Have you ever mastered a coordination exercise on the drumset, but then messed up the coordination simply by moving one of your limbs to a different part of the kit? If the answer is yes, then it’s probably the different sound that distracts you, not the coordination itself. The best way to conquer this problem is to practice the exercise a variety of ways, orchestrating it around the drumset.

In my previous PN article, “New Ways to Use Old Exercises” (August 2001), I included an exercise that involved playing eighth-note triplets between the large tom and the bass drum while the snare plays the melody (top line) from page 37 of Ted Reed’s Syncopation book (page 38 in the newer edition).

Instead of playing all the ghost notes on the snare, break them up between the snare (S) and the small tom (T). Try STST (example 4), SSTT (example 5), and STSSTSTT (example 6). If you see patterns here, you are right: STST are alternated singles; SSTT are doubles; STSSTSTT are paradiddles.

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Here's another good exercise. Start with this ostinato pattern from Joe Morello's book Master Studies.

The purpose of the contest is to demonstrate the highest level of artistic performance of multiple percussion literature. Each entry must submit 5 compact discs (one original and 4 copies) which will be used for judging purposes.

The entrants are to perform two pieces, selected from the list provided. All entries will be limited to 20 minutes. Four finalists will be invited to PASIC 2002 to compete in a recital program. The registration fee for the convention will be waived, but all additional costs are the responsibility of the participants (transportation, lodging, etc.). All entrants must be between the ages of 16–25.

Literature (choose any two of the following)

“Rebonds A” ..........................  Xenakis
“Anvil Chorus”  ......................  Lang
“Love of L’Histoire” .............  Delancey
“Inspirations Diabolique” .......  Tagawa
“Cold Pressed” ......................  Hollinden

* PAS reserves the right to cancel the contest if less than 10 entries are received. If the contest is canceled, entry fees will be refunded, but recordings will not be returned.

NAME _________________________________________
ADDRESS ______________________________________
CITY ____________________________ STATE _________
ZIP _____________________________
PHONE __________________________
SCHOOL __________________________
AGE _________

ENTRY FEE: $25.00 PAYABLE TO PAS

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ALL MATERIALS MUST BE RECEIVED BY MAY 1, 2002
Play the ostinato with your left hand, and then with the right hand play rhythms from the Syncopation book or from any snare drum reading book. You’ll be playing over the barline here because there’s an accent on every third eighth note. Play each hand on a different surface so that you can hear the difference between them.

Once you’ve mastered that, move the right hand to different parts of the kit.

Now let’s take it one more step. Count the number of bars you’re playing out loud. Start out by counting 1234, 1234, 1234, 1234. Then try counting 1234, 2234, 3234, 4234. This tells you what measure you’re on in addition to incorporating another part of your body into the coordination: your voice.

In addition to building coordination, these exercises build confidence.

Sam Ruttenberg teaches drums and percussion at Camden County and Burlington County Colleges in New Jersey. He has a bachelor’s degree from the University of Miami and a master’s degree from Julliard. He has toured and recorded with the Houston Symphony Orchestra, Houston Ballet, and Houston Pops. Ruttenberg has also performed with such artists as Lena Horne, Charo, and Steve Allen. Currently he freelances with the Settlement Music School Faculty Percussion Quartet and the Philadelphia Classical Symphony, and he is an active clinician.

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