

## 10 Ways To Change Your Snare Drum Tone

We have a lot of choices when it comes to getting different snare drum sounds (the type of shell, type of heads, etc). Today, I want to encourage you to experiment with getting different tones out of your snare with these 10 ideas. Keep in mind that how the drum is tuned and/or muffled will affect how each of these sound but let's get creative.

### 1. CENTER



The standard way to strike the snare drum would be dead center. This gives you the fullest sound. Usually, you would let the stick rebound off of the head to let the drum resonate but try leaving the stick on the head for a muted effect.

### 2. EDGE



Try striking the snare close to the edge. This brings out the drum's overtones.

## 3. ANGLED



Playing the snare with the sticks at a sharp angle can give you a different effect, especially when you buzz the notes.

## 4. RIM SHOT



Rim shots are a commonly used technique. This entails striking the head and the rim at the same time. This gives the drum a more piercing sound. It's worth the time to develop your ability to play consistent rim shots when needed.

## 5. CROSS STICK



Cross sticks (also known as side sticks) give you a wood block sound. This is another commonly used technique.

Lay the stick down on the drum with the tip close to the edge of the head and the butt end laying across the rim. Pick the stick up while leaving the tip on the head and strike the rim. I usually leave my palm on the head to mute it.



Playing the cross stick in the center of the drum will give you the fullest sound but experiment with playing the side stick on different parts of the drum.



You can also get some funky sounds by playing the rim with one hand along with the side stick on your other hand. Try playing flams this way.



You can also play flams with one hand using cross sticks by striking the rim of a nearby tom before landing on the snare.

## 6. STICK SHOT



The stick shot involves striking a stick that is touching the head with the other stick. Usually, you would leave the stick on the head and not let it rebound to get a more woody sound. Stick shots are a jazz staple.



## 7. SHELL



You can also strike the side of the drum with your stick like you would play a timbale. I'm a bit squeamish about doing this because I don't want to mess up the look of my drums, but it's an option.

## 8. SPARE HEAD



You can take a spare drum head and place it upside down on your snare drum to get a thicker sound. Actually, a company called big fat snare drum has taken this concept to the next level. They have some really cool products that give you this kind of effect. Check them out at [bigfatsnaredrum.com](http://bigfatsnaredrum.com)

## 9. CYMBAL



You can get some really interesting sounds by placing a splash cymbal on your snare drum (as well as your other drums). This obviously mutes the drum somewhat, but the resonance of the cymbal can make an interesting sound. I mount the cymbal on a hi hat clutch so I can lift it up while I'm playing this way.

## 10. UPSIDE DOWN



Try turning the snare drum upside down. You can drag a stick across the wires. Be careful when striking the bottom head though, because it is usually really thin and you can break it easily.

Experiment with trying these tones in different parts of the songs that you play. For example, plenty of songs have a side stick in the verse and a center stroke in the chorus. Try playing quietly on the edge for the verse and use rim-shots in the chorus for contrasting effect. (You could do the same thing with your hi hats. Play on the bell on the verse and the edge in the chorus.)

Sometimes you just need one consistent sound throughout whatever you're playing, but other times you can add some nice contrast by experimenting with the above suggestions.

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