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# FL STUDIO MUSIC PRODUCTION

A beginners guide to  
making beats



## **Modern Hip-Hop**

For the sake of having an easy learning experience, this book will teach you the fundamentals of making beats through the teaching of Modern Hip-Hop Beats

Modern Hip-Hop drum patterns and melodies can be much easier to read due to the notes being more spread out in the channel rack and piano roll

Drum pattern templates relating to other genres are available in unit 3

### **BPM**

Keep your **Tempo at 130 BPM** for the remainder of this book



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## **The Next Few Pages**

The next few pages are resources to consider for a better learning experience.

We've provided important changes and common accidents to be aware of.

You should come back to the **piano roll** changes once you're familiar with the software and have reached the unit where it's required.

**ENJOY!**

# IMPORTANT!

## 1st

If you are a beginner, please make sure your **metronome is “on”**.

This will make your learning experience easier

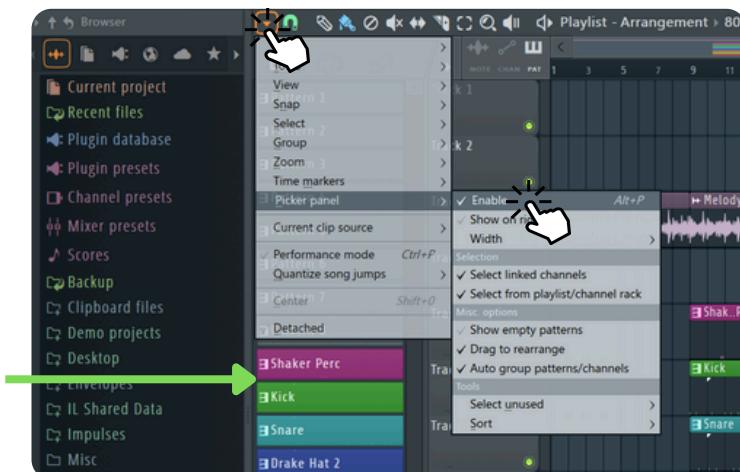


## 2nd

To make more space in your playlist disable **“Picker Panel”** by going through settings or using the shortcut

**ALT + P**

**Picker  
Panel**



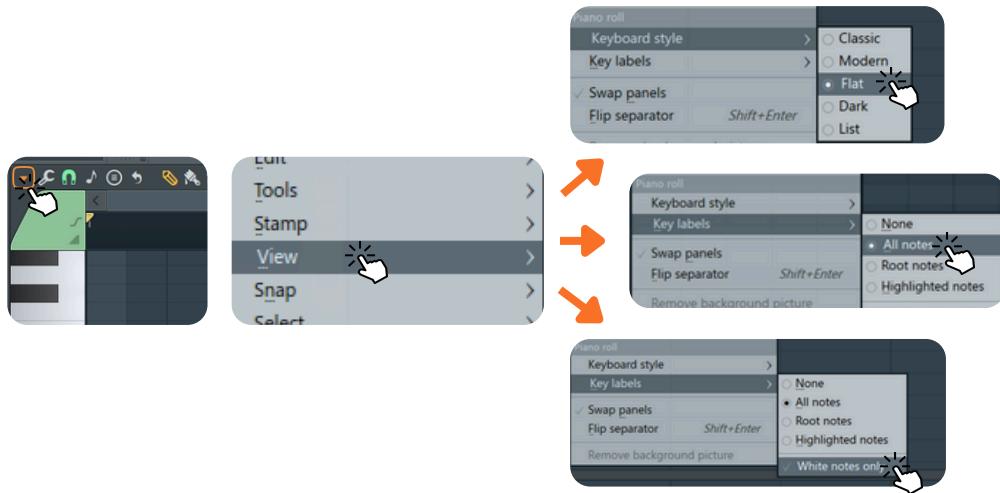
# Piano Roll Changes

These piano roll changes are extremely crucial, this will make your experience much easier

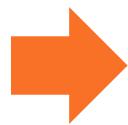
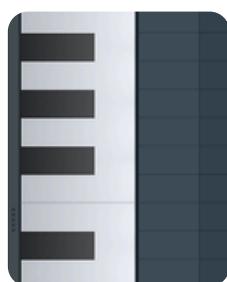
## 1st

To make the Piano Roll easier to read, select **Options**, then “**View**”, and follow these 3 steps;

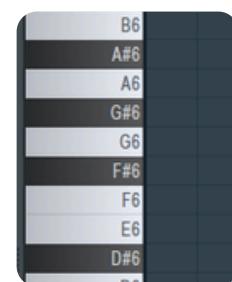
- “Keyboard Style” > “Flat”
- “Key Labels” > “All Notes” >
- “Key Labels” > Unselect “White Notes Only”



## Before

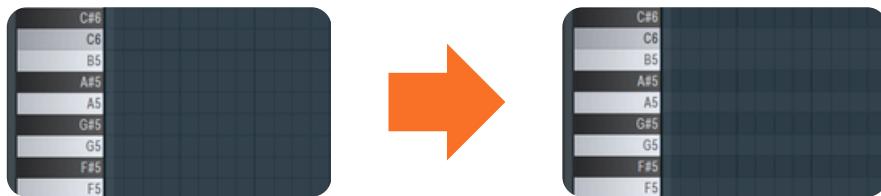


## After



## 2nd

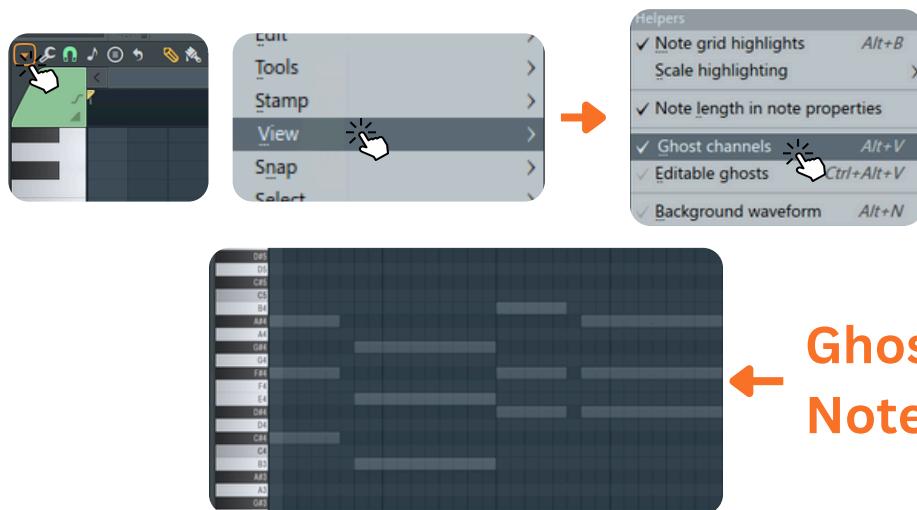
Another Piano Roll trick is to use the shortcut **ALT + B** for guidance on black notes.



## 3rd

This last piano roll change is very **important**. This will add ghost notes, which allows you to see other instrument notes within the same pattern, making it easier to stay within scale.

**“Options” > “View” > enable “Ghost Channels”**

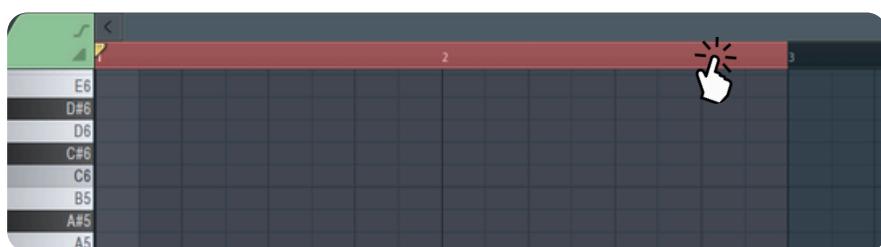


## Common Accidents

Before you begin your journey of making beats, we've provided some common accidents you may encounter when learning about FL Studio. please refer back to these pages if you cant fix a mistake

### 1st

- If you accidentally highlight your piano roll or playlist in red, this will cause your beat to **repeat** inside of the red highlight
- To fix this, just **double click** on the red line that is highlighting the numbers above your pattern



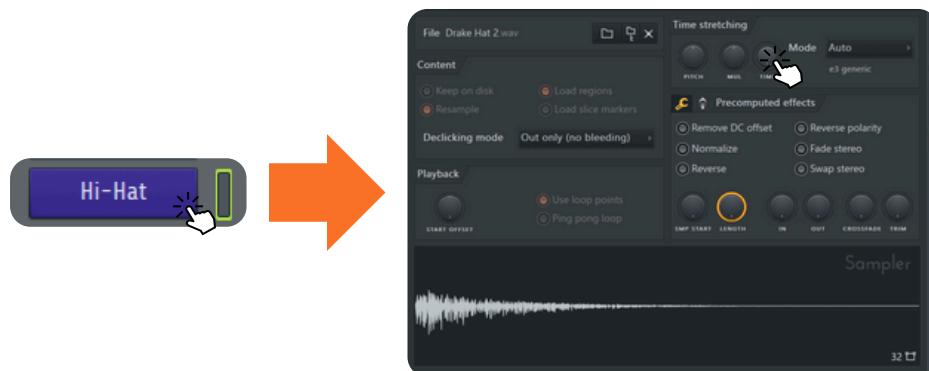
## 2nd

### Instrument Only Playing One Note

- If your instrument is **not changing pitch** in the piano roll and only playing one note



- Go to the instruments properties and turn the **“Time”** knob down



- You will notice the wav file change at the bottom

### 3rd

- If you accidentally drag and drop an instrument into the piano roll, you will need to use the shortcut **ALT + N** to get rid of the waveform that sits in the back



### 4th

- If your instrument is **repeating itself** and playing double notes in the channel rack, go to the instruments properties and turn off “**Use Loop Points**”



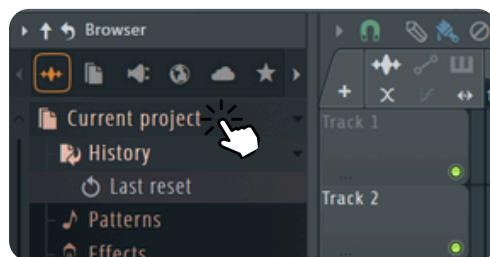
## 5th

- If you accidentally use the **automatic zoom** shortcut and find that the piano notes or playlist track on the left are too large
- You can use the shortcut **CRTL + RIGHT-CLICK**
- Or click and hold on the square button underneath the Piano Roll/Playlist exit (x)



## 6th

You should know where your **history tab** is located incase you accidentally undo something you meant to keep



## UNIT 1

# Learning Keyboard Shortcuts & Software Layout



## **What You Will Learn**

In this unit you will learn the foundation required  
for a smooth journey with FL Studio

### **By the end of the unit, you will know;**

- **(1.1)** Keyboard Hand-Positioning ..... 23-26
- **(1.2)** Keyboard Shortcuts ..... 27-34
- **(1.3)** Software Layout ..... 27-34

## 1.1

### **Keyboard Hand-Positioning**



## Keyboard Hand-Positioning

To make music at an efficient speed you must first know the hand-positioning.

Here's what you do at all times:

- Pinky finger on “**CTRL**”
- Index finger on “**SPACE BAR**”





1.2

## Keyboard Shortcuts



## Main Keyboard Shortcuts

These are the main shortcuts used throughout the book

- **Zoom in/out** → Ctrl + Mouse Scroll
- **Automatic Zoom in (don't use this)** → Ctrl + Right-Click
- **Undo Mistake** → Ctrl + Z
- **Drag Highlight** → Ctrl + Left Click
- **Click Highlight** → Ctrl + Shift + Left-Click
- **Copy** → Ctrl + C
- **Paste** → Ctrl + V
- **Note Delete** → Right-Click
- **Putting Instrument In Mixer** → Ctrl + L
- **Pencil tool** → Alt + P
- **Slice Tool** → Alt + C
- **Paint Brush Tool** → Alt + B
- **"Rename/Colour" Instrument** → Shift + Left-Click
- **Play/Pause** → Spacebar
- **Piano Roll Note Chopper** → Alt + U
- **Octave Shift** → Ctrl + Up or Down Key

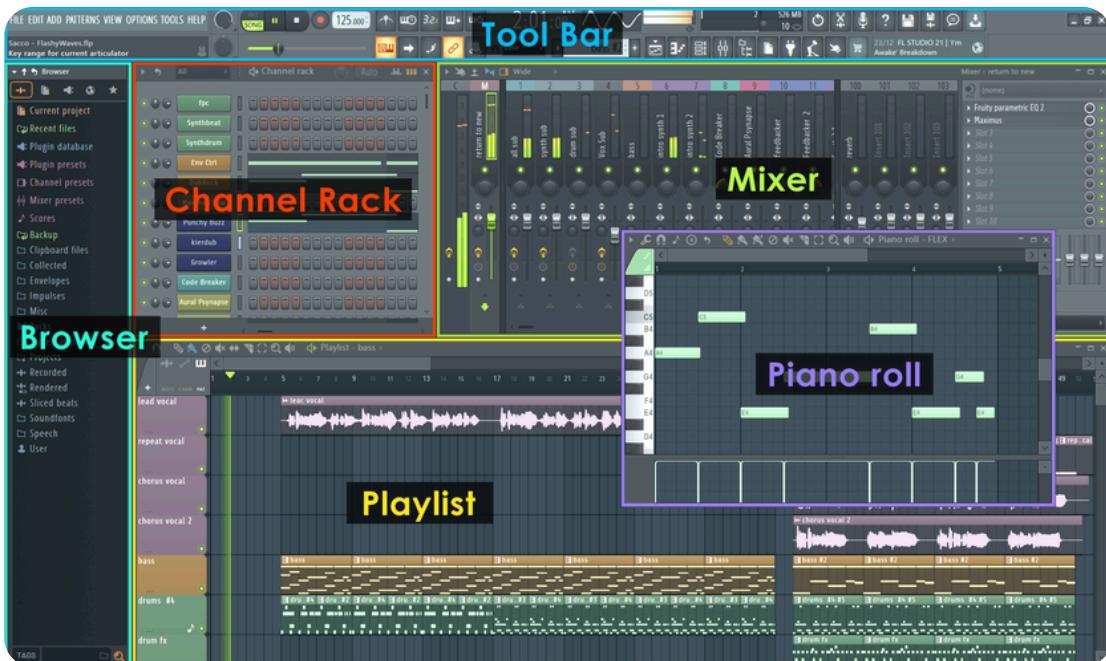
1.3

## Software Layout



## Software Layout

- **Browser:** Where your instruments are located
- **Channel Rack:** Where you place your instruments to create Drum & Melody patterns
- **Piano Roll:** This is where you create melodies for your music
- **Mixer:** where you balance the volume of your instruments
- **Playlist:** Where you create your musical compositions (songs)
- **Tool Bar:** Gives you access to the features above



## **UNIT 2**

### **Basic Drum Patterns**



## What You Will Learn

In this unit, you will learn how to create a basic **drum patterns** in the **channel rack**

### By the end of the unit, you will know;

- (2.1) How to use the Channel Rack and Stay Organized ..... 23-26
- (2.2) Drum Pattern Instruments & How to Use Them ..... 27-34
- (2.3) Tempos & Templates of Different Genres ..... 27-34

### Unit 2 Shortcuts

- **Undo Mistake** → Ctrl + Z
- **Note Delete** → Right-Click
- “**Rename/Colour**” **instrument** → Shift + Left Click
- **Play/Pause** → Space Bar



## **2.1**

### **How to Use The Channel Rack & Stay Organized**



## !(Before You Begin) !

### Shorten The Browser

- Select “All” to open the Browser
- Then, make it smaller to give space for the rest of the software tools by dragging it to the left



## The Channel Rack

The channel rack is where you place your sounds & instruments to create your drum/melody patterns.

This unit will focus on drum patterns first

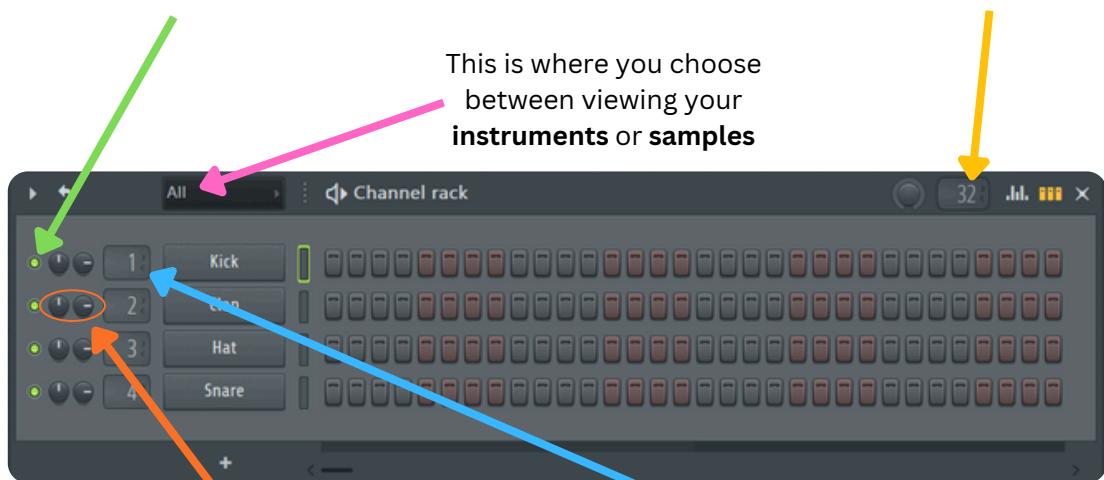


This is the **mute button**, when the green button is off then the instrument is muted

- To mute all instruments except one, use the shortcut; **CTRL + LEFT-CLICK**

This is where you set your “**beats per bar**”, for this unit you will set this to 32 by using the scroll on your mouse.

- Professionals set this to 64**



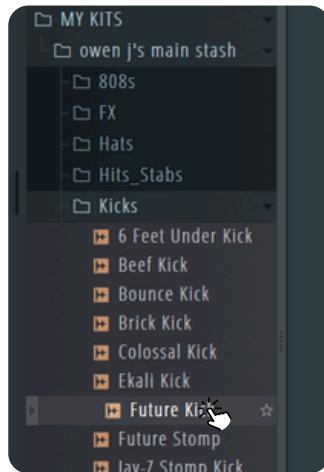
- The left nob is your channel panning which makes the sound go to the left or right of your headphones (**Do Not Touch**)
- The right nob is the instrument volume (**Do Not Touch**)

This is the **mixer insert** that each instrument is assigned to

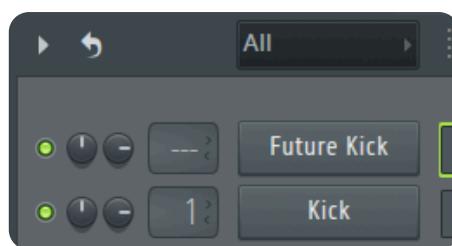
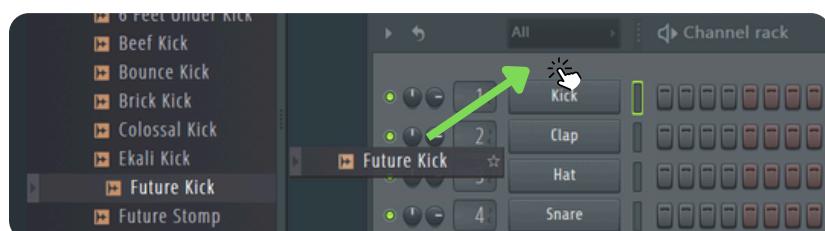
- It's better to manually send them to the mixer rather than using this
- Use shortcut “**ALT + M**” to get rid of it

## The Channel Rack

To choose your specific instrument,  
**left click on** each one to hear a **preview**



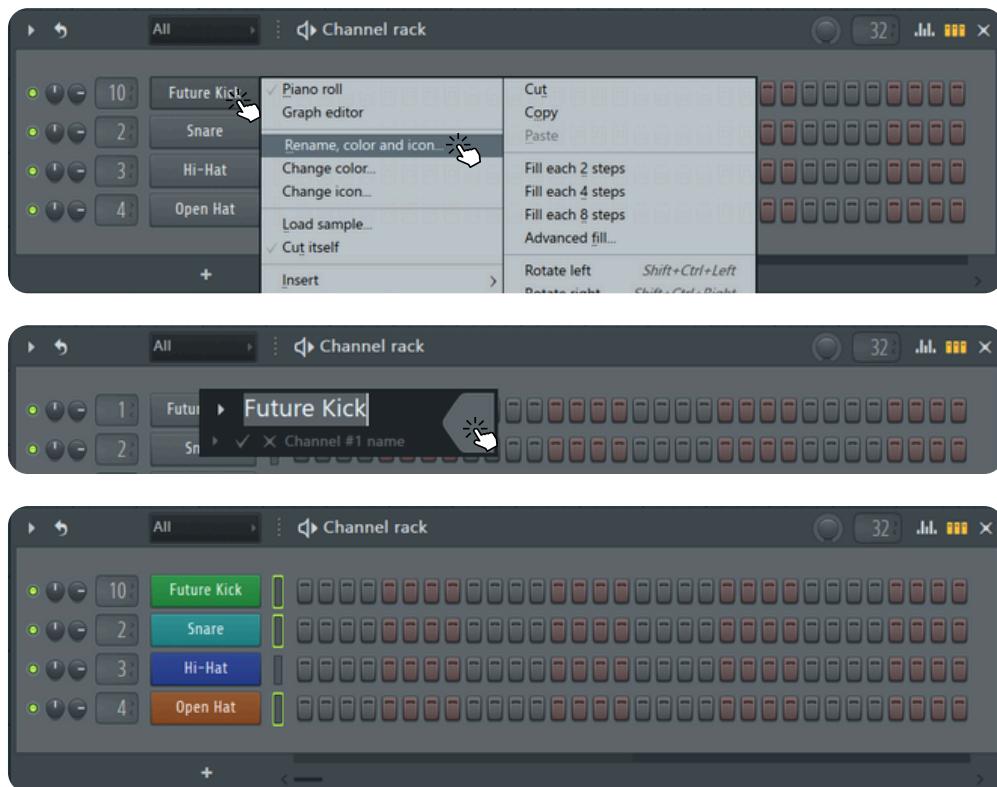
Then, drag it above other instruments.  
Make sure you **don't** place it on top of another  
instrument (**you cant undo that mistake**)



## Channel Rack Colour Organization

Colour code your instruments to make things easier to look at.

- To do this, simply **right-click** on the instrument and select “Rename/Colour”, then click on the grey tab
- The shortcut is; **SHIFT KEY + LEFT-CLICK**



## 2.2

### Drum Pattern Instruments & How to Use Them



#### METRONOME

Make sure the metronome is on

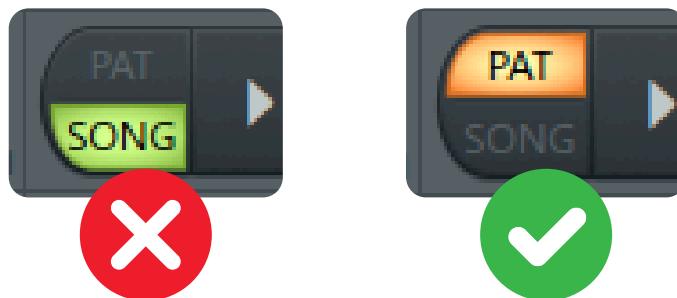


Metronome

## ! (Before You Begin) !

### Song vs Pattern

Make sure **pattern mode** is selected, this will ensure you are listening to the pattern made in the channel rack



### METRONOME

Make sure the metronome is on



Metronome

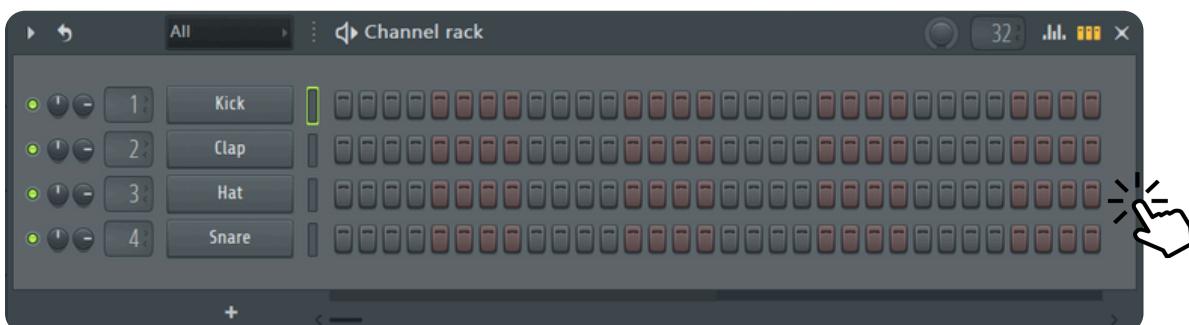
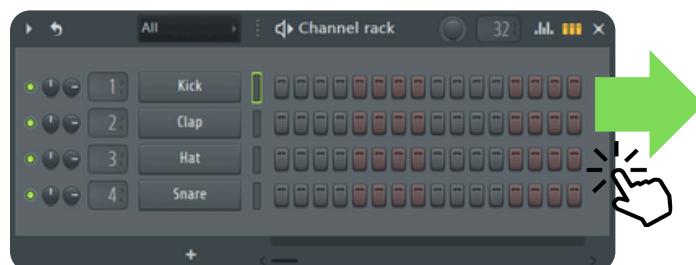
## !(Before You Begin) !

### Beats Per Bar

Set your **BPB** to **32** or right-click or select  
“**2 Bars**”



When increasing your BPB you must drag it to the right in order to work with more beats



## **!(Before You Begin)!**

### **USE BOTH HANDS!**

Use “**SPACE BAR**” to play/pause  
Use “**CTRL + Z**” to undo the mistake



## Drums



When creating a drum pattern you need  
**4 main instruments**



KICK



SNARE/CLAP



HI-HAT



OPEN-HAT

- Here's what a basic drum pattern will look like in **FL Studio**



Right-click to delete a mistake





## SNARE/CLAP

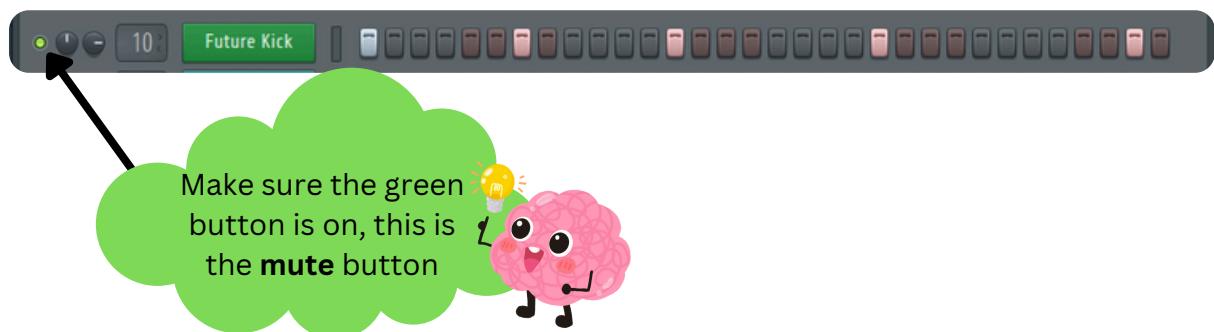
It can be easier to start with snare/clap first as it will ensure your beat is on time.

The snare and clap have the same concept, you can use them together or separately



## KICK

For a basic kick pattern, replicate the diagram below in your **FL Studio** channel rack





## Hi-HAT

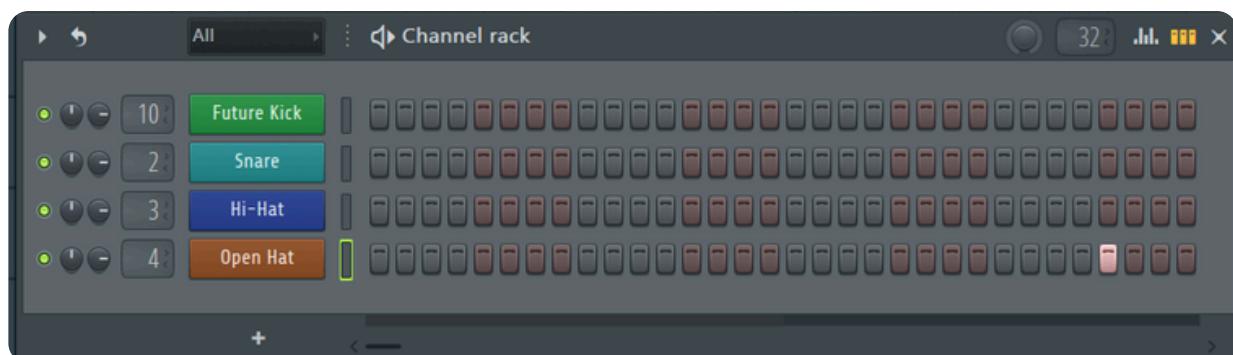
Closed-hats are really easy, you just need to **right-click** on the instrument and select **“Fill Each 2 Steps”** or **“Fill Each 4 Steps”**.  
Another word for Hi-Hats is Closed-Hats





## OPEN-HAT

The open hats can be used in many different places of a drum pattern, but since this unit is about the basics, just copy the diagram below



## 2.3

### **Tempos & Templates of Different Genres**



## What's Tempo?

Tempo is the speed at which a song is played at and is calculated by its **BPM**, which stands for “**Beats Per Minute**”

- The tempos shown can vary depending on the style you are trying to create

### Old School Hip-Hop: 85-95BPM



### Modern Hip-Hop: 100-170BPM



## **Reggaeton: 80-110BPM**



## **R&B: 70-90BPM**



**Pop: 100-150BPM**

**EDM: 115-130BPM**

**Dubstep: 132-142BPM**



## Unit 3 Homework



Repeat the process of making basic drum patterns, do this multiple times till you have memorized the placement of the drums. Then you will be ready for the next unit.



## UNIT 3

### **Basic 808's & Sub-Bass**



## What You Will Learn

In this unit, you will learn how to setup  
and use 808's & Sub Bass

### By the end of the unit, you will know;

- **(3.1)** How to Tune These Instruments to the Correct Key ..... 40-43
- **(3.2)** Making Sure the Sound of the 808/Sub-Bass Doesn't Overlap ..... 44-47
- **(3.3)** Making an 808/Sub-Bass Pattern in the Piano Roll ..... 48-50
- **(3.4)** Making a 4-Bar Beat Using Loop Mode ..... 48-50
- **(3.5)** Bass Note Template ..... 48-50

## Unit 3 Shortcuts

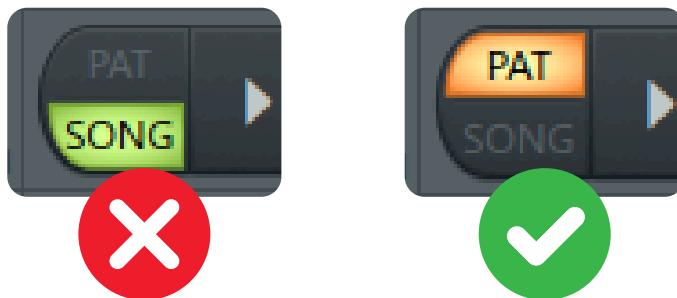
- **Zoom in/out** → Ctrl + Mouse Scroll
- **Precision Note Movements** → Shift + Mouse Scroll
- **Automatic Zoom in** → Ctrl + Right-Click
- **Play/Pause** → Space Bar
- **Undo Mistake** → Ctrl + Z
- **Note Highlight** → Ctrl + Shift + Left-Click
- **Copy** → Ctrl + C
- **Paste** → Ctrl + V
- **Note Delete** → Right-Click
- **Pencil tool for placing notes** → Alt + P
- **Octave Change** → Ctrl + Up/Down Arrow
- **Note Fill** → Ctrl + L



## ! (Before You Begin) !

### Song vs Pattern

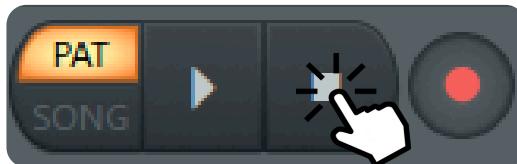
Make sure **pattern mode** is selected, this will ensure you are listening to the pattern made in the channel rack



### Sub-Bass Doesn't Stop Playing

Due to the sub-bass having a long tail, it wont stop playing when you want to hear a sample in the drumkit.

- To stop this, click the “Stop” button



## What's The Difference Between 808's & Sub Bass

The 808 bass drum has pronounced attack sound while sub-bass frequency doesn't. The 808, however, can have either a thick low-frequency registry of just around 60hz. To sum it up, sub-bass is to add energy to your low frequency (not necessarily have a distinct tonality).

**808**



**Sub-Bass**



### 3.1

## **How to Tune These Instruments to the Correct Key**



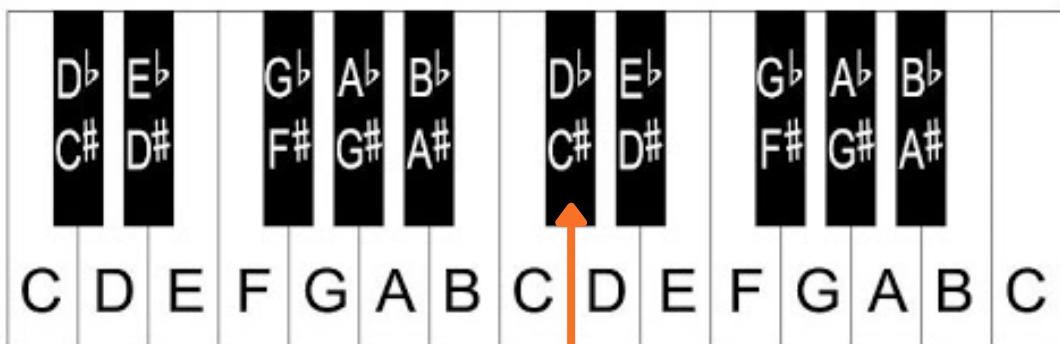
## Tuning your 808's & Sub-Bass

Once you've chosen your 808 or Sub-bass and dragged it to your channel rack, you need to **tune** the instrument to the **correct key**.

(This means that your instrument will be in the correct piano note in the piano roll)

### Tuning Tip:

- You must know your piano notes for this unit, if not you may refer to the diagram



This means “C Sharp”  
or “D Flat”

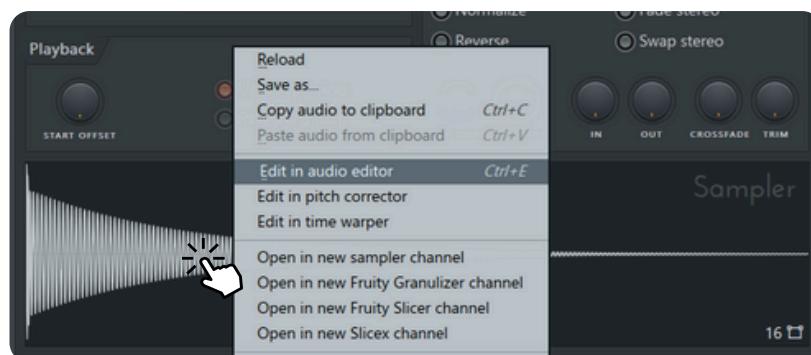


**1st**

Once you've dragged your 808/Sub-Bass to the channel rack, **left-click** on the instrument to bring up its properties  
**(Sample Settings)**

**2nd**

**Right-click** the wav file at the bottom and select “**Edit**”



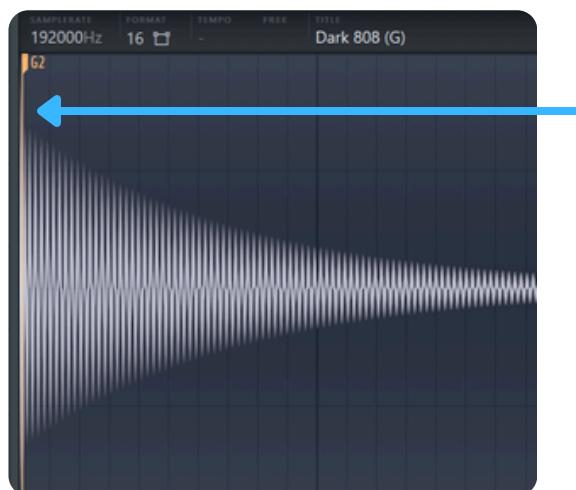
### 3rd

Right-click on the new wav file and select “Regions”, then select “detect pitch regions”



### 4th

The orange mark with the “letter” is the **key/note** that your instrument is in



## 5th

Now go back to the instrument properties (**Sample Settings**) and select “Envelope”



## 6th

Since the key is in “G”, you have to **right-click** the piano key that represents “G”. This will tune your 808 or Sub-Bass



The Key changed from “C” to “G”



### 3.2

## Making Sure the Sound of the 808/Sub-Bass Doesn't Overlap



## Making Sure the Sound of the 808/Sub-Bass Doesn't Overlap Itself

If you want to make things quick and easy,  
follow these steps

- Go to the instrument properties  
**(Sample Settings)**
- Then go to the “Miscellaneous Functions”  
and select “Cut Self”



## Manual Method

If you want to control how long your 808 or Sub-Bass plays for, you must follow these few simple steps below.

**!(ALWAYS DO THIS FOR SUB-BASS)!**

### 1st

You must go to your instrument properties (**Sample Settings**), and select “Envelope”



### 2nd

Move the “ATT” nob all the way to the **left**



### 3rd

Move the “**HOLD**” nob all the way to the **right**



### 4th

Move the “**DEC**”, “**SUS**” and “**REL**” nobs all the way to the **left**





### 3.3

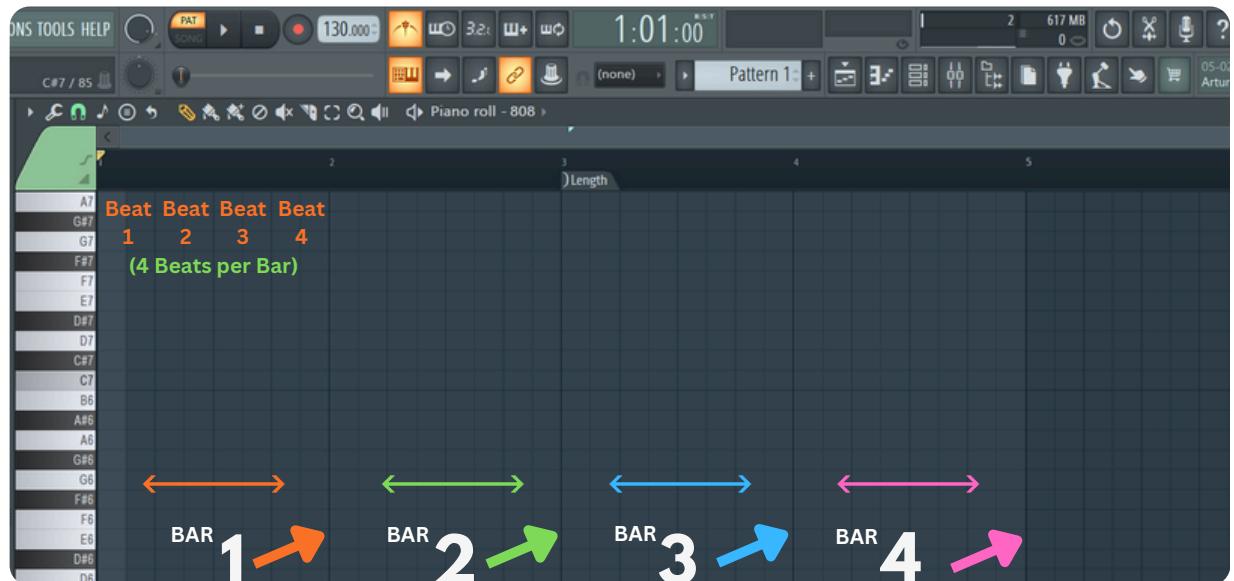
## Making an 808/Sub-Bass Pattern in the Piano Roll



## !(Before You Begin)!

### 1st

You should know the difference between a  
“Bar” and “Beat”



- 4 bars = 64 BPB in the channel rack
- 2 bars = 32 BPB in the channel rack

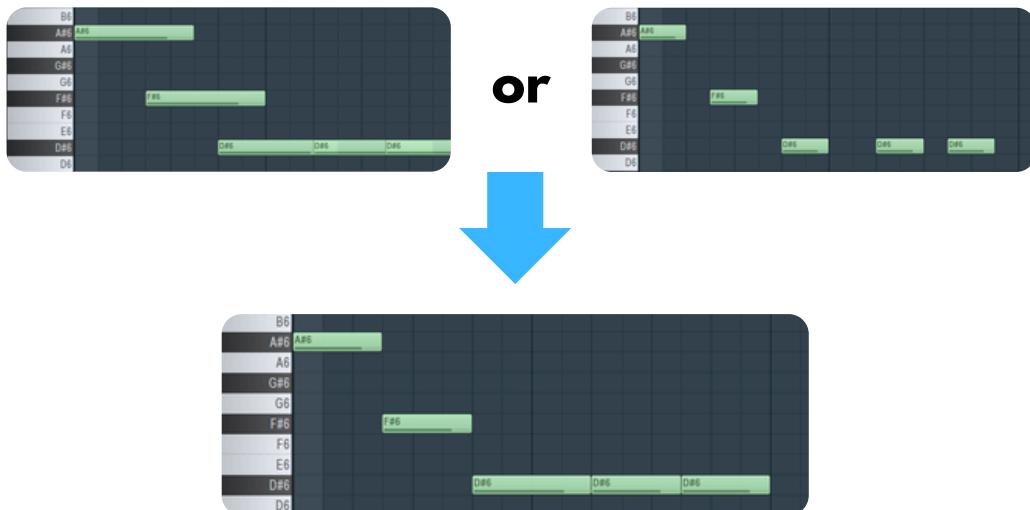
## !(Before You Begin)!

### 2nd

Place your **notes at a high octave** so that it doesn't sound like bass, this will make it easier for your ears to notice if the notes are not in scale

### 3rd

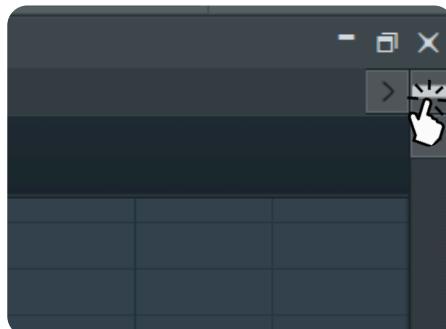
If your notes are too short or long you can use the **fill shortcut** to line them up **CTRL + L**



## ! (Before You Begin) !

### Common Accident

- If you accidentally use the automatic zoom shortcut and find that the piano notes on the left are too large
- You can use the shortcut **CRTL + Right-Click**
- Or click and hold on the square button underneath the Piano Roll/Playlist exit (x)



## **!(Before You Begin)!**

### **USE BOTH HANDS**

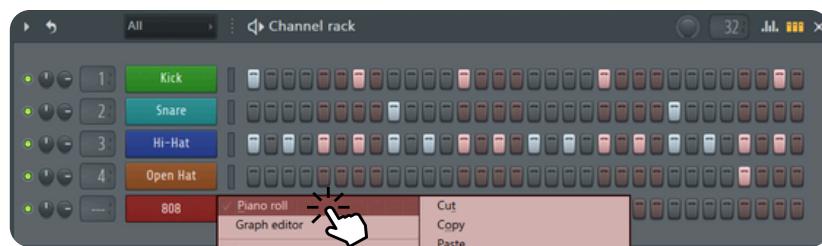
**Use “SPACE BAR” to play/pause  
Use “CTRL” for shortcuts**



## Making a melodic 808/Sub-Bass Pattern in the Piano Roll

**1st**

Right-click the 808/Sub-Bass and select  
“Piano Roll”



**2nd**

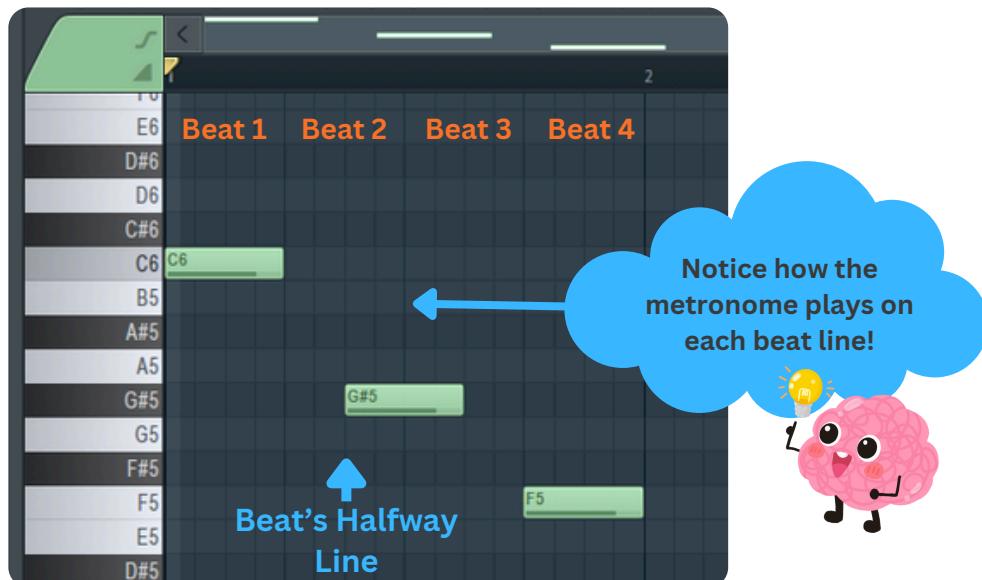
Set your “Grid” to “1/2 Beat”  
(Once you are comfortable with the piano roll, you can use any grid type)



## 3rd (Now The Fun Begins)

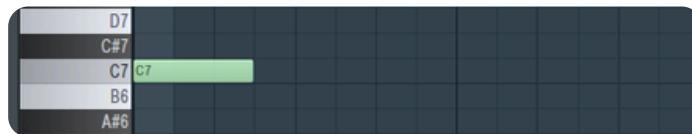
First thing you should know is to keep your notes on the **guiding beat lines**, if you feel that your instrument sounds off beat, this would definitely be the reason why.

- Your note should either be at the **beginning of the beat or at the halfway line**.



## 4th

Place your first note in the Piano Roll,  
Simply “Left-Click” with your mouse



## 5th

Place the second note above or below and  
press play. If the note sounds off then;

**right-click to delete**

- The notes don't sound good together because they aren't in the same scale



## 6th

Your next note placement should move 1 note  
in the direction you chose to go

- Repeat this process until you have found  
the note you want to hear
- Then, use the “Octave Change” Shortcut



**3.4**

## **Making a 4-Bar Beat Using Loop Mode**



## 1st (Making 808 4-Bars)

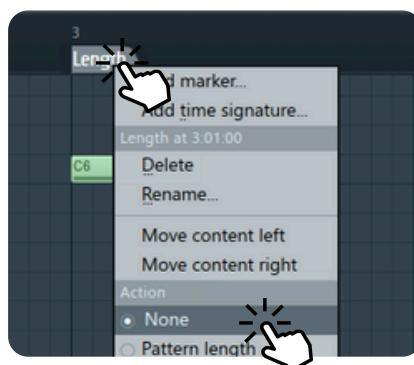
If you find that the pattern is too repetitive you can make it **4 bars longs**, but you will have to turn on “**Loop Mode**” in the channel rack

- The reason we turn loop mode on is because the channel rack is set to “**2 Bars**”
- Right-click the “Loop Mode” and select “**Advanced Looping**”



## 2nd

In the Piano Roll, right-click on “**Length**” which is located at the top and select “**none**”



### 3rd

- Change up the 4th bar's notes for more creativity, or just do whatever you like 😊



- Then, drop the notes a few octaves by using the shortcut **CTRL + DOWN ARROW**

### 4th

- To get rid of a looping ghost note, **right-click “Bar”** then select “**Don’t Loop**”



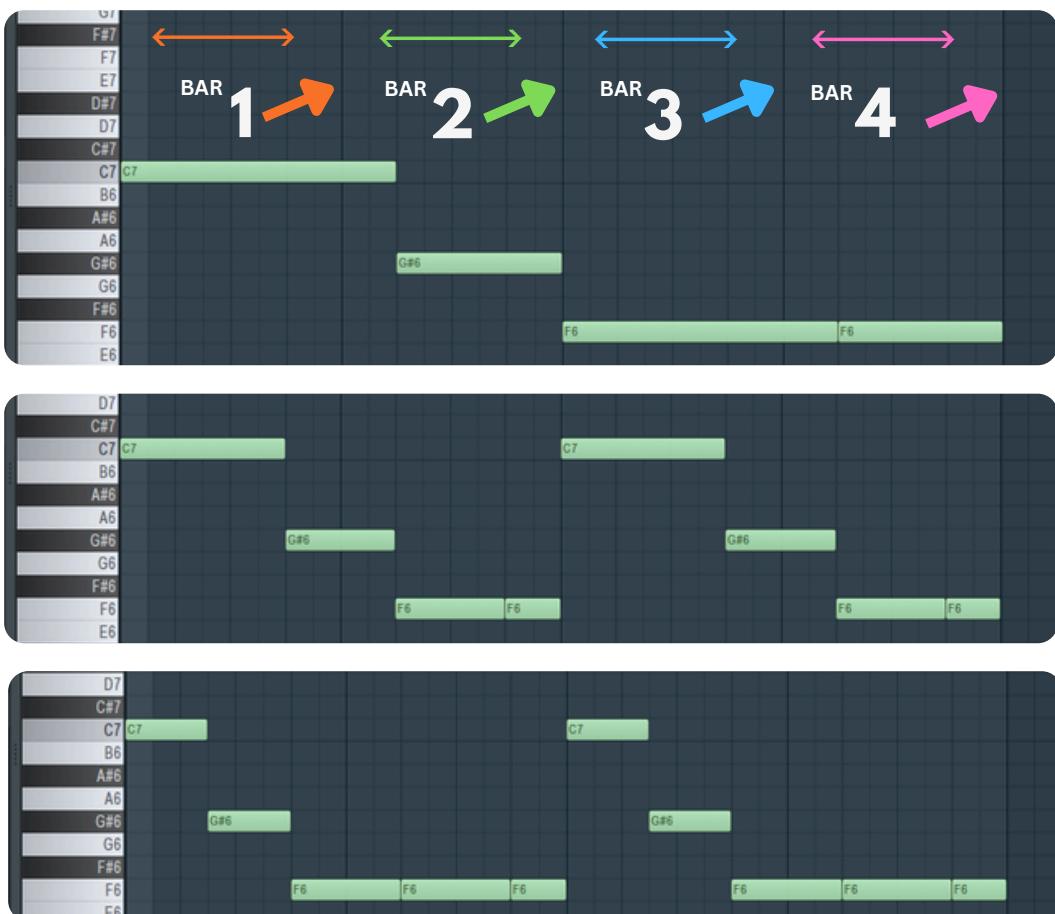
3.5  
**Bass Note Template**



## Bass Note Template

These are some different structures of 808/Sub-Bass patterns.

The rhythms below go from slow to fast



## PART 1 Homework



Repeat the process of making basic drum patterns with 808's included, do this multiple times till you have memorized the placement of the drums. Then you will be ready for the next unit.

