

Swing & Shuffle

Music

What 'swing' actually does to written eighth notes, and how much.

Straight eighths

- Both halves of the beat are equal
- 1 and 2 and — evenly spaced
- Rock, pop, classical, funk
- A 1:1 ratio

Swung eighths

- First is long, second is short
- Closer to a triplet: 2:1
- Jazz, blues, shuffle, swing
- Written as straight eighths with 'swing' at the top

THE DIFFERENCE THAT MATTERS

Hard swing approaches a triplet feel (2:1). Light swing sits nearer 1.5:1. Tempo pushes it: fast jazz swings less.

A shuffle is a swung feel with the middle triplet note dropped: long, rest, short.