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DRUM TIPS

to make you a better drummer

DRUM LESSONS IN LA.COM



Stefano Ashbridge

25 Drum Tips to Make You a Better Drummer

These tips about practicing and playing the drums were compiled from the [Drum Set Bulletin](#) newsletter. Some of these are somewhat obvious tips that not everyone implements, while others are a little more inventive. Whether you're a beginner or a more experienced drummer, I hope there is something here that will make your drumming journey a little easier and more fun. Here we go.

PLAYING TIPS

1. You can get some cool muted sounds from your acoustic drum set by placing a spare drum head upside down on top of your drums.
2. If you play really hard and have a problem with your snare drum moving around, try loosening the snare basket so it's not too tight. Also, make sure the stand's legs are retracted considerably.
3. When considering the tempo of a song, the vocals are a good guide. Sing the song to-yourself to make sure the lyrics don't sound rushed.

4.

If you play with loops, treat them like another instrument. The loop is conveying a feel and groove that we need to play with, not over.

PRACTICING TIPS

5. Use words to help with odd time phrasing. For example, think of a 5 syllable word or phrase like *hippopotamus* while playing in 5.

- 6.** Videorecord yourself playing drums. You will be amazed at what you can learn from this. Everything from your setup to the look on your face.
- 7.** Making time to practice will usually involve the cooperation of others in your household. Whether its a significant other or room mates, let them know your goals and how important your practice time is to your improvement. Come to an agreement on when you can have uninterrupted practice time.
- 8.** One way to spark some creativity in your playing is to give yourself some limitations. Play along to songs with just your snare drum or try playing songs with just a kick, snare, hi hat, and nothing else. You may come up with some good stuff.
- 9.** If you have trouble playing with a metronome, it may help to think of it as an instrument being played by another musician, like a cowbell, in perfect time.
- 10.** If you feel stuck in a creative rut with your playing, one thing that may inspire you is to move your drums and cymbals around. Change the order of your toms or take away or add things to your kit.
- 11.** Practice the rudiments along to music. It makes practicing them more fun. Find songs at different tempos to keep challenging yourself.
- 12.** If you find it difficult to find the time to practice, try this. For one month, make a commitment to practice for just 5 minutes-5 days a week, for the whole month. (Most likely you can find 5 minutes to practice and you will usually want to play longer). After you have made a habit of doing it consistently for a month, increase the time to 10 minutes-five days a week, for a month. Then 20 minutes, then 40 minutes, and then 60 minutes or as long as you can. If you can practice specifically targeted material consistently, you will definitely see improvements. (Learn more about revising your practicing [HERE](#)).
- 13.** To get some drumming ideas, play phrases from your favorite songs on the drums. For example, work out the guitar lick on your drums.
- 14.** When playing odd time signatures, it can help to break down the count in groups of 3s, 2s, and 1s. For example, think of a measure in 7/8 as a group of 3 and two groups of 2. (1-2-3, 1-2, 1-2)

MAINTENANCE TIPS

15.

Write down the serial numbers of all of your drums and other equipment (and also take pictures) so you have a way to identify them if they should get stolen.

16. If the claws on your snare stand keep opening up when you play the snare, applying some plumber's tape on the threading just below the adjustment mechanism should keep it in place.

17. To save time when changing snare side heads, use some paint or nail polish to mark the position of the straps or wires that hold the snares, so you can put them back exactly where they were.

18. Use a can of compressed air to help clean out dust between lugs and places that are hard to reach with a cleaning rag.

19. If your drum has a stripped tension rod and you don't have access to a spare, some plumber's tape wrapped around it can temporarily keep the drum in tune.

SETTING UP TIPS

20. If you have different sized sticks in your stick bag, consider marking the butt ends with different color marker or tape to distinguish the different pairs. This helps if you need to get to certain sticks in a hurry.

21. If you have many stands that you set up and break down, it can save time to color code or number the parts that separate so you know which part goes where.

22. To save time when setting up your drums (and to ensure you set them up the same way every time), use memory locks on your stands or mark off the height and angles on your stands. If memory locks are not available, use hose clamps. You can get those at any hardware store and they are not expensive. Also, use a drum rug and mark where all of the stands go. A drum rug will also ensure that your bass drum does not slip away from you when you are performing.

23.

Keep a tool kit with spare drum parts, drum keys, snare wires, etc. in case something breaks or goes missing and needs to be replaced ASAP.

24. While in transit, you can protect the hi hat pull rod (the part where the hi hat actually clamps onto) by extending the tubing all the way up. If that makes it too tall for your trap case, take the pull rod and the tubing off and store them together. Keep the hi hat clutch clamped on the top of the rod so they don't separate.

25. If you mike your drums (or anything else) and have problems with the microphone slipping from the clip, put a rubber washer or rubber band on the far side of the mike between the mike and the clip.





Drummer and educator Stefano Ashbridge has a passion for music that has taken him on an amazing journey of playing, teaching, recording, and touring internationally. He has formed a creative style of playing; always serving the song, and making it sound and feel good. He has spent the last 3 decades developing a successful teaching strategy that has helped hundreds of drummers to improve quickly and have fun learning the music they love.

Stefano has studied drum set percussion with world class drummers such as Zoro (Lenny Kravitz, New Edition) and Mark Schulman (Pink, Foreigner). He has also studied songwriting, audio engineering, and the music business.

Originally from Naples, Italy, he is now working professionally in Los Angeles. Some of the bands Stefano has worked with include Brad Wilson of Stone, Rakit, Alan Ritchson, and Grammy nominee Derek Jordan. He also took home the "Electronica Drummer of The Year" award at the L.A. Music Awards.

