

# Bones Unlimited

BY: FREDERICK T. EDMUNDS



# **BONES UNLIMITED**

**FREDERICK T. EDMUNDS**

Copyright © 1989 Frederick T. Edmunds

**Copyright 2007 Rhythm Bones Society, Signal Mountain, Tennessee 37377**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface .....		Page 1
Chapter 1	How to Hold the Bones .....	Page 2
Chapter 2	Beginning Rhythms .....	Page 14
Chapter 3	Another Good Lick (Pickup Notes) .....	Page 22
Chapter 4	Triplets .....	Page 34
Chapter 5	Quadruplets .....	Page 55
Chapter 6	Putting Things Together .....	Page 71
Chapter 7	The Off-beat .....	Page 89
Chapter 8	Finishing Touches .....	Page 97

## PREFACE

Bones is one of mankind's very first musical instruments. It is primitive and simple and easy to play, but to make beautiful music with any instrument, including bones, a basic sense of rhythm and musical expressiveness are very important. With these two natural traits plus a willingness to master the exercises in this book a person will be able to create good artistic accompaniment to many types of music. There will be much personal enjoyment as well as good entertainment for others.

**CHAPTER 1**  
**HOW TO HOLD THE BONES**

Proper holding of the bones is of utmost importance. Learn this lesson well both in your head and in your hands. Every exercise in this course will depend to a large degree on how well you hold the bones. In time holding the bones properly will be natural and easy. We learn by repetition.

Let's take it up step by step.

**Like this:**

The bones

The fingers

The hands

The wrists

The forearms

The elbows

The bones

## Exercise 1-1

Four bones makes a set. There will be two bones in each hand. Each bone is slightly curved from end to end, and in the playing position the tip ends of each pair point slightly away from each other. The middle portions of each pair bend a bit toward each other.

Like this

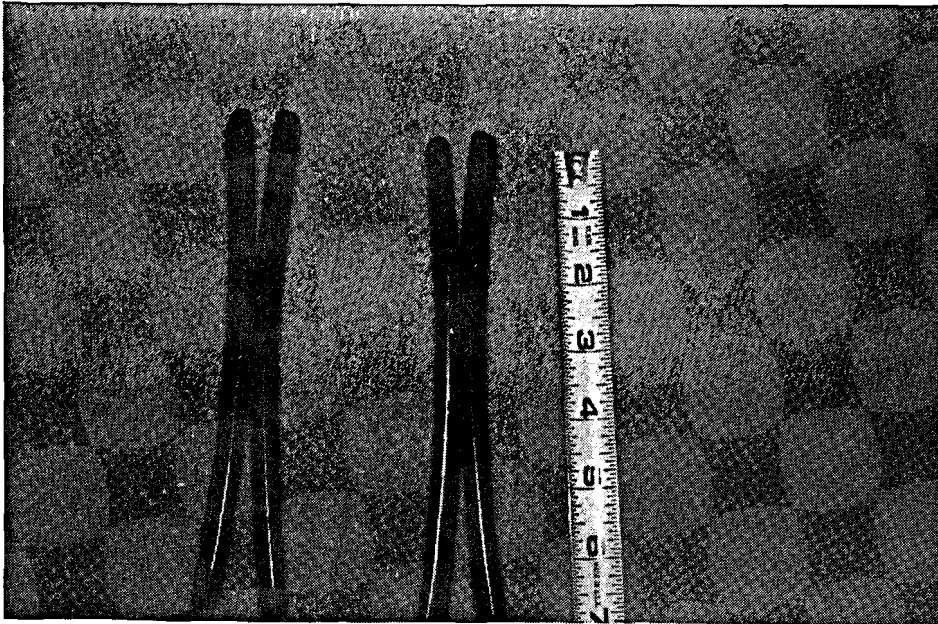


Figure 1

This is the proper curve.

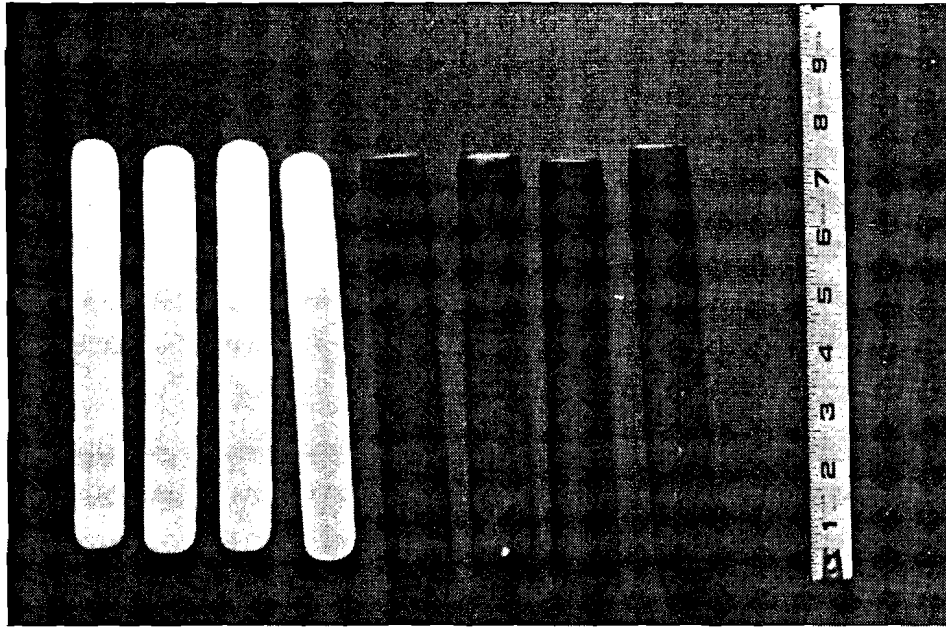
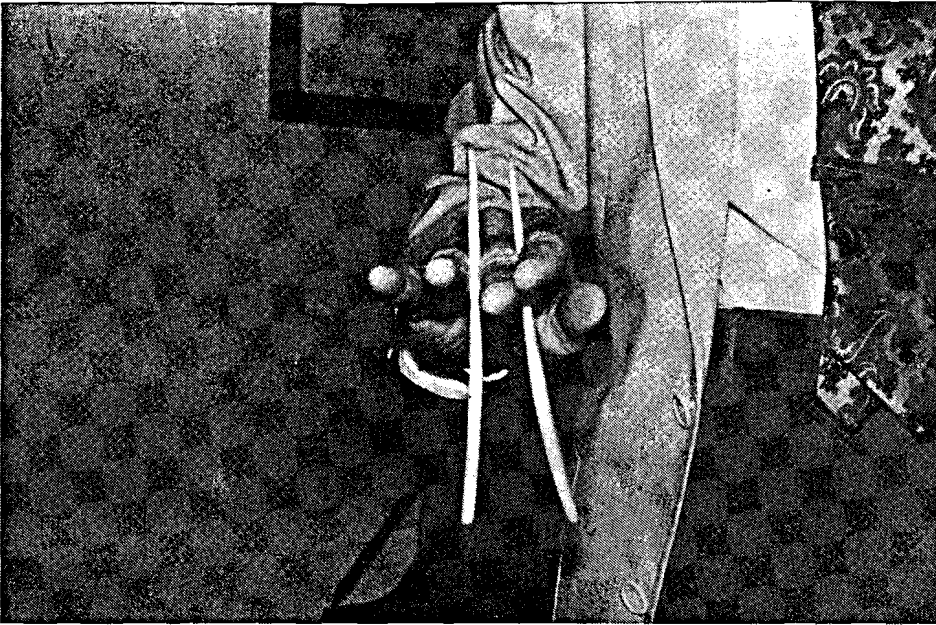


Figure 2

This is two sets of bones.  
One of wood and one of bone.

The two bones in each hand are to be separated from each other by the middle finger. That will place one bone next to the first finger and the other bone next to the fourth finger. Hold them nearer to one end so that the long ends will be on the palm side of the hand. The short ends then will be on the knuckle side of the hand. If the bones which you will be playing are thinner on one end then hold them between the fingers closer to that end. The longer, thicker ends will be on the palm side and the shorter thinner ends will be on the knuckle side of the hand.



**Figure 3**

This shows the bones separated by the middle finger with the long ends on the palm side of the hand.

### The fingers

### Exercise 1-2

At the end of exercise 1-1 we had two bones in each hand with the middle finger separating them.

Now remove one bone. Set aside the bone next to the fourth finger and leave in place the bone next to the first finger.

Next, bend the middle finger over the edge of the remaining bone in such a way as to force its other edge firmly against the heel of the hand at the base of the thumb. Keep it there. This bone stays fixed



and completely stationary. It does not move in the hand at all. Get the feel of it.

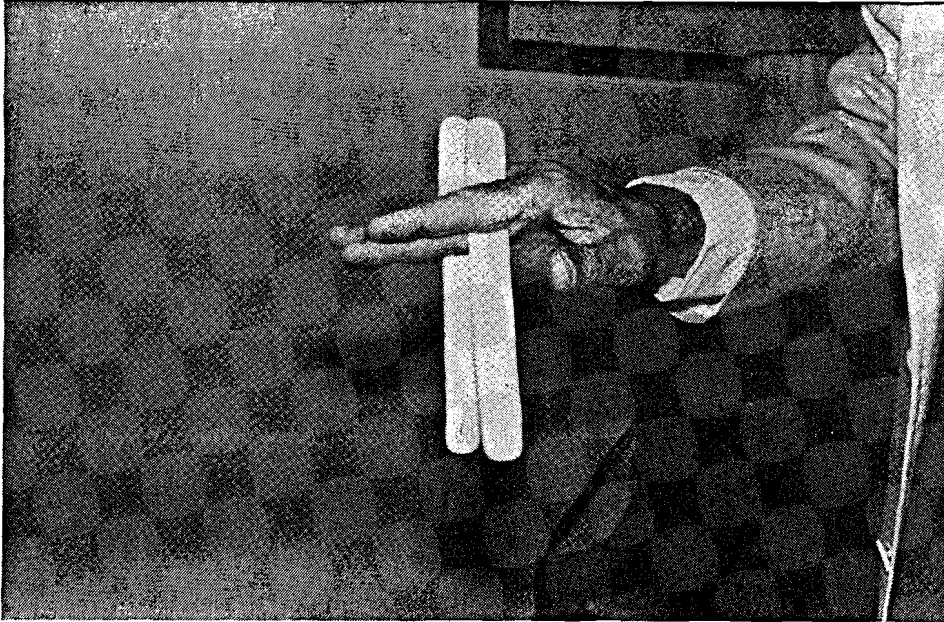


Figure 4

Same as Figure 3. The short ends are on the knuckle side of the hand

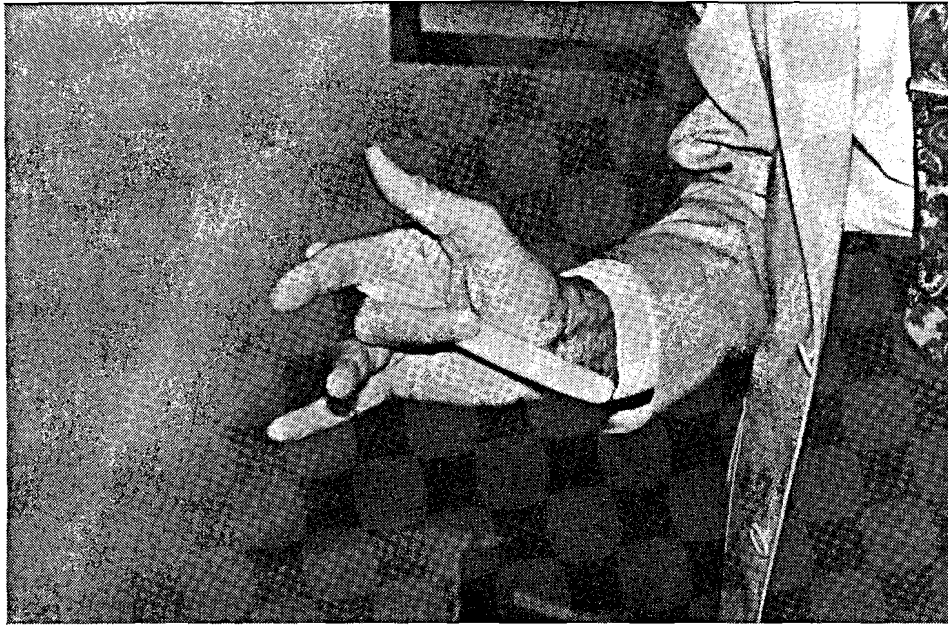
With only this one bone in each hand wiggle the hand in all directions but do not let up with the middle finger. Continue to press the edge of the bone with the middle finger so as to hold its opposite edge fixed against the heel of the hand at the base of the thumb.



**Figure 5**

This shows the middle finger bent across the edge of the bone next to the index finger.

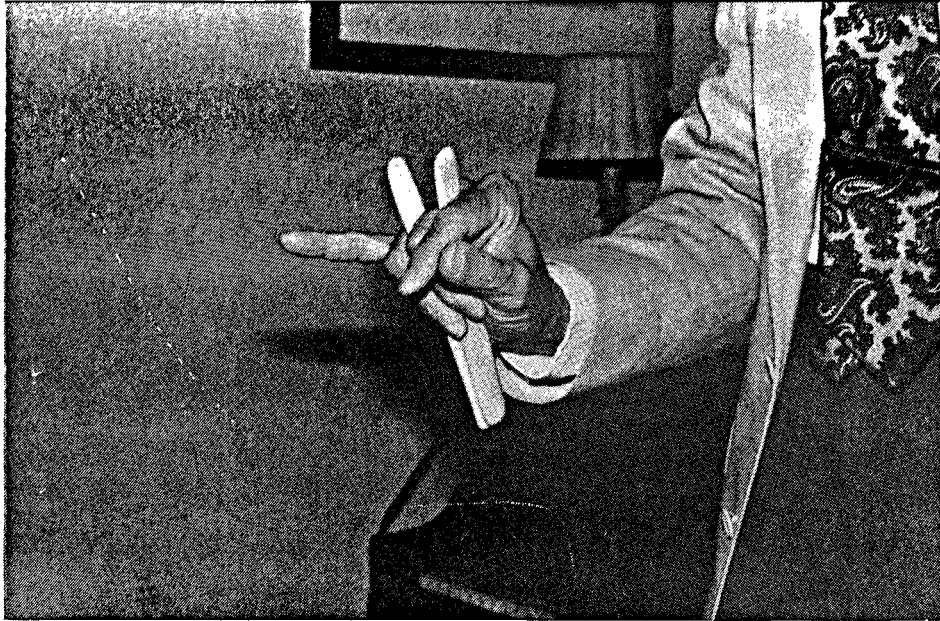
Move the hand hard and fast in all directions. Over the head, below the waist, everywhere but keep the bone fixed in place and stationary in the hand. This is a **MUST** in bones playing.



**Figure 6**

The middle finger squeezes this bone firmly against the heel of the hand at the base of the thumb.

Next, replace the other bone. Hold it between the middle finger and the fourth finger. Its long end is to be on the palm side of the hand to match the position of the stationary bone. The fourth finger should bend comfortably across the edge of this second bone but should not squeeze it, as this is the bone that moves.



**Figure 7**

This shows two bones held properly. The middle finger is squeezing the bone.

The number one, most important principle of bones playing is that one bone is held fixed and stationary. The other bone, the one that moves, strikes against the fixed bone to make the sound.

The thumb and fifth finger play only a very small part. In my case the fifth finger plays no part at all. It sticks out to the side when I play.

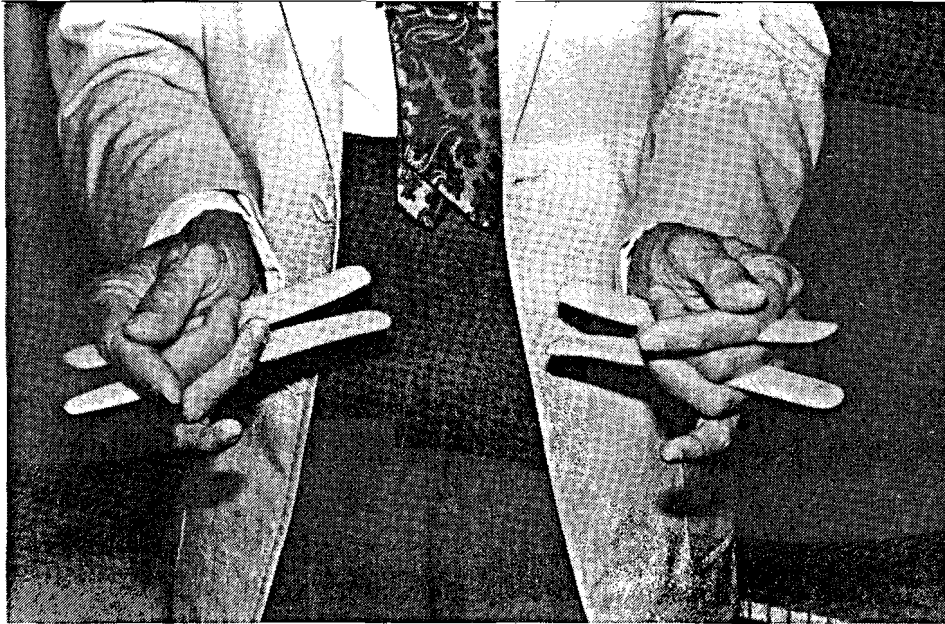


Figure 8

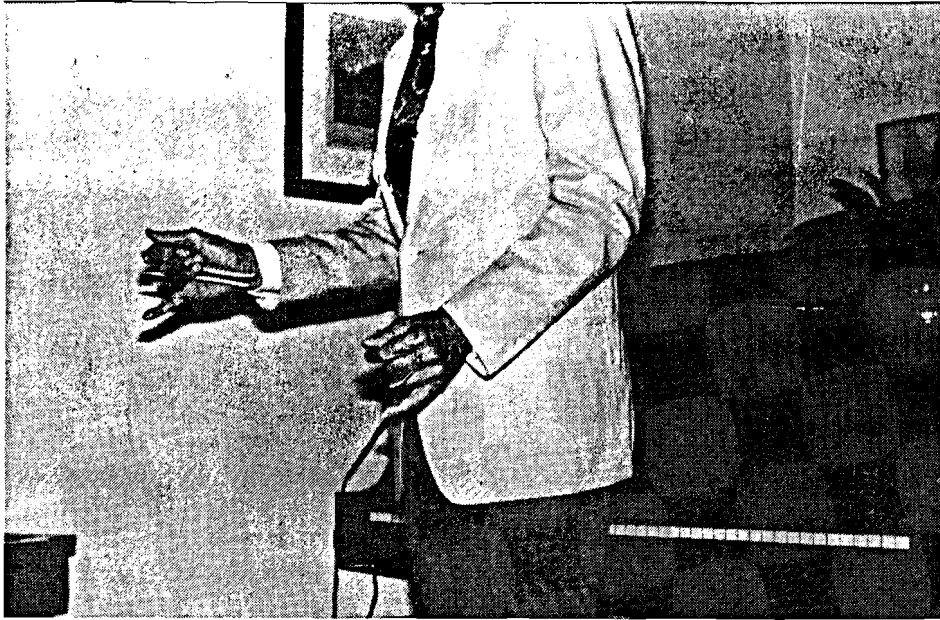
The fourth finger bends over the edge of the bone but does not squeeze. The forearms are slanting down a bit.

### The hands

### Exercise 1-3

When playing bones the hand is bent back, not all the way back, but back. You will bend farther back for some exercises than for others. Pick what is best for you.

Hold the bones two in each hand as described. Adjust the hands so that the long ends of the bones in each hand point partly down and partly in toward each other and partly back toward yourself.



**Figure 9**

The bones point down and in and back.



**Figure 10**

The hands are waist high and the wrists are bent back a bit.

The wrists

## Exercise 1-4

Technically speaking the wrists will not rotate. It is the forearm that rotates, but when I say rotate the wrists you will know what I mean. Rotation of the wrists to and fro is the major movement of bones playing.

The forearm

## Exercise 1-5

Forearm movements also play a major role in bones playing. They should slant slightly downward in front of you, making the hands to be about waist high. For most bones playing you will also want the forearms to point slightly in toward the middle.

The elbows

## Exercise 1-6

They should be bent enough to cause the forearm to slant slightly downward making the hands to be about waist high. The elbows should not be directly at your sides but should be a bit forward.

The most common error, by far, is letting up with the middle finger. Bend it across the bone which is next to the index finger. Apply enough force with it to fix the opposite edge of that bone firmly against the heel of the hand at the base of the thumb. Hold it fixed and stationary in that place.



**Figure 11**

Front view showing all. Notice that the middle finger is tight across the bone. The fourth finger is bent over the movable bone but is not squeezing it.



## CHAPTER 2

### BEGINNING RHYTHMS

Hold the bones, two in each hand as described in Chapter One. The hands should be comfortably in front of you about waist high, with the wrists bent back. Adjust the hands so that the long ends of the bones in both hands point partly down, partly in toward the middle, and partly back toward yourself. In this position the stationary bone, the one next to the index finger, will be above the other bone.

The force which causes the lower bone, the one that moves, to strike up against the upper stationary bone has three sources. They are:

1. Movement of the fourth finger.
2. Rotation of the wrist.
3. Movement of the forearm.

Beginning pupils tend to push the upper bone downward with the tip of the thumb to make contact. This tendency is natural but it won't work. Do it like this. Rotate the wrists sharply outward in such a way that the long end of the lower bone strikes upward against the long end of the upper stationary bone in each hand. The wrist is for power and the fourth finger is for control. The lower bone (the one that moves) will need to be guided a bit by the fourth finger. Each click should be a single, sharp, crisp sound. The sound comes entirely from the long ends on the palm side of the hands. The short ends never touch.

This course on how to play the bones consists mainly of exercises illustrating various patterns of clicks of the bones. Each exercise is set to four-beat bars. The written exercises are brief but the pupil should repeat the exercise many times in a continuous manner.

The beats of the bar are labeled by numbers--

Like this

1.....2.....3.....4.....1.....2.....3.....4.....1

The clicks of the bones are designated by capital letters--

Like this

R - Means to play a right-handed click.

L - Means to play a left-handed click.

T - Means to play both hands Together.

In many of the exercises some written sound effects will be included to help the pupil understand how the exercise should sound.

Play these exercises:

Count only. No bones. Just count, four beats to the bar.

Like this

Exercise 2-1

1.....2.....3.....4.....1.....2.....3.....4.....1

Practice musical counting: completely steady, all at the same speed, just like marching.

Next, play a right-handed click with the bones at each count of the four-count bar. There are four

beats to the bar and four clicks to the bar. Play one click with the right hand at each beat.

Like this

Exercise 2-2

R.....R.....R.....R.....R.....R.....R.....R.....R.....R  
 1.....2.....3.....4.....1.....2.....3.....4.....1

The R above each count means to play one right-handed click at that count. Keep repeating. Count aloud and it will be easier to keep steady.

In the next exercise play left-handed clicks only. Play one click per beat, four clicks per bar and keep repeating.

Like this

Exercise 2-3

L.....L.....L.....L.....L.....L.....L.....L.....L.....L  
 1.....2.....3.....4.....1.....2.....3.....4.....1

The L above each count means to play one left-handed click at each count. Count aloud and keep repeating.

In the next exercise we will alternate hands from beat to beat, first a left-handed click and then a right. Play one click per beat and four clicks per bar. Play the first and third beats with the left hand and play the second and fourth beats with the right hand.

Like this

Exercise 2-4

L.....R.....L.....R.....L.....R.....L.....R.....L  
 1.....2.....3.....4.....1.....2.....3.....4.....1

The Ls above the ones and threes mean to play those beats with the left hand. The Rs above the twos and fours mean to play a right-handed click at those beats. Play four clicks to each bar, alternating from hand to hand. Try to make all four clicks sound alike. Count slowly and keep repeating.

In the next exercise we play to the same four-beat bar but this time each beat is played with both hands Together. We still play only four clicks to the bar. The T above the count means to play both hands Together at each beat.

Like this

Exercise 2-5

T.....T.....T.....T.....T.....T.....T.....T.....T.....T  
 1.....2.....3.....4.....1.....2.....3.....4.....1

In all four of these exercises we play one click per beat, four clicks per bar. Play one time all with the right hand; one time all with the left hand; one time alternating hands from beat to beat; and one time with both hands Together. The object of these exercises is not speed but steadiness. Count slowly and keep an even beat. Practice all of them until they are easy. Use a metronome if you like.

The next exercise will be more complicated. Play to the same count, at the same slow speed as before.

Play all four counts with the right hand and add a left-handed click at beats two and four.

Like this

Exercise 2-6

R.....T.....R.....T.....R.....T.....R.....T.....R  
 1.....2.....3.....4.....1.....2.....3.....4.....1

R means a **right**-handed click and T means play both hands Together. In this pattern the right hand plays all four beats and a left-handed click is played Together with the right hand on counts two and four. Count as you repeat the four-beat bar.

Play the whole thing with the left hand and add right-handed clicks at beats two and four.

Like this

Exercise 2-7

L.....T.....L.....T.....L.....T.....L.....T.....L  
 1.....2.....3.....4.....1.....2.....3.....4.....1

So all four counts are played with the left hand and counts two and four are played with both hands Together.

In the next exercise we play both hands Together to the same four-beat bar but this time play only beats one and three.

Like this

Exercise 2-8

T.....T.....T.....T.....T  
 1.....2.....3.....4.....1.....2.....3.....4.....1

The first and third beats, then, are played with both hands Together and the second and fourth beats are not played at all. Keep the count going in a slow, steady way, two clicks per four-beat bar.

Play both hands Together again at only some of the beats as indicated.

Like this

Exercise 2-9

T.....T.....T.....T.....T.....T.....T.....T.....T.....T  
 1.....2.....3.....4.....1.....2.....3.....4.....1

Keep this one going. Repeat indefinitely and it will remind you of marching.

Play the marching pattern in a variety of ways:

All with the right hand.

Like this

Exercise 2-10

R.....R.....R.....R.....R.....R.....R.....R.....R.....R  
 1.....2.....3.....4.....1.....2.....3.....4.....1



Play the four-beat bar alternating hands as in Exercise 2-4. But this time

1. Play beats one and three softly with the left hand.
2. Play beats two and four with the right hand.
3. Accent beats two and four. That is, play them louder.

Like this

Exercise 2-14

	^			^				^				^		
L.....	R.....	L.....	R.....	L.....	R.....	L.....	R.....	L.....	R.....	L.....	R.....	L.....	R.....	L.....
1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	1.....	2.....	3.....

The upside down V above the click means to play that one louder. That is, accent it.

Make each four beats sound just like all the other four-beat bars. Sounds good, doesn't it?

Now play it to music--and keep it going.

Congratulations!! You are now playing the bones. Could you play a pipe organ this quickly? Probably not.



## CHAPTER 3

### ANOTHER GOOD LICK

The exercises in this chapter will deal with what I call pickup notes. The pickup note is a click which comes before the click that lands exactly on the beat. Everyone knows how it sounds.

Sing this

Exercise 3-1

dum	da	dum	da	dum	da	dum	dum	da	dum	da	dum	da	dum	dum
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	1.....	2.....	3.....

The "da" is the pickup note and the "dum" is on the beat. The "da" is closer to the next beat than to the previous beat and definitely it is not halfway between beats.

"It's a Long Way to Tipperary" is a good example of a song using pickup notes.

Sing this

Exercise 3-2

It's	a	long	way	to	tip	a	rar	ie
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	1.....

It's	a	long	way	back	home
.	.	.	.	.	.
1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	1.....	2.....

The pickup notes are "a," "to" and "a." All the other words fall exactly on a beat of the four-beat bar.

Another song using pickup notes is "Tea For Two."

Sing this

Exercise 3-3

Tea		for	two		and	two		for	tea	
.		.	.		.	.		.	.	
and	me		for	you		and	you		for	me
.	.		.	.		.	.		.	.
1.....2.....3.....4.....1.....2.....3.....4										

The pickup notes are "for" and "and." "Tea," "two," "me," and "you" all fall exactly on a beat. In this particular song beats two and four are not sung at all.

The song "Yankee Doodle" has a quite different rhythm.

Sing this

Exercise 3-4

Yank	e	doo	dle	went	to	town	a	rid	ing	on	a	po	ny
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Stuck	a	fea	ther	in	his	hat	and	called	it	mac	a	ro	ni
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
1.....2.....3.....4.....1.....2.....3.....4													

In the first two songs the pickup notes are not half way between beats but are closer to the next beat















Play this

Exercise 3-16

L.....L.....L.....L.....L.....L.....L.....L.....L  
 1.....2.....3.....4.....1.....2.....3.....4.....1  
 . . . . .

Play this

Exercise 3-17

R..L.....R..L.....R..L.....R..L.....R..L.....R..L.....R..L.....R..L  
 1.....2.....3.....4.....1.....2.....3.....4.....1  
 a..1.....a..2.....a..3.....a..4.....a..1.....a..2.....a..3.....a..4.....a..1  
 . . . . .

Exercise 3-17 is the same as Exercise 3-16 except that each beat is preceded by a single right-handed pickup note. The pickup note is closer to the next beat than to the beat before and not half way between beats.

Play this

Exercise 3-18

L....R..R..L....R..R..L....R..R..L....R..R..L....R..R..L....R..R..L....R..R..L  
 1.....2.....3.....4.....1.....2.....3.....4.....1  
 1....an..a..2....an..a..3....an..a..4....an..a..1....an..a..2....an..a..3....an..a..4....an..a..1  
 . . . . .









evenly spaced and there are three clicks to the beat and twelve clicks to the bar. The first triplet (group of three) starts with the left hand on the count of one. The second triplet starts on the count of two with the right hand and so on. There are of course two clicks between beats which fall on no beat of the bar.

Compare Exercise 4-2 with Exercise 3-12.

Like this

R.....R...L

1.....2.....3.....4

R...L...R...L

Exercise 4-3

The rhythms are much alike.

When triplets are played fast it sounds

Like this

Click a de click a de click a de click a de click









not play this one for too long at a stretch except in practice.

Play intermittent triplets--a stop-and-go kind of triplets.

Like this

Exercise 4-10

L...R...L...R.....L...R...L...R.....L...R...L...R.....L...R...L...R  
 1.....2.....3.....4.....1.....2.....3.....4  
 1 an a 2.....3 an a 4.....1 an a 2.....3 an a 4  
 rat a ma tat rat a ma tat rat a ma tat rat a ma tat  
 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

It is triplets, all right, but not continuous triplets. The clicks stop abruptly on each second and fourth beat.

Play a pattern similar to Exercise 4-10 but not the same.

Like this

Exercise 4-11

L...R...L...R.....L...R...L...R.....L...R...L...R.....L...R...L...R  
 4.....1.....2.....3.....4.....1.....2.....3  
 4 an a 1.....2 an a 3.....4 an a 1.....2 an a 3  
 rat a ma tat rat a ma tat rat a ma tat rat a ma tat  
 . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .



I played this one in the army on twenty mile marches. Four platoons of soldiers marched in perfect step. The company commander carried my rifle while I played the marching beat with the bones. Pretty good deal.

Play intermittent triplets and play a right-handed pickup note before each group. Accent beats one and three.

Like this

Exercise 4-14

```

R...L...R...L...R̂.....R...L...R...L...R̂.....R...L...R...L...R̂.....R...L...R...L...R̂
  4.....1.....2.....3.....4.....1.....2.....3
a  4 an a  1      a  2 an a  3      a  4 an a  1      a  2 an a  3
.  .  .  .  .      .  .  .  .  .      .  .  .  .  .      .  .  .  .  .

```

This is the stop-and-go variety of triplets preceded by a right-handed pickup note. There are five clicks but we are still playing triplets.

Play a double right-handed pickup note before each group of three. Accent beats one and three.

Like this

Exercise 4-15

```

R..R..L...R...L...R̂.....R..R..L...R...L...R̂.....R..R..L...R...L...R̂.....R..R..L...R...L...R̂
  4.....1.....2.....3.....4.....1.....2.....3
an a  4 an a  1  an a  2 an a  3  an a  4 an a  1  an a  2 an a  3
.  .  .  .  .      .  .  .  .  .      .  .  .  .  .      .  .  .  .  .

```





### Automatic Triplets

There is another method of playing triplets which is easy to perform but quite difficult to describe. This one is another of the absolute musts of bones playing. With it you can play triplets as fast as you want with one hand or with both hands Together. The energy of the performer is the only factor limiting the speed of the clicks.

It works by rotating the wrists to and fro along with a sympathetic assist from the forearm. As always the one bone remains fixed in place and the other one strikes against it. The fixed bone, the one next to the index finger, is held fixed by the middle finger which is bent over one edge of it squeezing its opposite edge against the heel of the hand at the base of the thumb. The movement of the other bone is powered by the wrist and forearm and guided by the fourth finger.

With the wrist bent far back do this: Rotate the wrist out and away and then back and in without stopping between motions. Keep it up. Make the motion as smooth and as continuous as you can. As soon as the wrist and hand are rotated out and away from you, start them back and in toward you. Keep repeating and sooner or later you will get a sound like

click a de click a de click a de click

It will come. It must. You cannot be a bones performer without playing this beat. When playing it with both hands at the same time they should be rotated outward and away at the same time and then back and in at the same time. Repeat the motions over and over and with no stop between changes of direction of the hands. I call it automatic triplets because if you hold the bones properly and rotate the wrist to and fro properly















Like this

Exercise 4-30

<sup>^</sup>T.R.R.R.R.R.R.R.R.R.R.R.R.<sup>^</sup>T.R.R.R.R.R.R.R.R.R.R.R.R.R.R.R.R.<sup>^</sup>T.R.R.R.R.R.R.R.R.R.R.R.R.R.R.R.R.<sup>^</sup>T.R.R.R.R.R.R.R.R.R.R.R.R.<sup>^</sup>T  
 1.....2.....3.....4.....1.....2.....3.....4.....1  
 . . . . .

It sounds like

Click a de ick a de ick a de ick a de click a de ick a de ick a de ick a de click

1.....2.....3.....4.....1

Play intermittent (stop-and-go) automatic triplets--with one hand or with both hands Together.

Like this

Exercise 4-31

R...R...R...R.....R...R...R...R.....R...R...R...R.....R...R...R...R  
 4.....1.....2.....3.....4.....1.....2.....3

It sounds like

de da le dit          de da le dit          de da le dit          de da le dit

or

rat a ma tat          rat a ma tat          rat a ma tat          rat a ma tat

Play right-handed intermittent, automatic triplets accented by adding left-handed clicks at beats one and three.

Like this

Exercise 4-32

R...R...R...<sup>^</sup>T.....R...R...R...<sup>^</sup>T.....R...R...R...<sup>^</sup>T.....R...R...R...<sup>^</sup>T  
 4.....1.....2.....3.....4.....1.....2.....3

It sounds like

de da le click          de da le click          de da le click          de da le click

Play right-handed, intermittent, automatic triplets accented by adding a left-handed click at all four beats.

Like this

Exercise 4-33

<sup>^</sup>T...R...R...<sup>^</sup>T.....<sup>^</sup>T...R...R...<sup>^</sup>T.....<sup>^</sup>T...R...R...<sup>^</sup>T.....<sup>^</sup>T...R...R...<sup>^</sup>T  
 4.....1.....2.....3.....4.....1.....2.....3  
 . . . .          . . . .          . . . .          . . . .

It sounds like

click a de click          click a de click          click a de click          click a de click





There is one last thing to be pointed out before leaving triplets. In the continuous variety of automatic triplets you will find the double-speed type to be more useful. In most music the six-click-to-the-beat type is easier to play than the three-click-to-the-beat type.

























Play this

Exercise 5-23

R..R..L.....L..L..R.....R..R..L..L..R..R..L.....R..R..L.....L..L..R.....R..R..L..L..R..R..L

1.....2.....3.....4.....1.....2.....3.....4

an a 1    an a 2    an a 3 e an a 4    an a 1    an a 2    an a 3 e an a 4

. . .    . . .    . . . . . . .    . . .    . . .    . . . . . . .

Other beautiful alternating patterns such as this can be worked out.

Let's analyze it again. Leave out the "e" sound of quadruplets and you have double pickup notes.

Like this

Exercise 5-24

From

1 e an a 2 e an a 3 e an a 4 e an a 1

To

1    an a 2    an a 3    an a 4    an a 1



The final technique for playing quadruplets is an alternating pattern. While triplets alternate naturally from hand to hand and from beat to beat, quadruplets do not. In order for quadruplets to alternate hands from beat to beat there will need to be two clicks in a row with the same hand. We will learn it in steps.

### Step 1

Play this

Exercise 5-27

```
L..R..L..L..R.....L..R..L..L..R.....L..R..L..L..R.....L..R..L..L..R
1 e an a 2.....3 e an a 4.....1 e an a 2.....3 e an a 4
. . . . .      . . . . .      . . . . .      . . . . .
L           R           L           R           L           R           L           R
```

Step 2 - Play it the other way around.

Like this

Exercise 5-28

```
R..L..R..R..L.....R..L..R..R..L.....R..L..R..R..L.....R..L..R..R..L
1.....2.....3.....4.....1.....2.....3.....4
R           L           R           L           R           L           R           L
1 e an a 2.....3 e an a 4.....1 e an a 2.....3 e an a 4
. . . . .      . . . . .      . . . . .      . . . . .
R           L           R           L           R           L           R           L
```







**CHAPTER 6**  
**PUTTING THINGS TOGETHER**

In this chapter we review the things we know and arrange them into more musical routines. But first, before we get started, let me tell you what I think about some things. You may already know that bones playing does not enjoy a very good reputation. You work to achieve excellence and people don't understand. You will find yourself being compared to a spoons player or a hamboner or a jews harp player. I once played for a physician friend of mine. He thought I was great. I reminded him of his grandfather who made music by blowing on a leaf. Can you imagine comparing me to some guy blowing on a leaf? It can get discouraging but don't let it get you down. Realize that there are a million squares out there and there is nothing anyone can do about it. As Roger Miller says "squares make the world go round." Worst of all, our reputation is 99.9% deserved. Almost every bones player is so bad that it is embarrassing. Here is the way they play.

click a de click    click a de click

click a de ick a de ick a de click

Just that--the same thing over and over. To me that deserves a grade of double D minus. That means disgusting and dishonest. To use up a listener's time with that kind of junk is insulting. Don't do it. Play well the things I teach you and we will all look good.



























The second and fourth bars are Pattern #1 with a little added excitement at the fourth beat.

Play this

Exercise 6-27

```

R...T.....T.....R...T.....R...L.....R...T.....T.....R...T.....R...L.....
      ^             ^             ^             ^
R...T.....T.....R...T.....R...L.....R...T.....T.....R...T.....R...L
      ^             ^             ^             ^  ^
1.....2.....3.....4.....1.....2.....3.....4
a...1.....2.....a...3.....a...4.....a...1.....2.....a...3.....a...4
. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

```

More two-handed clicks and a double accent at the end.

In all of these Pattern #1 routines we have accented the second beat and the pickup note before the fourth beat.

Like this

Exercise 6-28

```

L.....R.....R...L.....R...L.....R...L
      ^             ^
1.....2.....3.....4.....1
1.....2.....a...3.....a...4.....a...1
. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .

```

Variation is fine if it fits the music. For example:

Like this

Exercise 6-29

```

^           ^           ^
R.....R...L.....R...L.....R...L.....R
1.....2.....3.....4.....1
1      a  2      a  3      a  4      1
.      .  .      .  .      .  .      .
    
```

Pattern #2 has the advantage of requiring two bars for its completion making it less repetitious than Pattern #1.

Play this

Exercise 6-30

```

^           ^
L.....R.....R...L.....R...L.....R...L.....R...L.....R.....
^           ^
L.....R.....R...L.....R...L.....R...L.....R...L.....R
1.....2.....3.....4.....1.....2.....3.....4
1.....2.....a...3.....a...4.....a...1.....a...2.....a...3.....4
.      .      .      .      .      .      .      .      .
    
```

This is Pattern #2 and a repeat of itself.





Play this

Exercise 6-33

```

L...R...L...R.....R...L.....R...L.....R...L...R...L...R...L.....R.....
      ^                ^
L.....R.....R...L.....R...L.....R...L.....R...L.....R...L.....R
1.....2.....3.....4.....1.....2.....3.....4
  
```

These four bars are playing the rhythm of Pattern #2. The accents in the first two bars are the same as in the second two bars.

Play this

Exercise 6-34

```

L.....R.....R...L.....R...L.....R...L.....R...L.....R.....
      ^                ^
L.....R.....R...L.....R...L.....R...L..L..R..R..L..L..R..R..L..L..R..R..L
1.....2.....3.....4.....1.....2.....3.....4
1      2      a 3      a 4      a 1 e an a 2 e an a 3 e an a 4
.      .      .  .      .  .      .  . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .
  
```

This is Pattern #2 for two bars followed by part of Pattern #2 and some quadruplets.

Play this

Exercise 6-35

R..R..L...R...L...R...L...R...L.....R.....R...L.....R...L.....R...L.....R...L.....

R..R..L.....R.....R...L.....R...L.....R...L.....R...L.....R...L.....T

1.....2.....3.....4.....1.....2.....3.....4

The routine in this exercise is mixed up a bit. It illustrates how a bones player might alter the rhythm for a few beats and then recover to a regular pattern as the music continues.



The off-beat is played frequently in military music and in Dixieland music but can be heard also in almost any type of music. In bones playing, the off-beat is usually accented (louder) but in Exercise 3-4 we sang a song in which there was not much difference in the loudness between the beat and the off-beat. Sing Yankee Doodle again and see.

**Play this**

**Exercise 7-3**

	^		^		^		^		^		^		^		^		^
L.....	T.....	L.....	T.....	L.....	T.....	L.....	T.....	L.....	T.....	L.....	T.....	L.....	T.....	L.....	T.....	L.....	T.....
1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	1.....	2.....	3.....	4.....	1.....	2.....
1	an	2	an	3	an	4	an	1	an	2	an	3	an	4	an	4	an
.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.

The left hand is playing eight clicks to the bar and the off-beat is played by both hands Together.

In the next exercise we will play several patterns all of which include a click playing the off-beat and all are quadruplets or parts of quadruplets. You will recall that in triplets and single pickup notes there is no click that falls exactly half way between two beats of the four-beat bar.

## Play these

## Exercise 7-4

1.....2.....3.....4.....1.....2.....3.....4.....1

L....R....L....R....L....R....L....R....L....R....L....R....L....R....L....R....L

L..R..L..R..L..R..L..R..L..R..L..R..L..R..L..R..L..R..L..R..L..R..L..R..L..R..L..R..L

L....R..R..L....R..R..L....R..R..L....R..R..L....R..R..L....R..R..L....R..R..L....R..R..L

L..L..R..R..L..L..R..R..L..L..R..R..L..L..R..R..L..L..R..R..L..L..R..R..L..L..R..R..L

R....L..L..R....L..L..R....L..L..R....L..L..R....L..L..R....L..L..R....L..L..R....L..L..R

L....L..L..R....R..R..L....L..L..R....R..R..L....L..L..R....R..R..L....L..L..R....R..R..L

L..R..L..L..R..L..R..R..L..R..L..L..R..L..R..R..L..R..L..L..R..L..R..R..L..R..L..L..R..L..R..R..L

T..R..R..R..T..R..R..R..T..R..R..R..T..R..R..R..T..R..R..R..T..R..R..R..T..R..R..R..T..R..R..R..T

T..R..R..R..R..R..R..R..T..R..R..R..R..R..R..R..T..R..R..R..R..R..R..R..T..R..R..R..R..R..R..R..T

1.....2.....3.....4.....1.....2.....3.....4.....1

In the final two patterns of Exercise 7-4 there are some two-handed clicks played in automatic quadruplets.

## Play this

## Exercise 7-5

<sup>^</sup>                    <sup>^</sup>                    <sup>^</sup>                    <sup>^</sup>                    <sup>^</sup>                    <sup>^</sup>  
 L.....R.....L.....R.....L..R..L.....R.....L.....R.....L.....R.....L..R..L.....R  
 1.....2.....3.....4.....1.....2.....3.....4  
 1     an    2     an    3 e an    4            1     an    2     an    3 e an    4  
 .     .     .     .     . . .     .            .     .     .     .     . . .     .

In this one the accent jumps from the off-beat to the beat and back again making a very nice sound.

## Play this

## Exercise 7-6

<sup>^</sup>                    <sup>^</sup>                    <sup>^</sup>                    <sup>^</sup>                    <sup>^</sup>                    <sup>^</sup>  
 L.....T.....L.....T.....L..R..L.....T.....L.....T.....L.....T.....L..R..L.....T  
 1.....2.....3.....4.....1.....2.....3.....4  
 1     an    2     an    3 e an    4            1     an    2     an    3 e an    4  
 .     .     .     .     . . .     .            .     .     .     .     . . .     .

This one is the same as Exercise 7-5 but with some two-handed accents.











**CHAPTER 8**  
**FINISHING TOUCHES**

Now we move to a modern rhythm and style often heard today in rock and country rock music.

Learn a new technique.

1. Hold the bones two in each hand, with the bone which is next to the index finger held fixed in place by the middle finger, just as usual.
2. Strike upward with the right-handed pair against the under surface of the bones in the left hand.
3. The sound is produced when the long ends of the right-handed pair strike against the long ends of the two bones in the left hand.
4. On paper this sound will be represented by "X".

Play this

Exercise 8-1

X.....X.....X.....X.....X.....X.....X.....X.....X.....X  
 1.....2.....3.....4.....1.....2.....3.....4.....1

The sound produced in this way is quite different from any so far.

Play this

Exercise 8-2

L.....X.....L.....X.....L.....X.....L.....X.....L  
 1.....2.....3.....4.....1.....2.....3.....4.....1





These samples of patterns using the "X" click illustrate its versatility. Play it with anything. It goes well with all.

The principle of striking two bones against two bones is useful in another way. We can play a roll, much like a drum roll. We'll learn it in steps.

**Step 1.** Play the "X" sound again but with this difference: this time leave a space between the two bones in the left hand and between the two bones in the right hand.

**Step 2.** Wiggle the right wrist to and fro very rapidly. Cause the fixed bone in the right hand to vibrate against the movable bone in both hands.

**Step 3.** Narrow the gap between all the bones so that all four are vibrating against each other.

The buzzing sound produced in this way is what I call a buzz roll and on paper it will be labeled "z" for buzz.

Play this

Exercise 8-4

X<----z---->L.....X<----z---->L.....X<----z---->L.....X<----z---->L

1.....2.....3.....4.....1.....2.....3.....4

1. The "X" shows that the roll starts with all four bones on the counts of one and three.
2. The "L" shows a left-handed clickoff on the counts of two and four.
3. The "z" shows the continuous buzz roll.

Play the buzz roll for an entire four-beat bar.

**Like this**

**Exercise 8-5**

X<-----z----->L

1.....2.....3.....4.....1

**Play this**

**Exercise 8-6**

R..R..L..R..L..X.....X<-----z----->L.....X<-----z----->L

1.....2.....3.....4.....1.....2.....3.....4.....1

This is triplets with a double pickup note and two buzz rolls.

**Play this**

**Exercise 8-7**

R...R.....R...L.....R...X.....X...L.....R...X<-----z----->L

1.....2.....3.....4.....1.....2.....3

This is a pickup note pattern and a buzz roll.



Play this

Exercise 8-8

T..R..R..R..T..R..R..R..X<-----z----->L

1.....2.....3.....4.....1

This is automatic quadruplets with a left-handed accent and a buzz roll.

Play a group of patterns using the "X" sound and buzz rolls.

Like these

Exercise 8-9

a. X.....X.....L.....R.....X.....X.....X.....X.....L.....R.....X<----z---->L

b. T.....L.....R.....X.....X.....L.....R.....X<-----z----->L

c. X.....X.....L.....R.....X.....X.....L.....R.....X<-----z----->L

1.....2.....3.....4.....1.....2.....3.....4

In all cases the buzz roll:

- 1. Starts and continues with all four bones.
- 2. Ends with a left-handed clickoff.

There is another necessary pattern to learn which takes us back again to pickup notes and triplets.

**Play these****Exercise 8-10**

- a. L.....R.....R...L.....R.....R...L
- b. L...R...L...R...L...R...L...R...L...R...L  
1.....2.....3.....4.....1

The rhythm of pickup notes is similar to the rhythm of triplets.

Accent the pickup note.

**Like this****Exercise 8-11**

- R.....<sup>^</sup>R...L.....R.....<sup>^</sup>R...L
- 1.....2.....3.....4.....1

Play the same accent in triplets.

**Like this****Exercise 8-12**

- <sup>^</sup>L...R...L...<sup>^</sup>R...L...<sup>^</sup>R...L...R...<sup>^</sup>L...<sup>^</sup>R
- 1.....2.....3.....4

The note before the third beat is accented much like an accented pickup note.



This prolonged accented pickup note pattern may be a bit difficult to learn but once learned it becomes so easy that it is difficult not to play it. At the end of the exercise the accent shifts from the pickup note to the beat.

This is enough; not all, but enough. Here's wishing you and your listeners good music and lots of fun.

