

Grooving Flams

Drumming's Tongue Twisters

by Chet Doboe



Flams, flams, flams. Yes, flams can drive us drummers batty! It's a rudiment that seems so easy, and yet so difficult at times. And certainly, the real challenge with flams is to become fluent with incorporating them into the creative process.

It's no easy task to excel at mixing and matching flam patterns, which can often be our drumming version of tongue twisters. But the mission with flams is so much more than this technical challenge. Flams give us a creative choice for adding texture and color to our rhythmic stories. It's about making music. It just so happens that inserting flams into your creations can make performance way more difficult.

The following ten flam patterns are some of my personal favorites. I love the way each feels and grooves. Some of these might be "tongue twisters" at first. Go slowly, and make these patterns groove.

Incidentally, you may find it helpful to perform each pattern minus flams (playing all flams as accents). This will allow you to better key-in on the main storyline of the pattern, and will also allow you to digest what the flams contribute to each example.

By the way, these patterns can easily be applied to the drumkit. Some things to try: 1) Perform all of the flam patterns over the following bass drum patterns: quarter notes, half notes, and 2 and 4. 2) "Voice" your right hand on the hi-hat, and again apply the above kick patterns. 3) Move your right hand around the toms, leaving the left on the snare.

Chet Doboe is an acknowledged master of rudimental drumming. He leads the successful percussion group Hip Pickles.

1 R L R L R L R L L R L L R L

2 R R L R L L R L R R L R L L R L

3 R L R L R L R R L L R L L R L L

4 R R L L R L R R L L R L

5 R L R L L R L R L R R L L

6 R R L L R R L L R R L R L

7 R L R L R R L R L L R L R R L

8 R R L L R L L R R L R R L L R L

9 R R L R L L R L R R L R L L R L

10 R L R R L R L L R L R R L R L L

