

Tutorial 5D: Rhythmic Freedom, Part 2



Welcome! In this tutorial you'll learn how to:

1. Use rubato
2. Use 5 against 4
3. Use 7 against 4

Enjoy the learning!

Other Level 5 Tutorials

- 5A: Playing Outside, Part 1
- 5B: Playing Outside, Part 2
- 5C: Rhythmic Freedom, Part 1
- 5E: Rhythmic Pulses
- 5H: The Matrix

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- ▶ There are more tools to use so you can achieve true rhythmic independence. Rubato techniques and odd-meter groupings give you the flexibility to take your solos in new rhythmic directions.

Part 1 – Using Rubato

A) How do I use rubato in my solo ideas?

**Rubato* means slowing down or speeding up somewhat in your musical idea. This is done frequently in ballads and slower-tempo tunes. Rubato lets you explore many subtle dimensions in rhythm. As you use it, keep it as an occasional contrast to strict rhythms so the listener hears an enjoyable variety.

*Here are some ideas for using rubato in your solos:

1. Slow down slightly towards the end of a phrase, keeping the pitch selection strong. Or, hold a non-harmonic tone or alteration and resolve it a bit late at the end of a solo.
2. Slow down in the middle of a phrase, then speed up to the original tempo. This is like musically stretching a rubber band.
3. Speed up considerably (not just a little) towards the end of a phrase. This is like using an off-tempo (see *Off-Tempos* below).

*For other ways to use rubato, see *Introductions and Cadenzas*, *Off-Tempos*, *Burning*, and *Wiggling*.

4. Play randomly placed staccato notes, to erase the tempo of your melody.

- **TRY IT** – Basic: Choose a familiar melody and use the first part of idea #1 above. Medium: Use idea #2. Challenge: Use ideas #3 and #4.

B) How do I create effective intros and cadenzas?

*An *introduction* is an unaccompanied solo you play before the main tune begins. The purpose is to set up the tune, so as you play an introduction keep these points in mind:

- Remember the tune melody and its mood.
- Play secure rhythms and pitches as you play alone.
- Use expression well (dynamics, accents, and effects).

*A *cadenza* is an unaccompanied (or sparsely accompanied) solo. It can be an effective way to open or close a tune. The cadenza puts a lot of responsibility on the soloist to effectively set the stage for the tune or finish it strongly. For effective cadenzas:

- 1) See your melodic shapes in advance; use relaxed concentration.
- 2) Use good development techniques to keep your ideas strong.

(Part 1 – Using Rubato)

3) Don't overplay or underplay it, or develop ideas too fast.

4) You can use *riffing* to build intensity (see *Riffing* in Tutorial 4D: *More Development*).

5) Don't ramble on (better to play a short, effective cadenza than a tiresome one).

6) When you're finished, give a clear signal to the group so they can join you.

- ▶ **TRY IT – Basic:** Play a brief introduction before you launch one of the MIDI files from 300 Standards.
Medium: Play a brief cadenza just before the end of one of the 300 Standards (pause the MIDI file). **Challenge:** Play longer a introduction or cadenza with good development.

C) What are off-tempo?

*You can rush or drag rhythms so they are in between their current value and the next “stepped” value (see *Stepping through Rhythms* earlier in this chapter.) The effect is hazy, but it's quite effective with strong melodic ideas.

*For example, you can drag quarter-note triplets slightly, or push eighth-notes slightly off-tempo. Be sure to play and maintain the off-tempo while the rhythm section remains steady in the original tempo.

*Here are some guidelines for going off-tempo:

- 1) Keep the dragging/rushing ideas simple and strong so they are easily distinguished.
- 2) After the off-tempo, re-enter the old tempo *securely*.
- 3) It's usually best if the other players don't try to change tempos with you. The original tempo provides a good contrast against your rubato.
- 4) Use distinct melodic patterns. Developing with sequences or semi-sequences in off-tempo creates an interesting tension against the melody.

- ▶ **TRY IT – Basic:** Using a metronome, speed up quarter-note triplets in a flexible scale; slightly then slow them back to normal, or slow them slightly, then speed them back to normal. **Medium:** Use eighth-notes. **Challenge:** Use eighth-note triplets. Practice Pages

(Part 1 – Using Rubato)

D) What is burning?

**Burning* is where you play a very fast passage that's at or near the limit of your speed technique, *regardless* of what the current tempo is. Burning is like a faster extension of double-time feel.

*As long as the passage is clean, in tune, and interesting, the “burn” passage doesn't really need to relate to the original tempo. But don't overuse this technique, as it can eventually weaken the rhythmic strength of your solo.

*To exit “burning mode,” end the passage securely. You can also slow down or play longer rhythmic values until you lock into double-time, eighth-note triplets, or regular eighth-notes. A clean transition makes that approach *very* effective.

- ▶ **TRY IT** – Play a line of 8th-notes and add a short “burning” passage to it. Move back and forth between 8th-notes and burning. Use smooth transitions back to 8th-notes.

E) What is wiggling?

Once in a while you can turn burning into “wiggling” (your fingers), where you play random notes as fast as you can. Keep this brief and well-timed so it doesn't lose its surprise.

Here are some wiggling tips:

- Wiggle briefly in any register.
- Wiggle into the high register and back down.
- Wiggle after “burning.”

- ▶ **TRY IT** – Play a line of eighth-notes and add a short “wiggling” passage to it. Then move back and forth between eighth-notes and wiggling.

Part 2 – Using 5 Against 4

*You can use 5 against 4 for strong rhythmic variety. Here are some basic 5-against-4 ideas:

- Use 5/4 rhythms in a 4/4 tune
- Play contour groups of 5
- Use brackets of 5

(Part 2 – Using 5 Against 4)

*The examples below show 5-note groups in different contours with various rhythms.

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*To use a mixed-contour group of 5, divide the groups into patterns of 2 and 3, then alternate the ascending and descending contours. Or, repeat the same contour, dividing the groups into 2's and 3's.

----3----|--2--|----3----|----2--|----3----|--2--

----2--|----3----|--2--|----3----|--2--|----3----

*To make contour groups stand out more, separate each with a wider interval.

- ▶ **TRY IT – Basic:** Write and play your own 5-note groups.
Medium: Try a longer melody with 5-note groups.

B) How do I use brackets of 5?

*The goal is to fit the bracketed notes into the measure as accurately as possible. Of course, you can simply squeeze 5 notes into the space of four, but that's hard to do while keeping the rhythms even.

(Part 2 – Using 5 Against 4)

----- 5 ----- ----- 5 -----



*To play the 5 notes more exactly in time,

1 Subdivide the 5-note group into 2+3 or 3+2.

2 Play the triplets *slightly slower* and other notes *slightly faster* until they're all even.

- **TRY IT** – Basic: On a flexible scale, alternate playing 4 quarters in one bar and a bracket of 5 quarters in the next bar. Medium: Use brackets of 5 8th-notes.

Part 3 – Using 7 Against 4

*Playing 7-against-4 is similar to playing 5-against-4, using these techniques:

- 7/4 rhythms in a 4/4 tune
- Contour groups of 7 or brackets of 7

A) How do I use 7/4 rhythms in a 4/4 tune?

*You can play 7/4 rhythms against 4/4 time. Using these longer rhythms takes more practice, but the effort is well worth it. For 7/4 rhythms, make the rhythm *one beat less than two bars*, as in the example below.

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*You can also count odd meters by breaking them up into groups of two and threes. In 7/4, the groupings are 2+2+3, or 2+3+2, or 3+2+2. And you can use 7/8 rhythms against 4/4; see *5 Against 4* for ideas.

- **TRY IT** – Repeat a motif of mixed quarter-notes and 8th-notes as a 5/4 rhythm in a 4/4 tune. Then use some offbeats & rests. Then use some triplet values.

B) How do I use contour groups of 7?

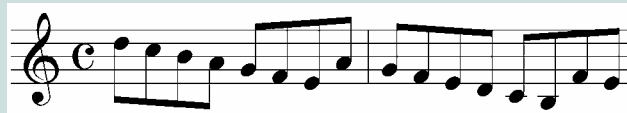
*You can play seven-note groups in different contours, using 8th-notes and 8th-note triplets. (Fast rhythms work better with 7-note groups, so the group doesn't take too long.)

7

(Part 3 – Using 7 Against 4)

Divide the 7 notes into one of these groups: 3+2+2, or 2+3+2, or 2+2+3. The basic ideas from *Contour Groups of Five* also apply here, with ascending, descending, or mixed contour groups of 7.

===== etc.



*You can also use mixed contours with groups of 7, similar to mixed contours of 5. To make the contour groups stand out more, separate each one with a slightly wider interval.

► **TRY IT** – Write your own 7-note groups.

C) How do I use brackets of 7?

*Be sure to fit the bracketed notes into the measure as accurately as possible. To do this, play the seven 8th-notes *slightly* slower than normal 8th-notes. You

can even out the timing of bracket notes by alternating quarter-note triplets and 8ths in a bar, slightly rushing the triplets, and slightly dragging the 8ths, until all the notes are even:

----- 7 -----



► **TRY IT** – Improvise on a flexible scale. Play eight 8th-notes in bar 1, a bracket of seven 8th-notes in the bar 2, etc., alternating between 8 & 7 every other bar. Practice Pages

That's all for Tutorial 5D!

There is no Quiz for this Tutorial.