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DRUM LESSONS IN AALSMEER · SINCE 2011

Notes and rests

Reading and counting in 4/4: the notes, the rests and how to count them out loud. With exercises for the practice pad or the drum kit.



THIS BOOKLET BELONGS TO

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Welcome

WHY THIS BOOKLET

Notes show what you play and when. Rests show when you leave a space. Once you can read both, you can take any rhythm apart. This booklet explains it in the order I use in lessons: first the notes, then the rests, then counting.

HOW TO USE IT

Read a page, count the examples out loud, then play them on a practice pad, a cushion or your drum kit. Most pages end with 'Done when': what you should be able to do before moving on. Take your time. Slow and clean beats fast and sloppy.

COUNT OUT LOUD

It feels odd at first, but it works. When you count out loud you hear straight away where each note belongs. Add a metronome (a free app is fine) at a calm tempo, 70 for example.

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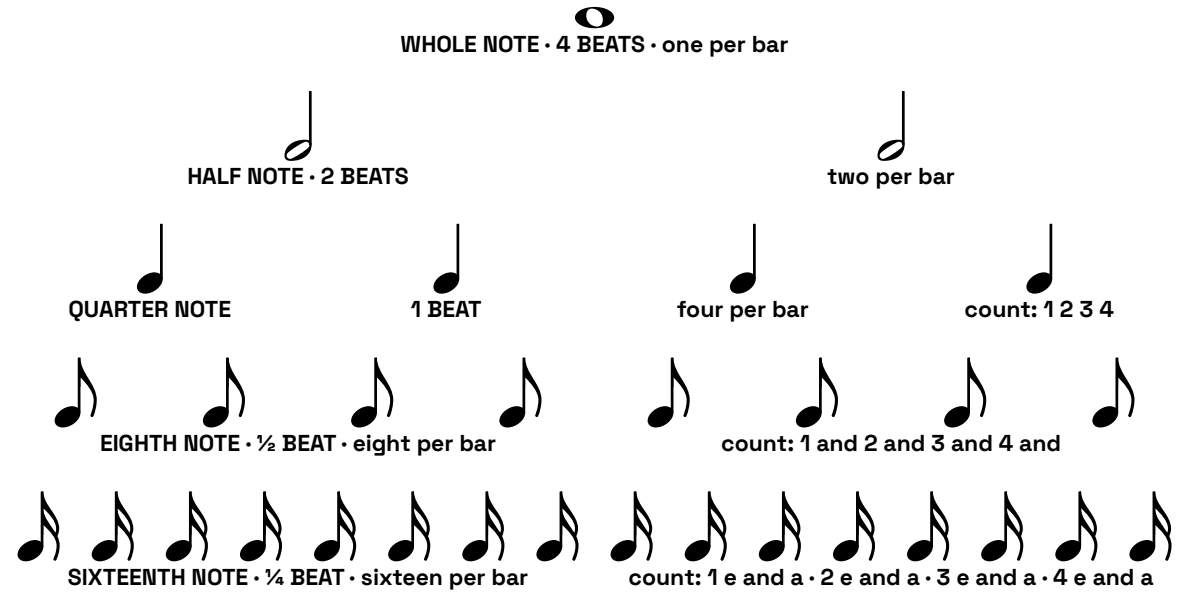
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How long is a note?

Every note has a shape that tells you how long it lasts. We count in 4/4: a bar has four beats and a quarter note is one beat. Every row below lasts exactly one bar.

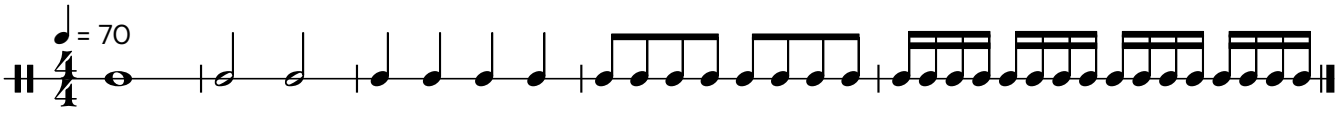
THE NOTE TREE



EVERY ROW LASTS THE SAME

One whole note lasts exactly as long as two half notes, four quarters, eight eighths or sixteen sixteenths. Each step down the tree splits the note in two. Eighths and sixteenths are joined per beat with a beam: two eighths or four sixteenths under one beam last one beat together.

HOW IT SOUNDS ON THE SNARE



DONE WHEN

You can point to all five notes and say how many beats each one lasts.

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How long is a rest?

A rest is a silence that lasts exactly as long as the note with the same name. You play nothing, but you keep counting so you come back in at the right moment.

THE FIVE RESTS

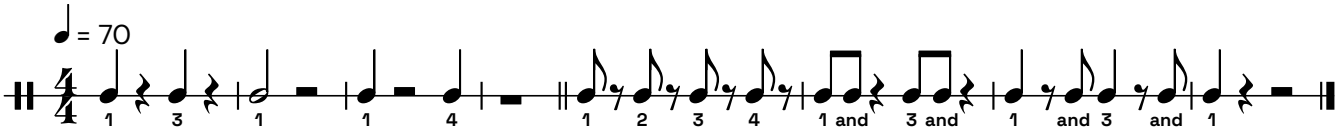


WHOLE REST	HALF REST	QUARTER REST	EIGHTH REST	SIXTEENTH REST
4 beats	2 beats	1 beat	½ beat	¼ beat

HOW TO TELL THEM APART

The whole rest hangs below the line: a hole in the ground, four beats long. The half rest sits on the line: a hat, two beats. The quarter rest is the slanted zigzag: one beat. The eighth rest has one flag (half a beat), the sixteenth rest two (a quarter beat). Just like with notes: every extra flag halves the length.

NOTES AND RESTS MIXED



WATCH OUT

In the second line the notes and rests alternate on '1' and 'and'. Count the 'and' out loud even when you play nothing there. That is exactly where beginners lose the beat.

DONE WHEN

You can point to the five rests, know their length and play the lines above with a metronome without losing count.

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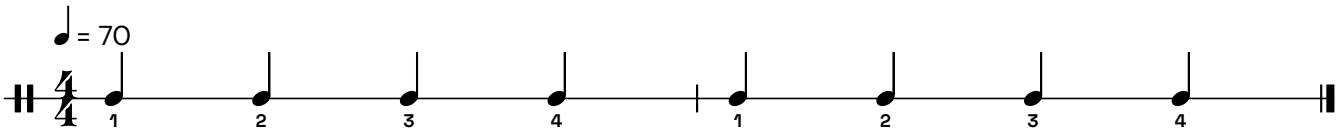
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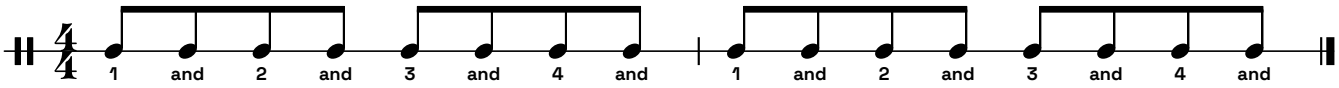
Counting out loud

Counting is the bridge between reading and playing. Every beat gets a word, and so does every subdivision. That way you always know where you are in the bar. These are the words I use in lessons.
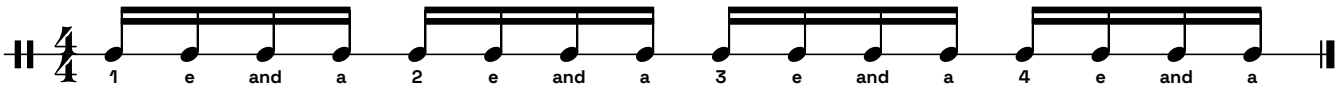
QUARTERS: 1 2 3 4



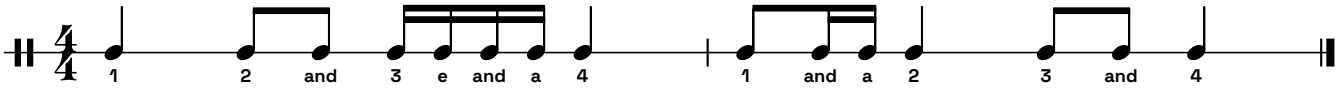
EIGHTHS: 1 AND 2 AND 3 AND 4 AND



SIXTEENTHS: 1 E AND A



MIXED: KEEP COUNTING



TIP

Say each word at exactly the same moment as the stroke. Can't manage it? Then the tempo is too high. Turn the metronome down and build up in steps of five.

DONE WHEN

You can play all four lines at 70 while counting out loud, without stopping.

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The dot and the tie

Two signs make a note longer. You will find them in almost every drum part.

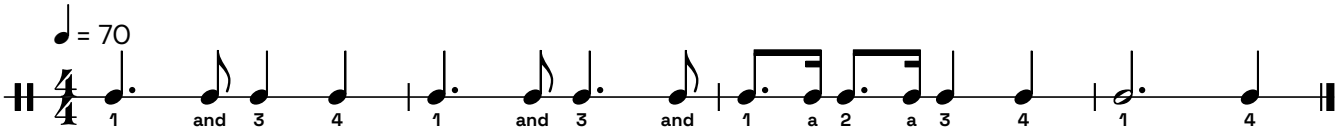
THE DOT: ONE AND A HALF TIMES AS LONG

dotted half note = 2 + 1 = 3 beats

dotted quarter note = 1 + ½ = 1½ beats

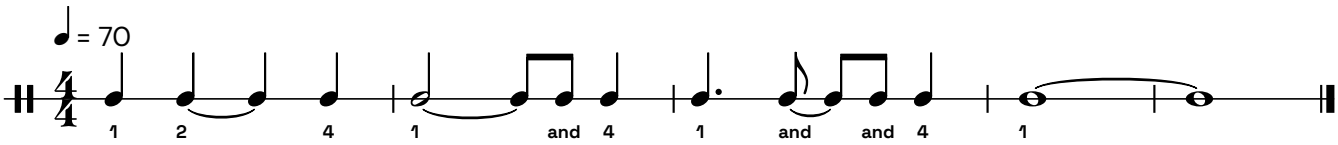
dotted eighth note = ½ + ¼ = ¾ beat

A dot after a note makes it half as long again: the note itself plus half of it. A dotted quarter (1½ beats) is almost always followed by an eighth (½ beat): together exactly two beats. That is the familiar 'long-short' rhythm.



THE TIE: TWO NOTES BECOME ONE

A tie joins two notes in the same place. You play only the first one and hold it for the length of both. That is how a note can run across a bar line.



DONE WHEN

You can work out the three dotted notes and play both lines while counting.

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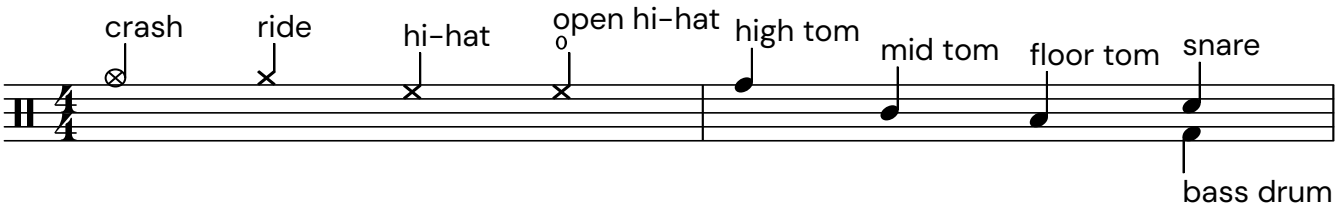
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The drum kit on paper

A drum staff shows instruments, not pitches. The two thick strokes at the start are the drum clef. Crosses are cymbals (hi-hat, ride, crash), dots are drums. The higher on the staff, the higher the sound.

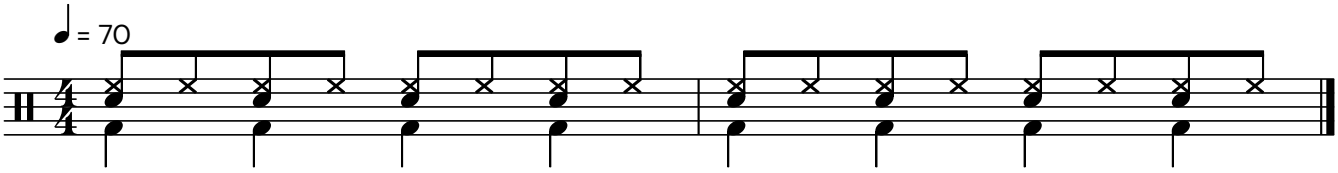
WHERE EACH PART SITS ON THE STAFF



HANDS UP, FEET DOWN

The stems of the hands (hi-hat, snare, toms) point up, those of the feet (bass drum, hi-hat with the foot) point down. So you see at a glance what the hands do and what the feet do. Above the notes you sometimes see R or L: right hand or left hand.

YOUR FIRST GROOVE, READ FROM THE PAGE



Read top to bottom, beat by beat: on '1' the hi-hat, snare and bass drum play together, on 'and' only the hi-hat. Count '1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and' and play each part on its own before you put them together.

DONE WHEN

You can point to every part on the staff and play the groove slowly while counting out loud.

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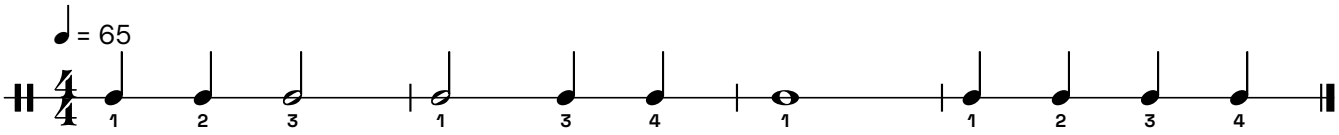
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Practice: read and play

Four short lines for the snare or the practice pad. First count out loud without playing, then clap the rhythm, and only play it once the clapping is right. Metronome at 60 to 70.

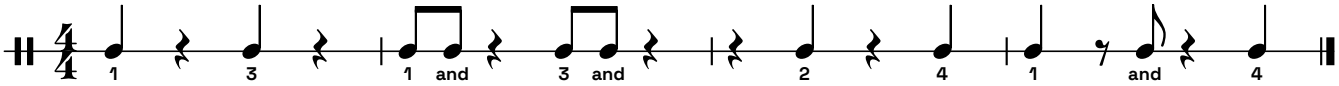
1 · QUARTERS AND HALF NOTES



2 · QUARTERS AND EIGHTHS



3 · WITH RESTS



4 · WITH SIXTEENTHS



DONE WHEN

You can play all four lines without mistakes at 70, counting out loud, three times in a row.

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Glossary

BAR A stretch of music with a fixed number of beats, closed off by a bar line. In 4/4 that is four.

TIME SIGNATURE The two numbers at the start: 4/4 means four beats per bar, and the quarter note is one beat.

BEAT The steady pulse you count along to. Four beats per bar in 4/4.

NOTE A sign that tells you when to play and for how long.

REST A sign that tells you when not to play and for how long. You keep counting.

BEAM The thick line that joins eighths or sixteenths per beat.

FLAG The little curl on a single eighth or sixteenth. Every flag halves the length.

DOT Makes a note or rest half as long again.

TIE Joins two notes into one longer note.

TEMPO How fast the beats go, in beats per minute (bpm). 70 bpm is a calm practice tempo.

METRONOME A device or app that ticks the tempo. Your best practice buddy.

DRUM CLEF The two thick strokes at the start of a drum staff: instruments live here, not pitches.

WHAT NEXT?

At dedrum.studio/en/freebees you will find the poster 'Notes and rests in 4/4' for above your drum kit. Want to learn drums with someone who listens and counts along? I teach drums in Aalsmeer, for children from age 5, teenagers and adults. A trial lesson is free: dedrum.studio/en/proefles.

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