



Basic Superimposed Metric Modulation - 4 Over 3

I am going to suggest three basic exercises to get you used to the 4/3 polyrhythm. A polyrhythm is when two or more rhythms are being played at the same time. The two rhythms always meet at certain points, and at this point the polyrhythm derives its name. The first exercise to get your sticks around involves playing sixteenth notes phrased in threes, between the ride cymbal and snare, with the hihat on quarter notes. Although it is not notated, accent the ride cymbal.

Drum Kit

Next, play the same thing again, but without the two snare hits in between each ride cymbal:

Drum Kit

Finally, leave out the bass drum. What we have arrived at is the essence of the 4/3 polyrhythm and the most important exercise to master in terms of 'feeling' the flow of time correctly.

Drum Kit

Whilst keeping your hi-hat playing the 1/4 note, count one through eight with the ride cymbal hits, and place a snare drum on count three and count seven:

Count: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Drum Kit

Now add a bass drum on beat one and beat five:

Count: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

Drum Kit

This is our first 4/3 groove. Contrast it with two bars of 'normal' time and see how the groove appears to slow down when you shift to playing it as a 4/3 polyrhythm.

Drum Kit

Dr.

Lets look at two additional grooves. The first additional groove places a bass drum on beats one and two, and five and six:

Count:

Drum Set

Dr.

The second additional groove places a bass drum on beats one, four, five and eight:

Count:

Drum Set

Dr.

Potentially, there are limitless grooves that can be played as a 4/3 polyrhythm, so go crazy and try some of your own. Remember. He who dares, wins.