

# PERCUSSION COURSE

INSTRUCTOR'S GUIDE



↑ LEVEL 5 ↓



MUSIC AND ARTS MINISTRIES  
CANADA AND BERMUDA

## **Table of Contents**

<b><u>Lesson</u></b>	<b><u>Page</u></b>	<b><u>Material</u></b>
<b>Review</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Triplets, Other Instruments</b>
<b>5.1</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>More Scales</b>
<b>5.2</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>Swing Rhythms</b>
<b>5.3</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>Timpani</b>
<b>5.4</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>More Techniques</b>
<b>Rudiments</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>Rudiment Practice</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>Level 5 Wrap-up</b>

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## **Introduction to the Instructor's Guide**

Welcome to the Instructor's Guide for the Percussion Course. This book is meant to be used by the teacher/instructor of the course, either at music camps or in other programs.

Each student should have their own copy of the student workbook. In addition to these books, the students should be learning from our Music Theory course to help with all things music related. Learning percussion involves a lot of musical knowledge. At times, this course will work under the assumption that the students have already grasped certain music theory concepts. This course is functional for any number of students, and is also usable for self-teaching purposes.

Each lesson is designed to take approximately 30-45 minutes long including teaching and practice time. Do not let the students take shortcuts. It is important to practice each exercise at multiple speeds (fast and slow). Be sure to use additional ideas to re-enforce specific concepts to meet the needs of your students. Keep in mind that not every student will progress at the same pace. This may require working one bar at a time, or repeating more complex lessons and material.

Wherever you see boxed text with written instructions, this indicates teaching instructions that are not included in the student workbook.

Each student should take a placement test before being placed in a level. After a student completes a level, there is a separate final test that should be completed and passed before moving on to the next level. Be sure you have these materials.

If you are unfamiliar with percussion playing yourself, the workbook, along with this instructor's guide, should give you the necessary information to learn as you go.

Let's get teaching!

# Introduction and Review

**Instructor's tip:**

It is important that all students have good music theory knowledge in order to get the most out of this book. The recommended minimum level in the Music Theory course achieved should be approximately Level 4. This page provides an opportunity to refresh the minds of the students, but does not teach these concepts.

Before we start Level 5, here is a quick look at various basics learned in the previous levels. Be sure to check out the previous books if you feel you need to refresh any of this material. But this page should be a helpful reminder of what was covered in Level 4.

**Triplets:**

A triplet is a group of three notes that are played within one beat. In 4/4 time, you can have as many as 12 triplet eighths in one measure.

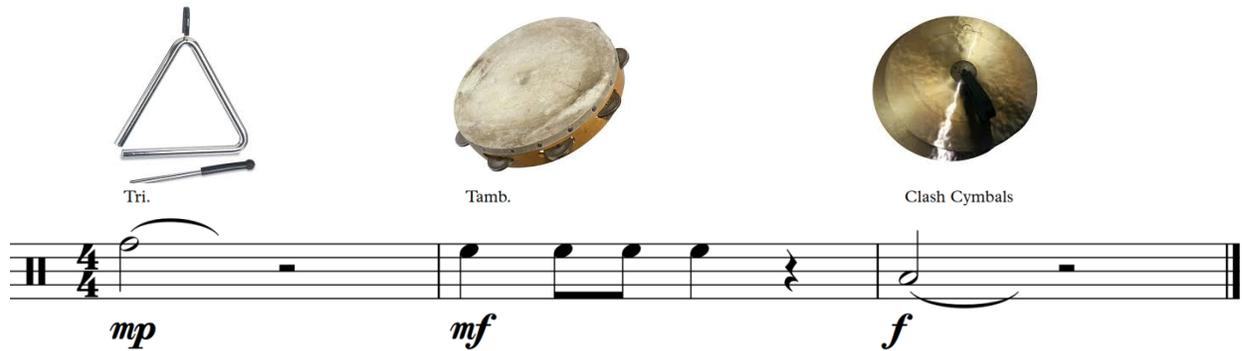


**Instructor's tip:**

In addition to looking at triplets, it might be helpful to review time signatures. This might include counting out loud in both common time and compound time (ex: 4/4 & 6/8).

## Other Instruments:

A common notation for triangle, tambourine and crash cymbal.



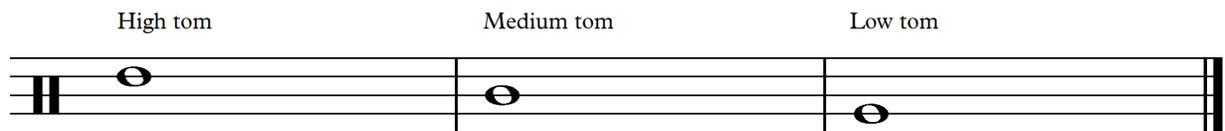
The image shows three photographs of instruments: a triangle with a mallet, a tambourine, and a pair of clash cymbals. Below them is a musical staff in 4/4 time. The first measure contains a triangle note (a circle with a vertical line) on a middle line, marked *mp*. The second measure contains a tambourine note (a circle with a vertical line) on a middle line, marked *mf*. The third measure contains a crash cymbal note (a circle with a vertical line) on a middle line, marked *f*. The staff ends with a double bar line.

### Instructor's tip:

For proper playing technique for these instruments, see Level 4. Make sure the students also remember the notation for snare, bass drum and suspended cymbal.

## Tom-toms:

Toms are generally used as part of the drum kit. Here is the notation for high, medium and low toms.



The image shows three musical staves, each representing a different tom. The first staff is labeled 'High tom' and has a note on the top line. The second staff is labeled 'Medium tom' and has a note on the middle line. The third staff is labeled 'Low tom' and has a note on the bottom line. Each staff ends with a double bar line.

### Instructor's tip:

Take time to listen to your students perform. Have them play a lot, and give constructive comments throughout the book. If you can, always demonstrate how to play a technique.

## Lesson 5.1 More Scales

In Level 4, we learned about playing major scales on keyboard percussion. Let's tackle three more major scales, remembering that they are all built on the following pattern of tones and semitones: **T T S T T T S**

**Instructor's tip:**

Students should already be well versed in C, F and G major from the previous level. While it's not essential to play these scales perfectly, it would be beneficial to review Lesson 4.1 (Level 4).

### Bb Major Scale

T T S T T T S

Bb C D Eb F G A Bb

### D Major Scale

T T S T T T S

D E F# G A B C# D

### Eb Major Scale

T T S T T T S

Eb F G Ab Bb C D Eb

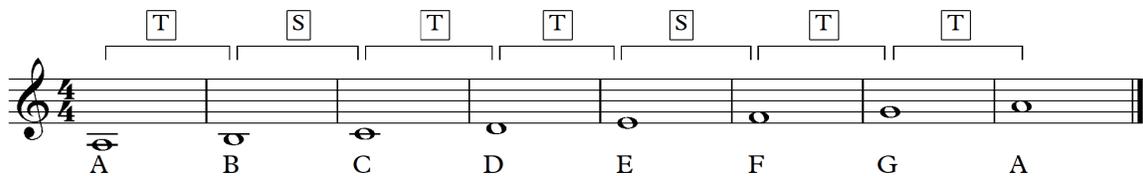
## Minor Scales

Sometimes music will be in a minor key. We need to work toward being able to play comfortably in these key signatures. It is easier than you might think since we have already learned some minor scales without being aware of it.

First, let's take a look at how a minor scale is built. For now, we will only work on the natural minor scale which uses the following pattern of tones and semitones:

**T S T T S T T**

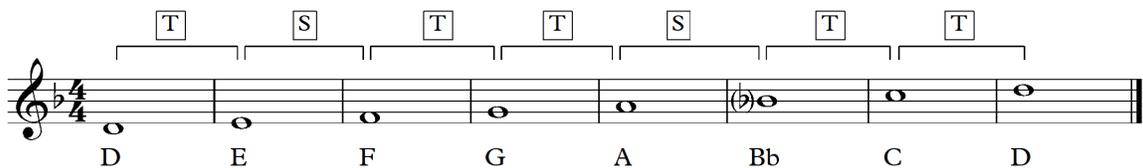
### A Natural Minor Scale



Notice how the **A minor scale** is the same as the **C major scale**, only starting on the note A. There are no flats or sharps, just like the C major scale. This is what we call a relative major/minor.

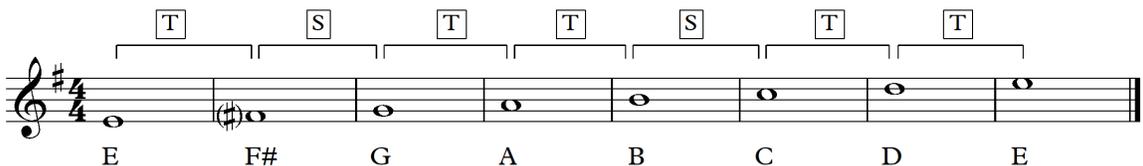
See if you can identify what the relative major is for this next scale, D minor.

### D Natural Minor Scale



What major key has one flat? Can you identify the next scale?

### E Natural Minor Scale



The trick to identifying the relative minor is that it is 3 semitones lower than the major. Also, notice that the third note of each minor scale is your relative major. For a major scale, the sixth note will be your relative minor.

## Let's practice

The following exercises are designed to expand your abilities with keyboard/mallet percussion. As you work through all of them, try to recognize the feeling of certain key signatures and their stickings. For example, in

**Bb major**, you may find yourself playing all of the **E flats** with your right hand. Let that hand gravitate towards that spot on the keyboard.

### Instructor's tip:

Keyboard percussion instruments and mallets are required for these exercises. Once they are comfortable with the different notes, set a metronome ranging from ♩=72 to about ♩=120+.

a) 

b) 

c) 

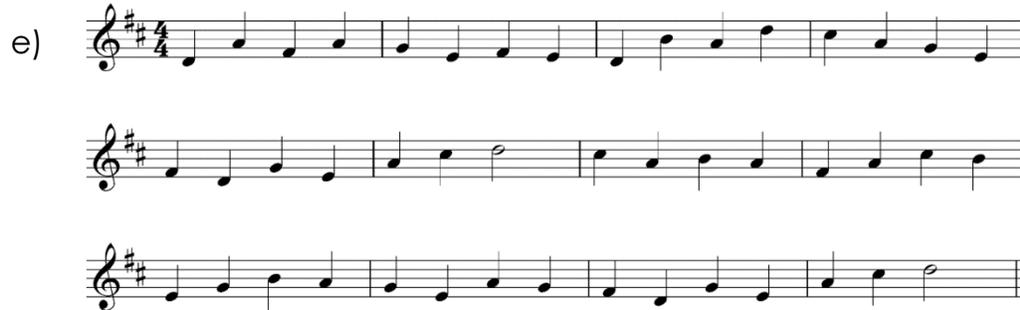
You should try to practice your major scales in a variety of rhythms. The attention given to scales enhances your ability to play within that particular key.

Let's take a look at **D major**. We now have two sharps to play. At times, it will be easier to use double stroke patterns in this key signature.

**Instructor's tip:**

Some students will progress slower than others. Use these exercises as guides, but don't simply play straight through them all. Instruct bar by bar when necessary. Continue to reinforce personal scale practice as the key to success.

d) 

e) 

f) 

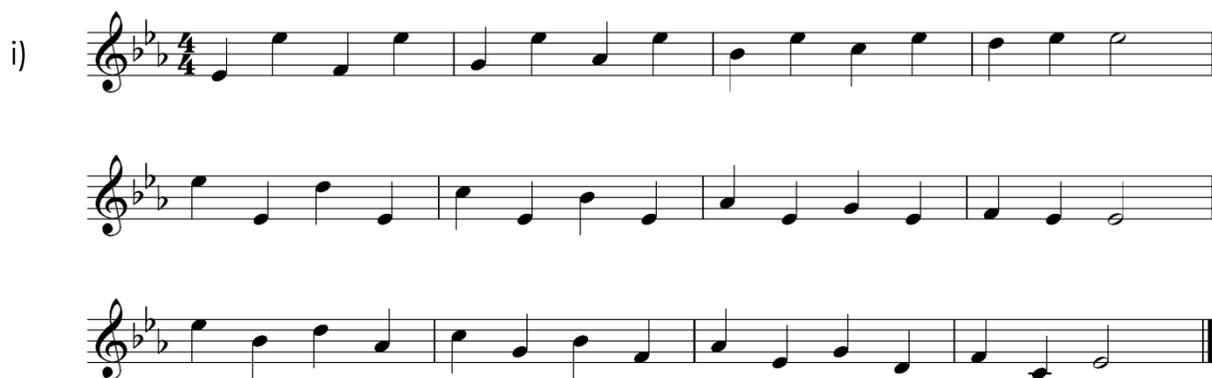
g) 

Continuing on with learning new keys, we take a look at **Eb major**. These exercises will help us learn the new key and help our reading ability. Individual practice on scale patterns is strongly encouraged.

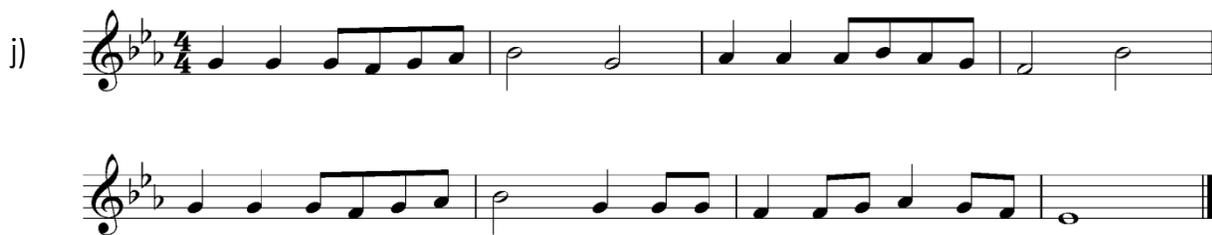
h)



i)



ii)



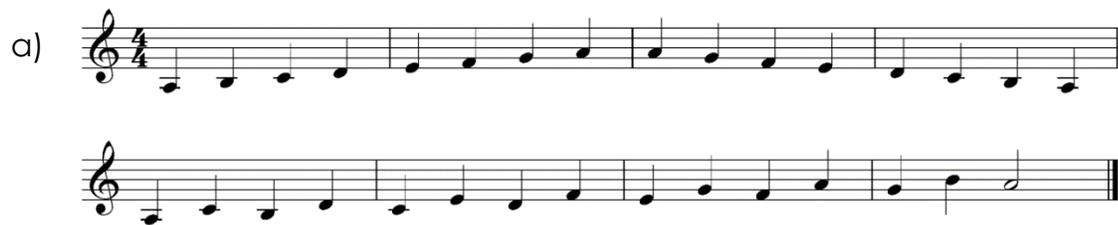
You should now be relatively comfortable with the C, F, G, Bb, D, and Eb major scales. Keep coming back to these scales to increase your proficiency.

## Let's practice...natural minor scales

### Instructor's tip:

This entire lesson and practice section will most likely take longer than the time you have available. You can split it up and work on a different lesson if you feel a change of pace is necessary.

Here are a few exercises to work on in **A minor**, **D minor** and **E minor**.

a) 

b) 

c) 

d) 

e) 

f) 

Here is one more exercise that will take you through several different keys. Keep a consistent tempo and aim for note accuracy.

g) 

**Instructor's tip:**

Exercise g) is a good practice excerpt that should be part of a routine. It takes the students through various keys, playing almost every note on the keyboard. Look for a suitable standard of playing before moving past this lesson. It may require continued review and work to make progress. The important thing is to involve other percussion elements to this learning experience. Include different rudiments and dynamics to keep things fresh.

## Lesson 5.2 Swing Rhythms

As we get further along in learning percussion, there are increasingly more techniques and styles that are expected of us as players. Up to this point, we have learned how to do standard rock/kit patterns that use straight rhythms as the feel for the music.

In this lesson, we will take a look at swing rhythms. This is not unlike compound time rhythms, but it will be written in a common time signature.

The first concept that we will focus on relates to the eighth notes and what their value is within a time signature.

In swing, two eighth notes grouped together have the feel of a quarter note to eighth note triplet. Here is an example of how it would look versus how it will sound:



- The first eighth has a longer value
- The second eighth has a shorter value

*Will sound like this.*



### **Instructor's tip:**

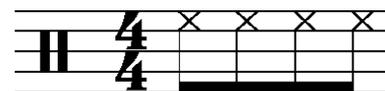
This will need demonstration for your students to fully understand. You might also consider playing a recording of swing music. For the visual learners, it should be self-explanatory.

It is important that you maintain the triplet length for the first and last eighth. It may come close to sounding like a dotted quarter to sixteenth, but that won't be correct for swing. Most often, you will play swung eighths with one hand as opposed to switching between left and right.

*Not like this.*



You will be required to learn swing on all percussion instruments. To identify if a piece of music is in a swing style, it will most likely be labeled on the music like this:



## Let's practice

Select a moderate tempo that will give you the ability to play all the notes in the appropriate timing. We will slowly add instruments to form the drum kit, but this should only be done when you can play the first few exercises confidently.

**Instructor's tip:**

Recommended tempo range: ♩=80-120+

Ask for various dynamics.



Ride/Hi-hat

a)



Ride/Hi-hat

b)

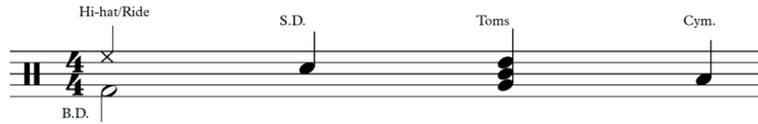


Ride/Hi-hat

c)

As you might notice, the rests are equally as important as the notes. They create space and rhythm, even though there is nothing being physically played or hit. Remember to use rests within the music as part of the sound.

Now we will add the extra parts to the **drum kit**. Here is a helpful reminder of the drum kit notation.



d)

e)

f)

Here is a slightly different drum pattern to try. Play the swing rhythm on the toms, and play the Hi-hat with your foot by opening and closing.

g)

Continue to perfect the swing style across all percussion instruments. Remember to make a difference between swing, straight, and dotted rhythms.



## **Lesson 5.3 Timpani**



The timpani can enhance the sound of any music group when played accurately and in tune. Depending on how many drums are available, you can expect to have anywhere from 2 to 4 drums to play the music. **Set up the timpani with the largest on the left and smallest on the right.** The timpani are similar to other percussion instruments like tom-toms and congas, except that the player must change the actual pitch of the drum to match the notes written on the staff.

There are three steps to playing the timpani that are listed below. It is important to be comfortable with them all.

1	Tuning/Changing the pitch	<p>The timpani functions by the use of a pedal that tightens/loosens the head of the drum. The tighter the head, the higher the pitch, and vice versa.</p> <p>On some timpani, there will be “cheaters” or “note guides” that help for quick changes. It is important to have a tuner so that you can accurately place the pitch of the drum.</p> <p>Each drum has a specific range. The larger the drum, the lower it sounds. Get to know what range each drum covers.</p>
2	Playing/Striking/Beating	<p>Using the <b>appropriate timpani mallets</b>, beat the head approximately 4 inches in from the edge. Rolls are often used in timpani parts, however it will a single stroke roll. Try to keep your wrists loose and rapidly alternate between the left and right hands.</p> <p>Be aware of how much volume is produced by the timpani. Understand that depending on the style of music, you may have to use harder sticks for more precision in softer passages and softer sticks for more tone in general.</p>
3	Dampening/Stopping the sound	<p>There are two parts to the sound of the timpani. The first is the initial attack, and the second is the sustained ringing. Let the timpani ring for the duration of the note, and dampen the drum by placing a hand on the head.</p>

# Let's practice

Let's start practicing with the timpani tuned to a **C** on the high drum and **G** on the low drum. Be absolutely sure they are tuned correctly by using your tuner.

**Instructor's tip:**  
Minimum of two timpani are required for these exercises.  
Recommended tempo range: ♩=80-120+

a) **Timpani (C-G)**

Exercise a) consists of two staves of music in 4/4 time. The top staff is labeled 'Timpani (C-G)' and contains four measures of quarter notes: C, G, C, G. The bottom staff contains four measures of eighth notes: C, G, C, G; G, C, G, C; C, G, C, G; G, C, G, C.

b) **Timpani (C-G)**

Exercise b) consists of two staves of music in 4/4 time. The top staff is labeled 'Timpani (C-G)' and contains four measures of eighth notes: C, G, C, G; G, C, G, C; C, G, C, G; G, C, G, C. The bottom staff contains four measures of eighth notes: C, G, C, G; G, C, G, C; C, G, C, G; G, C, G, C.

c) **Timpani (C-G)**

Exercise c) consists of two staves of music in 4/4 time. The top staff is labeled 'Timpani (C-G)' and contains four measures of eighth notes: C, G, C, G; G, C, G, C; C, G, C, G; G, C, G, C. The bottom staff contains four measures of eighth notes: C, G, C, G; G, C, G, C; C, G, C, G; G, C, G, C.

d) **Timpani (C-G)**

Exercise d) consists of two staves of music in 4/4 time. The top staff is labeled 'Timpani (C-G)' and contains four measures: *f* C, G, C, G; *p* G, C, G, C; *f* C, G, C, G; *f* G, C, G, C. The bottom staff contains four measures: *p* C, G, C, G; *p* G, C, G, C; *f* C, G, C, G; *f* G, C, G, C.

Let's change the pitch to **D** and **A**. You have to increase your efficiency in switching between notes, so practice this until you can do it almost immediately. There will be times that you will have to change the pitch of the timpani during a piece of music.

e) **Timpani (D-A)**

Timpani (D-A)

*f* *f* *p* *p*

*p* *f*

In this next exercise, set the timpani to **D - A** and halfway through you will need to adjust the lower timpani to **G**. Remember to continue counting your rests in time.

f) **Timpani (D-A)**

Timpani (D-A)

*f* *f* 2

(D-G)

*p* *f*

And now we will adjust both timpani in the middle of this next exercise.

g) **Timpani (D-A)**

Timpani (D-A)

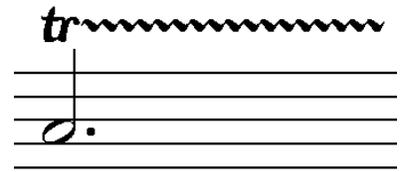
*f* 2

(C-G)

Try playing the timpani in a controlled manner. Do not merely bang the timpani head and hope that it sounds nice. You have to strike it in a way that allows the head to produce a resonating sound.

## Let's practice...timpani rolls

Here is a quick look at how a timpani roll is notated. As mentioned before, they are played using a single stroke roll. The sustained sound of the timpani will help create the continuous sound of the roll. Notice that the notation for timpani rolls is usually identified by the trill symbol.



### **Instructor's tip:**

Remember that timpani rolls are different than snare drum rolls. To roll on timpani it has to be a rapid single stroke. Remember that while holding the timpani mallets, the palms should face each other as opposed to facing the drum head. The sticks should be tightly gripped by the thumb and index finger, while being fairly loose within the palm. Make sure the roll comes from the wrist and not the arm. Keep the arms in a solid position while allowing the wrists to maneuver. Rapidly alternate between right and left.

Let's play a few exercises to practice timpani rolls. Be sure to play them for the value of the note or the length of the symbol itself.

a) **Timpani (C-G)**

b) **Timpani (C-G)**

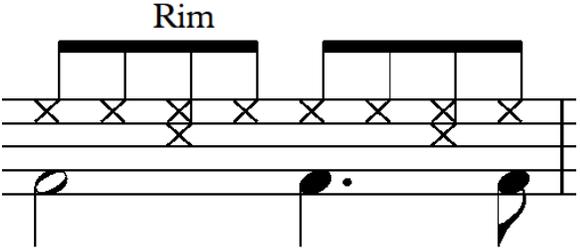
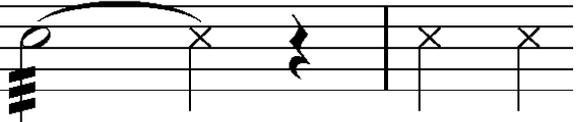
c) **Timpani (D-G)**

## Lesson 5.4 More Techniques

Here are some basic extended techniques for various percussion instruments. These techniques are pretty straight forward, and you may already be utilizing them in your playing. Let's go through them to confirm the correct approach.

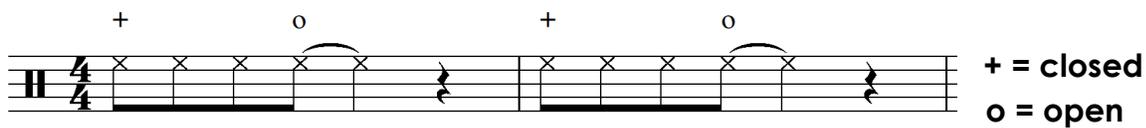
### Rim Shots

There are a couple different types of rim shots, but we will cover the “**lay-over**” and “**power-shot**” techniques. Most of the time, it is up to the percussionist to identify what styles of music will call for certain techniques.

<b>Lay-over</b>	<b>Power-shot</b>
<p>To execute a lay-over rim shot, the butt of the stick is laid across the rim of the drum at approximately the two o'clock position. Holding the stick in your left-hand with just the tips of your thumb and first finger, keeping the bead of the stick on the centre of the drum, you lift the butt to articulate the rim shot.</p> <p>You will feel the stick on part of the palm of your hand, but do not wrap the other fingers underneath the stick. The objective is to produce a popping, wood-block sound.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Rim</p> 	<p>The power-shot is most common in marches and is used to amplify accented passages or to cut through the ensemble. The objective is to have the bead of the stick strike the head of the drum at the same time as the rim.</p> <p>Often this occurs on individual notes, but it can also be found at the end of a roll. To achieve this, your dominant hand will need to be raised slightly higher on the final stroke to accentuate the rim shot. This is most effectively achieved by the simple flick of the wrist.</p> 

## Open and Closed

There are some instruments that naturally ring and sustain when played. Sometimes this will be notated by the use of symbols like **+** and **o**. The **hi-hat**, is a good example of this. Usually, it is played closed with the two cymbals tightly touching, but when the **o** symbol is placed above the note, it means the cymbals should be kept open and naturally vibrating. This is done by slightly lifting your left foot, which is placed on the hi-hat pedal, opening up the cymbals.



**+** = closed  
**o** = open

The same premise applies to the **triangle**, except we assume that if not otherwise notated, it is played open.



Not only is the length of sound for the hi-hat and triangle impacted by whether it's open or closed, but it changes the texture for overall attacks. For example, repeated quarter notes on a triangle in the closed position has a very dead yet bright sound to it. The hi-hat, in an open position, creates a wild and messy texture that is opposite to its normal and tight percussive sound. Keep these ideas in mind as you practice the open and closed techniques.

### **Notation tip:**



There will be times where the hi-hat is a half note value. Because it is normally notated with an x note head, it will have a circle around the x note head.

## Let's practice

First, let's practice the **lay-over**. This involves playing a simple drum kit pattern.

### Instructor's tip:

Work on each exercise in smaller portions.  
Repeat bars as needed.

Recommended tempo range: ♩=80-120+

a)

Exercise a) consists of two staves in 4/4 time. The top staff is a drum kit notation with 'x' marks for cymbals and dots for snare and bass drum. The bottom staff is a bass line with quarter notes and eighth notes.

b)

Exercise b) consists of two staves in 6/8 time. The top staff is a drum kit notation with 'x' marks for cymbals and dots for snare and bass drum. The bottom staff is a bass line with quarter notes and eighth notes.

Next, we'll cover the **power shot**. Make sure you have a clear understanding of where and when you are going to be hitting the rim.

c)

Exercise c) consists of two staves in 4/4 time. The top staff is a drum kit notation with 'x' marks for cymbals and dots for snare and bass drum. The bottom staff is a bass line with quarter notes and eighth notes.

d)

Exercise d) consists of two staves in 6/8 time. The top staff is a drum kit notation with 'x' marks for cymbals and dots for snare and bass drum. The bottom staff is a bass line with quarter notes and eighth notes.

Now it's time to work on the **open and closed** technique on the **hi-hat** and **triangle**. (You can use exercises e) and f) for both instruments.)

e)

o + o + o

+ o + + o + o + o

f)

o + o + o + o + o + o

+ o + o + o + o

Let's apply everything we've learned with the full drum kit setup. Try to open the hi-hat to a spot that allows the cymbals to separate but is still close enough so that they vibrate against each other.

g)

o + o + o + o

+ o + o + o + o

h)

+ o + o + o

+ o + o + o

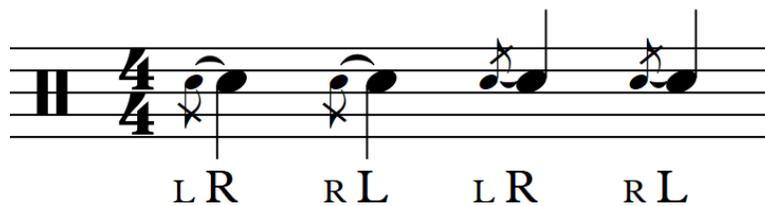
## Rudiment practice

### Flams:



A flam is a pair of notes played on a drum. The first note is a grace note, which doesn't have a designated value, but rather is a very quick note played prior to the preceding note. The second note is the primary note and it's played on the beat or in rhythm.

In this example, you can see that there are four main notes on each beat. The small note (grace note) is rhythmically placed slightly before each quarter note.



### Drags:

A drag is very similar to a flam, only there are two grace notes played prior to the primary note.

The sticking technique used to perform a drag is very much like the start of a double stroke roll. Your dominant hand (let's say right) will play the primary note, but the two drag notes (grace notes) are placed just before with a bounce effect by the left hand. On other percussion instruments and with different sticks that don't bounce, you will use a simple hand alternating style to play a drag. For example on Timpani, you will start the drag with the same hand that you use to play the primary note.



# Other Rudiments

## Paradiddle:

R L R R L R L L

## Double Paradiddle:

R L R L R R L R L R L L

## Triple Paradiddle:

R L R L R L R R L R L R L R L L

## Single Stroke Four:

R L R L

## Single Stroke Seven:

R L R L R L R

## Single Paradiddle-diddle:

R L R R L L

## Single Dragadiddle:

Rr L R R Ll R L L

### Instructor's tip:

Ask individual students to perform certain rudiments to demonstrate their abilities. It is important that students start memorizing each different technique.

## Level 5 Wrap-up

Level 5 has covered a broad range of material. This includes major and minor scales, swing rhythms, playing the timpani, and an increasing number of extended techniques and rudiments. The following exercises include most of the material looked at in this level as a recap.

a) (Flams)

b)

c)

d)

**Instructor's tip:**

This is the conclusion of Level 5. The next step is to have the students take the Level 5 final test. To prepare them for this, the Level 5 Wrap-up includes most of the material from the entire level. However, some students may need additional review on specific techniques.