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About the Video

All of the lessons are numbered the same both in the book and on the video file names. Note: Steve’s Pathways of Motion Drum Guru packs (which contain the same material) are also numbered the same way.

The video files are available for download to your computer/device by visiting www.halleonard.com/mylibrary and entering the following code:

3003-2584-3080-3416

DRUM SETUP

When I set up my drumset, I want to be sitting in a way that I'm as comfortable and centered as I can possibly be. I start by adjusting my seat height. I've found over the years, especially having some back issues years ago, I've been able to solve those by having my hip slightly above my knee with a slight incline of the thighs. Then I sit in such a way where my feet are relaxed and comfortable, and they fall into this natural position.



I keep the center of my knee aligned with my second toe. This is something I learned from studying yoga for some years. This way, I can easily work my feet and ankles and not hurt them.

The next thing that I'll do is, now that I know exactly where I'm going to be sitting, is adjust my double pedal. I adjust it so the heel plates are aligned, and if I'm using a single pedal and a hi-hat, I'll adjust the hi-hat and the bass drum pedal so the heel plates are aligned. But, since I prefer the double pedal, I'll be using that today. I place the bar that joins the left pedal to the right pedal very close to the bass drum, so those heel plates are lined up. And then I adjust the hi-hat so it's as close as it can be to that second bass drum pedal. So you'll see when I sit down, I'm in a very comfortable, relaxed, and natural position with the feet.





As far as the snare drum, I sit with the shoulders down—the shoulder blades relaxed down the back; hold the sticks with the elbows in; and allow the tips of the sticks to descend with a slight angle, and the spot in which my stick tips naturally fall is where the top of the snare drum head is going to go. So, we'll put the snare drum in place. Sit at the pedals. And we're in a very comfortable playing position to get started.



Now I've noticed that some people may not be comfortable with the hi-hat where I have it, and sometimes they may pull the hi-hat stand over closer. But I'm very comfortable now playing the hi-hat exactly where it falls, adjusting it first with my feet—because if I pull it over, it could throw me off into an unnatural position where my left foot would be out of alignment with the right foot. This could actually throw me off to be uncentered and possibly cause some injury down the road.



So I leave the kit set up like this and make the adjustments so I can play comfortably from this setup. And, for me, now, this feels very relaxed and natural.



DRUM SETUP



Steve Smith

PACK 1

FOUR VERSIONS OF MATCHED GRIP





Introduction

A few years ago, I made the decision to start developing my matched grip technique. I had been playing traditional grip for many years and, after years of playing, spending hours practicing, I developed a bit of a problem with my CMC joint in the cartilage there. So I found that if I spent some time developing the matched grip, I could give my traditional grip a break on the gig and then split up the playing between traditional grip and matched grip. It's an interesting process for me to get serious about matched grip because I had played matched grip before, but never really got into the details of how to develop the technique.

The first thing that I noticed is that my little finger and ring finger were not very developed. And, as I played in traditional grip, I started to notice more about what it was that made my right hand feel comfortable and have a high degree of technical development. As I focused on that, I did notice a lot of that development came from the finesse from the motions that my entire arm uses, from the shoulder, to the elbow, to the forearm, to the wrist, to the fingers and down—but specifically the ring finger and the little finger. So I started to use my right hand to instruct my left hand. And, really, one of the first places I started was the ride beat because I realized that that jazz ride beat that I had been playing for fifty years has really helped smooth out and develop my right hand to have a high degree of technique. So I started playing that jazz ride beat with the left hand, and we'll get into that in this program, and that was a helpful tool, to help me develop technique and symmetry between the hands.

But a key, like I said before, is this focus on the little finger. I noticed that if I focused on the little finger, it really was what controlled the opening and closing of the hand and, when we play the drums, we want to be very fluid with opening and closing of the hand and not have the hand be static and just holding the stick in a grip that's tense, but we want to have a nice relaxed, loose grip where the hand freely opens and closes and that you have a lot of freedom with the movement of the fingers. And the fingers, quite naturally, follow the lead of the little finger. So we'll get into some of that detail. But, even now, try this idea of opening and closing the hand. If you contract the little finger, the other fingers naturally follow. It's not the case if you contract the other fingers. They all act quite independently pretty easily. But that little finger, if I hold my hand in that position and contract the little finger, it closes the hand.

These are some of the motions that we're going to be using in order to play in a very relaxed and smooth style that, for me, I call the "drumset style." And my playing is adapted to the drumset; it's not a military style or a drum corps style. It's a drumset style. Even though I'm using rudiments, and all the traditional vocabulary coming from rudimental playing, I'm adapting it to the drumset. So my technique has adapted so I can play the drumset with a very relaxed approach.

Here is an example of some improvised matched-grip playing.

The image shows a page of musical notation for guitar, consisting of two systems of music, each with six staves. The notation is complex, featuring rhythmic patterns, fingerings, and dynamic markings. The second system includes specific rhythmic patterns written out as letters: R L R L, L R L R R L R L R L R r L R L I R r L R L I R L R r L R L I R R r L L I R R r L L, I R L R r L R L I R R r L L R r L L I R R L I R L R r L R L R L R L L L R L R R L, R L L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L L R L R L, and B L L R L R R L R L L R L R R L R L R L.