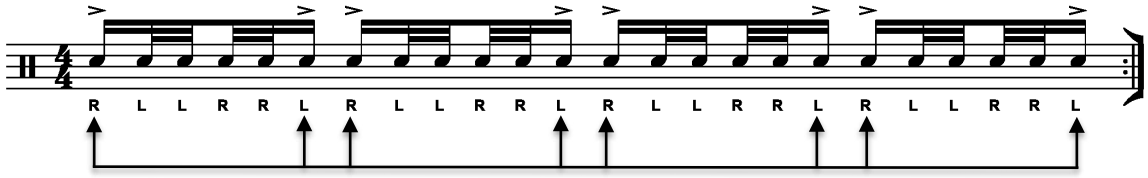
Applying Accent Variations to the Six Stroke Roll

Accents are the nuances needed to make patterns take shape and propel rhythms. Just like being able to smoothly mix and transition from singles to doubles, a drummer must be comfortable with applying accents to an array of sticking and patterns. The six-stroke roll traditionally has accents on the two single strokes within the roll (traditional right hand lead sticking) as follows:

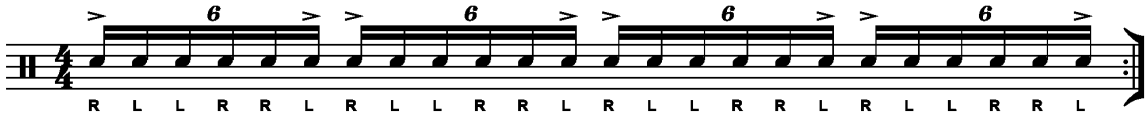
Ex. 1.1



Single Strokes

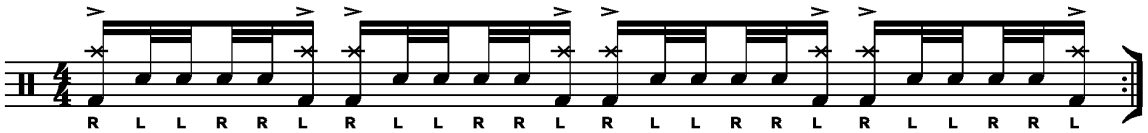
The six-stroke roll can also be played as sextuplets as follows:

Ex. 1.2

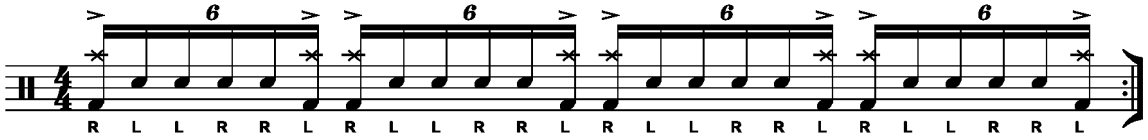


These two versions of the six-stroke roll (Ex. 1.1 and 1.2) can be applied to the drum set. The two single strokes can easily be moved to tom toms and cymbals like so:

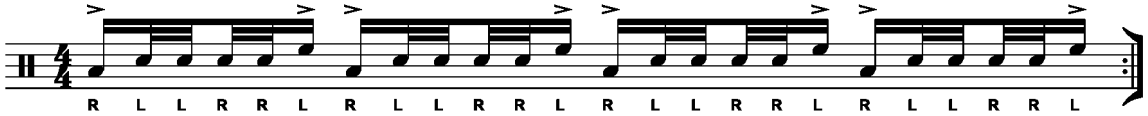
Ex. 1.3



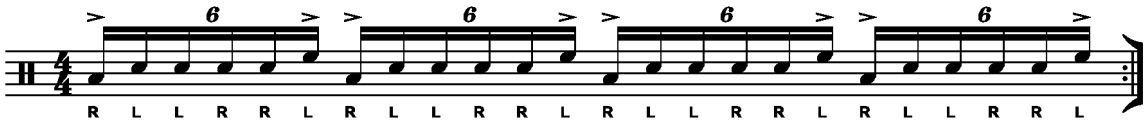
Ex. 1.4



Ex. 1.5



Ex. 1.6



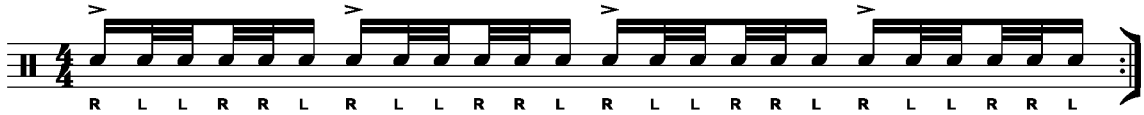
Applying accents to the double strokes within a six-stroke roll

A great way to develop your ability to add accents to any pattern at will is to apply accents to the double strokes within a six-stroke roll. This technique takes you out of your comfort zone with six-stroke rolls, allowing you to create numerous combinations of sticking and accents.

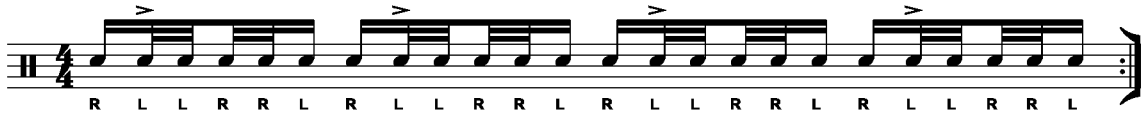
To start you will play an unaccented six-stroke roll in order to not reply on the accented single strokes. Next, you will move one accent through every partial of a six-stroke roll as follows:
Ex. 1.7

1 Be sure not to accent any note:

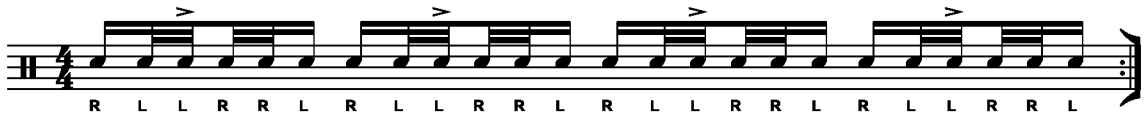
2 Add an accent to every down beat making sure not to accent the single left hand on the "ah" of every beat:



3 Add an accent to the first note of the left hand double stroke. You must throw the left stick downward to produce the accent but must immediately ease up to allow the rebound to fall gently after the accented note:

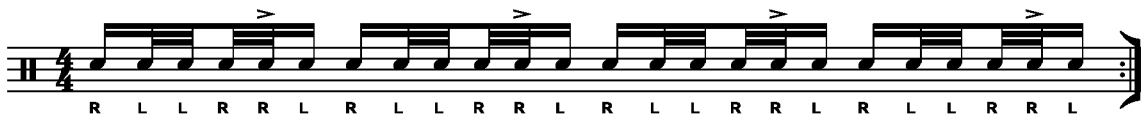


4 Add an accent to the second note of the left hand double stroke. You must snap your wrist after the first stroke of the double in order to produce the accent:

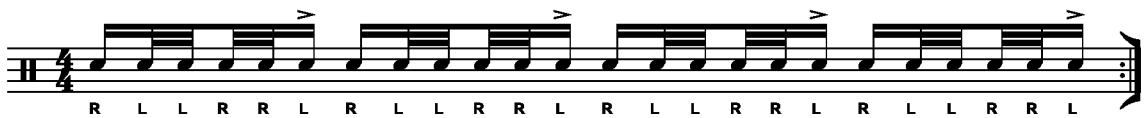


5 Add an accent to the first note of the right hand double stroke. You must throw the right stick downward to produce the accent but must immediately ease up to allow the rebound to fall gently after the accented note:

6 Add an accent to the second note of the right hand double stroke. You must snap your wrist after the first stroke of the double in order to produce the accent:



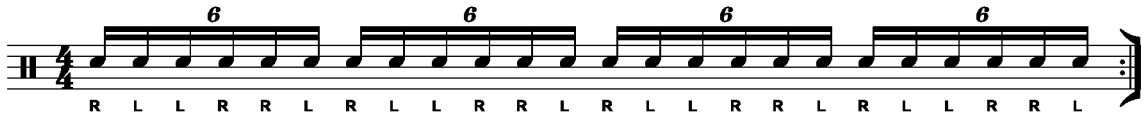
7 Add an accent to the "ah" of every beat making sure not to accent right hand single stroke on the downbeats:



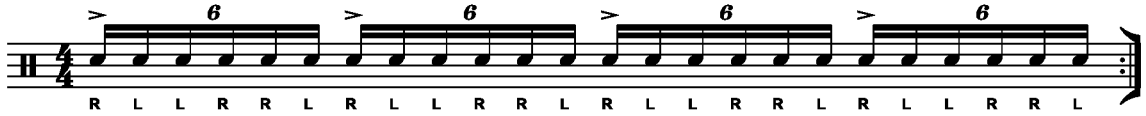
Next, apply the same series of accents from above (Ex. 1.7) to sextuplet six-stroke rolls as follows:

Ex. 1.8

1 Unaccented:



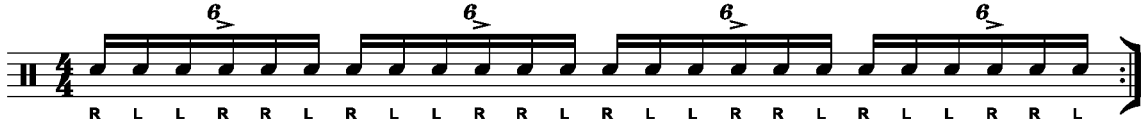
2 Accents on the downbeats:



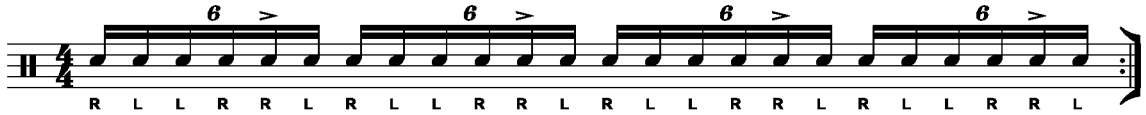
3 Accents on the second partial:

4 Accents on the third partial:

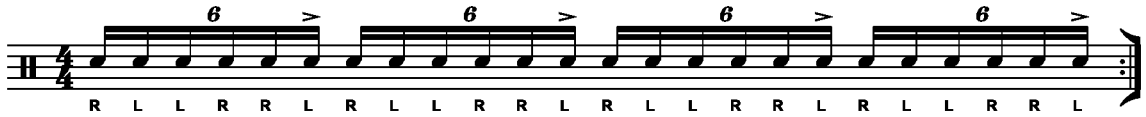
5 Accents on the fourth partial:



6 Accents on the fifth partial:



7 Accents on the sixth partial:



Drummer and educator based in Los Angeles, California. Currently the Program Chair for Drums at Musicians Institute in Hollywood, Stewart Jean is a dedicated professional.

As Program Chair for Drums at MI Stewart steers the program down a path of success for his students. Authoring and co-authoring contemporary curriculum, developing innovative teaching methods and consistently providing a nurturing learning environment are some of the highlights Stewart has brought to Musicians Institute.

Maintaining a steady drumming career Stewart has performed or recorded with Raul Midon, Bruce Kulick, Don Felder, Jimmy Buffett, Betty Wright, Sam Moore, Preston Smith, Bo Diddley, Christian Zallies, Diego Bertie and Pedro Suarez Vertiz.

Stewart received a Bachelors Degree in Music from the University of Miami as a graduate of the Studio Music and Jazz Program. While in Miami Stewart also served as Jazz coordinator for the National Foundation for Advancement in the Arts.