

Swing Studies 1

Steve Hatfield

The proper spacing between notes is one of the most important aspects of swing. Relating common ride cymbal patterns to the 8th note triplet will help ingrain the proper feel.

Lets begin our studies by playing the stickings listed in Group A on snare drum. Be sure to pay close attention to all written accents. Next, move on to the drum set patterns found in Group B. By playing all written ride cymbal notes with your right hand, you'll see that these patterns use exactly the same stickings covered in the Group A stickings. Focus on playing the ride cymbal with a full and relaxed motion. The snare drum should be played with very light strokes. You will also play beats 2 and 4 with your left foot on the hi-hat. Try to match the volume of the hi-hat to that of the ride cymbal.

Group A

1A

R L L R L L R L L R L L

2A

R L R R L R R L R R L R

3A

R L L R L R R L L R L R

4A

R L L R L R R L L R L L

5A

R L L R L L R L L R L R

Group B

1B

2B

3B

4B

5B

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Now that you can play the Preliminary Swing Studies comfortably, let's try putting them into a more practical situation.

In each of the following exercises, you'll find two bars of a Group B pattern followed immediately by two more bars leaving out the snare drum. This will create a four bar phrase that is to be repeated many times. The goal is to keep the ride cymbal sounding and feeling the same throughout each exercise.

The image displays five musical exercises, numbered 1 through 5, arranged vertically. Each exercise is written on a single staff in 4/4 time. The first two bars of each exercise feature a Group B pattern consisting of four eighth-note triplets. The first bar has a snare drum on the second and fourth beats, while the second bar has a snare drum on the first and third beats. The next two bars of each exercise are identical to the first two but omit the snare drum, leaving only the ride cymbal pattern. Each exercise concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots. The exercises are as follows:

- Exercise 1:** Four eighth-note triplets on the first two bars. Snare on beats 2 and 4 of bar 1; snare on beats 1 and 3 of bar 2.
- Exercise 2:** Four eighth-note triplets on the first two bars. Snare on beats 1 and 3 of bar 1; snare on beats 2 and 4 of bar 2.
- Exercise 3:** Four eighth-note triplets on the first two bars. Snare on beats 1 and 3 of bar 1; snare on beats 2 and 4 of bar 2.
- Exercise 4:** Four eighth-note triplets on the first two bars. Snare on beats 2 and 4 of bar 1; snare on beats 1 and 3 of bar 2.
- Exercise 5:** Four eighth-note triplets on the first two bars. Snare on beats 1 and 3 of bar 1; snare on beats 2 and 4 of bar 2.

Swing Studies 2

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The term comping literally means to compliment. As drummers, we can use the snare drum and/or bass drum to compliment or reinforce our ride cymbal phrases.

To get comfortable with this idea, we will begin by memorizing each of the two-bar patterns written below. In the first measure of each pattern, you will notice the typical Swing ride cymbal/hi-hat pattern. In the second bar, we'll add either the snare drum or bass drum on the "ands" of beats 2 and/or 4. These "ands" are often called skip-notes and serve to add a forward motion to the basic pulse. The snare and bass drum should be played at about half of the volume of the ride cymbal and hi-hat. Remember, we are trying to compliment the ride pattern, not disrupt it.

1

2

3

4

Swing Studies 2-pg.2

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The image shows four musical staves, numbered 5 through 8, each representing a drum pattern in 4/4 time. Each staff has a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The patterns are as follows:

- Staff 5:** The top staff shows a ride cymbal/hi-hat pattern with four triplet accents (marked '3') over the first four measures. The bottom staff shows the corresponding snare and bass drum patterns.
- Staff 6:** Similar to staff 5, but with a different snare and bass drum pattern.
- Staff 7:** Similar to staff 5, but with a different snare and bass drum pattern.
- Staff 8:** Similar to staff 5, but with a different snare and bass drum pattern.

Now, let's put our new skills to use. Play the traditional ride cymbal/hi-hat pattern below and add the snare or bass drum to any or all of the "skip notes".

The image shows a single musical staff in 4/4 time with a treble clef. It features a traditional ride cymbal/hi-hat pattern with two triplet accents (marked '3') over the first two measures. The bottom staff shows the corresponding snare and bass drum patterns.

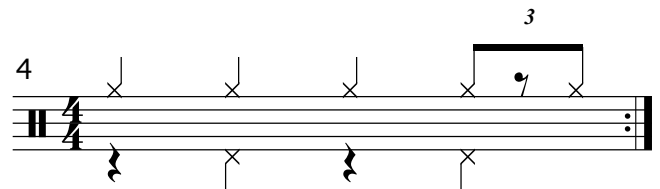
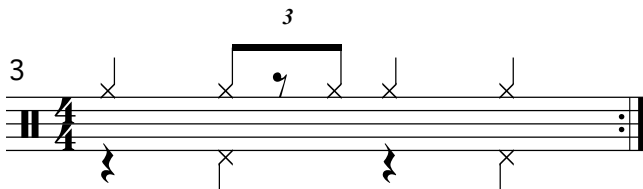
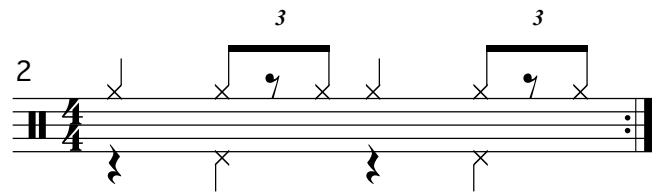
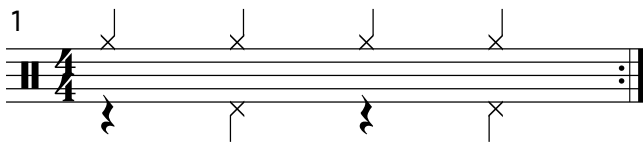
Swing Studies 3

Steve Hatfield

Because Jazz is primarily an improvised music, it is difficult to describe a specific "beat" that the drummer should play. However, if we must choose one defining ingredient of a Jazz drummer's vocabulary, it would most likely be his or her phrasing of the ride cymbal. The ability to play good, focused time on the ride cymbal is of the upmost importance for anyone attempting to play this style. Theoretically, a drummer should be able to make a band sound good with the intensity of their ride cymbal alone.

We'll start by learning the four One-Bar Patterns listed below. Each pattern should be played many times committing it to memory as you go. As you repeat each pattern, try to get your eyes off of the page and literally watch your ride cymbal. You should be using a full, relaxed motion that combines equal amounts of the arm, wrist, and fingers.

One-Bar Patterns



Because it is rare that even a well written drum part will be spelled out note for note, it is important that the drummer have as many patterns committed to memory as possible. A good test of your memorization of this material is to play four bars of Ride Pattern 1, followed immediately by four more bars of Ride Pattern 2, then Ride Pattern 3, and last, Ride Pattern 4. Next, do the same with two bars of each pattern and finish up by playing just one bar of each. These steps should all be done without looking at the page. When you can perform these steps comfortably, move on to the next page and set of assignments.

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Now, let's create a bit of rhythmic interest by combining two of our One-Bar Patterns from the previous page to form a series of Two-Bar Patterns. Again, memorize each exercise as soon as possible and continue to strive for a good feel. Once you are comfortable with these combinations, try adding the snare drum or bass drum to any or all "skip-notes".

Two-Bar Patterns

The image displays six two-bar rhythmic exercises, numbered 1 through 6, arranged vertically. Each exercise is written on a five-line staff with a 4/4 time signature. The first bar of each exercise contains four eighth notes, each marked with an 'x' above it. The second bar contains a triplet of eighth notes (marked with a '3' above a bracket) followed by two eighth notes, each marked with an 'x' above it. Below each staff, a drum set notation is provided, consisting of a snare drum (represented by a vertical line with a flag) and a bass drum (represented by a vertical line with a flag). The drum notation indicates the placement of the snare and bass drums for each eighth note in the two bars. For example, in exercise 1, the snare drum plays on the first and third eighth notes of the first bar, and on the first, second, and fourth eighth notes of the second bar. The bass drum plays on the second and fourth eighth notes of the first bar, and on the first, second, and fourth eighth notes of the second bar.

Swing Studies 4

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In many styles of music, ideas are often resolved by emphasizing the first beat of the phrase. In Swing, however, it is more common to play an accent on the "and" of beat four just before the next phrase. This gives a feeling of forward motion and is often called the anticipated-one or a push-note.

Here are eight exercises to get you comfortable with this idea. You'll notice that the first three measures of each exercise contain nothing more than slash marks. This is a common short-hand method of writing some drum set parts. It suggests that the drummer improvises those measures according to the predetermined style. In this case, use any of the Ride Cymbal Patterns and Comping ideas from previous exercises to build phrases. Its probably best to start simply then add more ideas as you become comfortable.

You'll play the fourth bar as written. The lagato mark on the "and" of beat four suggests a shoulder crash. This is accomplished by laying the shoulder of the stick flat against the ride cymbal: this creates a sound somewhere between the tip of the stick in the middle and the shoulder on the edge. When you repeat back to the beginning of the phrase, let beat one go by without hitting the ride cymbal. This will help the phrase sound more relaxed.

1 Improvised Ride Cym. and Comping Patterns

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Detailed description of the musical notation: Each exercise is written on a single staff in 4/4 time. The first three measures of each exercise are filled with diagonal slashes, indicating improvisation. The fourth measure is written out with specific drum notation. Above the staff, there are four 'x' marks representing cymbal hits on the first, second, and third beats, and a note with a slur and a flat accent mark on the 'and' of the fourth beat. Below the staff, there are four 'x' marks representing snare hits on the first, second, and third beats, and a note with a slur and a flat accent mark on the 'and' of the fourth beat. The notation for exercise 1 includes a dashed line above the first three measures.

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Bonus Exercise: Now, lets put our studies to the test by improvising the fourth measure of our four-bar phrase. This is much simpler than it may seem. Just continue to take the same steps in bars one through three as you did in exercises 1-8. However, when you get to the fourth measure, try inprovising a fill that ends up on the "and of 4" with a shoulder crash. At first, you may just want to use the same fourth bar patterns you played in exercises 1-8. Next, try substituting one or two of the snare drum notes with a tom-tom. These ideas should leed you to creating your own fills. When you find an idea that you like, repeat many times so that it becomes part of your vocabulary. It is greatly encouraged that you listen to great jazz drummers to see how they handle similiar

Improvised Ride Cym. and Comping Patterns -----, Improvised "Anticipated One"