



Beginner's Toolkit: Percussion

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0:31 Snare Drum Basic Setup

- Figure out how high or low the drum should be based on your height
 - Put the top *head* of the drum below or at the height of your belt
 - Body size and proportions will vary per person, as will the drum height
 - Adjust as necessary

1:47 Putting the Drum on the Stand

- Every snare drum has *snares* made of cable or wire on the bottom
- Snares are attached to brackets on either end, a *butt plate* and a *strainer*
 - The *strainer* or *throw-off* controls the *snares*
- Line up the *snares* going forward to play parallel over them
 - The drum sounds the best this way
 - This also gives you quick and easy access to turn the snares off and on in ensembles

3:36 Drum Angle

- Drums and drum pads can be either tilted or kept flat on the stand
 - A flat drum may require a higher position
 - An drum angled away from you helps the stick contact and response of the drum

4:58 Where to Strike the Drum

- Do NOT strike at the center of the drum
- Find the center of the drum and the front edge, then find the halfway point as your target
 - This beating spot is on the far side of the drum from your body
- To play softly, move the beating spot closer to the edge, but stay at least ½ inch from the edge

6:24 Where to Stand

- Do NOT stand too far away and reach for the drum
 - This will lose power and control with your playing
- Position yourself close to the drum, almost touching
 - Your arms will organically be at your side and your shoulders will be back and comfortable

7:32 Tuning the Drum

- Concert drums are almost always tuned too low to get a crisp, clear sound
- Use the "T" *drum key* to adjust the 8 or 10 *tension rods* around the circumference of the drum
- The drum should be tight, crisp, and articulate, with the help of tuning
- Stay even and organized when tuning
 - Start on the right hand side and turn the key to tighten the tension rod
 - Move directly across the drum and tighten that tension rod
 - While across, move one rod to the side and tighten that
 - Then, move directly across the drum head again
 - Do NOT go neighbor to neighbor around the circle of the head

-Tune the *snare*s

-Turn the *snare*s on with the *strainer*

-Loosen the *snare*s all the way by turning the *strainer knob*

-While tapping the drum, gradually tighten the *snare*s to the point where they engage

-Do NOT over tighten the *snare*s or you will get a choked sound

-Do NOT under tighten the *snare*s or you will get a wet and buzzy sound

10:53 Muffler

- Create a cleaner sound by muffling or dampening the sound with fabric

-A small cloth, leather, handkerchief, or piece of scrap fabric will work

-Without the cloth, the overtones are very high and can make the drum sound shrill

11:44 Basic Technique: Grip

-Hold the stick between the pad of the thumb and first joint of the index finger

-The top of the thumb is not above the index finger

-Keep the thumb flat: use the pad and not the tip

-Wrap the back 3 fingers loosely around the back of the stick

-They do NOT hold the stick

-These fingers help with rebounds and ornaments

-Close the grip between the thumb and index finger in the palm of the hand

-Hold the stick fully, but softly with all parts of the hand

-The sticks should have some play

-Do NOT grip too tightly

-Let the hands fall naturally to the side, then lift to the drum at the beating spot

-The back of the hands will face the ceiling

-Do NOT turn the thumbs up

-Keep the hands the width of the hip bone: not too wide or narrow

-Keep the shoulders and body open

14:50 Basic Technique: Stroke

-Use your wrist up and down

-It is okay to move while playing, but have the wrist mostly make the stroke motion

-Keep the hands soft and loose

-The rebound is essential and must happen with soft hands

-Harness and engage with the rebound

-Allow the hand to follow the stick during the rebound

-Interact with the rebound and do NOT fight it

-Think of dribbling a basketball: the arm, wrist, and hand will follow the flow of the ball

18:28 Playing Evenly

- Strive to make both hands sound exactly the same
- The challenge to make dominant and non-dominant hands even
- Evenness is a 3-legged stool:
 - Leg #1: Both hands must play at the same *dynamic*
 - Leg #2: Both hands must play at the same *timbre*
 - Leg #3: Both hands must play with the same *rhythm*
- Keep these evenness aspects in mind to better even out your playing, which then allows you to begin to phrase and make music

Thank you and good luck!