

# Tradition of Excellence™ Drum Set Mini-Method

from *Drum Sessions Book 1*, by Peter O’Gorman

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## Dear Percussion Student,

Once you have begun to master the fundamentals of percussion playing, the study of drum set is a natural next step. The benefits are numerous: advanced coordination and technique, refined listening skills, and frequent opportunities to apply your talents creatively in unlimited styles of music—all important facets of being a well-rounded percussionist.

While this Mini-Method shows you how to set up a full, average-size kit, the included introductory exercises only require four surfaces: snare drum, bass drum (often referred to as kick drum), ride cymbal, and hi-hat. For more comprehensive drum set instruction, continue with *Drum Sessions Books 1 and 2* by Peter O’Gorman (Neil A. Kjos Music Company edition numbers 151DCT and 152DCT). Much of this Mini-Method’s content is excerpted from Book 1.

Learning to play drum set is fun and exciting. This Mini-Method will give you the solid foundation you need to continue your drum set studies for many years to come.

Best wishes,



Bruce Pearson



Ryan Nowlin

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## Drum Set (Drum Kit)

### Set-Up



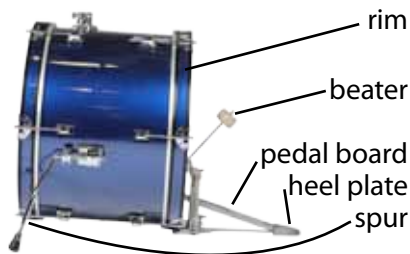
- 1) Set up the kit roughly as shown in the photograph (set-up varies between drum kits). Begin by positioning the bass drum and attaching the pedal, then position the snare drum, toms, cymbals, hi-hat, and throne in relation to one another. To prevent the kit pieces from moving when you play, set up on a rug or carpeted surface.
- 2) Adjust the throne height so that a) when seated, your thighs are almost parallel to the floor and b) when your feet are resting on the bass drum and hi-hat pedals, your lower legs are angled away from your body.

3) Adjust the tension of the bass drum pedal so that it can support your relaxed foot but still move easily.

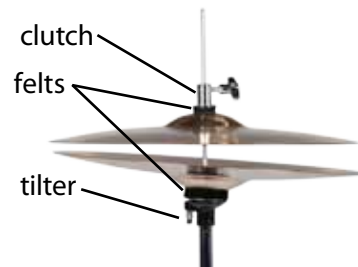
4) Adjust the snare drum stand so that the drum's top rim is approximately waist high when you are seated on the throne.

5) Adjust the hi-hat cymbals so that a) the bottom cymbal is six to ten inches above the top rim of the snare drum and b) the cymbals are approximately one inch apart when the pedal is at rest (up).

#### BASS DRUM AND PEDAL

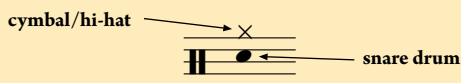


#### HI-HAT CYMBALS AND STAND



- 6) Adjust the rest of the kit elements so that every drum and cymbal surface is within comfortable reach and is easy to play. You want to be able to move around the kit without unnecessary motion and be able to play in a relaxed fashion.
- 7) Place the music stand near the hi-hat and adjust the height so that you can see both the music and your director. You may need to rotate the entire kit to allow for a comfortable sightline.

**Terms & Symbols**



**drum set notation** – each surface is assigned to a line or space on the staff (toms, bass drum, hi-hat with foot, and other cymbals are assigned to other lines and spaces)

**Drum Set Technique**

**ride** – a steady, repetitive pattern usually played on a ride cymbal or hi-hat with either hand; for now, keep the hi-hat cymbals closed when riding by depressing the pedal with your left foot



**Cymbal Ride**

Hold the stick with your normal grip and rotate your forearm so that your thumb is facing up. Strike the cymbal with the tip of the stick halfway between the bell and edge. You may also ride with your palm down.



**Right Hand Hi-Hat Ride**

Cross your right hand over your left, keeping your left hand in position to strike the snare drum. Strike the top hi-hat cymbal with the tip of the right stick, about halfway between the bell and edge. You may also ride with your thumb facing up.



**Left Hand Hi-Hat Ride**

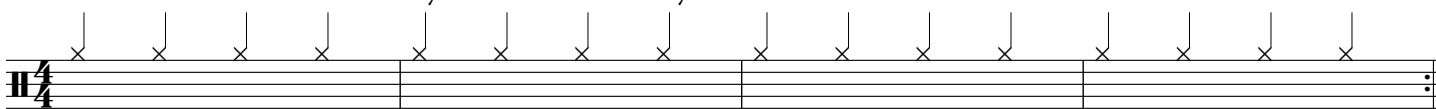
Strike the top hi-hat cymbal with the tip of the left stick, about halfway between the bell and edge.

**coordination** – combining independent musical elements played by the hands and feet to create a single, more complex musical element

notation, ride

**1. Quarter Note Ride**

- ▶ Practice first with your right hand on ride cymbal or closed hi-hat, and then with your left hand on closed hi-hat. Sit up straight on the throne, but remain relaxed.
- ▶ Also try riding on hi-hat with the shoulder of the stick striking the edges of both hi-hat cymbals simultaneously.



- right hand ride
  - left hand ride
- ▶ Practice both ways. Once mastered, check the boxes.

**MORE PRACTICE:** *Tradition of Excellence Percussion Book 1* p. 44, #1-20 — play rhythms on ride cymbal or hi-hat to build your chops.

coordination

**2. Basic Quarter Note Ride/Snare Coordination Patterns**

- ▶ Repeat each pattern several times at different tempos. Use a metronome.

A.

B.

C.

D.

E.

F.

- right hand ride, left hand snare
- left hand ride, right hand snare

### 3. Advanced Quarter Note Ride/Snare Coordination Patterns

- right hand ride, left hand snare
- left hand ride, right hand snare

**MORE PRACTICE:** *Tradition of Excellence Percussion Book 1 p. 44, #1-20*  
 — play rhythms on snare with one hand, and add a quarter note ride with the other; first practice snare alone, then add ride.

### 4. Eighth Note Ride

- right hand ride
- left hand ride

**MORE PRACTICE:** *Tradition of Excellence Percussion Book 1 p. 45, #21-40*— play rhythms on ride cymbal or hi-hat to build your chops.

### 5. Basic Eighth Note Ride/Snare Coordination Patterns

▶ Repeat each pattern several times at different tempos. Use a metronome.

- right hand ride, left hand snare
- left hand ride, right hand snare

## Drum Set Technique

To help you learn more complex coordination patterns, gradually add notes to the pattern. For example, to learn #6A below:

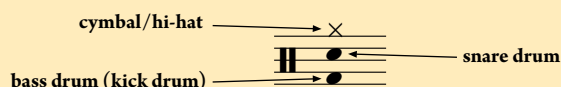
Repeat each step several times until you are comfortable with it, being sure to count through the entire measure (including the rests on each repeat). Practice slowly at first, and add a measure of rest to each step if desired.

### 6. Advanced Ride/Snare Coordination Patterns

▶ Repeat each pattern several times at different tempos. Use a metronome. If you prefer, practice the left column first, followed by the right column.

- right hand ride, left hand snare
- left hand ride, right hand snare

## Terms & Symbols



**drum set notation** – each surface is assigned to a line or space on the staff (toms, hi-hat with foot, and other cymbals are assigned to other lines and spaces)

## Drum Set Technique

The bass drum (kick drum) is played by your right foot. Use either **heel down** or **heel up (ball of foot) technique** when playing. It is recommended that you learn both techniques. Heel down makes it easier to play softly and with more control. Heel up makes it easier to play faster and with more power.

### Heel Down Technique



- 1) Place your right foot flat on the pedal board. Your heel should be on the heel plate and the beater should be in a rest position off the head.



- 2) Using your heel as a fulcrum (pivot point), quickly move the ball of your foot in a down/up motion causing the beater to strike the head and rebound. Both the ball of your foot and your heel should remain on the pedal board throughout the entire stroke.

### Heel Up (Ball of Foot) Technique



- 1) Place the ball of your right foot on the pedal board, two to four inches above the heel plate. Your heel should be raised off the plate and the beater should be in a rest position off the head.



- 2) Raise your leg slightly and allow it to drop back down, causing the beater to strike the head and rebound. The ball of your foot should remain on the pedal board and your heel should remain off the heel plate throughout the entire stroke.



## 7. Bass Drum Patterns

► Practice first using the heel down technique, and then with the heel up (ball of foot) technique. Use a metronome.

A.  B. 

C.  D. 

E.  F. 

G.  H. 

I.  J. 

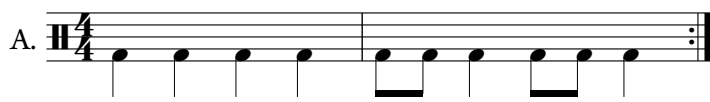

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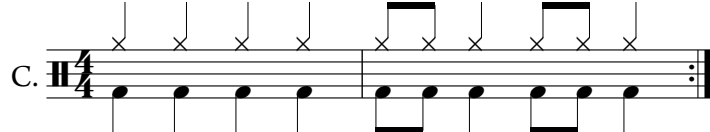
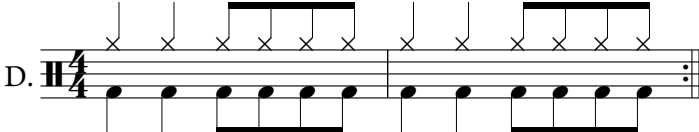
- heel down
- heel up (ball of foot)

**MORE PRACTICE:** *Tradition of Excellence Percussion Book 1*  
pp. 44-46—play rhythms on bass drum.

## 8. Chop Builders

► Play each Chop Builder for at least one minute without stopping. Practice at different tempos and dynamics. Use a metronome.

A.  B. 

C.  D. 

- C and D: right hand ride
- C and D: left hand ride

**MORE PRACTICE:** *Tradition of Excellence Percussion Book 1*  
pp. 44-46—play rhythms on ride cymbal or hi-hat combined with bass drum (as in C and D above).

### 9. Ride/Bass Drum Coordination Patterns

▶ Repeat each pattern several times at different tempos. Use a metronome. Apply the step-by-step technique on Mini-Method page 5 to help you learn patterns that are difficult.

- right hand ride
- left hand ride

### 10. Snare/Bass Drum Coordination Patterns

▶ Repeat each pattern several times at different tempos. Use a metronome. Apply the step-by-step technique on Mini-Method page 5 to help you learn patterns that are difficult.

- left hand snare
- right hand snare



## Drum Set Technique

**groove** – the foundation upon which a pop, rock, or jazz tune is built

To help you learn grooves, first play each combination of two limbs (hands and/or feet), then combine all limbs, as shown in the steps below. Repeat each step several times until you are comfortable, then move on to the next step. When you reach Step 4, play the groove for two minutes without stopping. Use a metronome.

### groove 11. Grooves

<p>A. <b>Step 1</b></p> <p><b>Step 2</b></p> <p><b>Step 3</b></p>	<p><b>Step 4 (Groove)</b></p>
<p>B. <b>Step 1</b></p> <p><b>Step 2</b></p> <p><b>Step 3</b></p>	<p><b>Step 4 (Groove)</b></p>
<p>C. <b>Step 1</b></p> <p><b>Step 2</b></p> <p><b>Step 3</b></p>	<p><b>Step 4 (Groove)</b></p>
<p>D. <b>Step 1</b></p> <p><b>Step 2</b></p> <p><b>Step 3</b></p>	<p><b>Step 4 (Groove)</b></p>
<p>E. <b>Step 1</b></p> <p><b>Step 2</b></p> <p><b>Step 3</b></p>	<p><b>Step 4 (Groove)</b></p>
<p>F. <b>Step 1</b></p> <p><b>Step 2</b></p> <p><b>Step 3</b></p>	<p><b>Step 4 (Groove)</b></p>
<p>G. <b>Step 1</b></p> <p><b>Step 2</b></p> <p><b>Step 3</b></p>	<p><b>Step 4 (Groove)</b></p>
<p>H. <b>Step 1</b></p> <p><b>Step 2</b></p> <p><b>Step 3</b></p>	<p><b>Step 4 (Groove)</b></p>

- right hand ride, left hand snare
- left hand ride, right hand snare