

4

Developing Rhythm For Rock Grooves



Mixing Combinations of Subdivisions

In our first three lessons we have learned about quarter notes and eighth notes. These are often referred to as **subdivisions**, as they divide the beat.

So far we have used this knowledge to develop our ability to play rock grooves. This lesson develops a more sophisticated understanding of rhythm and helps you create more interesting rock grooves on the bass guitar.

Firstly, let's have a look at a series of exercises that mix quarter notes and eighth notes and see how we get on.

Remember you can use your BassXtractor to slow the exercise down if it is too quick and build the speed up when you become more comfortable.

Lesson Objectives

- Develop our rhythmic understanding by mixing quarter notes and eighth notes.
- Develop control of string crossing by playing quarter notes and eighth notes.
- Develop reading simple **notation** using **subdivisions**.
- Develop left hand fingering technique.

Mixing Subdivisions – Bass Reading Study 1

There are 8 bars in this exercise and you can cycle it around and around if you wish. Count out loud and keep strict time. To help with the note values, the rhythm is played by the band and as always you can use the multimedia files to play along with.

Exercise 1: Bass Reading Study 1

lesson004.ibsdrfrg.01



Playing Mixed Subdivisions as Rock Grooves — Bass Reading Study 2

The next step is to play these new rhythms as part of your groove playing.

We need to do two things:

- Play a bar of simple time and then;
- Play the new rhythms.

The next exercise does exactly that. We have taken the bars from *Exercise 1* and in front of each bar we have put a much simpler rock groove.

Have a good look at the next exercise below and use the media files as usual. I would be tempted to watch and listen carefully to the video whilst following the musical exercise before having a go yourself.

Exercise 2: Bass Reading Study 2

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The exercise consists of 16 measures of bass notation in 4/4 time, presented in pairs of two measures per line. The notation is as follows:

- Measure 1: Simple rock groove (quarter notes: G2, A2, B2, C3).
- Measure 2: Rhythm 1 (quarter notes: G2, A2, B2, C3).
- Measure 3: Simple rock groove (quarter notes: G2, A2, B2, C3).
- Measure 4: Rhythm 2 (quarter notes: G2, A2, B2, C3).
- Measure 5: Simple rock groove (quarter notes: G2, A2, B2, C3).
- Measure 6: Rhythm 3 (quarter notes: G2, A2, B2, C3).
- Measure 7: Simple rock groove (quarter notes: G2, A2, B2, C3).
- Measure 8: Rhythm 4 (quarter notes: G2, A2, B2, C3).
- Measure 9: Simple rock groove (quarter notes: G2, A2, B2, C3).
- Measure 10: Rhythm 5 (quarter notes: G2, A2, B2, C3).
- Measure 11: Simple rock groove (quarter notes: G2, A2, B2, C3).
- Measure 12: Rhythm 6 (quarter notes: G2, A2, B2, C3).
- Measure 13: Simple rock groove (quarter notes: G2, A2, B2, C3).
- Measure 14: Rhythm 7 (quarter notes: G2, A2, B2, C3).
- Measure 15: Simple rock groove (quarter notes: G2, A2, B2, C3).
- Measure 16: Rhythm 8 (quarter notes: G2, A2, B2, C3).

Left Hand Finger Technique using the 3rd finger

So far we have played the notes of **A**, **G**, **C** and **D** using only the 1st (index) finger of our left hand. The next step is to use other fingers of the left hand. This will make it easier to play rock grooves which move around the notes more quickly.

You have played the following exercise before in *Lesson 1*. Now play it using the 3rd finger of your left hand.

Exercise 3: Using the 3rd finger

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Playing an A on the E string using the 3rd finger

Technique Store – using all 4 fingers

Now that you have started to play using the 3rd finger, you need also to be able to play using your 2nd and 4th fingers as well. We will run the same exercise again, but this time using in turn your 1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th fingers, so that you can play using any of your 4 fingers.

Watch our *Technique Store* video so that you can see what you have to do. The same technique is then practised in the remaining four exercises in this lesson, which will mean that you can play all the notes you have learned so far, with any of your 4 fingers.

Video 1: Developing finger technique

lesson004.ibsdrfrg.techstore.01

Numbering of the fingers of the left hand (the fretting hand)



The fingers of the left hand are numbered from 1 to 4, with the index finger being number 1 through to the little finger being number 4. The Thumb has no number and is referred to as the Thumb.

Exercise 4: Playing A

lesson004.ibsdrfrg.04

1st 1st 1st 1st LEFT HAND
 2nd 2nd 2nd 2nd
 3rd 3rd 3rd 3rd
 4th 4th 4th 4th

Playing all notes with all fingers

Now that you can play A with all four fingers you need now to be able to play the 3 notes we have learned so far with all four fingers as well. Use the exercises that follow to practise using all your fingers with each of the notes you know.

Exercise 5: Playing G

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1st 1st 1st 1st LEFT HAND
 2nd 2nd 2nd 2nd
 3rd 3rd 3rd 3rd
 4th 4th 4th 4th

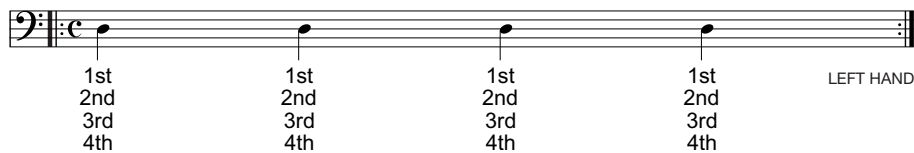
Exercise 6: Playing C

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1st 1st 1st 1st LEFT HAND
 2nd 2nd 2nd 2nd
 3rd 3rd 3rd 3rd
 4th 4th 4th 4th

Exercise 7: Playing D

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How to Practise

The best way to develop your playing is to play your exercises as often as you can. We have all heard the expression that *'Practise makes perfect'*.

The truth is that repetition makes us good at doing something. The reason is that your brain and your body work together remembering how you do something and they use this information to understand when it feels good and when it feels wrong. It is often referred to as **muscle memory** as our body seems to learn the movements.

The more often you practise kicking a ball against a wall, the better you get at it. Accordingly, the more often you go through your bass lesson exercises the better you will become at playing them.

However, always make sure that you are practising them correctly, otherwise you just get good at getting it wrong.

Make sure that you:

- Pay attention to the bass tracks on the media files.
- Practise at slow tempos to begin with so you can check what you are doing.
- Count out loud, so that you know where you are and that you are actually reading what you are playing.

Once you feel that you are getting it right, you can use your midi bass guitar to record your performance and check it back. You can save that file so that you can look back at a later date to see how much you have improved.

Additionally, it is a good idea to play along to your favourite CDs and see if you can play the grooves in time with the songs. Don't worry that you are not playing exactly what the bassist on the track is doing for the moment, just play along and see how you get on.

Remember that you can gradually develop your ability to play faster by increasing the tempo on your BassXtractor. The play-along media files on your BassXtractor can change tempo, unlike your CDs, so that is a good way of building up your speed so that you can eventually play along with the faster tracks on your favourite albums.