

1 Repeating the notes

By Daniel Schell, excerpt of Chapter 17 of 'My Space' (2007)

Repeating notes is a source of problems for the tapper. If he plays repeated notes with one finger, he will create a dry or *staccato* sound. In order to obtain a nice legato sound, he will have to alternate fingers. Two main cases can be observed: Alternate fingers on one note, or alternate fingers on different notes.

P2 4 1/ 2 4 1/ 3 4




Figure 1: The tapper wants to play C Major in Position P2/C

Now he wants to repeat each note :He could choose to repeat all notes with the same finger.

2 2 4 4 1 1 2 2 4 4 1 1 3 3 4 4 4 4 3 3 1 1 4 4 2 2 1 1 4 4 2 2




Figure 2: Repetition with the same finger. The hand stays in position P2/C , but the sound is staccato.

He can also alternate always the same fingers but then he has to change permanently of position P.

2 1 2 1 2 1 2 1 2 1 2 1 2 1 2 1




Figure 3: Alternate always fingers 2 1 produces a better sound but asks for permanent P changes.

2 Staying in position and alternating fingers: the good way!

And here we give the solution:

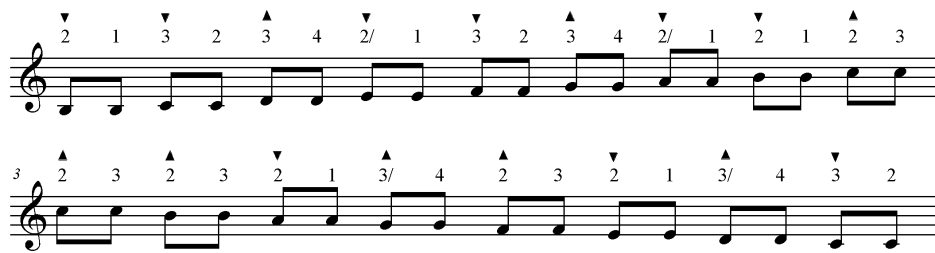


Figure 4: Observe the regularity of the stroke patterns when the scales are arranged with three notes per string: the pattern starts with two of a sort then the opposite.

A full discussion of these rules is given in ‘My Space’ but we give it here in short:

Rule 1 :

An even number of repetitions changes the position, whereas an uneven number keeps it. Repeating two notes changes the P, Repeating three notes keeps it.

3 Ascending and descending strokes

Let us define **n-taps** as sets of successive alternate taps. For instance, 2-taps for two taps, 3-taps for three and so on....

We can define Ascending 2-taps , notated A or ▲ , as the ones where the second finger has a number superior to the first one. We can similarly define descending 2-taps, notated by the sign V or ▼ . as the ones where the second finger has a number inferior to the first one.

We do not have to confuse ▲ and ▼ 2-taps with ascending and descending hand **movements**

Rule 2: In order to minimize repetition, use ▼ 2-taps in ascending motion and ▲ 2-taps in descending. In other words, the 2-taps motion should be contrary to the hand motion.

Rule 3 : The last of the two repeating fingers should be in P before a string change. This rule is equivalent to a shortest path rule for the hand.

This rule 3 has priority over rule 2.

Intuitive rule : In case of runs with three 2-taps per string, we observe that we always start with two 2-taps in the same direction, and the last 2-taps in the opposite direction. In the case of runs with four strokes p 2-taps per string, the process is analogue: the first three 2-taps are in the same direction and the last one opposite.

4 Alternating various patterns of repetition



Figure 5: Phrases with various patterns of repetitions produce interesting rhythmic accents. Indian musicians use those extensively in their fast *tana*-s.

5 Alternating fingers on different notes on the same fret

Another problem with repeated fingering is observed in runs containing notes on the same fret. In this case one uses the E finger before or after the P finger, where E stands for exceptional, out of position.



Figure 6 Fingering the interval of fourths. In ascending runs, the E finger plays before the P. In descending runs, the E plays after the P

Rule 5: In ascending runs containing notes on the same frets, play the E finger before the P. In descending, the P before the E.

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