



Drumset FUNdamentals

by Kristen Shiner McGuire

Practice Tips

- Practice only as fast as you can play something CORRECTLY (i.e., all beats line up together.) This will lead to a good GROOVE.
- Remember—you can't express something you can't play, so keep in mind that TECHNIQUE + LISTENING = EXPRESSION.
- Work on your hands every day via mastery of the RUDIMENTS.
- Since keeping TIME is your main job as a drummer, practice playing with a metronome or recordings every day.
- Set GOALS for yourself for each practice session or week.
- Each practice session should include:
 - snare drum technique for speed and evenness
 - coordination exercises
 - working on one or more styles/grooves
- Each practice week should include:
 - listening to great artists, especially drummers
 - copying beats/fills/solos from recordings
 - reading drum charts
 - sight reading

Working On Coordination

- When first learning a new pattern, use exaggerated, clear wrist (not arm) movements. Muscles will learn/retain patterns more easily this way. (Ex. 1)
- Practice SLOWLY and LISTEN to make sure all beats line up correctly. (Ex. 2)
- COUNT ALOUD while you play for accuracy and awareness. (Ex. 2)
- Play familiar snare drum solos while playing bass drum/high hat patterns underneath.

Ex. 1. Jazz Independence (swing the eighth):

↑ Use **full** wrist upstroke so right hand is not “tempted” to play in unison with left hand.



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Ex. 2. Bossa Nova (hands only):

1 & 2 & 3 & 4 & 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

hi-hat

snare drum cross-stick

Speaking Your Way To Better Coordination

These next examples show how fairly advanced patterns can be learned more easily by using your voice to “tell” your limbs what to do:

Ex. 3. Combining left hand and right foot in intermediate bossa nova:

A

Say: both hand foot hand foot hand foot hand

B

Play:

Say: both hand foot hand foot hand foot hand

C—Add steady eighth notes in hi-hat (RH)



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Fills

Ex. 6 Flam Accent:

a—Flam accent #1:

b—Flam accent #2:

LR L RRL R L LR RRL L

c—Shuffle beat with flam accent fill:

LR RRL LLRLRLRL

Ex. 7 Six Stroke Roll:

a

R LLRRL R LLRRL

b—Rock beat with six stroke roll fill:

R LLRRL R LLRRL R LLRRL R



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Recommended Books

Great for 5th-6th grade beginners. Simple charts and songs with cassette.

Drum Sessions, Vol. 1 (2)
by Peter O’Gorman
Neil Kjos. \$14.95 (book and cassette)

Good all around beginning book.

Alfred’s Beginning Drumset Method
by Sandy Feldstein and Dave Black
Alfred Pub. \$14.95 (book and cassette)

Intermediate. Rudiments applied to drumset beats.

One Surface Learning
by Roy Burns and Joey Farris
Rhythmic Pub. P.O. Box 3535 Fullerton, CA 92634 \$9.95

Jazz/Latin/rock styles. Prep for middle/high school jazz band.

Drumset Fundamentals
by Dave Mancini
William Allen Music \$15.95 (book and cassette)

Great beginning play-along that covers all styles. Easy charts.

The Drumset Performer
by Steve Houghton
Warner Bros. Music (book and CD)

Intermediate/Advanced. Setup, chart reading, soloing, listening skills in all styles.

The Contemporary Rhythm Section—Drumset
by Steve Houghton
Warner Bros. Music (book and video)

Setting Up Your Drumset

Your drumset should be set up for you, personally, to play. Make sure all drums and cymbals are easy to reach without stretching your arms or turning your torso. Keep the ride cymbal low enough so you don’t have to raise your arm for an extended time. Keep the stool, snare drum, and small ride tom lined up in a straight line so you don’t have to turn to play the floor tom. And try keeping the stool low enough so your thighs are approximately parallel with the floor. This will give you better balance when playing with both feet simultaneously.