

# Appendix I: Organization Of Patterns/ Labeling System

In part one, each pattern is classified according to four characteristics: **Length**, **Sticking**, **Inversion**, and **Embellishment**.

1) **LENGTH:** The number of digits indicates the length of each pattern.

**Examples:**

THREE DIGIT PATTERN	EIGHT DIGIT PATTERN
( 1 2 3 )	( 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 )
R L L	R L R R L R L L

**Labeling System:** The number of digits in each sticking pattern is indicated by the first number in the label.

**Examples:**

THREE DIGIT PATTERN	EIGHT DIGIT PATTERN
3A1) RLL	8A1) RLRR LRL
▲	▲

2) **STICKING:** The term “sticking” refers to the particular combination and order of the four fundamental units of stick technique (R, L, RR, LL) in a (repeating) pattern of a given length.

**Examples:** Three Digit Patterns and Eight Digit Patterns

There are two possible combinations of R, L, RR, or LL which form patterns that are three digits in length.<sup>1</sup> They are:

- A) R + LL (RLL)  
B) L + RR (LRR)

There are five possible combinations of R, L, RR, or LL which form patterns that are eight digits in length.<sup>2</sup> They are:

- A) R + L + RR + L + R + LL (RLRR LRL)  
B) R + L + R + L + RR + LL (RLRL RLRL)  
C) L + R + L + R + LL + RR (LRLR LLRR)  
D) R + L + R + LL + R + LL (RLRL LRL)  
E) L + R + L + RR + L + RR (LRLR RLRR)

**Labeling System:** Each **sticking** pattern of a given length is labeled by letter.

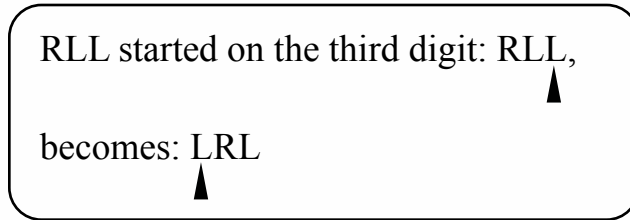
**Examples:**

3A1) RLL	3B1) RLL
▲	▲

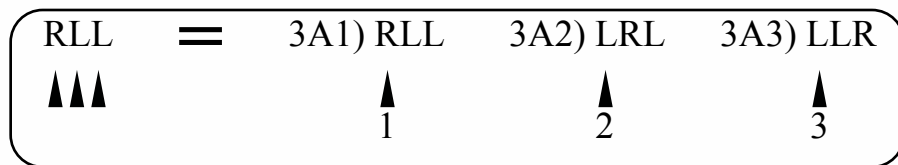
<sup>1</sup> Any other three digit patterns are *inversions* of the two listed below. For further information, see item 3, “Inversion.”

<sup>2</sup> Any other eight digit patterns are *inversions* of the five listed below. For further information, see item 3, “Inversion.”

3) **INVERSION:** To invert a sticking pattern means to start it in a different place. For example, the sticking RLL can be inverted by starting on the third digit rather than the first:

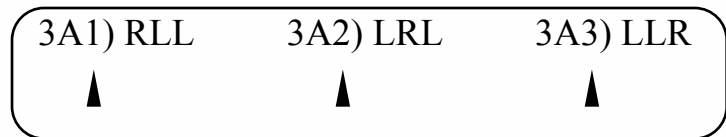


The number of inversions possible for a sticking pattern is the same as its number of digits. For example, for a three digit pattern, there are three possible inversions:



**Labeling System: Inversions** of sticking patterns are numbered to the right of the letter.

**Example:**



4) **EMBELLISHMENT:** Except in the Sticking Pattern section, the underlining of digits represents accent, flam, single, double, and buzz stroke embellishments to those digits. (In the accent section the underlined digit is executed with an accent; in the flam section the underlined digit is executed as a flam, etc.)

**Labeling System: Embellishment** methods are labeled with a third number separated from the second by a decimal point.

**Example: Accent Pattern 6A**



# Appendix II: Determining A Pattern's Utility

Drumming Patterns is an encyclopedia of technique listing nearly every technical and rhythmic pattern which could be of practical use to most drummers. However, there are more patterns presented here than many readers might have time to practice. Therefore, it is an important skill to be able to determine which patterns have the greatest utility.

A pattern's utility is determined by four factors: length, symmetry, phrasing, and inversion.

- 1) **Length: The shorter the pattern, the greater its utility.**
- 2) **Symmetry: Symmetrical patterns tend to have greater utility than asymmetrical patterns.**

Each of the above patterns falls into one of two categories: symmetrical and asymmetrical. Symmetrical patterns may be divided into two equal parts which are mirror images of one another.

**Example:**

Symmetrical Sticking Patterns	Symmetrical Rhythm Patterns
R L	♪ 7
RR LL	♪♪ 77
RLRR LRLl	♪7♪♪ 7♪77

Asymmetrical patterns cannot be divided into equal parts. However, asymmetrical patterns do come in inverse ("mirror image") pairs.

**Example:**

Asymmetrical Sticking Patterns	Asymmetrical Rhythm Patterns
RLL	♪ 7 7
LRR	7♪♪
RLRLL	♪7♪77
LRLRR	7♪7♪♪

Symmetrical patterns tend to be easier to execute on a technical level, and more versatile on a musical level.

### 3) Phrasing: A pattern's utility varies depending on how it is phrased.

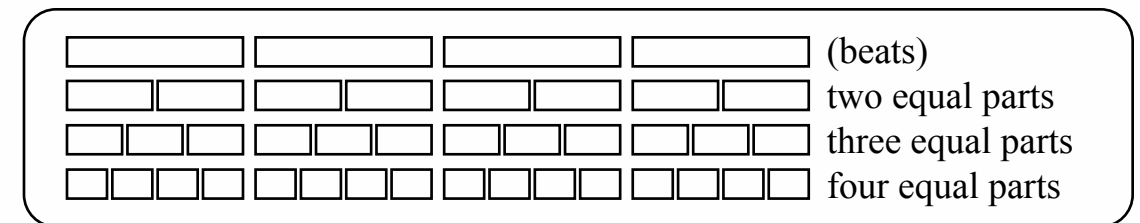
To understand how patterns are phrased, we must first understand how music is structured rhythmically.

The most fundamental rhythmic subdivisions in music are called beats. These provide the basic rhythmic pulse, and the framework for other divisions and subdivisions. When you tap your foot to music you are usually tapping out the beats. It is within the framework of beats that rhythmic and technical patterns are phrased.

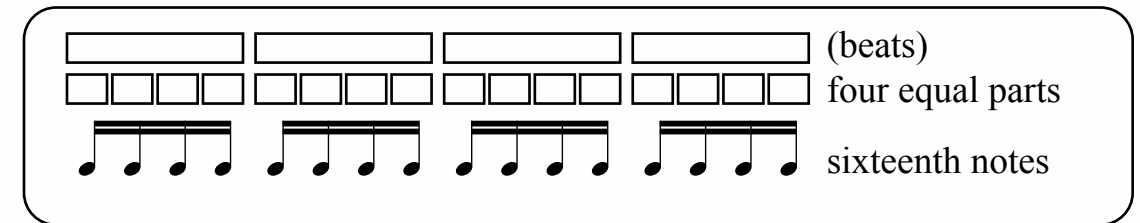
How patterns are phrased depends on how each beat is subdivided. To understand how beats are subdivided, first, let's look at an illustration showing how we might visualize a row of beats.



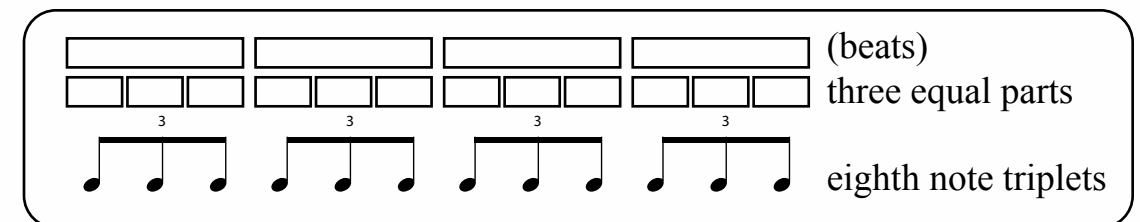
Remember, each one of these beats signifies a moment where you would normally tap your foot. Now let's show several ways these beats may be subdivided. In Western popular music, subdivisions of beats are almost always multiples of two or three:



Each type of subdivision has a corresponding musical notation. For example, to subdivide each beat into four equal parts is to play sixteenth notes.<sup>1</sup>



To subdivide each beat into three equal parts is to play eighth note triplets.



1. In this book, all quarter notes equal one beat.

Each pattern (sticking pattern or rhythmic pattern) can be phrased in several different ways, according to how each beat is subdivided. The character of a pattern varies considerably according to the way it is phrased, even though the pattern itself remains the same. For example, the sticking RLL, and the corresponding rhythm based on the same pattern ♪ 7 7, can be phrased in several ways, such as eighth note triplets, or sixteenth notes.

When the pattern is phrased as eighth note triplets:

it is easy to execute on a technical level, and is fundamental on a musical level because the entire pattern occupies one beat. However, if this same pattern is phrased as sixteenth notes:

it becomes harder to execute on a technical level and less fundamental on a musical level because the pattern must be superimposed over the course of three beats.

How each beat is subdivided, then, determines how many beats the pattern will last. The fewer beats a pattern requires, the greater the pattern's utility.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore, a pattern's utility varies according to how it is phrased. Patterns of two, four, five, seven, eight, and ten digits in length lend themselves more readily to double subdivisions, such as eighth notes and sixteenth notes. Patterns three, six, and nine and twelve digits in length lend themselves more readily to triple subdivisions, such as eighth note triplets and sixteenth note triplets.

An important element of the Drumming Patterns system is that all patterns are presented in both duple *and* triple phrasing.

1. There is a simple formula to determine how many beats a pattern will last when superimposed over a beat with a given set of subdivisions: multiply the number of digits in the pattern by the number of subdivisions of each beat.

#### 4) Inversion: A pattern's utility varies according to its inversion.<sup>1</sup>

There are three kinds of inversions possible within most sticking patterns.

- A) An inversion that begins on a *single stroke* has the greatest utility.
- B) An inversion that begins on the *first digit of a double stroke* has the second greatest utility.
- C) An inversion that begins on the *second digit of a double stroke* has the least utility.

##### Example: Sticking Pattern 3A (RLL)

- A) The most effective inversion for Sticking 3A (RLL) is its first inversion (RLL) because this inversion begins on a single stroke.
- B) The second most effective inversion for Sticking 3A is its third inversion (LLR) because this inversion begins on the first digit of a double stroke.
- C) The least effective inversion for sticking 3A is its second inversion (LRL) because this inversion begins on the second digit of a double stroke.

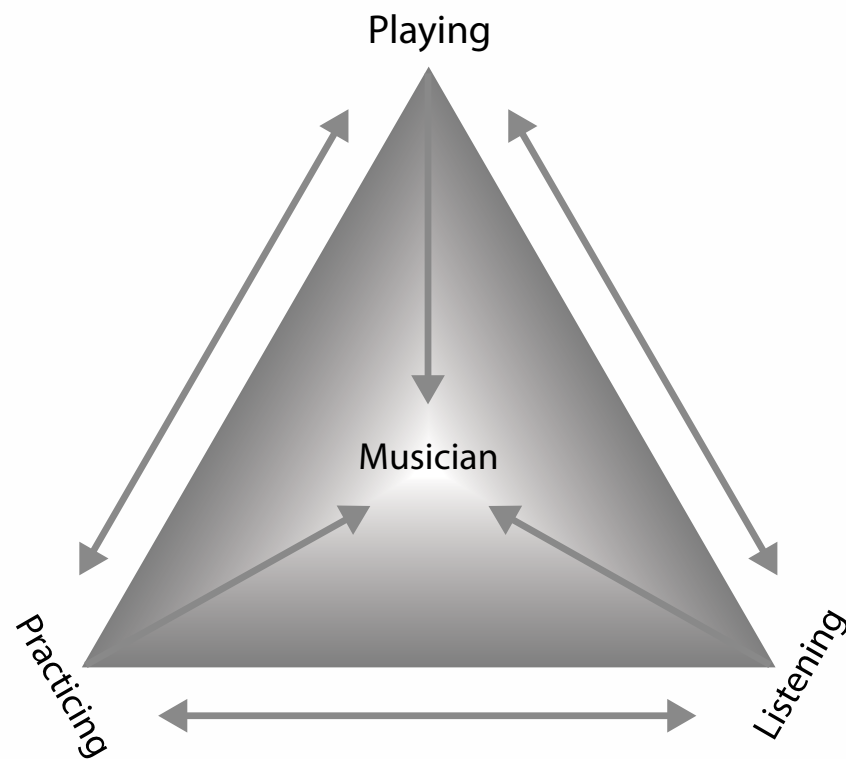
For drummers, sticking patterns and rhythmic patterns are the basic tools used in making music. An understanding which patterns are available, and which have the greatest technical and musical utility, is an essential prerequisite for technical development and musical understanding.

1. A definition of the term "Inversion" may be found in Appendix I, Item 3 on page 162.

## Appendix III: Playing/Practicing/ Listening

Drumming Patterns presents all of the fundamental components of snare drum and drum set technique. Its approach is universal, comprehensive and open-ended; it is intended to be the book that students receive on their first lesson and practice for the rest of their lives. For this reason, in addition to presenting the system itself, I would like to clarify for students the specific role of technique in the larger scheme of their development as musicians.

It is already understood by most that technique is not an end in itself, but rather a means to acquire the skills needed to create and perform music. What is less widely understood, however, is that technique is not the sole means of developing one's talents, but only one of three interrelated means: *practicing*, *playing*, and *listening*.



To illustrate this idea graphically, I have used the figure of a triangle to help convey that these three activities are (1) equal in importance, and (2) interrelated—the level of skill attained in each area directly affects the level of skill attainable in the others.

The first of these activities which should be considered is listening.

### Listening

Listening is an important primary skill because (1) before we can set our goals (which will determine *what* we will practice), we must be aware of what musical options we will be choosing from, and (2) music is an *aural* art form, the subtleties of which can only be grasped first hand, i.e. *aurally*, through listening. As drummers and musicians, listening directly to music—not practicing—should set our goals and provide our main source of information about music and our instrument. Furthermore, for the purpose of learning, it is important that we listen analytically, to grasp clearly *what* we are hearing and *how* it is being produced. When attending live performances, the visual element is helpful in this respect. Recordings, on the other hand, offer the opportunity to listen to a single passage repeatedly in order to memorize it or write it down, a process known as transcription.

The goal of listening is to gain a first-hand familiarity with every style and every individual stylist relevant to our development and to find among those stylists those that we personally love who will therefore become inspirations and guideposts for developing our own styles.

### Practicing

To execute what we would like to play, most of us require an extensive amount of practicing. In drumming, the material we practice can be divided into three general areas. The first is the purely technical material we must learn to physically play our instrument. This material is the focus of Drumming Patterns.

The second area involves practicing the specific vocabularies of the musicians and styles that we love and admire. The ostinato (repeating) drumming patterns associated with various styles are detailed in Part II of Drumming Patterns. The subtleties of these vocabularies, however, must be learned through the process of analytical listening described earlier. Accurate transcriptions provide an excellent source of practice material for this purpose.

The third area of practice involves developing music reading skills, material for which includes Ted Reed's "Syncopation" book, the various classical and rudimental snare drum etudes available, and the interpretative reading of drum "charts" for large groups or unusual compositions.

The goal of practicing is to develop technical mastery, not to express oneself musically.

### Playing

The third means of musical development, playing, may at first seem to be the final goal. However, it is both the final goal and an essential part of the means of attaining it. Playing provides a barometer of our progress and develops the essential skill of subconsciously integrating our knowledge into our own musical style. Many innovative musicians developed their styles not in their practice room, but as a creative response to musical ideas initiated on the bandstand by their bandmates. The earlier in a musician's development this process begins, the better.

The goal of playing is to create art, not to develop technical mastery. As a prerequisite to creating art, one must separate one's aesthetic expression from one's technical development, and never engage in the destructive habit of "practicing on the bandstand."

In achieving your goals, I wish you the best of success in using Drumming Patterns as the technical means to your musical ends.

## Appendix IV: Listening And Transcribing: Learning From Others While Thinking For Yourself

Drum technique is not an end in itself, but rather a means to the end of making music. Therefore, the most important techniques to learn are those which have direct application to that end—which in fact *are* that end—and which can be discovered through the process of transcription.

Along with practicing the material in Drumming Patterns, transcribing and practicing transcriptions are among the most beneficial methods of development because they develop several key skills simultaneously: (1) one must **listen** in an extremely focused and comprehending manner to a passage of music to notate it correctly; (2) transcribing sharpens one's skill in working with **notation**; (3) notating musical sounds involves translating an aural language into a visual language, the **grasping** of abstract sounds into conscious terms; (4) there is an inherent amount of **technique** involved in playing transcriptions which potentially ranges from basic to advanced. In addition, it is the practical, *specific* technique required for making music; (5) practicing transcriptions advances **reading** skills; (6) transcriptions advance one's **musical knowledge and taste** by providing insights into the styles of the greatest artists in the world, in the context of the music in which those styles are appropriate.

Despite this, I have frequently heard musicians and music educators deride transcribing and even analytical listening as being without merit, and even harmful to development. While this is untrue, I would like to clarify the premise upon which it is based.

Specifically, that premise asserts that the stylists one might transcribe created their vocabularies “intuitively,” without copying the vocabularies of their predecessors note for note, and would not have been innovative *had* they copied their predecessors. Although there is some truth to this statement, it reveals a grossly oversimplified view of the process of artistic evolution.

Each successive generation of drum stylists, while not copying the vocabulary of the preceding generation, do *abstract* conceptual elements of that vocabulary and re-work these elements when creating styles of their own. The way successive generations of musicians absorb existing vocabularies is through a conscious and subconscious (not intuitive) process of conceptual abstraction and integration, mixing different vocabularies in different proportions, and adding their own ideas to the mixture in the process.

To deride analytical listening and transcribing is to overlook the essence of this process: the better a musician understands the specifics of a given set of vocabularies, the more

effectively his conscious and subconscious mind can integrate those vocabularies with his own concepts (which themselves will be largely spurred into existence from his understanding of these vocabularies).

Those without creative ability may indeed not progress beyond the level of repeating transcriptions note for note. However, these same players would not have become creative without exposure to transcriptions. And conversely, those with creative ability don't become less creative with exposure to transcriptions. Learning from others and thinking for yourself are not mutually exclusive acts. All musicians become immensely better the more they deepen their understanding of the styles that preceded them, and that will form the basis for the styles to come.