

Drum Fundamentals I



The first of a four-part series to improve technique

Do you want to learn the drums in a simple and understandable way? ACM's Neil Hart is here to show you how, breaking down techniques, rudiments, grooves and song structures to bring you a comprehensive learning curve that's second to none.

Lesson 1 - Techniques 1

Hey Groovers! Neil Hart here armed with a pair of sticks and a passion to rock. First things first, before we can bash out those phat rhythms, we have to get a basic understanding of technique. Stop yawning and reaching for your mouse to click me outta here!

Technique is the foundation of all the great players, the building blocks of rock if you will. There's only so much you can do with limited technique, it's like putting a 1.1 fiesta engine in a Ferrari - you'll only get so far before it gets frustrating. Having astounding technique will open the floodgates to a whole world of precision playing and satisfaction. Enough with the lecture already!

Still here? Good. Let's get it on.

Grip

There are two different types of grip that you can use. Traditional Grip or Match Grip. There are pro's and con's to using both so it's a matter of preference really. Since I'm going to be dealing with rock and pop playing for now so we shall be going with the Match Grip!

Match Grip

Picture

Hold the stick between your thumb and forefinger about a third of the way down. Make sure that the fat end of the stick (not the tip) rests in the fleshy part of your palm and curl your remaining fingers underneath the stick. Hold the sticks as lightly as possible to increase flexibility but not so much that they fly out of your hands and wipeout some unsuspecting member of the public (it's all fun and games until someone loses an eye!). Try to think of the stick as an extension of your arm. As a sixth digit!

Moeller Technique

Picture

The Moeller Technique is all about fluidity; making the most impact with the least effort. To achieve this you will need to understand and control the following strokes; tap, up, down and full. To successfully play all of your rudiments and grooves these strokes will need to be mastered. Don't worry it's quite simple and, with a bit of patience, you should be whipping through your chops like a butcher on drugs! Try each of these strokes with both hands individually and then alternatively.

Tap Stroke

Picture

The tap stroke consists of one simple movement. The stroke begins with your stick being about an inch or so from the snare drum skin. All you do is simply tap the skin being sure to keep your fingers curled around the stick.

Up Stroke

Picture

Starting in the same position, lift your wrist and loosen your fingers so that the stick drops onto the skin. Continue to lift your wrist until the stick has left the skin and moves into an upright position. Use your spare fingers to balance the stick as it arrives in the upright position.

Down Stroke

Picture

This stroke begins in the upright position and goes through the lifting action of the Up Stroke on its way to the skin. As you approach the skin only your thumb and forefinger should be attached to the stick. When you hit the drum be sure to cushion the stick with your other fingers as before.

Full Stroke

Picture

Starting from the up right position again, the Full Stroke goes through all the stages I've mentioned, and returns to the point that it started. It's just a case of bouncing the stick off the skin and allowing the force of the downstroke to return the stick to the upright position once again.

Lesson II will cover Basic Grooves

Neil Hart - Academy Of Contemporary Music

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