

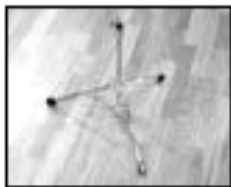
## Basic Snare Drum Technique

By Thom Hannum

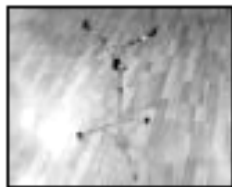
There are a number of effective methods for learning basic snare drum technique. So be open to suggestions and seek a teacher to help guide you through the fundamentals. Below are some guidelines to get you started. Have fun!

### Stand Assembly and Instrument Position

1. Spread the base of the stand far enough to create a stable platform.
2. Insert the top into the base of the stand.
3. Place the drum into the basket while avoiding contact with the snare strainer.
4. The drum should be at about waist level and slightly angled for your comfort.
5. Tighten all stand wing nuts.



Step 1



Step 2



Step 3



Step 4



Step 5

### Tuning and Stick Selection

Now it's time to tune the drum for the best possible sound. I recommend following the steps outlined in Tom Freer's Pearl article, *Basic Snare Drum Tuning*, which can be found at Pearl's website ([www.pearldrums.com](http://www.pearldrums.com)). Have your teacher help select snare sticks that work for you. Something equivalent to a 2B or a 5B usually works fine. The balance point is 1/3 of the way up from the butt end of the stick. Grip the stick near this point for the best response and bounce.

### Grip Guidelines and Posture

Learning to hold the sticks properly is essential for improving technique. Use the photos as a guide and make sure to memorize the feel of the following guidelines: #1 Fulcrum (thumb and first two fingers), #2 Finger contact (comfortably wrap all fingers around the stick; not too tight), #3 Bead placement (as close together as possible for an even sound) and then striking area (center of the drum head), #4 Wrist motion (down position and up position).



#1 Fulcrum



#2 Finger Contact



#3 Bead Placement



#4 Down Position



#4 Up Position

Stand with your legs slightly separated and your arms resting comfortably by your side. The drum should be at waist level. Put your hands in the playing position with the sticks in the center of the drum head. Your shoulders, arms, and hands should remain relaxed.

### Stroke Motion, Rebounds, and Stick Heights

- Make sure the bead of the stick goes straight up and down. Try your best to land in the same spot on the drumhead with each stroke. No slicing motions!
- Relax your fingers, hands, and arms so the stick will bounce.
- Change stick heights to help control dynamics.

Here are the basic strokes you'll need to learn one by one:

**Full Stroke**  
(start in up position)  
(end in up position)



**Down Stroke**  
(start in up position)  
(end in down position)



**Tap Stroke**  
(start in down position)  
(end in down position)



**Up Stroke**  
(start in down position)  
(end in up position)



Now combine these strokes into one exercise. F-D-T-U See example #1 below.

**Multiple Bounce**

Play a down stroke and let the stick bounce freely as many times as possible. Practice this with the right and left hand. Now you have the basics to play a multiple bounce, or buzz roll.

**Flams**

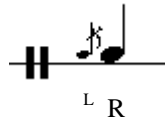
A flam consists of an up stroke in one hand while playing a down stroke in the other.

Play the upstroke just before the down stroke. See example #2 below.

As you play make sure to review and maintain the grip guidelines.

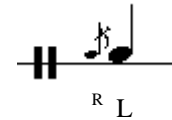
Right Flam

Play an up stroke in your left hand and a down stroke in your right hand



Left Flam

Play an up stroke in your right hand and a down stroke in your left hand



Single-double-triple beats

Use full strokes and make your feel the natural rebound of the stick. Go slow at first. Then gradually speed up the tempo. See examples #3 - #5 below.

<p><b>#1 FDTU</b></p> <p>FULL DOWN TAP UP FULL DOWN TAP UP R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L</p>	<p><b>#2 FLAMS</b></p> <p>L R R L L R R L L R R L L R R</p>
<p><b>#3 SINGLE INDEPENDENT</b></p> <p>R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L</p>	<p><b>SINGLE HANDS TOGETHER</b></p> <p>R L R L R L R L R L R L R L</p>
<p><b>#4 DOUBLE INDEPENDENT</b></p> <p>R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L</p>	<p><b>DOUBLE HANDS TOGETHER</b></p> <p>R R L L R R L L R R L L R R L L</p>
<p><b>#5 TRIPLE INDEPENDENT</b></p> <p>R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L</p>	<p><b>TRIPLE HANDS TOGETHER</b></p> <p>R R R L L L R R R L L L</p>

## Percussive Arts Society Rudiment Sheet

Any good snare drummer has a knowledge of the 40 International Drum Rudiments. These patterns use all the basic strokes plus single, double, and triple beats and are a great way to improve stick control and expand your musical vocabulary for solos. Download a copy from the Pearl website and get practicing.

## Music Reading

Reading music is very important for your development as a musician. See your teacher to supplement your practice with reading excerpts. I suggest looking at the Rhythmic Building Blocks segment of my article, *Building Your Rhythmic Vocabulary*, which is available on the Pearl website.

## Practice Tips

Here s a few simple reminders for making your practice more effective:

- Go slow at first, then gradually increase tempo. Stay relaxed.
- Always review and maintain the grip guidelines and posture.
- Practice dynamics.
- Use a Pearl practice pad.
- Play along to a recording of your favorite music. It develops your timing and makes it fun!



### **THOM HANNUM**

Thom Hannum is regarded as one of the nation's foremost percussion clinicians having presented numerous seminars and workshops throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, and Southeast Asia. He is best known for his work with the DCI World Champion Cadets of Bergen County and Star of Indiana. Thom is a member of the design team for Star of Indiana's Tony Award Winning production entitled "BLAST!"

Mr. Hannum has developed an outstanding percussion program at the University of Massachusetts where he serves as the Associate Director of the Minuteman Marching Band. He is a product consultant and clinician for the Avedis Zildjian Cymbal Company, Evans Drumheads, Vic Firth Sticks and Mallets, and the Pearl Corporation. He is an active member of the Percussive Arts Society and the President of the Massachusetts PAS Chapter.

Through the Hal Leonard Corporation, Mr. Hannum has published a Textbook and corresponding Student Workbook, *Championship Concepts For Marching Percussion*, which provide many band programs with a comprehensive foundation for percussion education. His instructional video produced by Warner Brothers/Chappell, *Fundamental Techniques For Marching Percussion*, demonstrates many of the concepts outlined in the books.

Thom is the founder and director of his MOBILE PERCUSSION SEMINAR which offers clinic and workshop programs for high schools and colleges of all ability levels. For more information call 1-800-292-3758 or visit the website at [www.percussion.org](http://www.percussion.org).

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