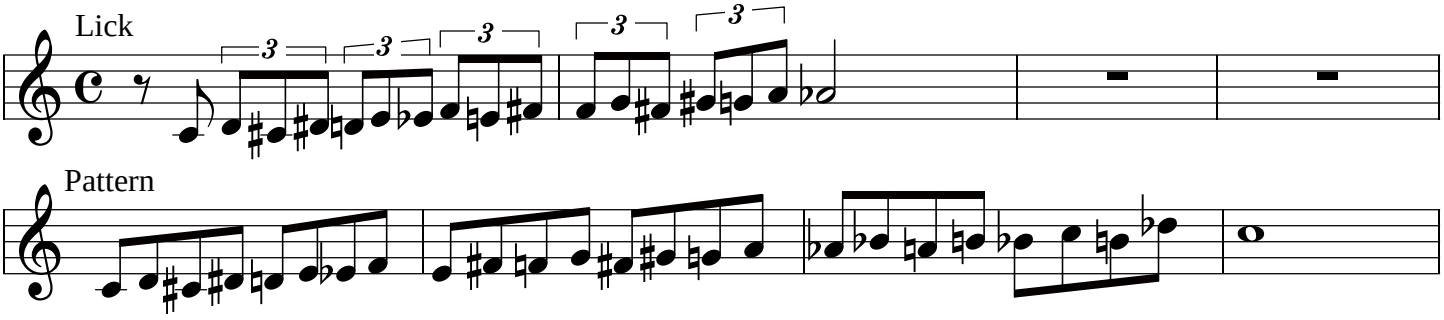
Sidewinder Patterns

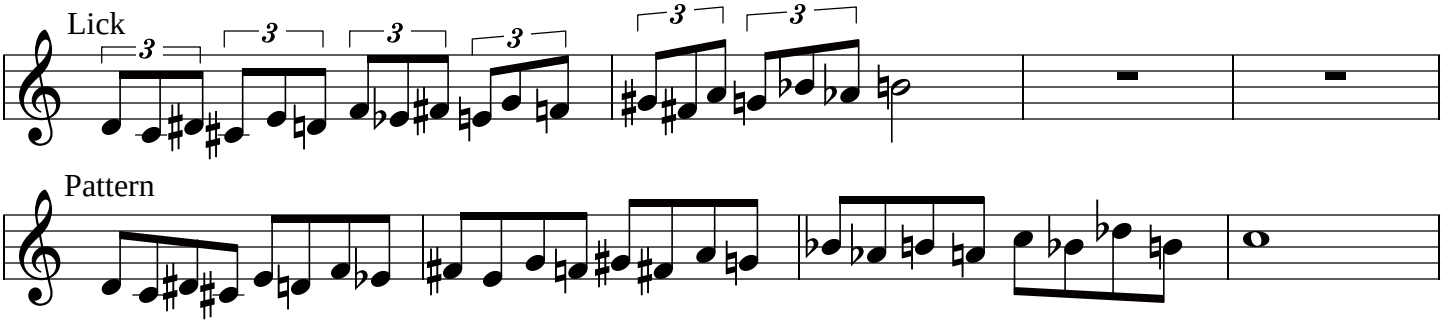
whole steps

J.Brent(c)2009

up/up-ascending



dn/dn-ascending



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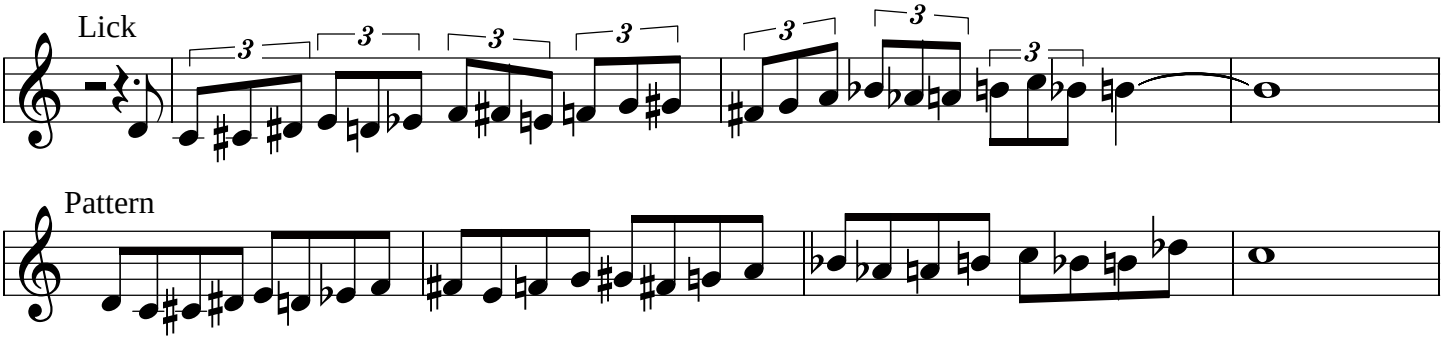
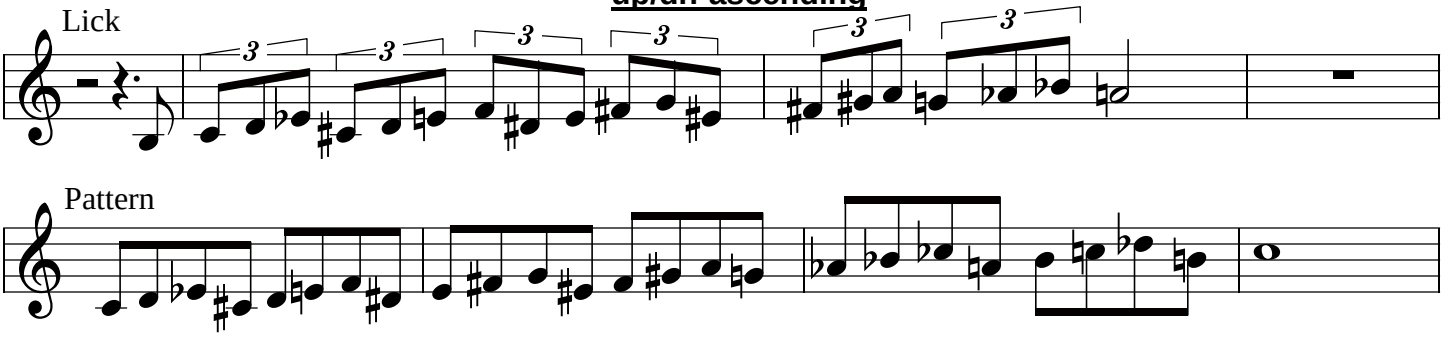


up/dn-ascending

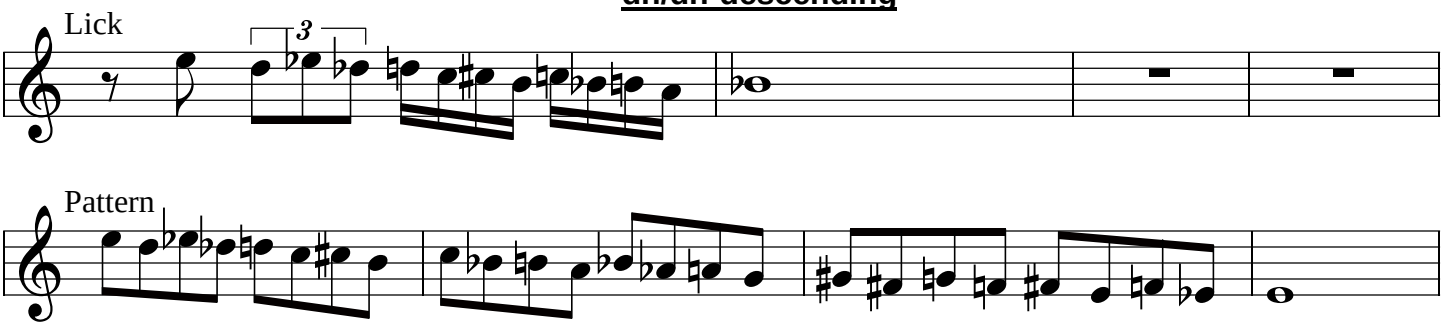


Sidewinder Patterns

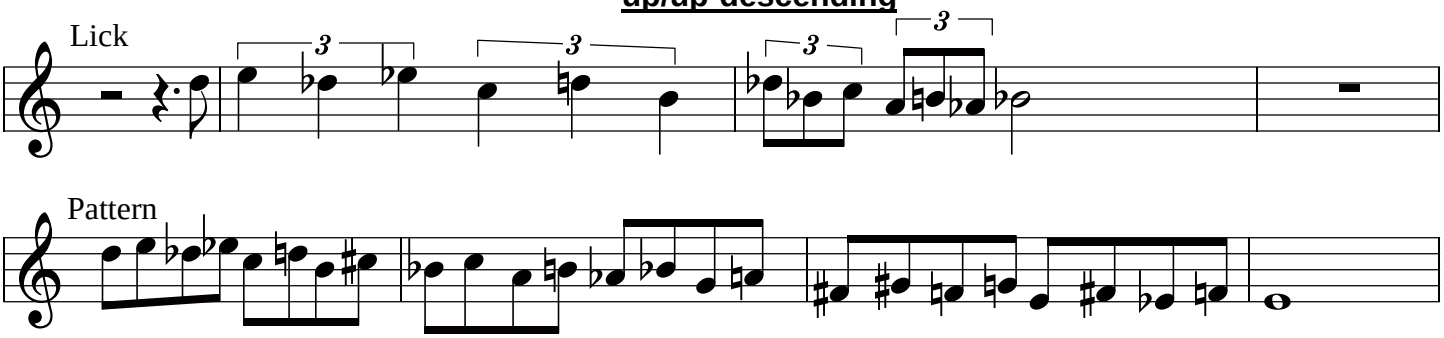
whole steps

J.Brent(c)2009

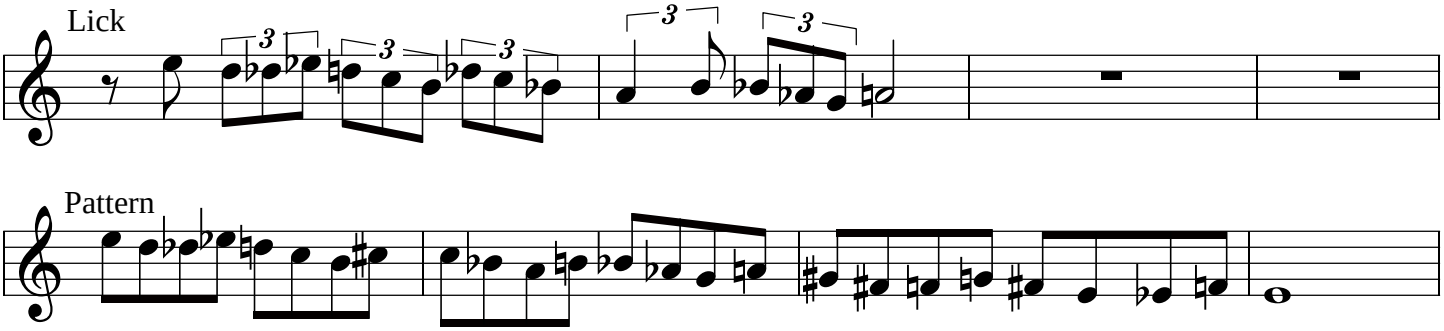
dn/dn-descending



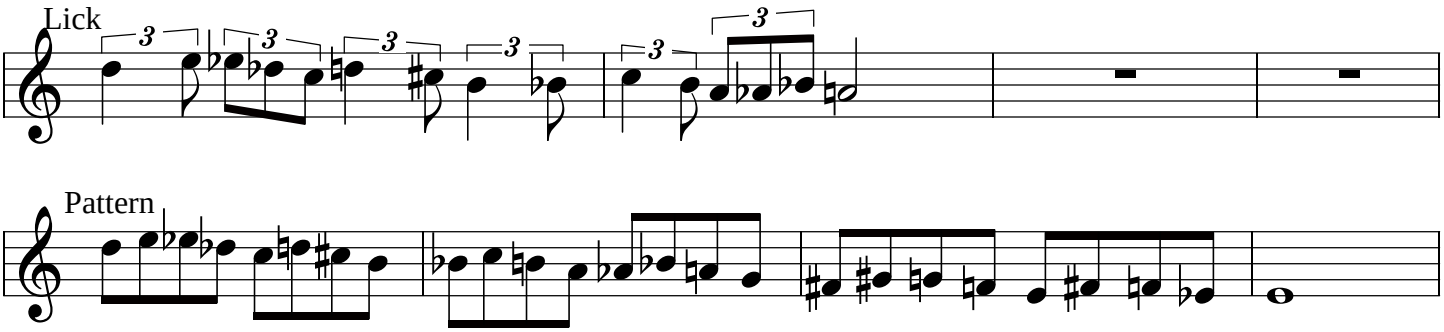
up/up-descending



dn/up-descending



up/dn-descending



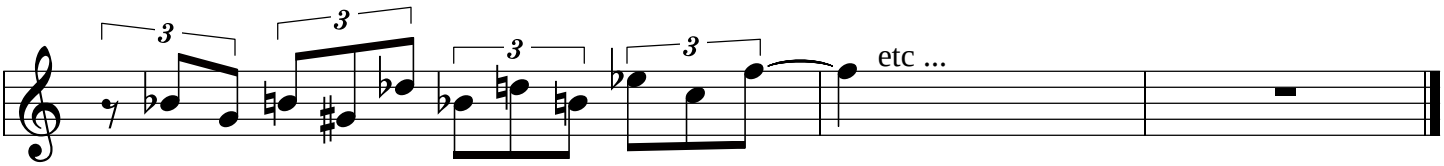
Sidewinder Patterns

J.Brent(c)2009

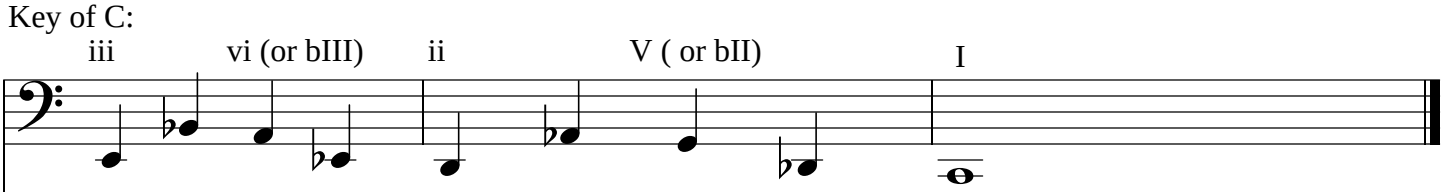
Sidewinder patterns consist of a sequence of identical fixed melodic intervals chromatically ascending or descending.

The examples above use as the fixed interval a major 2nd.
It is also possible to use other fixed melodic intervals (m3, M3, P4, #4, etc).

For example, in *"Dolphin Dance"*, Herbie Hancock leads into his piano solo (at 5:47) with a slightly modified **dn/dn-ascending** sidewinder pattern based on m3rds:



This common circular jazz bass line below is an
up/dn-descending sidewinder based on the interval of a b5:



The sidewinder melodic devices are usually used sparingly (a bar here or there) to "ladder" through one chord to another.

The **up/up** and **dn/dn** patterns (either ascending and descending) when played as straight eighths tend to sound mechanical and predictable.

One solution is to phrase them using rhythmic displacement and/or fitting their "square pegs" into "round holes" (by grouping them as triplets, for example) as I have tried to do for each "lick" on pages 1 and 2 to make them sound more musical.

They also sound more "convoluted" (ie. "interesting) in their **dn/up** and **up/dn** permutations. Or you can do like Herbie, and just leave something out.

One interesting property that sidewinders have is a number of ways to satisfyingly resolve. This is due to their built-in "surrounding note figures" (aka "enclosure" and "encirclement"). This insures a degree of musicality in spite of their "outness".

The astute observer will note that the **dn/up-ascending and up/dn-descending whole step sidewinder patterns** can also be thought of as **a sequence of diminished tetrachords** where the bottom note of each successive tetrachord is a member of the **C whole-note scale** (C D E F# G# A#):

dn/up-asc = **C** Db Eb E, **D** Eb F Gb, **E** F G Ab, **F#** G A Bb, **G#** A B C, **A#** B C# (D)
up/dn-desc = E Eb Db **C**, D C# B **A#**, C B A **G#**, Bb A G **F#**, Ab G F **E**, Gb F Eb **D**

Similarly, the **up/dn-ascending and dn/up-descending whole step sidewinder patterns** can also be thought of as a sequence of diminished tetrachords where the bottom note of each successive tetrachord is a member of the **B whole-note scale** (B C# D# F G A):

up/dn-asc = (**B**) C D Eb, **C#** D E F, **D#** E F# G, **F** F# G# A, **G** Ab Bb B, **A** Bb C Db
dn/up-desc = (F) E D **C#**, Eb D C **B**, Db D Bb **A**, B Bb Ab **G**, A G# F# **F**, G F# E **D#**