

The Six Stroke Roll

Part 4: Linear Licks



So far every note within the six stroke roll has been played with our hands. Now we're going to start playing some of the notes down on our bass drum instead. The term "linear" refers to a playing style where no two limbs are striking a note at the same time. Although the regular six stroke roll (played with the hands) is technically linear, drummers tend to reserve the term for patterns that involve not only the hands but the feet (or a foot) too.

Below is a list of different linear combinations that you can try, some of the stickings closely resemble the six stroke roll, while others may seem a little further removed from the original sticking. You'll find some easier than others and you'll likely prefer the sound of certain patterns. I recommend trying them all, they're are at least a good coordination workout, but then pick a few of your favourites to develop further and integrate into your playing.

All the notes in the following patterns are intended to be played with an even spacing (see part 2)...



Ex.1 R = right hand L = left hand K = kick drum

A) > > >
R K L R R L

B) > > >
R L K R R L

C) > > >
R L L K R L

D) > > >
R L L R K L

E) > > > >
R K K R R L

F) > > > >
R L K K R L

G) > > > >
R L L K K L

H) > > > >
R K L K R L

I) > > > >
R L K R K L

J) > > > >
R K L R K L

K) > > > >
R L L R R K

L) > > > >
K L L R R L

M) > > > >
K L L R R K



Once you can play those linear stickings, or you're at least comfortable with a few of them, it's time to start applying them as fills. Over the next couple of pages I've written out some of the linear stickings as 8th note triplet, 16th note and sextuplet based fills.

In the following examples I'll be using a few of **my** favourites. There are too many to write out playing examples for all of them in every note rate. You can either work on the ones that I've chosen or decide on your favourites and push ahead with those.

Each example is written for snare and bass drum, but of course, feel free to voice the notes all over your drumset.

Ex.2 (backing track available: "six-stroke-rolls-pt4-jazz")

8th note triplet licks in a jazz swing context...

H

jazz swing feel...

R K L K R L R K L K R L

K

jazz swing feel...

R L L R R K R L L R R K

Ex.3 (backing track available: "six-stroke-rolls-pt4-funk")

16th note triplet fills in a funky 4/4 context...

C

funk groove...

R L L K R L R L L K R L R L L K R L R L L K R L



● F

funk groove...

R L K K R L R L K K R L R L K K R L R L K K R L

● A

funk groove...

R K L R R L R K L R R L R K L R R L R K L R R L

● Ex.4 (backing track available: "six-stroke-rolls-pt4-rock")

16th note fills in a straight 4/4 context...

● E

straight rock feel...

R K K R R L R K K R R L R K K R

● J

straight rock feel...

R K L R K L R K L R K L R K L R



Ex.5 (Nine Note Sticking)

Getting even further away from the original six stroke roll... I like adding an additional three notes to create nine note stickings.

Let's add an additional R L L (from part 3) to the end of one of our six stroke linear licks. You can add these three extra notes to the end (or beginning) of any one of the stickings listed on page 1. I'm going to use "C" as an example.

> > > >
R L L K R L + R L L

...gives us our new 9 note lick: > > > >
R L L K R L R L L

Below is our new 9 note lick applied to a songo latin feel. I've written the lick as 8th note triplets over a couple of cut-common bars. In doing this we can play two complete nine note licks followed by a six note lick.

Once again I've written the fill for snare and bass drum but you should experiment by voicing the notes around your drumset.

(backing track available: "six-stroke-rolls-pt4-songo")

songo feel (2:3)...

R L L K R L R L L K R L R L L R L L K R L