

# Buzz Rolls

Buzz Rolls are a way to create a sustained sound on a drum.  
 This is done using buzz strokes, in which each wrist stroke has multiple bounces.  
 The goal is to create a smooth, seamless sound while continuously moving your hands.  
 Buzz rolls are also called closed rolls, multiple-bounce rolls, orchestral rolls, or drum rolls.

**Buzz Recipe**

WRIST  
 Think of a basketball. More wrist = more bounces.

FULCRUM  
 Grip too tight = fewer bounces  
 Grip too loose = bounces farther apart  
 Think "Goldilocks." Not too tight, not too loose.

FINGERS  
 Fingers will control the bounces to make them smooth

*All three elements must be in balance to create a good buzz roll.*

You will constantly need to adjust each element depending on musical style, tempo, dynamics, etc. For example, if you are playing softly you will use less wrist. Therefore your fingers will need to accommodate to create a smooth buzz roll.

- Directions for Basic Buzes**
- 1) Repeat the first two measures 25 times each. Experiment with wrist/fulcrum/fingers until each buzz is smooth and even.
  - 2) Play the entire exercise at 40-60 bpm. It will not sound like a smooth buzz roll. Just focus on good buzz strokes.
  - 3) Gradually increase to 80 bpm. By now the 8th notes should start to connect.
  - 4) By the time you increase to 100 bpm it should almost sound like a smooth buzz roll.

**The Main Idea**  
 Go *very slowly*, concentrating on long, smooth buzzes. The key to a good buzz roll is good individual buzz strokes. This exercise is meant to be slow so you can focus on developing a good buzz stroke with each hand. It won't sound like a smooth buzz roll.....yet!

- Checklist**
- \*Check your grip.
  - \*Remember the recipe: Wrist-Fingers-Fulcrum
  - \*Listen for smooth buzzes.

## Basic Buzes

**The Main Idea**  
 The goal is to alternate evenly between taps and buzzes with smooth buzzes and clear taps. *Start slowly!* As you speed up the rolls will become smooth.

- Checklist**
- \*Check your grip.
  - \*Remember the recipe: Wrist-Finger-Fulcrum
  - \*Try to get the buzzes to connect.
  - \***COUNT OUT LOUD**

## 16th Note Buzes

*Metronome Range: 55 60 65 70 75 80 85 90 95 100 105 110 115 120 125 130 135 140 145*

## ROLL BASICS

*A buzz counts as 2 strokes, and a tap counts as 1 stroke.*

A 5-stroke roll is two buzzes (4) plus one tap (1).

A 7-stroke roll is 3 buzzes (6) plus one tap (1).

A 9-stroke roll is four buzzes (8) plus one tap (1).

### 9-STROKE ROLL

A 9-stroke roll consists of 4 buzzes and a tap.

#### 9-Stroke Rolls

How it's written:



\*How it's often played:



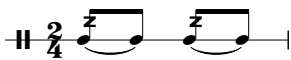
*\*Depending on tempo and dynamics, when you see a note with a buzz you will often convert it 16th buzzes to create a smooth roll.*

### 5-STROKE ROLL

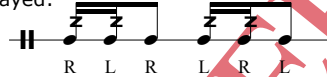
A 5-stroke roll consists of 2 buzzes and a tap.

#### 5-Stroke Rolls on a downbeat

How it's written:

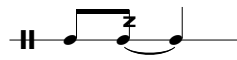


\*How it's often played:



#### 5-Stroke Rolls on an upbeat

How it's written:



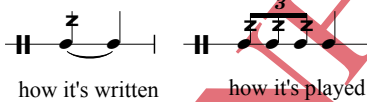
\*How it's often played:



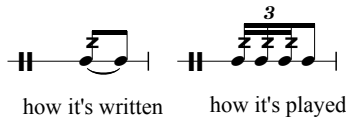
### 7-STROKE ROLL

A 7-stroke roll consists of 3 buzzes and a tap.

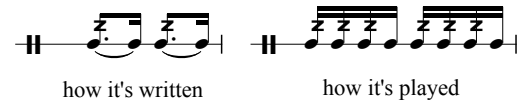
#### 7-Stroke Roll #1



#### 7-Stroke Roll #2



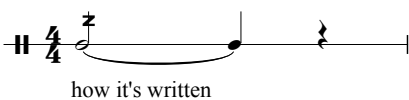
#### 7-Stroke Roll #3



### 17-STROKE ROLL

A 17-stroke roll consists of 8 buzzes and a tap.

#### 17-Stroke Roll



### Pulsing Rolls

In order to play rolls accurately you will often move your hands in rhythm. This is called "pulsing," or "metering" the roll. For example, if you see a written quarter note you may play four 16th-note buzzes (9-stroke roll). A half-note roll might be eight 16th-notes (17-stroke roll).

**The rhythm of the roll will depend on the tempo and dynamics you are playing.**  
 Slower tempos require more buzz strokes, and therefore faster rhythms. Faster tempos require fewer buzz strokes. So a quarter note roll might be played as a 9-stroke at a medium tempo, a 7-stroke at a faster tempo, a 13-stroke at a slower tempo, and so on.

#### Pulsing Example #1

Written:

Played:

Very Slow Tempo ♩ = 50-80

Slow Tempo ♩ = 75-105

Moderate Tempo ♩ = 96-152

Fast Tempo ♩ = 144-180

#### Pulsing Example #2

Written:

Played:

Very Slow Tempo ♩ = 50-75

Slow Tempo ♩ = 75-105

Moderate/Fast Tempo ♩ = 96-152

**The Main Idea**  
 Use good buzz strokes to play smooth rolls. Depending on tempo and dynamics you will use 5-stroke, 7-stroke, 9-stroke rolls, etc.

**Checklist**  
 \*Check your grip.  
 \*Remember the recipe: Wrist-Finger-Fulcrum  
 \*Connect your buzzes to create a smooth roll.

#### Roll Exercise #1

*Metronome Range:* 80 85 90 95 100 105 110 115 120 125 130 135 140 145 150 155 160

#### Basic Buzz Rolls

*Metronome Range:* 80 85 90 95 100 105 110 115 120 125 130 135 140 145 150 155 160

**Checklist**  
 \*Check your grip.  
 \*Remember the recipe: Wrist-Finger-Fulcrum  
 \*Connect your buzzes to create a smooth roll.

Simple 7's

**ROLL HINTS**

The most important thing in playing buzz rolls is for the audience to hear a smooth sound. Pulsing your rolls will help you play rhythms accurately, however *a listener should not be able to tell that you are pulsing your rolls!*

Sometimes, in order to play smoothly, it easier *not* to pulse a roll. This means that your hands will be moving out of rhythm. So it is extremely important for you to feel a steady beat in order to time the end of the roll.

**Checklist**  
 \*Check your grip.  
 \*Play smoothly and evenly at all dynamic levels.  
 \*Watch stick heights for each dynamic marking.  
 \*COUNT OUT LOUD

Dynamics Challenge

Fun with 5's and 9's