

The Notation

Many drummers play everything by ear and do not use notation.

The notation system used in this book is based on the Indian notation system. It can easily be read by those who aren't familiar with Western musical notation, and it works well for Middle Eastern rhythms.

The system is based on underlines, each underline representing one beat. The letter and numbers on top represent the hits that are explained throughout the course.

The location of the letter on the line determines when to play it. Here is an example of one hit per beat:

 T 1 T 1

Here are two hits per beat. The second letter on each line goes on the second half of the beat, in other words, dividing it into two. It sounds twice as fast as the previous example:

 T1 T1 T1 T1

If the beat has three equal letters on it, as in the following example, it is a triplet (the beat is divided into thirds):

 T1T 1T1 T1T 1T1

Here are four hits per beat:

 T1T1 T1T1 T1T1 T1T1

Here, each beat is divided into one half and two quarters:

 T T1 T T1 T T1 T T1

The big letters signify a loud hit while the small letters are soft and ghost-like:

 D1 1T 11 T1

To get a better grasp of this system, put on a metronome at 70bpm. Tap the beats on the page one at a time, one beat per line, at a steady pace, NO MATTER HOW MANY LETTERS ARE ON

THAT LINE. At the same time, read out loud what is on the lines. For example the following example reads “Tek 1 Tek 1.” Each line the beat stays the same but the hits get faster.

T	1	T	1
T 1	T 1	T 1	T 1
T1T	1T1	T1T	1T1
T1T1	T1T1	T1T1	T1T1

Tapping the beats and chanting the rhythm is a great way of internalizing the rhythm before you try playing it.

As far as the finger hits go, each finger is called a certain number. The superscript above the number tells you where you should hit that finger on the drum.

The * symbolizes a rest, in other words silence. Make sure you leave empty space for that beat – the rests shape the rhythm!

D	*	T	*
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Sometimes there is a rest on half of the beat. In the case below you play the second Tek in the middle of the beat:

D	* T	D	T
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