



THE PRACTICE BOOK






Welcome to the “4 ways” practice book! “4 ways” is a term that refers to drumming which utilises both hands and feet. The purpose of this method is to submerge the player in the technical aspect of the drums, therefore ingraining the exercises so that they become second nature. This results in freeing the player to be more creative and intuitive in any musical situation, and allowing them to focus on **THE MUSIC** (the groove, sound, interaction, time, tempo...).

For each exercise the following method is used:

- the MIRROR technique, utilizing the opposite hand to repeat the same exercise.
- Work on all the subdivisions from 2 to 8 (and potentially 9, 10, 11...).
- Several playing suggestions for the feet: ostinatos, overlapping with one hand, keep time, etc...

 **important** : every section has its own roadmap  which you can refer in order to complete all variations of the exercises.

For example  6 refers to the roadmap No. 6.

This icon  is used for the feet ostinatos and this  for the sticking and accents variations. This icon  is used for voicing the exercises around the kit.

Feel free to write on the book to note the date, the tempo (your comfortable tempo and your maximum tempo) to see how you're progressing with the course.

Be creative within the structure of the course, create your own patterns, breaks, phrases and voicings....

In the 'ideas, inspiration' section, there are creative techniques to help you further expand your vocabulary and inspire you to greater musical heights.

Good work, your rhythm is the good one!



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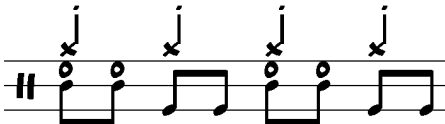

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Nomenclature :


Hands: Right:  Left: 

Snare drum: 

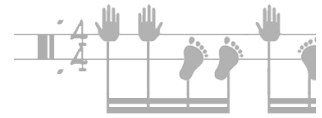
Snare drum: 
Bass drum: 

Cymbal > 
Hi-Hat pedal > 

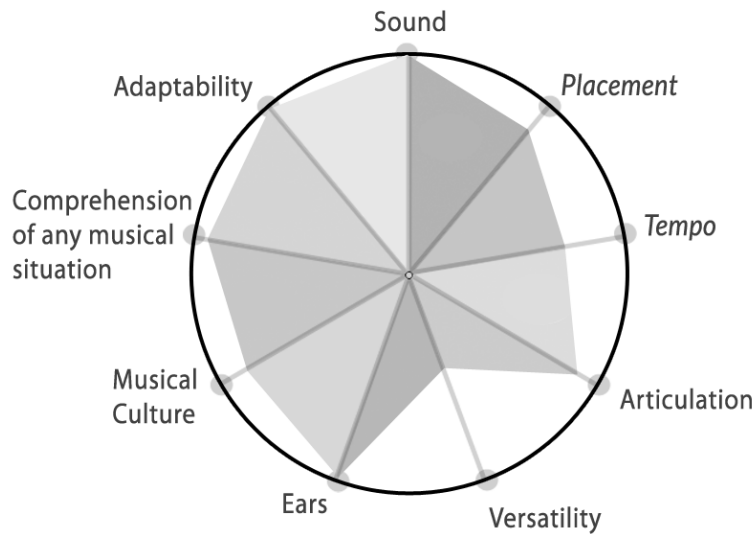
Notation of a sticking:  feet: 

Notation of the roadmap for a group of exercises: 

Introduction



Let's start by looking at the qualities that will help you to be a complete drummer and how we can improve on them:



The first thing to do is to position yourself: to 'self-evaluate' yourself in each of these qualities. This gives you a place to start based on what needs to be improved.

There are three tools that will enable you to organize your work:

- **BODY MECHANICS** - this refers to your general technique including movement, independence and coordination. *Do not confuse hand technique and drumming technique. The second one is more global, it includes the movement, the independence, the coordination...*
- **MUSICAL MECHANICS** - this refers to the sound, accuracy, perception of tempo, musical vocabulary and your capacity to create phrases which enhance the music...
- The balance between the two is organized by the **THOUGHT** : your taste, your perception, the interaction with other musicians, your ability to be creative and musical in any situation is affected by your technique so this needs to be worked on in tandem with the creative aspect in order to be a complete drummer.

General principle - organization of your practice sessions:

Technique - The aim is to complete daily exercises to create a solid, reliable foundation on which to build.

Creativity - This is a wider view in which you listen and analyse recordings alongside research into the origins and culture of musical styles. The goal is to have a greater understanding of the rhythmical structure and logic that gives each genre its own identity.

Plan your practice based on the long term goal of where you want to be with your playing. From this you can build daily practice sessions which will cover all aspects needed to reach that goal. After your daily warmup, make sure to vary your technical sessions.

Example: Every day: Warm-up / Technical Module / Independence Module / Tempo Work... then alternate each day the following modules: Styles / Phrase / Solo work / Odd measures, etc...



Body Mechanics :

Practice :

Think

Tempo

Work with a metronome (accent the down beat, the up beat, sing the subdivisions as you play eighth notes, sixteenth notes and so on), play a groove consistently for 10 mins, vary the tempos between 30-330bpm and vary the meters from 4/4 to 7/4, 5/4, 3/4 etc....

Technique

Hand Technique : how you hold the sticks, positioning of the hands. Rudiments: sing the subdivisions as you practice your rudiments and don't forget to vary the exercises! Be creative by playing rudiments on the pad, snare drum, bass AND snare drum either in unison or separated into parts.

Warm up

Without Sticks: stretch and flex wrists, forearms, arms and shoulders. WITH sticks : flex your wrists and fingers. Also experiment with different foot positions to achieve a comfortable, natural posture.

Coordination

With any snare exercise introduce the feet to replace or double the accents (as shown in "Drumbook")to develop coordination / Change meter often (4/4, 3/4, 5/4, 7/8, 5/8 ...)

Orchestration

With any snare exercise using either (or both) sticking and/or coordination explore the entire set with the patterns. This will develop your orchestral sensibility and range of sounds available to you.

Independence

Work on different combinations; see our Drumbook

Dynamics

exaggerate both the soft and loud strokes and familiarise yourself with *pp*, *p*, *mp*, *f*, *ff*...

Ergonomics / Posture

Watch as many of the masters as possible to incorporate good habits in how you sit and position your shoulders, hips and knees. Everyone's body shape is different so adapt what you can learn for your shape by watching great players with a similar build to yourself.

Breathing

As you play learn to breathe correctly to maintain a calm, relaxed state which is essential to executing technically difficult material.

Independence/Vocalizing

Get into the habit of vocalizing the rhythms, melody and subdivisions as you play. This will help you to realize your musical ideas and clarify what you need to work on in a more concrete way (see Drumbook)

important :

- Do not always work at the same tempo: vary the tempo from 30 to 300 bpm ...
- Do not always work in 4/4: vary the meter!



Musical Mechanics :

Groove

The most important part of a drummer's skillset is his/her ability to play consistently on a groove in a way that feels good. Train yourself to be critical of what is working and what isn't and adjust accordingly in real time. One of the best ways to achieve this is record yourself and listen back with a keen and critical ear to ascertain what you need to work on.

Sound / Physical and hardware settings

Work on setting up the kit in your own personal way; don't be afraid to experiment! Try different snares, cymbals and toms, types of skins, hardware and stick size. Also position the drums closer or further away from you until you find the setup that is most effective for you.

Time / Pulse / Placement

Work on where you place the beat in relation to the metronome. Experiment with playing on, in front and behind the beat and see what effect that creates in the music. Experiment with playing « metronomically » and « elastically » as in jazz and ethnic music.

Style

Learn the basics of several different styles. What's the underlying structure involved and see where it comes from culturally. Even the most rudimentary study of this will help your sound and ability to play a style with authenticity.

Phrasing

Play musical phrases. First simply build a phrase as in speaking, using only the snare drum and then develop it by including the whole kit. Try to invent phrases with a musical meaning (silence, dynamics, repetition, question / answer).

Cycles

In a typical practice session try playing straight time for 3 bars and fill for 1 bar. Move on to 2 bars of time and 2 bars of a fill and so on...

Polyrhythms

Try to hear simple polyrhythms, play / sing them without instruments, then to apply them on the pad, then play them on the drums as grooves and as "phrases" (fills).

Odd time signatures:

3/4, 5/4, 7/8 etc... Count, play on the pad, grooves, fills...

Resolution points:

Play grooves and fills that resolve on a given beat every 2 or 4 bars. Next, change this resolution point; try to resolve on different places...

Reading

Work on your reading of rhythms and/or melodies. Use rhythmic texts to play « anything ».

Play on music:

Before playing a piece pay attention to the tempo, stylistic aspects (like the sound of the snare or cymbals), the feel of that particular groove and what vocabulary you need to be familiar in regards to filling..

Solo work / Improvisation

Depending on the style and context, take as a starting point different grooves and atmospheres (free solo, solo on a piece structure, solo on rhythmic accents, solo on ostinato).



Thought / Musical Mind :

Creativity

You can be creative even with the simplest phrases. The more you build up your arsenal of phrases, the more creative and personal sounding player you will become. The best drummers find a balance between being a player who embraces the supporting role and being a player with a creative spirit who can drive the band to greater musical heights.

Intuition/Intention

HOW you play everything creates a feeling which is important to the music. Playing with intensity and concentration on the music at the moment is an important lesson. Everything you practiced and analyzed is necessary to create the foundation. However in the performance you want to be free to express your musical vision in a singular way and not be caught up in technical aspects (which should only be addressed in practice sessions).

Role

Understand and become aware of your role according to the STYLE and the MOMENT. Know what is expected from the drummer depending on the given moment. Support a song. Support the arrangement (hits, transitions ...). Interact OR NOT with soloists. Understanding and choosing your role is crucial.

Taste / Listening / Culture / Curiosity

Listen and try to develop your awareness of the style and how this translates on your instrument. Taste is tied to function and style. Have a 'curiosity' notebook (note names of artists, pieces, drummers, note your weak points...), this notebook is the source that feeds your ideas of work. Take note of musician names, groups, solos, grooves, fingering, try to understand the principles used by the drummers...

Inspiration / Exploration / Ideas:

Develop your ideas, listen to many styles, adapt ideas from other styles and include them in your playing. Draw inspiration from the rhythmic vocabulary of other instrumentalists (Bill Evans, Brad Mehldau ...). Everything can be inspiration. Even something you do not like can be transformed into a constructive idea.

Mistake / Ego

Everything you play must be motivated by a musical idea. Do not play for the drummers ('play for the singer' or 'play for the bassist', for the song etc...). The ego must remain that force which keeps you from playing everything you can. You don't have anything to prove to anyone, there is just music to deliver.

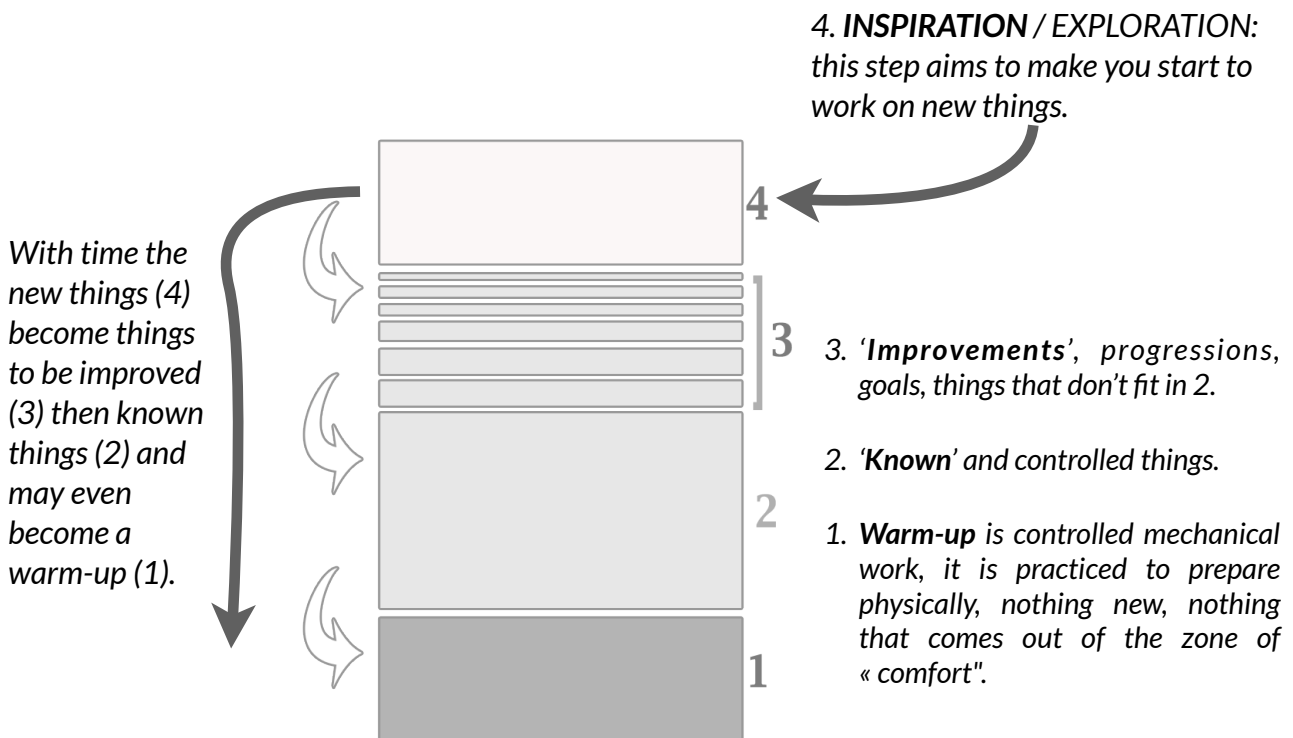
Internalize

Internalize the work done, internalize the music played, the repertoire, the structures, the transitions. This will make you 'sound natural'.

Interaction / Musicality

Adapt to the general discourse, adapt to the general volume of sound, adapt the nuances. Know how to be a true accompanist but also a force of proposition. Think about the silences. Do not play with the band that is in your head, but with the band you are actually playing with!

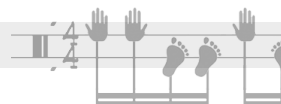
Construction and content (to be seen from the bottom up. The bottom is the foundation, and the session is building towards the top):



- Have a list of essential things to work on (**Body mechanics, Musical mechanics and Musical reflection**).
- Be able to feed your level of inspiration ... For example, have a 'notebook of inspiration' that allows you to note ideas at anytime ... Listen to new things, have a teacher, be curious. It is this 'bubble of air' that will make your engine progress! Be careful not to have too many inspirations at the same time. It is good to focus on a novelty for a certain period, to try to assimilate it, then the next, etc ...



I. Simple Sticking

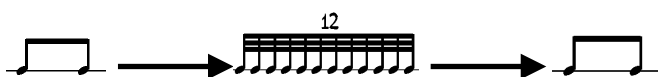


Road map 1:

For exercises 1>2

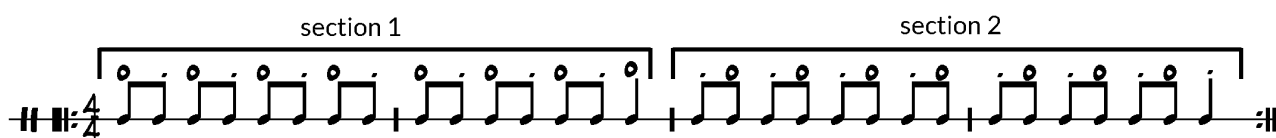
• A. Subdivision:

Explore subdivisions: 2, 3, 4.... To 12, then backwards : 12, 11, 10, 9... 2.



• B. Mirror:

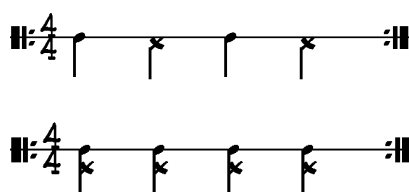
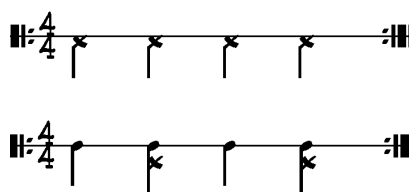
Use the « mirror » sticking (start with the opposite hand)



• C. 🖐️ Accents:

1. No accents
2. Accent every down beat
3. Accent every right hand stroke
4. Accent every left hand stroke

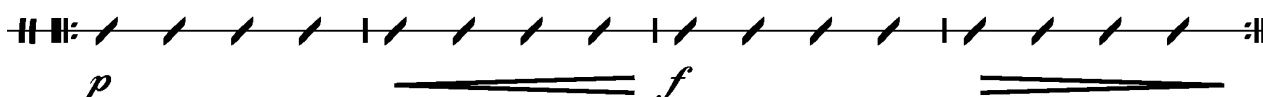
• D. 🦶 Feet:



• E. Tempo:

♩ = 50 ♪ = 60 ♩ = 70

• F. Dynamics:





1. Alternate stroke

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