

## Chapter 9

# Introduction to Subdivisions in Compound Meters<sup>1</sup>

### **Introduction to Subdivisions in Compound Meters**

Subdivisions in compound meters (6/8, 9/8, 12/8 etc.) generally feature divisions of three eighth notes to each beat or pulse. Naturally each eighth note may then be divided with sixteenth notes:

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<sup>1</sup>This content is available online at <<http://cnx.org/content/m22811/1.1/>>.

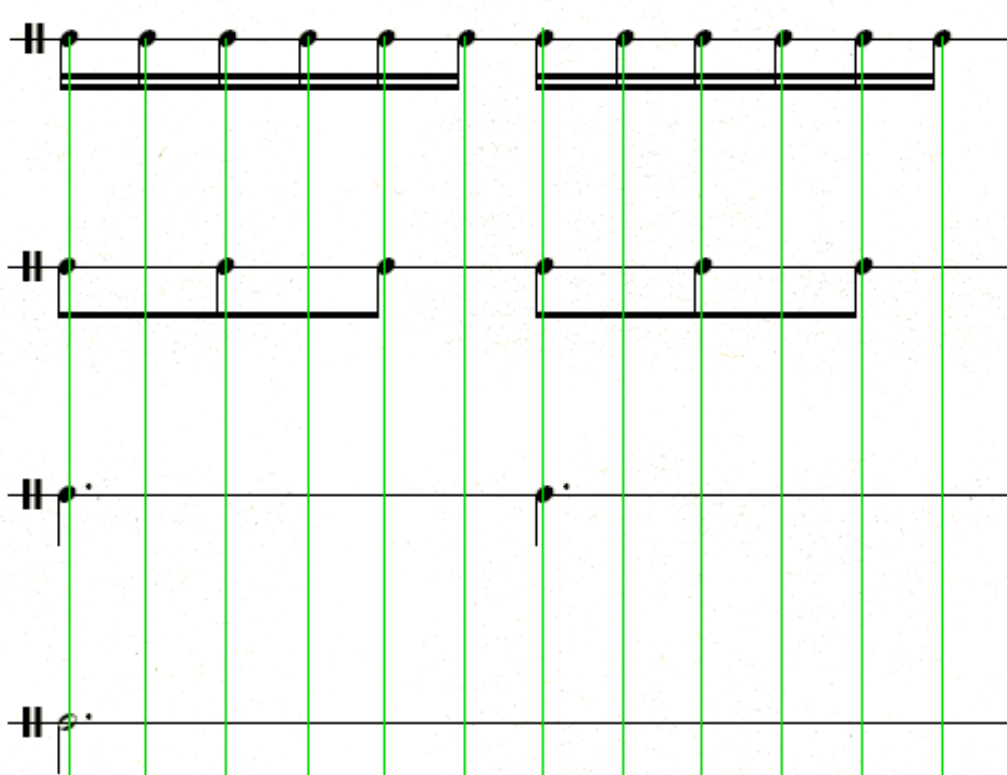


Figure 9.1

First perform the following by tapping eighth notes while singing the melody with “Ta” or “La” or playing it on your instrument.

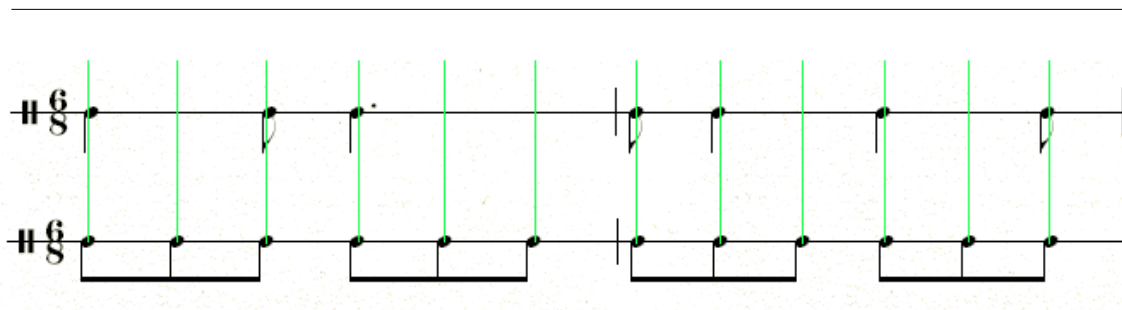


Figure 9.2

Once you have mastered that exercise, try to “hear” the tapping internally. Play the upper line while hearing the tapping.

Try this example in 6/8 with sixteenth note subdivisions:

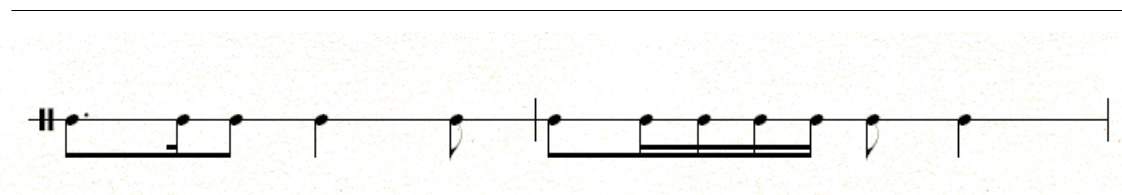


Figure 9.3

A good rule of thumb is to subdivide with the smallest note value possible. If the example above was performed at a slow tempo, eighth note = 60, then subdivisions with 32<sup>nd</sup> notes would be quite possible and would help to ensure proper note values. At a tempo of dotted quarter note = 100, sixteenth note subdivisions would be preferred. This new tempo would be too rapid to subdivide easily with 32<sup>nd</sup> notes.

Here are some further examples to subdivide with sixteenth notes (Wedge<sup>2</sup>, p. 165):

<sup>2</sup>"Introduction to Rhythmic Studies" <<http://cnx.org/content/m22805/latest/>>



Figure 9.4