

Teaching Young Percussionists

Fundamentals for your beginners

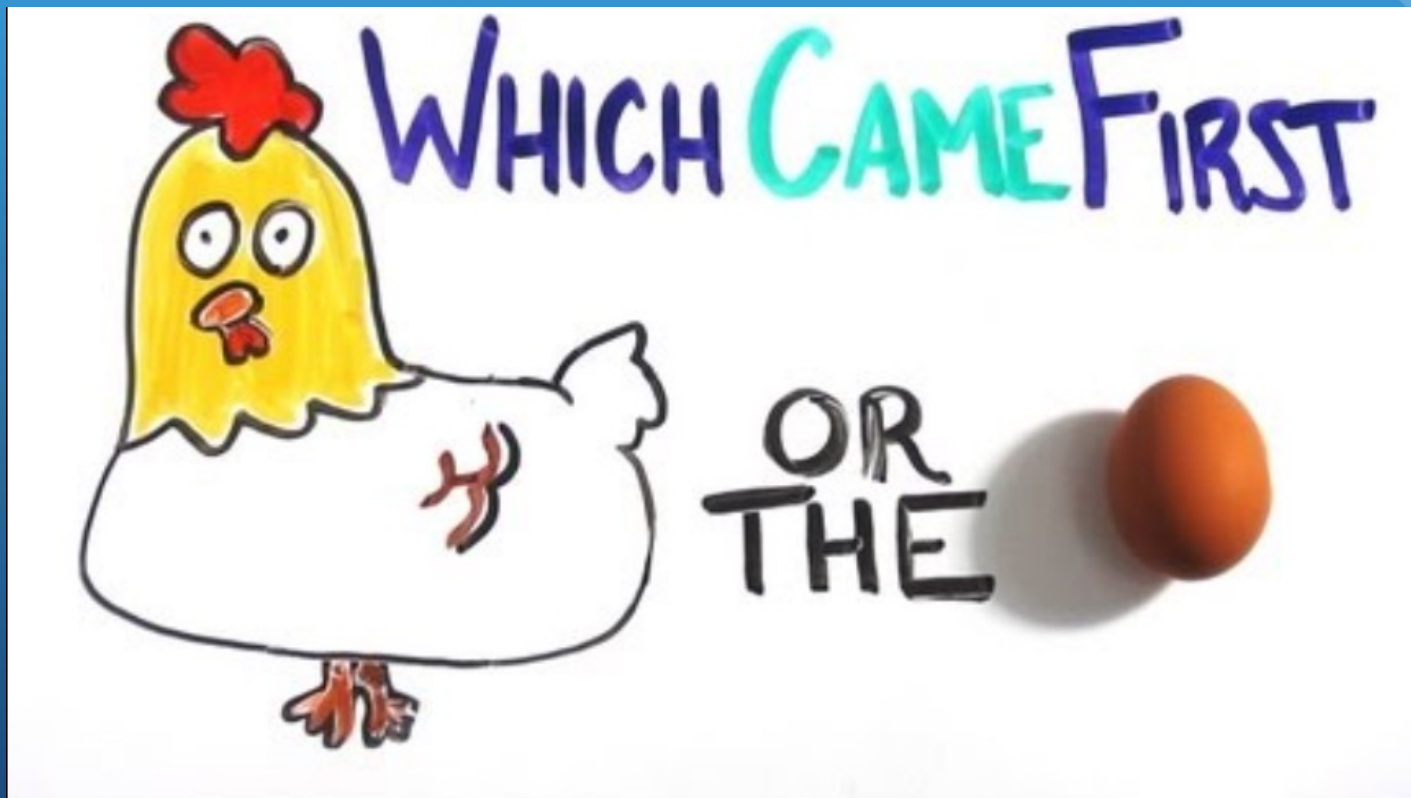
Dr. David Wolf

March 1-2, 2022

Massachusetts Music Educators Association

All-State Conference

The big debate in beginning percussion



Topics to discuss

- Snare Drum
 - Grip & Set Up
 - Equipment
 - Stroke Concepts
- Mallet Percussion
 - Grip & Set up
 - Equipment
 - Reading

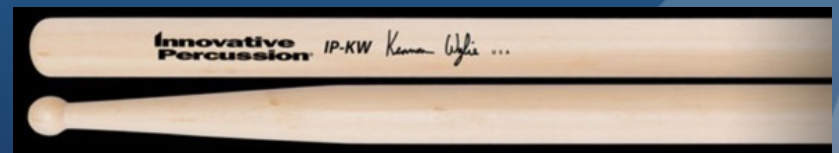


Snare Drum

- Equipment
- Grip
- Development of basic stroke
- Concept of sound
- Stroke Types
- Roll Base

- The challenge of being able to produce an acceptable sound immediately

Equipment

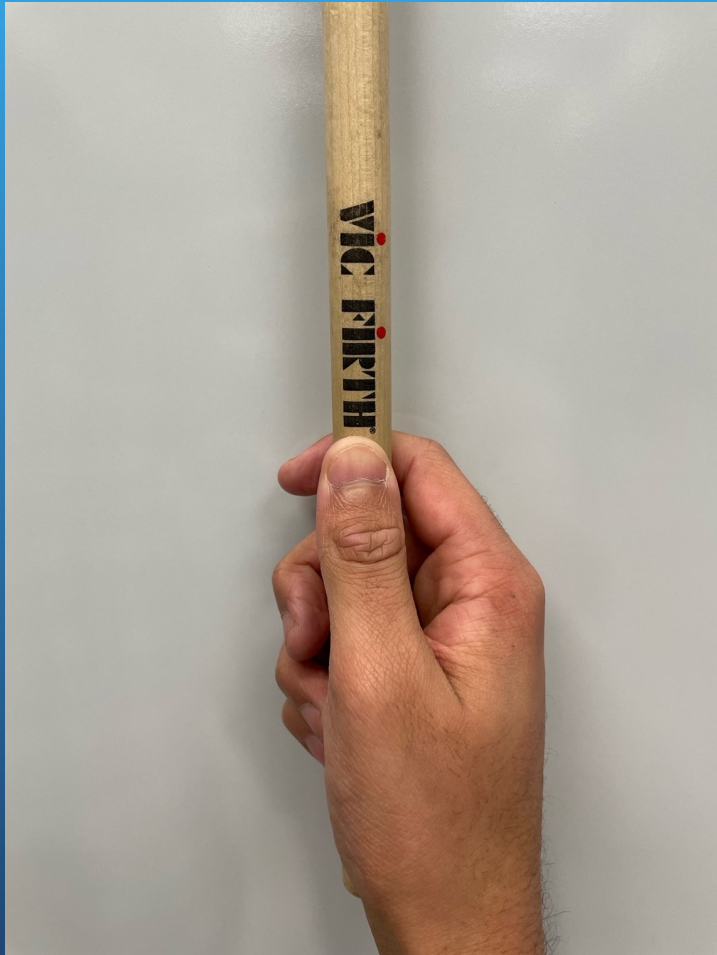


Snare Drum Grip

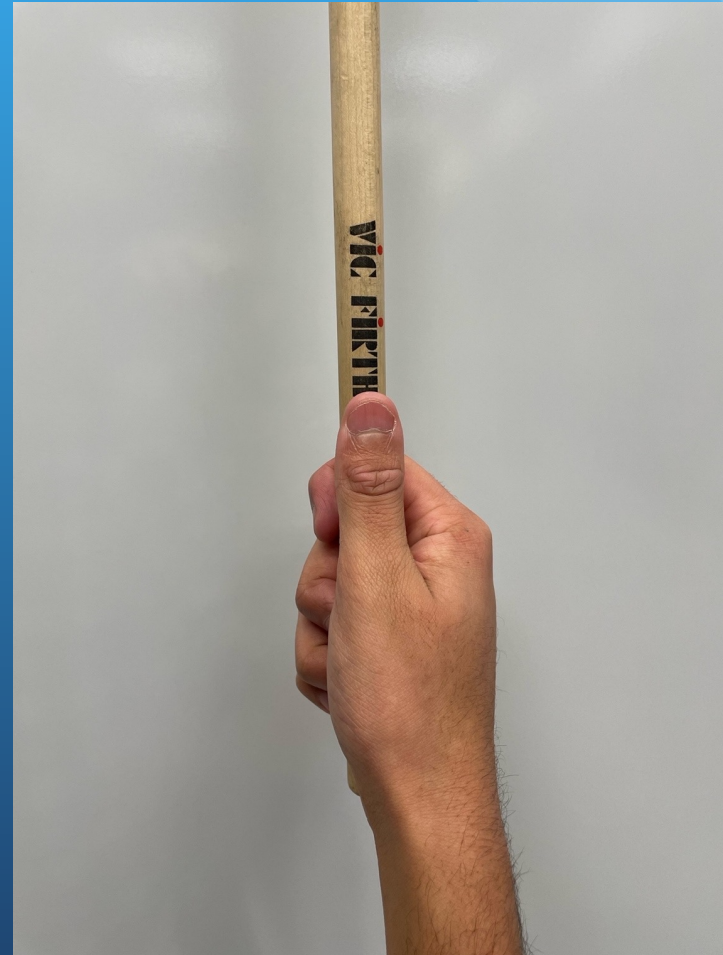


Snare Drum Grip

Capital T



Lowercase t



Snare Drum Grip

Capital T



Lowercase t





Proper fulcrum location

- Approximately $\frac{1}{3}$ of the way up the drumstick
- When playing the stroke, the stick should freely bounce back up
- Fulcrum location experiment - only hold with fulcrum
 - Too far back (all the way at the butt end)
 - Too far up ($\frac{1}{2}$ way)
 - Proper position ($\frac{1}{3}$ from butt end)

Things to watch out for!



Stick leaving back of hand near knuckles or under fingers.

Things to watch out for!



Thumb not completely
in-line with stick.



Things to watch out for!



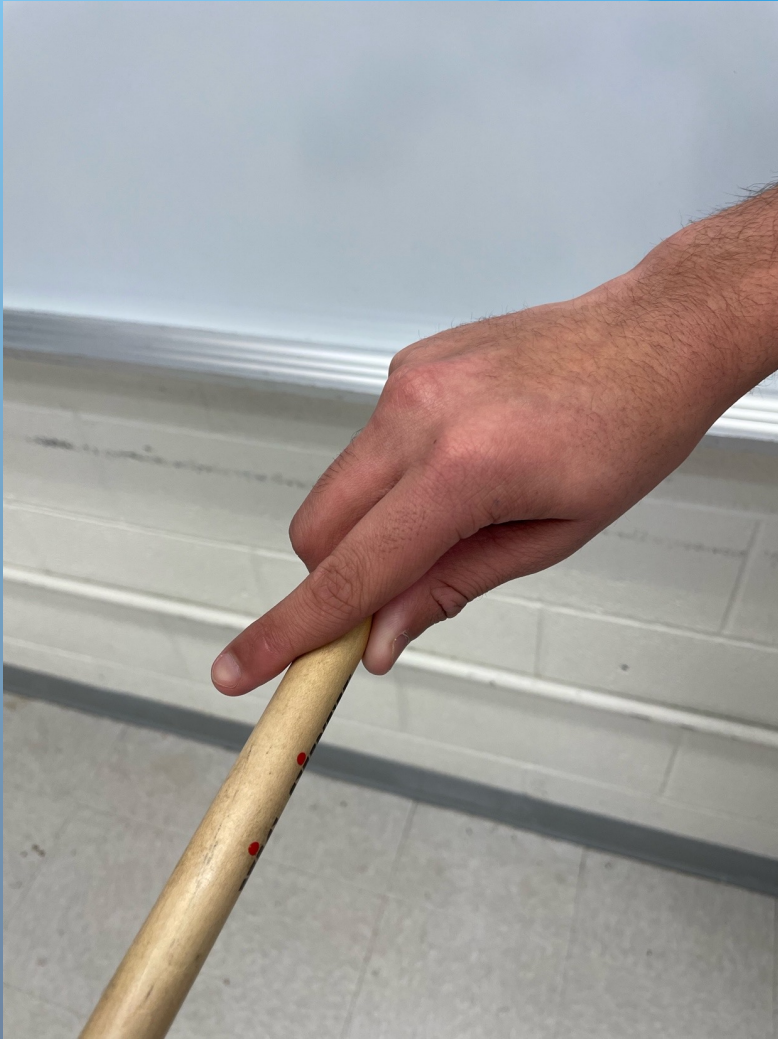
Thumb tip on stick.

Things to watch out for!



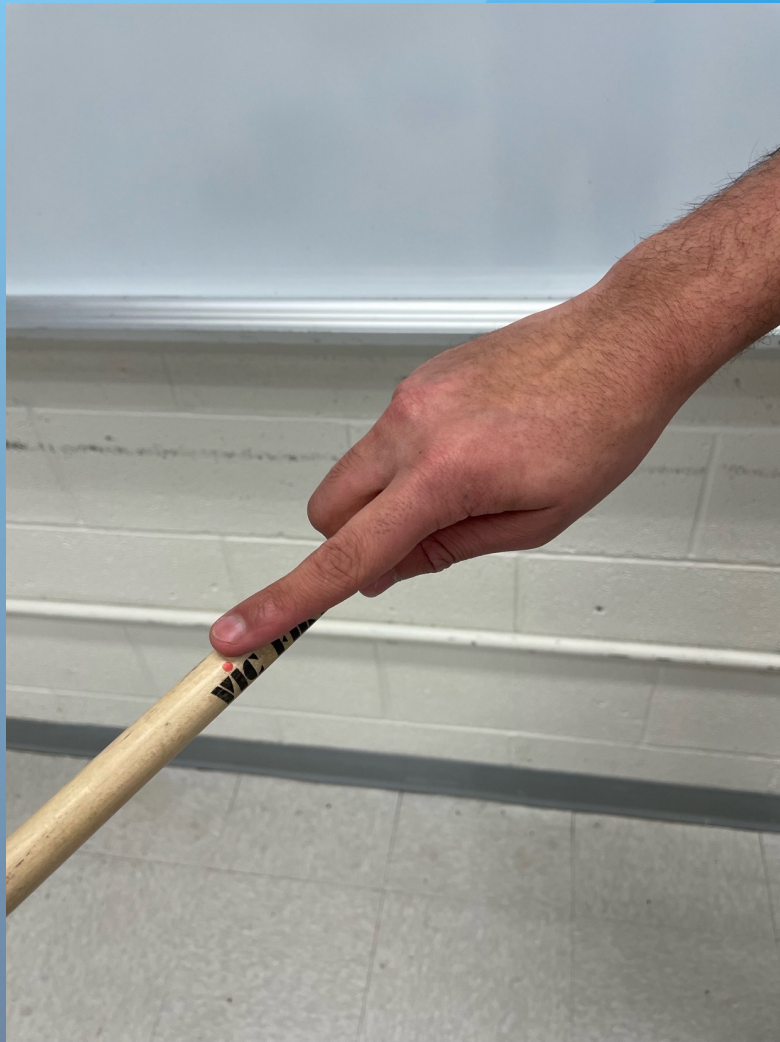
Index finger wrapped
to far around stick
and on 2nd joint.

Things to watch out for!



Index finger
extended.

Things to watch out for!

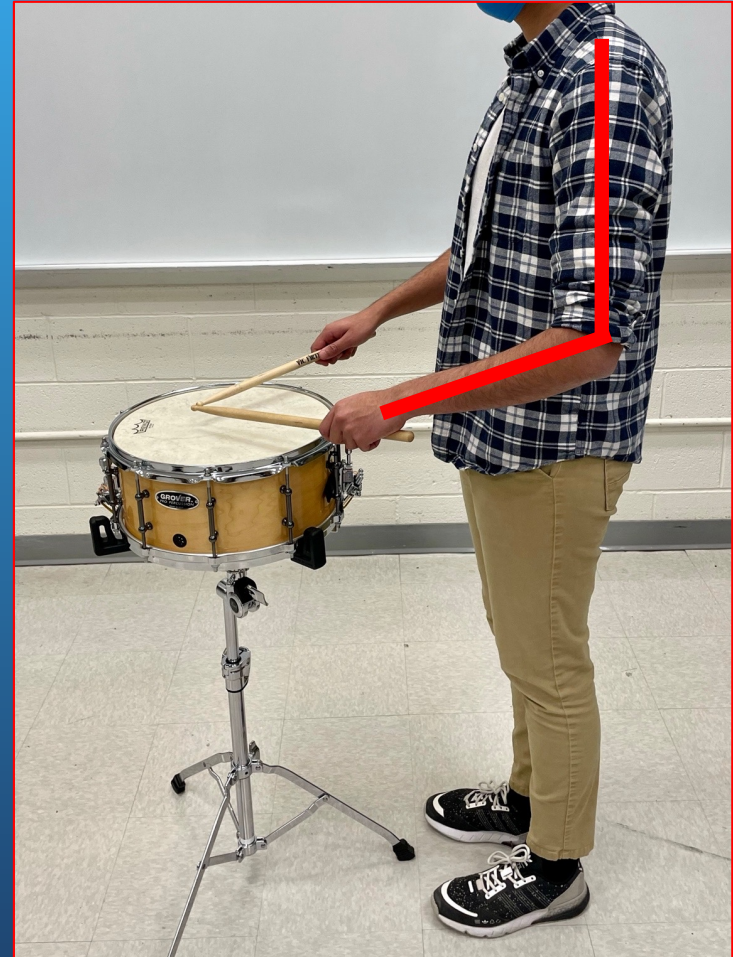


Index finger
extended and
pointing down stick.

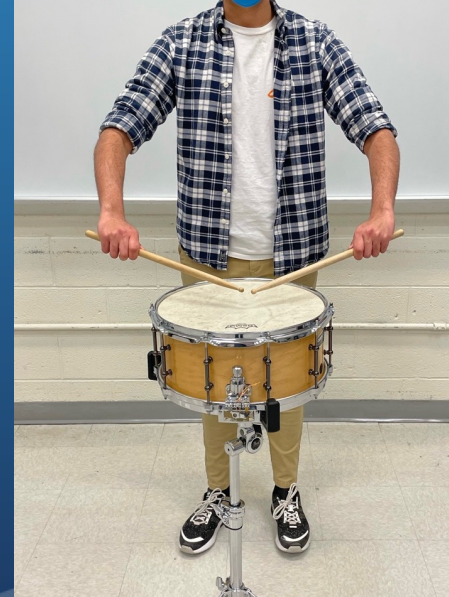
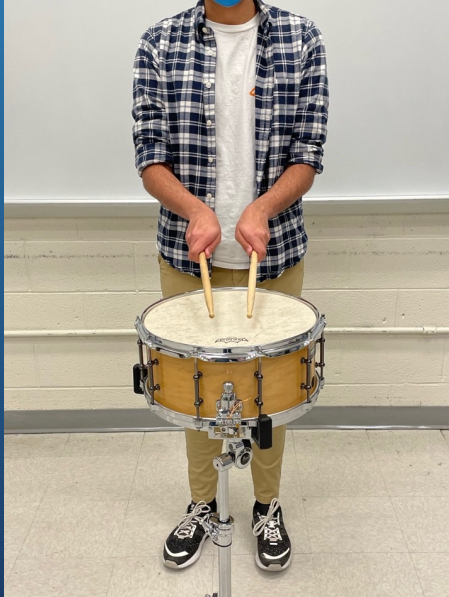
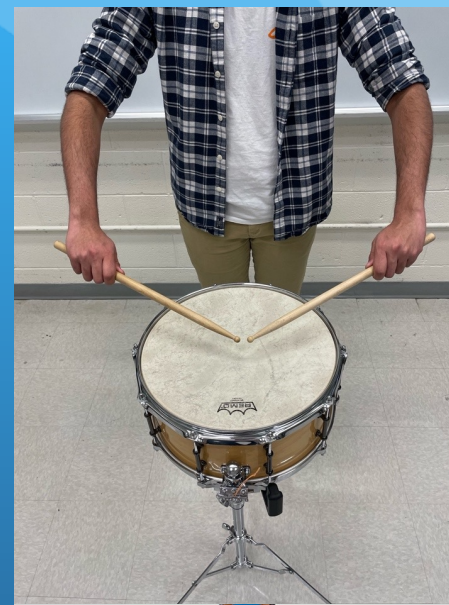
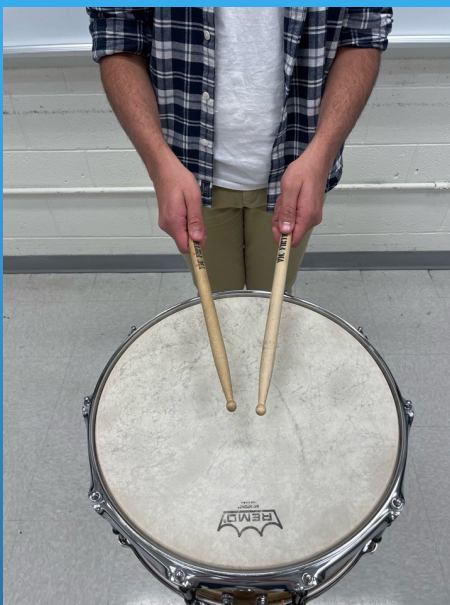
Standing at the Drum

- Proper drum placement goals
 - Beads of stick lay easily in center of drum
 - Shoulders, arms, and hands relaxed neutral position
- Two factors:
 - Drum height
 - Standing distance from drum

Body Position



What to watch out for

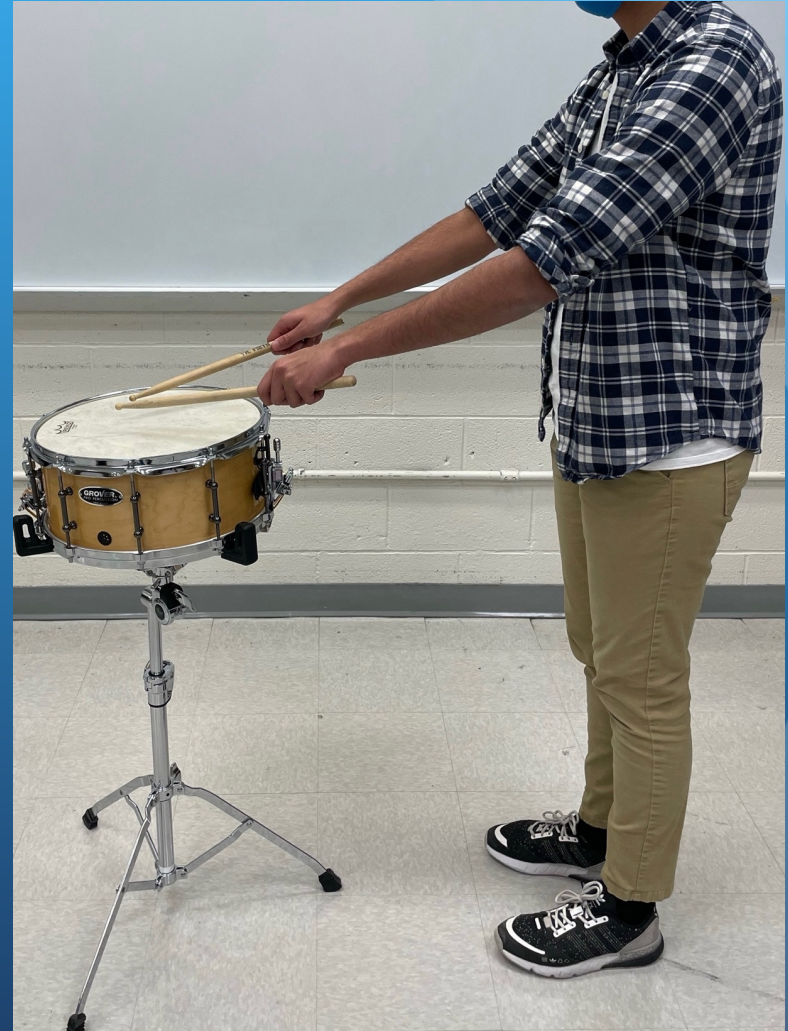


Where to stand at the drum

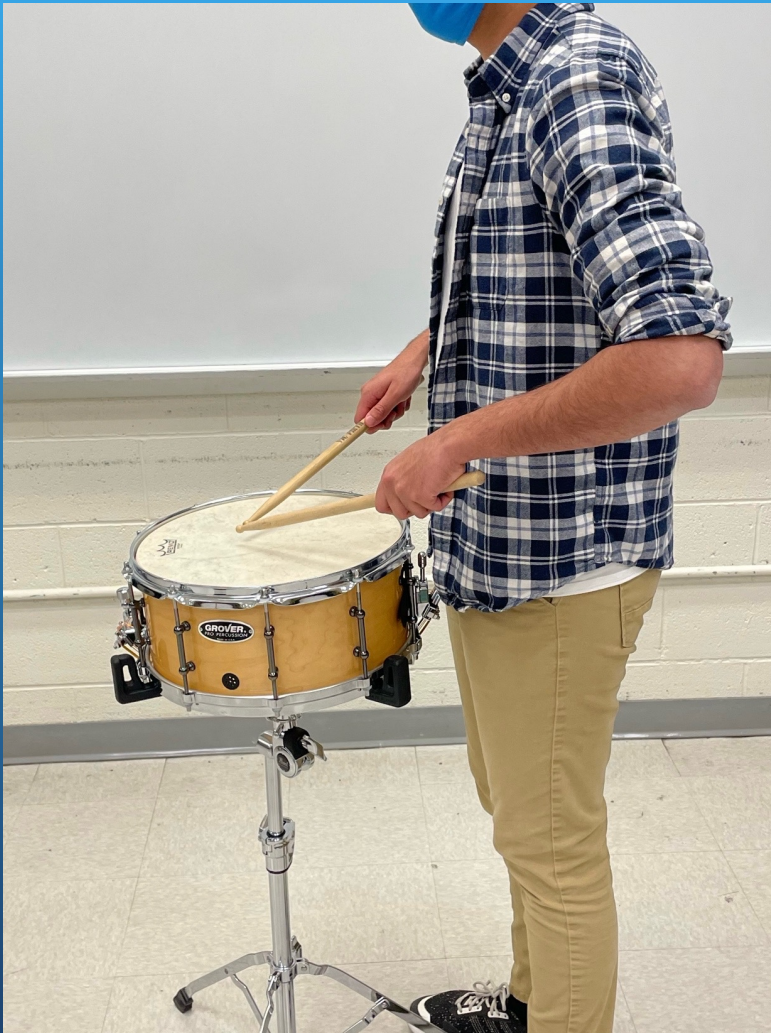
- Space between the drum and the body
- Larger if using a pad smaller than 14" in diameter
- Procedure for determining height.



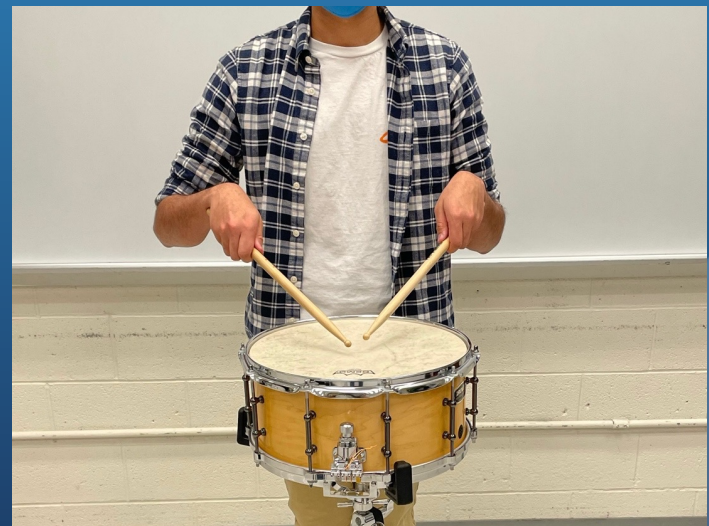
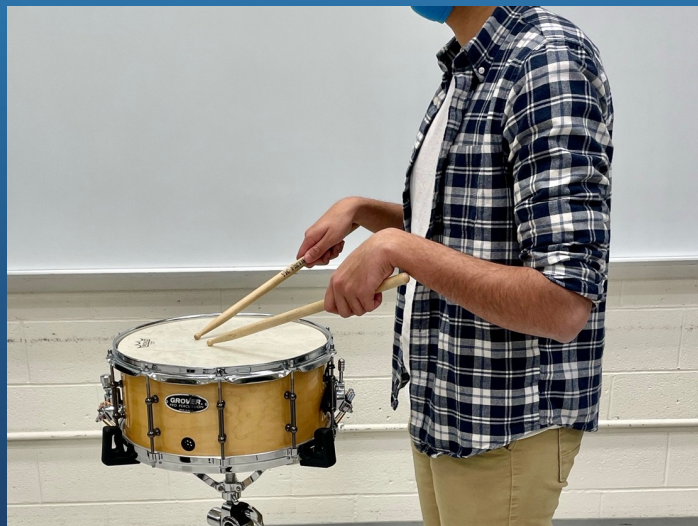
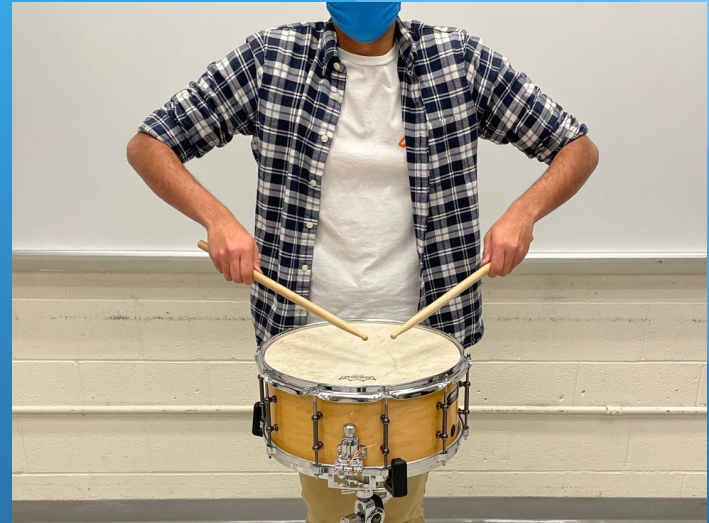
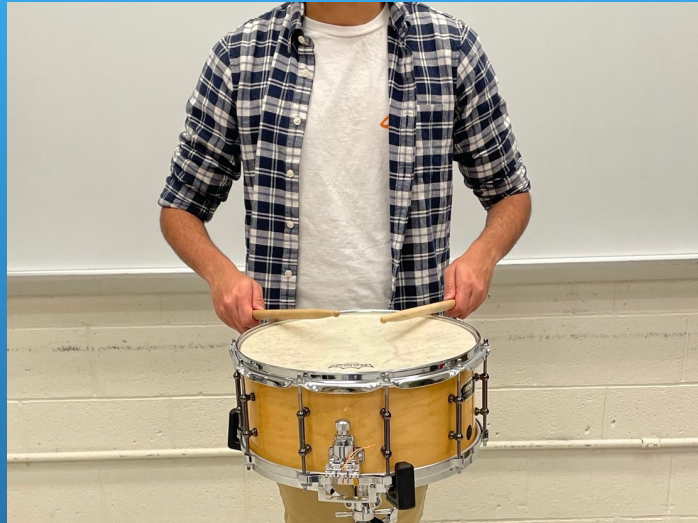
What to watch out for



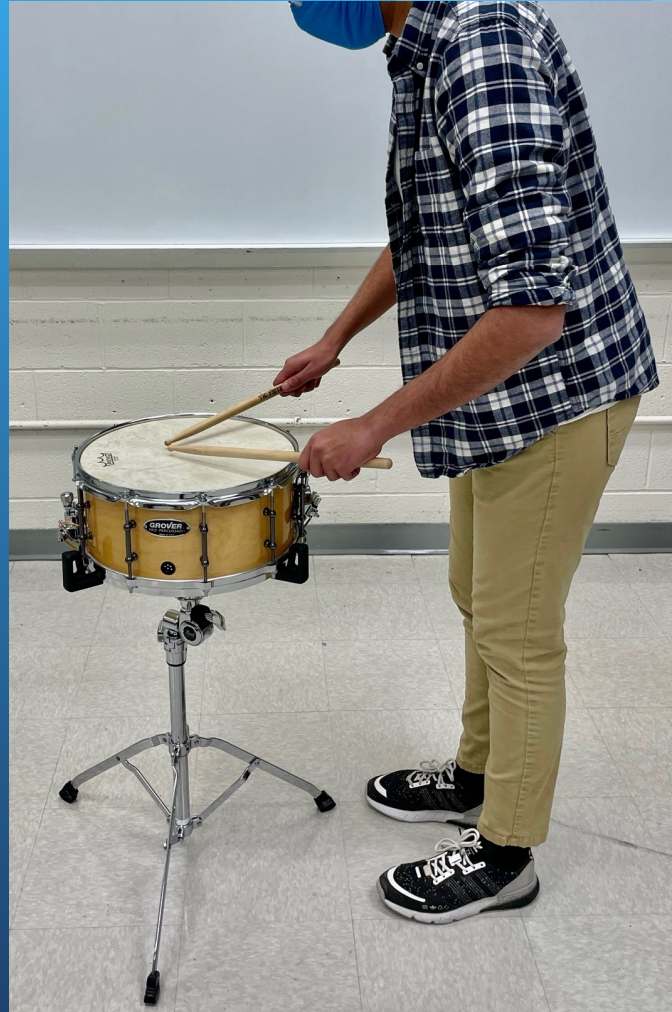
What to watch out for



Drum is too high



Drum is too low



Stroke Categories

- Single strokes
 - Used for rhythms, flams, accent patterns, dynamic changes
 - Full, Down, Tap, Up
- Roll strokes
 - Used for closed rolls, open rolls, drags
 - multiple bounce (buzz), double strokes, triple strokes

General Concept of Single Strokes & Sound Quality

- Stroke generated from the wrist
- Minimal involvement of fingers and arm in stroke motion
- Bead of the stick leads the motion of the stroke
- Stroke path is perpendicular to playing surface
- Grip Tension & Sound quality
- “Soft Hands”
- Dynamics achieved through stroke heights

Basic Stroke Development

- Sticking patterns
 - Stick Control - George Lawrence Stone
 - Developing Dexterity - Mitchell Peters
 - Make up your own combinations of R/L!
- 8 on a hand
- 8-4-2-1

8-4-2-1 Warmup

8's

2

3

4's

4

2's

5

1's

6

R R R R R R R R

L L L L L L L L

R R R R L L L L

R R L L R R L L

R L R L R L R L

R

8-4-2-1 Warmup

8's

2

R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L

Detailed description: This musical exercise is in 4/4 time. It consists of two measures. The first measure contains eight eighth notes on the right hand, grouped in pairs of four. The second measure contains eight eighth notes on the left hand, also grouped in pairs of four. The notes are on a single staff with a treble clef.

3

4's

4

2's

R R R R L L L L R R L L R R L L

Detailed description: This musical exercise is in 4/4 time. It consists of two measures. The first measure contains four eighth notes on the right hand and four eighth notes on the left hand. The second measure contains two eighth notes on the right hand and two eighth notes on the left hand. The notes are on a single staff with a treble clef.

5

1's

6

7

R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R L R

Detailed description: This musical exercise is in 4/4 time. It consists of three measures. The first measure contains one eighth note on the right hand and one eighth note on the left hand. The second measure contains six eighth notes on the right hand and six eighth notes on the left hand. The third measure contains seven eighth notes on the right hand and seven eighth notes on the left hand. The notes are on a single staff with a treble clef.

Four Single Stroke Types

- Full: starts up, ends up
- Down: starts up, ends down
- Tap: starts down, ends down
- Up: starts down, ends up

Stroke Types Warmup A

Two distinct and consistent stroke heights should be used for this exercise.
For example, play the accents at a forte dynamic and the unaccented notes at piano.
For repeated sections, play RH first time and LH second time.

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The musical score is written in 4/4 time and consists of nine numbered measures. Measure 1 is marked with a repeat sign and contains a sequence of notes with accents. Measure 2 is a continuation of the pattern. Measure 3 is also marked with a repeat sign. Measure 4 continues the sequence. Measure 5 is marked with a repeat sign. Measure 6 continues the sequence. Measure 7 is marked with a repeat sign. Measure 8 continues the sequence. Measure 9 is marked with a repeat sign and ends with a fermata. Hand assignments are indicated below the notes: 'R' for right hand and 'L' for left hand. Ellipses (...) indicate that the pattern repeats.

1 2

3 4

5 6

7 8 9

R L ...
R L ...
R L ...
R

Stroke Types Warmup A

Two distinct and consistent stroke heights should be used for this exercise.
For example, play the accents at a forte dynamic and the unaccented notes at piano.
For repeated sections, play RH first time and LH second time.

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1 **F F F F F F D** 2 **T T T T T T U**

3 **F F F F F F F** 4 **T T T T T T U**

5 **F F D T T U** 6 **F F D T T U**

7 **D U D U** 8 **D U D U D U D** 9 **D**

R L ...
R L ...
R L ...
R

Rolls

There are two types of rolls:

- Closed Rolls
- Concert Rolls
- Buzz Rolls
- Orchestral Rolls
- Multiple Bounce Roll
- Open Rolls
- Rudimental Rolls
- Double Stroke Rolls

Buzz Strokes aka Multiple Bounce Strokes

- Stroke motion
 - Arm stroke, stabilized wrist
 - Stick and arm travel in the same path
 - Press stick into head slightly, then relax
 - Doesn't have to be a high stroke
- Grip adjustments
 - Slightly more pressure in fulcrum
 - Squeeze - release
 - Middle finger should stay engaged
 - Ring & pinky fingers give the stick space to move

Buzz stroke development

- “Low, Slow, Elbow”
- Looking to develop length and consistency of buzz
- Practice 8 on a hand exercise with buzz strokes
- Work on lengthening buzzes as long as possible

What should they know on snare drum after the 1st year?

Technique Concepts

- Single Strokes
- Buzz Strokes
- 4 stroke types (Full, Down, Tap, Up)
- Dynamics

Skills & Rudiments

- Paradiddle
- Flam
- 5, 9, 13, 17 stroke rolls (closed)
- Simple accent patterns
- Basic rhythms up to 16th notes subdivision

2 Challenges for Keyboard Percussion

- Learning to read the notes on the page and learn where those notes are on the instrument (just like every other student in band)
- Being physically separated from the instrument (unlike every other student in band)

Equipment



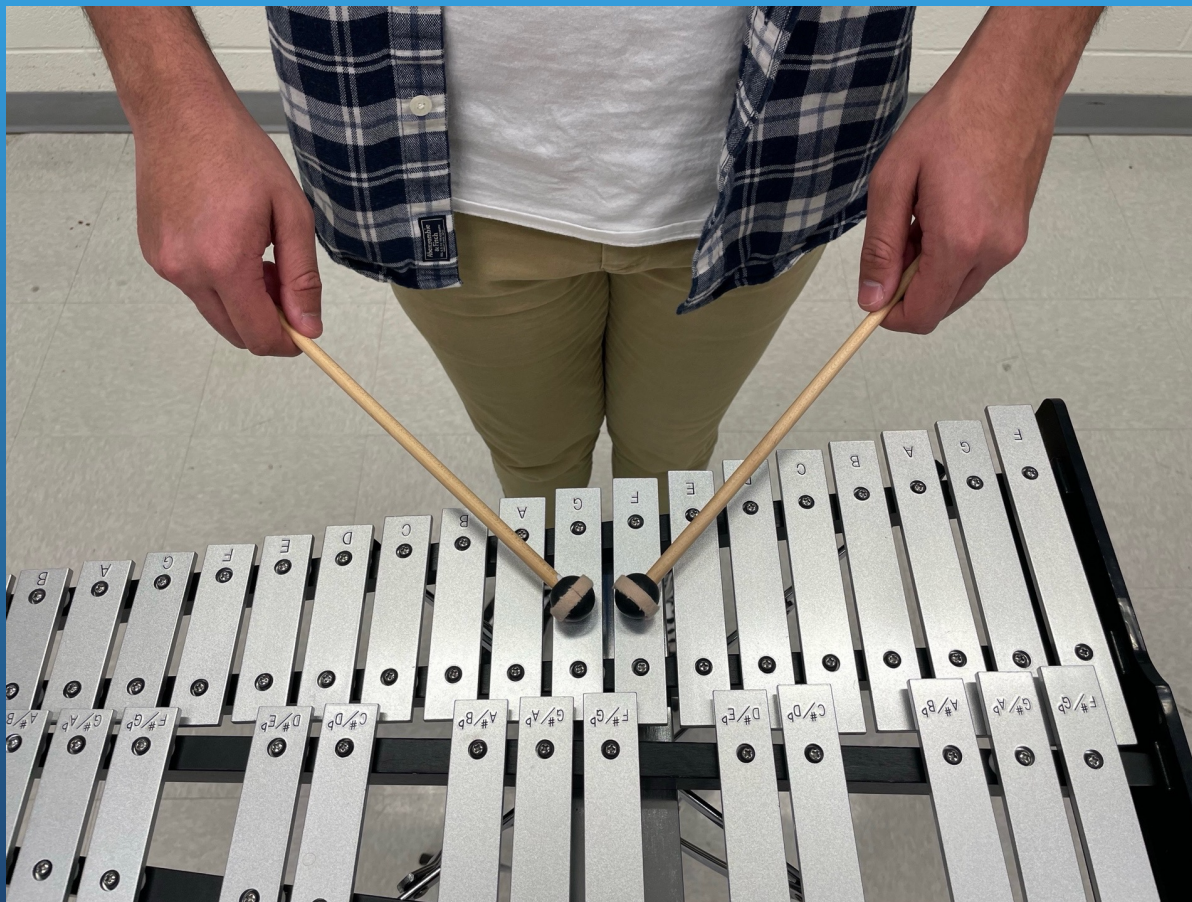
Equipment



Concepts from Snare Drum Body Position



Concepts from Snare Drum Hand & Grip Position



Concepts from Snare Drum Stroke Motion



Other considerations

- Alternating sticking is your ally in the long run!
- Peripheral vision
- Music stand placement
- Kinesthetic relationship to instrument
- Reading vs. memorizing

Thank you!

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