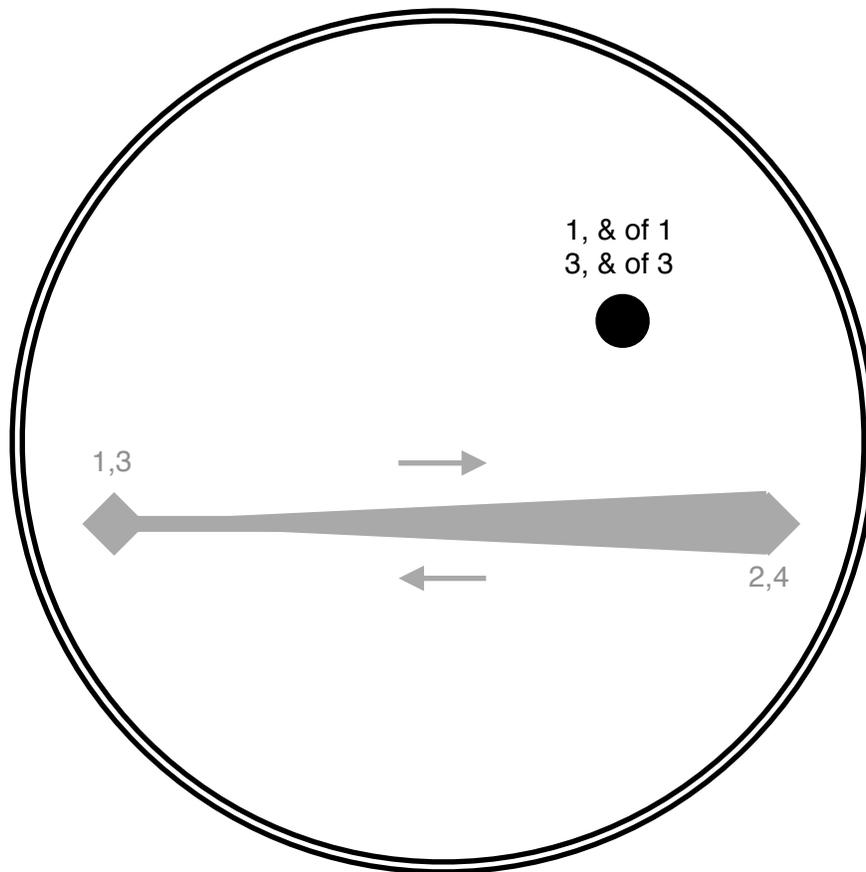
Similar to the motion in **Pattern 3: “Fast Swing”**, but plays tap strokes on beat 1 and beat 3 only.

# “Fast Swing”-Variation B

Tempo Range: ♩ = 240 - 400



Hi-hat plays beats 2 & 4



## Left Hand

Uses the exact same movements found in **Pattern 3: “Fast Swing”**.

## Right Hand

Similar to the motion in **Pattern 3: “Fast Swing”**, but plays tap strokes on beat 1 and the “&” of 1, then 3 and the “&” of 3.