

The Boys' Brigade - Bugle Bands & Drums Corps

Drum Notes For Beginners

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THE BEGINNER DRUMMERS SCHOOL

WELCOME TO THE DRUMMERS SCHOOL Training to become a full member of the Band/Corps Snare Drumline will take some time and effort. The first part of your training is called the Induction Course. This will last for 6 weeks and you must pass a formal proficiency test in order to proceed to the next stage, the Improver's Course. This will last for some months and when you are judged to be sufficiently competent you can attend the Band or Drum Corps Practices.

EQUIPMENT You will be issued with a pair of drum sticks, a practice pad and a ring binder file in which to keep your notes and music. Bring these to each drumming lesson or Band/Drum Corps Practice.

HOME PRACTICE You must practice at home for at least 15 minutes every day and preferably much longer. Practice the exercises set by your instructor. Listen to the rhythms and sounds you make so that you can correct any mistakes. If your wrists become tired, stop and rest for a while. If you wish to become an expert drummer you must work hard and practice every day. The more you practice, the quicker you will learn and the better you will become. It is best to practice away from other members of your family so as not to disturb them. Use your practice pad only and do not drum on hard surfaces, especially the furniture! Do not let other people use your equipment and do not leave it about where it can be played with and broken by younger brothers and sisters.

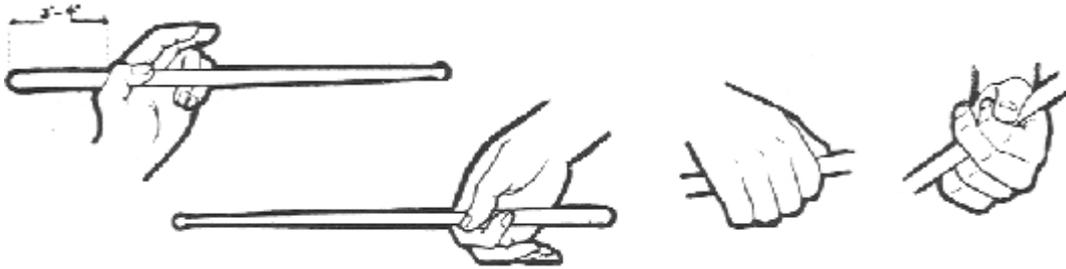
BECOMING A COMPETENT MEMBER OF THE SNARE DRUMLINE

To become a competent member of the snare drumline you must

- # Be able to play the basic drum rudiments competently
- # Be able to read simple drum music
- # Understand the meaning of the basic musical terms
- # Know the names of the parts of the drum
- # Know how to care for your instrument
- # Be able to march in step
- # Be able to march and play the drum at the same time
- # Be able to perform stick drill and drum drill
- # Become a disciplined and "professional" member of the Drum Corps

HOLDING YOUR DRUM STICKS To play a marching snare drum properly you must use the correct stick grips for the right and left hands. Most Bugle Bands & Drum Corps use the “Orthodox Stick Grips” that are shown in the diagram below. Later in your training, you will be shown the “Matched Stick Grip” that may be used when playing on a horizontal, carrier-supported snare drum or on a stand-mounted drum or on a drum kit.

HOW TO HOLD YOUR DRUM STICKS CORRECTLY



THE WRIST ACTION FOR PLAYING WITH THE ORTHODOX STICK GRIP

The Right Hand: The stroke made with the right hand uses a bending action of the wrist. Practice to make this a clean and even contact with the drum head or practice pad surface.

The Left Hand: With the left hand the stroke is made using a twisting action of the wrist. There should be no bending or up and down movement of the wrist.

THE STROKES AND RUDIMENTS: The list below includes the basic types of strokes and rudiments that must be learnt during the Induction and Improver’s Courses. Some are very easy, others are harder and will require a great deal of practice to master. There are also some advanced, internationally recognised drum rudiments that you may wish to learn and others when you have become more experienced.

#	The Single Stroke	#	The Single Stroke Roll
#	The Double Stroke	#	The Double Stroke Roll
#	The Double Bounce Stroke	#	The Mamma Dadda Open Roll
#	The Double Bounce Closed Roll	#	The Multiple Bounce Stroke
#	The Multiple Bounce or Buzz Roll	#	The Single Paradiddle
#	The Triple Stroke & T/Stroke Roll	#	The Triplet
#	The Single Stroke Four	#	The Single Stroke Seven
#	The Five Stroke Roll	#	The Nine Stroke Roll
#	The Thirteen Stroke Roll	#	The 17 stroke Roll (3 Pace Roll)
#	The Flam	#	The Drag

THE SINGLE STROKE**(One Wrist Action for One Stroke):**

Although in its basic form the single stroke is the easiest stroke to learn, it comes in a number of different versions, all of which must be mastered. Try to produce a “snappy” action with the wrists as though you are trying to flick drops of water off your fingers.

The “Full” or “Rebound” Stroke (High to High)

With this stroke the stick starts high and after striking the playing surface it should rebound cleanly and return back to the high position.

The “Down” Stroke (High to Low)

With this stroke, the stick starts high, but after striking the playing surface it is cushioned by the hand and stays down, about 10 cm above the playing surface.

The “Tap” Stroke (Low to Low)

With this stroke the stick starts low at about 10 cm above the playing surface, taps the playing surface and stays low.

The “Up” Stroke (Low to High)

With this stroke, the stick also starts low, but after striking the playing surface it should rebound cleanly and be brought up to the high position.

The “Velocity” Stroke Technique (Fast High to High)

This technique uses the forearms and wrists and the motion is very fast.

The “Moeller” Stroke Technique (High to Low to High)

This is a stroke motion that uses the arms as well as the wrists in a whipping action and often includes a series of the types of single strokes listed above.

THE SINGLE STROKE ROLL: A roll is a series of strokes played very quickly one after the other to make a nearly continuous sound. Practice each hand separately using the “Rebound” stroke, then alternately one after another - right - left - right - left, etc gradually increasing the speed, but keeping the strokes even. You should eventually be able to reach “semi-quaver speed”. The strokes must be evenly spaced and made with the same amount of force with both hands. This is called “coordination”. It is most important for a good drummer to coordinate the strokes with left and right hands. Practice starting very slowly and increasing the speed gradually to reach higher and higher speeds. Watch to see that the sticks come to same height for both hands. If the strokes become uneven, slow down again. If you are right-handed, then you will find that the left hand will need much more work than the right. When you can do this perfectly at slow and high speeds you will be able to close this into a Single Stroke Roll.

THE DOUBLE STROKE (Two Wrist Actions for Two Strokes) :

This rudiment is very easy to learn when you have mastered the single strokes. The double stroke may be considered to be two single strokes played one after the other with the same hand. However, as you will see from the list of Single Strokes, there are several combinations of pairs of these to make different types of Double Strokes.

The Double “Rebound Stroke” (High to High, High to High)

Make two “Rebound” Strokes one after the other with the same hand. Repeat using the other hand.

The “Buck” Stroke (High to Low, Low to High)

Make a “Down” Stroke followed by an “Up” Stroke using the same hand. Repeat using the other hand.

The “Diddle” Stroke (Low to Low, Low to Low)

This is two “Tap” strokes played one after the other with the same hand. Repeat using the other hand.

THE DOUBLE STROKE ROLL: As with the Single Stroke Roll, this roll is a series of strokes played very quickly one after the other to make a nearly continuous sound. Practice each hand separately using the double “Rebound” (Full) stroke, then alternately one after another - right, right - left, left - right, right - left, left, etc gradually increasing the speed, but keeping the strokes even. You should eventually be able to reach “semi-quaver speed”. The double strokes must be evenly spaced and made with the same amount of force with both hands. Practice starting again very slowly and increasing the speed gradually to reach higher and higher speeds. Watch to see that the sticks come to same height for both hands. If the strokes become uneven, slow down again. If you are right-handed, then you will find that the left hand will need much more work than the right. After a lot of practice the types of stroke will change to “Bucks” and then fast “Diddles” and at very high speeds may morph onto Double Bounce strokes. When you can do this perfectly at high speed you will close this into a true Double Stroke Roll.

Note: This will take a lot of hard work and years to perfect. For this reason you will be taught an easier form of roll called the Double Bounce Roll played using alternate Double Bounce Strokes. This is sometimes called the “Mamma-Dadda” Roll.

USING THE INTERNET FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Visit Vicfirth.com and follow the links Education/Education Resource Centre/Snare Drum/ Mark Wessels Beginners Lessons. This Website has video demonstrations of how to play all the Strokes and Rudiments listed. There are also lessons from Dr Wooton and Jeff Queen.

THE DOUBLE BOUNCE STROKE (One Wrist Action for Two strokes) :

Do not confuse this with the Double Stroke. With the Double Bounce Stroke only one wrist action is made. The stick will bounce off the playing surface back against your hand and as the wrist action continues the stick will make a second contact with the playing surface. Immediately after the second contact the stick must be lifted smartly clear of the playing surface. If the fingers are too loose, three or four bounces may occur, but if your grip is too tight only a single stroke may be made. There must only be one wrist action, not two. Explore the speed range and try to get faster and faster, but slow down again if it goes wrong.

THE MAMA DADDA: This rudiment is built up from open Double Bounce Strokes played with alternate hands. The beats must be even in strength and speed and will make the sound “MAM-MA-DAD-DA”.

THE DOUBLE BOUNCE ROLL: Practice playing the Mamma Dadda carefully, listening to the sound made by the sticks until you can do it perfectly at slow speed with both right and left hands. When you can do this perfectly at slow speed, gradually increase the speed until you can make an even series of double bounce strokes at high speed. Explore the speed range, but slow down if it goes wrong. When your Mamma Dadda reaches “demi-semi-quaver speed”, this may be considered as a Long Double Bounce Roll. However, with much practice you will be able to play it faster and closer” - ie with many more strokes. This is called a “Closed Roll” and it should sound smooth and continuous.

Note: You will need to spend many hours of practice to perfect this.

THE MULTIPLE BOUNCE STROKE: This is similar to the Double Bounce Stroke, but by loosening your grip slightly, the stick will make four to six bounces instead of only two.

THE MULTIPLE BOUNCE ROLL (The Buzz, Pressed or Orchestral Roll):

This Roll is made up of alternating Multiple Bounce Strokes which overlap making a “Buzz” sound. This roll can be played open or closed. It is a most important rudiment and will take years to perfect. It is the mark of a good drummer. **Work hard at it!**

THE TRIPLE STROKE: The Triple Stroke is three strokes one after the other with each hand. It may be used in playing some of the more advanced rudiments such as the Triple Stroke Roll.

THE TRIPLE STROKE ROLL: This roll built up from alternate triple strokes played hand to hand which when played at fast speeds may morph into triple bounces. This is an advanced rudiment and will not used on a routine basis in the Drum Corps.

THE TRIPLET - SINGLE STROKE FOURS AND SEVENS: A triplet is a group of three notes played in the time of two notes of the same value. It is shown in the music by placing a small "3" over the group of triplet notes. This is most common with quavers and semiquavers in 2/4 time. Quaver triplets in 2/4 time sound like quavers in 6/8 time. Playing semi-quaver triplets requires a lot of practice, but will be used in Single Stroke Fours and Sevens.

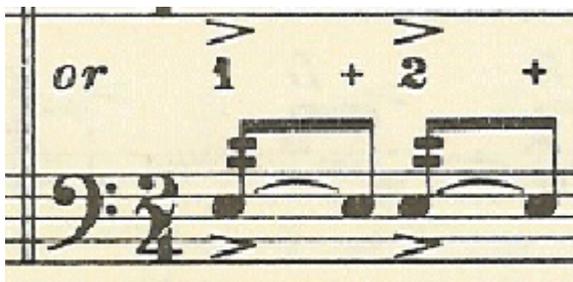
ROLL NOTATION: We could write the open form of the long roll thus:



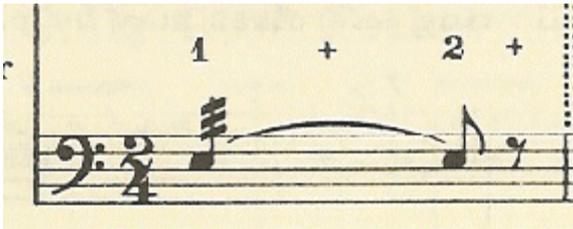
But it is much easier to write it as shown below. This is normally meant to be a closed roll. Roll notation is the subject of much controversy and will be explained in detail later.



THE FIVE-STROKE ROLL: This is one of the shortest of the so called stroke rolls and is usually shown in the music as a **Quaver** tied to a finishing stroke. The build-up for this roll is two strokes with the right hand, two strokes with the left hand and a single stroke with the right hand. It can be played as a true Double Stroke Roll or as Mumma Dadda Roll. Practice this starting very slowly and explore the speed range until it can be played perfectly at marching speed. It can also be played from the left hand.

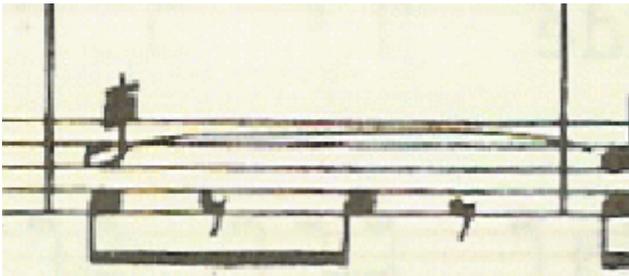


THE NINE-STROKE ROLL: The Nine-stroke roll is usually shown in the music as a **Crotchet** in 2/4 time or a **dotted Crotchet** in 6/8 time tied to a finishing stroke. The build-up for this roll is two strokes with the right hand followed by two strokes with the left hand, two strokes with the right hand, two strokes with the left hand and a single stroke with the right hand. Again it can be played as a true Double Stroke Roll or it will make the sound Mumma Dadda Mumma Dadda Mum if played using the Double Bounce Stroke. Practice this starting very slowly and explore the speed range until it can be played perfectly at marching speed.



THE THIRTEEN-STROKE ROLL: This can be thought of as a Nine-stroke roll played into a Five-stroke roll. The last stroke of the Nine is the first stroke of the five. This is an advanced rudiment seldom used in the Drum Corps

THE SEVENTEEN-STROKE ROLL (THREE-PACE ROLL): This roll is written as a **Minim** tied to a finishing stroke in 2/4 time or a **Dotted Minim** in 6/8 time and in its basic form is a 17 stroke roll. When marching, it is counted one, two, one and takes three paces - left, right, left. Two three-pace rolls are often used as an introduction to marches or drum solos.



THE FIVE-PACE ROLL: This roll is usually written as two **Minims** tied together and then to a finishing stroke in 2/4 time or two **Dotted Minims** in 6/8 time and is counted one, two, one, two, one or one, two, three, four, five. The 5-pace roll is also used as an introduction to marches or drum solos in some bands.

THE SINGLE PARADIDDLE: There are various so called “Diddle” Rudiments, but during the Induction and Improvers Courses you are only required to learn the Single Paradiddle. In its basic form, the Paradiddle is a special way of playing repeated patterns of 8 semi-quavers in 2/4 time using a combination of single and double strokes. Play the strokes evenly and very slowly putting an accent on the first Down Stroke of each four and repeat continuously. Explore the speed range, but slow down if you go wrong. You should eventually be able to play this rudiment as semi-quavers in 2/4 time and 120 beats per minute. However, with some years of practice, it is possible to play this rudiment much faster and even to close it into a paradiddle roll.

	Accent			
Hand	Right	Left	Right	Right
Stroke	Down	Full	Tap	Up
Say	Par	A	Did	Dle
Count	1	A	N	D

	Accent			
Hand	Left	Right	Left	Left
Stroke	Down	Full	Tap	Up
Say	Par	A	Did	Dle
Count	2	A	N	D

FLAMS AND DRAGS: These are the last of the basic rudiments you must learn and are sometimes known as “grace notes”. They have no musical time and cannot be counted like ordinary notes. They are a form of “decoration” to the basic drum beats.

The Flam: This is played by making a soft single stroke just before the main stroke.

The Drag: This is played by making a soft double stroke or double bounce stroke just before the main stroke.