

Swung Eighth Notes

Writing jazz rhythms the easy way.

Swung eighth notes means that the eighth notes are not read exactly as written. Every other eighth note will be a little shorter. It's very much like you replace each group of two eighth notes with a quarter note triplet and an eighth note triplet:

Swung eighths look like normal eighths:



But they are played more like this triplet rhythm:



Depending how fast the music goes, or how “bouncy” someone wants to play it, the swung eighth notes might start to sound more like a dotted eighth and a sixteenth:



The popular music of the 1920s, 30s and 40s was often swung. If you are looking to get into jazz music at all, you'll want to be aware of how this music is played.