

Kansas State University

Bass Drum Handbook

2019-2020



Kansas State University Marching Band

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The Program

With regular practice of the following program, you will be sure to improve yourself both as an individual and as a member of your ensemble. Remember, it is your responsibility to practice the program concept as outlined on these pages.

Always consider the following points when rehearsing on your own and as an ensemble:

- Practice daily for improvement.
- Play slowly at first, speeding up only after you are sure you are playing correctly.
- Use a metronome!
- Play in front of a mirror, paying particular attention to your style and technique.

TECHNIQUE

A) Etiquette

- Proper posture can only be maintained by:
 - Standing straight, poised and confident with the feet correctly positioned
 - Keeping your drumsticks and mallets straight while at attention
 - Holding your head up with both eyes focused straight ahead at all times
 - Projecting a facial expression of both confidence and aggression
 - Exhibiting absolutely no movement at all while standing at attention
- Mark time technique:
 - For marking time, maintain what was established with posture first and foremost.
 - Feet are parallel and together, heels touching and balls of each foot touching.
 - The pulse is articulated with the heel striking the ground with a 2-inch lift. This is universal across the band.
 - Balance your weight forward on your platform but still be aggressive with the mark time so time can be felt accurately, opposed to your heels barely touching the ground due to overcompensation of balancing your weight forward.
- Rehearsal Etiquette:
 - During drumline sectionals or sub-sectionals each section should organize their backpack in a line or as specified by section leaders. We travel, set up, and leave without a trace, be organized and professional.
 - During full band rehearsals our attention should be directed towards directors and GA's for instruction, but time will be given for section leaders to make specific comments between reps.
 - Silence and rest position should be maintained at all times between reps



Set Position, Sticks up



Set Position, Sticks out

B) Establishing & Maintaining Proper Grip

- The hands are relaxed — no tension!
- The fingers do not come off the sticks
- The sticks act as a natural extension of the forearm
- The sticks are held at a comfortable elevation above the drum surface
- The sticks travel in a straight up and down motion

Match Grip

- Start by making a fish hook with your index finger and placing the stick in the center of that groove, use your thumb to press and support the stick from the other side. This point of contact is one of the “fulcrums” and acts as a pivot point for the stick.
- Lightly wrap the remaining three fingers around the stick. Getting a relaxed feel from the back three fingers is very important!
- Avoid squeezing the stick unnecessarily.

Bass Drums

- There shouldn't be any extra mallet sticking out the bottom of the hand. This is to help get as much velocity behind the stroke as possible.
- The forearm should be parallel to the ground and the mallets should be at about a 45-degree angle from the ground.
- The stroke is generated from a rotation of the forearm for the middle to low range for better control. As dynamics increase, wrist break and extension should be added to this technique to get full dynamic range from your playing.
- This can be modified given specific rhythmic situations like rolling, or playing fast singles, when extending rather than rotating would be necessary.

C) Fingers

- Treat every finger as if it was 20% of each hand's potential. Take one of your fingers away and your ability, sound, and technique drastically decreases. Every finger has a purpose and at no time should they unnecessarily fly off the stick.
- The fingers will be developed and strengthened through various exercises. This will help to improve quality of sound, speed and endurance.

D) The 4 Strokes

- **Full Stroke**
 - The full stroke is a relaxed stroke that starts up and ends up. The velocity can determine whether it is legato or staccato, but its starting position and end position are the same.
 - The arm and wrist both work together in this stroke. Starting with the wrist prepping and your arm contributing weight into each stroke. It is important to turn your wrist and feel the rebound from the drum bring the stick back up. You could contribute this to bouncing a basketball.
 - These can be found and applied in 8-8-16, 'Gatos, Stick Control, and Trip Rolls.

- **Down Stroke**
 - This stroke starts up but ends down. It is important to note that when freezing down in the motion DO NOT SQUEEZE! The weight of your hand simply stopping down will also allow the stick to freeze its motion as well.
- **“Tap” Stroke**
 - While this is an important stroke it shouldn’t be treated any differently from the full stroke.
 - A tap stroke starts down and stays down, but in essence, just like the full stroke, it starts in one spot and ends in that same spot. This is important to think about, so you don’t practice weak or soft tap strokes, they should have the same weight and feel as Full Strokes, just at a different height.
 - These constitute any un-accented beats and make up the inner beats of exercises and music. It is important that those beats still have weight and sound, so time and rhythm don’t suffer.
- **Up Stroke**
 - This is simply any prep you have before any exercise or in space during music.
 - This initiation should come from the stick and fulcrum, as if a string was attached to the end of the stick and was pulled up naturally.
 - These should have the same velocity and maturity that you intend to play with.

F) Diddle Interpretation

Diddles can be categorized into three specific groups that each vary their technique. This is because as tempo decreases or increases it changes how we need to approach two strokes in one hand. Given the level of complexity in much of our warm ups and show music it is important to note the differences in types of diddles and how to approach them.

- **The Double Stroke**
 - The double stroke is exactly what it sounds like, two strokes. It is intentionally labeled this way to emphasize that when played you have full control of both strokes. Using your wrist as the primary fulcrum for this and keeping the weight in your hand even. Not a lot of forearm is involved unless dynamics and tempo deem necessary.
 - These are done at slower tempos ranging from 0 to 120 (differs from player to player) and are much more legato. Examples of this can be found in Stick Control (when taken slowly), ‘Gatos, and the double portion Double Triple Beat.
- **1 ½ Diddle**
 - Don’t be caught off guard by the name, the number doesn’t correlate to any rhythm or time signature. It simply symbolizes that this is the mid-point between the first and last category.

- Examples of these can be found in Trip Rolls if taken at the slower marked tempo. These also qualify as faster paradiddles, and double strokes that fit over 16th note patterns.
- These types of motions can be found in tempos ranging from 120 to 160.
- When playing these you should find that the weight in your hand shifts forward, but it isn't totally at the front. It should feel comfortable to still use the fingers to support the diddle and give more sound and weight to the second partial. Forearm does come into play here, however this is an even mix of both wrist and forearm.
- **The Diddle**
 - This constitutes basically any fast roll exercise or passage in music.
 - These can be found in tempos ranging from 160 and forever.
 - At this point it is necessary that you shift the pressure and weight of the hand and stick to the front of your fulcrum, BUT DO NOT SQUEEZE! It is important that you stay relaxed or it could cause harm to your tendons and arms. At this point you should be using arm to motivate every motion, since the arm has more weight it will help support and put more velocity into your motions which will help your diddles speak.
 - Faster rolls are much harder to achieve because evening out your hands and finding that good balance of pressure in your hands takes practice but working the first two categories and mastering those will create a strong foundation to work on faster rolls.

MUSICAL STANDARDS

A) An understanding of the full dynamic range of levels:

It should be notated that in the actual context of learning show music and developing the hand book that heights shouldn't always correlate to dynamics, as dynamics are relative depending on whatever you're playing. But to develop a consistent dynamic foundation, these are for reference.

- *pp* · 1 1/2 inches
- *p* · 3 inches
- *mp* · 4 1/2 inches
- *mf* · 6 inches
- *f* · 9 inches
- *ff* · 12 inches
- *fff* · 15 inches

B) Quality of Sound

- Achieved through:
 - Practice with metronome
 - Listening/ Balancing
 - Playing a lot!

C) Reading Skills

Because we learn a lot of music throughout the year, and we often do not have a lot of time to learn the music before we perform it, it is important that you understand how to read music. Not having music prepared is unacceptable. It is your responsibility to learn the music on your own and come to rehearsal prepared. Coming to rehearsal unprepared will result in not marching either halftime, pregame or both.

EXERCISES

The following exercises serve many purposes for us. Some of these exercises serve as warm-ups, some of them help develop technique, and many of them do both. Regular practice of these exercises will not only make you a better player, but it will help you understand the mechanics behind playing the instrument.

Always consider the following points when practicing these exercises on your own:

- Use a Metronome
- Practice daily for improvement
- Practice all of these exercises at varying tempos
 - Only move to a faster tempo if you can maintain a relaxed technique
 - Otherwise, slow it down until you can maintain a relaxed technique
- Practice all of these exercises at varying heights
- Practice in front of a mirror and/or record yourself while playing.

8-8-16

♩ = 80-170

Bass Line 1-6

Bass Line 7-12

R... *L...* *R...*

R... *L...* *R...*

5

B. L. 1-6

B. L. 7-12

R... *L...* *R...* *R*

R... *L...* *R...* *R*

Wildcat Accent Tap

♩ = 90-125



R...

L...

R...

5



L...

R...

L...

9



R...

L...

R...

L...

13



R

L

r

l

r

L

R

R

L

L

R

R

L

R

r

l

r

l

r

L

r

r

R

l

r

r

R

r

l

l

r

R

'Gatos

Bass Line 1-6
 Bass Line 7-12

Measure numbers: 120, 132, 144, 156

Circled A: Measure 120
 Circled B: Measure 144

[illegible]

16

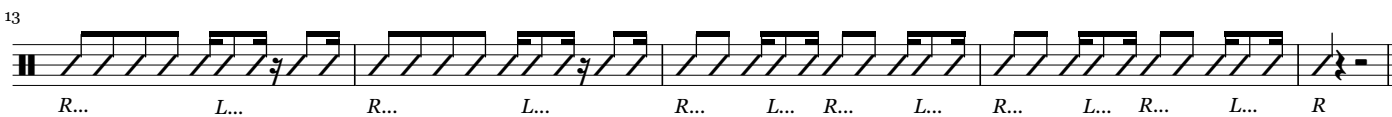
B. L.

B. L.

RLRRRLRLRLRL R L R L R L R... R L R... B B RLRRLRLRLRL R R L L L L R R R RLRR RLRR R R R RL LRL L L R

Double Triple Beat

♩ = 90-110



Stick Control

[illegible]

Phat Phlams

[illegible]

19

B. L.

R R R L

r r l l...

R...
L...

B. L.

R R R L

r r l l...

R...
L...

©

22

B. L.

7/4 6/4 5/4 4/4

R

B. L.

7/4 6/4 5/4 4/4

R

Trip Rolls

Ⓐ

♩ = 130-160

Bass Line 1-6

12/8

R Legato

R R L R R L

R R L L R L L

R R L R L L

Bass Line 7-12

12/8

R Legato

R R L R R L

R R L L R L L

R R L R L L

4

B. L.

R R L R R L

R R L L R L L

R R L R L L

R L...

B. L.

R R L R R L

R R L L R L L

R R L R L L

R L...

Ⓑ

8

B. L.

R L L L R R R

R L r r R L r r R L r l

R r l R R r l R R r l R

B. L.

R L L L R R R

r l R L r l R L r l R L

r L R l r L R l r L R l

12

B. L.

R l r...

r l r l r l r l r l

R l r...

B. L.

R l r...

r l r l r l r l r l

R l r...

15

B. L.

r l r l r l r l r l r l r l r l R l r l R l r l R l r l R R R r l r l r l r l r l

B. L.

r l r l r l r l r l r l r l R l r l R l r l R l r l R R R R l R l R l

18

B. L.

R L L L R l r L r l r l R l r r l r l r l r l r l R L

B. L.

R L L L r l r l r l r l R L R l r L R L R L

20

B. L.

R l r L r l R r l r l R L R...

B. L.

R l r r l r l r l r l r R L R...

22

B. L.

r... r l r r l r r... r l r r l r R R R r L r l R l r... r l r l r l r l r r r r

B. L.

r... r l r r l r r... R R R r L r l R l r l r l r... r r r r

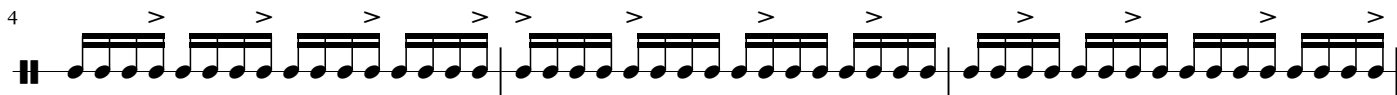
Variations:

Diddles on Accent, After Accent or all taps

Flams on Accent

Insert Rudiments

16th Grid



Triplet Grid

Variations:

Diddles on Accent, After Accent or all taps

Flams on Accent

Insert Rudiments

