



(3) 16th-notes, 2nd partial

Musical notation for exercise (3) in 15/16 time, consisting of four staves of 16th-note patterns. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a 15/16 time signature. The notation includes various rhythmic values such as quarter notes, eighth notes, and sixteenth notes, with some notes beamed together. The second and third staves continue the rhythmic patterns, and the fourth staff concludes the exercise with a double bar line.

(4) 16th-notes within each quarter-note

Musical notation for exercise (4) in 15/16 time, consisting of four staves of 16th-note patterns. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a 15/16 time signature. The notation features quarter notes, each containing a beamed sixteenth-note pair, and other rhythmic values. The second and third staves continue the rhythmic patterns, and the fourth staff concludes the exercise with a double bar line.

## Practice Tips

The above rhythms are written in their most basic form. Once the four sets of rhythms are comfortable, adding additional musical elements - rests, accents, rudimental ornamentations, orchestration, etc. - is a logical next step. Whatever element you add, maintain its position throughout each variation. This will allow you to become aurally and technically familiar with the new sound.

Example:

The example shows two lines of musical notation in 15/16 time. The first line contains four measures. Each measure has a group of four 16th notes with an accent (>) on the 4th partial. The notes are: quarter note, eighth note, dotted eighth note, and quarter note. The second line continues the pattern with 'etc.' at the end.

Notice that though the added element is an accent on the 4th partial of a group of 16th-notes, when the variation occurs on “beat 2” - the dotted-8th-note of the bar - the accent appears on the 3rd partial of that beat of three 16th-notes. How you adjust your added element - adjustment will not always be needed - to compensate for the three 16th-notes of “beat 2” is up to you. Make a decision and be consistent. Alternatively, you can ignore playing variations on beat 2, opting instead to always play the same sound each time, for example:

The example shows two lines of musical notation in 15/16 time. The first line contains four measures. Each measure has a group of four 16th notes with an accent (>) on the 4th partial. The notes are: quarter note, eighth note, dotted eighth note, and quarter note. The second line continues the pattern with 'etc.' at the end.

The second beat, being one 16th-note shorter than the others, is often initially heard as a “hiccup” and as a consequence can be hard to deal with accurately. By choosing to always deal with that segment of the core rhythm in the same way, you can quickly develop familiarity and stability. Once a single sound has become comfortable over beat 2, choose a second. By the time you have developed consistency with even just two or three sounds, you will find yourself able to move through the beat with relative ease.

## Counting

When learning this core rhythm's sound from scratch - without much prior experience dealing with various rhythmic groupings - it can be helpful to count the partials of each beat. You can count these partials in many ways: "1 2 3 4 1 2 3 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4," "1 e & a 2 & a 3 e & a 4 e & a," or using any other vocal representation that you find comfortable. I would recommend trying some basic South Indian Konnakol syllables; their percussive quality allows for a certain clarity and precision. For this core rhythm some simple syllables would be "ta-ke-di-mi ta-ki-da ta-ke-di-mi ta-ke-jha-nu."<sup>1</sup> Whatever method you use for counting, be clear and consistent.

When first counting, accent the "1" of each grouping, with a slightly stronger accent on the "1" of beat 1. This accenting need not be overly dramatic; the point of it is to hear each "1" as a clear beat within the bar, with all other partials leading into and from each beat. If you are practicing very slowly (around quarter note = 30-40bpm) it may be difficult to hear each beat as a cohesive unit. You might find 50bpm-70bpm a good range to begin.

Thank you for reading and happy practicing!

If you have any questions about this material, please email them to [kevinjcheli@gmail.com](mailto:kevinjcheli@gmail.com).

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<sup>1</sup> Using these syllables serves as a cursory introduction to a deep and nuanced system of vocal percussion. If inclined to explore South Indian rhythm further, there are many resources online; for a comprehensive text you can try Rafael Reina's Applying Karnatic Rhythmical Techniques to Western Music (Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2015).