



TULANE UNIVERSITY MARCHING BAND

2023 BATTERY TECHNIQUE AND EXERCISE HANDBOOK

Welcome to Tulane Bands! Your desire to become a part of this marching percussion ensemble is a testament to your desire to work hard, play well, entertain diverse audiences, and express your musical passion. The success of this group will be a direct result of an intense work ethic, dedication, and adherence to the program's core values from you and all members who come before and after you. In this band program you will be challenged musically, mentally, and physically. You will also make lifelong friends and have unforgettable experiences. From the Spirit of the Green Wave to the end of the Mardi Gras Parade, there are so many opportunities to engage with the musical cultures of Tulane and New Orleans. The following handbook has been compiled to assist you in your percussion studies.

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THE FOUR “A”s

ATTENDANCE- If you attend rehearsals consistently, you will fulfill your potential for improvement, for reaching the goal of being the best that you can possibly be.

ATTITUDE- When your attitude is consistently positive and objective, and you are eager to learn despite the challenges that may arise, you can — and will — achieve the goals you set for yourself and that the Tulane Percussion Section sets for itself as an ensemble.

AWARENESS- Always be aware of yourself in your surroundings. Understand that you are an essential, yet very small, piece of a much larger puzzle. Know your role. Demonstrate consistently that you understand your responsibilities. Doing those things will enhance your day-to-day experience. You will learn much more than you think by simply being aware of what’s happening outside your own little world. How well you integrate yourself into the larger effort will determine the ultimate progression and success of the whole group.

ABILITY- in the end, your actual performance ability, as opposed to your potential, will be the direct result of the level of your commitment to the previous “A”s. Your ability improves in proportion to your attendance, to your attitude and to your awareness.

As a member of the Tulane Percussion Section, you will be measured against the A’s. They are your standards. Your degree of success will reflect how well you’ve mastered them.

All members will be held to all instruction given. It is your job to apply the changes given by your instructors and maintain them as you are inevitably going to receive more and more instruction throughout the year.

TAKING CARE

CARE FOR THE INSTRUMENTS

Your instruments are owned by Tulane University and are to be treated with the finest care. Equipment will always have a professional presentation. Refer to student leadership and veteran members on what this means in any situation (awareness!). No one outside the membership of a section is permitted to play any instrument without permission from an instructor.

Keep track of screws, tension rods, keyboard string, and all other parts of your instrument for loose screws or broken or worn parts. We have a great relationship with our instrument providers at the Yamaha Corporation. Being proactive helps us make small repairs before they become bigger problems.

There is a large amount of heavy equipment associated with marching percussion and every member will be responsible for their assigned items. A system will be developed where every member is responsible for something. Speed and care is important, especially in performance settings, to avoid injury or unnecessary damage to equipment.

CARE FOR YOUR HEALTH

Marching band, and especially marching percussion, is a physically strenuous activity. Conditioning yourself over the summer is paramount to your success at band camp, and commitment to the technique program will prevent injury. Stay connected to the Slack and with your student leaders throughout the summer for helpful conditioning tips, and be sure to always take our warmups and physical training seriously. If you are experiencing pain or are injured at band, let a staff member know immediately so we can quickly and adequately address the issue and help you recover to performing condition!

We learn a *lot* of music. Music learning skills are paramount and time management is key. As a student at Tulane University you are already expected to perform at a high academic level. Manage your time to make sure you balance your academic studies with the time required to learn a new halftime show. Talk with your teammates about how you are managing your workload as they may have helpful experiences to share. Plan ahead, ask for help, and let us know if you're having trouble!

CARE FOR THE GROUP

There are many parts of this activity that go well beyond playing and marching. Far more important is how well you work with the group, how well you interact with others from different backgrounds, different ability levels, different ages, and different experience levels. Remember that every member is an important but very small part of the whole organization. We will all face unique challenges working toward our goal of being the best we can be. Part of your experience will include your ability rise up to these challenges and to help others up with you.

TECHNIQUE

Technique, or how you play your instrument, is the foundation of the Tulane Percussion Section. Just as a house cannot stand without a firm foundation, musicians cannot perform without a proper approach to their instrument. We will spend a great amount of time focusing on *technique*. It is expected that you will dedicate a large portion of your time to practicing the Tulane Percussion technique program. The most basic concepts should be worked on daily. These basic concepts should then be constantly applied to your exercises and music to lead you toward becoming a highly skilled musician. A solid *technique* program is absolutely crucial to our success as a percussion ensemble.

THE STROKE:

- All strokes are initiated by the wrist. The wrist should be the primary muscle at all heights, unless otherwise specified.
- The fingers act to support the wrist with every stroke type. The fingers help propel the stick toward the head, creating velocity at every height.
- The arm should move naturally, but again, the stroke is initiated from the wrist not the arm.
- It is imperative that you understand the role of the wrist, fingers and arm when you drum. Applying these basic concepts will help you create a high quality of sound for which we will strive at Tulane.

STROKE TYPES:

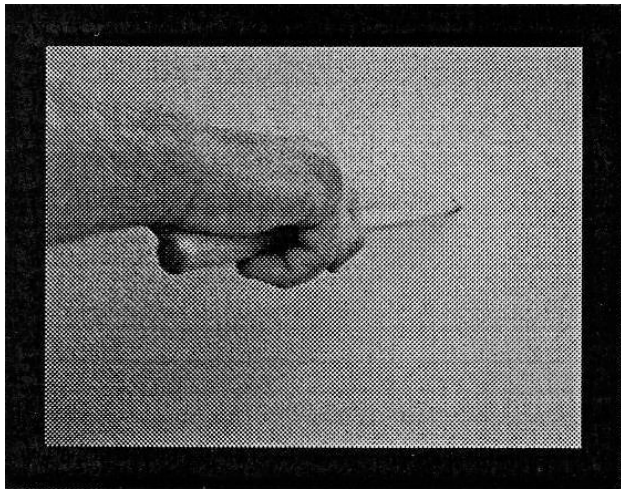
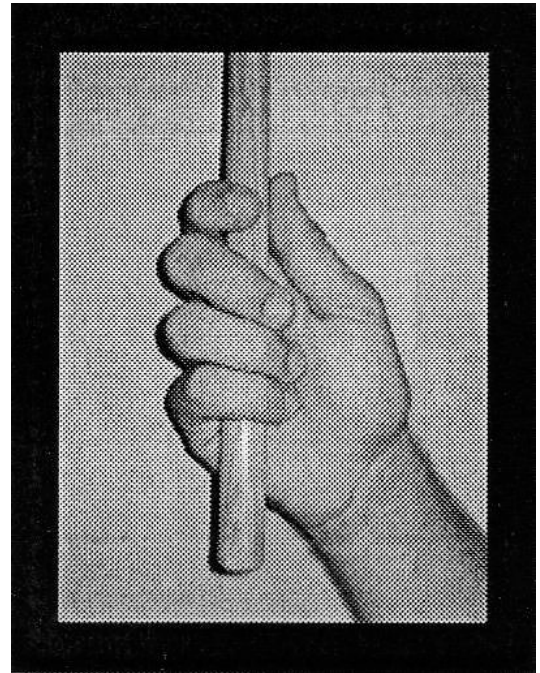
- **FULL STROKE:** a stroke that initiates and ends at the same height. This is often referred to as a rebound stroke or a legato stroke.
- **DOWN STROKE:** a stroke that starts at any height and ends at a lower height. This is accomplished by keeping the weight of the hand at the lower height after the stick makes contact with the drum head. No extra squeeze on the stick is necessary. This stroke is used in two height passages with accents to taps.
- **TAP STROKE:** a stroke similar to the full stroke; in that it starts and ends in the same position, but this stroke starts and ends in the 3" position.
- **UP STROKE:** a stroke that starts at a low and ends at a higher height. This stroke is primarily used to get from a tap back to an accent height.

The **FULL STROKE** and the **DOWN STROKE** should have the same sound. The **TAP STROKE** and the **UP STROKE** should have the same sound.

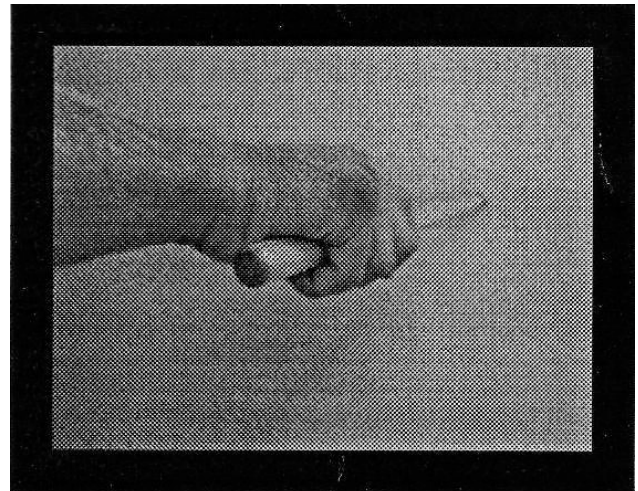
SNARE TECHNIQUE

RIGHT HAND GRIP:

- For “Matched Grip,” the right and left hand grips are identical.
- Thumb/Index finger connect approximately 1/3 from the bottom of the stick. There is no space between the thumb and index finger.
- Thumb is parallel with the stick (runs along the side of the stick).
- Middle, ring, and pinky fingers are all wrapped naturally around the stick, while never completely leaving the stick when in motion.
- The butt of the stick should be slightly visible out the back of the hand.



NO



YES

Snare Technique cont.

LEFT HAND TRADITIONAL GRIP:

It is important to understand the fundamentals of "Traditional Grip." Developed by drummers in Turkish Janissary bands and adapted by Swiss Basel drummers and eventually Colonial military drummers, the traditional grip was used for drums worn on a sling before the invention of modern marching percussion harnesses. Many groups still use the traditional grip to achieve the traditional look of a military-style battery.



*Above: The West Point "Hellcats"
Image Courtesy of Drum Corps International*



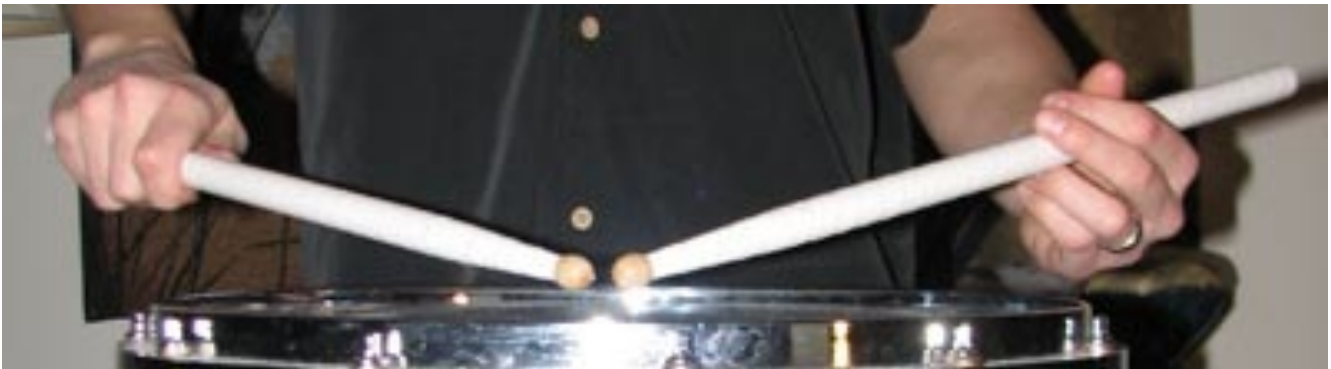
- In the left hand, the fulcrum is in the "V" or the webbing of the hand between the thumb and the index finger. The stick lies in the webbing between the thumb and the index finger.
- The pad of the thumb connects with the first knuckle of the index finger, forming a lower case "t". This is the fulcrum point and also the point where the power of the stroke is generated. Slightly arch the thumb up to keep pressure in the fulcrum.
- The middle finger is relaxed on the stick.
- The stick rests on the ring finger between the cuticle and the first knuckle. The pinky is relaxed, but matches the same curve as the ring finger.
- Your index and middle fingers should be comfortably wrapped around the top of the stick and should make contact with the stick at all times. The finger tips of the index, middle and ring fingers form a triangle.



Snare Technique cont.

PLAYING POSITION:

- The standard playing zone is in the center of the head, with the beads 1/2" apart and 1/2" above the surface of the drum. Sticks will be 90° apart, forming what looks like a baseball diamond.
- The sticks should form a natural, downward angle to the drum, creating a very aggressive approach. The right hand should be almost completely flat (German grip) and the left hand thumbnail should be pointing up at you.
- The right arm should stick out from the body to create an aggressive angle to the drum, without becoming uncomfortable. The left arm should be relaxed at your side, with a small gap between your body and your arm. This gap will allow the left arm to move naturally from side to side as you play.
- The *tacet* position comes into play when one stick is playing and the other is resting. The resting stick should remain completely motionless and in the exact playing zone, 1/2" apart from the moving stick and 1/2" above the surface of the drum.

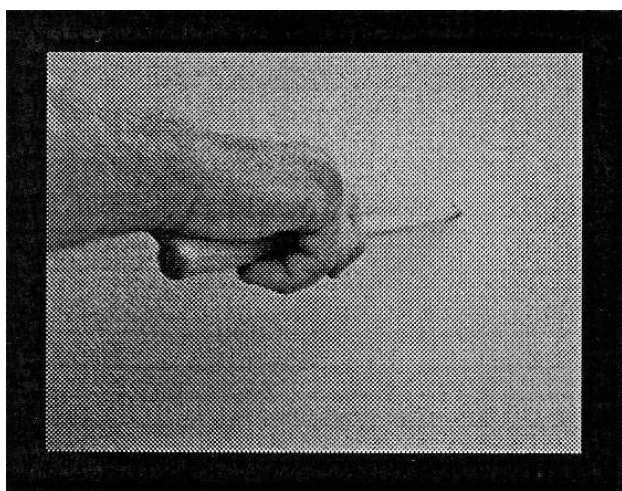
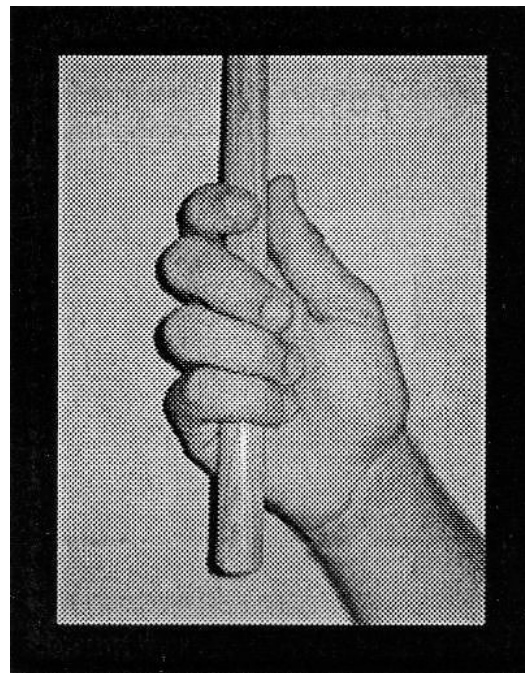


- For a lighter sound, the music may call for a passage to be played at "halfway". This will be defined as halfway between the center of the drum and the very front edge.
- For a very light sound, the music may call for a passage to be played at the edge. This will be defined as the very edge of the drum, as close to the front rim as possible.
- For a light sound that still retains snare response, the "gut edge" may be defined. The snare guts run diagonally across the drum. Gut edge will be defined as close to the rim as possible at the 2 o'clock lug.

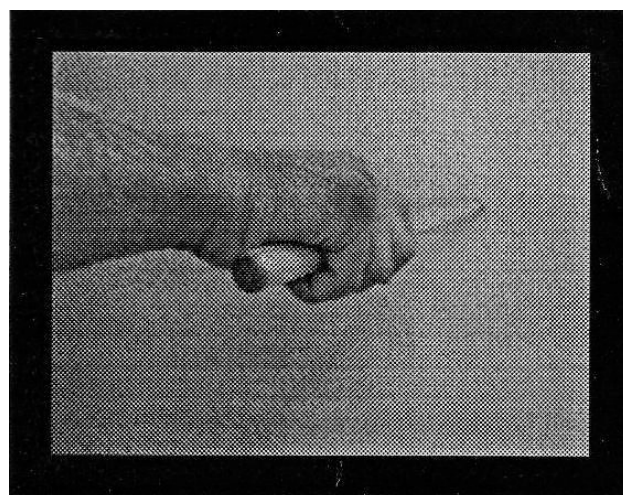
QUAD TECHNIQUE

GRIP:

- The quad drums use the same grip in both hands (matched grip).
- Thumb/Index finger connect approximately 1/3 from the bottom of the stick. There is no space between the thumb and index finger.
- Thumb is parallel with the stick (runs along the side of the stick).
- Middle, ring, and pinky fingers are all wrapped naturally around the stick, while never completely leaving the stick when in motion.
- The butt of the stick should be slightly visible out the back of the hand.



NO



YES

Quad Technique cont.

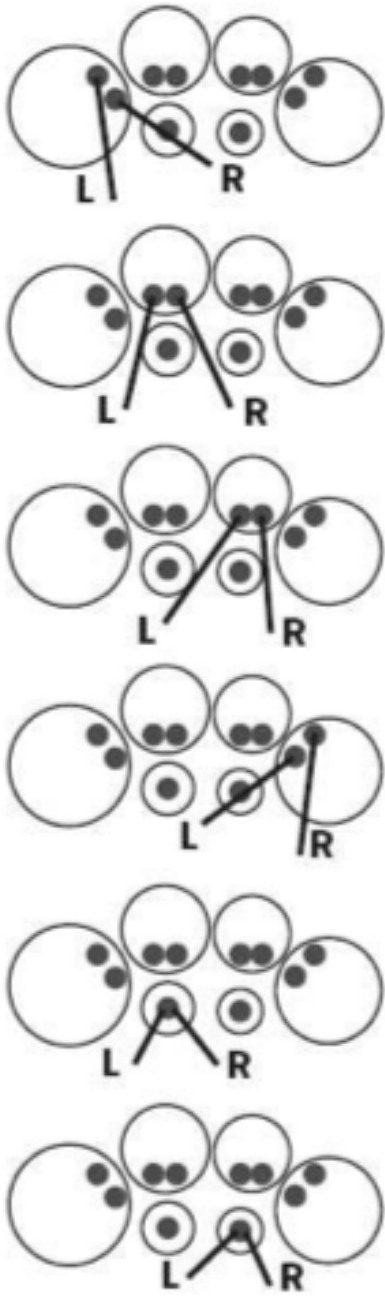
PLAYING POSITION:

- In order to achieve an ideal positioning over the drum, work from the beads of the stick backwards up to the shoulders.
- Generally, drum height should be about level with the waistline, but will be adjusted on a case-by-case basis.
- The shoulders should be very relaxed to avoid translating tension while still maintaining correct posture (“soft shoulders”).
- “Home Position” will be defined as the sticks over drums 1 and 2. The sticks will start and end in this position before and after all passages and exercises. We will not shift from drum to drum, unless defined otherwise.
- Beads are 1/2” above the drumheads, and approximately 1 1/2” in from the rim. Sticks should be angled slightly inward, almost perpendicular to the shoulders.
- Movement to the outer drums (3 and 4) should come from a horizontal pivot, starting from the elbow. Never move to the outer drums by turning your wrist over. Never allow the elbows to move behind the plane of the shoulders, unless playing on the spock drum.
- The hands should be rotated slightly outward in relation to the drum. The hands should not be completely flat to the drum (German grip), nor rotated completely vertical (French grip), as these tend to hinder use of finger motion and wrist motion respectively. This hybrid between flat and turned over is known as American grip.
- The arms should be naturally draped down, not resting against the body. Avoid pushing the elbows up or out, creating unnecessary tension in the upper body.
- The *tacet* position comes into play when one stick is playing and the other is resting. The resting stick should remain completely motionless and in its home position, no matter how busy the other stick may be moving from drum to drum.
- The sticks should form a natural, downward angle to the drum, creating a very aggressive approach.
- It is important to keep your fingers, wrists, arms, and entire body relaxed while you play. If you feel tension at any point during your playing, re-evaluate your position. Remember to breathe!

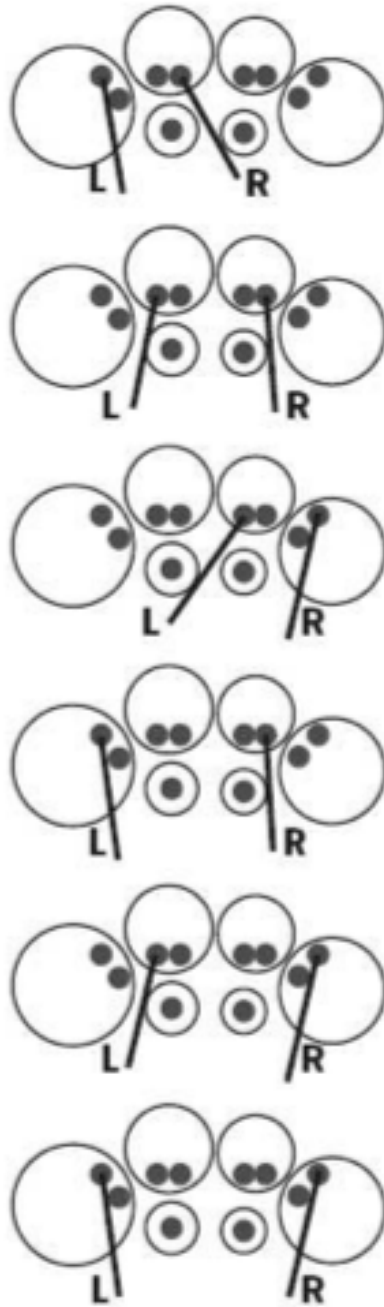


PLAYING POSITION CHART

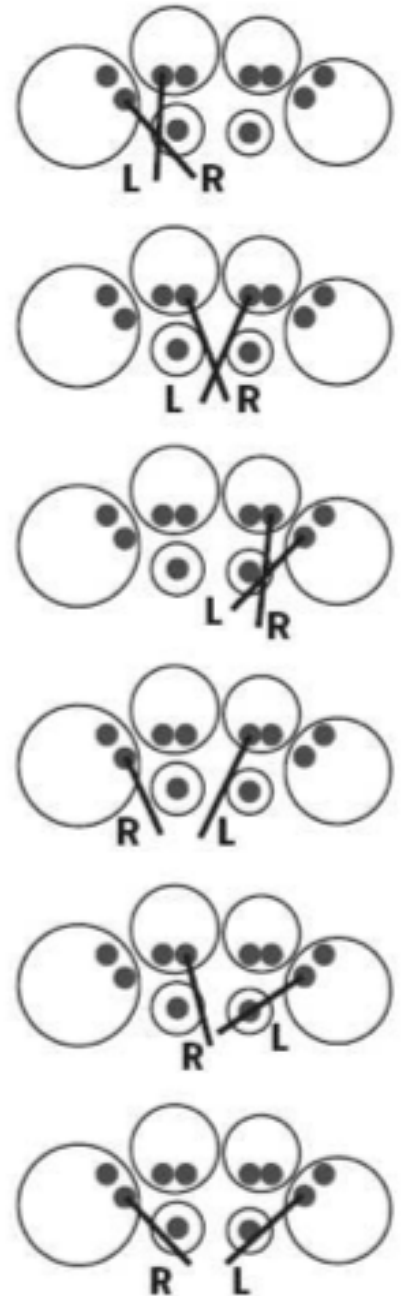
Hands on same drum



Hands on different drums



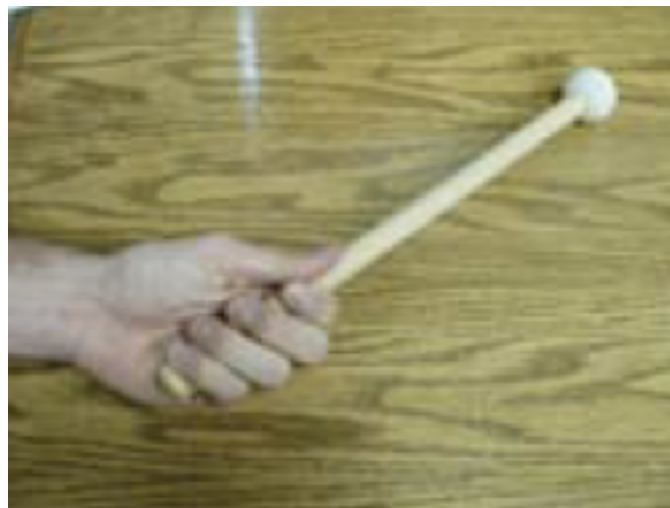
Crosses



BASS DRUM TECHNIQUE

GRIP:

- The bass drums use the same grip in both hands. This is similar (but not completely identical) to “Matched Grip.”
- Thumb/Index finger connect so the bottom of the mallet is flush with the bottom of the hand (contrary to snare/quad drums). There is no space between the thumb and index finger.
- Thumb is parallel with the stick (runs along the side of the mallet).
- Middle, ring, and pinky fingers are all wrapped naturally around the mallet, while never completely leaving the stick when in motion.



Bass Drum Technique cont.

PLAYING POSITION:

- To achieve the correct angle for playing the bass drum, drop both arms to the side and let them hang naturally.
- Place the mallets in the hands and let the mallet hang relaxed within the grip described above. Note how the weight of the mallet head naturally tugs the wrist. The angle created by this tug of gravity is approximately 45 degrees. This is the correct angle for the set position of playing bass drum.
- From this relaxed position (mallets down), simply pivot at your elbows to bring the mallets up to the drum to create the correct set position. The shoulders are relaxed and the elbows are positioned slightly away from the body.
- The angle of your elbows makes your forearms angle slightly towards the drum. The forearms are parallel to the ground and there should be a straight line between the inside of your elbow and the tip of your thumb.
- This “set” position should feel very natural. If it feels uncomfortable in any way, evaluate your grip and set position to make sure everything is aligned correctly.



Bass Drum Technique cont.

STROKE:

The bass drum stroke is exactly the same concept as matched grip on snare drum. The stroke, like snare and quad drumming, is initiated by breaking the wrist. Breaking at the wrist is more ergonomic and gives the player greater range of motion and more opportunity for velocity.

The head of the mallet moves first by engaging at the fulcrum and moving the wrist. The mallet head moves on a straight pathway with no circular motion. If the mallet at set position were a diagonal plane, the mallet should never leave that plane. There is slight lateral movement of the the forearm away from the drum that pivots at the elbow (i.e. The elbow moves little in relation to the body). This movement occurs naturally as the stroke is executed and helps to create velocity.

The stroke is described as “fast” and “through the drum.” The goal is not to have the loudest sound, but the fullest sound. The mallet should resonate as well as the entire shell of the drum, not just the drum head. This sound is achieved through a fast, relaxed stroke.

In the marching bass ensemble, relaxation is key. Relaxed approach to the drum by all members creates a uniform sound and increases the ability to flow as a bassline in an ensemble.



CYMBAL TECHNIQUE

The Garfield Grip:

The Garfield grip is the most common marching cymbal grip as it evenly distributes the weight of the cymbal over the entire hand and wrist and makes controlling the instrument my easier. To properly set up this grip, slide your hand through the strap loop making sure the side of the strap that will be closest to your thumb is under the other side of the strap. Rotate your hand around until the place where the strap overlaps itself and attaches to the cymbal sits between the thumb and the pointer finger.

standard marching grip



READY POSITION

Take the left cymbal and place the edge of it inside the pad of the right cymbal. Your hands will be facing out away from you and the two now connected cymbals will lie against your lower body. The Zildjian logos of your cymbals will be facing out so that the audience can read them.

SET POSITION

The bells of your cymbals should be at about hip level parallel from one another and each side of you. They should both be at the same height and not angling out in anyway.

Cymbal Carriage:

Regardless of the position the cymbals are in as designated by the tone production techniques, the carriage approach will always remain the same. The forearm and hand will always maintain a straight line extended out to the pointer finger. The wrist remains relaxed, yet fixed in a natural position to avoid injury. With very few exceptions such as some visuals, your wrist will never “break” the straight line or face at any strange angle that would cause strain.

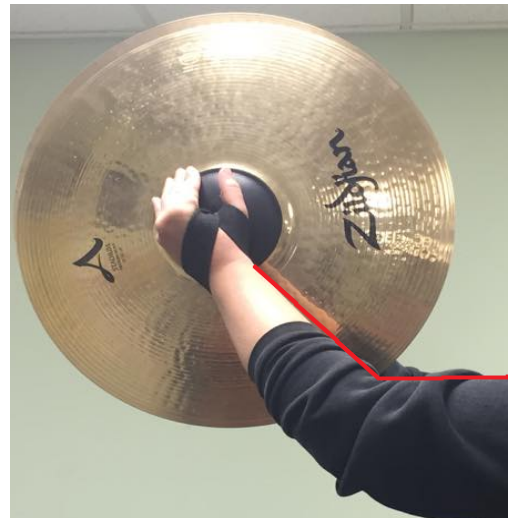
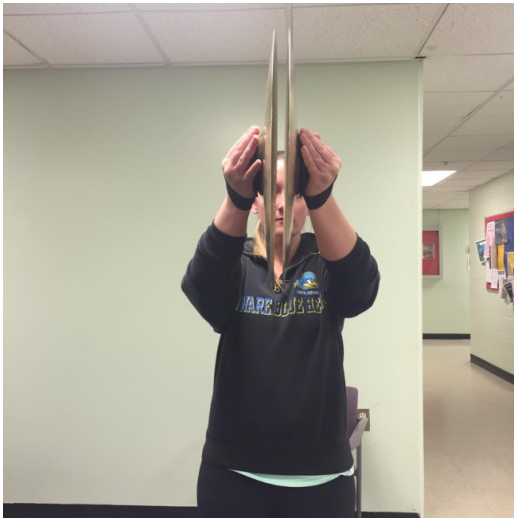


Offset Cymbal Placement:

In order to avoid undesirable popping sounds, particularly during crashes, cymbalists utilize the offset placement. To properly implement the offset placement, the right cymbal is held roughly 1.5 – 2 inches (depending on the cymbal size) higher than the left cymbal in the vertical position. This creates a “half moon” that helps air escape when producing sound to avoid a vacuum seal. In the horizontal position, the right cymbal is held away from the body at an angle towards the left about 1.5 – 2 inches creating a “half moon” shape in the inside right curve of the cymbal.

Vertical Alignment (V):

Although there are slight variations to the vertical alignment as designated by the different tone productions, there is a basic standard setup to this position. Cymbals are held away from the body with the right thumb (the higher of the two thumbs) in line with the eyes. The cymbals are kept roughly 1 – 1.5 inches apart and the arms should be bent at the elbows yet “rounded” to take up space.



Horizontal Alignment (H):

As with the vertical alignment, there are variations for the different tones. The basic horizontal setup hovers around the bellybutton with cymbals at a 45 degree angle (left side higher). The right wrist should be directly in front of the bellybutton so cymbals appear offset to the left of the body.



PLAYING TECHNIQUES

Vertical Crash

Prep: A - From your prep position, bring the bottom of your cymbals apart from each other to make a 90 degree angle from the tops of them. Again, the right cymbal should be overlapping the top of the left cymbal by an inch or two. If done correctly, it should look like an "A".

V – Next you will bend your wrists so that the tops of the cymbals are farthest away from one another and the bottoms are closest, forming a 90 degree angle between them. The right cymbal should be about 2-3 inches inside the edge of the left cymbal. This should look like a "V" and this is where the actual crash will occur.

A – After following through your "V" your cymbals should fluidly come back into the initial "A" prep position. This is very important because it helps bring out the sound of the crash.

-Following your AVA your cymbals should return to your "up" playing position.



Vertical Crash Choke

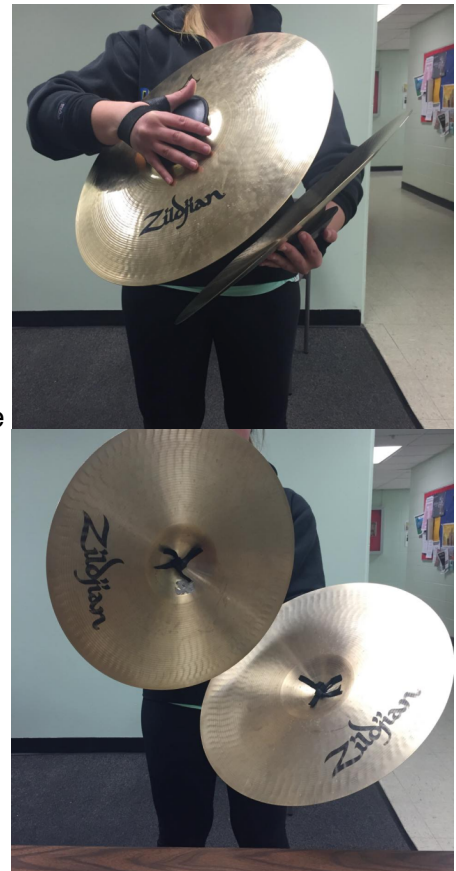
Start with the same prep as the vertical crash. When you follow through with the "V" position (the step that creates the crash) you will bring your cymbals towards your body where they should end up against your arm pits in the final "A" position. This should be a short, crisp choke sound. Once the crash choke is completed the cymbals should be pushed out back into the standard "up" position.

Horizontal Crash

Prep: A – Your right cymbal will come up and have its face completely parallel with the ground while the left cymbal will swing down and somewhat out so that the two cymbals will make an angle larger than 90 degrees of one another. This honestly doesn't look much like an A.

V – You will then twist both of your wrists in the opposite directions so that your two cymbals are now making a V shape with one another. Here, like the vertical crash, is where the crash will occur once followed through.

A – Your release A will be identical to the prep A. After this you will return your cymbals to the horizontal set position along the 45 degree angle.



Flat Crash

Start with the horizontal crash position.

Prep: Take your right cymbal and bring it back against your arm pit, now parallel with the ground. The face of your left cymbal should form the same angle as the "A" prep for a regular horizontal crash. This prep should always be done at least a beat before the actual crash unless otherwise defined.

Take your right cymbal and crash through your left cymbal. Your right cymbal should be farther out than the left and along the original 45 degree angle. The cymbals can return to set with or without a flip.

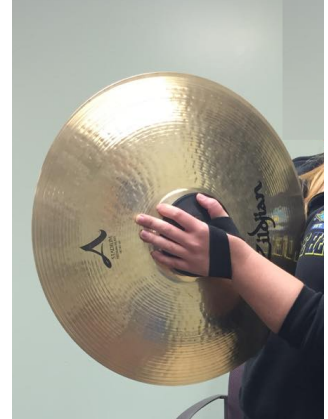


Flat Choke

The set up, prep, and crash for will be exactly the same as the flat crash. However, once you make impact between the two cymbals you will then bring both of them into your body to choke off the sound. The cymbals should end up on both sides of your waist, the tops of the cymbals then cut off by your arms.

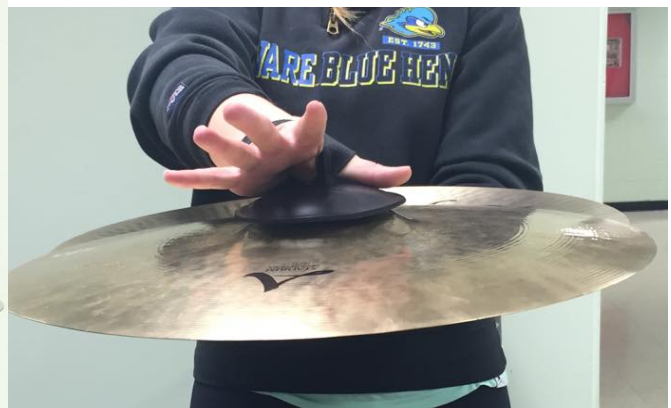
Hinge Choke / Hi-Hat

Start with the cymbals touching each other, right on top of left, against the stomach, parallel with the ground. For the prep lift only the front of the right cymbal; leaving the ends against your body to remain touching each other. Then bring the right cymbal down on top of the left. This can also be played from the vertical position, where the ends of the cymbals still remain against your body and to make the noise you separate both then bring them into each other.



Slide Choke

The Slide Choke is a two-part cymbal sound, and is notated as such. Start with the same set up as the hinge choke, as well as the same prep. However, instead of bringing the right cymbal down onto the left you will actually push the right cymbal across the left moving both cymbals away from your body. This is the slide sound. Then you will bring them both back into your body to the same starting position. This step is the choke sound.



Sizzle

Start with the same set up as a hinge choke. The prep will require both cymbals to move away from your body and to lift the right cymbal completely off of the left one. Then bring down the right cymbal onto the left at a slight displacement and let the sizzle sound ring for as long as is marked in the music.



Tap

Taps are set up in the “A” position for a vertical crash. Your prep will require the left hand to stay in place while the right hand tips away from the left to be perpendicular with the ground. Bring edge of the right cymbal down onto the left for the impact sound. Afterwards you should have a release where your cymbal goes back to the prep position and then back to set.

Tap Choke

The same set up and prep as a tap however for this, just as you would for a crash choke, when you make the impact between the cymbals they are brought into your body (in this case into your armpits).

Bell Tap

We start with our left hand in the horizontal crash position, while our right cymbal will have its face facing upwards, where your pinky is closest to the left cymbal. The cymbals should make a 90 degree angle in this position, with the edge of the right cymbal aligned with the bell of the left cymbal. For your prep you will move your right arm up along the angled plane, not altering the position of either cymbal. Then you will bring the right cymbal down into the bell of the left, making a “bong” sound. You will release by bringing back your right cymbal as if to prep and then set it back to the starting point to end.

Crunch

Start with the cymbals in the up position. Press the cymbals straight together with enough pressure where the resulting sound is short. The vibration should stop completely before the pressure is released and the cymbals returned to the up position. Can also be done in the horizontal position.

Zischen

Here your cymbals will both be up and your left cymbal will be in the same position it would as if you were in the standard “up” position. Your right cymbal however will be angled at a 45 degree angle with its top edge half way between the bell and the top of the left cymbal. Scrape the right cymbal directly up against the left – neither cymbals will move positions or angles, your right arm will be the only thing moving. Then once the sound is completed you will reset the right cymbal back to where it was prior the sound.

Klunk

For this technique, both of your cymbals will be placed at your sides with the front tips meeting each other (right farther out than the left). The cymbals should make a 90 degree angle. You will move the front of the right cymbal outwards while still keeping the back end against your body and then bring it back against the left. This sound is usually not very loud since there is no ringing allowed of the cymbals.



Klank

Start in the same position as the Klunk. The difference is when we prep and move our right cymbal out it will entirely come away from the body with the left cymbal also coming away from your body, though it will not change its position. When you bring the right cymbal into the left you will also quickly bring both cymbals back against your body as if you were doing a choke. This sound should be loud since the cymbals will have time to ring but it will be a short sound.

Suck

Sucks are the sound produced when a suction is created between the cymbals. Holding the left cymbal vertically resting in the center of the chest, the right cymbal's vertical bell is placed on the outermost edge of the left and tilted on a 45 degree angle. The suck sound is created when the right cymbal is forced "around the corner" of the left and they are pressed together quickly and firmly.

DYNAMIC LEVELS

pp — *pianissimo* — 1.5°

-10 degrees

drop the stick down from the set position (grace notes)

p — *piano* — 3°

0 degrees

Sticks are parallel to the drum head

p+ — *piano plus* — 4°

10 degrees

slightly above parallel, taps with a fuller sound

mp — *mezzo piano* - 6°

22.5 degrees

mf — *mezzo forte* - 9°

45 degrees

f — *forte* - 12°

Wrist turn with some arm support. Slightly below vertical.

ff — *fortissimo* - 15°

90 degrees

Sticks are fully extended, perpendicular to the drum head,
natural arm movement is included

fff — *fortississimo* - 18°

Visual dynamic. Sticks are vertically extended, arms extend height of sticks

