



# Erie All-City Marching Band Percussion



## Battery: Snare Drum

In this packet you will find the exercises and techniques used in our battery.

This packet belongs to:

Erie All-City Marching Band

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<https://www.facebook.com/goeacmb>



## Foundations of This Program

### Music & Performance

**Music** is what ultimately gave us our beginning, our passion, and our drive to join this activity. Just as it is important to practice our music and learn to play drums, it is also beneficial to be a good **music listener**. Broadening your musical horizon to include many genres will in turn help you play in those styles and maybe even relate your parts better with others. So whether you have played Snare Drum your whole life or this is your first time ever holding a stick, we hope to teach you to be a better drummer but first and foremost, a better musician.

### Dynamics

- Each dynamic in the music will have a corresponding height to go with it.
- Approach to the drum should be the same regardless of the height being played. Velocity will not change because of a change in heights (most of the time)
- The forearm should stay relaxed at all heights and will react to the motion created by the wrist.  
It is okay for the forearm to move at all heights 3" – 20"
- The sticks will **NEVER** travel past vertical. 15" is the vertical height.

**Ex. Definition of Stick Heights & Dynamics would be:**

The image shows a musical staff with a treble clef and a 2/4 time signature. There are five measures, each containing a snare drum rhythm of quarter notes. Above each measure is a stick height label: 3 inches, 6 inches, 9 inches, 12 inches, and 15 inches. Below each measure is a dynamic marking: *p*, *mp*, *mf*, *f*, and *ff*.

- The 20" height will be used for fortissimo volumes needing a little extra power. This involves a 15" full extension plus a bit of extra forearm movement.
- Heights past 20" will be referred to as visual height. Motion starts with a 12" wrist stroke followed by a rotation of the arm at the elbow. The stick will end completely vertical and further away from the body.

### Timing

**This is a percussion program and timing is a very important part of what we do.** Our role in the whole musical ensemble and the integrity of our rhythms rely very much on timing. Whether it be a buzz roll, open roll, or swiss flam drag, they are all rudiments with a specific rhythmic integrity. Learning your rudiments and learning them **CORRECTLY** is very important: always paying attention to correct rhythms, stickings and accent placements. Slower is always better than faster when it comes to practicing. Never move onto a faster tempo until you can play everything with the proper relaxed technique at slower tempos. Practice with a metronome to focus on your timing and the accuracy of your rhythms.

Also, another option would be to play exercises along with your favorite songs. It's like playing with a metronome but a little more comfortable and appealing than listening to a constant beep. It even creates a musical context for you to relate your parts to. This is exactly what we do when we play together as an ensemble. Don't be afraid to groove and have fun with the music. Then, you can apply that to your show music/exercises. You should find a groove to the music even when the music is abstract. All music has checkpoints you can use to find a 'pocket' for you to play in.



## Snare Drum Technique Guidelines

This section serves as an outline to the fundamentals of our technique. In order to achieve our goal of being the absolute best in the activity, we must simultaneously achieve exact uniformity in technique, touch, sound quality, rhythmic clarity, and dynamic clarity. Each individual in the line must be accountable for his or her individual performance and be aware of the accompanying responsibilities with regard to the percussion ensemble and full ensemble. This information, combined with the exercises, helps you achieve the highest degree of performance possible.

### How You Feel When you Drum

As you play, you should always strive for a relaxed physical sensation. The stronger a player you are and the more chops you possess, the more efficient you become, hence, the more relaxed you are. A relaxed hand allows the stick to “resonate” and produce a pitch conducive to a relaxed, open sound. Physical relaxation also pertains to your brain and state of mind. No matter what the musical or physical responsibility at any given time, through practicing GOOD habits and utilizing the descriptors above, you are setting yourself up for success by having peace of mind and a strong mental approach to your playing. This approach allows you to be more consistent as a player and musician. When you play, try and breathe comfortably. By learning to breathe naturally while playing, you will achieve a more relaxed, healthy sound and approach, regardless of the difficulty level.

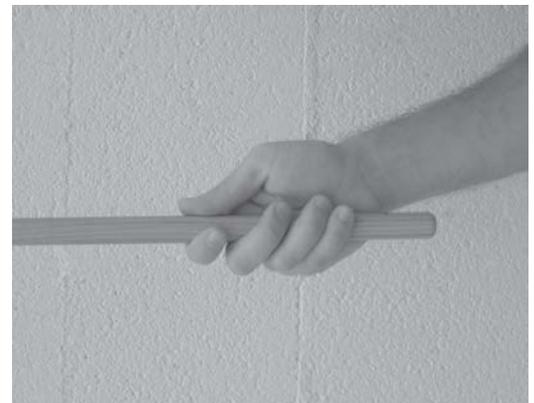
### Implement Grip

A great quality of sound and approach to the drum starts with the grip of the stick. In order to produce a full, resonant tone from the drum, it is important that your hands maintain a relaxed grip around the stick at all times, allowing the stick to resonate in your hand. If you hold the stick too tightly, you dampen the stick’s natural vibrations and “choke off” much of the sound, which produces a very thin quality of sound. Also, the brunt of the impact from the stick striking the drum will be transferred directly into your hand, leading to unnecessary injury. Always let the sticks “breathe” in your hands.

### Right Hand

The fulcrum is located between the thumb and the index finger. This is the point from which the stick pivots in your hand. This pivot point should be located at the optimal balance point of the stick and is generally located about 1/3 up the length of the stick from the butt end.

The remaining fingers should be wrapped naturally around the stick. They should be loose and relaxed but can never leave the stick. In order to employ the fingers properly, the stick should lay through the fleshy part of your palm opposite your thumb.





The palm of your hand should not be flat to the drum (German grip) nor should the thumb be completely on top of the stick (French grip). The crease created between the thumb and the index finger should be turned to an approximate 45-degree angle. This offers the best benefits from both the German grip (full wrist turn) and French grip (easy engagement of the fingers).



## Left Hand

The fulcrum point is again located between the thumb and index finger, with the thumb sitting on top of the index finger between the first and second knuckle. This connection must **ALWAYS** be maintained. There are common tendencies to push down or flex up the tip of the thumb. Avoid these by keeping the thumb relaxed.



The stick will rest on the fourth finger just past the first knuckle and near the cuticle. The pinky should stay attached to the fourth finger in a relaxed position, and the middle finger will rest beside the stick with the fingertip being slightly on top of the stick. Please be aware that the middle finger should simply be “along for the ride” and not used to generate a stroke by applying pressure in any way.

All fingers must remain relaxed and in a curved position at all times. Any unnatural straightening or flexing of the fingers simply causes unwanted tension that will ultimately inhibit your performance and quality of sound. The palm should be turned at a slight angle. Here is a good analogy: Your palm should be turned up enough that if it were raining, water would hit your palm and drain off. If your palm is turned up too much, the water would collect – not being able to drain off. If your palm is not turned up enough, your thumb would block the water from access to your palm.



## Playing Position

A proper playing position begins with finding an appropriate drum height. This can be done using the left hand as a starting point:

With your arms relaxed by your sides, raise your left hand from the elbow until your forearm is parallel to the ground.

With the stick in your left hand and the bead of the stick in the center of the drum, put the width of two fingers between the rim of the drum and the stick to establish the proper drum height. This will give the stick a slight downward angle (with your wrist being higher than the bead), yet still allow the meaty part of the bead to make contact with the drum.



Next, simply raise your right hand to the drum, matching the fulcrum point of the right hand to the fulcrum point of the left hand, making sure the stick angles down to the drum are the same.



Be careful to match the actual fulcrum points and not the hands in elevation. When playing traditional grip, most of the right hand is on top of the stick and most of the left hand is under the stick, so you will actually hold your right hand higher than your left to match the fulcrum points. Simply put, to generate the same sound from each hand, first each stick must strike the drum from the same pivot point.

The beads will always remain in the center of the head, resting 1/2 inch apart and 1/2 inch off of the head. It is absolutely essential for the beads to remain in the exact center of the drum at all times. If the sticks are not striking the drum in the same location, then they will not produce the same sound from one hand to the other.

Looking down at the drum, the angle created by the sticks (the “V” shape) should be approximately 90 degrees. The same concept of symmetry used earlier to match stick angles will be used here as well.





Again, the left hand makes a good starting point. Think of your left hand as a natural extension of your arm by keeping a straight line from the tip of your thumb through to your elbow, with your elbow hanging a few inches from your side. The half of the “V” your left stick creates should be mirrored by the right stick. Avoid any awkward bends in your right wrist by keeping your fulcrum point on a straight line through to your elbow as well.

Please note that matching the right stick angle to the left will push your right elbow farther out from your body than your left elbow. Don’t take this too far, however. You don’t want unnecessary tension in your shoulder and/or upper arm.

### **Strokes**

#### *Legato/Full Stroke:*

The legato stroke is often referred to as the rebound stroke. When using this stroke, the player should allow the stick to rebound (bounce) off of the drumhead. The player is responsible for the initial effort of quickly moving the stick toward the head. From here, the drum naturally rebounds the stick back to the upstroke position. The key to playing legato is to not restrict the motion of the stick. The motion should never stop – it is always moving either toward or away from the drumhead. All fingers should remain on the stick at all times, but they should not inhibit the rebound by holding the stick against the palm. The arms, hands, and fingers remain relaxed, naturally moving with the motion of the stick

#### *Down/Marcato Strokes:*

We define a marcato stroke as a controlled rebound stroke. When playing marcato, the fingers stop the stick to keep it from rebounding fully instead of traveling with the natural rebound motion of the stick after striking the playing surface. The marcato stroke is exactly like the legato stroke until after contact with the playing surface. The fingers simply do not allow the stick to rebound back up. Don’t make the mistake of applying the brakes on the way down, as the sound will be choked. Instead, concentrate on what your fingers do immediately after contact with the playing surface. Try and use only the exact amount of energy needed to stop the stick.

#### *Taps:*

This refers to all of the lower inner beats between accents. Most of the time these will be a 3” stroke.

This stroke is essentially as 3” legato stroke.

It is important while playing taps that the stroke be relaxed and wrist only turn to 3 inches. Although we will play very relaxed. That DOES NOT mean we will play “loose” with a lack of control.

#### *Up Strokes (modified):*

When playing something that involves accents and taps in the same passage it will be necessary for us to use a modified Up Stroke.

After playing a regular 3” wrist stroke, the wrist will turn upward lifting the head of the stick to the height of the following accented note.

Any tap that comes directly before an accent will become an upstroke in order to prepare the stick for the proper accent height. The upstroke makes it much easier to achieve clarity in passages that have accents following taps.



## Rehearsal

In Marching Band, rehearsal time is VERY limited. It is imperative that we maximize this time as much as possible by being prepared for rehearsal 100% of the time. We will work hard but we will also work smart in order to put out the most consistently excellent product that we possibly can every performance.

\*The first part of being prepared for rehearsal is personal preparation at home. You WILL be expected to show up every rehearsal prepared with what is asked of you.

\*The second part of being prepared for rehearsals is coming with a good attitude and ready to drum from the first minute of rehearsal to the last. Part of this is arriving to all rehearsals ON TIME.

\*Lastly, make sure you have everything you need for rehearsals with you at all times. Some of the items necessary for all music rehearsals are:

*-Pencil*

*-Highlighter*

*-3-ring binder w/all music and exercises*

*-Sneakers*

*-Water bottle*

*-Sticks and/or mallets*



## Notes/Resources

This technique packet should be plenty of information to get you started on the right path towards success. Once you feel comfortable with all of these concepts it may be helpful to search the internet for more information. The same can be done if you are struggling with a concept. There is no substitute for watching people do things at a world class level and emulating what you see in your own practice time. Below are some resources to help:

### Websites

[www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

- Search for Blue Devils Drumline, Bluecoats Drumline, Rhythm X, and Riverside Community College for examples of some of the best drumlines in the world.
- Search Arcadia Drumline 2011, Dartmouth Drumline, and Chino Hills High School Drumline 2010 for examples of some of the best **High School** drumlines in the world.
- Bluecoats Drum Break Finals Night....GO THERE NOW!!!
- DCI 2009 - Bluecoats Drumline in the lot @ San Antonio....GO HERE NOW TOO!!!

[www.vicfirth.com](http://www.vicfirth.com)

- TONS of information including articles about playing, videos demonstrating the skills, rudiments with play along tracks, and much more.

[www.steveweissmusic.com](http://www.steveweissmusic.com)

- If you ever need equipment, music, or anything percussion related this is the place to go. They are cheap, have fast delivery, and are very reputable. My percussion friends, most schools I work with, and myself personally all get our products through them.

### Books

- Rudimental Logic by Bill Bachman
- The Next Level by Jeff queen
- Stick Control for the Snare Drummer by George Lawrence Stone
- Accents and Rebounds by George Lawrence Stone
- Dr. Throwdown's Rudimental Remedies by Dr. John Wooton
- A fresh Approach to Snare Drum by Mark Wessels
- The Snare Drummers Toolbox by Chris Crockarell and Chris Brooks

### Questions?

- Contact me by email anytime at: [tkantorowski@eacmb.org](mailto:tkantorowski@eacmb.org)
- If interested in private lesson inquire at the above email address.



## General Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_

School/Grade \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Mother's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Father's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Personal Email \_\_\_\_\_

Family Email \_\_\_\_\_

Full Address

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