

Wrangling Rhythms into Our Bodies

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Reading the rhythm on the page is just the start. As handbell ringers/percussionist we need to put the rhythms into our bodies so we can reproduce it in our ringing. Using exercises, we will learn that there is a correlation between the duration of the pitch and the space needed to sound that pitch in rhythm.

These rhythmic exercises can be done individually, as an ensemble as we “Get Our Rhythm On!”

I) **Movement Exercises to feel the relationship between the half, quarter, eighth notes and triplets.**

EQUIPMENT: hand drum or piano to set a tempo/beat

Through walking and tapping on our legs we will feel the relationship of different rhythms in our bodies as they play out at the same time.

Remember to keep you legs moving at all times from step to step

The shorter the note the less movement occurs with your arm as you tap the beat/subdivisions of the beat

A) **Walking the Beat**

- 1) Walk the half note—stepping on beat 1 and 3—keep the legs moving for the duration of the beat.
- 2) Walk the quarter note.
- 3) Walk the quarter note and add Tapping the eighth notes on your thigh with you dominate hand.
- 4) Walk the quarter note and add Tapping the half note on your thigh with your non-dominate hand.
- 5) Walk the quarter note, tap the half note with non-dominate hand and tap the eighth notes with dominate hand.
- 6) Walk the quarter note and add Tapping the triplets on your thigh with you dominate hand.
- 7) Sit and Tap half notes with your non-dominant hand and the quarter note triplets with your dominant hand. Switch hands.

B) Repeat B: 1-5 but change which hand you use to tap the additional rhythms (that is change from the dominate hand to the non-dominate hand)

C) Try these exercises using bells as the eighth, triplet and half note rhythms walking in place to the quarter note rhythm in exercises 1-7.

II) Movement Exercises to experience the spatial relationship between the half, quarter, eight notes and triplets and efficient movement to fit the tempo

EQUIPMENT: 1 tennis ball for each participant
a waist high table if possible (set next to each participant),
a hand drum or piano—for the leader use to set the beat and tempo

Through the bouncing of a tennis ball, we will incorporate into our bodies the physical space that half, quarter, eighth and sixteenth notes require be executed well without rushing or slowing down the beat/tempo. The space the ball needs to fill is related to the space the ball needs to travel/fill in relation to our bodies before damping or restriking.

A) Movement to fit a variety of tempi.

- a. Move any part of your body to fit the tempo set by the percussion instrument. The size of your movements should correlate to the tempo set—faster tempo smaller movements.

B) Getting the Rhythms into Our Bodies

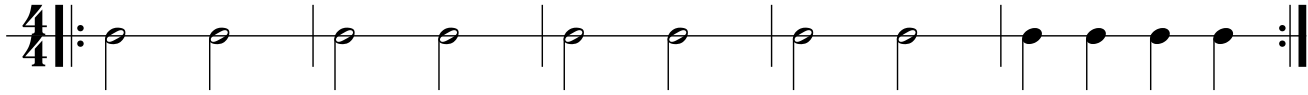
- a. **Bounce-Catch** in this exercise attempt to bounce the ball on beat “1” and catch it on beat 3. This is simulating the space needed for a half note to fill so that you do not reach the 3rd beat too soon and end up “standing” around. What needs to happen with you bouncing technique?
- b. **Bounce-Catch** this should be done is measured rhythm on the beat, on the subdivided beat. This is a “2 beat” exercise to feel the evenness of the beat and subdivision to each other at steady tempo. (bounce on beat “1” catch on beat “2”)
- c. **Bounce-Catch; Bounce, Bounce-Catch** this is done at a steady tempo; the double bounce represents a subdivision of the beat—in this case eighth note duration. The double bounce needs to happen in the same duration of time as the single bounce. What do you need to do to have the double bounce happen in the same amount of time as the single bounce?
- d. **Bounce-Catch; Bounce, Bounce-Catch; Bounce, Bounce, Bounce, Bounce-Catch** we have moved onto the sixteenth note and the space we need to use to make 4 bounces happen in the same amount of time as 2 bounces or 1 bounce. What do we do to make the 4 bounces happen in the same duration of time as 1 bounce?

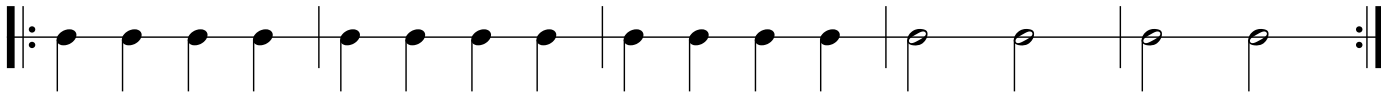
C) Putting these exercises into practice with Rhythm Sequences

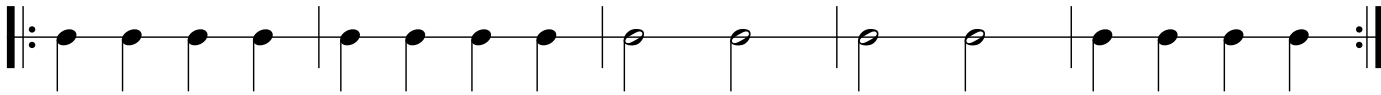
- a. Beginning with a leisurely tempo start with the ‘Rhythms for Bouncing a Ball’ sheet exercise 1, each exercise is repeated, and the leader will set the tempo with the drum or piano. Work through exercise 1-3 until you feel comfortable change your bounce style between half and quarter notes.
- b. Move to exercise 4, 5 and 6 to explore the spatial relationships between the eighth, quarter and half note. Once you feel comfortable with these relationships move onto the next exercises.
- c. Exercises 7 and 8 allow you to explore the spatial needs of the sixteenth note and how it relates to the eighth notes.
- d. As you learn and feel comfortable with the spatial relationship between the distance traveled and note duration speed up the tempo.

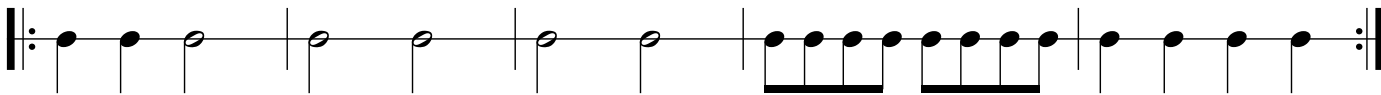
- D) Try these exercises using a bell in the C5-D6 range; repeat exercises 4, 6 and 8 making sure the bell is traveling through space in an appropriately sized circle, so it does not stop moving “waiting” for the next beat to be damped or be struck again **NOR** come to the next beat too late.

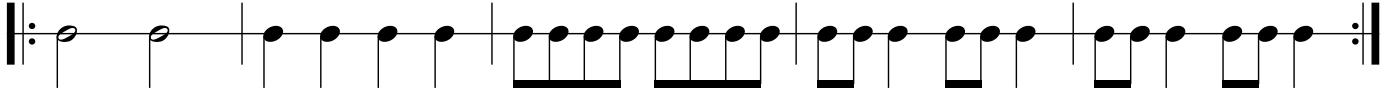
Rhythms for Bouncing a Ball

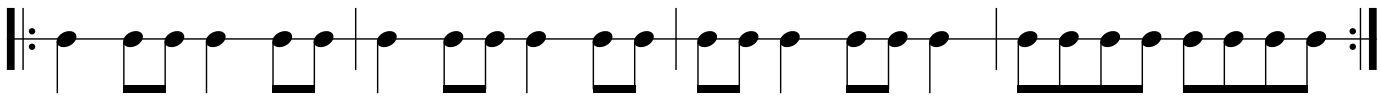
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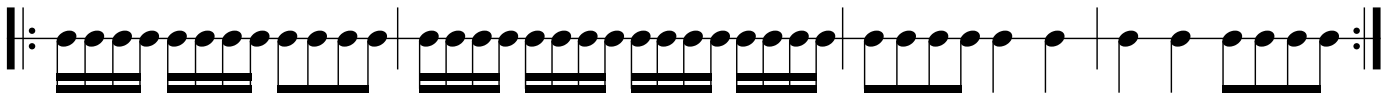
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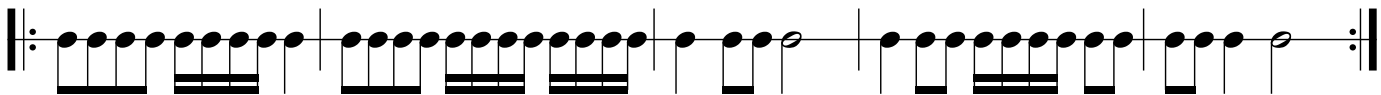
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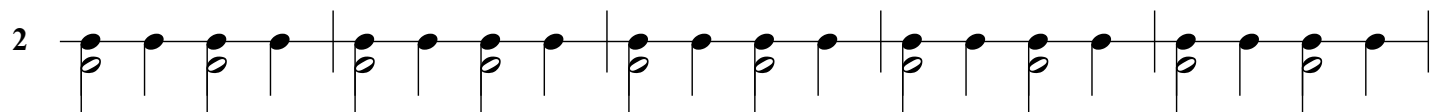
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Rhythms for Walking, and Tapping

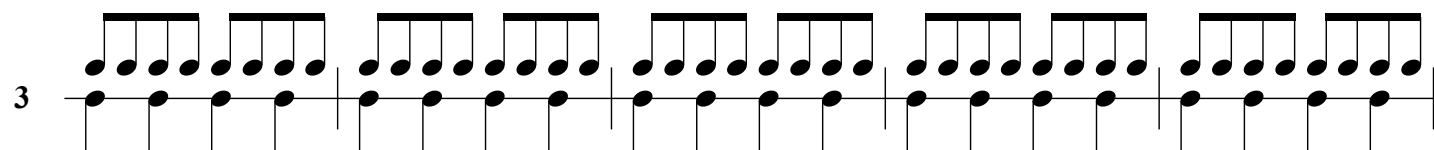
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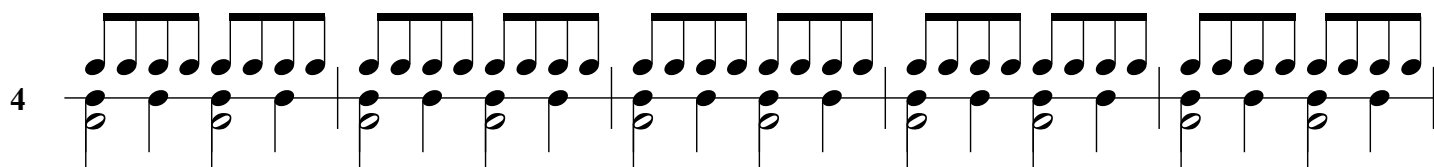
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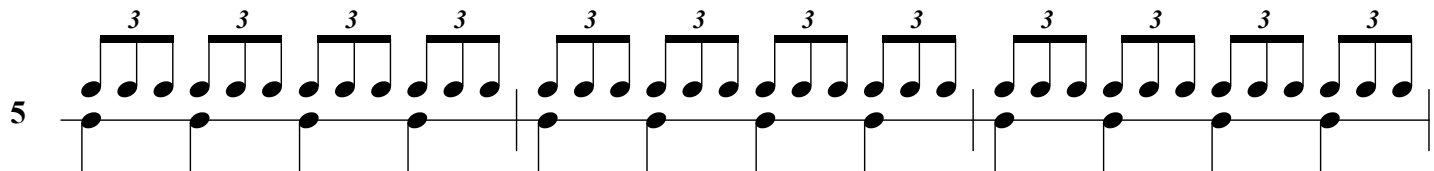
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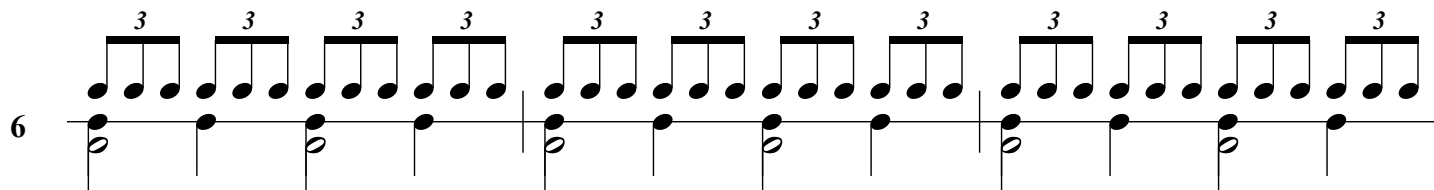
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