

# Drumming Technique



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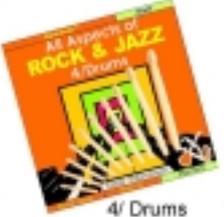
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# All Aspects of ROCK & JAZZ

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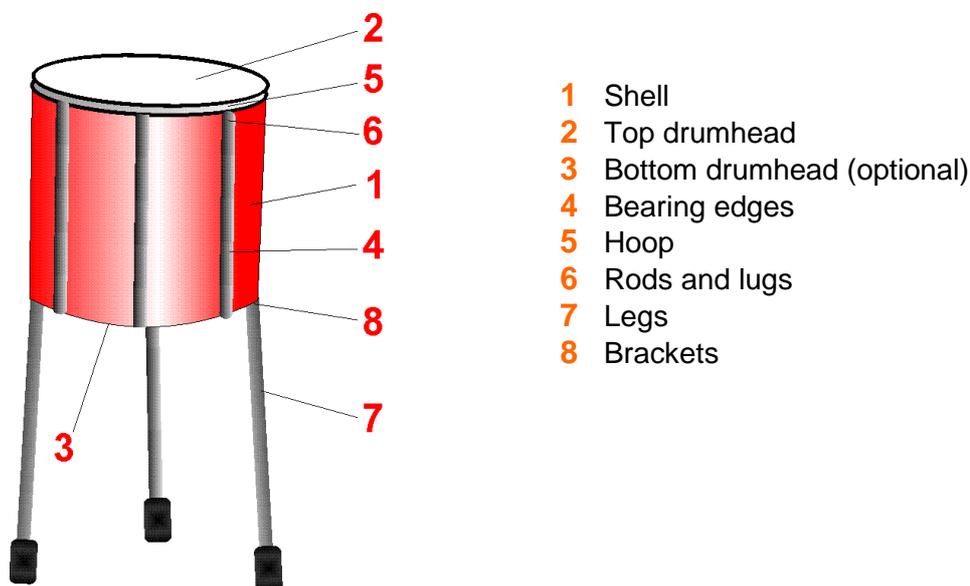


# General Introduction

In this book, we use the classic 5-piece drum kit. Most of the techniques in this chapter, however, can be used on almost any combination of drums.

## THE ANATOMY OF A DRUM KIT

Common to All Drums



### Shell (1)

A shell is a **cylinder** made from Maple, Beech, Birch or Mahogany wood laminates. Cheap drums are made of hardwood. The shell is painted or lacquered. In the case of very inexpensive drums, a plastic coating is glued to the shell. Each drum has special clamps and brackets for attachment to stands, legs or other drums.

**Thin or thick shells?** A thin shell is able to reproduce the drumheads as the thin wall vibrates in tune with the head. A thick wall though, does not vibrate as well and only the head can be heard, not the wood.

**The depth of the drum** A deep drum has a full and rich sound, as the sound waves are longer and thus stronger.

**Inside the drum** On expensive drums, the outside lacquer is also used on the inside. This way the sound becomes cleaner and crisper.

## Drumheads (2)

Drumheads are plastic pads stretched over a metal ring (hoop) held in place with a metal rim. The head is mounted with tension screws in lugs (brackets) in the drum. Using a drum key, you can tune the drum by tightening/loosing the screws.

When beating the drum, the head vibrates through the shell and the hardware. The result is a sound with pitch and overtones. The final sound depends on your tuning and the quality of the head and the shell design.

**Single or double heads?** Using two heads alters the sounds too. A double head (batter and resonant) produces a strong sound due to the vibrations between the batter and the resonance head. The double drumhead makes it easier to control the sustain of the drum. Most toms and bass drums have double heads. A single drumhead (batter) has a clean sound with a short sustain.

**Tuning the double heads 1** When the heads have the same pitch, the sound waves will be in phase. This means a maximum resonance in the drum. **2** With different tunings of the heads, the sound waves will be out of phase. The result is a bigger impact when beating the drum.

**Bottom Drumhead (3)** Some toms are equipped with bottom heads to increase the sound.

## Hardware

**Bearing Edges (4)** The metal edges of the shell are shaped to maximize the transmission of sounds from the drumhead to the shell, amplifying and enriching the sound. The sharpness of the edge makes better resonance. If the edge is rounded, the sound will be a little dull.

**Rim** The rim on the snare drum holding the head is used to produce a short, dry woodblock-like sound when the drummer beats the rim. The sound can be both high and aggressive (when hitting both the head and the rim with a "rim shot") or soft (when hitting the rim alone).

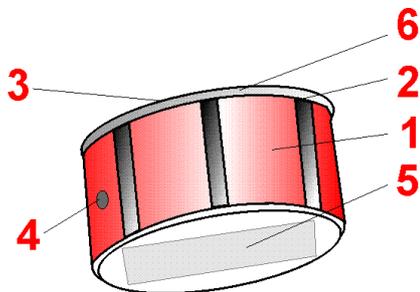
**Hoop (5)** The hoop is a band with holes for the tension rods. Die cast hoops gives the drum a bright sound and a better attack. Wooden hoops on the contrary gives a warm sound, and they last longer than the metal ones. More hoops on the drum make it easier to tune the head.

**Tension rods and lugs (6)** The tension rods are placed in the holes of the hoop. They are screwed in place and are square at the top to fit into the tuning key. The lugs (also called a nut boxes) are depressions in the hoop attaching them to the shell.

**Legs (7)** The bass drum, the floor tom and certain other drums have pointed skew legs.

**Brackets (8)** Holders for legs and connectors to other drums and cymbals.

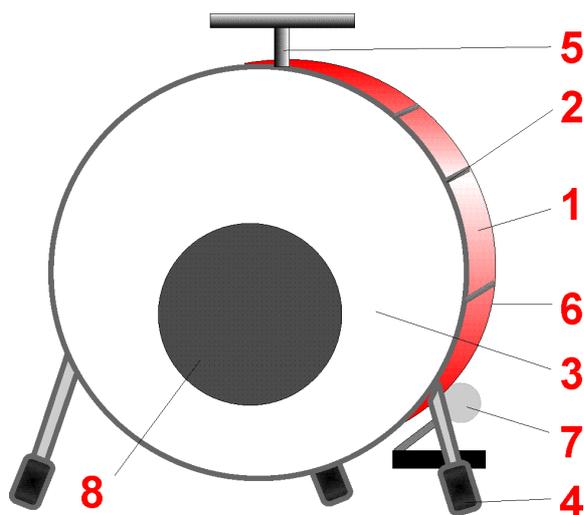
### The Snare Drum



- 1 Shell
- 2 Bearing edges
- 3 Drumhead
- 4 Brackets
- 5 Snare side head
- 6 Rim

The snare drum usually has a shell made of steel. It is equipped with a single ply head on top (batter side), sometimes with a dot applied for longer life, and a snare side head with wire coils (the snares) at the bottom. The lower bearing edge has two shallow cuts for the wire coils.

### The Bass Drum



- 1 Shell
- 2 Bearing edges
- 3 Front drumhead
- 4 Legs
- 5 Brackets for toms
- 6 Back drumhead
- 7 Pedal and beater
- 8 Hole for muffling the sound

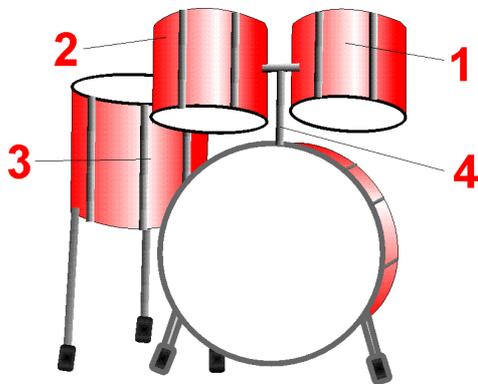
The bass drum is the largest and most powerful drum in the kit. The heads are tuned down to the lowest possible pitch. The front head has a small circular hole for inserting a microphone or a sound-dampening pillow. The batter head of the pedal has a patch to prolong the life of the head.

Always place the bass drum on a carpet. The pointed legs of the drum anchor the drum to the carpet to keep it from “travelling” away from you, driven by the beats of the batter head.

### Double Bass Drums

Some drummers prefer to play on two bass drums instead of one. Double bass drums are common in Heavy rock and funk. The double bass drum is equipped with a special pedal to beat the two drums at the same time.

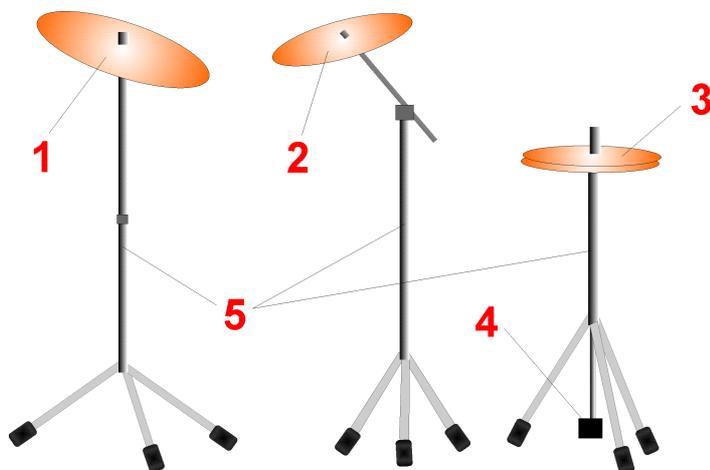
### The Toms



- 1 Small tom
- 2 Medium tom
- 3 Floor tom
- 4 Brackets on the bass drum

The toms are the “spice” of the drum kit; the melodic drums. They have one or two drumheads above and below. The toms are often tuned to produce the well-known high – middle – low frequency, when starting on the two mounted toms and proceeding to the floor tom.

### The Cymbals



- 1 Ride Cymbal
- 2 Crash Cymbal
- 3 Hi hat
- 4 Pedal
- 5 Cymbal Stands

The hi hat consists of two cymbals and a special stand with pedal. The other cymbals have stands, normally with an adjustable arm. All the cymbals are fastened to their stand with a finger screw.

## HOW TO SET UP THE DRUMS

The routine of setting up the drum kit must be rehearsed many times, before it becomes second nature. It must be done quickly and carefully. And in the same order all the time; not necessarily the order of this drum tutor, but the order that suits you best. If you change the order of the process every time, it will *never* become second nature.

### Basic Setup Routine

- 1 Place the bass drum carpet on the floor in the middle of the stage. Mount the legs on the bass drum. Place the bass drum and make sure that the pointed legs are safely locked into the carpet.
- 2 Place the pedal in front of the bass drum back drumhead.
- 3 Place the toms in their holders on top of the bass drum. Lock them tightly.
- 4 Place the hi hat on the left-hand side of the bass drum. Mount the cymbals – the heaviest cymbal is the bottom cymbal. – with the felt pad in between and lock the finger screw.
- 5 Place the snare drum stand between the hi hat and the bass drum. Mount the snare drum in the stand. Make sure that the snares are unlocked.
- 6 Mount the legs on the floor tom. Place the floor tom on the right-hand side of the bass drum.
- 7 Place the two cymbal stands close to the front of the bass drum. Mount the cymbals and lock the finger screws. Adjust the crossbar to make it as easy as possible to reach the cymbals from the stool.
- 8 Mount the stool in the stand and place it behind the bass drum. Adjust the position of all the drums, until you can reach them all easily.

### Tips and Tricks

**All parts of the drum kit should be easily accessible** Adjust all stands, including the snare drum and the hi hat, to be as near your hands and feet as possible. Be sure that the bass drum pedal doesn't "travel" on the carpet.

**How to Sit on the Stool** Sit on the stool with a straight back as far forward as possible. The energy comes from your feet. The hands should not be lower than the snare drum.

**For heavy rock drummers** To make sure you are heard, lift the bass drum over the carpet by placing a block of wood under the front side of the drum. And place the toms on a separate rack instead of directly on the bass drum.

## TUNING

### Introduction

Tuning a drum is no different than tuning a piano or a guitar; if you don't do it well, the audience will react disapprovingly. Nobody likes false notes.

At first sight, "tuning" a drum seems to be impossible; it has no strings, no pipes, nothing that can produce a tonal sound. But on second thoughts, every sound emerging from any material has one or more specific tonal pitches, even if these appear to be "noise". And a drum must be tuned very carefully to let the vibrations of the drumhead, the shell, and the room create a pleasant sound; a tuned sound.

Tuning your instrument – the drums – is just as important as the guitar player tuning the guitar it's just a little more complicated. But many young drummers are afraid of changing the tuning of the drums. "My drums sound great as they are", "If I tune them, it will spoil the sound" etc. Not true! If the guitarist doesn't tune the guitar, you would be the first to bang him/her over the head. But the guitarist believes that the false notes of the drums are OK – that how drums sound, isn't it? NO, sir.

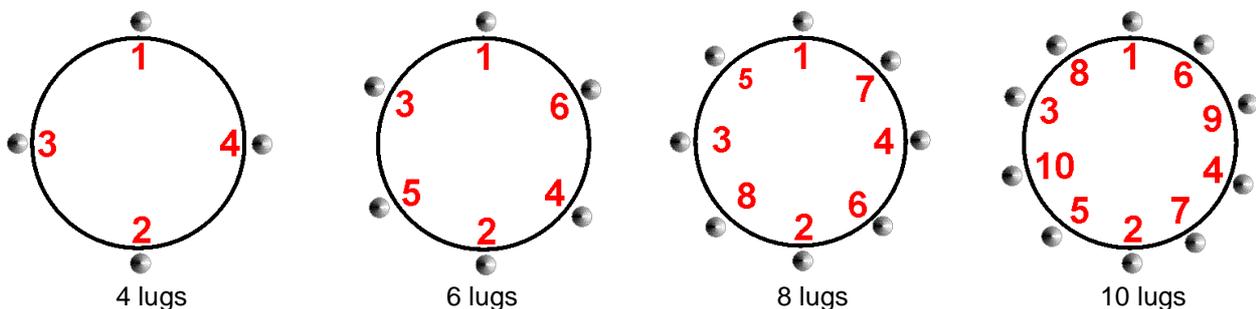
Want to know how simple drum tuning can be? The hoop with its tension rods stretches the drumhead. By tightening or loosening the tension rods and the lugs, the pitch will either increase or decrease.

### Replacing the Head

- 1 Buy new heads for the drums. While you're out shopping, buy some very fine sandpaper and paraffin, too. If you have fibreglass or metal drum, you don't need the sandpaper. You will also need a perfectly flat table.
- 2 Make a sketch that shows where the lugholes fit into the shell. You will have to find the exact position again during the tuning process.
- 3 Remove the head by unscrewing the lugs. Discard the old heads.
- 4 Clean the interior and exterior of the drums.
- 5 Tighten the brackets and other hardware parts.
- 6 Check the edge for smoothness. If it isn't smooth, grind the edge lightly with the sandpaper. Be careful not to overdo the grinding.
- 7 When finished with the grinding, place the drum upside down on the table. If the drum rocks, you will have to redo the grinding with sandpaper. Gently, please!

<p><b>NOTE</b> If you are in doubt, don't do the edge grinding yourself, let a music shop do it for you.</p>
--

- 8 Grease the edge with a thin layer of paraffin to facilitate the positioning of the drumhead.
- 9 Place the head on the edge and put the hoop back in its own position (see your sketch in point 1).
- 10 Repeat the rocking test from point 7. Do not rotate the drumhead during the test.
- 11 Place the lugs in the hoop and tighten them until a slight tension on the hoop has been achieved.
- 12 When stretching a drumhead, is all about tightening a number of opposite lugs. Here is the order of the four most common lug settings – the order has to be followed strictly:



### Tuning the Head to Itself

- 1 Tighten the tension rods moderately. Try the pitch, it should sound good.
- 2 Now place your hands on the drumhead and press hard until you hear a crack. Don't be afraid to break the head – it can stand the pressure. When you hear the crack, the edges of the head touching the rim loosen up and the drumhead becomes centred in the middle of the rim.
- 3 Place the drum on the floor to keep the other head and the shell from resounding when tuning.
- 4 Beat the head 3cm/1” from each lug. Adjust the pitch of each lug until they are in tune.
- 5 Place your hands on the drumhead and press hard until you hear a crack again.
- 6 Repeat point 4-5 four times. Now the head is tuned to itself.

### Tuning the Head to a Specific Pitch

**Tuning to the Shell** Each shell has its own pitch. Strike the shell with a soft piece of wood and listen carefully to the sound. Adjust the head to the pitch.

**Tuning to the Bottom Head** 1 Tuning the bottom head to the same pitch as the top head produces a warm, sustained tone. 2 Tuning the bottom head to a lower pitch as the top head produces a deep, neutral tone. 3 Tuning the bottom head to a higher pitch as the top head produces a deep, neutral tone and the pitch decreases when the tone fades. This is a very popular effect on the toms, especially the floor tom.

The two heads should not be too far away from each other in pitch, as this will make the tone dull.

**Tuning to the Pitch of Other Drums** It is common to tune the toms melodically in for example fourth or fifth intervals.

### Tuning the Snare Drum

Tuning the snare drum is different from the other drums, as the shell is made of metal and the bottom head touches the snares.

**The Bottom Head** The snares vibrate more on a tight head than on a loose head, so adjust the head to your favourite sound.

**The Top Head** Generally, a loose head produces a lower tone and a tight head a high tone. Rock players usually prefer a low tone, whereas jazz players prefer a high tone.

### Dampening the Drums

It is very common to dampen the drums. There can be many reasons for that, better control over the sound, a richer tone, dampening the overtones etc.

Tape on the edge of the head dampens the overtones. Special plastic “rings” on the heads are very common and have the same effect as tape. It is normal to adhere tape to the underside of the head.

A sheet over the snare drum helps producing a warm, muted sound. Placing 2 layers of Kleenex between the snares and the bottom head dampen the snares response to the other drums.

Carpets, pillows or old papers in the bass drum are classical means of dampening the sound.

### General Properties of Heads

The pitch of the head depends of the thickness.

Single ply heads produce a sharp tone, whereas double ply heads produce a warmer tone. Fluid heads produce an even warmer tone.

Dotted heads dampen the overtones.

# The Human Instrument

When playing the drums, always play relaxed. Be as lazy as you can, avoiding major jumps between the drums. Being relaxed in your body, and rehearsing the exact positions of the drums are crucial for your playing and your health. Like with the mouse of the computer, tensions in your hands and shoulders will get you into trouble.

## POSITION OF THE BODY

Be relaxed but do not lean too much back or forwards. For sight-readers: Do not bend your neck when reading the notes, as this can lead to tensions and pain in the neck and shoulders.

## PSYCHOLOGY

According to Sebastian Kalamajski, author of *All Aspects of ROCK & JAZZ / 3 The Electric Guitar*, the following exciting new methods can be utilized to become a much better player, musically and physically:

**Some Basic Brain Info** The brain uses the following main functions: Conscious thinking, Subconscious storing of information and the Supraconscious mind, which is separated from the other parts of the brain. The latter is the centre of the intuition, independent of the conscious thinking process.

By learning to control your *Consciousness* you improve your learning rate drastically both in music and other aspects of life, for example learning new languages and your general reading speed. By controlling the Consciousness, you can also get a more efficient use of the *subconscious* memory, using readily available information on rhythms, co-ordination, shifting your sticks from drum to cymbal position etc. without having to think consciously about where to place your hands and feet.

**Concentration** is the keyword in any learning process. Concentration means focusing and collecting your mind on one subject only without letting yourself disturb by anything.

*“Make a sketch of what you are going to practice – and follow it!”* Make a list of what you want to rehearse and how long each item will take including a 5min rest every 30min.

*“Focus on your playing”*. Focusing on a subject will help you use the brain more effectively. Close the door to the room and tell everybody in the flat/house to leave you alone while you rehearse, maybe even put a “Don’t Disturb” poster on your door.

*“Get motivated and inspired”*. There are several ways of getting / being motivated. It could be the desire to play like your drum hero or because your girlfriend / boyfriend is coming to dinner. But in my experience, motivation can be produced through simple mechanics: 1) the more you play the better it feels. 2) If you keep on working – even if your motivation is low – the pleasure of playing your instrument will return in a short while, simply due to working with

the drums. Motivation comes from working harder in itself rather from being rewarded or dreaming of being a famous drummer. This may seem slightly controversial but that is how I have been inspired and motivated over the years: Work is the drug.

**Second Nature Playing** is the point in the learning process where the conscious mind leaves the work to the subconscious part of the brain - you play by heart. When you do not have to think about the position of your hands, you can concentrate on the interpretation of the music, expressing yourself.

To achieve this state of “automation”, you will have to concentrate fully on your hands and feet. You may often experience a certain fatigue at the end of the rehearsing session, and your mind starts wandering. Try to keep the concentration during the learning process and remember: a 5min break every 30min.

The phenomenon called “*muscle memory*” is important in connection with Second Nature Playing. While you learn to play, the muscles start “remembering” the movements of your hands and feet. When planning your practice, you must be very careful to check all the technical details and playing problems, because if you and your body rehearse a technically *wrong* version of the music, the muscles will remember the wrong version and not the correct one. I once worked with an extremely talented singer. She made a mistake the first time she sang a certain line of the text, and she never managed to get rid of the mistake, the line got stuck in her head as second nature. So be careful...

#### INTERESTED IN SEBASTIAN'S METHODS?

You can find much more stuff and useful information in Sebastian Kalamajski's book All Aspects of ROCK & JAZZ / 3 **The Electric Guitar**, or read his articles on [Guitar9.com](http://Guitar9.com).

#### ERGONOMIC THINKING

Playing the drums is a sweaty business. Your finger muscles, the arms and your back are exposed to severe working conditions while you play. You must learn to follow a number of important rules, in order to avoid Carpal Syndrome and a slipped disc in the back, which are some of the occupational risks for drummers.

1. The drums must be 100% balanced to fit your body and adjusted to be near to your hands and feet. The hardware must also be in 100% working order. And the drums must – of course – be in tune.
2. Always use the most relaxed playing technique and take the necessary time to learn to play. Correct techniques take time to learn but when they become second nature to you, the rest is like a breeze.
3. Play concentrated and relaxed. It is important to play the drums, and you should not think above the forgotten rent, your friends or your dinner, while you play. You are a professional.
4. Play a maximum of half an hour or 45min without pausing. If your wrist starts hurting, stop the playing immediately or play very slowly to relax the muscles.

## SPEED

There are many musicians dreaming of being the world's fastest players. What a misconception. Although talented drummers play wonderful solos, they actually spend most of their time comping the solo players. That is the most important role for all drummers; being a part of the band – the team.

1. Rehearse drum patterns, as many as possible, 1 hour a day.
2. Start in a very slow tempo and be sure the body position is correct and the hands are relaxed. Raise the tempo slowly the first weeks. When you feel sure about the slow and moderate tempi, you may increase the tempo even more.
3. Do not despair if a one of the positions troubles you, Play the figure again and again, *slowly*. At long last, you will come to the point where you *understand* the pattern. You can *hear* what it should sound like, and after that tempo and technique are only formalities. It is your comprehension of music's spirit and nature that determines your ability to play it the right way.

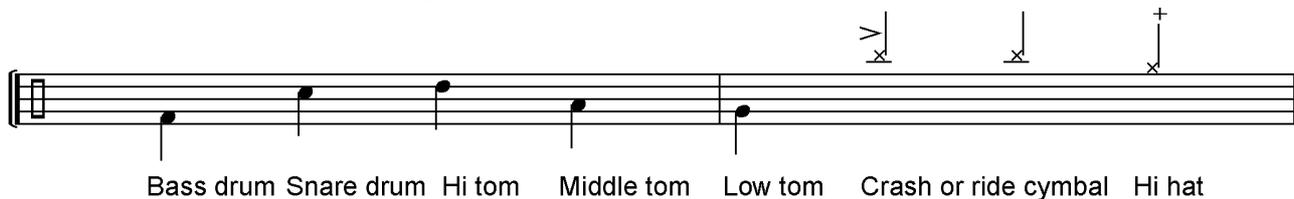
# Drum Notation

Drums can be written in the bass clef as classical musicians do, but rock and jazz musicians normally use a special drum clef. A drum tablature is also widely used. Here are the two notation systems.

## DRUM NOTATION

The drum clef is different to normal note writing, as it doesn't have pitch indications. As the drums don't have "scale pitches", there is no need for pitch values. Each part of the drum kit has its own line inside or outside the system, as follows:

Positions of the Drums and Cymbals



**LISTEN** to the example [gen\\_2\\_01.mid](#)

As to note duration and symbols, the drum clef works like any clef in traditional note writing (see Music Theory of the All Aspects series, chapter 1, Note Writing for further details)

**NOTE** The above example is unfortunately not the only drum clef system. Standardization has never been implemented in note writing, alas! The above notation is consequently used in this book.

To make things a little bit easier, the bass drum and snare drum are always like the above example in all Clef systems. The problem is the toms and the cymbals.

## DRUM TABLATURE

Having a drum clef, which takes a couple of hours to get used to, if you already know traditional notes, should be enough. But a drum tablature system has been invented for the increasing group of musicians using only tabs.

A tablature is a very old way of writing musical notes. It was invented in the renaissance and used primarily for writing down lute and guitar music. The drum tablature has – opposite the drum clef system – no duration values, which makes it harder to read as the duration is shown relative to the meter of the bar. Here is an example of a basic rock rhythm in drum clef notation and drum tablature:

C	-----	-----	-----	-----	x
H	x---x---x---x---	x---x---x---x---	x---x---x---x---	x---x---x---x---	-
S	-----o-----	-----o-----	-----o-----	-----o-----	-
B	o-----o-----	o-----o-----	o-----o-----	o-----o-----	o
	1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +	1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +	1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +	1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +	1

The notes are the x's (cymbal) and o's (drums). There are specialized symbols for open hi hat, crash cymbal etc. The tablature must be written in the font "Courier New" to have the symbols and bar lines aligned.

### Drum Parts

C	-Cymbal-----
H	-Hi hat-----
Rd	-Ride-Cymbal----
t	-Small-Tom-----
T	-Medium-Tom-----
S	-Snare-Drum-----
F	-Floor-Tom-----
F2	-2nd-Floor-Tom---
B	-Bass-Drum-----
Hf	-Hi hat-w/foot---

### Cymbal Symbols

-x-	Cymbal or Hi hat
-X-	Loose Hi hat, Crash
-o-	Open High Hat
-#-	Dampen Cymbal
-s-	Splash Cymbal
-c-	China Cymbal
-b-	Bell of Ride
-x-	Hi hat With pedal

### Dynamics and various

-o-	Strike
-O-	Accent
-g-	Ghost Note
-f-	Flam
-d-	Drag
-b-	Soft Roll
-B-	Accented Roll
-@-	Snare Rim

### Note Duration

There are no duration values in the drum TAB system (!), which make it bit odd to read as you always have to check if the TABs suddenly change from 1/4 to 1/16!

#### 4/4, in 1/4's

C	-----	
H	-----	
S	-----	
B	-----	
	1 2 3 4	

#### 4/4, in 1/8's

C	-----
H	-----
S	-----
B	-----
	1 a 2 a 3 a 4 a

#### 4/4, in 1/16's

C	-----
H	-----
S	-----
B	-----
	1e+a2e+a3e+a4e+a

### Triplets

C	-----
H	-----
S	-----
B	-----
	1ae 2ae 3ae 4ae

Repeat Signs

	-----repeat 3x-----															
H	-----					-----										
S	-----					-----										
B	-----					-----										
	1	a	2	a	3	a	4	a	1	a	2	a	3	a	4	a

# Playing the Drums

In this chapter, you will learn to use the sticks, the drums and the cymbals. You will also meet the first small exercises with basic drum patterns in rock and jazz style. There is short introduction to basic drum patterns and a few exercises to train your muscle memory.

## COUNTING DRUMS

During your music theory lessons (in the Music Theory book of the All Aspects series or elsewhere), you have probably not learned to count like a drummer. Here is how it goes:

1/8

<b>1</b>	<b>and</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>and</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>and</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>and</b>
1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8	1/8

1/16

<b>1</b>	<b>e</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>a</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>e</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>a</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>e</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>a</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>e</b>	<b>+</b>	<b>a</b>
1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16	1/16

## STICKS

### Energy Wasters

Don't waste energy. Use the sticks in a relaxed, composed manner. If you want to hit the drums hard, don't lift your arms high in the air. Simply move the stick downwards very fast. Unnecessary movements are simply energy wasters.

### The Anatomy of a Stick

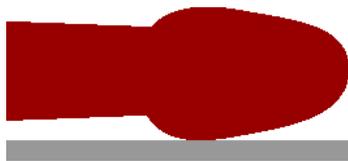


- 1 But
- 2 Shaft
- 3 Shoulder
- 4 Neck
- 5 Tip

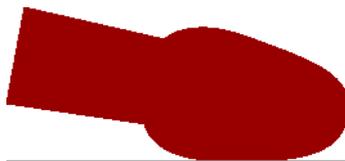
\* A **heavy** stick produces a full sound with both high and low frequencies. These kinds of sticks are suited for rock.

A **light** stick produces mostly higher frequencies. These sticks are ideal jazz sticks.

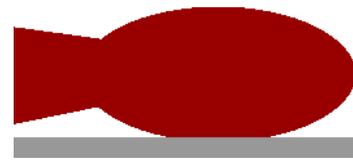
The shape of the tip is important for the sound. The triangular tip is the most common type, and for good reasons. With a triangular tip, you have two types of playing, either a high sound with the edge of the tip (1) or a low sound with the flat side of the tip (2). This cannot be achieved with a round ball-type tip. A triangular tip is suited for rock and heavy playing.



1 Playing with the tip touching with the edge



2 Playing with the tip touching with the flat side



3 Elliptic tip with a sound that is not too high and not too low

Using an elliptic tip (3) – or a ball-type tip – is suited for soft playing.

### Ghost Strokes

**Ghost Strokes** are weak/soft strokes used to colour the drum pattern.

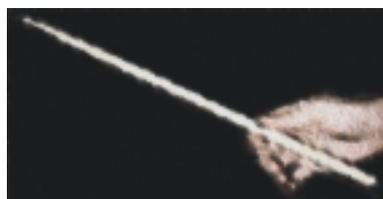
### Holding the Stick

Don't cling to your stick. Play with a loose hand – barely hold the stick with the lightest touch in the world. The fingers are only there to hold stick; the forearm does the real work hitting the drums. For fast playing you only use two fingers in order to let the stick rotate and jump freely.

The arms should be motionless from the shoulder and down to the elbow. Only the forearm moves,



For normal playing



For fast playing

**DON'T** clench the stick like a shovel. You will end up having Carpal Syndrome!

### Stroke Exercise

This is a peculiar exercise to assist your **muscle memory**. It should be played slowly with the numbers counted aloud. The spoken counting is the trick that “welds” the stroke technique into the muscles. The exercise should be trained 1-2 times a week for 2 months.

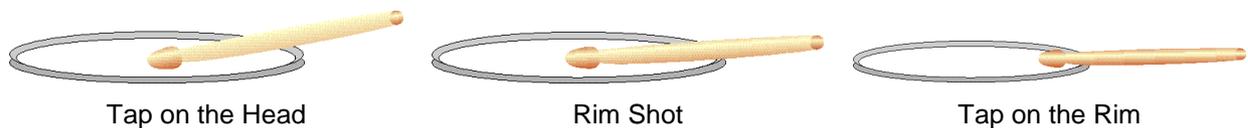
- 1 Begin counting: Right hand 1 2 3 4 Left hand 1 2 3 4
- 2 Proceed counting but count numbers instead of 1: Right hand 2 2 3 4 Left hand 2 2 3 4
- 3 Repeat 100 times.

### THE SNARE DRUM

The snare drum is the most important drum. The “drive” of the both rock and jazz comes from the snare drum. The sound of the snare drum is also extremely important for at hit record – it can take days to create the right sound. So it is obviously important to know the whereabouts of this drum.

### Strokes

There are three basic types of strokes on the snare drum; **Taps on the Head**, **Rim Shots** and **Taps on the Rim**. Furthermore, there is a variant called **Bounce**, where the drummer hits the head and lets the stick bounce back.



**Taps on the Head** Hit the head without touching the rim. This is the way, jazz drummers and classical percussionists play.

**Rim Shots** Hit both the head and the rim. Rock drummers use this stroke type.

**Taps on the Rim** Hit the rim only. The low clicking sound is used in Latin and jazz.

**Bounce** Hit the head and let the stick return to the height where you started.

### Paradiddle



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

**LISTEN** to the example [gen\\_2\\_02.mid](#)

Here comes the first exercise in the book! This is a **Paradiddle**, the first element of the drum archetypes (see the rest in chapter 4, Advance Drumming). **L** is the left hand, and **R** is the right hand. The paradiddle is a very fascinating pattern. It has two versions of a simple 8 strokes pattern, one starting with the left hand and one with the right hand, reversing the hands but keeping the rhythmical flow of the strokes. You should exercise the paradiddle at least half an hour a day over a period of minimum a year. By rehearsing the paradiddle, you train shifting your hands and become conscious about what you are doing. And after a while, you stop thinking; the paradiddle has become second nature! **START NOW...**

### Rolls



R L R L R R L L R R L L etc.

**LISTEN** to the example [gen\\_2\\_03.mid](#)

**Rolls** are another one of the basic features of drumming. Here is an example from modern classical music. You should carefully read the notes – there are surprising details along the way! It should give you a first impression of rolls.

In real life notation, rolls are written like this:



How you actually perform the rolls is a matter of interpretation. If you work with classical drumming, the rolls will be written note for note, but in rock and jazz, they are normally up to the drummer's taste and style.

## Fills

Besides the traditional 0 2 0 4 beats on the snare drum, the drummer is supposed to create fills when the vocal takes a pause or when the music needs an extra kick. Here's a classical fill. There are many other examples in chapter 5, Exercises.



**LISTEN** to the example [gen 2 06.mid](#)

A fill is often used before a verse or a chorus to heighten the musical excitement. Don't play too many strokes, though, when the vocal is in focus; simple is beautiful. And when the fill finally comes, it will be much more powerful after a period of quiet playing.

## THE BASS DRUM

The bass drum (also called a kick drum) produces the basic beat of the drum set. In the old jazz of the 1920-ies, the bass drum would go 1-2-3-4 all the time. In modern jazz, the bass drum is often treated like a tom and mostly used as effect (the cymbals have taken over the 1-2-3-4 of the old jazz). In rock, the snare drum and the bass drum works tightly together, creating a rhythmic flow.

## Using the Pedal

There are two traditional methods of striking with the pedal, the **Heel Up** and the **Heel Down**. Heel Up is the healthiest way of the two, as a kick with the leg is more relaxed than pushing from the angle, as in the Heel Down method.

**Heel Up** Place the back of the foot midway on the pedal. Strike with the whole leg.

**Heel Down** Place the whole foot on the pedal. Strike by pushing the ankle.

Besides these two methods, you will rather often have to use both feet alternating on the pedal. If you have a **double bass drum**, you use both the pedals at the same time (much faster).

Kicking with the leg and then bouncing the beater with the ankle is used for fast patterns.

## Basic Exercises for the Foot

- 1 Play 8 x 1/8 strokes on the snare drum in tempo 100 BPM (RLRLRLRL), and proceed with 8 x 1/8 strokes on the bass drum. Continue playing until your feet are relaxed. Do the exercise for about half an hour every day. When the exercise becomes second nature, your increase the tempo 110, 120, 130, 140 up to? Do these exercises for at least two years.
- 2 When you have gained enough strength and endurance in your feet, try playing rolls and paradiddles with your feet. Or play snare drum or tom parts on the bass drum alone.

## THE TOMS

The toms are the melodic part of drumming. While keeping the rhythmic flow with the bass drum, the hi hat and the snare drum, the toms are the spice and the sugar coating. To continue the gastronomic comparison, too much spice and sugar kill the food – the same goes for too many rolls on the toms. Like fills on the snare drum, tom fills must be carefully worked out almost like a Chinese poem. Overture, rising, climax, fade out – all in one floating movement. Perpetual tom rolls are the characteristic of the amateur drummer. But to learn simplicity, you will have to rehearse and play for 100 years.

A Chinese painter was almost 106 years old. One morning he paused and looked at the 15<sup>th</sup> drawing, he had made that day. “Finally, I have made a real drawing”, he said. There was just one line. The line was the universe.

### Typical Fills on the Toms

Here is a standard tom fill from the snare drum and over the three toms:

1 e + a 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e + a

1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and

1 and 2 and 3 e + a 4 e + a

1 and 2 and 3 e + a 4 e + a

**LISTEN** to the example [gen\\_2\\_08.mid](#)

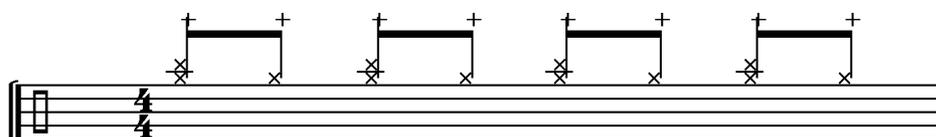
- First, use the ride cymbal and snare drum for the basic beat in the first bar.
- Use the ride cymbal in the first half of the second bar.
- Add bass drum, and you have a typical example of a rock rhythm with a tom riff:

### Other Uses of Toms

Toms are often used as an alternative to the snare drums. You can play the snare drum and one of the toms at the same time, using the same rhythm patterns. Or you can play snare drum figures on the toms. Toms are the perfect drums for rolls using the melodic differences between the three toms and for soloing.

### THE CYMBALS

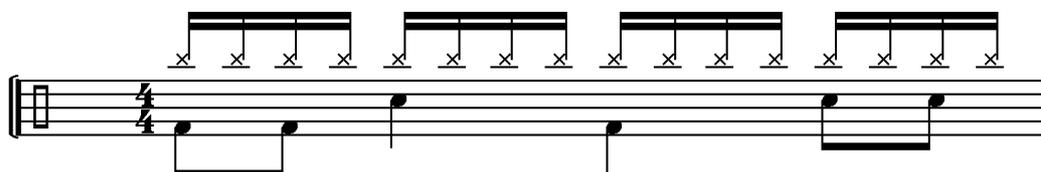
The ride cymbal and the hi hat have taken over the rhythm keeper role, that used to be the bass drum's before 1948. The traditional rock cymbal standard is 1/4 strokes on the ride cymbal (marked with an underlining) and 1/8 strokes on the hi hat (marked with a +). This is rock essential.



**LISTEN** to the example [gen\\_2\\_09.mid](#)

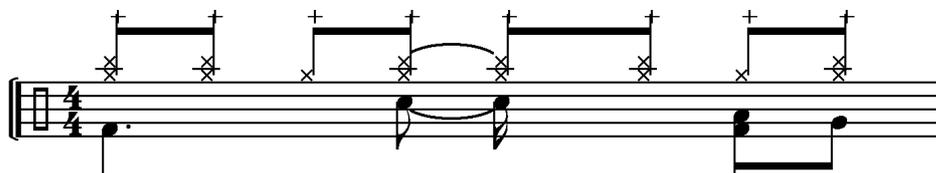
### The Ride Cymbal

In certain styles, the ride cymbal is played in 1/8 or even 1/16, producing a breathtaking effect and speeding up the rhythmic feel of the music.



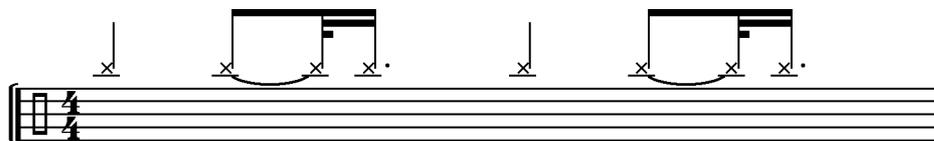
**LISTEN** to the example [gen\\_2\\_10.mid](#)

You do not necessarily have to play boring 1/4's on the ride cymbal. By letting the stick "dance" on the inner circle of the cymbal, you can add lifts and energy to the music:

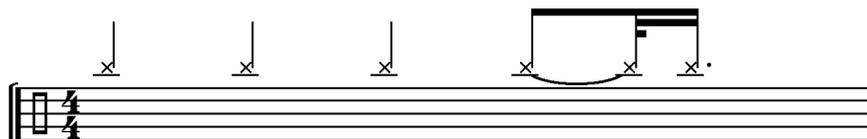


**LISTEN** to the example [gen\\_2\\_11.mid](#)

In jazz, the ride cymbals are used differently. Here are two examples:



**LISTEN** to the example [gen\\_2\\_12.mid](#)



**LISTEN** to the example [gen\\_2\\_13.mid](#)

### The Crash Cymbal

The crash cymbal is an effect cymbal like the gong or the Chinese cymbals. It should be used economically (unless you are the new Keith Moon). You may use it as a sort of ride cymbal by playing on the inner circle of the cymbal with the tip of the stick, producing a cowbell-like effect.

### The Hi Hat

The hi hat has two different “modes”. Normally, it is played with the pedal – open, close all the time – but it can also be used as a sort of mini crash cymbal: Remove the foot from the pedal and play the hi hat with the stick to produce a high pitched crash effect. Please don't do this all the time, as the effect will soon become tedious.

### **IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM EDDY**

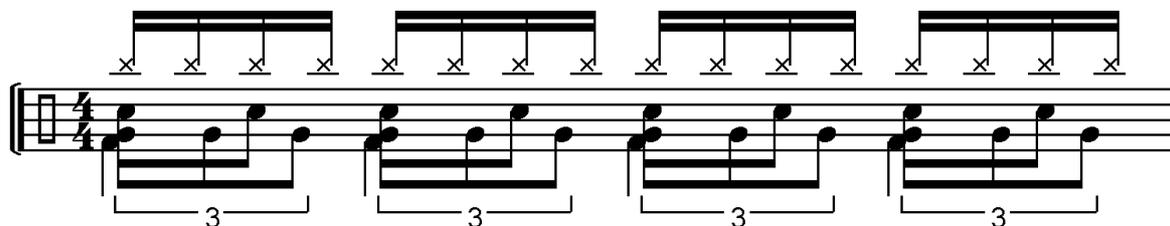
Now proceed to chapter 3, Playing in the band, Rhythm and learn the drum parts by heart. When you have rehearsed the parts for a about half a year, you return to the next chapter, Co-ordination to find out how to co-ordinate four different drum patterns – simultaneously.

# Co-ordination

When you have learned the basic parts of drumming, you are ready for the real thing, playing four different parts at the same time (spooky!).

## THE EASY EXERCISE

- 1 Start in a slow tempo. Let the bass drum strike in 1/4's.
- 2 Strike the snare drum in 1/8's.
- 3 Add the ride cymbal in 1/16's (use the left hand).
- 4 Strike the floor tom in 1/8 triplets. Still sitting safely on your stool?

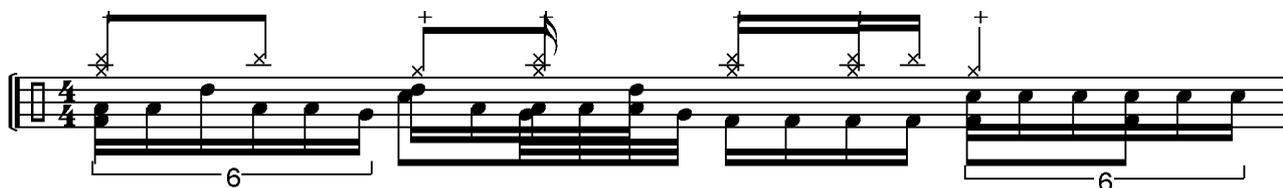


**LISTEN** to the example [gen\\_2\\_14.mid](#)

You probably gave up on point 3, but that's ok; the idea is to keep rehearsing the four parts one by one and together, until you see the light. It can take weeks, sometimes longer. Remember to play some easy drum parts once in a while to relax and get some new energy for proceeding with the co-ordination exercise.

## THE REALLY SPOOKY EXERCISE

When you master the easy exercise, you'll be ready to play this:



The solution to playing such a monster drum pattern is breaking the patterns apart and collecting them again in small groups, until they are all together.

**SEE** the complete notation examples of the analysis in [gen\\_2\\_15.pdf](#)

**LISTEN** to the example [gen\\_2\\_15.mid](#)

The drum pattern uses all parts of the drum kit. This is, of course, impossible – you cannot play 8 drums and cymbals at the same time – so the drum pattern travels from one cymbal to the other and from one tom to another tom.

- 1 Start with extracting the two cymbals and the hi hat.
- 2 Then extract the toms, the snare drum and the bass drum.
- 3 Play all the extracted (multi) parts until you know them fairly well.
- 4 Combine the cymbal and snare drum parts.
- 5 Combine the toms and bass drum parts.
- 6 Combine the bass drum and snare drum parts.
- 7 Combine the Cymbals and toms.
- 8 Finally, combine all four extracted parts.

Schematics of the Extraction Process in Notation

Isolated voices	Combined voices
Extract the cymbals: ===== ===== ===== Ride and crash cymbal, hi hat	=====
Extract the toms: ===== ===== ===== Tom 1, 2 and floor tom	=====
Extract the snare drum: ===== Snare Drum	=====
Extract the bass drum =====	=====

When meeting complex drum notes, use this method: to reduce the complexity by extracting the voice into max. four combined parts. Rehearse each part individually, combined one plus one, and finally, combine all four parts. This is going to take a long time to master, especially when sight-reading notes. Expect at least 5-6 years of hard work with real drum notes. A jazz drummer will have to be able to handle drum notation as complex as this example or worse.

**TIP** After solving the “spooky” exercise, try to extract 20-30 real life sheet music drum passages in your own note handwriting. It’s a good training to separate the voices and getting used to write down drum notation. You will need the experience later on.

### DOWNBEATS AND UPBEATS

Downbeats are strokes on the 1/4’s in the bar. Upbeats are strokes placed on the AND when counting “and 2 and 3 and 4 and”.

#### Examples

This musical notation example shows a 4/4 time signature. The first four measures are labeled 'Downbeat' and feature a single quarter note on the first beat of each measure. The next four measures are labeled 'Upbeat' and feature a quarter note on the 'and' of the previous measure, followed by a quarter rest on the first beat of the measure.

This musical notation example shows a 4/4 time signature. The first four measures are labeled 'Mixed upbeat and downbeat'. The first measure has a quarter note on the 'and' of the previous measure. The second measure has a quarter note on the first beat. The third measure has a quarter note on the 'and' of the previous measure. The fourth measure has a quarter note on the first beat.

**LISTEN** to the example [gen\\_2\\_16.mid](#)

# Dynamics

Dynamics is essential for drummers. The classical orchestra works with extreme dynamics, where the orchestra might play barely inaudible for a few bars and immensely loud the next bars. Rock and jazz have moderate dynamics compared to the symphony orchestra, but it is still very important to know how to control the loudness of the drums.

## DYNAMIC LEVELS

There are several dynamic levels (see the Music Theory book of the All Aspects series for all details). Here is an excerpt from the Music Theory book:

Degree	Symbol	Name	Function
<b>WEAK</b>	PPP	Piano pianissimo	Very, very weak
	PP	Pianissimo	Very weak
	P	Piano	Weak
	MP	Mezzo-piano	Moderately weak
<b>DECREASE</b>	Decres. Dim >	Decrescendo Diminuendo	Decreasing strength
	<b>INCREASE</b>	Cres. <	Crescendo
<b>POWERFUL</b>	MF	Mezzo-forte	Moderately powerful
	F	Forte	Powerful
	FF	Fortissimo	Very powerful
	FFF	Forte fortissimo	Very, very powerful

## Changes

The following indications are used to indicate changes in the tempo or the feeling in the music.

Italian	English
Accelerando	Accelerating
A tempo	Original tempo
Colla voce	Vocal/freely
Più mosso	Faster
Poco a poco	Gradually
Rallentando	Restrained
Ritardando	Dying

Italian	English
Ritenuato	Hold back at once
Rubato	Freely
Smorzando	Dying strength + tempo
Stringendo	Raising in tempo
Tempo primo	A tempo

### Character

Besides a key, a tempo and a sound, all music has a "character", i.e. a general feeling. If you want to indicate a certain character in the music, you have a long list of traditional Italian names. In modern times, especially in rock music, most of the musicians add their own personal character instead.

Italian	English
Ad libitum	As you please
Animato	Lively
Cantabile	As singing
Dolce	Soft/sweet
Espressivo	Expressive
Leggiero	Light
Scherzando	Playfully
Semplice	Simple
Sostenuto	Prolonged
Tenuto	Hold back

### REHEARSING WITH DYNAMICS

Most sheet music for rock/jazz drums is without dynamic signs. Make it a habit to write the dynamics signs as handwritten notes in the sheet music or on a note-writing program (Sibelius, for example, comes with both drum clef and drum tablature).

#### A Simple Exercise

Take a song – any song – and play it in each of the dynamic levels, from PPP to FFF. Reverse the order from FFF to PPP.

Insert varying dynamic signs, including changes and characters into a sheet music (use a pencil!). Rehearse the song with the dynamic and other signs. Erase the marks and put in other dynamic levels, changes and characters.

When receiving material from your teacher or the band, always ask them to mark the music with proper dynamic signs. If they can't, ask them to buy our Music Theory book 😊.

# Volume and Sound

Before we proceed with the joys of playing in a band, you must read a couple of “traffic rules” concerning volume. We are talking about drums and electrically amplified instruments, and if you do not play by the rules, you will end up having a tough time with the band until you learn to be a part of the band, not a troublemaker.

## WHAT IS DANGEROUS NOISE?

Noise can be irritating, but the noise of a heavy rock band in a rehearsal room for 4 hours is not only irritating, it is downright dangerous to your hearing.

When you come home after a rehearsal, you might hear a buzzing or ringing in the ears, as your hearing has been damaged a bit. You should start wearing **Hearing Protection** now! If you don't do it, the result will be **Tinnitus**.

### Tinnitus

Tinnitus is a very common condition, shared by many people, who don't play music, but wear MP3 players and earphones – the volume of course at the top. Or persons working in airports, to mention two typical situations. Having Tinnitus hurts with a loud ringing tone as sharp as a dagger. It goes away for a while, then it comes back all of a sudden. Once it's there, it will never go away again.

### Hearing Protection

The modern – and affordable – earplugs are *the* remedy.

## VOLUME

**Adjust to the band and your role in the musical style** The style of the music decides your position in the total picture. In soul, you keep the pulse. In country, you have to stay in the background keeping the time. Never play louder than the other band members do. Be conscious about the style and its demands.

**Adjust to the room** Some rooms have much natural echo. In such rooms, you must play softer. Otherwise, you will have a blurred, distorted sound. In very dry rooms, you will have to play louder. By the way, too much echo and dry rooms are nuisances.

**Do not damage the hearing of yours or the band** If you play so loud that the other band members or the audience complain – play softer! It is a health risk and the local police will not allow it (who cares about the police when you are into Rock'n'roll, uh?)

Now you have bought a drum kit, learned to co-ordinate your hands and other technical stuff. Now it is time to play with the other boys and girls!



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