

8 and 4

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Purpose:	This exercise focuses on the basic two height stroke. The exercise seems simple, but there are many things to think about.
1) Stick motion:	There are three different stick motions in this exercise: high-to-low, low-to-low, and low-to-high. Make sure that every motion is self consistent. Every accent height should be exactly the same and every tap height should be exactly the same. At high tempos, a slight moeller motion should be used to allow for fast, relaxed low-to-high strokes.
2) Sound Quality:	Does every tap stroke sound the same? How about every accent? How about from your right hand to your left? Some common mistakes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Playing your taps too high in general, though some people have the opposite problem. Shoot for exactly 3" for all of your taps.b) At higher tempos, playing the first accent of each measure higher than the rest of the accents - Control that first accent height.c) Pounding the very last note of the exercise.d) Playing the right hand accents higher than the left... don't be the guy with the weak left!
3) Rhythm and Timing:	How perfect is your eighth note rhythm? Some common areas where mistakes occur: <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) First two notes of the exercise: The first note defines the exercise starting point and the second note defines the tempo. You must internalize the tempo before you start so that these two notes are 'perfect'.b) Hand-to-hand transfers: It is very common for people to warp the rhythm when switching hands. The key here is to think of the exercise as a steady stream of eighth notes while ignoring the fact that you are switching hands. The tendency will almost always be to rush the last one or two eighth notes before the hand transfer.
4) Variations to this exercise:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Play entire exercise on one hand - chop building!b) Play exercise at with different accent and tap heights - 6" to 3", 15" to 3", 9" to 6", etc.c) Play exercise as all double stops, checking that the stick motion from left to right is the same - DO THIS! This is a great way to improve your accent-to-tap stroke on the left hand - have your right hand 'teach' your left!d) Play on low-rebound surface to improve muscle strength and endurance.e) Invert the accents and the taps, i.e. play all of the taps as accents and all of the accents as taps.