

Tutorial 1D: Rhythmic Variety



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

1. Find and emphasize offbeats in solos
2. Mix offbeats and downbeats effectively
3. Use triplets and other interesting rhythms
4. Use rhythmic combinations and the VPM

Enjoy the learning – watch for waves ...

Other Level 1 Tutorials

- 1A: Virtual Practice
- 1B: Chords and Scales
- 1C: Melodic Color
- 1E: Flexible Scale Levels
- 1F: Using Expression
- 1G: Develop Motifs/Phrases
- 1J: Chords, Keys, Progressions

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- ▶ Like melodic color, rhythmic variety in your solo ideas puts you in a position to create interesting shapes & melodies. There are many great rhythmic variations you can use without getting complicated – they're all at your fingertips!

Part 1 ~ Find & Emphasize Offbeats

A) What are the offbeats to emphasize?

*In 4/4 time, the offbeat quarter-note beats are 2 and 4. Offbeat eighth-notes are *between* the quarter-note beats. With triplets, the offbeat notes are the second and third notes of each triplet group.



B) How do I emphasize them?



*Rest just before the offbeat you want to emphasize.



*Or, tie the offbeat into the next downbeat. This eliminates the attack on the next downbeat so the offbeat stands out more.



- **TRY IT – Basic:** Write or play a two-measure melody with quarter-rests on beat 1 or 3 in each bar. Do this again with 8th-rests on 1, 2, 3, or 4. **Medium:** Use tied 8ths from “4-and” into 1, “1-and” into 2, “2-and” into 3, or “3-and” into 4. **Challenge:** Use ties to downbeats instead of rests.

C) What are consecutive offbeat half-notes?

*Half-notes (tied quarters) on beats 2 & 4, or 1½ and 3½.



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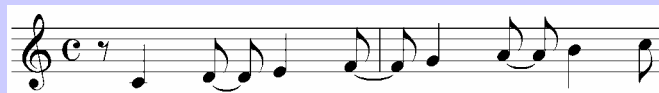
(Part 1 – Finding & Emphasizing Offbeats)



- ▶ **TRY IT – Basic:** Play all the color intervals (up skips) in the key of C. **Medium:** Do the same with down skips. **Challenge:** Do up skips in all keys in the circle of 4ths.

- D) What are consecutive offbeat quarter-notes?

*Quarter-note values (tied 8th-notes) *between* beats.



- ▶ **TRY IT – Basic:** On a flexible major scale, at quarter-note = 120, play one downbeat eighth-note, then play consecutive offbeat quarters. **Medium** **Challenge**

Part 2 – Mixing Downbeats & Offbeats

*When you play several consecutive offbeats and then return to downbeats, those downbeats sound more interesting. Switching downbeats and offbeats is a powerful improvisation tool.

- A) How do I shift from downbeats to offbeats?

*Add a note that's *half the value* of the consecutive notes. If the offbeats are half-notes, add a quarter-note; if the offbeats are quarter-notes, add an 8th-note.



- B) How do I shift back to downbeats?

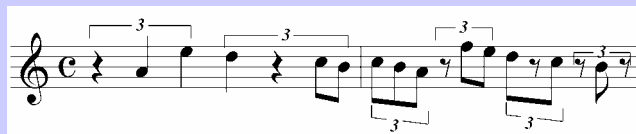
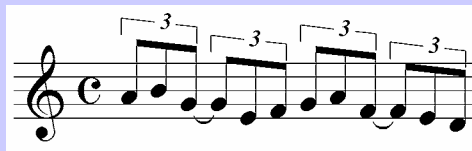
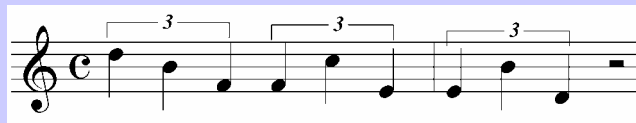
*The same way; add a single half-value note, as in the example above.

- ▶ **TRY IT – Basic:** On any flexible major scale, MM = 120, play a downbeat quarter, then mix offbeats and downbeats. **Practice Pages**

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D) How do I get more variety with triplets?

*Use tied triplets that emphasize offbeats. These rhythms take practice to play smoothly, but they're well worth the effort to become skilled with them.



▶ **TRY IT – Basic:** Same as the Try It for Item D; add a few ties to triplets and a few triplet rests. **Medium**

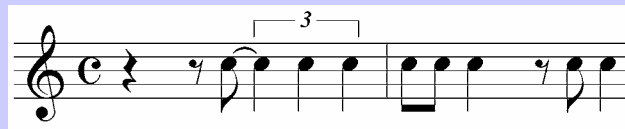
Part 4 – Using Rhythmic Combinations

A) What are some interesting rhythm combinations?

*When you combine these rhythms with flexible scales, you can create very interesting melody lines.

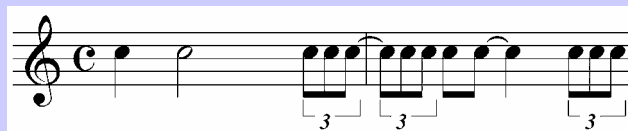
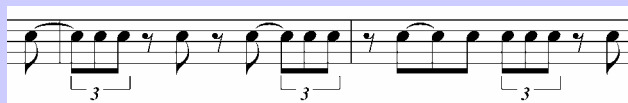
Interesting rhythms discussed in this chapter: **MORE**

- Half-notes (beats 2 and 4)
- Offbeat 8ths tied to dotted quarters (before beats 1 and 3)
- Offbeat quarter-notes (between the beats)
- 8th-notes and dotted quarters
- Quarter-note triplets, also with ties and rests
- Eighth-note triplets, also with ties and rests



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(Part 4 – Using Rhythmic Combinations)



- **TRY IT – Basic:** Write several 2-bar examples that combine any of these: offbeat half-notes, offbeat quarters, offbeat eighths tied to dotted quarters, mixed eighths and dotted quarters, or triplets.
- Medium:** Play the examples you wrote in a flexible scale.


B) What is the Virtual Practice Method for rhythms?

- 1 In your mind's eye, *see* a one-bar rhythm with offbeats, ties, triplets, etc. It's not necessary to see every note and mark, but you should have the basic picture firmly in mind.
- 2 Tap a pulse of constant quarters (foot or finger) at a slow-to-medium tempo.
- 3 Hear a percussion group (latin) or a rhythm section (swing) in the background. Hear them in your mind for each bar.
- 4 As you hear the background and tap along, sing or hum the rhythm once perfectly (one repeated pitch).
- 5 Repeat the rhythm and the background, gradually speeding up the taps.
- 6 Add your own pitches to the rhythm; vary the pitches each time you repeat the rhythm.
- 7 Once you're comfortable with the rhythm, change to a new one or try a 2-bar rhythm.

That's all for Tutorial 1D!

Next is the Quiz –to get started, go to the next page.

QUIZ - 1D: Rhythmic Variety

Click on the letter for the best answer for each question. You'll hear a C Major arpeggio if you're right. If you miss 2 or less, you pass the Tutorial!
Or, click **Back**  to review the Tutorial before taking the Quiz.

- 1) Which is an offbeat location for quarter-notes in 4/4?
A) 1 B) 2 C) 3 D) they all are
- 2) Consecutive offbeats can use:
A) quarter-notes B) half-notes C) tied eighth-notes
D) all of these
- 3) Which is not a way to emphasize offbeats?
A) play them consecutively B) after a rest C) tie them into downbeats D) use them as eighth-notes in a group
- 4) You shift from consecutive offbeat quarters to downbeat quarters by inserting:
A) a quarter-rest B) a quarter-note C) an 8th-note
D) two eighth-notes
- 5) Which of these is the most interesting rhythm combination?
A) offbeat half-notes B) offbeat 8th-notes C) downbeat quarter-notes D) consecutive half-notes
- 6) Which of these is the least interesting rhythm combination?
A) quarter-note triplets B) half-notes tied to 8ths C) consecutive 8ths D) offbeat 8ths tied to dotted quarters
- 7) What do you combine with triplets to make them more interesting?
A) ties B) rests C) both of these D) neither of these
- 8) In Virtual Practice for Rhythms, which comes last?
A) add pitches B) hear a rhythm section C) tap a pulse D) speed up the pulse



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