

Flam Relationships

Triplets

I call this section **flam relationships** because we are going to take 2 flam rudiments that sound exactly the same but have different sticking patterns and relate them to one another. First, we are going to do this in a triplet feel, then in a duple feel. Finally, we are going to relate certain aspects from each group to glean some fascinating flam information that will deepen your understanding and appreciation of flam rudiments, all while sharpening your chops and giving you some ideas for placing these wonderful patterns on the drum set.

Let's take a deeper look at *flam accents*. On the surface, flam accents seem like they should be easy because they are just alternating triplets, or 8th notes grouped in 3s.



However, by simply adding a flam at the beginning of each 3-note grouping, it causes each hand to hit 3 times in a row! Let's examine further...



Begin by looking at the right hand on beat 3. The right hand hits again on beat 4, as a grace note for the accented left flam. Then it hits a 3rd time in a row, on beat 5. The left hand plays this same pattern beginning with beat 6.

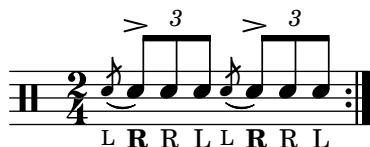


Flam accents work both hands and are good for “melody” on the drum set. Place your right handed accents on the floor tom and left handed accents on the rack tom; keep all unaccented notes on the snare. For a very full sound, flatten out the flams, play the accents on crash cymbals, move unaccented notes around the snare and toms, all while keeping a steady stream of triplets going underneath with double bass.

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There is another rudiment that sounds exactly like the flam accent – *swiss army triplets*. It is a 3-note grouping with an accented flam at the beginning. I have no idea why it's not directly below the flam accent on the rudiment sheet. Nor do I have a clue why these are given the word “triplet” as part of its name, but flam accents are not. Furthermore, flam accents are written as 8th notes, while swiss army triplets are written as one beat of 16th note triplets. Once again, they sound the same and can be written the same. The only difference here is the sticking and that's where we're going to find the relationship between these two sister rudiments.

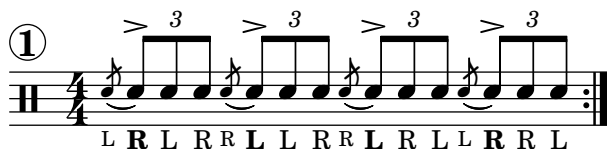


Swiss army triplets are flam triplets with a double up front. Using our detective skills from the previous page, we see that each hand only hits 2 times in a row. Therefore, we should be able to play swiss army triplets 33% faster than flam accents! Remember, flam accents required each hand to play 3 times in a row. We also see that swiss army triplets do not switch hands, retaining a dominant hand lead, which should result in even more speed.

Let's dissect this even further, and play the hands separately. The right hand essentially plays a double, or diddle. At this point, this motion should be familiar and fairly easy. The left hand remains very close to the drum and plays a “shuffle” rhythm. These quiet tap strokes can be achieved by using a simple “drop-catch” motion. By now, you should be able to play your swiss army triplets close to *twice as fast* as your flam accents!

Just because swiss army triplets are good for speed doesn't mean that you should abandon flam accents. When swiss army triplets get to warped speed, they almost sound like an uneven double stroke roll. Even though the rhythm is the same for these two rudiments, there are certain qualities that the stickings provide; allow the music to dictate which flam triplet rhythm you utilize.

The first example combines flam accents and swiss army triplets and works out both hands. The second example replaces the flam accents with regular triplets, allowing for more speed.



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On the drum set, a fill I like to play alternates between regular triplets played on the floor tom, snare drum, then bass drum, and swiss army triplets between the rack and snare. This combination of regular triplets and swiss army triplets is similar to ② on the previous page. However, by placing a bass drum on the last partial of the triplet, it allows you to keep all the swiss army triplets on the right hand. To orchestrate this for a 5-pc. kit, simply play one of the swiss army triplets on the 2nd rack tom.



Step hi-hat – quarters or 2,4



Step quarters on hi-hat

3:4



Step quarters

If you play a left handed flam, it becomes a flam accent, not a swiss army triplet.

For speed, you can flatten out the flam and play a double stop between the ride and snare. Using a side-to-side wrist motion and some propulsion from your index finger, bring the stick from the ride to the snare, on a diagonal plane. Add bottom end by playing the bass drum on downbeats.

Let's summarize certain aspects of these two flam triplet rhythms:

Flam Accents

- Each hand plays 3 times in a row.
- Works both hands.
- When separated, each hand plays a cool rhythm.
- Good for melody on the kit.

Swiss Army Triplets

- Double up front.
- Each hands plays only 2 times in a row.
- Doesn't switch hands.
- Left hand stays close to drum.
- Good for speed.