

Fills

A fill, or fill-in, is any variation to the steady beat being played. Usually the term implies to play around the drums. Here are some one bar examples:

The image displays four musical staves, each representing a different drum fill pattern in 4/4 time. The first staff shows a steady eighth-note pattern. The second staff shows a steady eighth-note pattern followed by a sixteenth-note triplet. The third staff shows a steady eighth-note pattern followed by a sixteenth-note triplet. The fourth staff shows a steady eighth-note pattern with various triplet markings.

On the following page the word **FILL** is written over eighth notes, sixteenth notes and triplets. Ad lib those notes around the drum set as shown above. In measure 16 you will see *slash marks* to show where the fill is. Ad lib, **but keep it simple**.

Musical notation for a drum fill example starting at measure 1. The notation is on a single staff with a drum set icon. It shows a 4/4 time signature. The first two measures contain a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with 'x' marks above them, indicating cymbal hits. The third and fourth measures are marked with a double bar line and a slash, indicating a two-measure rest. The fifth measure is labeled 'FILL' and contains a sequence of eighth notes.

Musical notation for a drum fill example starting at measure 5. The notation is on a single staff with a drum set icon. It shows a 4/4 time signature. The first two measures contain a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with 'x' marks above them. The third and fourth measures are marked with a double bar line and a slash. The fifth measure is labeled 'FILL' and contains a sequence of eighth notes.

Musical notation for a drum fill example starting at measure 9. The notation is on a single staff with a drum set icon. It shows a 4/4 time signature. The first two measures contain a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with 'x' marks above them. The third and fourth measures are marked with a double bar line and a slash. The fifth measure is labeled 'FILL' and contains a sequence of eighth notes, with the first four notes grouped by a bracket and labeled '3', indicating a triplet.

Musical notation for a drum fill example starting at measure 13. The notation is on a single staff with a drum set icon. It shows a 4/4 time signature. The first two measures contain a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with 'x' marks above them. The third and fourth measures are marked with a double bar line and a slash. The fifth measure is labeled 'FILL' and contains a sequence of eighth notes, with the first two notes marked with 'x' above them.

Musical notation for a drum fill example starting at measure 17. The notation is on a single staff with a drum set icon. It shows a 4/4 time signature. The first two measures contain a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with 'x' marks above them. The third and fourth measures are marked with a double bar line and a slash. The fifth measure is labeled 'FILL' and contains a sequence of eighth notes, with the first two notes marked with 'x' above them.

Musical notation for a drum fill example starting at measure 21. The notation is on a single staff with a drum set icon. It shows a 4/4 time signature. The first two measures contain a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with 'x' marks above them. The third and fourth measures are marked with a double bar line and a slash. The fifth measure is labeled 'FILL' and contains a sequence of eighth notes, with the first two notes marked with 'x' above them.

Most often, fills take up less than one measure and they are commonly followed with the the crash cymbal on the "1" count. Here are some two bar examples using the crash:

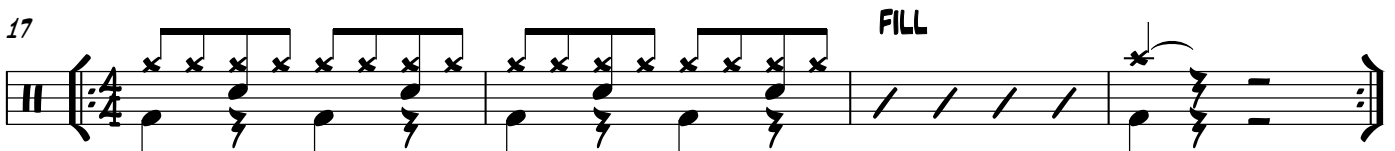
Musical notation for a two-measure drum fill example starting at measure 25. The notation is on a single staff with a drum set icon. It shows a 4/4 time signature. The first measure contains a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with 'x' marks above them. The second measure is labeled 'FILL' and contains a sequence of eighth notes, with the first note marked with 'x' above it.

Musical notation for a two-measure drum fill example starting at measure 29. The notation is on a single staff with a drum set icon. It shows a 4/4 time signature. The first measure contains a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with 'x' marks above them. The second measure is labeled 'FILL' and contains a sequence of eighth notes, with the first note marked with 'x' above it.

For more variety, use rests in your fills to create space. Here are some one bar examples to be practiced around the drum set. Each fill is followed by a crash cymbal.



Play "time" then ad lib your own fills. For example:



FILL

Staff 1: Musical notation for measures 1-4. Measures 1-4 contain quarter notes with 'x' marks above them. Measure 2 has a slash below the note. Measure 3 has a slash below the note. Measure 4 has four slashes below the staff.

5 Staff 2: Musical notation for measures 5-8. Measures 5-8 contain quarter notes with 'x' marks above them. Measure 8 has a slur over the note and a slash below the staff.

9 Staff 3: Musical notation for measures 9-12. Measures 9-12 contain quarter notes with 'x' marks above them. Measure 12 has a slash below the note.

13 Staff 4: Musical notation for measures 13-16. Measures 13-16 contain quarter notes with 'x' marks above them. Measure 16 has a slash below the note.

17 Staff 5: Musical notation for measures 17-20. Measures 17-20 contain eighth notes with 'x' marks above them. Measure 20 has a slash below the note.

21 Staff 6: Musical notation for measures 21-24. Measures 21-24 contain eighth notes with 'x' marks above them. Measure 24 has a slash below the note.

25 Staff 7: Musical notation for measures 25-28. Measures 25-28 contain eighth notes with 'x' marks above them. Measure 28 has a slash below the note.

29 Staff 8: Musical notation for measures 29-32. Measures 29-32 contain eighth notes with 'x' marks above them. Measure 32 has a slash below the note.

33 Staff 9: Musical notation for measures 33-36. Measures 33-36 contain eighth notes with 'x' marks above them. Measure 36 has a slash below the note.

37 Staff 10: Musical notation for measures 37-40. Measures 37-40 contain eighth notes with 'x' marks above them. Measure 40 has a slash below the note.