

tommy igoe's  
**Great Hands** for a  
**lifetime**  
*Featuring the Lifetime Warmup™*



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GREAT HANDS FOR A LIFETIME  
Featuring the *Lifetime Warmup*™

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# Introduction

This eBook is the *companion* to the *Great Hands for a Lifetime* DVD. Inside, you'll find some detailed discussions about the material presented on the DVD and some new exercises and concepts. You'll also find some enlightening thoughts on various subjects, like practice time and structure and even a few additional exercises that weren't included on the DVD. However, this really is a "companion" text and is not designed or written to stand on its own (without the DVD). The DVD is going to show you how and why to execute certain drumming motions at the proper time, so there is no need to bore you with repeating myself here. Rather, this text will be an additional visual stimulus for the student to help reinforce some of the most important concepts presented on the DVD.

I'm also going to use these pages to give you some more insightful thoughts on things that can often go wrong when practicing these concepts. The things that, if you aren't careful, will actually slow your hands down instead of perk them up. These are potential "technical traps" I've helped students avoid, so give them a read to avoid falling into them yourself.

Throughout the DVD you hear me say time and time again, "Easy!" Well, what if it's not so easy for you? First thing: Don't panic. At some point, you will get stuck; it happens to everyone. Say, for instance, you just can't get a bouncy feeling in your rebound strokes and you can't visualize a fulcrum. You can do one of two things:

- A.** ● *Get frustrated, give up on this new technique, and just do what you've always done*
- or
- B.** ● *Stay calm, smart, and realize that it will come if you stay focused, aware, patient, and accepting of the simple truth that nothing good in life comes easily.*

If you've been playing with poor technique for years, you may believe it's very difficult to change your approach. And you're right. You probably thought I was going to tell you it was easy, right? Nope. It's easier for brand-new students to incorporate all this technical material, since they haven't had the chance to develop poor or unhealthy habits. But so what? There's absolutely nothing here that anyone—even if you've been playing poorly for decades—can't incorporate into their drumming with calm, focused, and patient practice.

Once again, without the DVD to guide the student in proper execution, this is all empty information. So please, use this eBook with care, and defer to the DVD for examples of how to play specific exercises. And please, as I say in each of the *Groove Essentials*™ books, "Take your time and enjoy the journey!"

# The *Groove Essentials*™ Approach

I mentioned in the beginning monologue that we'll be applying the "*Groove Essentials* approach to technique." What the heck does that mean? Well, if you are unfamiliar with GE, it's the drumset series I created for Vic Firth and Hudson Music that has become a popular groove encyclopedia for drummers of all levels around the world. But what exactly is the GE approach?

The *Groove Essentials* philosophy breaks up large music education concepts and logically categorizes the pieces into easily digestible "families." For example, in GE, we took the entire universe of grooves and broke them into six families:

- **Rock Grooves**
- **Funk Grooves**
- **R&B/Hip-Hop Grooves**
- **Jazz Grooves**
- **World/Specialty Grooves**
- **Odd-Meter Grooves**

Once you understand these families, it's much easier to break each family into smaller groups to practice and master. For example, the "Rock" family consisted of three subgroups in GE 1.0:

- **Eighth-Note Grooves**
- **Sixteenth-Note Grooves**
- **Half-Time Grooves**

In GE 2.0, we were able to break those grooves into even more advanced subgroups:

- **Ghosted Grooves**
- **Rock Ballads**
- **Waltzes**
- **Hybrids**
- **12/8 Grooves**
- **Rock Shuffles**

But the overall idea—the *approach*—is that they are all just rock grooves! They are all related to each other, and since they are in the same family, it's easy to see the relationships between grooves and musically absorb their characteristics. Of course, they take a lifetime to master and get into your musical soul; we all know that, or at least we should. But to learn them, understand them, and join the party by actually *playing them*? Easy! Every drummer, of every level, can get involved.

We'll now apply this same *Groove Essentials* approach to technique.

Inside *Great Hands For A Lifetime*, we'll have three main sections, which we will split into smaller subgroups.

## 1. Basics

- *Grip and Fulcrum*
- *Rebound Strokes*
- *Accents*
- *Double Strokes*
- *Check Patterns*

## 2. The 5 Families of Rudiments

- *Ruffs*
- *Rolls*
- *Diddles*
- *Drags*
- *Flams*

With everything leading to the crown jewel of this DVD:

## 3. *The Lifetime Warmup*

- *Basic*
- *Intermediate*
- *Advanced*
- *5-minute version*

And that's it. The above list represents a simple, basic structure that will give anyone who is willing to approach technique with an open, calm mind a way to develop a healthy foundation for their hands.

# My Drum Corps Experience

I still, even now, get asked a lot about my drum corps experience, so let me share a brief synopsis of my short time marching in the Bayonne Bridgemen. I have always loved rudimental drumming and still do. Early on, my father, Sonny, took me through some wonderful rudimental literature, including the Wilcoxon and N.A.R.D. books, and I developed a real appreciation for that kind of military-inspired snare drumming. We lived in a small New Jersey town next to a football field, and they had a drum corps show every year as a fund-raiser for the local fire department. This was in the mid 1970s, when drum corps was thriving and there were literally hundreds of corps in existence.

***Personal note: It's sad that this piece of true Americana, this wonderful youth activity that introduced so many kids to music and structure, is now a fraction of what it once was in terms of available participation. Drum corps was my "boot camp," it's***

***where I failed and learned the world still kept spinning. Where instructors would scream at you one minute and hug you the next, and you realized you were tougher than you thought. It was where I learned that if I didn't quit, and if I was open to learning from those around me, I would be better tomorrow. My mother always said she sent off a boy on to summer tour and got back a young man. Thank you, drum corps.***

At my local show, there was a corps called the Hawthorne Muchachos. I remember just following them around trying to learn their street beat (cadence). It was so hip, so much cooler than everyone else's. It was funky and syncopated, and I was hooked. Every year I eagerly awaited that show, and I heard one name come up again and again: Dennis DeLucia. Well, by the end of the 1970s, another corps, the Bayonne Bridgemen, was my new favorite. Hey, who was writing for the Bridgemen? Dennis DeLucia. Hmmm... there's that name again.

So, when I convinced my dad to let me audition for the corps when I was 15, where did I want to go? The Bayonne Bridgemen, of course. The Bridgemen had just won the drum title in the 1980 championships during the summer, and they were the *hot new thing*. I remember as clear as day my audition in November of 1980. There were over one hundred drummers assembled, all waiting to get an audience with Dennis himself. I was so nervous I thought my heart was going to go running off down the corridor by itself, followed closely by my queasy stomach. Ah, memories...

Everyone had their sticks out, warming up and showing off (imagine a room full of peacocks on full display all trying to out-do their competition). In every direction there were kids playing in a way I'd never really seen before. They had hands that were, well, different from mine, and that's about the only way I can explain it. *Beefier* is maybe a good description. Now, don't confuse this with music or drumset playing. I'm just talking about kids with sticks all playing on a single surface with giant 3S clubs. They were playing all this stuff I'd never seen! I remember, in particular, seeing the veteran snare drummers (they were approaching 19-20 years old, and to me, they were godlike in their coolness—they could *drive!*), playing a thing that had this visual swirl thingamajig in it. My eyeballs hit the floor, and a cartoon "BAROOOOOOGA!" sound came out of my ears. I was in love. It was drumming heaven, and I was going to do whatever it took to get into that line.

Now, Dennis met me when I was 15 years old (when I was only 6'1", as he likes to say) and deep in the throes of gawky adolescence; there was not a more awkward primate dead or alive. I did make that 1981 drumline, just by the skin of my teeth. It was very, very close. I marched bass drum that first year. A 32-inch monster that weighed as much as I did (the guy behind me had a 36!). It was an experience that I didn't know at the time would be my greatest learning opportunity.

***Playing bass drum in a drumline is something I wish I could get every serious drummer to experience. You will find more about your internal clock and rhythmic integrity playing bass drum than you will anywhere else. You need to have steely concentration and be able to hit just one note in a series of complex running figures that are going on all around you. Imagine performing the part of just one string of Jaco Pastorius' bass guitar; that's what it's like. You also learn responsibility. If one person in***



***a six-person bass drum line misses one little note, the entire rhythm is ruined. Trust me, you don't want to be "that guy." You learn a lot about yourself playing bass drum.***

Dennis DeLucia created a special environment back then. Everyone's—and I mean everyone's—style at the time was very, very stiff (which is one of the reasons drum corps drumming was—and still is—so despised by certain segments of the percussion universe). Dennis turned everything on its head and tried to create a “moving drumset” with loose technique inspired by great jazz drummers like Joe Morello. And, amazingly, it worked. I still don't know how, but it did. Dennis is now one of my closest friends, and his genius in that arena was—and still is—an inspirational talisman to me. And, he invented the insane left hand thing I show you on the DVD that nobody should become as with obsessed with as I was. But it is so cool...

After I stopped marching in 1983 and starting gigging, I still tried to stay current with the activity by writing for high schools, and that's really where my passion for music education was cultivated. I worked for some incredible band directors and met some great professional educators who were active in the public schools. Until then, I planned to gig around, make a name for myself, and be a successful player. But it was here that I was slowly discovering that just playing the drums wasn't enough for me. So, for the next 15 years, while I was gigging around the world with bands and stuff, I was also writing percussion scores for high schools! I loved writing; it was my way of keeping my hand in the activity that gave me so much.

My drum corps experience was positive musically, mostly because I did not try to directly apply that world to the drumset, which (when attempted) is a musical disaster. If you marched drum corps or were in a serious marching band, you've got to take the best of that world and blend it intelligently into the vocabulary of the drumset. Only then will it be a powerful tool in your musical journey.

***A quick note of apology to marching band and drumline members: When performing the group exercises with my students, I sometimes refer to “marching band stuff” in a negative way. This is intended only in terms of applying that world to the exercises we were performing, and in no way meant to demean your hard work with your groups. I advocate drumline playing for all young drummers, if they have quality programs available to them. I think it's a fantastic musical experience.***

## Practice

This is a top-five question: “How often and how much should I practice?” Well, I don't know. Nobody (no matter what anyone says) can know, except you. It depends on several things:

- ***Your goals***
- ***Your ambitions***
- ***Your mental stamina***
- ***Your physical stamina, and***
- ***(most importantly) understanding how YOUR brain operates.***

It's easy for teachers like myself to simply say, "Practice as much as you can." But that really does a disservice to a question that deserves some deeper thought. While practice (and more specifically, *daily* practice) is crucial, the length of those sessions should be a personal decision. We've all heard the stories of these great drummers (and not-so-great drummers!) who would lock themselves into a room for 18 hours a day, emerging only for bread and water. But then there's Buddy Rich, who famously declared he never practiced. So, what to do? Well, you've got to be honest with yourself. Ask the important questions:

What kind of "practicer" are you?:

- ***Do you think practice is fun or a chore?***
- ***Can you concentrate for long periods or just short little segments?***
- ***Does your enjoyment of playing diminish with long practicing?***
- ***Do you get bored easily while practicing?***
- ***Do you find yourself just going back to what you know and jamming with your favorite records even though those copies of Stick Control and Portraits in Rhythm are staring you in the face and laughing at your avoidance?***

I'm a firm believer in *quality* practice over *quantity*. Some of us have the ability to go 8, 10, 12 hours a day with enough mental focus to stay in the game and love it. Some of us, only half that much. You have to know yourself, and structure your time to suit your strengths and weaknesses. But sometimes a common trap for people who love to practice is that they end up repeating things they already know over and over. Is that a good use of practice time? I don't believe so. If drummer A practices 12 hours a day and only plays what he knows, while drummer B practices 4 hours a day, confronts his weaknesses and pushes himself into new territory with each session, who do you think is going to be the better player in the end?

Another crucial point: I believe that daily quality practice of a reasonable amount is infinitely better than three days of 20 hours, cramming and jamming in everything you can. Much of practice is repetition. Any good teacher will tell you that you'll get better results practicing something correctly and focused for an hour a day rather than six hours of cramming it in twice a week.

However, the realities of life are often the biggest hurdle to practice. Some people have real-life time obstacles to prevent daily practice such as work, study, health, living situations, relationships, and on and on. Everyone, everywhere, has something going on. So you shouldn't feel "guilt" if you can't practice as much as you'd like; you should make the most of the time you do have. For example, a young, unmarried student desiring a professional career as a drummer will obviously have more time, and a need to practice with more urgency, than a married, middle-aged person with a family who wants to play with friends on the weekends. That's just the way life works.

Also, length of practice time shouldn't be a contest between you and any other drummer you know or have read about. Practice time is simply time; it isn't an indication

of results. I knew drummers who practiced eight hours a day and didn't get any better because their practice routine was a waste of time. It's *your* practice time and it can't be measured against anybody else's effort.

Ask yourself this: What are you practicing? Are you practicing stuff to look cool? To impress your friends? To do clinics and make people cheer? To "beat" the guy down the block? I've seen too many young players waste years of their life mastering things that only other drummers care about. There's not a bass player in the world who cares how fast your left hand is, how you hold the stick, or the method you use if you can't play time and groove. And even then, they don't care much! Trust me on that...

Here's a little saying I'm sure you've heard before that has done more harm than good, not because it's message is inherently wrong, but because it's missing one very important word:

## ***"Practice Makes Perfect."***

Which is, of course, not true at all. It should really read:

## ***"Perfect Practice Makes Perfect."***

Which is a quote from the great Vince Lombardi, the legendary football coach, who famously drilled his troops down to the bone with this mantra. Take it, print it out, blow it up really big, and put it on your wall by your drums. I did, because baby, it's the truth!

Finally, may I suggest one more thing when it comes to practice? Many of the guys who I've witnessed practicing for absurdly long hours could have really used some time away from the drums LISTENING TO GOOD MUSIC AND GOOD DRUMMERS! I'm sorry to shout, but really, this is important. Listening to great players and studying their musical motivations is just as important as practicing. My formula is simple: you should be listening to music away from the drums just as much, and as many hours, as you spend practicing them. Not just hearing music, mind you, but truly listening—as in doing nothing else at all (including driving, texting, web surfing, etc.): Just *you and the music*.

# **The Problem with "Methods"**

First of all, there is no "problem" with drumming methods; I just don't subscribe to them. As I say on the DVD, there has been a major explosion in advocacy (because of some popular DVDs and the phenomenon of internet video) of certain name-brand technical drumming methods—the Moeller system (named for Sanford "Gus" Moeller) in particular—in the last 20 years. These methods are becoming somewhat cult-like, with their believers almost militant in their views that a certain system, or method, is the Holy Grail that has been missing from their drumming lives, and yours.

I've seen a disturbing trend flow through my studio recently: students coming in for their first lesson flailing around trying to execute some technical method they saw on a DVD, YouTube, or read about online. Which is fine. But, instead of listening to the result, they were obsessed trying to get a "motion." After a few uncomfortable moments of watching these students trying to play a simple roll, I ask them, "What are you doing?"

I often get the answer, “Moeller.” I then ask, “Really, what’s Moeller?” Well, then their eyes light up. “It’s the best technique ever! You can do anything with Moeller, every great drummer uses it!” *(No, they don’t, actually)* “Interesting,” I say, “but what is it?” Silence. Then I ask, “Do you hear how horrible your roll sounds?” And then—and I’m not making this up—9 times out of 10 they will say, “I wasn’t listening.” Pardon me as I slam my head into the wall a few times. I suggest, dear readers, that perhaps this isn’t the best approach.

Contrary to what some advocates believe, nobody invented “bounce,” “whip,” “prep,” “snap,” “up,” “down,” “rebound,” or “fulcrum.” There are drummers from cultures around the world who have been using all of these techniques for hundreds, if not thousands of years. Just because they aren’t playing it on a 7-ply maple snare drum with a custom piano lacquer finish and mylar drumheads, and may not know what a flam tap is, doesn’t make it any less real. No disrespect intended, but when I hear anybody credited with “inventing” the above drumming attributes, I admit, I cringe.

There is no such thing as a universal drumming method that works for everyone, including this one. How hypocritical it would be for me to exclaim that within these pages is the “magic technique fairy dust” for every drummer. No. Rather, I can only guarantee that the concepts presented here will *help* every drummer to achieve their goals while staying healthy doing it. For some, the way I play and the concepts I share will be all they need. For others, you may wish to take my ideas and combine them with some other techniques you may have learned. Great! Take ownership of YOUR hands and do what’s necessary for you to feel good, play pain-free, and be musically satisfied.

Remember this: You have nobody to answer to but yourself and your musical ambitions. When this DVD is released, the closed-minded on every drumming chat board will undoubtedly scream, “Technical treason!”, and go on and on about how everything I’m telling you is garbage. Those are the people I mentioned in my monologue: the ones who have not yet learned to unclench their fists and let go of “right” and “wrong.” Unfortunately, they may never learn. They are more interested in being validated—that their technique is the “right” way to play. Technique is highly personal and causes heated arguments among students and enthusiasts. *(Interestingly, you don’t hear professionals arguing about technique, ever. Professionals know that there are many ways to skin the technique cat, and getting it done is all that matters. Pros argue about other stuff—important stuff, like where to find the best pizza in Soho at 3am.)*

My ultimate desire is for you to learn what I show you, make it a part of your musical journey, and then FORGET ABOUT IT! Remember, the idea is to never think about technique when playing in a band. That’s *why* we practice technique in the first place. It needs to become part of who you are as a musician, so it’s completely transparent to the listener.

# Fulcrum Discussion

I can distill my technical concept (and indeed the entire DVD) down to a simple three-word phrase: Use a fulcrum.

You hear the word “fulcrum” used over and over in various “methods,” but I do not see it applied by the average drummer nearly enough, and I’ve found that this one simple concept is the key to unlocking *anyone’s* hands.

I will often ask a student, “What is a fulcrum?” Sometimes they get the right answer, often not. So let’s define it right now. It’s incredibly simple.

## ***A FULCRUM is the pivot point (axis) on a lever.***

Imagine a child’s see-saw. The middle point, where the see-saw rotates, is the fulcrum. Easy enough, right? Your thumb and forefinger will form a fulcrum on the drumstick just like the point on a see-saw except it won’t be a 50/50 even split, it’ll be more like 70/30, giving you more leverage and power towards the tip of your stick. You may find this interesting...

*There are three classes of lever using different kinds of fulcrum.*

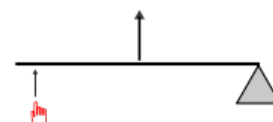
### **We are using the FIRST-CLASS FULCRUM, illustrated here:**

You can easily see the positive and negative force working together on either side of the fulcrum (illustrated by the triangle). One side goes up, the other has to go down (positive and negative energy), just like a stick will pivot in your thumb and forefinger, if you employ a fulcrum correctly while drumming.



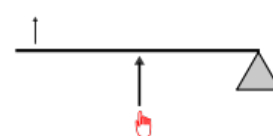
### **The SECOND-CLASS FULCRUM is this:**

A door hinge or a wrench is a good example of this kind of fulcrum, where the bolt (the triangle in the illustration) is the pivot point.



### **A THIRD-CLASS FULCRUM looks like this:**

A broom is an easy way to visualize this fulcrum, where your upper hand holds the broom steady and your lower hand sweeps in the middle of the handle.



Now, that’s all very interesting, but at this point, I’d like you to stop thinking about fulcrums at all, except for the first class fulcrum we formed between your thumb and forefinger; the see-saw example. You will see some methods go on and on about how your wrist is a fulcrum (a hinge, actually), your elbow is a fulcrum, your shoulder is a fulcrum, and your fingers have multiple fulcrums. Yikes. I remember I was amazed when I discovered how much time some teachers spent going on and on about this simple thing. I was, thankfully, taught only one fulcrum point. For me, all the thinking about multiple fulcrum points is just too much. As far as I’m concerned, we’ve got one fulcrum, and it’s formed between your thumb and forefinger. Moving on...

# Grip Checklist

## MATCHED

My matched grip (both hands executing the same grip, hence *matched*) checklist is exceeding simple—only three steps, as demonstrated on the DVD. I recommend you perform these three steps, just as I do on the DVD, every time you pick up a pair of sticks, until it becomes a part of your unconscious routine. Here they are once again:

1. **Thumb and forefinger form the fulcrum.** *(By the way, the thumb is flush against and pointing up the stick, and the stick should be between the first and second joint on the forefinger).*
2. **Fingers 3-4-5 touch the stick lightly with the tips.**
3. **The butt of the stick points down the palm and does not flair outside.**

It's couldn't be simpler. The trick is correct repetition and visually inspecting your hands for any gremlins that can appear at this delicate point in your technical makeover.

## TRADITIONAL GRIP

I once searched online the term “traditional grip demonstration” and I was (to put it mildly) confused by what I found.

*This is a great time to remind everyone that just because you see something demoed on YouTube by a guy with a drumset and video camera, that doesn't make it quality information. And that, my friends, is being generous. I know I said that you need to think in terms of options but I certainly don't mean options from just any 'ol place. Some things are just plain wrong and even physically dangerous if you repeat them too much. When getting your information online from unknown sources, especially YouTube, let the buyer beware, even if it's free.*

So, let's now quickly talk about a checklist for traditional grip. Once again, the DVD is the place to truly get the demonstration of this often-flummoxing adventure.

1. **Present your left hand like you were about to shake somebody's hand: hand facing to the side, wrist straight, and fingers extended away from you.**
2. **Put the stick in the webbing of your hand, right at the base of your thumb (the stick should be touching at roughly the same point as it does in your matched grip—adjust to taste).**
3. **Softly and gently place the rest of the fingers in place. Make a loose triangle with your 2-3-4 fingers with the 2-3 fingers on top of the stick, and the 4-5 fingers below the stick.** Don't worry about your pinky, he'll tag along just below your 4th finger if you stay relaxed and don't obsess. I'm convinced everyone's pinkies find their own way. The only thing I don't want to see is a flexed pinky jutting out on its own. This conveys a feeling of tension in the entire hand.

# Hey, What About the Wrist?

This particular part of my approach is probably what most people who have studied name-brand “methods” have the hardest time integrating: Stop obsessing about your wrists!

Infuriating fact: I can’t tell you how many people come to me talking about a fulcrum and then DON’T USE ONE! I ask them, “what’s your philosophy for technique?” They then proceed to say all the right things, tell me about a fulcrum, and then just throw it all in the garbage with this huge wrist-based motion! Ugh...

I take a completely different approach where I barely talk about the wrist at all. Look, I believe that some things just happen by themselves, and wrist motion is one of them. Look at this logically: The fulcrum, as opposed to the wrist, is a much more involved concept. You have to “create” a fulcrum yourself, you have to manipulate it with just the right amount of pressure and incorporate the fingers; there’s a lot going on in there! But the wrist? It basically moves one way and acts as a hinge (second class fulcrum).

***My father was very close to Henry Adler, a drumming and publishing icon who recently passed at the age of 93. He wrote the legendary book Buddy Rich’s Modern Interpretation of Snare Drum Rudiments in 1942, which featured the Adler method of technique. Mr. Adler taught the method to my father, who used it to teach his students. It was a totally wrist-based approach to start with, which incorporated a “bounce” motion later. My dad, being a gentle yet stern taskmaster and a “stick to the plan” kind of teacher (for beginners, at least), taught me the Adler method, too, just like any of his other students. I remember doing these very regimented wrist-based exercises at 7 years old and thinking, “Wow, this doesn’t look like drumming to me.” I started out teaching the Adler method too, and it worked because it’s a clear and well-thought-out system. But I certainly never used any of those motions in my own playing. Finally, I had the temerity to ask myself the toughest question of all: “Why am I teaching this to my students?” No good answer came. It was an epiphany for me. That question became the basis of my educational approach. If I couldn’t answer the question, then I wouldn’t teach it. Period. I ripped my entire educational philosophy down to the bone and started over. The exercises you see in the DVD and in this eBook are the result of my educational re-engineering.***

So, what about the wrist? I reply, “So, what about it?” It moves too. I move my wrist, as I showed you in the DVD numerous times. I’ve yet to discover a student who, when asked to play the upcoming rebound exercises with a properly conceived fulcrum, didn’t move their wrist sympathetically, naturally, organically, without being TOLD to move their wrist! Never. Not one. As a matter of fact, it’s very hard—nearly impossible—to NOT move your wrist! So what is all this fuss about? Nothing, from where I sit. Just relax, do what I do, and your wrist will find it’s way. The fulcrum is the driver, the wrist will fall into place.

Now, just the thought of telling the student to “find their own way” is abhorrent to many educators who believe you have to tell the student *exactly* what to do in every

conceivable instance. And, indeed, it's easier for the student AND the teacher to say, "Do this... bam, bam ,bam"—right down a technique checklist. But that won't work here. I can't see your hands, and to pretend one set of rules will work for everyone is silly. Rather, use the overall concepts I'm showing you and adjust to taste. You'll find your way. Don't be afraid to experiment! Find what works and what doesn't. It may take a long time—in fact, a lifetime (get it?)—to attain your goals, but you'll find your way. If you stay focused, calm, and self-aware, this will work. I've yet to see a pair of hands that didn't soften and flow after applying these concepts.

***And, a note to educators who may be using this DVD for themselves and with their students: I advise you to find the courage to let your students technique develop organically and uniquely. The truly great educators among us understand: it takes real courage to let a student's hands look a bit different from the teacher's! It's naturally hard to resist making the student a copy of yourself. Yet, only when you have the confidence to let the student's anatomy and natural gifts come to the surface in their own way will you have reached the next level as teacher of an artform.***

## **Fulcrum Visualization Exercise for Matched Grip**

Please, take the time to try this little exercise I show you on the DVD. It's so, so important. If you can't perform the Fulcrum Visualization Exercise, and really SEE your fulcrum and fully appreciate the motion of the axis at your fulcrum point, you'll have a very hard time performing the rebound strokes in the next section.

Believe it or not, this point, right now, before you play a note, is what is going to set you up for success or failure with this approach. This silly little exercise is your entry to softer hands that will allow you to play things you could previously only imagine—that's how important it is. And it's so simple to do, though it may take a while to master.

Common question: How long should you spend on this rather boring exercise? Ten minutes, tops. What, only ten minutes? Yes, ten minutes per day. This exercise is something you'll get bored of quickly (and rightly so!) and a good educator never allows the student to become resentful of technical exercises. So this simple little thing should be done for ten minutes, and only until you feel you've started to "see" your fulcrum functioning without the wrist getting involved. Once you've got it, you don't have to do it anymore. This simple exercise is only to help you get your fulcrum conceptualized, after that, it's all about playing. I only do this exercise with my students at the first lesson, then a quick refresher at the second, and that's it. After that, they're on their own.



# Rebound Strokes

Contrary to every method I know, I don't use any primer exercises on the pad to illustrate the mechanics of motion. I've tried them all, taught them all, and have respectfully chosen another path. I immediately start every student with the most essential of all drumming motions: rebound strokes. I concentrate right away on getting the focus off the wrist and into your fulcrum—to *FEEL* the effortless bouncing of your sticks. Eliminating exaggerated motions has been one of the most important and successful aspects of refining my personal approach to teaching technique.

The following four exercises are the exact exercises I demonstrate on the “Rebound Strokes” chapter of the DVD (and also the “Group Demo: Rebound Stroke Practice Routine”). These exercises are as simple as they can be, and that's the point: simple drumming played at a high level rather than hard things played poorly. The fancy stuff is all smoke and mirrors if you don't have a strong foundation.

A great beginning tempo on these exercises is 105 beats per minute on your metronome. After you get it feeling great, play along with us on the DVD if you like. When we get too fast, stop! It's going to take awhile to get as fast we as do. One day soon you'll probably be able to achieve a faster tempo than the group demo on the DVD. If you feel you have more “gas in the tank,” go for it! As long as you are calm, relaxed, and bouncing, while seeing the axis in your fulcrum, you can go as fast as you'd like. That's the point: it's your journey. The only thing I ask everyone to remember is that exercises like this are never a thing to be won. There's never a winner when it comes to technique, no matter what anyone says.

***Very important point: a normal human instinct is to grip something tighter when things get difficult (faster). That's exactly what we don't want here. We want to soften up, relax, and let the sticks do the work. In the beginning, you will have to “try” to be relaxed (as silly as that sounds). You need to train your hands to soften as they get faster, not tighten up. Okay, just how do you do that? By being self-aware and your most critical judge. You have to honestly see yourself and listen to your drumming as you explore more extreme tempo ranges, and teach your hands to stay calm when the heat is on. Correct repetition pays huge benefits with these simple exercises. You'll soon notice improvement in everything you do with a pair of sticks if you take these principles and make them a part of your drumming philosophy.***

For educators, keeping a student's interest during the drudgery of learning the basics is always a chore. By playing using exercises that involve some grace and beauty right away, I've found it infinitely easier to have the student enjoy this (what I call) “lonely practice.” Give it a try with your students, too. Get your students to play these rebound exercises with a beautiful flow right away. Get your head away from drumming! Just like I say on the DVD, “Don't drum—bounce!” Say it, own it, and believe it. Now get to it.

# Rebound Stroke Exercises

Suggested tempo range: 105-220 bpm



## THINGS TO REMEMBER:

1. Don't drum—bounce!
2. Air in the back of the fulcrum=sound from the tip of the stick.
3. Focus on the fulcrum motion, not the wrist.
4. Experiment! Let the wrist find it's way; keep it loose.
5. Should feel calm—like walking, not running.
6. Breathe; keep shoulders down and centered.
7. Chest out, nice posture, sit in a commanding position over the pad.
8. Nothing changes as you get faster!
9. Tap foot on quarter notes.
10. Last note on each hand stays down!

# Accents

An accent is a note that stands out from its neighbors, and they are the most powerful musical tool in any drummer's basic technique. Without accents, music would be as boring as eating vanilla pudding everyday: no contrast, no spice, no variety. Accents, quite simply, bring color to music. They are also one of the signature ways for drummers to develop their own sound and feel.

I show you how to play accents on the DVD, so please play with me and get some nice "whippy" accents that snap and pop. Remember: to get powerful accents, don't fall into the "higher is louder" trap. It's always stick *velocity* generated at the tip that will make accents explode upon impact. Stick height alone, without snap and velocity, produces absolutely nothing of musical value. It just adds clutter, and makes drumming lifeless and heavy. (If you want to destroy a groove, play high, big, and without accents on the drumset. I guarantee nobody will be dancing.)

The unaccented notes, called "taps," are softer notes that stay relaxed and live closer to the drum. The volume difference, or ratio, between the accent and taps is always up to the individual drummer. I recommend keeping them both realistic. Taps that are inaudible and accents that obliterate eardrums are musically unusable. Pick a good ratio that has nice accent volume and find a tap volume that compliments your well-executed accents. How do you discover this ratio? Experiment and listen to your drumming. Adjust to taste.

***I personally recommend staying away from high and unnecessarily "flowery" accents that are advocated by some methods. In the heat of musical expression, you want efficient strokes that give you the most musical sound (not necessarily the most volume!) with the least amount of effort. However, there are great players who think that playing accents that way on a pad is the only way to go. After you try my way, go try another. Maybe you'll wind up combining a few methods into your own way. That's what I did. Pick what's right for YOU. It's always about results. The way you get it done is inconsequential.***

Exercises# 5-8 are the exact exercises I play alone and with the group in the chapters entitled "Accents" and "Accent Practice Routine." I like to run #5-7 as a chain and then use #8 as a cool-down. But you can also use just #8 by itself for a great workout too. Remember to embrace the circular feeling of the triplets in #8, as opposed to the more vertical feeling of the eighth notes (duples) in #5-7.

## Accent Exercises

Suggested tempo range: 85-220 bpm

#5

L L L L L L L L L L L L L L L L

#6

#7

#8a

#8b

#8c

### THINGS TO REMEMBER:

1. Accent power comes from stick velocity (snap!).
2. Stick stays down after executing the accent.
3. Taps are soft and relaxed.
4. Nothing changes as the tempo is increased.
5. Accent/tap volume ratio is key to clarity; don't underplay taps, don't overplay accents.
6. Relax; breathe; stay calm, smart, and efficient.
7. At faster tempos, you're walking, not running.
8. Keep your shoulders down and chest out; breathe.

# Rudiments Explained

Rudiments (coming from the word “rudimentary”) are short, simple sticking combinations that contain the basic motions of drumming, much like scales played on a melodic instrument. And, like scales, they are not “music.” They are simply nice, organized building blocks designed to acquaint you with instrument mechanics. Now, can you take a paradiddle and make music? Of course; that’s the idea. A simple paradiddle itself, like a C-major scale, isn’t music. It’s the *application* of that paradiddle in a musical context that will turn the rudiment (or scale) into a valid musical statement. In other words, it’s all up to you! Don’t blame the poor little paradiddle if your groove ain’t happening; it’s not its fault. The paradiddle—and any rudiment—is a brush; you’re the artist.

***This DVD and eBook are not meant to be a rudimental encyclopedia. Far from it, actually. We will only be discussing some basic rudiments, not all of the rudiments. We won’t be discussing any fancy new hybrid or drum corps-oriented rudiments like eggbeaters or cheeses or whatever the new hot flavor of rudiment they think of next. Not that I don’t love that stuff and enjoy messing around with them myself, but that’s not on the menu here.***

***Rudimental purists get understandably protective over “their” domain. However, please don’t get upset if you take umbrage with my presentation here today. I’m declaring here and now that this is an incomplete rudimental offering skewed for the drumset. I know all the rules and respect the history. Indeed, I strongly encourage everyone who is intrigued by what we discuss here today to actively check out some other focused rudimental tools. Go backwards to the N.A.R.D. (National Association of Rudimental Drummers) stuff—and to the very, very beginning with the Swiss drummers of the 16th century!—and into the future with Jeff Queen’s amazing snare drum work, and the thousands of books and videos in between. Also, notice how great drumset players all use the rudiments in their own unique way.***

***I feel pity for drummers who think they’ve evolved past learning and embracing the rudiments; they’re missing out on some wonderful learning opportunities. The rudiments get a bad rap from the “too cool for school” drumset crowd, often because they don’t want to play in the same pool as those “icky marching-band drummers.” Or they think that something that is old and “military” couldn’t possibly have merit today. That’s a shame. But my job here is not to indoctrinate the closed-minded, it’s to discuss the possibilities and show you the wonderful little secrets the rudiments have to offer us. They’ll help put you in touch with your technical strengths and weaknesses.***

***You can sometimes witness raging, bare-knuckled fights between drummers over how many rudiments there actually are. N.A.R.D. had 26, P.A.S. (Percussive Arts Society) has their chart of 40 “official” rudiments, and then there are modern drum corps guys who believe there are over 60. Yet there are other drummers who believe there are only two rudiments: singles and doubles. In the category of “debates that are a complete waste of time,” only the mother of all ridiculous drum fights, the “traditional-vs.matched-grip” debate, nudges this silly argument out of the top spot.***

*For the record, I have no idea how many rudiments there are. Somewhere between 2 and 60, I'd guess.*

*One last warning: rudimental and drumline drumming can become an addiction for some drummers, who stay on a single surface obsessed with trying to rid their inverted-flammed-cheesed diddles of that last little bit of slop at a metronome marking of 712. And then, down the road, when I meet them in my studio, they wonder why they don't have a pocket on the kit. Don't let this happen to you, especially if you are a former drum corps or marching band drummer entertaining the idea of becoming an accomplished musician. I love rudiments and my decades of exploring them, but please remember to keep your relationship with them healthy and use them to your advantage on the drumset. For us, that's why they're there.*

## THE FIVE FAMILIES OF RUDIMENTS

1. **Ruffs:** short single-stroke rolls\*
2. **Rolls:** double strokes ("rolls," when used without a modifier, is usually a catch-all term for successive double strokes. Indeed, for our purposes, we'll be talking about "open" double strokes rather than closed or "buzzed" rolls)
3. **Paradiddles:** Simple combinations of singles and doubles
4. **Drags:** Two grace notes followed by a primary note
5. **Flams:** One grace note followed by a primary note

*\*Unfortunately, there is a basic flaw that developed with our rudimental labeling. The stickings of a drag and a ruff are often mixed up and sometimes even combined, as if there is no difference between them. Just like basic harmony, our system should be just as clear and intelligently organized (you won't find an educated student anywhere in the world calling a Eb-minor scale anything but an Eb-minor scale). So, let me say it loud and proud: if you see a ruff notated as anything but single strokes, that is, in my opinion, incorrect. Period. Obviously, some teachers have had enough of this fiasco too—P.A.S. has taken the rudiment forever known as the "4-stroke ruff" and renamed it the "single-stroke 4." That works I guess, but I think we have enough names already. I'm sticking with "ruff." I'm on a mild crusade to get some consistency into our labeling by just organizing what's already there with clarity and logic. Anyway, in my rudimental world, single strokes are the ruff family, and forever will be.*

All rudiments, with the exception of the closed or “buzzed” roll, and some newer hybrid rudiments, can go inside these families. Here's the list of rudiments we'll be looking at today.

RUFF FAMILY	ROLL FAMILY	PARADIDDLE FAMILY	DRAG FAMILY	FLAM FAMILY
Three-Stroke Ruff	Five-Stroke Roll	Single Paradiddle	Single Drag	Alternating Flams
Four-Stroke Ruff	Six-Stroke Roll	Double Paradiddle	Double Drag	Single Flam Paradiddle
Five-Stroke Ruff	Seven-Stroke Roll	Triple Paradiddle	Single Ratamacue	Double Flam Paradiddle
Seven-Stroke Ruff	Nine-Stroke Roll	Paradiddle-Diddle	Double Ratamacue	Triple Flam Paradiddle
	Ten-Stroke Roll		Triple Ratamacue	Flamacue
	Eleven-Stroke Roll			Flam Taps
				Flam Accent
				Flam Drags
				Swiss Triplets

## RUFF FAMILY

### Three-Stroke Ruff

Suggested tempo range: quarter note=60-230



It's hard to get more basic than this. Just snap the accent, and keep everything else down—nice and soft.

#### THINGS TO REMEMBER:

1. This simple rhythm becomes easily corrupted. As the tempo gets faster, the eighth note starts to lose it's full integrity, and you wind up with nasty slop rather than the perfectly squared off rhythm written above.
2. Since this rudiment naturally alternates and is so short, if you have any problems leading with your left hand, there is nowhere to hide. So look and listen to your hands and sticks, and let your ears and eyes tell you if there are some mechanics that need to be addressed.

Here's another fun way to play a three-stroke ruff. Let's reverse the rhythm and try accenting the first beat as I show you on the DVD.



Another interesting way to look at this rudiment is to keep the same rhythm as our original example and only change the accent. It's tougher than it looks! Isn't it incredible how different this sounds from the original, and all we did was shift the accent? The power of accents is a very important tool for any serious player.



Here are some other fun ruffs to practice that aren't included in the Lifetime Warmup. I use all these ruffs every time I sit behind a drumset. They are wonderful for your hands, so give them a try.

## Four-Stroke Ruff

Notice how this even-numbered ruff does NOT naturally alternate! You have to manipulate the sticking to start it with the other hand. If you didn't, it would always start on the same hand.

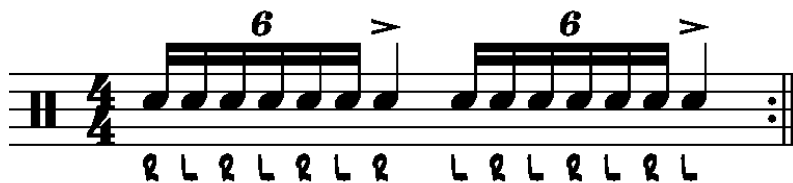


## Five-Stroke Ruff





## Seven-Stroke Ruff



## Double Strokes

It's time to tackle the most misplayed and misunderstood stroke in all of drumming: the double stroke. A double stroke is when you play two notes with one hand in quick succession. If you talk to anybody about the problem with double strokes, you're likely to hear the same thing repeatedly: "the second stroke is weak." Meaning the second note on each hand isn't the same volume as the first note. The poor second stroke is always being called lazy. And, to be sure, he sometimes is. But there's something else afoot here...

I'm absolutely convinced, after hearing the flailing double strokes of thousands of students, that the problem is just as likely to be the *first* stroke as it is the second, if not more so. The first stroke is like the class bully; it sneaks up on the second stroke, smacks him in the head and takes his lunch money.

Think about it logically for just a second: You're trying to create an equal sound from both notes yet the poor second note has to garner all it's power coming off the bounce of the first stroke. Hardly seems fair. After all, the first stroke can reach back and use a ton of wrist to prep if it wants to. The second stroke will never—repeat, *never*—equal the volume of the first stroke if you play the first stroke too high and loud. It's physically impossible. Ultimately, you will always have the classic mushy roll sound that lacks clarity and air if you don't get that first stroke under control.

I always tell students to observe and respect the second stroke by making sure the first stroke isn't beating it up. It's not hard! Once they see that the first stroke is powerful all by itself, they start to ease off, bringing the first stroke down. They then let the second stroke bounce up to its full height thereby bringing a new evenness and clarity to their rolls that was previously missing. So instead of obsessing about how your second stroke is weak, I recommend spending an equal amount of time making sure your first stroke isn't too strong.

This is all discussed completely on the DVD and I hope you take the time to go through the exercises and analyze your personal roll quality. Remember, even rolls that have been terrible for years can be fixed if you focus on the right things. It's never too late for a technical makeover! Great rolls are within your grasp, just stay calm and smart, they will be yours.

I play a simple double-stroke mechanics exercise on the DVD that let's you focus on the quality of your double stroke, one hand at a time. Let's take a look at that now:

## Double-Stroke Mechanics Exercise:

Right hand:

Left hand:

Both hands:

It's important to do these exercises in rhythm so they have context. If you can get the left and right hands of this double-stroke mechanics exercise sounding even, you're going to have no problem with the fancier things coming down the road. Let's take a look now at the rolls that will be going inside the Lifetime Warmup.

## ROLL FAMILY

### Five-Stroke Roll

Suggested tempo range: quarter note=70-250

Here's the shortest double stroke roll: simply two sets of doubles and an accent. We're using this rhythm in  $\frac{3}{4}$  because that's the rhythm used inside the Lifetime Warmup. But just know that you can take this, and any rudiment presented anywhere in any book, and change the rhythm to suit your tastes and needs.

You can also *start* any roll with an accent, too. Above, we're *finishing* with an accent

on the last stroke (sometimes called the release) of the roll. But feel free to experiment with starting with an accent, too.

This is probably the most useful roll for drumset in terms of it's application possibilities. Five stroke rolls are EVERYWHERE, if you take the time to look.

## THINGS TO WATCH FOR:

Again, as with the three-stroke ruff, the shortness of this rudiment is often it's biggest challenge. Longer rolls have a chance to "clean up" as they go on, but fives have to be great right away. If you want clean five-stroke rolls, you either have them or you don't. So watch your mechanics! They'll help you execute beautiful five-stroke rolls.

- Don't lift too high.
- Don't over-squeeze the sticks.
- Use your fulcrum pressures.
- Feel the doubles in your back fingers.
- Stay relaxed.
- Don't work too hard. If you're too physical with this short little roll, you'll just wind up crushing it. Let it breathe!

## Seven-Stroke Roll

Suggested tempo range: quarter note=70-230



Ah, the seven-stroke roll: a favorite of the N.A.R.D. school and an incredibly useful roll behind the drumset. Here's an interesting comparison that illustrates the relationship between rudiments: if you take a four-stroke ruff and double the first three strokes, you wind up with a seven-stroke roll. So, like the four-stroke ruff, it does NOT naturally alternate. To make it alternate you have to change the sticking, which we will not do this time. Why? Because, sometimes it's great to not alternate. Even though the rudimental police are all around us ready to wag their finger, there's no rule that says you HAVE to alternate all the time, especially behind a set of drums. It's just as valid to have things come around to the same hand, and enjoy that continuous feeling. It's all about application.

As with the five-stroke roll, this is the rhythm we use in the Lifetime Warmup, but feel free to change the rhythm to try it in additional musical applications. As with the four-stroke ruff, this roll works great with a triplet pulse, so give that a try, too.

## THINGS TO WATCH FOR:

- *The non-alternating construction feels different!*
- *Avoid a very stiff left hand while playing all the doubles.*
- *Avoid accents that get too big and loud.*
- *Common problem: the eighth-note starts to lose it's full value.*
- *Common problem: a right-hand that has a hard time finding its motion.*

Honestly, this is one of the easiest and most relaxing rolls to play, and I find most students get it very quickly.

## Nine-Stroke Roll

Suggested tempo range: quarter note=70-230



This is my desert island roll. If I could only play one roll for the rest of my life on the drumset, it would be the nine; it's just so useful. So, like the five-stroke roll, we're back to a naturally alternating feeling. This is, again, a great opportunity to find weaknesses in your technique, if you have trouble starting or stopping a roll on either hand. All sorts of gremlins will present themselves with these simple alternating rolls. This gives all of us a chance to really get inside our fundamentals, if we have the courage to look!

## THINGS TO WATCH FOR:

- *Now we're into a roll that's a little longer, so if your doubles aren't matching on either hand, you'll hear it loud and clear.*
- *Each hand now has two sets of doubles before the accent. Your mechanics need to breathe more now, and patience is needed before you reach back for the accent.*
- *The 5/4 construction of this roll may be a bit tricky the first time you try it. I recommend slow practice with a metronome (well, I ALWAYS recommend slow practice with a metronome, so that's not exactly a news flash). Take your time getting the tempo up to where you want it to be.*

Once this settles in, you're going to enjoy this roll in many musical applications.

## Ten-Stroke Roll

Suggested tempo range: quarter note=70-230



The ten-stroke roll is an unusual length, and that's why I like it so much. It's also our first opportunity to explore a roll with two accents instead of just one. Rolls, after you get the basics down, are great in solos and fills, where you can basically accent wherever you want—kind of “roll around the accents,” improvising as you go along. The ten-stroke roll solidifies that very useful feeling of playing two accents in your hands.

### THINGS TO WATCH FOR:

- A common problem is that the rhythmic integrity of the accents starts to vanish because of the different mechanics of playing two accents.
- This is a non-alternating roll, so care needs to be taken to stay relaxed as the roll comes around to the same hand every time.
- Coming off the two accents, the next left double has a tendency to get squished rhythmically. Take care to keep that double breathing, and feel the air between the notes.

## Eleven-Stroke Roll

Suggested tempo range: quarter note=70-230



The eleven-stroke roll is exactly like the ten-stroke roll except it only has one accent. Same exact feeling as the ten, same time signature too, but now we only have a right hand accent. It's also non-alternating.

**NOTE:** I should mention now that the old-school method of “numbering strokes” is extremely unmusical to the drumset player. I mean, who cares how many strokes you play when you're sitting in a band playing the drumset? Nobody. But, there is history here to learn and enjoy! In 1933, when Bill Ludwig assembled the top rudimental drummers of the age, there was no agreed-upon rudimental system. They left their Chicago meeting with the 26 essential rudiments that became the framework for the

rudimental system that we still use to this day. To categorize rolls, they used length—not in terms of musical beats, but in terms of stroke count. They didn't invent stroke count, by the way, they just standardized it with a system. And even though I agree it's not exactly the most musically enlightening way to look at playing something on a drumset, it works. And, really, it's just so that we can all call things by the same name anyway. So when rudimental drummers said, "Play a nine-stroke roll here," everyone knew what was going on. I think there is something gratifying about holding on to a little history and connecting to the drummers who came before us. They were quite ingenious, you know!

## THINGS TO WATCH FOR:

- This one should be good to go, honestly. If you have all the rolls up to this point in good shape, you're going to have no problem with the eleven stroke roll.

## Six-Stroke Roll

The six-stroke roll isn't in the Lifetime Warmup, but it's such a fantastic and useful drumset roll that I wanted to share it with you in this project. I show you how to play it on the DVD. By the way, some call this the "inverted" version of a six-stroke roll but that really depends on your perspective. I'm showing you this version because it's the most useful and common on the drumset, by far.

Here is the right-hand-lead six-stroke roll:



Here is the left-hand-lead six-stroke roll:



## Six-Stroke Roll Check Pattern

This particular check pattern is checking motion and accent placement. The accents and flow of both bars should feel the same.

Suggested tempo range: 80-180 bpm



## Double-Stroke Check Patterns

Here are the exact check patterns I use for double-stroke development in the beginning of the roll chapter and with the group in the chapter “Group Demo: Double-Stroke Check Patterns.”

**Here is check pattern A.** This check pattern checks the sound of your doubles. Both bars should sound exactly the same. Well, close to it at least; don't get obsessive.

**A** suggested tempo range: 105-220 bpm



**Here is check pattern B.** This exercise checks your motion. Both bars should *feel* the same rather than getting stiff and trying to “stroke” each note of the doubles with your wrist. This check pattern is designed to get your hands to soften, and feel the fulcrum on the second bar.

**B** suggested tempo range: 135-275 bpm



I certainly didn't invent these check patterns; they've been around forever. For as long as drummers have been trying to attain great roll quality there have been these simple exercises. I learned them at an early age and was surprised to find many drummers who were never introduced to the concept of check patterns. So, if this is new to you, you're going to love what it does for your drumming technique! Plus, they're a lot of fun to play, especially with friends.

# PARADIDDLE FAMILY

The introduction of the paradiddle, or the “diddle” family, is a crucial moment for any serious student. It’s going to combine everything we’ve covered so far: rebound, accents, singles, and doubles, and put them into one neat little four-note grouping. The DVD has the complete demonstration, so please check it out and incorporate the concepts. *By the way, the definition of paradiddle is two single strokes followed by one double stroke.*

The fact that a paradiddle naturally alternates is a powerful tool for the drumset player, since it allows you to explore both “sides” of the drumset seamlessly. Unfortunately, the paradiddle has been made into a bit of a bigger deal than it needs to be technically, and many drummers think paradiddles are harder than they are. Nonsense. They are easy, easy, easy! Yes, I know, some may find them easier than others, but I refuse to accept this simple sticking can cause major problems—assuming, that is, they are approached with a calm and confident mind. Stay with me, I haven’t lost anybody in the paradiddle quagmire yet.

**Note: I don’t demonstrate things at a super-slow speed. I just don’t think you need me for that—you can do that on your own. You can look at any sticking, on any rudiment, and slow it down as much as is necessary to absorb what it is, and then start to get the tempo up to where it starts to flow at your own pace. That’s the point at which I meet you—and together, we explore from there.**

## Single Paradiddle

A paradiddle is a four-note group, so below, you have a right-hand single paradiddle and a left-hand single paradiddle. Play with me on the demo and then by yourself to get the feeling of these paradiddles. **Note: when talking about paradiddles, the name “single paradiddle” is commonly referred to as just a “paradiddle.”**

Suggested tempo range: 70-260 bpm



## Single Paradiddle Check Pattern

Suggested tempo range: 70-230 bpm



This check pattern checks for sound; both bars should sound the same. All sorts of funny things can happen here!



## THINGS TO WATCH FOR:

1. Relax, focus on your fulcrum, and get the wrist out of the inner taps.
2. Use a nice prep for the accent—but not too high!
3. At faster tempos, play in “ones” not “fours.”
4. Keep your shoulders down; breathe; make it sound effortless.
5. Feel the bounce of the “diddle” (the double) portion of the rudiment.

## Double Paradiddle

The double paradiddle is a six-note rudiment combining four single strokes and one double stroke. We'll be looking at it two ways here: with two accents and with one accent.

### Double paradiddles with two accents:



### Double paradiddles with one accent:



## THINGS TO WATCH FOR:

- Do not stroke each accent with your wrist! Use the “bounce-down” technique I show you on the DVD.
- Keep the taps between the accents soft and relaxed.

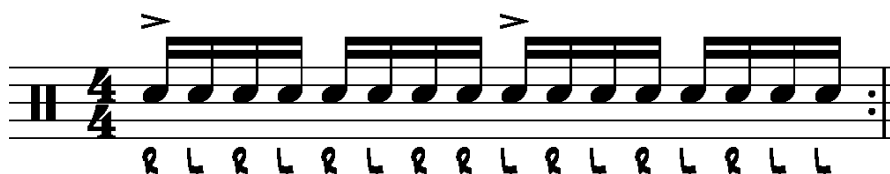
## Triple Paradiddle

Here's the triple paradiddle, an eighth-note rudiment: 6 singles followed by a double. Don't forget to try that "one hand on the pad, one hand on your leg" exercise where you can focus on the mechanics of each hand separately.

**Triple paradiddles with three accents:**



**Triple paradiddles with one accent:**

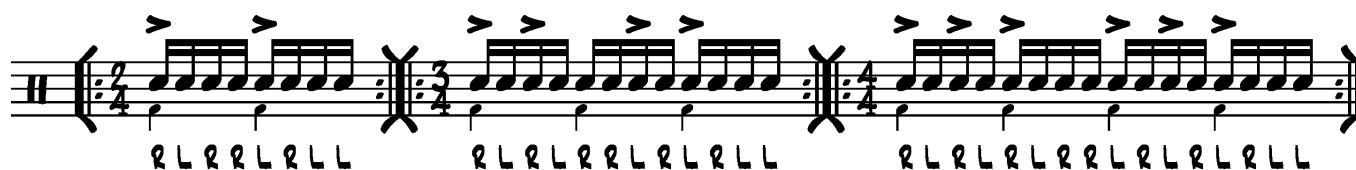


### THINGS TO WATCH FOR:

- Again, do not stroke each accent with your wrist! Use the "bounce-bounce-down" technique I show you on the DVD.
- Keep the taps between the accents soft and relaxed.
- The length of this paradiddle can be a bit trickier to get inside your hands, so don't rush; take your time.

## Paradiddle Combination

Inside the Lifetime we have all sorts of combinations. The first one we'll look at is the paradiddle combination. It's simple: four single, four double, and four triple paradiddles chained together and looped over and over.



### THINGS TO WATCH FOR:

- It's crucial you use the bounce-down technique on the accents of this combination.
- Your hands should feel calm and relaxed at upper tempos, without any strain or tension. Keep the focus on your fulcrums, not the wrist!
- This will test your hands ability to stay relaxed, your natural instinct will be to grip the stick tighter to control the inner notes. Resist this at all costs, and use your fulcrums and fingers.

## Paradiddle Variations

Once you get these basic versions of the paradiddle down, you can then start to experiment with accent placement. The following are just a few examples of the possibilities of messing around with paradiddle accents.

### Single paradiddle variation:



### Double paradiddle variation:

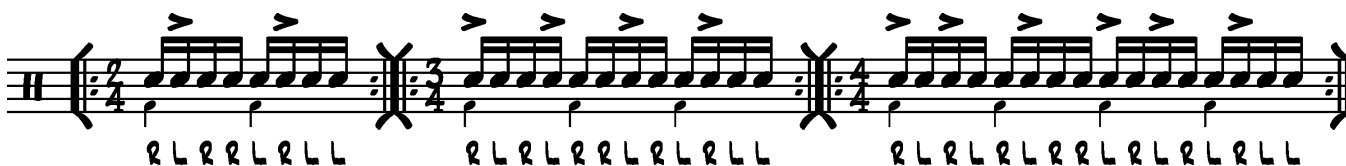


### Triple paradiddle variation:



## Paradiddle Variation Combination

Below is the combination of the above paradiddles. This is a real challenge at faster tempos. I think everyone is going to have a great time trying to navigate this beast. It really is a blast to play.



### THINGS TO WATCH FOR:

- Avoid a foot that taps in morse code rather than on the beat.
- Avoid stiffness and wrist-based strokes because of the syncopations.
- Common problem: lack of clarity in the taps due to syncopations.

## Paradiddle-Diddle

This rudiment consists of a paradiddle plus an additional diddle (get it?). This is an amazing drumset rudiment. Unlike the paradiddle, it doesn't alternate naturally. It keeps coming around to the same hand, which mechanically allows us to explore faster speeds with this sticking. It also has a much "rounder" feeling than the paradiddles.

Here is a right-hand-lead paradiddle-diddle:



Here is a left-hand-lead paradiddle-diddle:



## Paradiddle-Diddle Check Pattern A

This particular check pattern is checking the quality of your right hand and left hand paradiddle-diddles. It's basically seven paradiddle-diddles and one double paradiddle. We're looking for both sides to be equally great. If you close your eyes, the whole thing should sound exactly the same, and feel the same, too.

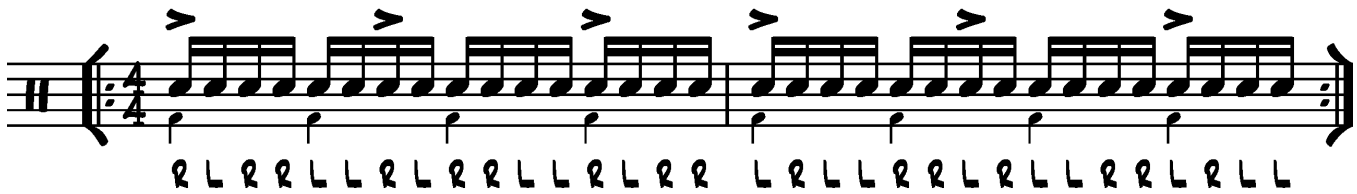


### THINGS TO WATCH FOR:

- *Rhythmic integrity is a big one here. It has to be seamless with no gaps or stutters.*
- *Try to feel the "roundness" as you chain these together.*
- *Keep the non-accent hand loose; it can often tighten up.*
- *As it gets faster, don't let the rhythm change. Hiccups often occur.*
- *We're using the double paradiddle to get us over the other hand; it often tightens up and sounds uneven, so be careful.*

## Paradiddle-Diddle Combination

Here is the classic paradiddle-diddle combination that we'll be using inside the Lifetime Warmup. This exercise consists of two paradiddle-diddles and one paradiddle. The paradiddle gets us over to the other hand so it alternates gracefully.



### THINGS TO WATCH FOR:

- Again, rhythmic accuracy is key. This often gets slurred and sloppy.
- Don't let the paradiddle on the end get choppy.
- Tap your foot consistently.
- As always, nothing changes as the tempo get faster—you just get smarter and looser.

# DRAG FAMILY

Drags (or half-drags, depending on which era you belong to) are defined as two grace notes followed by a primary note. Now, grace notes are technically small, soft notes that don't have rhythmic value; it's up to the performer to assign just how open or closed the grace notes will be. Traditionally, in all concert snare drum music, drags are written like this:

### Left-hand drag:



### Right-hand drag:



**Note: This is the ultra-traditional naming, where the primary note determines what the rudiment gets called (just like with flams). But in modern snare drum playing,**

**when you hear something like “a left-hand drag,” it means what you think it means: a double grace note executed with the left hand. The double grace notes of a drag, unlike the single grace note of a flam, can stand on their own as an actual musical tool (without a primary note).**

You can see the small grace notes before the primary. How you perform them is called your “interpretation.” I demonstrate this on the DVD for you to see and hear. Drags are a very powerful way to spice up things like fills. You can take an ordinary fill, add some drags, and you’ll wind up with something completely new. Now, let’s take a look at the first drag rudiment in the Lifetime Warmup.

## Single Drag



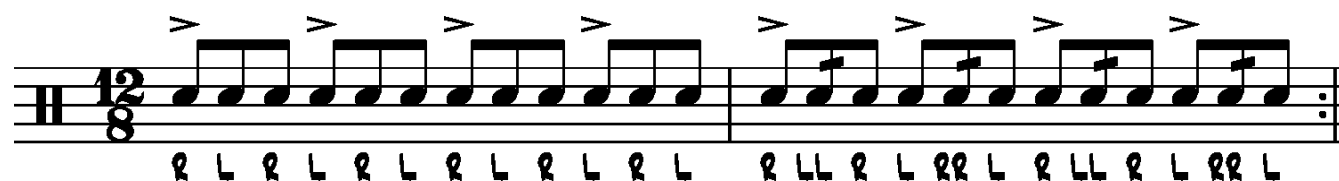
Welcome to one of the most useful rudiments for the drumset. You might be saying to yourself, “Hey, I don’t see those grace notes anywhere in here!”, and you’d be right. When you assign value to grace notes, we use a different way to notate them. Remember, grace notes in their traditional usage don’t have rhythmic value; they’re truly just an accessory to the primary. However, here we’re going to assign value by writing a line through the middle note of each grouping. That means we’re doubling that note, so those eighth notes are now sixteenth notes. This is a kind of shorthand for writing rhythms used all the time on professional-level scores. I want you to see it now just in case you run across it on a piece of music. Now you’ll know what to do.

**Note: This rudiment is often presented in 2/4, since by definition it is a drag followed by an alternate tap, which is why it is sometimes also called a drag tap. But its proper name is really a single drag, so let’s not add to the confusion. In 6/8, this rudiment shows its true versatility by letting its construction breathe and flow.**

## Single Drag Check Pattern

This pattern checks for motion; both bars should feel and flow the same. With the exception of the drag in the center of each triplet in bar two, it should sound the same, too!

Suggested tempo range: 100-220 bpm



## THINGS TO WATCH FOR:

- Keep your hands flowing.
- Only the accents, comes up in height; everything else stays down and soft.
- This rudiment can lose its rhythmic clarity if you aren't careful.
- Don't use your wrist; use your fulcrum pressures to make this really speak.

## Double Drag

Suggested tempo range: 70-205 bpm



Here's a rudiment that, honestly, doesn't translate well to the drumset at all. However, it's a great exercise for your hands, so that's why I'm including it here. You really need to have great control of all your little fulcrum pressures to make this clear without tension coming into your hands. Notice how we are now writing the drags in the traditional manner again. This time, we're going more for an effect and keeping the drags tight to the primary, instead of assigning a note value to the drag itself. Refer to the DVD for the demonstration.

## THINGS TO WATCH FOR:

- Don't crush the drags, they should still breathe even at fast tempos.
- Watch the placement of the primaries.
- Tension is the enemy. Stay relaxed, even on tough rudiments like this.

## Ratamacues

Ratamacues are an incredible rudiment and they have fantastic potential on the drumset.\* A ratamacue is a bit of a hybrid where we combine a drag with a four-stroke ruff. Of course, refer to the DVD for the demonstration. Note that these accents are just one possibility. You can experiment, as you should with all the rudiments! Ratamacues are a huge part of the old N.A.R.D. solos that I grew up studying.

\*The first successful educational drum video (now considered a classic) was a Steve Gadd video filmed in the early 1980s by my friends Rob Wallis and Paul Siegel. Gadd gives an unforgettable lesson on how to apply a simple ratamacue to the drumset. It's something everyone should see, not because it's so incredible or anything, but because up to that time, this simple application had never been executed like that before.

## Single ratamacue:

(One drag and a four-stroke ruff)



## Double ratamacue:

(Two drags and a four-stroke ruff)



## Triple ratamacue:

(Three drags and a four-stroke ruff)



## Ratamacue Combination

Here's the classic ratamacue combination. It combines four single, four double, and four triple ratamacues. This is the exercise that ends the Lifetime Warmup.

Suggested tempo range: 100-270 bpm



## THINGS TO WATCH FOR:

- The left-hand lead often isn't as crisp as the right.
- Don't let the triplet lose it's rhythmic integrity.
- Avoid slurring the drags together on the double and triple ratamacues.



# FLAM FAMILY

A flam is defined as one grace note followed by a primary note. I introduce them after the drags here, and in my private teaching, because I've learned through the years that they are actually to bit harder to control, learn, and master than the drag family. Flams, to put it bluntly, are basically a pain in the neck. They're very—let's see, what's a good word?—temperamental. One day they sound great, the next day they stink. One day you're whipping out tight gorgeous flams that all sound the same, the next day they're so fat they need to be put on a diet.

But, tribulations aside, flams (as I explain on the DVD) are an amazing tool for drumset players because they seem to “lengthen” a single note. Therefore, just adding some well-placed flams to any normal fill (for example) can yield a new, exciting result. It all depends on the application. But before we can apply flams, we have to control them, which can be a bit of a slippery slope. So let's get to it.

Let me share with you a little tidbit I picked up long ago. I call it “Dennis DeLucia's Three Steps to Great Flams” (and this is right from Dennis himself):

1. **Keep your grace note down.**
2. **Keep your grace note down.**
3. **See 1 and 2.**

Dennis always did have a gift for getting right to the core of the problem.



**Dennis DeLucia and Tommy (2009)**

## Flams

Suggested tempo range: 70-210 bpm



This is a nice place to start because it allows you to do a couple of important things at once: check your flam quality while simultaneously checking your flam consistency. Flam quality means the relationship between the grace note and the primary note. Ask yourself, “Does it sound too tight, too fat, or just right?” Once you are satisfied, then ask yourself, “Do they all sound the same, or do some sound different than their neighbors?” We want them to sound like clones of each other: exactly the same.

Now let's try a much tougher exercise.

## Alternating Flams

Suggested tempo range: 60-200 bpm



You'll discover right away that all sorts of, um, "interesting" things can happen here.

THINGS TO WATCH FOR:

- *The grace notes will now want to pop up. Keep them down.*
- *The flam quality will suddenly become inconsistent.*
- *Tension will now creep in due to the controlled grace notes. Stay relaxed!*

## Flam Paradiddles

Dress up some paradiddles with a few flams and what do you have? Flam paradiddles, of course! I really encourage you to watch the demo on the DVD a few times because, like all things technical, talking about it isn't nearly as educational as seeing it.

**Single flam paradiddle:**



**Double flam paradiddle:**

(Shown in 3/4 since that is how we use it in the Lifetime Warmup)

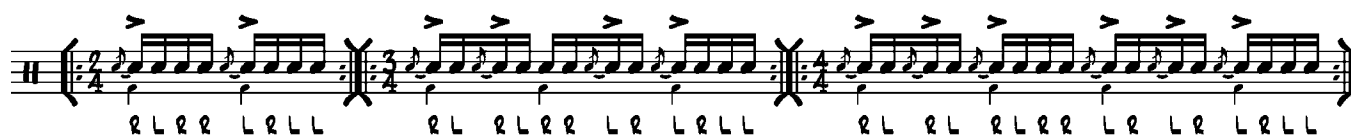


**Triple flam paradiddle:**



## Flam paradiddle combination:

Suggested tempo range: 50-130 bpm



Things to watch for:

- Obviously, you'll want to squeeze all the little notes. Don't do it.
- Avoid poor flam quality with increased tempo.
- Flam consistency on the triple flam paradiddle is almost always an issue at first.

## Flamacue

This is such a simple and funky little rudiment. Technically, this is a five-stroke ruff with a flam on the first and last note. But the hip part is the strong accent on the second note—a very cool flavor.

Suggested tempo range: 60-165 bpm



Below is a flamacue in 3/4. Isn't it incredible how different this feels from the 4/4 version?

Suggested tempo range: 60-140 bpm



THINGS TO WATCH FOR:

- Grace notes will come popping up.
- The second note will lose its power.
- Don't let the last flam become a double stop.

## Flam Taps

This is a fantastic rudiment that lets you see if you're incorporating a fulcrum into EVERYTHING you do. The construction of this rudiment is really a first glimpse into using a three-stroke bounce (which I'll talk about a bit towards the end of the eBook in the "Triple Stroke" section). Refer to the demo and play along with me on both of these essential flam rudiments.

### Flam tap in 2/4:

Suggested tempo range: 50-170 bpm



### Flam tap in 6/8:

Suggested tempo range: 80-220 bpm



### THINGS TO WATCH FOR:

- *The flams can get very fat on these if you aren't careful.*
- *Don't over-accent the flams; it's just not necessary.*
- *This will turn to slop if you try to play it faster than you should.*

## Flam Accents

Suggested tempo range: 60-240 bpm

Just play single stroke triplets and put a flam on the first note. You're done.

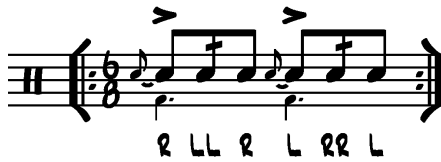


### THINGS TO WATCH FOR:

- *Over-accented flams are not necessary .*
- *Don't let the taps get too soft.*
- *Tension will creep in at faster tempos if you aren't careful.*

# Flam Drags

Suggested tempo range: 1-200 bpm



Ah, flam drags. When I marched, having great flam drags was a true badge of honor. It's easy to see why; they're a total pain in the butt! This rudiment is a real hybrid, where we are taking a single drag and putting a flam on the first note. Or, you can think of it as taking a flam accent and putting a drag on the middle note! Whatever...

Listen, these are hard. If you want to play them, then play them; if you don't (for today), then don't. Here's the deal: If you don't yet have excellent single drags and flam accents, this rudiment should not be attempted since it basically contains both. It's not a good drumset rudiment at all, it's just a real challenge for your hands, and I love a good challenge.

**Note: Due to time constraints, I left the flam drags out of the 5 1/2-minute advanced Lifetime Warmup. However, feel free to put them back in if you wish by replacing the flam accents with flam drags.**

### THINGS TO WATCH FOR (besides everything):

- The flam grace note will come up in height, destroying everything around it.
- The drag will ruin the flam if you aren't careful.
- The flam will ruin the drag if you aren't careful.

# Swiss Triplets

I get a pleasant headache thinking about all the possibilities for Swiss triplets (or Swiss Army triplets, to be even more precise) on the drumset. The motion, the sound, the flow; it's like they thought of drumset players when they made this thing up. The notation is the same as a flam accent, but the sticking has changed. Instead of alternating (like the flam accent), it now keeps coming around to the same hand, creating a very relaxed "round" feeling. The non-alternating mechanics also allow this rudiment to be played at blistering speeds, if desired.

### Swiss triplet combination:

Suggested tempo range: 80-210 bpm

This is the combination as used inside the Lifetime Warmup. It's basically seven Swiss triplets and one flam accent (which forces you over to your other hand).



## THINGS TO WATCH FOR:

- Since it's so easy to play, the flam can get too wide interfering with the rhythm of the triplet.
- The accent starts to lose its power because of the sticking mechanics.
- The unaccented hand has to play the last note of the triplet and then immediately play the grace note. Keeping it low and relaxed is your only chance of success.

## Flam Combination

Suggested tempo range: 80-210 bpm

Here's the big Kahuna. This combination doesn't contain every flam rudiment discussed, but it does give you a good idea of how it feels to flow through different flam possibilities. More advanced players can substitute flam drags for the flam accents in bar 3, or you can add another bar onto the exercise to make it longer. Don't forget, you can adjust to taste here, and everywhere in my approach.

## THINGS TO WATCH FOR :

- Flowing from one rudiment to the next can be tricky.
- High grace notes ruin this exercise.
- The last three bars are sometimes a bit rough initially because of the rhythm and accent placement.

# The Lifetime Warmup™ Concept

Just today, I was reading an article about a famous drummer in a drumming magazine. They asked him the requisite question, "So, uh, how do you warm up?" This drummer gave the requisite answer (and by requisite, I mean the same answer that just about every drummer on the planet gives to this question). He said, "You know, I play some paradiddles and maybe a couple of rolls. You know, maybe, I don't know, uh... some paradiddles (cough)." Man, there's got to be a better way.

You see, I didn't realize how fortunate I was to learn this thing called the Lifetime Warmup, because I've known this routine literally since I could walk. I just assumed everyone else had a routine, too. You know, maybe theirs was different, but they still had some kind of "hand maintenance" routine. I soon learned that this was not the case. Most drummers, after they spent so much time learning rudiments and gaining technique, had this kind of piecemeal approach to maintenance, like the drummer in the story above. They didn't have a routine to check in with, so they could analyze their hands' strengths and weaknesses over time.

If there is one thing the Lifetime Warmup will give you, it is perspective on your hands over time. Since it's a routine, if you make it part of your drumming life, you'll notice amazing things happening to your hands right in front of your eyes. Like my father, I start every lesson with the Lifetime Warmup. It's amazing what you'll discover.

## THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW:

- *Please, I'm begging you, don't try to play the whole thing right away! When I teach this, it takes at least **a full year** to get all the elements added the entire routine. Only a fool would try to cram all of this in quickly. You'd do more harm than good.*
- *When starting this, students will often get tired, and feel burning in their hands by the time they get to the five-stroke roll. This is only because they are still learning "not to work"; still getting comfortable with the concept of using an effortless fulcrum. If you start to feel real pain, stop. If you feel tension coursing through your hands or feel your fingers start to get stiff and tighten up, stop. Nothing good will come from going on. Regroup, relax, and take a break. In a few minutes your hands will feel fresh again.*
- *My favorite moment with students comes when we get to about the triplet rolls. I look at them and ask, "How do you feel?", and they say, "Great!" I then ask, "Remember about 4 months ago, you couldn't get past the 5-stroke roll? Do you remember?" And their eyes brighten and they start laughing because their hands now look and feel like a champion thoroughbred racehorse instead of a donkey. Those moments are why I teach.*

## Extra Lifetime Warmup Elements

You'll find complete demos of each of these elements on the DVD.

## Singles and Doubles

This is pretty much what you think it is: a bar of singles and a bar of doubles. The tricky thing here is moving from triplets to sixteenths with grace and beauty.

The image shows the musical notation for the 'Trot' section of the 'Pomp and Circumstance March No. 1'. The notation is in 4/4 time and consists of two staves. The first staff features a melody with eighth-note triplets and a bass line with quarter notes. The second staff features a melody with eighth-note groups and a bass line with quarter notes. The key signature has one sharp (F#).

### 3-Stroke Ruff Combination

This is technically a 3-stroke ruff, a 7-stroke ruff, and then another 3-stroke ruff—but that's so overly technical; please don't think of this (or anything else) that way. It's just a nice little combination that alternates all the way through; a very relaxing and fun little combination.

## Triplet Rolls

There's no way around it, these are tough. The instinct will be to close off the back of your hand, lock your wrist, and only use your arms. Because this is so fast, you can actually get away with that motion and make it sound okay, but that's not why we're here, right? No, we're trying to stay relaxed and "fulcrumized" through everything we play, even this fast stuff.

The first system of the musical score for 'The Rose Tree' is shown. It consists of a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The time signature is 4/4. The melody begins with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. This is followed by a quarter note C5, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note A4. The melody then continues with a quarter note G4, a quarter note F#4, and a quarter note E4. The system ends with a double bar line and repeat signs. Below the staff, there are two lines of text: '2-' and '1-'. The first line of text is aligned with the first measure of the melody, and the second line of text is aligned with the second measure of the melody.



### Paradiddle combination: one accent

Here's the paradiddle combination with one accent at the beginning of each paradiddle. Careful on this: we're going to play many more taps and not as many accents, so stay relaxed and keep those inner notes even and soft.



### Paradiddle combination: no accents

This is the hardest combination of all. You will want to lift your sticks where the accent used to be. Don't do it. Watch those tips!



## Extra Exercises

Remember, as I've said a hundred times, this is an incomplete rudimental offering. We didn't cover every rudiment, especially more intricate rudiments like flam fives, pata-fla-flas, or any inverted variations like an inverted flam tap. But I'd like to show you a couple of exercises that will introduce the techniques needed to explore those rudiments and more, even though I don't use them in the Lifetime Warmup versions presented here. But remember, that doesn't mean you can't. Indeed, you can and are only limited by your imagination.

### "Truth Serum"

In the beginning of the old TV show "Kung Fu," the young student was told, "If he could walk across the rice paper and not leave a trace, he was then a master." Well, here's a little exercise I call "truth serum." This exercise will let you know exactly where you stand with the most simple and basic strokes. There's nowhere to run; you can either play it or you can't. It contains no accents, just a sequence from one stroke to four strokes and then back down to one. Remember, no accents! Close your eyes or (even better) record yourself, and you should hear nothing but a continuous line of notes without any breaks, variances, or stutters. This is my favorite exercise of all time. Good luck.

Suggested tempo range: 80-170 bpm

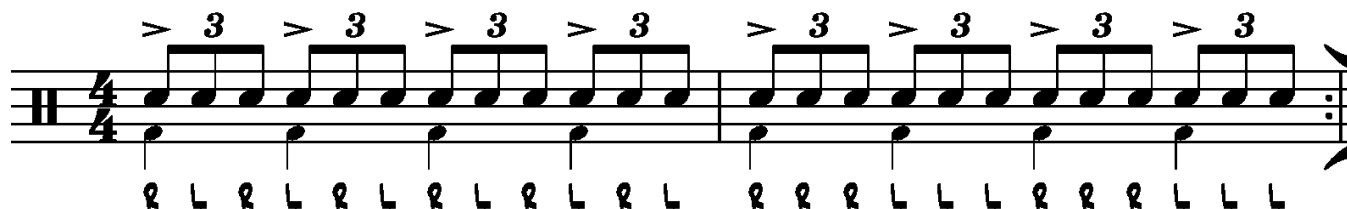


## Triple Strokes (Bounce)

Drumming is pretty boring if you stay only with singles and doubles. To be sure, with the flam rudiments and such we were playing longer chains with each hand than just double strokes. However, here are two focused 3-stroke check patterns that will allow you to check your triple strokes, both accented and unaccented.

### Triple-stroke check pattern A (accented):

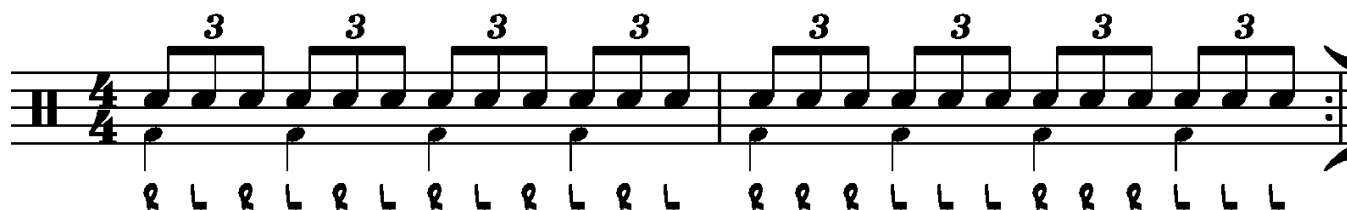
Suggest tempo range: 110-270



### Triple-stroke check pattern B (unaccented):

This exercise is very, very challenging.

Suggested tempo range: 110-240 bpm



## Drumset Application

After all this work comes the big transition: bringing it to the drumset. This is the point where all we've worked on can be either a positive or negative experience. It is entirely up to you. The point where many players get confused and frustrated (thereby turning this into a negative experience) is that they believe that now, because they sound and look good on a pad, they will sound and look good on a drumset—a revolutionary moment, of sorts. That probably isn't going to happen.

Rather, what should (and hopefully will) happen, is that all that work on the pad will start to gradually come over with you to the drumset in a more of an evolutionary process (rather than a revolutionary one). If you take the overall concepts of my approach and start to add those concepts into your physical connection to the drumset, you should soon notice all the things we noticed at the pad—fulcrum, bounce, air, relaxation, roundness, clarity, beauty—all start to become part of *who you are* on the drumset.

The drumset is a multi-surface/multi-instrument beast that no practice pad—no matter what its design—will realistically emulate. That's fine; I don't practice on a pad to emulate a drumset. That would be silly. I practice on a pad solely to get my core hand

technique refined. Putting that technique on a drumset is a personal journey that will only happen for you if you do these two simple things:

- Watch great drummers play; observe and copy their physical approach, and
- Watch yourself; observe and refine your personal approach.

***Personal note: The real players among us all started out worshipping our favorite drummer. We dissected, listened, watched (so much easier now with the internet than ever before), and (most importantly) copied! Yes, copied, right down to the brand of shirt and tried to be that drummer. That is the most powerful way to learn anything: study and emulate a master. Currently there is an absurd idea that you shouldn't copy anyone because your "voice" (whatever that means) will be lost. Please, this is more ego talking than anything. If you think you are in possession of some sort of great new "voice" that the world has been missing out on until your arrival, well, good luck with that. However, for the rest of us, to get inside the mind of a master drummer is not only musically necessary during our developmental period, it's also creatively inspiring. So if you do have an original voice inside you worthy of expression, it'll only be more artistically developed if you have the courage to explore the greats who came before you.***

Examples of how to play drumset with great technique are all around us. Let's pick four great drummers with completely different technique.

- Horacio Hernandez
- Keith Carlock
- Bill Stewart
- Cindy Blackman

If you study, not just watch, but *study* their various techniques, you'll learn so much about technical possibilities. The lessons are all right there. The trick is to not think about "pad practice" and then bring that mindset to the drums; it won't work. Bring the concepts over. Bring your new unlocked hands over. Notice how I'm not saying to look at these drummers because they will validate "MY APPROACH." Yuck. No, in fact, they'll show you various ways of making beautiful music with completely different techniques. That's the idea!

Please, think about this: When we're on a pad, we've got our sticks to the center of the pad and our tips are together all nice and calm; a position we're almost never in on the drumset! Ninety-five percent of the time, we're playing some sort of groove, and our hands are split between various instruments—some made of metal that aren't even stationary! If you try to play a basic rock groove like you're playing on the pad, forget it, you'll just look and sound silly. What you want to do is connect with each hand and look at the mechanics. So you'd see your right hand on the hi-hat, get it to soften up and add some fulcrum to get the most sound from the least effort. Then, you'd see your snare playing the backbeat and add some efficient snap and whip to your stroke to get the drum to pop. That's it; one groove done, a thousand more to go! Soon, you'll see

that if you start to play even one groove with a calm relaxed technique, it soon starts to spread into everything you play! Think of it like a healthy virus.

Now, another biggie is drumset “motion,” which is a different discussion. Playing a groove, we’re usually parked in one set position (for the most part), but when we play fills, solos, or groove variations, ya gotta move! How do you do it? Come on, you know the answer already. Let’s pick a few different drummers known for their chops on the drumset:

- *Dennis Chambers*
- *Vinnie Colaiuta*
- *Carter Beauford*
- *Buddy Rich*

If you *watch*, not just see these great players, but actually *study* their concepts, you’ll find common themes: efficiency, grace, power, beauty, and a calm relaxation that defies the density of drumming often achieved. So, you take the concepts from the pad, and then start to apply them to everything you do around the drumset. It really is that simple. I know, I know: You hear all sorts of things about how it’s *not* that simple; about how this is all supposed to be some sort of torturous journey requiring pain, sweat, charts, graphs, and your firstborn child. Nonsense! It is as simple as you want it to be. That doesn’t mean it’s easy, because (I’ll tell you right now) it isn’t. If it was, we’d all be whipping around a drumset at 900 miles an hour. It’s not easy and it takes years of dedicated effort to achieve the facility of a true master.

Also, you have to bend this approach to whatever style of music you’re in. A trio-jazz drummer and a speed-metal drummer simply cannot approach the drumset in the same way; it would be silly to try. But, that doesn’t mean they both can’t have the same core philosophy of staying relaxed and loose. Loud doesn’t necessarily have to mean “abusive.” You can play loud and still stay graceful and injury-free. All it takes is dedication by the player to incorporate the concepts discussed. So go ahead, if you have to bash, then bash! But try to stay healthy doing it.

Lastly, be true to your musical self. If you want to be a chops god, then be one! If you don’t, then don’t. Never, ever feel pressure to “keep up with someone” who can play faster than you can if it’s simply a contest between drummers. Of course, if your favorite band often executes fast tempos, and you want to be in that band, you had better be able to play fast. But there’s no law that says you have to play fast. This DVD is just as much about staying healthy during a lifetime of playing as it is about acquiring speed and power.

***Interesting historical speed story: Woody Herman had a chart in his library called “Caldonia.” It became a badge of honor, when the next wave of musicians took over the chairs, to play “Caldonia” faster than the previous band. It got so fast at the end of Woody’s career that it was over 400 bpm! If you wanted that gig, that’s where the bar was set, and you had to get there. So the “speed wars” that drummers often wage are nothing new, and if there is a real musical reason to work for raw power and speed, like the above example, don’t run from it, attack it!***

# Now What?

If you've paid attention and really applied everything we've talked about, your hands should be (or soon will be) softer, stronger, and healthier. You're using less to get more, and you should feel confident, smarter, inspired, and hungry for more. So you're ready for more? Good!

Well, the first thing I want everyone to do is go buy a copy of the classic 1935 book *Stick Control*. If you only buy it for the first three pages, which are now legendary, you'll be glad you did. It's a wonderful reference that is great for your overall technical development.

You can, of course, go on to learn even more rudiments if you wish, and (as I suggested earlier) check out amazing modern snare drummers like Jeff Queen. But also check out some great and interesting drumset players and learn their techniques.

Jojo Mayer produced an excellent DVD recently called *Secret Weapons for the Modern Drummer* that has become very popular. It shows Jojo's fine technique and also his breakdowns of interesting things like Buddy Rich's left hand facility. Likewise, my friend Johnny Rabb has mastered something he calls the freehand technique, and it's simply incredible to watch him execute it. It uses the rim as a fulcrum point, and to see him do what he does with it is mind-blowing. Johnny published a book called *The Official Freehand Technique* and if you want to learn something really different, that's the book to get.

The great Alan Dawson developed another fantastic routine that he taught his students much the same way that my father taught his. It's called the Rudimental Ritual, and I remember seeing Alan play this himself live and in person at the first *Modern Drummer* Festival in 1986—and he played it with brushes! What an incredible performance. If you are curious to learn Alan's concepts (and every serious player should, I think) I'd like to recommend a great book, *The Drummer's Complete Vocabulary as Taught by Alan Dawson* written by John Ramsay. Inside you'll find not only the Rudimental Ritual, but also original ways to use books like *Stick Control* on the drumset. Highly recommended!

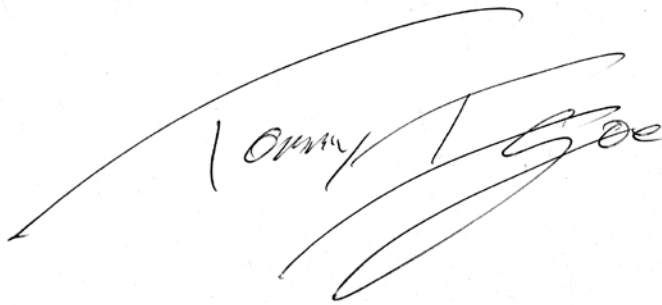
***Unfortunately, I've seen the more barbaric amongst us try to make the Lifetime Warmup and the Rudimental Ritual into competitors, like they're in some perverted contest. I can only shake my head in pity. These are tools, folks, both using rudiments as a way for us to become better players. It's like arguing over a hammer.***

It's time to wrap up this “much larger than I originally planned” eBook. I hope you had as great a time working on this material as I have had assembling it for you. Remember, you'll always find things that directly contradict what I've shown, you or perhaps things you may have learned from other instructors. At that moment, you can either fall into the trap of “right” and “wrong,” or you can simply do as I do and think in terms of “options” (*I always tell the story of how, when I studied Latin drumming, I'd get different answers on things like how to play an “official” Songo groove; it's the nature of art*). As always, I believe in results. How you get there is up to you. Use what I've shown you to your advantage and don't be afraid to mix and match various styles to find what works

for your hands. I'm not a technical purist, and I don't recommend you be one either. It's all about the results, not the method!

Finally, try to accept that you'll have great days and bad days with your technique, but the journey should always be joyous and full of the warm satisfaction of learning. I hope you enjoyed our never-ending journey through technique and incorporating the magic of the Lifetime Warmup into your daily drumming life. On behalf of the large team of talented people who helped me create *Great Hands For A Lifetime*, thank you for exploring with us.

Good luck and groove hard (with soft hands!),

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tommy Igoe". The signature is stylized with a long, sweeping horizontal line above the name.

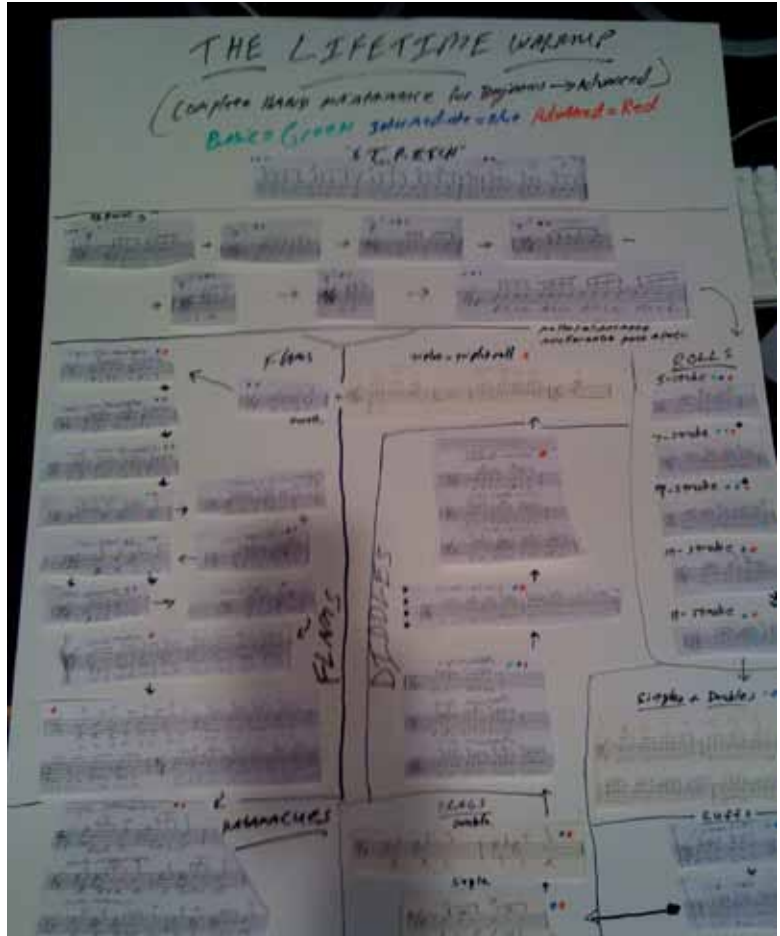
Tommy Igoe



A special nod of respect to my friend Rick Drumm. Rick called me back in 2002 (when he was president of Vic Firth) and said, "I have this idea for a groove poster." I said, "That's funny, I've been working a groove encyclopedia." He said, "I want it to be a poster of 'essential' grooves," and I said, "That's funny, the working title of my book is *The Essentials of Groove*." What came out of that five-minute conversation became *Groove Essentials* and everything that's associated with it.

Rick moved on and became the president of D'Addario. After he settled in and I joined the Evans team, it was time to get creative again. This time I called him and had this "pretty cool idea for a new kind of poster, but something completely different." He was pretty excited since he already knew the Lifetime Warmup. You see, Rick personally studied with my father back in the early 1970s, when he was just a kid himself! But he couldn't envision it on a poster and neither could I actually, but I didn't tell him that.

So I went to Staples and bought a piece of big white poster board (actually, 10 pieces, since I knew I was going to destroy at least seven of them), some colored sharpies, tape, and manuscript paper. I proceeded to write each element of the Lifetime out by hand and then cut them into little pieces, and this is what I presented to Rick:



It's funny to see this now, but I'm showing it to you because I think the Lifetime poster is going to become an important part of thousands of drummer's musical lives after the release of this DVD. I thought you might like to see where it all came from. I didn't have any idea of what I was doing, but I just started cutting and pasting, and after many failed attempts, the poster started to take shape. But it still looked pretty, um, homemade.

Rick, however, upon seeing my third-grade level arts and crafts project, saw what I envisioned. He saw the possibility of what it could be and what it could mean to so many drummers. He felt as frustrated as I did that more drummers didn't know this routine and thought a poster, coupled with a top-quality DVD, could be a vehicle to really make an impression. After that, the graphical talent of Jack Mansager made it into the final version that it was destined to become. I'd like to thank Rick for his vision and faith in me, and the whole team at D'Addario for putting their all into making an educational product we're all very proud of. Now go play!

# MP3s

Included on your DVD are 7 MP3s for you to practice the Lifetime Warmup. These will be indispensable on your iPod (or whatever device you listen to music on). You'll have all the versions of the Lifetime Warmup with you at all times! You can play with me, or you can play by yourself with only a click. Either way, you're going to have an amazing experience with these audio files as your drumming technique get stronger and healthier through the years to come. These files are located in the "MP3s" folder on your DVD. Here's what they will look like:

Title	File Name
Basic Lifetime Warmup with Tommy	BasicLW-Tommy.mp3
Basic Lifetime Warmup with click only	BasicLW-Click.mp3
Intermediate Lifetime Warmup with Tommy	IntermediateLW-Tommy.mp3
Intermediate Lifetime Warmup with click only	IntermediateLW-Click.mp3
Advanced Lifetime Warmup with Tommy	AdvancedLW-Tommy.mp3
Advanced Lifetime Warmup with click only	AdvancedLW-Click.mp3
5-minute Advanced Lifetime Warmup	5minAdvancedLW-Click.mp3

Just like *Groove Essentials*, these MP3s will be encoded so they will appear in iTunes (or whatever flavor of music/jukebox software you use) already titled and categorized by artist, album, category and genre. Just drag the files into your main window and they should import automatically (though you may need to do this manually through the file menu). Worst case, you'll have to label the files yourself in your audio software, but the important thing is to just get them in there so you can hear and play with them.

Needless to say, these MP3s will be useless to anyone who doesn't take the time to properly learn the execution and concept of the Lifetime Warmup from the DVD! Only after you watch our basic, intermediate and advanced group demonstrations will you be able to work with the MP3s. Note, unlike the 5-minute version, the MP3s of the basic, intermediate and advanced versions do not line up with the performance on the DVD. Rather, I designed these especially for individual practice, so don't try to play them with the DVD at the same time.

On each file I'll be calling out what to do, and there will also be a tambourine strike on the primary downbeats (or the "1s") so you know where to line up. Notice how the click doesn't change for the odd meters and just pulses quarters (like a real metronome). Also, the accelerando double stroke roll should be seamless and smooth with no audible breaks. Very challenging! Also, there's almost no coaching, since that was done on the DVD and it would be plain annoying to hear over and over in your phones. Hey, Have fun!



# WEB LINKS

Please check out the following websites for more about Tommy and the products he uses:

**Tommy's Website:**

<http://www.tommyigoe.com/>

**Tommy's Signature Stick from Vic Firth:**

<http://www.vicfirth.com/product/buynow/product.php?button=STI>

**Drum Workshop Drums:**

<http://www.dwdrums.com/>

**Zildjian Cymbals:**

<http://zildjian.com/EN-US/artists/artistDetail.ad2?artistID=1196>

**Evans Drumheads:**

<http://evansdrumheads.com/EvansArtistDrumsetsDetails.Page?ActiveID=2037&ArtistId=40043>

**Hudson Music:**

<http://www.hudsonmusic.com/hudson/products/groove-essentials-2-0-book/>

**Latin Percussion:**

[http://www.lpmusic.com/Pros\\_That\\_Play\\_LP/Players\\_Roster/igoe.htm](http://www.lpmusic.com/Pros_That_Play_LP/Players_Roster/igoe.htm)

**Rhythm Tech:**

<http://www.rhythmtech.com/>