



INCLUDES AUDIO & VIDEO!

BY KENNAN WYLIE WITH GREGG BISSONETTE

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7777 W. BLUEMOUND RD. P.O. BOX 13819 MILWAUKEE, WI 53213

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In Australia Contact:
Hal Leonard Australia Pty. Ltd.
4 Lentara Court
Cheltenham, Victoria, 3192 Australia
Email: ausadmin@halleonard.com.au

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INTRODUCTION

This book is designed to help the beginning drummer develop hand and foot technique, read music, play basic rock beats and fills, develop coordination and independence, play basic jazz patterns, and much more. Basic drumming exercises are included, as well as audio demonstration and play-along tracks, plus video lessons.

ABOUT THE AUDIO AND VIDEO

Each main exercise and song in this book includes two audio tracks:

1. A **demonstration track** that includes the notated drum part so you can hear how the example is supposed to sound.
2. A **play-along track** of the same example *without* the drums, so you can practice it along with the backing instruments.

The audio tracks for each exercise continue on a loop for approximately three minutes so you have plenty of time to listen or play along. When there are multiple lines within one exercise, the band will continue playing through them without any breaks.

Video lessons are also included, featuring drum master Gregg Bissonette! Gregg will demonstrate introductory concepts, song examples, and techniques throughout the book.

Examples including audio and/or video are marked with icons throughout:



HOW TO PRACTICE

1. **Go Slowly:** Learn new beats and stickings at a slow tempo.
2. **Use a Metronome:** Always use a metronome to reinforce good time-keeping.
3. **Be Repetitive:** Each line should be repeated up to 10 times, at a minimum, to develop muscle memory.
4. **Stay Relaxed:** Avoid tension in the grip, the feet, and the body.
5. **Record Yourself:** Record yourself playing and self-evaluate what you hear.

SETTING UP YOUR DRUMSET

The drumset is a very personalized instrument to arrange. What works for one drummer may not exactly work for the next drummer. The bigger the drumset does *not* mean the better the drummer. The most important thing to remember is to use the right equipment for the style of music you are playing. However, there are some common approaches that all drummers share when arranging their drumset.

Throne (Stool)

Proper positioning of the drum throne can have a great effect on the drummer's balance, as well as foot technique. Both the height and distance from the drums can impact the drummer's performance. Some players sit with their legs almost parallel to the floor while others keep their legs slightly above parallel to the floor with the heels just below the knees. Your feet should feel comfortable on the pedals. The drummer should experiment until maximum relaxation and efficiency is achieved. Avoid using chairs or stools that do not adjust.



Snare Drum

The snare drum should be positioned in a way that does not interfere with the proper alignment of the forearms and hands. Matched grip players (see "Grips and Strokes" on page 8) usually keep the snare drum flat, while traditional grip players might use a slight downward tilt. The snare drum should stay a few inches above knee level.

Bass Drum/Hi-Hat

After the snare drum is set up between your legs, the bass drum and hi-hat pedals can be placed on the floor. The bass drum should be positioned just below, or in front of, your knee. The hi-hat pedal should be within easy reach of your hi-hat playing foot (typically the left foot). Once a relaxed position has been set with the feet over the pedals, you can now slide the bass drum in to fit your setup. Some drummers may choose to start with the foot pedals and bass drum first, adding the snare after. The primary goal is to set things up consistently for a relaxed playing position.





GRIPS AND STROKES

MATCHED GRIP

Of the two main grips, **matched grip** is the more basic. The right and left hand should look and move identically.

- Place the stick in between the thumb and index finger, about four to five inches from the butt end of the stick. The pivot point between the index finger and the thumb is referred to as the **fulcrum** (left photo below). Another option is to have the fulcrum between the middle finger and thumb (right photo below) for more of a loose feel. This very important part of the grip is responsible for control. It needs to be quite secure. Try marking this point with a piece of tape or a felt pen.
- Keep the thumbs on the side of the stick.
- Keep the tip of the index fingers curved slightly around the stick and not pointed. This will help control.
- Keep the back fingers resting gently on the stick. Avoid hanging them in the air. Also avoid grasping the stick too tightly with the fingers. The stick will not be able to move freely when it needs to (especially when rebounding).
- Where you grip as well as *how* you grip the stick can affect the tone production. Squeezing the stick can “choke” the sound. On the other hand, gripping too loosely can cause control problems.



BASS DRUM TECHNIQUE

The bass drum is commonly referred to as the **kick drum**. It is struck with a bass drum pedal that is played with the foot. The bass drum beater is usually made of hard felt or wood. The spring tension should be set so the beater does not contact the head when the foot is resting on the pedal. The tighter the tension, the faster and stronger the rebound will be from the pedal. Heel down and heel up are the two basic methods for playing the kick:

Heel Down

This technique is usually for more low-end volume. The heel is down with the foot flat on the pedal. The foot returns immediately to the “up” position.



Heel Up

This technique is used for more high-end volume and can give more power. Simply lift the heel up and use just the ball of the foot to press the pedal. The foot returns immediately to the “up” position. This is useful for playing multiple strokes on the bass drum.

Open Tone

An **open tone** is created when the beater is allowed to rebound off the bass drumhead. This produces more of a resonant bass drum sound.



Closed Tone

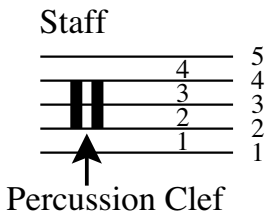
A **closed tone** is created when the beater sticks (or is “buried”) into the bass drumhead. This produces more of a punchy and dry bass drum sound.

Open and closed tone sounds are utilized by most drummers from time to time. The tuning of your drum and style of music you are playing may also help determine what type of sound is needed.

LESSON 2: MUSIC READING BASICS

QUICK TIP – Counting aloud is one of the best ways for a drummer to learn how to internalize tempo and rhythm. If you can't say it, you can't play it!

First, let's look at some basic musical terms:



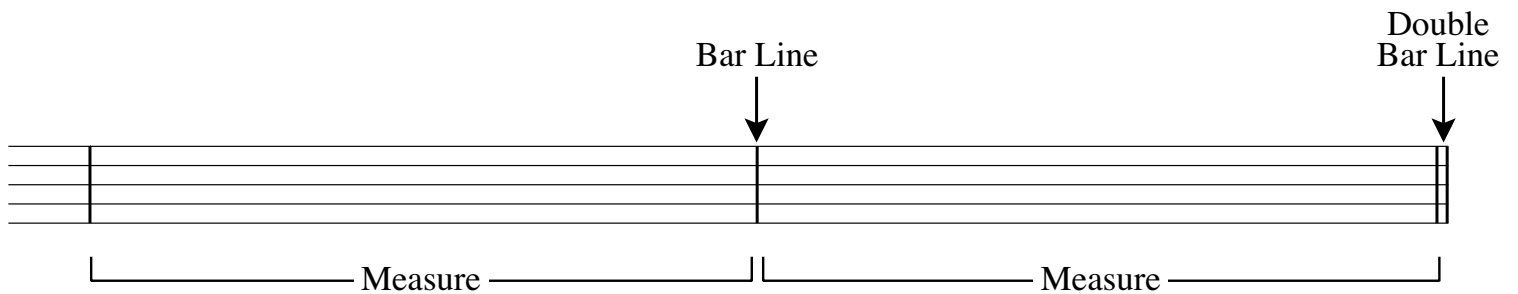
Staff – Made up of 5 lines and 4 spaces, counted from the bottom to the top

Percussion Clef – Denotes music of indefinite pitch

Bar Lines – Divide the staff into measures

Measures (or bars) – The space between bar lines

Double Bar Lines – Mark the end of a section



For drumset playing, each line and each space on the staff represents a different drum or cymbal. Using the staff below, see if you can find the different parts of the drumset.

