

Hawkeye Drumline Tenors

Grip

The fulcrum point is located between the thumb and the index finger or middle finger. This is the point from which the stick pivots in your hand. The rest of the fingers should be wrapped naturally around the stick. They should be loose and relaxed but can never leave the stick. In order to employ the fingers properly, the stick should lay through the fleshy part of your palm opposite your thumb. Lastly, the palm of your hand should not be flat to the drum (German grip) nor should the thumb be completely on top of the stick (French grip). The crease created between the thumb and the index finger should be turned to an approximate 45 degree angle. This offers the best benefits from both the German grip (full wrist turn) and French grip (easy engagement of the fingers)



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.

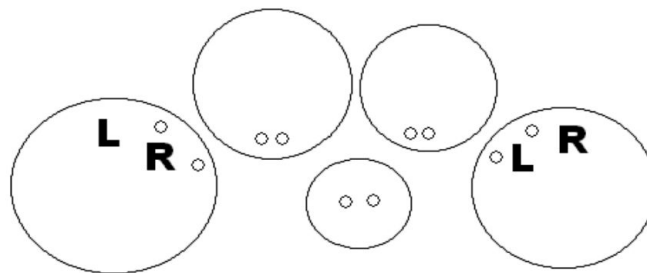
There should be a weight to your strokes which will produce a big, full sound. Make the sticks feel heavy in your hands. To achieve this, it's important to realize that higher volumes will typically require a higher stroke velocity. This is partly to ensure you're producing a big sound, but also to propel 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.

Sticks In

When you are not playing, the sticks will be brought in to this position. Notice that the thumb is behind the mallet and the mallet head or "bead" is lined up with the end of the other mallet. This will be the same for both hands, and will be the same no matter what implement we use until you are told otherwise. 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 Zones



Each circle is the point of impact of each mallet. I've given an L for left and an R for right to notate the stick positions on drum 3 and drum 4. We want to impact the head on one concentric circle, like a timpanist. We want to be off center, approximately 2 inches from the rim, or 1.5 inches from the bearing edge. This area produces the most resonant sound and is ideal for projection and tone. The six-inch drums are played just off of center as well. These are the zones for playing on more than two notes or just a single note on one drum.

Movement

Regarding movement around the drums: "we play many drums the way we play one drum." You'll be hearing this a lot. You can improve yourself anytime you see a difference (any difference) in the way you approach the drum on the move from when you play the same passage on one drum. Attack these differences, because they allow more room for error and

complicate your life as a tenor drummer. When playing sweeps, one must understand that movement around the drums does not change the technique in the hands. The arms are used merely as a transportation device for the wrists. The technique used on one drum is applied to all drums, with the arms simply moving the hands and wrists to the correct playing area. This is another one of those “make or break” techniques that must be understood or learned to be a member of the quad line.

Wrist Turn Consistency

One of the things quad drummers do not usually do very well is consistent wrist turn while moving between drums. You should turn your wrists straight up and down. Many students will turn their wrists outward in preparation for a moving stroke (such as a sweep or scrape). This is a BAD IDEA. Turning our wrists out or over forces us to learn an infinite number of techniques. Instead, we should play around the drums as we would on one drum. You would never turn your wrists out like this on drum 2, why would you ever do it during an around passage?