

Basic Rock Beats

8ths on Ride / Stepped Quarters On Hi-Hat

Stepping hi-hat is an incredibly important aspect of drumming that many drummers ignore. There are many excellent reasons to step hi-hat. The common layperson marks time to the beat by doing any number of movements: bobbing their head, clapping their hands, snapping their fingers, and tapping their feet. Stepping hi-hat is equivalent to tapping your foot to a song. It also gives your bandmates a constant high-pitched sound to latch onto. This is especially helpful if you play a complex fill with challenging rhythms; the hi-hat helps everyone follow the pulse. For a drummer, it helps give you balance. If you're playing a rock groove on the ride cymbal with a busy bass drum pattern, your right side is working hard while the left side only plays snare drum backbeats. Having your left foot lie dormant also hinders your time keeping abilities. As a bonus, stepping hi-hat sounds great!

The following 18 simple rock grooves help with feet independence while strengthening your time and securing your balance. There are many left foot techniques that work, but make sure your foot never lifts off the pedal board. When your foot is completely off the pedal you are out of balance and creating tension within your body. You can begin by only stepping hi-hat with the snare backbeats on 2 and 4. Your left side will be working in concert and there won't be any foot coordination required. Once you add hi-hat steps to beats 1 and 3, your feet will be working together and against each other. Anytime there's a bass drum on an "&," it'll be without the hi-hat. After mastering stepped quarters, try stepping 8th notes.

Practice each groove individually and play as many times as needed or desired. Eventually, try to play each beat 4 times, going directly into the next without stopping. Finally, combining patterns to create 2-bar and 4-bar phrases is the most musically effective and closest to what you would play for a song. These grooves can be played on the hi-hat at first to get comfortable with the bass drum patterns. If practicing this way, simply ignore the stepped hi-hat on the bottom of the staff.

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