Understanding Half Note Triplets

Half note triplets are tricky. But once you understand the details of how to count them, you’ll have it locked. Here’s how it works. Use the framework of eighth note triplets as your guide (see line/staff #2).

Using the counting method “one-trip-let, two-trip-let,” etc for each note of the eighth note triplets, you simply assign the first note (“one”), the fifth note (the “trip” of two), and the ninth note (the “let” of three) off of your eighth note triplet grid as the three notes of your half note triplet.

Have a look at the notes in lines 1 and 2 above.

Line/staff #1 above shows the half note triplet and the vertical arrows/lines below those notes show you how they line up with the eighth note triplets in line/staff #2.

To practice, count all of the eighth note triplets and clap your hands on the first, fifth and ninth notes. Count every triplet note as you do this. Your claps are creating the rhythm of the half note triplets.

That’s it!