

Tutorial 5C: Rhythmic Freedom, Part 1

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

1. Step through rhythms, slower or faster
2. Use shifted triplet groups
3. Use unusual triplet groups

Enjoy the learning!

Other Tutorials

- 5A: Playing Outside, Part 1
- 5B: Playing Outside, Part 2
- 5D: Rhythmic Freedom, Part 2
- 5E: Rhythmic Pulses
- 5H: The Matrix

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- ▶ Just as you learned about playing outside the key, there are also ways you can play “outside the rhythm.” These rhythmic tools give you a good start at stretching your rhythmic abilities for solo ideas.

Part 1 – Stepping through Rhythms

*An interesting technique that builds intensity is to make your rhythms *appear* gradually faster or slower *without* changing the tempo. For example, if you play a bar of quarter-note triplets followed by a bar of eighth-notes, the rhythm appears to speed up slightly between the first and second bars. The trick is to choose rhythms that are *gradually* faster or slower, so the transition is smooth.

A) How do step through rhythms, slow to fast?

*The example below starts with quarter-notes and gradually shifts through faster rhythms until reaching sixteenth-notes (like double-time eighth-notes).



*You can start at any point in the example above and go forward, choosing your own pitches and playing more notes on each rhythm type. Remember to keep the *tempo* absolutely steady as you change the rhythms.

- ▶ **TRY IT – Basic:** Write a 2-bar melody; start with quarter-note triplets and end with 16ths, slower-to-faster rhythms. **Medium:** Write a 4-bar melody; start with half-notes and end with 16ths, slower-to-faster rhythms.

B) How do step through rhythms, fast to slow?

*You can also make your rhythms gradually appear slower without changing the tempo. The example below is basically the reverse of the slower-to-faster example.

*You can start at any point in the example below and go forward, choosing your own pitches and playing more notes on each rhythm type.



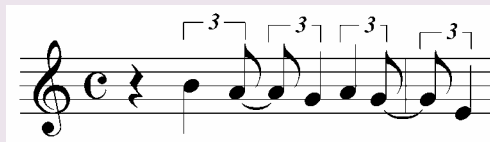
- ▶ **TRY IT – Basic:** Write a 2-bar melody; start with 16th-notes, end with quarter-note triplets. **Medium:** Write a 4-bar melody; start with 16th-notes, end with half-notes.

Part 2 - Using Shifted Triplets

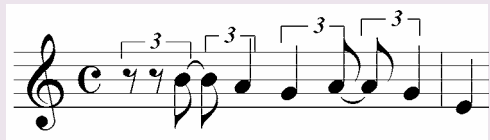
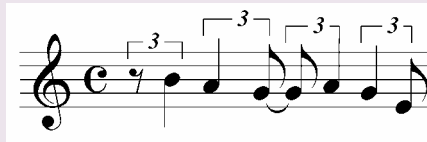
A) How do I play shifted triplets?

*An interesting way to play triplets is to shift them slightly so they start a little later than usual. The effect can be surprising, but the notes need to be played securely. Notice that ties are used to write some of the shifted triplet values. The basic types of shifted triplets are:

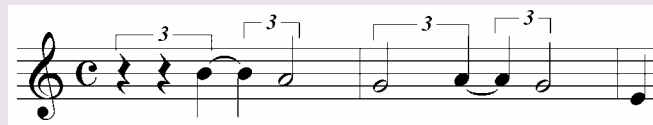
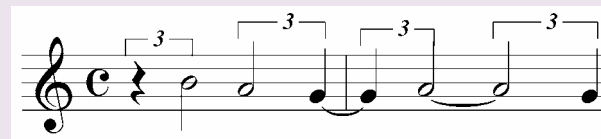
- Quarter-note triplets starting on beat 2 or 4



- Quarter-note triplets shifted by 1 or two 8th-note triplets



- Half-note triplets shifted by one or two quarter-note triplets (for faster tempos)



- A four-note bracket shifted in 3/4 time



- *You can also shift the bracketed group by 3 eighth-rests, instead of 1 8th-rest, as in the example below.



3

*And you can alternate shifted brackets with regular 4-note brackets in 3/4:

----- 4 ----- 4 -----



*Practice these shifted triplets slowly at first. Then practice switching back and forth between regular triplets and shifted triplets.

- ▶ **TRY IT** – Basic: Play six regular quarter-note triplets, then six shifted ones. Medium: Use half-note triplets. Challenge: Use four-note bracket notes in 3/4.

Part 3 – Unusual Triplet Groups

A) How do I play unusual triplet groups?

*Mixing quarter-note triplets, half-note-triplets, and 8th-note triplets makes some unusual triplet groups. There are some basic keys to creating unusual triplets:

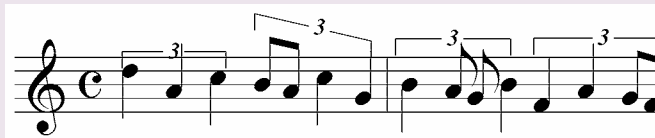
- Create a triplet group that is *longer* or *shorter* than the typical group (3 or 6), such as 4 quarters, 4 half-notes, 2 half-notes, etc.

- Mix in some *shorter* rhythmic values, such as 8th-note triplets inside a quarter-note triplet group, or quarter or 8th-note triplets inside a half-note triplet group. These shorter values act as rhythmic “markers” to separate the repetitions of the group.

- Use sequences, expanding intervals, or other techniques to strengthen the repetition of the groups.

*Below are rhythms for some sample “unusual” triplet groups, followed by music examples. Note the markers in each case.

===== == ===== == ===== ==



===== ===== =====



(Part 3 – Unusual Triplet Groups)

*You can get a lot of interesting results by taking a stream of 4 or 8 quarter-note triplets and inserting rests in different spots. The Wynton Marsalis quartet did this very well on their Standard Time, Volume 1 CD. For example:

a)  (or shift the rest)

b)  (or shift the notes)

c)  (or shift the note)

d) 

(Marsalis CD, “The Song is You” 1:43-1:54)

e) 

f) 

g) 

*Here are a few additional rhythms, based on 5, that you can repeat to create unusual triplet groups:



*There are many other combinations of triplets and rests; experiment with them and find ones that interest you. In Tutorial 5D you'll work with groups of 5 and 7 triplets.

- ▶ **TRY IT** – Basic: Play a passage and use one of the unusual triplet groups described above. Medium: Use two different triplet groups. Challenge: Create a new unusual triplet group, not listed above; play it in a passage. Practice Pages

That's all for Tutorial 5C!

There is no Quiz for this Tutorial.