

Module #7: Kit Singles

This module deals with applying singles to the kit. What that means is, you move singles strokes around the kit using the hands and then we incorporate the kick foot. The exercises in this Module are for developing comfort with your setup and moving around the kit. It also helps to meld the hands and right foot together. Combining the hands and feet will really fine tune your coordination, note placement between hands and feet, and develop fluidity between the hands and feet.

The first part of the PDF deals with just the hands. We take the right and left hand individually and move it all over the kit. Then, we put the hands together using alternated strokes and move that around the kit. It seems simple at first, but you will quickly discover just how awkward moving around the kit can feel. Most people just move around the kit on a fill and can 'make it work' for those 2 beats, or whatever. These exercises will, hopefully, get you comfy on your setup, and possibly even expose some setup issues that may need to be adjusted.

These exercises are presented in a rather "clinical" way, meaning it's very logistical in it's approach and not very musical. As you play through these, try to see the actual visual pattern. We start with the hats and work your way "down" the kit to the lowest tom and then back up. Then it starts at the bottom and works it's way up and back. Then we deal with, what I call 2 "planes", the "front line" (ride, 2 racks, and crash) and "back line" (floor, snare, hats). Once you get the idea and shape of the pattern, you should incorporate dynamics and eventually variation into your routine. Use this simply as a starting point and then come up with your own patterns, like Ashley does in the lesson Module.

The exercises below are written with a 5 piece kit in mind (kick, snare, 3 toms, hats, ride and 1 crash). For those of you that have smaller or larger kits, you will get the idea from this PDF and then you can adapt the routine to fit your setup.

4's Around the Kit

r r r r r r r r r r r r r r r r ...
l l l l l l l l l l l l l l l l ...
r l r l r l r l r l r l r l r l ...

3's Around the Kit

r r r r r r r r r r r r r r r r ...
l l l l l l l l l l l l l l l l ...
r l r l r l r l r l r l r l r l ...

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*Bonus Materials are variations on the exercises covered in each module. It's meant to reinforce concepts and to expound on ideas presented in each module.

2's Around the Kit

1's Around the Kit

Incorporating the Foot

Now we add the foot to the mix and work on single strokes between the hand(s) and foot. Basically we've taken the same patterns used for the hands and put a kick in between every note with the hand(s). Sounds simple but is a difficult challenge to get control of.

Some common issues that arise when adding the foot are: balance problems, lag between hand(s) and foot, awkward stroke/timing in the hands, more Tin-Man-Syndrome issues. The goal is relaxed comfort and control going around the kit with the hands and the combination of hands and kick.

Hands & Foot

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4's Around the Kit

Musical notation for the '4's Around the Kit' exercise, consisting of three staves. The first staff includes a drum set icon and a 4/4 time signature. The notation features a sequence of notes with stems, some marked with 'x' for cymbals. Below the first staff, a rhythmic pattern is indicated by vertical lines and letters:
r l r l
l l r l
l r l r

3's Around the Kit

Musical notation for the '3's Around the Kit' exercise, consisting of two staves. The first staff includes a drum set icon and a 3/8 time signature. The notation features a sequence of notes with stems, some marked with 'x' for cymbals. Below the first staff, a rhythmic pattern is indicated by vertical lines and letters:
r l r
l l r l r l

2's Around the Kit

Musical notation for the '2's Around the Kit' exercise, consisting of two staves. The first staff includes a drum set icon and a common time (C) signature. The notation features a sequence of notes with stems, some marked with 'x' for cymbals. Below the first staff, a rhythmic pattern is indicated by vertical lines and letters:
r l
l l
r l
l r

1's Around the Kit

Musical notation for the '1's Around the Kit' exercise, consisting of two staves. The first staff includes a drum set icon and a common time (C) signature. The notation features a sequence of notes with stems, some marked with 'x' for cymbals. Below the first staff, a rhythmic pattern is indicated by vertical lines and letters:
r l
l l
l r

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Here are the same exercises starting the broken pattern with the foot. Having the kick on the downbeat presents a whole new set of challenges. It's mostly a psychological issue but reversing the hands and foot can make it feel like a completely new exercise. Again, the goal is to feel comfortable at various tempos and sound completely solid.

The same 4 sticking options should be applied here, as well. Eventually you will mix all the stickings up, 'on the fly', in your own creative way. To do that instantaneously, however, requires serious control with the various sticking options at a wide range of tempos. Take your time and please realize that this type of exercise is an ongoing process. Gaining control of this Module and it's concept could take weeks or even months of regular practice. Don't be impatient or get discouraged. Be methodical and steadfast and you just might become a MONSTER!

Foot & Hands

The first staff of music includes a sticking diagram below it:

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r ...  
l ...  
r l ...  
l r ...
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The second and third staves show the same rhythmic pattern on a single staff.

4's Around the Kit

The first staff of music has 'x' marks above the first four notes. The second staff of music has 'x' marks above the last four notes.

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3's Around the Kit

Two staves of musical notation for the '3's Around the Kit' exercise. The first staff is in 6/8 time and contains 12 measures of music. The first three measures feature eighth-note triplets marked with an 'x'. The remaining nine measures consist of eighth-note pairs. The second staff is in 8/8 time and contains 12 measures of music, all consisting of eighth-note pairs.

2's Around the Kit

One staff of musical notation for the '2's Around the Kit' exercise in 6/8 time, containing 12 measures. The first three measures feature eighth-note pairs marked with an 'x'. The remaining nine measures consist of eighth-note pairs.

1's Around the Kit

One staff of musical notation for the '1's Around the Kit' exercise in 6/8 time, containing 12 measures. The first three measures feature quarter notes marked with an 'x'. The remaining nine measures consist of quarter notes.