

# Drum Set Creativity

## DRUM LESSONS IN LA.COM

If you've ever gone through a period of time where you feel like everything you play sounds the same or you just want to come up with some new ideas, here are some things to help you get creative with your playing.

**Study and observe what great drummers have done.** If you play in a cover band, you are in a position to learn the parts that successful drummers have played **and** how it affects the music. If you're not in a cover band, you can do the same thing by analyzing, learning, and paying attention to the parts of great songs.

This isn't to say to just copy what others are doing. Think about the concept behind what's going on. For example, in the first verse, the snare is a cross-stick on the count of 2 and there is a tom instead of the snare on the count of 4. Or in the bridge, the drummer plays a half time marching feel. Think about what these concepts do for the music?

Some things to pay attention to would be, are the drums playing with or against the other rhythmic instruments? How do the drums support or interact with the melodic instruments? Are the fills more rhythmic or melodic?

(Here is a [blog post](#) analyzing how the drums and bass work together on several hit songs.)

I do recommend learning and transcribing specific part though. From there you can take it further and make it your own.

**Study what other instruments are doing.** The drums are primarily a rhythmic instrument, but you can get some inspiration by analyzing the melodies and phrasing of the melodic instruments in songs. You don't have to know how to play these instruments (although that's not a bad idea). Think of a song and play the melody as a beat or fill.

**Study different styles of music.** You can get some fresh ideas about the things I mentioned previously by analyzing music in different genres. For example, if you are primarily a rock drummer, studying jazz can give you ideas as to how to interact with the other musicians. You can even get ideas from different periods of the same genre. Rock n roll from the 50s is different than rock n roll from the 90s.

## Drum Set Creativity

**Create with your existing vocabulary.** You can take what you already know and try adding, subtracting, and altering it. Take a beat and fill that you know well and add flams and drags to it to spice it up. Add ghost notes to the snare, change up the hi-hat pattern. Try playing your fills in unison or substituting the bass drum for some of the notes. Play some of the fill as doubles. Orchestrate the phrasing of your beat and fill around the drum set.

**Get creative with instructional books.** Try to apply the exercises in books you are working out of. Make a beat or fill out of what you're working on when you have a grasp of it. You can make beats and fills out of the rudiments. Start them at different parts of the measure to get them to sound completely different.

**Change your point of view.** You can also get some creative ideas by changing up your drum set up, tuning or muffling your kit differently, playing with different drumsticks or brushes, or adding electronics to your set up.

Just like anything, the more you practice something, the better you get at it. It may be worthwhile to make working on your creativity part of your regular practice routine. I recommend recording what you come up with to see how it sounds and more importantly, think about how and where you would use these things appropriately. I hope this helps.