

A FRESH APPROACH *to the Snare Drum*

by **MARK WESSELS**

A LOGICAL APPROACH FOR
DEVELOPING RHYTHMIC READING
ABILITIES, RUDIMENTAL TECHNIQUE
AND MUSICIANSHIP ON THE
SNARE DRUM.



**DOWNLOADABLE
PLAY-ALONG
TRACKS!**

also including:

DRUMSET FUNDAMENTALS "MINI-METHOD BOOK"
PROGRESS CHART FOR ESSENTIAL RUDIMENTS AND TECHNIQUES
INSTRUCTIONS FOR PLAYING THE ACCESSORY PERCUSSION INSTRUMENTS

The Matched Grip

The matched grip is most commonly used by percussionists because it immediately applies to all other percussion instruments. I recommend that all beginning students start with matched grip because of the relative ease that young students have learning to play with two hands that grip the stick and move in exactly the same manner. Here are the steps to achieving a perfect matched grip.



Grasp the stick between the fleshy part of the thumb and the first joint of the index finger about 5 inches from the butt end of the stick. This point of contact is called the "fulcrum" and acts as a pivot point for the stick. The tip of the index finger gently curves around the stick. Notice that the thumb is horizontally even with the index finger.

Lightly wrap the remaining three fingers around the stick. Avoid squeezing the stick unnecessarily!



The proper playing position can be achieved by first standing without the sticks in your hands. Allow your arms to hang loosely by your sides and your shoulders to relax.



Lift your forearms until they are slightly below parallel to the floor. Notice that the hands are naturally flat (or almost flat) and that the elbows are in a relaxed position, a few inches from your sides. You'll want to keep this natural space between the hands.



The positioning of your snare drum or practice pad is very important! Adjust the height of the drum so that the top rim is 4 inches below your belly button (about a hand's width). As you pull the sticks up to playing position, check to see if the forearms are in the correct position (slightly below parallel), then make slight adjustments from there.



Bring both sticks up, placing the tips in the center of the drum. Your hands should be close to flat, and the sticks should be at about a 90° angle. Compare yourself in a mirror to these pictures of the matched grip. If everything looks good, then you are now ready to learn the stroke!



The Traditional Left Hand Grip

The traditional grip was developed many years ago at a time when drummers wore their instruments hanging on the side of the body. With this drum position, it made sense to use this left hand grip – but today, it's much easier to learn to play with matched grip.

Because the traditional grip involves an entirely different grip from right to left, as well as using different stroke motions with dissimilar muscle groups, I recommend that all beginners start with the matched grip and “switch over” to traditional ONLY after the fundamentals of the matched stroke are developed. If you are just starting out and still wish to learn the traditional grip, be patient and persistent to develop the proper technique.

Start with the arm hanging by your side, shoulder relaxed.



Pick up your forearm, maintaining the relaxed hand position, with the thumbnail facing up. You should always be able to look down and see your thumbnail!



Open your hand as if holding an imaginary tennis ball (fig. A). Lay the stick in the crotch of the hand, about four inches from the butt. The shaft of the stick will rest just above the cuticle of the ring finger – between the knuckle and where the fingernail begins (fig. B). Wrap the index finger around the stick and place the pad of the thumb on the side of the first knuckle (fig. C). The middle finger rests lightly on the stick and the picky curves under to provide support for the ring finger.



Figure A

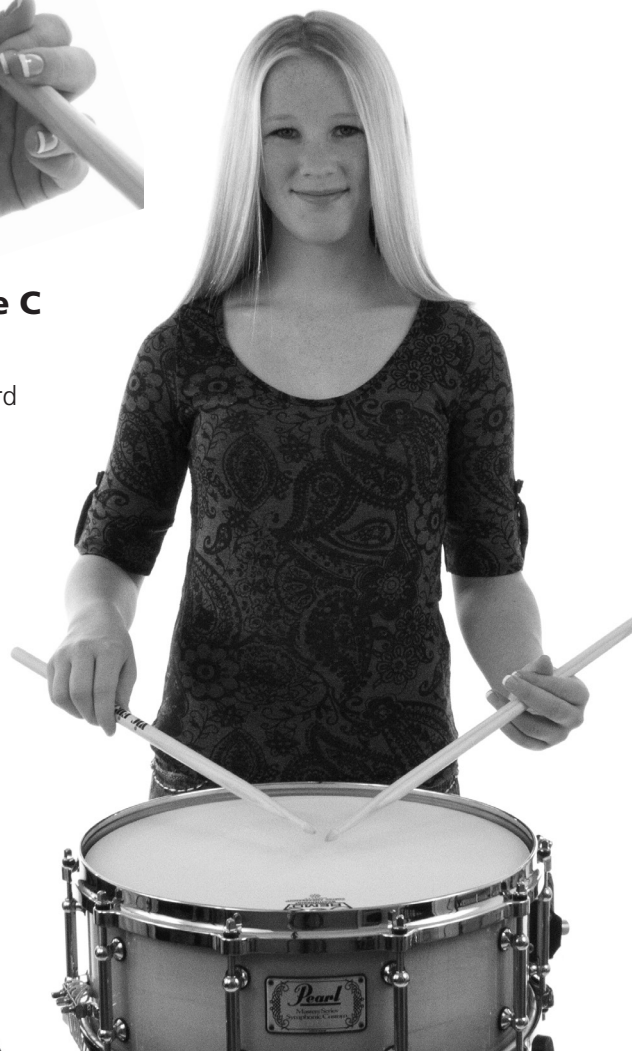


Figure B



Figure C

As you move the stick into playing position, remember to point the thumbnail toward the ceiling. Check your grip and playing position in a mirror.



LESSON 3

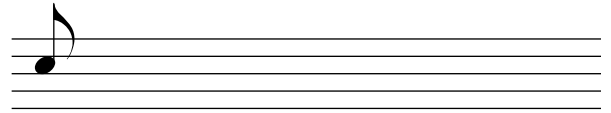
Technique WORKOUT

It is important to begin each practice session with the technique exercises and rudiments suggested on page 72 & 78. In this lesson, you will add exercise #4 which helps you to develop smooth, relaxed double strokes. Practice the double strokes on each hand separately (Ex. A), then alternating (Ex. B).

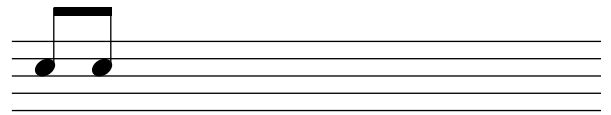
The 8th Note



An eighth note looks similar to a quarter note, but with one "flag" attached to the stem. Practice drawing 5 eighth notes on this musical staff:



You will often see eighth notes connected together in PAIRS. In this case, instead of a "flag," the two stems are connected together with a BEAM. Draw 3 more PAIRS of 8th notes on this staff:



There are two 8th notes in one quarter note.

MUSIC MATH: Fill in the correct number in the blank. Remember that there are TWO 8th notes for each quarter.

1. One = ____ 's 2. Two 's = ____ 's 3. Five 's = ____ 's

4. Two 's = ____ 's 5. Four 's = ____ 's 6. Ten 's = ____ 's

When counting in quarter time, the quarter notes fall on the "downbeats" (counts 1, 2, 3, etc.). The first 8th note in a pair also falls on the downbeat – the second falls on the "upbeat" and is called "and" or "te."



Repeat Signs

Two dots place before a double bar



is called a **repeat sign**. When you reach a repeat sign, go back

to the similar sign:



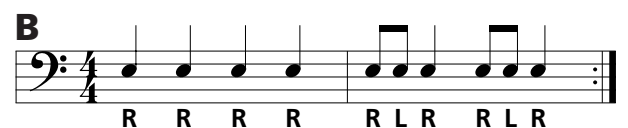
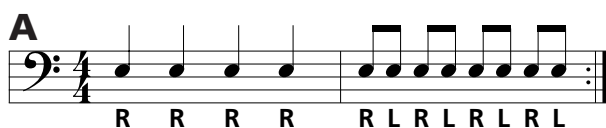
If no similar sign is indicated, go back and play from the beginning.

Key Exercises

Count each exercise out loud to a metronome set on 80 first. The "downbeats" (right hands) should always fall with the metronome clicks. Any 8th note on the "upbeat" (or left hand) will fall between the beats. After you work up each Key Exercise, learn the **Lesson 3 Appendix** on page 55 and 56 before moving on the the Playing Exercises.

HOT TIP:

Learn each of these Key Exercises separately with a metronome set on 70, then try playing along with the accompaniment track at the Bronze, Silver and Gold levels.



The **upstroke** is a preparation stroke for the downstroke and is responsible for the “flow” of rudimental accent patterns. To produce an upstroke, play a soft wrist stroke, then immediately lift the hand to the “up” position. The upstroke will position the hand for the following downstroke in these short exercises:

R up DOWN R up DOWN L up DOWN L up DOWN

The Upstroke

HOT TIP:

Be sure to watch the video lesson on YouTube for this important stroke!

Watch for REPEAT SIGNS in these exercises. After working up each line, go back and “buzz” the 8th notes.

Playing Exercises

HOT TIP:

Always, always, ALWAYS count a new line out loud before you attempt to play it! By saying the counts, you will establish a strong sense of rhythmic accuracy in your playing.

The 5 stroke roll consists of two double strokes, followed by an accent. In the first example, play the “slashed” 8th notes marked as MULTIPLE BOUNCES. In the second, play the slashed 8th notes as DOUBLE STROKES.

R L R L R L R R L L R L L R R L

Snare Drum Rudiment:

The Five Stroke Roll

LESSON 7

Technique WORKOUT:

The Flam

HOT TIP:

Listen very carefully to the "sound" of each flam!

It's very difficult to get consistent space between the grace note and the primary stroke. Too much space and they will sound like "fa-lam's."

A **flam** is a combination of a soft tap – called the **grace note** (♪) – and a loud note – the **primary stroke**. Practice several grace notes on each hand. Start with the sticks one inch above the drum. Keep a very relaxed wrist and just "drop" the stick for each grace note, playing each note as soft as possible:

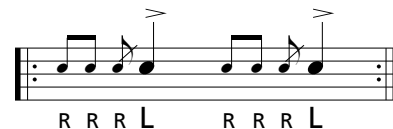


The flam is named for what those two strokes sound like: "faLAM." In this short exercise, you will play three soft grace notes, followed by a full right hand stroke (called the PRIMARY STROKE). As you play the right hand primary stroke, do not LIFT the left hand grace note!



Say this while you play: "fa fa FLAM" "fa fa FLAM"

Once you have the right flam mastered, switch to the opposite hand:

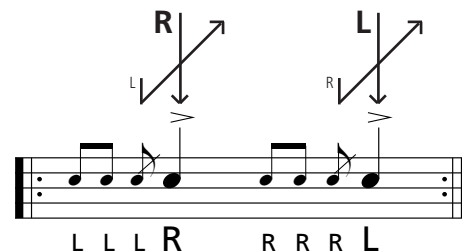


"fa fa FLAM" "fa fa FLAM"

The Flam is a difficult rudiment to master – and many of the rudiments are built on this important foundation. I highly recommend watching the video lesson on how to play a flam. I also recommend that you take private lessons from a qualified private teacher to learn it correctly!

Learning to play ALTERNATING FLAMS:

To play alternating flams, play the grace note of the flam as an UP-STROKE and freeze the primary stroke close to the drum. By lifting the grace note and keeping the primary stroke close to the drum, you'll be prepared to play the next flam on the opposite hand!



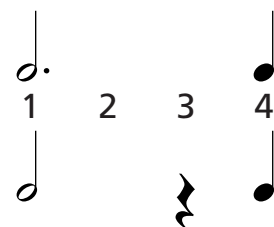
Find the video lesson for the flam here:
www.youtube.com/user/FreshApproachBooks



The Dotted Half Note

A dot behind a note or rest increases its value by **half of the original value** of the note. Since there are two quarters in a half note, a dotted half would be equal to **three** quarters (or three beats in quarter time).

This Coordination Exercise utilizes the dotted half note. Play the right hand on the rim and the left hand on the drum.



Exercise for TWO Drums

The note on the second space is for the low-pitched drum and the note on the third space is for the high drum. When playing exercises for more than one drum, always place the highest drum to the right.



GRADUATION TEST: 2

You Draw

Supply the missing note in the following measures. Use only **one note** in each measure from the following note values:



The image shows the first ten exercises of the 'Ten Minute Musical Warm-ups' book. The exercises are numbered 1 through 10 and are written on a single staff in bass clef. Each exercise has a unique time signature and rhythm pattern.

- 1. 2/4: Quarter note.
- 2. 4/4: Two quarter notes.
- 3. 5/4: Quarter rest, followed by a quarter note.
- 4. 3/4: Two eighth notes, followed by a quarter note.
- 5. 2/4: Quarter note.
- 6. 4/4: Quarter note.
- 7. 5/8: Two eighth notes, followed by a quarter note.
- 8. 4/4: Quarter rest.
- 9. 6/4: Sixteenth notes, followed by eighth notes, followed by quarter notes.
- 10. 3/4: Quarter note.

Fill in the Blanks!

Write in the counting under the notes, **then** give the top number in the time signatures.

1 2 3 4

5 6 7 8

Technique Workout

To make sure that your technical development is on par with your rhythm reading development, check to see if you can play each exercise and rudiment at the recommended tempos for the LESSON TEN progress chart on page 72 & 78.

Of course, speed should not be the only consideration when practicing the Technique Exercises and Rudiments! Proper attention to the correct stroke styles and evenness of sound is most important. You will only be able to achieve speed if you're practicing the correct stroke styles at a slow tempo first!

If you haven't started to learn to play the DRUMSET by this point in the book, I highly encourage you to do so! To become a well rounded percussionist, you'll eventually be asked to play drumset parts – even if you're only going to play in the school band.

The DRUMSET FUNDAMENTALS section in the appendix on page 82 will take you step-by-step through all of the essential skills! Even if you don't own a drumset and learn by playing with your hands on your legs, you'll have fun playing the grooves along with some great tunes!

Etude in "8 time"

Start slowly, gradually working up the tempo marked.

 = 160

The image displays three staves of musical notation in bass clef, 3/8 time. The notation consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together, and rests. The first staff begins with a bass clef and a 3/8 time signature. The second and third staves continue the sequence without a time signature. The notes are primarily G, A, and B, with some sixteenth-note patterns. Rests are indicated by a 'y' symbol.

Exercise #4 is a **musical** study that applies all of the rhythms and dynamics that you have encountered in the book.

Musical Study for Snare Drum

4

f *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *ritard.*

RLR LRLRLR
RLRL LRL
RLRL LRLR

♩ = 90-110

The seven stroke roll uses the new rhythm that you have learned, only bouncing the 16th notes. This new rudiment can also be played with an accent added to the beginning (Exercise B & C). Since this added stroke is not bounced, this version of the seven stroke roll is often called a **tap roll**.

The Seven Stroke Roll

A

LRLR LRLR

B

RLRLR RLRLR

C

RLRLRLRL R

A composer will often designate a different ending to be played on the repeat of a musical phrase. This is indicated by **first and second ending signs**.

First & Second Endings

1 2 3 4

In this example, play measure 1 and 2, the first ending (meas. 3), then repeat back to the beginning. Play measure 1 and 2 again, SKIP the 1st ending (meas. 3), and finish with the second ending (measure 4).

5

♩ = 60-80

LRL RLRLR L RLRR LRL L R L R L RLRL RLRL RLRLR L
RLRR LRL L R L RLRL R LRL R R RLRR L L LRL R LRL RL
RLRLR L R R RLRR L LRLRL RLRLRL RL 1 2 R L R

Rudimental Etude #16

HOT TIP:

Sometimes a flam at the beginning of a 7 stroke roll will cause a tempo problem. Practice count two of measure 4 until you are able to keep an even 16th note base.

Appendix

Lesson 10

①

②

③

④

⑤

Lesson 11

①

②

③

④

⑤

⑥

Accessory Percussion

All well-rounded percussionists should know the fundamental techniques for the accessory percussion instruments. Included in these two pages is some very basic information followed by an etude that incorporates most of the common techniques. For a more thorough explanation, check out the video lessons that are available for these and other accessory instruments at www.youtube.com/user/FreshApproachBooks.



Concert Bass Drum

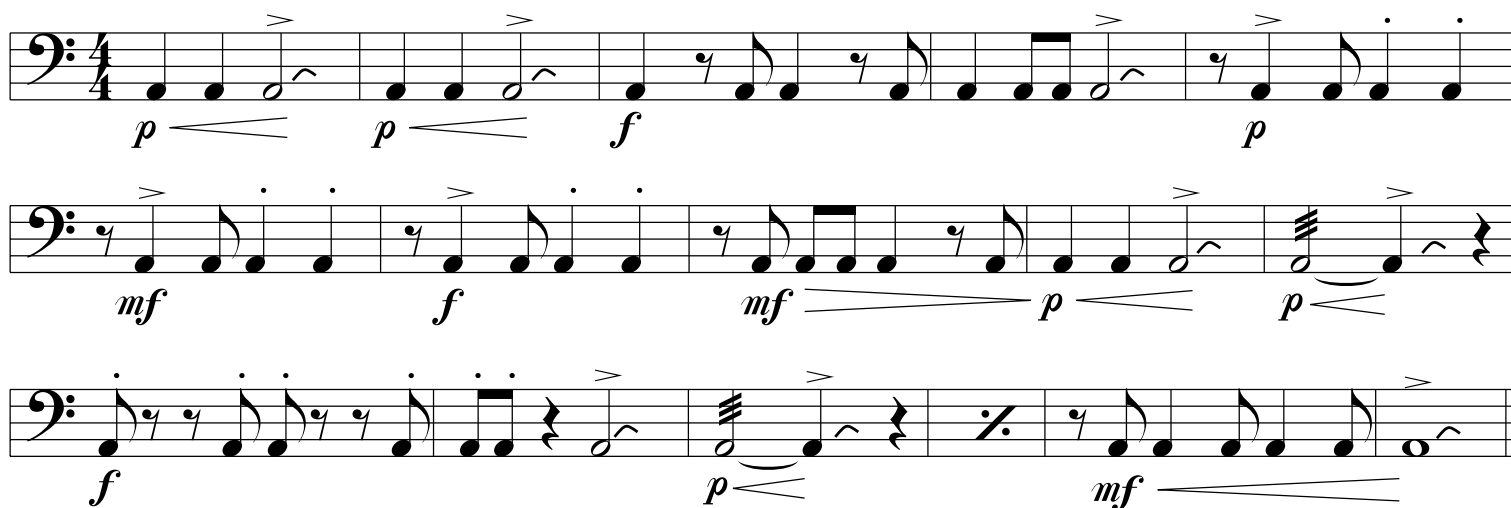
The first step in getting a great concert bass drum sound is using a mallet that is generally matched to the size of the bass drum itself. Timpani or keyboard mallets are not large enough to produce a full, deep sound from the drum, so always use a bass drum mallet designed for the drum.

On a bass drum that is in a vertical position, stand slightly to the right side and behind the drum. You will play the drum with your right hand and use your left to muffle the drum head. Strike the drum slightly off center. A stand that allows the drum to be tilted at an angle provides a better playing position for the performer.

If extra muffling is required (for marches and very staccato passages), drape a small towel over the edge of the rim of the drum. Clipping the towel to the rim will keep it in place.

When playing rolls on the bass drum, always use two mallets. Play the roll with alternating single strokes.

Concert Bass Drum Etude



Crash Cymbals

The cymbal straps are held in much the same grip as the right hand snare grip. Let the strap drape over the second joint of the index finger. The fingers then curl around the strap to make a fist.

In order to play a full cymbal crash, one cymbal (usually the left) is held stationary. The right cymbal is held at a slightly higher angle and is dropped down against the left with a "glancing blow." After the cymbals are struck together, bring your hands apart and down slightly so that the cymbals may be allowed to vibrate freely.

For fast, repeated cymbal strikes (as in a march), keep the cymbals close together, with all edges even. Keep the left cymbal stationary and strike it with the left. Usually, time does not permit the "glancing blow" type of strike described above. Keeping one cymbal slightly off-center from the other will usually eliminate air pockets that may occur.

When muffling the cymbals, the follow through is omitted and the edges should be drawn to the players body (chest, midriff, or shoulders) to stop the sound. This is absolutely necessary for short, **staccato** notes. The shorter the notes, the faster the player needs to draw the cymbals to his or her body.

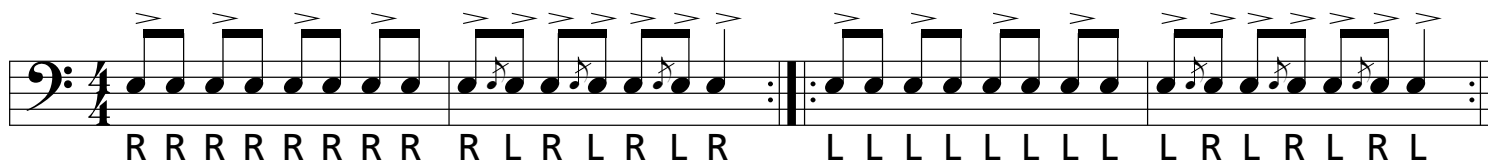
If the crash cymbals are to be played for extended periods of time, have a cymbal rack or padded table to lay the cymbals on when they are not being played.

TECHNIQUE WORKOUT:

EXERCISES

Exercise #15: "Flam Control"

Use this exercise to develop control over alternating flams. The motion that is used in the first measure is EXACTLY THE SAME as the motion in the second. Practice playing the primary stroke of the flam in the air just above the drum (sometimes called a "fake flam") to develop control over the downstroke.



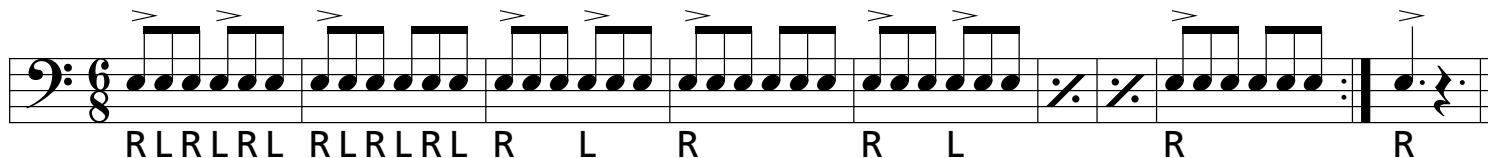
Exercise #16: "Chicken and a Roll"

Work for an even motion from the 16th notes to the bounces. Count the "roll skeleton" out loud to ensure a consistent tempo. Use double bounce as well as multiple bounce rolls and practice starting on the left as well as the right.



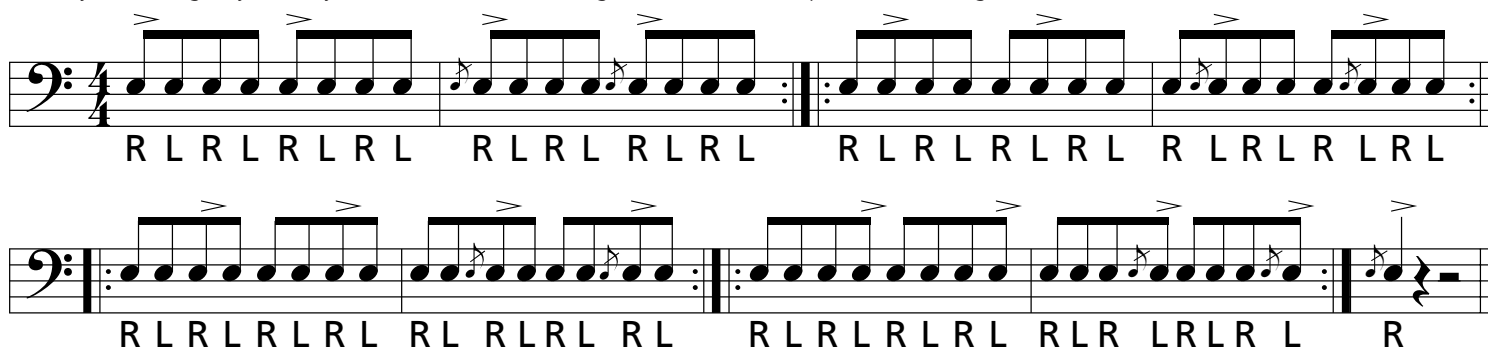
Exercise #17: "Alternating Accents in Three"

This is another two height exercise. Play each accent with a full stroke and innerbeats at 2–3 inches. Practice playing this exercise in the air above the drum to gain control over the downstrokes. See how close you can come to hitting the drum without actually doing it!



Exercise #18: "Grid Flams"

Using the same "grid" concept as "Grid Diddles." The first measure in each segment isolates the accent pattern, then you'll add the flam in the second. Watch your sticking very carefully! Even with the flam shifting from downbeat to upbeat, the sticking remains consistent.



Exercise #19: "Chicken & a Tap Roll"



ESSENTIAL RUDIMENTS

II. PARADIDDLE RUDIMENTS

16. Single Paradiddle



BRONZE					BRONZE					GOLD				
30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100

17. Double Paradiddle



BRONZE					BRONZE					GOLD				
30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100

18. Triple Paradiddle



BRONZE					BRONZE					GOLD				
30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100

19. Paradiddle-Diddle



BRONZE					BRONZE					GOLD				
30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100

III. FLAM RUDIMENTS

20. Flam



BRONZE					BRONZE					GOLD				
30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100

21. Flam Accent



BRONZE					BRONZE					GOLD				
30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100

22. Flam Tap



BRONZE					BRONZE					GOLD				
30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100

23. Flamacue



BRONZE					BRONZE					GOLD				
30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100

24. Flam Paradiddle



BRONZE					BRONZE					GOLD				
30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100

25. Flammed Mill



BRONZE					BRONZE					GOLD				
30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100

26. Flam Paradiddle-Diddle



BRONZE					BRONZE					GOLD				
30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100

27. Pataflafla



BRONZE					BRONZE					GOLD				
30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100

28. Swiss Army Triplet



BRONZE					BRONZE					GOLD				
30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100

29. Inverted Flam Tap



BRONZE					BRONZE					GOLD				
30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100

30. Flam Drag



BRONZE					BRONZE					GOLD				
30	35	40	45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100

ESSENTIAL RUDIMENTS

IV. DRAG RUDIMENTS

31. Drag



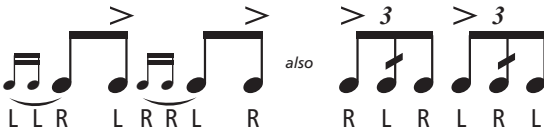
BRONZE				SILVER				GOLD			
45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100

36. Drag Paradiddle #1



BRONZE				SILVER				GOLD			
45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100

32. Single Drag Tap



BRONZE				SILVER				GOLD			
45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100

37. Drag Paradiddle #2



BRONZE				SILVER				GOLD			
45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100

33. Double Drag Tap



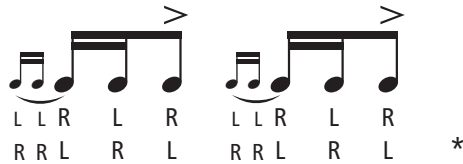
BRONZE				SILVER				GOLD			
45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100

38. Single Ratamacue



BRONZE				SILVER				GOLD			
45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100

34. Lesson 25



BRONZE				SILVER				GOLD			
45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100

39. Double Ratamacue



BRONZE				SILVER				GOLD			
45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100

35. Single Dragadiddle



BRONZE				SILVER				GOLD			
45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100

40. Triple Ratamacue



BRONZE				SILVER				GOLD			
45	50	55	60	65	70	75	80	85	90	95	100

DRUMSET FUNDAMENTALS

All percussionists should know how to play the drumset. This section, adapted from "A FRESH APPROACH TO THE DRUMSET," will get you playing along to some great tracks in no time! And with the FREE video lessons available, you can learn by watching world-renowned drummer Stanton Moore demonstrate all the fundamentals!

For FREE drumset video lessons, go to www.youtube.com/user/FreshApproachBooks



Learn About the Parts of the Drumset



Cymbals

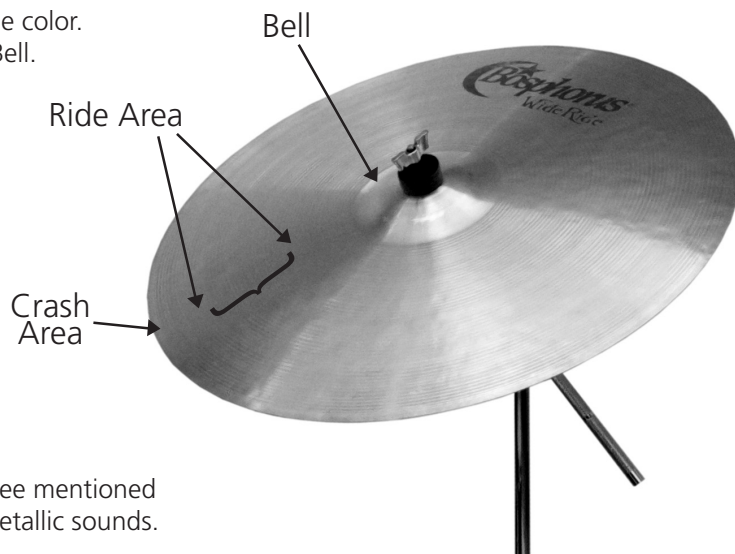
While the drums are the heart of the drumset, the cymbals provide the color. There are 3 general areas to play on: The Crash Area, Ride Area and Bell. Every set should have at least three types of cymbals:

RIDE: The ride is the largest and heaviest of the three. Generally, you'll play time-keeping patterns on the ride cymbal.

CRASH: These are smaller, thinner cymbals that you'll use to "punch" parts of the music.

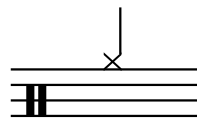
HI-HAT: The hi-hat cymbals come in pairs and you'll play them with either your foot (via the hi-hat pedal) or your hands.

There are many other types of cymbals available in addition to the three mentioned above – chinas, sizzles, splashes as well as a dizzying array of other metallic sounds.



The Ride Cymbal

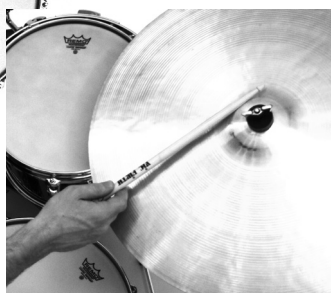
The "RIDE CYMBAL" was named for the "ride" (time-keeping) patterns that are often played on it. A general "all-purpose" playing area for the ride cymbal is about a third of the way in from the edge.



Ride Cymbal Grip ("French Grip")

When you begin to reach around the drumset, it often helps to rotate your hand slightly so you can minimize the movement of your arms. The grip you'll use on the ride (most commonly referred to as the "FRENCH GRIP") is produced by turning your hand to where the thumb is on top of the stick, as if you were going to shake hands.

For more ride cymbal sounds, you can also play on the bell (also called the "dome").



Or you can play with the shoulder of the stick on the edge for a heavy crash. A good ride cymbal can be played as a crash as well.



"SOLID AS A ROCK"

Watch Stanton jam to this track!
www.youtube.com/user/FreshApproachBooks



This track switches from the hi-hat at Letter A to the ride cymbal at Letter B. Drummers will often play a beat on the hi-hat during the "verse" (letter A), then move to the ride during the "chorus" to get a bigger sound. If you're up for a challenge on the chorus, try playing your left foot hi-hat on 2&4 with the snare!

(A)

Play 3 times

count: 2 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 3 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

(B)