
A Hand-Clappin', Foot-Stompin' Funky Good Time

Four-Limb Independence for Handbell Musicians

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Two-Limb Studies

Now let's move on to using two limbs. There are six possible pairs of limbs: RF-RH, LF-LH, RF-LH, LF-RH, RF-LF, RH-LH.

- Do the single-limb examples again, but alternating between the six combinations listed
- Do them again, but start on the opposite hand or foot (ie. instead of going RF-RH, go RH-RF)
- Do them again, but do them with the limbs paired (ie. RF+RH alternating with LF+LH, then RF+LF alternating with RH+LH)

Three-Limb Studies

There are four possible three-limb combinations: RF-RH-LH, LF-LH-RH, RF-LH-LF, RF-RH-LF. Further variations are possible by reversing the sequence of the combinations, and even more are possible by starting the sequence on a different limb.

- Do the single-limb examples again, going sequentially between three limbs
- Do them again, but in the reverse direction
- Do them again, but reverse direction between repeats (ie. first time through, go RF-RH-LH and the 2nd time through go RF-LH-RH)
- Do them again, but start on a different limb (There are three possible starting points for each combination)
- Do them again, starting on a different limb AND reversing direction between repeats
- *Added challenge:* Do them again, but this time do the limbs in pairs as you go around the triangle. (ie. RF+RH—RH+LH—LH+RF)
- *Added challenge II:* Do that again, but reverse direction between repeats



Four-Limb Studies

Using four limbs opens up whole new worlds of possibilities. There are 24 possible sequences—six per starting limb—and that’s not even counting throwing in pairs or triples!

Those 24 sequences are:

1. RF — RH — LH — LF
2. RF — RH — LF — LH
3. RF — LH — RH — LF
4. RF — LH — LF — RH
5. RF — LF — LH — RH
6. RF — LF — RH — LH

7. LF — LH — RH — RF
8. LF — LH — RF — RH
9. LF — RH — LH — RF
10. LF — RH — RF — LH
11. LF — RF — LH — RH
12. LF — RF — RH — LH

13. RH — RF — LH — LF
14. RH — RF — LF — LH
15. RH — LF — RF — LH
16. RH — LF — LH — RH
17. RH — LH — LF — RF
18. RH — LH — RF — LF

19. LH — RF — RH — LF
20. LH — RF — LF — RH
21. LH — LF — RF — RH
22. LH — LF — RH — RF
23. LH — RH — LF — RF
24. LH — RH — RF — LF

As before, let's start with our single-limb rhythms, but doing them with the four-limb sequences. Start easy and repeat the same sequence through the entire list of exercises before moving to combinations of sequences, or—if you're feeling brave—jump right in and mix up the sequences in any order you wish!

Once we've gotten a handle on using all four limbs, we're going to start doing the sequences using real music rather than generic rhythmic exercises. We'll start with easier rhythms and move to more complex ones.

On This Day Earth Shall Ring, arr. by Cathy Moglebust

Choristers Guild, L3. Full Score = CGB460, HB Part = CGB461.

There is a 12 bar intro before the melody enters.

There is a 6 bar interval before the melody repeats.

Now the Green Blade Riseth, arr. by Kevin McChesney

Agape Hope Publishing, L3. Code No. 1892.

There is a 12 bar intro before the melody enters.

The musical notation consists of four staves, each representing a measure of the 12-bar introduction. The time signature is 2/4. The notes are as follows:

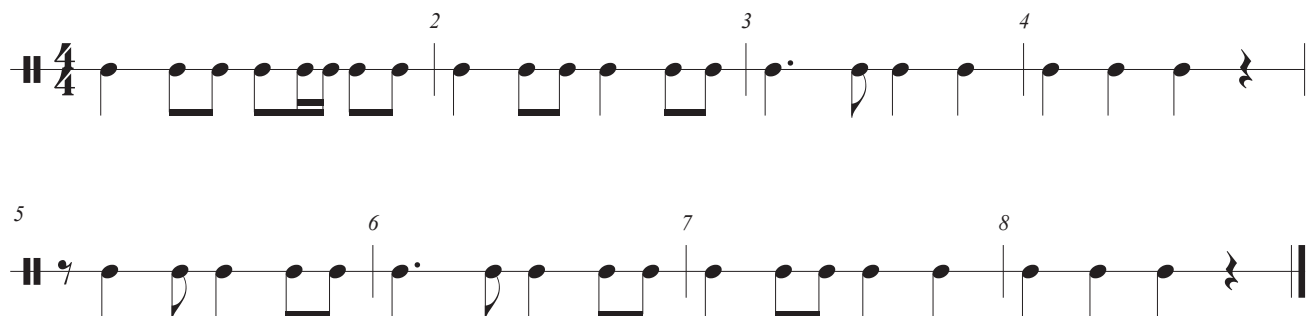
- Staff 1 (Measures 1-4): Measure 1: quarter note G4, quarter note A4. Measure 2: quarter note B4, quarter note C5. Measure 3: quarter note D5, quarter note E5. Measure 4: quarter note F5, quarter note G5.
- Staff 2 (Measures 5-8): Measure 5: quarter note G5, quarter note F5. Measure 6: quarter note E5, quarter note D5. Measure 7: quarter note C5, quarter note B4. Measure 8: quarter note A4, quarter note G4.
- Staff 3 (Measures 9-12): Measure 9: quarter note G4, quarter note A4. Measure 10: quarter note B4, quarter note C5. Measure 11: quarter note D5, quarter note E5. Measure 12: quarter note F5, quarter note G5.
- Staff 4 (Measures 13-16): Measure 13: quarter note G5, quarter note F5. Measure 14: quarter note E5, quarter note D5. Measure 15: quarter note C5, quarter note B4. Measure 16: quarter note A4, quarter note G4.

There is a 3 bar interval before the melody repeats.

Korobeiniki, arr. by Matthew Prins

From the Top, L3. Catalog #20163

There is NO intro before the melody enters.



*The melody plays twice, then there is an 8 bar interval,
then the melody plays one time, then there is another 8 bar interval,
then the melody plays twice again.*

NOTE: *The melody accelerates each time it plays!*

Up to this point, our examples have repeated the melody with an interval between repeats to give us time to “reset” and get ready. Our next example is 32 measures long with no time to rest. Practice it until you can play through without stopping!

The Entertainer, arr. by Jane Kristenson

From the Top, Quartet EM. Catalog #1060

There is NO intro before the melody enters.

1 2 3 4

5 6 7 8

9 10 11 12

13 14 15 16

17 18 19 20

21 22 23 24

25 26 27 28

29 30 31 32

This next example starts with a “straight” rhythm, then changes to syncopated.

Popcorn, arr. by Amy Maakestad

From the Top, Level 3. HB Part = Catalog # 20569, HC & BW Part = Catalog # 20569-C

There is a 6 bar intro before the melody enters.

Repeat this rhythm 4 times before moving on to the syncopated version.

The musical notation for "Popcorn" is presented on two staves. The first staff begins with a 4/4 time signature and a 6-measure introduction. The melody starts with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. This is followed by a repeat sign. The first rhythmic pattern consists of four measures of eighth notes: G4-A4-B4-G4, A4-B4-G4-A4, B4-A4-G4-B4, and A4-G4-F4-G4. The second rhythmic pattern also consists of four measures of eighth notes: G4-A4-B4-G4, A4-B4-G4-A4, B4-A4-G4-B4, and A4-G4-F4-G4. The second staff continues the melody with a 4-measure pattern of eighth notes: G4-A4-B4-G4, A4-B4-G4-A4, B4-A4-G4-B4, and A4-G4-F4-G4. This is followed by a 4-measure pattern of eighth notes: G4-A4-B4-G4, A4-B4-G4-A4, B4-A4-G4-B4, and A4-G4-F4-G4. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Now let's introduce changing time signatures.

Dorian Dance, by Michael Joy

Jeffers Publishing, L4+. JHS9365.

There is a 9 bar intro before the melody enters.

The melody repeats immediately.

The musical notation for "Dorian Dance" is presented on two staves. The first staff begins with a 9-measure introduction in 8/8 time. The melody starts with a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note C5. This is followed by a quarter note B4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note G4. The second measure of the intro consists of a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The third measure consists of a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note A4. The fourth measure consists of a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The fifth measure consists of a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note A4. The sixth measure consists of a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The seventh measure consists of a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note A4. The eighth measure consists of a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The ninth measure consists of a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note A4. The piece then changes to 4/4 time for the first measure of the melody, which consists of a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The second measure of the melody consists of a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note A4. The third measure of the melody consists of a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The fourth measure of the melody consists of a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note A4. The piece then changes to 2/4 time for the fifth measure of the melody, which consists of a quarter note G4 and a quarter note A4. The sixth measure of the melody consists of a quarter note B4 and a quarter note C5. The seventh measure of the melody consists of a quarter note G4 and a quarter note A4. The eighth measure of the melody consists of a quarter note B4 and a quarter note C5. The ninth measure of the melody consists of a quarter note G4 and a quarter note A4. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Finally, our most complicated rhythm yet!

Gaudeamus, by Arnold Sherman

Jeffers Publishing, L4+. JHS9365.

There is NO intro before the melody enters.

The musical notation consists of five staves of music, each starting with a double bar line and a 4/4 time signature. The notation is as follows:

- Staff 1: Measures 1-4. Measure 1: 8 eighth notes. Measure 2: 8 eighth notes with a tie between the 4th and 5th notes. Measure 3: 8 eighth notes with a tie between the 4th and 5th notes. Measure 4: 8 eighth notes with a tie between the 4th and 5th notes.
- Staff 2: Measures 5-8. Measure 5: 8 eighth notes. Measure 6: 8 eighth notes with a tie between the 4th and 5th notes. Measure 7: 8 eighth notes with a tie between the 4th and 5th notes. Measure 8: 8 eighth notes with a tie between the 4th and 5th notes.
- Staff 3: Measures 9-12. Measure 9: 8 eighth notes. Measure 10: 8 eighth notes with a tie between the 4th and 5th notes. Measure 11: 8 eighth notes with a tie between the 4th and 5th notes. Measure 12: 8 eighth notes with a tie between the 4th and 5th notes.
- Staff 4: Measures 13-16. Measure 13: 8 eighth notes. Measure 14: 8 eighth notes with a tie between the 4th and 5th notes. Measure 15: 8 eighth notes with a tie between the 4th and 5th notes. Measure 16: 8 eighth notes with a tie between the 4th and 5th notes.
- Staff 5: Measures 17-19. Measure 17: 8 eighth notes. Measure 18: 8 eighth notes with a tie between the 4th and 5th notes. Measure 19: A whole note.

Conclusion

Mastering four-limb independence is good not only for rhythm skills, but also for brain interconnectivity. We have so many hidden opportunities to practice these skills in our daily lives: in our cars while listening to the radio (if you drive an automatic transmission, you have three limbs available!), while standing in line at the grocery store, etc. Try to incorporate rhythm drills into your daily life, even if for only a few minutes at a time. Be creative! Your brain will thank you.

RESOURCES:

Amad, Ali, et al. "Motor Learning Induces Plasticity in the Resting Brain-Drumming Up a Connection." *OUP Academic*, Oxford University Press, 3 Mar. 2016, <http://doi.org/10.1093/cercor/bhw048>.

Marsh, George. *Inner Drumming: Drumset Exercises for Developing Body/Mind Awareness*. Sher Music, 2016.

