

## Hawkeye Drumline Snare

### Grip

#### Right Hand

- 1) The grip follows the line of the forearm. The top of the hand should be slightly sloped down and to the right in its natural state.
- 2) The butt end of the stick can be seen. It should not be hidden under the forearm.
- 3) The right hand fulcrum: The thumb is positioned directly along the side of the stick. The forefinger wraps around the stick and is even with the thumb. The stick is cradled by the middle, ring, and pinky fingers. All fingers are in contact with the stick and will remain free of tension.



#### Left Hand

- 1) The natural curvature of the hand should be maintained when moving to the playing position. Observe how the hands look when they're hanging by your side. This is exactly how they should look when they are holding the stick in playing position. Avoid straight fingers or a condensed, collapsed hand.
- 2) The thumb connects to the first knuckle of the first finger. In this position, the thumb rests on top of the first finger with no tension.
- 3) The stick rests on the cuticle of the ring finger.
- 4) The middle finger rests along the stick, relaxed and never straight.
- 5) The ring finger and pinky work in unison to support the stick. They should remain relaxed and together at all times. Think of them as the Oprah and Dr. Phil of your left hand grip.

- 6) The left hand fulcrum is the webbing between your thumb and index finger. I suggest playing legato exercises with just your fulcrum.
- 7) The thumb and first finger should always remain connected.
- 8) The rotation of the left hand should be just like turning a door knob.



### Stroke

Our strokes are primarily made with the wrist; however, they aren't isolated to JUST the wrist. The forearm does play a role in contributing weight to the stroke, and fingers need to come into play during certain sticking patterns, like doubles. Don't worry yourself with how much arm or how much wrist to use. The primary goal is to make it a natural motion that uses a harmony of wrist, forearms, and fingers. The music will dictate how much of each is necessary at any given time.

Focus on allowing the stick to vibrate in the hand. Squeezing the stick too tightly will choke off the sound and diminish sound quality. If you notice yourself wanting to squeeze or choke off the stick, consider eliminating pressure from the forefinger and shifting a little bit of fulcrum control to the middle finger. This will help to maintain a natural stroke.

There should be a weight to your strokes which will produce a big, full sound. Make the sticks feel heavy in your hands. To achieve this, it's important to realize that higher volumes will typically require a higher stroke velocity. This is partly to ensure you're producing a big sound, but also to propel the stick so that it rebounds back to its full stroke position. A little bit of arm in your stroke isn't a bad thing. Aim for achieving a big, full, round sound at all dynamic levels.

The sticks should rebound straight off the angle of the head. Since our drums are slightly tilted, this is pretty self-explanatory for the left hand

stroke path. The right hand pathway is at a very slight angle. Do not call this a “slice.” It’s actually a stroke path that allows the right stick to bounce directly off the head in the most natural way. If we attempted to play a vertical stroke with the right hand, THAT would be a slice. If you are used to playing on a flat drum, adjusting your right hand for the angle is a very natural and automatic transition that won’t take long.

During the up-and-down motion of the stroke, focus on creating a CONSTANT MOTION with the sticks. When stopping the sticks (i.e., during accent/tap patterns), don’t squeeze the stick or choke it off. This is one instance where marching drummers have a tendency to tighten up. Make a point of practicing accent/tap patterns slowly, focusing on eliminating tension in the grip.

### Sticks In

The sticks in position is shown below. The left hand will rest on the rim. The sticks will remain parallel to the playing surface. Sticks will come out two beats before the attack, and will return to the “sticks in” position one beat after the release.



### Playing Position

- 1) Relax your arms at your side.
- 2) With relaxed shoulders, bend the arms from the elbow so your wrists are just about waist-level. This will determine the height of your drum.
- 3) When holding the left stick with the grip guidelines above, follow the resulting angle of the left stick to determine the angle of your drum. The tilt is 10 degrees (measure with a phone compass). With the arms in place

and the height and angle of the drum set, there will probably be a two finger taper between the rim and the stick.

4) Beads will be in the center of the head, as close as possible without touching one another. Keep the beads as close to the head as possible without resting on the head.