

To be flawless is not good enough. It impresses no one. To be impressive you must have flawless technique, and exude confidence in everything that you do. You must force everyone that sees or hears you at any time to be impressed by everything you do. This means you must perfect expression, dynamic range, your quality of sound on top of having perfect technique. To be perfect, or flawless is not good enough. You must focus on being more than that. You must present yourselves as an image of absolute excellence. This is the only way you will achieve what you want. Before we can be more than perfect, we must first be flawless.

To be flawless we must first define, and achieve all the details of your technique. Through definition, you can achieve a flawless and uniform technique, and therefore achieve an undeniable uniformity of sound. We must make sure your critics see and hear only perfection.

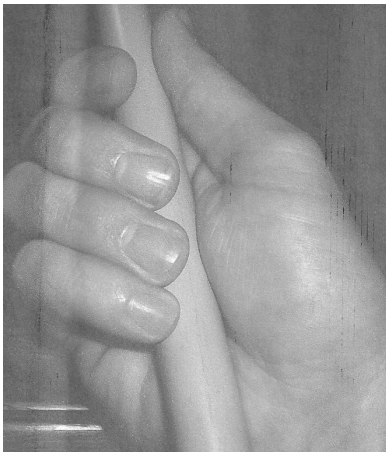
The details in this packet must be achieved before you start learning the show. For perspective, there are 375,804 minutes in a drum corps. season starting from November camp and going to finals night. At sub-sectional move- ins we focus on applying our technique to the book. That means uniformity of approach and sound must be achieved with the entire exercise packet 3 months before the first show. They have from the moment they move in until finals to focus on being more than perfect. This applies to you and your group in that you must give yourself as much time as possible to apply the technique. In order to make this happen we must put forth a superior effort into not only achieving these details at rehearsals, but by preparing all of these details at home, so that we can focus on the uniformity of these details at rehearsals.

The best way to seem exceptional is by being exceptional. Therefore, we will not first consume ourselves with image. We will never tell you to "make sure you look confident". We will not tell you to shift your weight forward on your toes, or contort your body in ways that will make you seem more confident. We will make sure you have a reason to be confident. This is why you will look confident. We will focus first on perfecting our sound, so that when we play we achieve a sound that inspires awe. In this way you will not only seem excellent, but you will be excellent.

We will Start with grip.

# Grip

The grip that we use is American matched grip. The fulcrum consists of two points of contact created by the thumb and the index finger gripping the implement approximately a third of the way from the butt of the stick. The fulcrum should be firm enough to keep the stick/mallet from moving, but relaxed enough to allow the stick/mallet to resonate. The top of the hand should be slightly turned from flat to a 45-degree angle. The fingers should maintain contact with the stick at all times, cradling it in the “bed” of the palm. Make sure your grip allows the mallet to be an extension of the arm, so there is a straight line from the elbow to the mallet head. Do not generate an extra angle at your grip, so that the mallet creates an angle with your arm, because this would cause you to lose power and speed.  $F=MA$ ,  $A= dv/dt$



# Stroke

Approach to the drum: Relaxation is the key. There must not be any tension when approaching the drum. A “one drum mentality” is applied to movement and motion around the drums, meaning: legato remains legato, marcato remains marcato, staccato remains staccato, a whip stroke remains whip stroke. Parts should first be learned on one drum to ensure quality of sound, rhythmic accuracy, and muscle memory sensation. Applied to the around, all of these aspects should remain, most importantly, the muscle memory sensations. Stay as relaxed moving around as you would playing on one drum. Shoulders should remain stationary, low and relaxed during difficult scrape passages and crossovers. A good guideline to go by: 70% wrist and 30% finger. Keep in mind; this guideline is tempo and volume conducive.

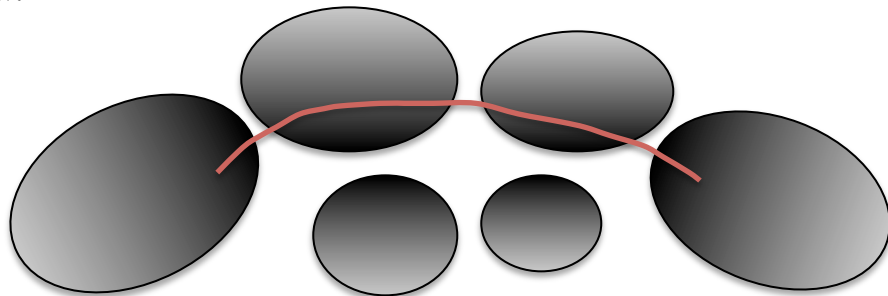
## Playing Position

The head of the mallet should rest approximately  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch above the surface of the drumhead, sloping down at a 10-degree angle. The head should rest approximately  $1\frac{1}{2}$  inches from the rim. Default tacit position is defined as sticks split over 1 & 2. Stick movements prior to playing will be defined according to the music. The “T’ed” up approach will be used for the outer drums. Notice that the heads are equidistant from the rim.



The elbow should rest near the player's body, but not touching. At no point should tension enter the arms, shoulders, neck, or face.

When traveling from A to B, maintain an arc, never pulling the elbows back. When moving to the 6" & 8" drums, the elbows pull back while keeping the shoulders soft and low.



## Crosses

There are 3 basic kinds of crosses.

1. Fulcrum to Fulcrum - this only happens when you are playing drums that are beside one another such as the 1 or the 2, 1 or the 3 and so on. You should make sure to cross only fulcrum and not shaft as to not inhibit the movement of the hand underneath the crossing hand.
2. Wrist to Wrist - this crossover is when you are crossing over the 1 to 4 drums or the 2 to 3 drums. The wrists will be the point of crossing-over.
3. Forearm to Forearm - this only happens once, when you are crossing over the 4 and 3 drums.

One thing to keep in mind when doing crossovers is to keep the auxiliary hand (the hand under the crossing hand) low to the drum. This will ensure that you won't bump hands or sticks.

Height of the drum must always facilitate the marching technique and free motion of the legs. Remember – relaxation is the key. Height of the drum is important to maximize relaxation and eliminate tension.

## The Metronome

Consistent tempo is an important part of being a percussionist and the metronome can help you achieve this. However, the metronome should be used as a guide for playing in time and not as a crutch. Using the metronome with half notes instead of quarter notes will increase your tempo awareness. Most of our tempo responsibilities include either playing with a met or playing with another person. It is recommended to practice both.

## Recommendations on Equipment and Tuning

The Stage 4 drum line uses Dynasty MT-680234 marching toms. High schools may want to try the lighter less expensive MT-668024. We use a six drum 6", 8", 10", 12", 13" and 14" configuration. Other combinations may consist of two 6" toms and either 10-12-13-14 or 8-10-12-13 inch configurations. The smaller drums have less presence in the ensemble but may be the right balance for small bands and students of small physical stature.

At Stage 4 we also use Innovative Percussion sticks and mallets. We currently are using the IP TS-2 Multi Tom Stick the features a round nylon bead that offers a fuller sound than sticks but more articulate than a mallet. We also use the IP TS-TJ. For High Schools we recommend the TS-2 Multi Tom stick and the FT-1B, the latter being more durable and suitable for younger players.

As far as tuning the Multi-Toms there are numerous schools of thoughts and approaches. A good rule of thumb is good separation between the drums with thirds and fourths being preferred. At Stage 4, we use a BbM9 chord with Bb on the 14", D on the 13", F on the 12", A on the 10", C on the 8" and F on the 6". We find this series of pitches desirable because they blend well with the Bb instrument.