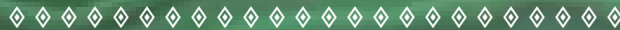


# Tutorial 2E: Embellishments



Welcome! In this tutorial you'll learn how to use:

1. Trills
2. Grace notes, turns, and neighbor tones
3. Repeated notes

Enjoy the learning, and see you at the pines!

Other Level 2 Tutorials

- 2A: More Scales
- 2B: Melodic Shapes
- 2C: Swing Rhythms
- 2D: Three and Four
- 2F: Melodic Development
- 2H: Tune Forms
- 2K: Preparing Concert Material

- ▶ There's a knack to understanding how to embellish your solo melodies. Too little and it's boring; too much and it's annoying. When you use the right embellishments at the right times, your power of expression grows.

## Part 1 – Using Trills

### A) What are embellishments?

\*They are extra notes played quickly that add variety to the melody. The embellishing notes are usually close in pitch to the melody notes.

\*Common types of embellishment in improvisation include trills, grace notes, turns, and neighbor tones.

\*Use embellishments like other expression: occasionally and with subtlety. Some players litter their phrases with so many embellishments that those notes lose their beauty and simply become annoying.

### B) How do I use trills in improvisation?

\*A trill occurs when you alternate rapidly between a note and the note above it. Unlike classical trills, you don't have to resolve your improvised trills. Here are some things you can do to get variety in your trills:

1) Play some trills slower, some faster. Slower trills need to be held out longer; faster trills can be shorter or longer.

2) Accelerate a trill until it's as fast as you can play it, or slow it down until the notes become quarter-note triplets.

3) Trill to a chromatic tone. For example, on a CMa7 chord you can trill from G to Ab, or from D to Eb.

4) Use consecutive trills, such as a new trill on a new pitch, every half note. You can also make trills go up or down chromatically.

5) Crescendo or decrescendo in the middle of trills.

6) Horn players can bend the trilled pitches slightly up or down, for an out-of-key effect. When you end a trill, you don't have to hold out the bottom note, as classical music often does. Instead, you can play the bottom or top note as an eighth-note and continue the contour up or down, or use any other method that works for you.

► **TRY IT – Basic:** Play a line of 8th-notes; hold a trill on the last note. Experiment with accelerating the trill or decelerating the trill to quarter-note triplets. Repeat this in new keys and ranges. **Medium:** Trill to a non-harmonic tone. **Challenge:** Trill several consecutive half-notes at the end.

## Part 1 – Using Trills

### C) What about wide trills?

A wider trill uses an interval of a minor third or more, up to an octave. For brass players, some wider trills end up played as “lip trills,” which are more difficult to do quickly as the interval approaches an octave.

Wider trills are somewhat easier for woodwinds and even easier for keyboards and fretted instruments.

You can also play consecutive wider trills or use any of the suggestions in Part 1.

- **TRY IT** – Repeat the previous Try It but use wider trills.

## Part 2 – Grace Notes, etc.

### A) What is a grace note?

\*It's a quicker note played just before one of the notes in a phrase.

\*The grace note is usually a step away from the following note, as in the first example below. It can also be a wider interval, as in the second example below:



\*Some points to remember about grace notes:

- You should play the grace note somewhat softer than the note that follows it.
- A grace note is usually played from above the following note, but occasionally you can play one from below.
- Grace notes are harder to insert into fast passages; they end up sounding like eighth-note triplets amid fast eighth-notes.

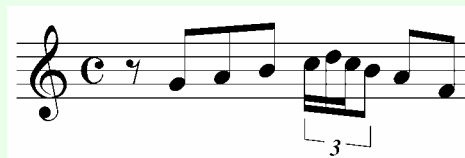
## (Part 2 – Grace Notes, etc.)

\*Wind players and vocalists can also perform the grace note as a muted sound, such as half-valved, half-keyed, or half-voiced.

- ▶ **TRY IT** – Write a phrase, then add a few stepwise grace notes to it in different spots. Then use wider-interval grace notes.

### B) What are turns, and how do I use them?

\*A *turn* sounds like two stepwise grace notes played together. To create a turn, you play a given note on its beat, add a note just above it, and play the first note again, all within the space that the given note would take. This changes an eighth-note into three triplet sixteenths:



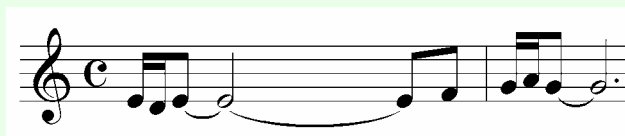
- ▶ **TRY IT** – Basic: Create and write a phrase, then add a few turns in different spots. Medium: Play a flexible scale, adding a turn every few notes.

### B) What are neighbor tones?

A neighbor tone is a note that's a step above or below your downbeat target note. You play it quickly, then you return to the target note. The example below shows a lower neighbor tone (L) and an upper neighbor tone (U).

L

U



- ▶ **TRY IT** – Create and write a phrase, then add upper and lower neighbor tones.

## Part 3 – Repeated Notes

### A) How can I best use repeated notes?



\*Using repeated notes is a concept that's often misunderstood. Some players overdo it, with too

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many repeated pitches – especially in slower latin tunes and ballads. Other players totally avoid them, thinking every pitch *must* be a new one. Using repeated pitches wisely can add interesting expression to your solo and help slow the up-and-down motion of contours.

- Focus more on color tones for repeated pitches.
- With a larger number of repeated pitches, slow them down or speed them up.
- Avoid single repeated pitches that don't add interest to the solo.
- Vary the articulations or accents of the repeated notes.
- Use effects with the repeated pitches, such as clusters, bends, half-sounds, etc. (see Chapter 4C).

See also the description of repeated pitches in *Flattening Contours* in Tutorial 2B: *Melodic Shapes*.

- ▶ **TRY IT** – Play a flexible scale, using the suggestions above to insert repeated pitches every so often.

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That's all for Tutorial 2E!

There is no Quiz for this tutorial.