

# Shuffle

The Shuffle is a triplet-based rhythm which gets its feel from the first and third note of each triplet in every beat.

The diagram illustrates the Shuffle rhythm over four beats. It is organized into three rows and four columns, with columns labeled 1, 2, 3, and 4 at the top.

- Quarter Notes:** Each column contains a single quarter note.
- Triplets:** Each column contains a triplet of eighth notes, indicated by a bracket above the notes and the number '3' above the bracket.
- Shuffle:** Each column contains a shuffle rhythm consisting of a quarter note followed by an eighth note, indicated by a bracket above the notes and the number '3' above the bracket.

The rhythmic accompaniment for early jazz and blues is traced back to the marches of New Orleans. Drummers kept time and accompanied early forms of jazz and blues on the snare drum. This rhythmic accompaniment was primarily a triplet-based swing/shuffle feel. As these musical styles developed, the trap kit (drumset) was also beginning to take shape and drummers began to explore a wide variety of time-keeping possibilities. From this point on, drummers began to develop and set the groundwork for modern drumming as we know it today.

Today, shuffle grooves are a common rhythmic accompaniment in a wide variety of styles including: Gospel, Rock, Country, Reggae, Blues, Boogie, R&B, Rockabilly, Jazz, Go-Go, Hip-Hop and more. Within the style of Blues, there are various subgenres: Delta Blues, Chicago Blues, Texas Blues, Memphis Blues, Piedmont Blues etc. The drumset accompaniment for each style of Blues has subtle yet evident differences. The best way to begin to understand the subtle differences of each variety of Blues and shuffles in others styles, is to listen to and investigate each style — listening is essential.

***“I like to play shuffles.  
It’s a hard feel to get happening,  
and there are a million ways to do it.”***

— Dave Weckl, *Modern Drummer*, April 1998