

# The Warmup Book

Creating a Structured Routine for  
Daily Percussion Skill  
Development

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## About the Warmup Book.....

I came up with the idea for this book when thinking about how we structure technical development at my university. We often go back to the same types of exercises, but these were not really written down anywhere. Additionally, teaching fundamental skill development on the large family of instruments that becomes the world of percussion requires the purchase of a VERY large quantity of books. All of these books are phenomenal, and all include very important material. But they often also all only get used for a few pieces of information in each book. This becomes a tremendous cost to students, many of whom are currently working their way through school while trying to minimize debt.

My concept for this book was for it to be merely a starting point. This book is not, and was NEVER intended to be, the full answer for technical development. I want it to be a place for students to begin, and also to be able to come back to, as they go through their studies.

The exercises contained in this book are what we find to be the most basic and fundamental needs for a percussionist to start on the various instruments. This is ONE place to begin, and hopefully from here, many more will be added for the students as they progress.

A sincere thank you to my students who have been the guinea pigs along the way as we experimented and developed this material. I must thank my teachers, especially Wayne Bovenschen, Chris Shultis, Michael Bump, Benjamin Toth, Glen Velez, Alexander Lepak, and Nancy Zeltsman, all of whom I have borrowed all of my ideas from. Dr. Meghan Merciers and Lauren Teel who both said “you should write a book.” And of course my wife Adrienne, and daughters Keira, Sophie, and Emily who put up with all of this!

## Keep This in Mind

At its most basic level, percussion is a simple concept. You take a thing, and you hit another thing with it. It is VERY easy to over complicate matters. I think it is important to keep in mind that the basic techniques transfer from one instrument to the next. Take all of the concepts learned on snare drum, and then use those on everything else (with of course the minor adjustments that have to be made for each specific instrument). Everything in percussion generally breaks down to the main stroke types, muscle groups, and combinations of single and double strokes. Focus on those things, and making those concepts work well, and everything else will start to fall into place!

## How to Use the Book

- 1) Each page is a collection of exercises. Pick and choose what you need to work on. They can be done as a full sequence, or they can be excerpted out to refresh a particular concept.
- 2) Loop the exercises as many times as needed. The idea of being able to do a very short exercise, focusing on a particular technique, repeatedly allows you to focus on the consistency of your technique.
- 3) Vary the tempos and dynamics regularly. I do highly recommend using a metronome (or even better, your favorite playlist of songs) to keep you consistent in your timing. But these exercises should allow you to explore how techniques adjust for different speeds and dynamic ranges.
- 4) For the keyboard section, choose different scales, or different chord progressions regularly to use for the exercises. The four mallet section is designed for you to be able to work through various common chord progressions in music, to help you start to think more about chords and voicing, while also developing technique.
- 5) Be creative. Find new ways to explore this material. Use the exercises as the starting point to creatively improvise. Put various patterns together to start to generate ideas for composing. Keep the practicing interesting!
- 6) It can often be a good idea to do something just to do it, rather than having to have some larger goal or plan beyond just making yourself better, or creating something to create it. Keep that spirit in mind while working through this book. Make yourself better, so you can more freely create art.\
- 7) **WEAR HEARING PROTECTION!** This should be something you always get in the habit of doing when you go to practice. Percussion is loud. Keep your ears safe.
- 8) Have fun!!!!

rebound slightly in the hand. 2) if it does not that means too much tension was handed in the hand after the stroke (squeezing the stick). Does not choke the stick after this stroke as it will alter the tone. Merely do not let the hand come back up.

### *Tap Stroke*

This stroke should feel just like the full stroke, but played from a lower height.

### *Up Stroke*

This stroke starts as a tap stroke, and after striking the drum it rebounds up to the full stroke position. This stroke is also often used in soft playing on timpani.

Used in combination for example in the snare exercises: 8's = full strokes; Accent tap/paras is down (the accent)/tap (all but the final non accented notes)/up (the final non accented note as you move to again play an accent); etc. When you practice these exercises keep these stroke types in mind.

### *Rolls*

When rolling the goal is to get as full of a buzz sound as is possible. When playing the basic roll exercises the motion is generating more from the forearm and elbow. Do not press and stop the stick dead on the head (a very short sound). Instead, try to keep the hand relaxed enough that you get a large bounce of multiple strokes with each motion. When the hands are combined into alternations the buzzes should start to overlap slightly. Another great exercise (which is the base idea of Chicken and a Roll in this section) is to work using one arm motion, but creating 2, 3, and 4 stroke bounces with each motion. This works on using the fingers to know when to stop the stick after the desired number of strokes. The motion of the arm and hands should be the same for any of these stroke numbers. When playing Chicken and a Roll, the playing motion should look completely the same throughout, with the only difference being the application of slightly more middle finger pressure to create the additional strokes each time.

The two roll exercises that change hand speeds are about trying to create musical effects. The first one, with no dynamics, is to work trying to keep a consistent roll sound while underneath the roll changing the speed and touch of the hands. The goal is to hear one smooth roll, without hearing the hand speed changes. This is a great exercise for practicing softly. The other two exercises are to work increasing and decreasing hand speeds as one crescendos and decrescendos a roll. This is NOT the required technique every time you have this type of roll (< or >), but it helps you begin to think about how to shape and phrase these more effectively.

# Snare Drum

Wiggins

Accent Tap (repeat each bar as desired - use right and left hands, and both as double stops)

8's =120+ Paradiddles

Concert Snare

7

Con.Sn.

11 Gallop (F/P/Single) - Can also do triplet rather than duple diddle

Con.Sn.

16 Roll Values 5 stroke

Con.Sn.

21 6 stroke 7 stroke 7's v. 2

Con.Sn.

26 Rolls (buzzes should be as long and open as possible) Chicken and a Roll Use 2/3/4 stroke diddles

Con.Sn.

31 change hand speed with out changing the roll sound 5 Flams

Con.Sn.

*p* *f* *p*

36 Drags (double strokes)/ruffs (single strokes) - do both left and rh lead

Con.Sn.

43 4 Stroke Drag (rl)l/s/Ruff (lr)

Con.Sn.

47 Play Rh and Lh lead Flam Accent Swiss Army Triplet Flam Taps

Con.Sn.

## Mallet Instruments

The keyboard section is designed to take the student through many common 2 and 4 mallet patterns. They are, like the snare drum, designed as short musical ideas to use. They show you what the patterns are, but do not continue all the way through each scale to conserve space. It should be intended for any patterns used to complete the scale patterns.

### *Positioning*

Stand with the feet spread slightly. Be a comfortable distance from the instrument (not too close). Elbows should be right at the side or slightly in front of the body. As much as possible keep your body centered in the middle of what you are playing. If possible lean slightly as needed to minimize foot movement. If you have to move the feet, slide rather than cross over the feet. Going from the naturals to accidentals, roll the hands forward with the shoulders feeling like the release downward to move the hands forward, rather than scrunching the shoulders up to make that move. If you have increase the arm spread, bend down at the knees, keeping the back straight (almost like you are sitting), rather than bending over at the back.

When you practice, be consistent about WHERE you stand in sections of you music. Even small changes in position to the keyboard will greatly affect accuracy. If there are passages that you figure out you have to be in a certain range, or foot position in, to play, mark those into your music so that you practice those spots consistently. MANY accuracy issues on mallets are caused by inconsistency of where the player is standing from session to session!

### *Where to Play the Bars*

The range of the bars will all produce different tones. The most ideal position will typically be just off the center of the bar. When moving up the keyboard I often tell students to think about aiming at the edge of the resonator. The very edge of the accidentals is an underutilized position that is great for faster passages, and to help with some four mallet chordal positions. On the edge be sure you are fully on the edge to avoid getting too close to the node.

### *Two Mallets*

Work these etudes in many of the scale patterns listed. A good approach might be selecting a different type of scale and key to work in each day or week. Working a variety of these patterns in each tonal area will help the student become much more familiar with the keyboard. In addition, the student could start to base their warmup on the chord progressions as well.

# 2 Mallet

Use all forms of scales. Also work in various chord progressions.

Xylophone

1 2

Xyl. 3

3 4

Xyl. 5

5 6

Xyl. 7

7 8

Xyl. 10

Work in 3rd's, 4th's and 5th's

9 10

Xyl. 13

11 12 13

Xyl. 17

14 15 16

Xyl. 19

17 18

Xyl. 22

19 20 21





# Tambourine/Triangle/Bass Drum

Soft Version - Use fingers and Finger Rolls  
Loud Version - Full Technique and Shake Rolls  
Basic Strokes

Musical staff 1: Basic Strokes. The staff shows a sequence of notes starting with a diamond symbol, followed by quarter notes, eighth notes, and sixteenth notes. The final section consists of four groups of three sixteenth notes, each marked with a '3' above it.

7 Alternating Strokes (F has 2 versions - knee/fist; wrist rotation) Rolls Builder (F 2 versions  
knee/fist; wrist rotation

Musical staff 2: Alternating Strokes. The staff shows a sequence of eighth notes, followed by a section of eighth notes with '3' above them, and ends with a section of eighth notes with '3' above them.

12 Grace Notes

Musical staff 3: Grace Notes. The staff shows a sequence of sixteenth notes, followed by a section of sixteenth notes with '6' above them, and ends with a section of eighth notes with '6' above them.

17 Short Roll Builder

Musical staff 4: Short Roll Builder. The staff shows a sequence of eighth notes, followed by a section of eighth notes with '3' above them, and ends with a section of eighth notes with '3' above them.

24

Musical staff 5: Continuation of Short Roll Builder. The staff shows a sequence of eighth notes, followed by a section of eighth notes with '3' above them, and ends with a section of eighth notes with '3' above them.

# Cymbals/Bass Drum

30 Basic Crash Builder (practice loud and soft)

Musical staff 6: Basic Crash Builder. The staff shows a sequence of notes starting with a diamond symbol, followed by quarter notes, eighth notes, and sixteenth notes. The final section consists of four groups of three sixteenth notes, each marked with a '3' above it.

37  $\text{♩} = 48$  Allegro  
Rach (practice at F as well for practice sake) Tchaik

Musical staff 7: Rach and Tchaik. The staff shows a sequence of notes starting with a diamond symbol, followed by quarter notes, eighth notes, and sixteenth notes. The final section consists of four groups of three sixteenth notes, each marked with a '3' above it. Dynamics *pp* and *f* are indicated.

44  $\text{♩} = 148$  (ish)  
Mussourgsky

Musical staff 8: Mussourgsky. The staff shows a sequence of notes starting with a diamond symbol, followed by quarter notes, eighth notes, and sixteenth notes. The final section consists of four groups of three sixteenth notes, each marked with a '3' above it.

48

Musical staff 9: Continuation of Mussourgsky. The staff shows a sequence of notes starting with a diamond symbol, followed by quarter notes, eighth notes, and sixteenth notes. The final section consists of four groups of three sixteenth notes, each marked with a '3' above it.

## **The Basic Percussionists Toolkit**

A Good and Sufficiently Large Mallet Case or Bag

Concert Snare Drum Sticks

Hard, Medium, Soft marimba mallets

Medium cord Vibe Mallets (set of 4)

Hard, Medium, Soft Timpani Mallets

A Pair of Wooden Timpani Mallets (these are excellent for toms and multi percussion)

Medium Hard Xylophone Mallets

Hard Xylo/Bell Mallets

Drumset Sticks

A Set of Triangle Beaters

Beeswax (for tambourines)

A Good Practice Pad

A Marimba Practice Pad (great for at home or travelling)

Drum Key (get a good T key - it will save you a ton of time down the line)

Multiple Black Towels

A Metronome (can be a Dr. Beat or a really good met app on a phone)

A Tuner (or tuning app)

A Tuning Fork (A is perfect. You can also get sets with multiple pitches)

Audio and Video Recording Gear (can start with you phone or computer, but eventually look to build you gear through mics, interfaces, a stand alone camera)

A Notebook (for writing down memories from lessons, organizing practice sessions, jotting down ideas)

A Planner (Can also be a phone calendar IF you train yourself to use it regularly)

A Couple of Triangle Clips (can be used for triangles, to hang other things, clip a towel to a bass drum, etc.)

PENCILS (MANY pencils. Have them everywhere. ALWAYS have it on you or on your stand in rehearsals)

Fishing Line (to hang all the things)

A Dictionary of Percussion Terms (small enough to keep in mallet case)

**Your First Big Purchases (these are the instruments that you will use a lot for gigging)**

A Tablet (at least 12.4" for readability) and a bluetooth pedal

A Good Quality Tambourine

A Folding Guitar Footrest (fits in your case, and is gear for tambourine, bass drum, castanets, etc.)

A Good Quality Triangle

A Good Quality Concert Snare Drum

A Drumset (this can help you have a multitude of instruments and options, besides just being a drumset)

A Good Quality 18" Cymbal (for suspended cymbal use)

A Good Pair of 18-19" Cymbals

Various Small Hand Drums

Medium Hard Bass Drum Mallet

Roller Bass Drum Mallets

Chime Hammers (pair)

A Pair of Timpani (the middle two 29/26")

Malletcontroller (can be VERY versatile for various gig types)

Glockenspiel

Xylophone

Vibraphone

A Couple of Stand Lights

A Marimba

## Tracy Wiggins

Tracy Wiggins is assistant director of bands and coordinator of the percussion program at **The University of North Alabama**. He has a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from the HARTT School, University of Hartford. Dr. Wiggins holds a Masters Degree in Percussion Performance from the University of New Mexico and a Bachelors Degree in Music Education from Oklahoma State University.

He has performed with The Huntsville Symphony, The Fayetteville Symphony Orchestra, Florence Symphony Orchestra, Carolina Philharmonic and the Santa Fe Symphony. Tracy performed as a marching percussionist with the Freelancers and Black Gold Drum and Bugle Corps, as well as instructing the DCI Division III World Championship finalist Delta Brigade and the Northern Aurora Drum and Bugle Corps, and DCA Finalist Carolina Gold. He has made solo appearances at universities throughout the United States and Jordan. Tracy has appeared 3 times on Focus Day at PASIC, presented clinics at PASIC and the Midwest Clinic, and is co-hosting the 2018 PASIC Focus Day. He has served as Vice-president and Treasurer of the Alabama PAS Chapter, and President and Vice-President of the North Carolina Chapter of PAS. He is currently a member of the PAS Board of Advisors, the Percussion Ensemble Committee, and has served on the University Pedagogy and New Music/Research Committees. He is also an active adjudicator and arranger for marching percussion throughout the southeast.

His teachers have included Johnny Almendra, Tricia Bovenschen, Wayne Bovenschen, Michael Bump, Joe Galeota, Ralph Hardimon, Gregg Koyle, Alexander Lepak, Christopher Shultis, Ben Toth, Glen Velez and Nancy Zeltsman.

He is an artist/endorser for **Yamaha Percussion, Black Swamp Percussion, Innovative Percussion, Remo Drum Heads and Percussion, Beetle Percussion and Sabian Cymbals.**