

ODD FEELINGS

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Sixteenth-Note Meters

You've developed enough understanding of odd meters at this point that we can move into meters with a sixteenth-note base. Obviously, when switching into sixteenth-based meters, the pulse changes as compared to quarter- or eighth-note based meters. Because the sixteenths have a shorter duration and go by quicker, it's necessary to be that much more focused on the pulse.

The pulse of these grooves can be confusing at first, but as always, careful counting will get you off on the right path to mastering them. Sixteenth-note based meters show up in modern progressive music, so it's best to have some grasp of them. Let's look at the counting system for these odd rhythms. Good luck!

Counting Exercise

Just as we did with quarter in eighth notes, here we will apply the same counting system to help understand what happens to the pulse when playing odd rhythms with 16th notes. The "beat shift" in these time signatures is more pronounced than what we have previously seen. Start a comfortable speed, count out loud, and repeat each measure four times.

The image shows three staves of musical notation for a counting exercise. Each staff contains four measures of music, with time signatures changing every two measures. The notes are represented by 'x' marks on a staff, indicating sixteenth notes. Above each group of notes are numbers 1 through the total number of notes in that group, indicating the count. The time signatures and note counts are as follows:

- Staff 1: 4/16 (4 notes), 3/16 (4 notes), 5/16 (3 notes), 7/16 (3 notes)
- Staff 2: 5/16 (5 notes), 6/16 (6 notes), 7/16 (7 notes), 8/16 (8 notes), 9/16 (9 notes)
- Staff 3: 9/16 (9 notes), 10/16 (10 notes), 11/16 (11 notes)

Can you hear the shift in these different groups of 16th notes? It is very interesting, even though at the beginning it might seem uncomfortable. Let's discuss this rhythmic shift.

Sixteenth-Note Shift Effect

This very simple exercise will help us to understand what happens to the pulse when we use odd rhythms with a 16th-note base. The bass drum will play on the metronome pulse (quarter notes), while the hi-hat accents every 5 16th notes (just as if this were a measure of 5/16). Try this slowly.

The image shows a single staff of musical notation for the sixteenth-note shift effect exercise. It consists of five measures. The time signature is 4/4. The notes are represented by 'x' marks on a staff, indicating sixteenth notes. Above each group of notes are numbers 1 through the total number of notes in that group, indicating the count. The notes are grouped as follows:

- Measure 1: 1 2 3 4 5
- Measure 2: 1 2 3 4 5
- Measure 3: 1 2 3 4 5
- Measure 4: 1 2 3 4 5
- Measure 5: 1 2 3 4 5

Is it clear what is happening? The hi-hat is playing every five 16th notes, and the bass drum is playing every four 16th notes. This particular pattern takes five measures to resolve so that the accents occur together again on

“1.” In most 16th-based meters, there is a grouping like this that must be felt, although it will not always relate back to an underlying quarter note.

How do we use the metronome in odd rhythms with 16th notes? That is a good question. It is difficult practicing this chapter using the metronome on a quarter note pulse, so my advice is try something like this (using 5/16 as an example). Each metronome beats stands for a 16th note. So your metronome to accent every five notes (most newer metronomes and metronome apps can do this).

The image shows two staves of music. The top staff is labeled 'DRUMSET' and has a 5/16 time signature. It contains five eighth notes followed by a quarter note. The bottom staff is labeled 'METRONOME' and also has a 5/16 time signature. It contains five eighth notes, with an accent mark (>) over the first one, indicating a 5-beat pulse.

Once you understand this exercise, shut down the metronome and play freely. You should have internalized a sense of the five note group from playing with the metronome. Welcome to a new world of challenges!

Counting System in 5/16

In odd time signatures with 16th notes, having precise counting is important. Counting well ultimately means having a relaxed groove.

We could count 5/16 like this:

The image shows a single staff of music with a 5/16 time signature. It contains five eighth notes, each with a number above it: 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.

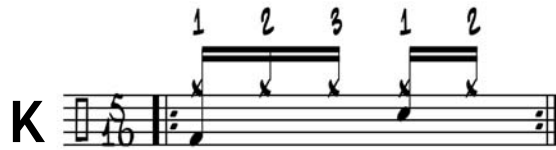
But, since 5/16 is usually faster in execution/tempo, this (3+2) is better:

The image shows a single staff of music with a 5/16 time signature. It contains two groups of notes. The first group consists of three eighth notes with numbers 1, 2, and 3 above them. The second group consists of two eighth notes with numbers 1 and 2 above them.

Different possibilities include 2+3, 3+2, 1+4, or 4+1. There are twelve example grooves to try. Start slowly and remember to count!

Grooves in 5/16

5/16 counted "3 + 2"

K 

1 

2 

3 

4 

5 



MP3

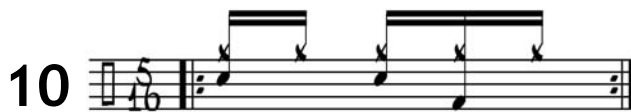
6 

5/16 counted "2 + 3"

7 

8 

9 

10 

11 

12 



MP3



13 

Counting System in 7/16

Grooves in 7/16 are very musical and creative (and you'll notice that 3/16 is also present in its subdivisions). This groove is widely used in progressive and fusion music. Because of the rhythmic "shift" it contains, we can create many interesting beats. Let's explore the counting system for 7/16.

The more 16th notes we have, the more potential difficulty lies in counting without losing our place or losing the feel. Once again, we will notice that counting every note in this time signature might not be so comfortable:



Remember that 7/16 is different from 7/8 because the duration of the notes is smaller, therefore the music will go by much quicker. For this reason, try to count it this way (4+3):



I think you'll agree this is much more relaxed. Possible accounting systems for 7/16 are 4+3, 3+4, 3+2+2, 2+3+2, 2+2+3, 5+2, 2+5, or 3+3+1. Once again we will check out 12 example grooves.

Count out loud.

Play a comfortable speed.

Don't forget to shut down your mobile phone!

Grooves in 7/16

7/16 counted "4 + 3"

L 

1 

2 

3 



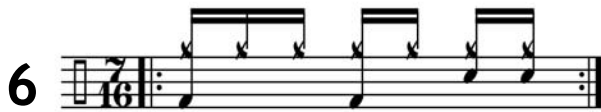
MP3

4 

L L L L

7/16 counted "3 + 2 + 2"

5 

6 

7 

8 



MP3



9 


R R L L

Grooves in 7/16

7/16 counted "3 + 4"

10 

11 

12 

13 

14 

L R L L



MP3