

Now compose a melody for your chord progression. Bear in mind the limits and range of the performer you are writing for. Give the melody a strong shape, with phrases which fit in with those of the chord progression.

### Step 7: creating a drum pattern

When you begin adding a drum pattern to your melody and chord progression, the overall mood and feel will begin to take shape. If you are not intending to include a drum track (for instance, if your composition is for voice and guitar only), you will need to add a rhythmic element to your accompaniment instead. This is covered in step 8.

A good first step is to start with a simple drum pattern of one, two or four bars. If you are using a sequencer, you can build up a drum track one instrument at a time, setting the software to record on a loop in mixed mode and then overdubbing the instruments one by one. You can then cut and paste this loop to form a continuous track.

Although you are advised not to use commercial drum loops, if you have access to any, you could look at some of these for ideas and then base your own ideas on them. The 'add drum pattern' plug-in on Sibelius might be a good place to start, although of course you can't use these in your piece. Alternatively, listen to the drum tracks on actual songs.

Concentrate first on the bass drum, snare and hi-hat. At this stage, you are looking for something that will give you the right feel, so you can add details later. Here are some patterns to try out with your existing material:

Try 1-3 at tempos from ♩ = 100-180

+ = closed, o = open

1. 2. 3. 4. ♩ = 110 5. ♩ = 85

6. ♩ = 90 7. ♩ = 140 8. ♩ = 160

The first five are straight rhythms in  $\frac{4}{4}$  while numbers 6-8 are swung and written out in  $\frac{12}{8}$ . Note that you can also use less common metres, such as  $\frac{3}{4}$  or  $\frac{5}{4}$ .

Once you have a basic pattern, this should provide you with a good starting point. Although it is tempting just to repeat this pattern all the way through your song, doing this can make your song sound rather repetitive. Your song will be more effective if you vary the drum pattern intelligently.

In the last bar of a four- or eight-bar phrase, the drums often play a **fill** - a mini solo, where they depart from the basic pattern. When leading into new sections, the fill is often quite prominent and inventive. It usually involves more of the instruments in the kit, especially toms, and can end with a crash cymbal on the barline.

Here are some examples:

♩ = 120      ♩ = 140      ♩ = 100      ♩ = 140

♩ = 90      ♩ = 140