

Tenor Technique Packet

Playing methods

- Feel 100% physical comfort and relaxation from your shoulders through your fingertips. The fewer muscles you have tense and engaged, the better your sound will be.
- Achieve a full, warm sound quality at every dynamic level. Piano shouldn't sound like forte, but it should be the fullest, warmest piano possible.
- Find the pocket and stay in it. Our main utility as percussionists is to keep perfect time. Strive to find the groove in every phrase and keep rhythms in time.
- Always feel a soft touch in your hands. The stick should feel heavy and your grip never tight or squeezing the stick. "Choked off" and harsh sounds will result from a too-tight grip.
- Play perfect rhythms. Analyze each rhythm you play, identify the rudiments, and be able to understand the underlying check patterns within each phrase that exist to keep you in time.
- Lastly, be ready to work your hardest. You will be expected to simultaneously achieve a balanced, warm quality of sound and perfect rhythms while using a uniform touch, feel, and technique with multiple other people.

Grip

Drumheads provide incredible amounts of rebound; as such we aim to allow that rebound to dictate our playing. Our grip is there just to control the amount of rebound we will get, not to prohibit it in any way. Tension in any part of our grip can stop the bouncing of the stick and cause short, harsh sounds. Grip and hands should remain relaxed enough to get rebound and a warm sound, but "firm" enough to control it.

- Thumb/Index finger connect approx. 1/3 from the bottom of the stick



- Middle, ring, and pinky fingers are all wrapped gently and naturally around the stick, while never completely leaving the stick when in motion
- Most of your control will be felt near the back of the hand in the "pocket" created with your back three fingers and fleshy inside of your hand. Try to avoid unneeded pressure in the index and thumb
- The butt of the stick should be slightly visible out the back of the hand

To find the angle and grip that we use for playing quads, hold the sticks loosely at your side. Now, completely relaxed and without adjusting your wrists, bring your sticks up to playing position. This should be just short of being "flat". This wrist angle allows more use of fingers and supplies a consistent stroke angle. Do this in front of a mirror to help your stick's path and check yourself on the technique. The thumb should be flat against the stick with the index finger wrapped loosely but firmly around the shaft of the stick. Make sure the space between the index finger, and thumb is closed.

Playing Position/Set-Up

Key Points:

- The neck/shoulders should be very relaxed to avoid translating tension while still maintaining correct posture
- While arms are naturally hanging by your side, there is a little of space between your side and the inside of the bicep/tricep area. Don't dig either arm into your body, or move your arm outward too far. If you feel your shoulder actually doing work, that's probably too far
- The path from your shoulders through your arms through your hands to the head of the stick should be "downhill" throughout
- The stroke on tenors must remain consistent from drum to drum. Practice doing the basic technique exercises on one drum to help get a consistent stroke is a necessity.
- When traveling from drum to drum, we use Bill Bachman's approach of a straight plane across the drums on which your sticks travel. Your elbow is your pivot point (no excess motion should be needed except for getting to the spock drum).
- The official playing area is 1/3 of the distance into the head, between the rim and center. This is where you will find the clearest, fullest sound.

Resting/Starting Position



Crossovers

The system we use for crossovers is dependent on the distance between the drums that are being played. If the drums are next to each other (1 and 2, 2 and 4, 1 and 3), the crossover is over the sticks, about an inch or two over the fulcrum. This helps achieve the proper playing area:



If there is one drum separating the two drums being played on (2 and 3, 1 and 4), the crossover occurs at the fulcrum:



If the cross over is on 3 and 4, the crossover is at the wrist:



Sweeps

When playing a “sweep”, use the same motion you would for a double stroke on one drum. This comes from the wrist, arm, and fingers. The idea is to think not across the drums, but over the space between the drums. You have to think of an arched path from drum to drum. This helps with a fluid motion and getting a full dark sound out of the drum. If you are sweeping across the drum and skimming the surface of the head, you will have a poor sound quality, especially on the second note of the double. A good way to check this is in front of a mirror and watching your playing areas.

Strokes

Key Points:

- Described in this section are the Full (Legato) and Down (Marcato) Strokes
- Always lead the stroke from the bead of the stick
- Right hand should be more of a hinge motion (rest your arm on a table and knock on it without picking up your arm; this is the primary motion of the right wrist)
- Left hand should rotate similar to turning a doorknob
- The primary focus for both hands is a wrist turn. To conserve energy, wrist “only” is to be used while playing most full/down/tap strokes. When using “only” wrist, your forearm will be relaxed. Your forearm will move, just not thought of as motivating the stroke. If you see your skin “jiggle”, you’re on the right track. When playing at ff or 15”, this is when we’ll starting thinking of using our arms to actively contribute in the stroke.
- However, drumming is not an exact science, so the fingers and arms will support the wrist together to create a full/relaxed sound for various skill sets (moeller, rolls, etc.)
- When playing, the weight of the stick generally sits in the middle of the right hand (between the middle and ring fingers), and the “webby” portion of the left hand.

****Having the weight/rotation points further back in the hand (rather than the front finger fulcrums) enables us to achieve a fuller sound while focusing on the proper wrist rotation****

- Minimize the amount of “human interference,” allow each stroke to be as efficient as possible
- If the stick is held tightly, the natural vibrations and resonance of the stick are “choked off,” resulting in a very thin quality of sound
- Consequently, the shock of an improper stroke into the drum will be transferred directly into the player’s hands and forearms---potentially resulting in unnecessary injury
- Always let the stick “breathe” in the hands

****Exception: We will feel the “fulcrum” in different areas sometimes depending on the amount of pressure needed (fast diddles, buzzes, etc.)****

Legato/Full Stroke:

- Think “8 on a hand”
- Sticks start and stop at the same point, letting the stick “bounce” back naturally
- Goal is to allow the rebound to “do the work.” Throw the stick down, DON’T lift it up
- Rebound should be the same speed as the initial movement (don’t stop it!)
- Grip will “open” a bit to allow for rebound inside your hand at higher heights

Marcato/Down Strokes:

- Think “tap accents”
- Should sound the same as full strokes, and feel the same prior to hitting the drum
- Once contact is made with the drum, the difference between full and down strokes is the stopping of the wrist motion, which prevents the stick from rebounding to the initial height
- Hand should feel like “dead weight” after head strikes the head. Heaviness of the hands helps stop the stick in a warm manner
- Avoid squeezing the fingers to stop the motion

Taps:

- Taps will be played primarily with a wrist stroke, albeit smaller than full strokes
- Taps are neither truly a “full” or “down” stroke. They will rebound, and like a full stroke, they will be played by only initiating downward and not pulling back up. The rebound, however, will not have the same velocity as a “full stroke”. To remain fluid, and not have awkward pauses at the top of our strokes, taps will be played *slightly* more “into the drum”
- The grip is slightly more “closed” than the “openness” felt at higher heights for full strokes.

The hand must stay relaxed and heavy without being tense to ensure a controlled rebound and quality sound

Dynamics

- We use a dynamic system that correlates to specific heights---this makes it easier to define, as well as balance and blend our sounds
- We strive to have a consistent approach to the drum regardless of heights/dynamics
- In general, consistency of heights dictate volume, however the music is the ultimate factor in defining volume (there will be situations in which players are asked to play a phrase stronger or lighter than normal for musical expression)

- Additional arm is added above 15"
- The sticks will never travel past vertical but will be higher in the air because of the arm extension above 15"

Approximate Heights:

- pp 1" (For incredibly soft passages, played from resting playing position)
- p 3" (Taps and grace notes, sticks parallel with the ground)
- mp 6" (Back of hand about parallel with the ground, sticks ~22.5°)
- mf 9" (Sticks ~45° from ground)
- f 12" (As far as wrist can comfortably turn without arm, sticks ~67.5°)
- ff 15" (Sticks vertical, start to "use" arm)
- fff Huge" (Sticks vertical, add additional arm for visual effect)

How you feel when you drum

- Relaxed
- Confident
- Don't aim to play "hard." Play warm, resonant, and a quality sound will come
- Let the sticks feel "heavy" inside your hands---let the weight do the work
- Chops are important, but they mean nothing without a relaxed approach, a solid pocket, good control, and sound quality
- Learning to breathe naturally while playing anything regardless of difficulty will result in a more relaxed, healthy sound and approach
- Listen to what you are playing and self-diagnose yourself in order to correct issues

8's

To be played at 3", 6", 9", 12

Metronome at Quarter Note 95-200

1
R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L

5
R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L R

Detailed description: This block contains the first five measures of the '8's' exercise. Each measure consists of a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes. The first measure has 8 eighth notes (4 on the right, 4 on the left). The second measure has 8 eighth notes (4 on the left, 4 on the right). The third measure has 8 eighth notes (4 on the right, 4 on the left). The fourth measure has 8 eighth notes (4 on the left, 4 on the right). The fifth measure has 8 eighth notes (4 on the right, 4 on the left), followed by a quarter rest. The notation includes a double bar line at the end of the fifth measure.

Accent Tap

Focus on staying relaxed and maintaining a two-height system.

Metronome at Quarter Note 90-150

$\text{♩} = 132$

1
R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L

7
R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L R R R R R R R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L L L L L L L L L

13
R R R R R R R R R R R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L L L L L L L L L L L

17
R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L R R R R R R R R L L L L L L L L R

Detailed description: This block contains the 'Accent Tap' exercise, measures 1 through 17. The tempo is marked as quarter note = 132. Each measure consists of a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes with accents (>) over the first note of each eighth-note pair. The first measure has 8 eighth notes (4 on the right, 4 on the left). The second measure has 8 eighth notes (4 on the left, 4 on the right). The third measure has 8 eighth notes (4 on the right, 4 on the left). The fourth measure has 8 eighth notes (4 on the left, 4 on the right). The fifth measure has 8 eighth notes (4 on the right, 4 on the left). The sixth measure has 8 eighth notes (4 on the left, 4 on the right). The seventh measure has 8 eighth notes (4 on the right, 4 on the left). The eighth measure has 8 eighth notes (4 on the left, 4 on the right). The ninth measure has 8 eighth notes (4 on the right, 4 on the left). The tenth measure has 8 eighth notes (4 on the left, 4 on the right). The eleventh measure has 8 eighth notes (4 on the right, 4 on the left). The twelfth measure has 8 eighth notes (4 on the left, 4 on the right). The thirteenth measure has 8 eighth notes (4 on the right, 4 on the left). The fourteenth measure has 8 eighth notes (4 on the left, 4 on the right). The fifteenth measure has 8 eighth notes (4 on the right, 4 on the left). The sixteenth measure has 8 eighth notes (4 on the left, 4 on the right). The seventeenth measure has 8 eighth notes (4 on the right, 4 on the left), followed by a quarter rest. The notation includes a double bar line at the end of the seventeenth measure.

Stick Control

To be played at 3", 6", 9", 12"

Metronome at Quarter Note 95-180

RLRLRLRLRLRLRLRL RRLRLRLRLRLRLRLRL RLRLRLRLRLRLRLRL RLLRLRLRLRLRLRLRL

5

RLRLRLRLRLRLRLRL RRRLRLRLRLRLRLRLRL RLRLRLRLRLRLRLRL RLLRLRLRLRLRLRLRL

9

RLRLRLRLRLRLRLRL RRRRLRLRLRLRLRLRL RLRLRLRLRLRLRLRL RLRLRLRLRLRLRLRL

13

RLRLRLRLRLRLRLRL RLRLRLRLRLRLRLRL L LRLRLRLRLRLRLRLRL

17

LLRLRLRLRLRLRLRL RLRLRLRLRLRLRLRL RLRLRLRLRLRLRLRL RLRLRLRLRLRLRLRL

21

LLLRLRLRLRLRLRLRL RLRLRLRLRLRLRLRL LRLRLRLRLRLRLRLRL RLRLRLRLRLRLRLRL

25

LLLRLRLRLRLRLRLRL RLRLRLRLRLRLRLRL RLRLRLRLRLRLRLRL RLRLRLRLRLRLRLRL

28

LRLRLRLRLRLRLRL RLRLRLRLRLRLRLRL LRLRLRLRLRLRLRL RLRLRLRLRLRLRLRL

Double Beat

To be played at 3", 6", 9", 12"

Metronome at Quarter Note 90-150

$\text{♩} = 132$

RR R RRR RRR R RR R RRR RRR R RR R RRR RRR R RRR RRR RRR

5

LL L LLL LLL LL L LLL LLL LL L LLL LLL L LLL LLL LLL

9

RRR RRRR R RR RRR RRRR R RR RRR RRRR R RRR RRRR R RRR RR LLL LLLL LLL

14

LLL LLLL LLL LLL LLLL LLLL LLLL LLLL LL RRR RRRR RRR R

18

R RR R RRR RRR R LLL LLL LLL LLL L LLL LLLL LLL L R

16th Rolls

Focus on maintaining rhythmic diddles, not just a sticking.

Metronome at Quarter Note 80-130

$\text{♩} = 92$

5

9

13

16

Detailed description: This musical score consists of five staves of music, each containing four measures. The first staff begins with a tempo marking of quarter note = 92. The music is written on a single-line staff with a double bar line at the beginning. The notes are beamed in groups of 16, representing 16th rolls. The first four measures of each staff show a consistent rhythmic pattern of 16th rolls. The fifth staff includes accents (marked with a 'v' symbol) on the first and third measures, and a final measure that ends with a quarter rest. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

Triplet Rolls

Focus on maintaining rhythmic diddles, not just a sticking
KEEP YOUR FEET IN TIME!

Metronome at Quarter Note 90-150

The musical score consists of five staves of music, each starting with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 142. The notation includes various rhythmic patterns of triplet rolls, with some notes marked with accents (>) and slurs. The measures are numbered 1, 6, 11, 16, and 20. The first staff (measures 1-5) features a mix of eighth and sixteenth note triplets. The second staff (measures 6-10) continues with similar patterns, including some with accents. The third staff (measures 11-15) shows more complex triplet rolls with slurs. The fourth staff (measures 16-19) includes a measure with a fermata and a measure with a repeat sign. The fifth staff (measures 20-21) concludes with a final triplet roll and a fermata.

Flam I Am

Focus on maintaining low and accurate grace notes

Metronome at Quarter Note 90-130

RLRLRLRLRLRLRLRL

5

RLRLRLRL RLR LRLRL RLRLRLRL RLR LRLRL RLRL RLR LRL RLR LRL

9

RLRL RLR LRL RLR LRL RLRL RRLRLRLR LLRL RLRL RR LL RR LLRLRL RLRL RRLRLRLR LLRL

13

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

16

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