Iowa State Drumline Technique Book
Mission Statement

Individual improvement is the key to our success as an ensemble. One person does not make our drumline great; instead everyone must work to achieve greatness. As members of this organization we obligate and challenge ourselves to improve our abilities as players. By striving to achieve nothing less than personal excellence, we ensure the quality of our ensemble.

General Philosophy

With a full marching band regularly in excess of 340 members, the Iowa State Drumline has the crucial role of providing a solid rhythm and tempo. To do this, drumline members must individually play accurate rhythms and parts. There is no “hiding” one’s playing in the line. Each member is expected to equally contribute to the overall sound of the line. Thus, the line is able to produce a full quality sound with the volume to project into a full stadium.

How to use this Technique Book

With the vast amount of information contained within this packet, it is unadvisable to attempt to learn everything at once. The packet is generally set up in the order of the learning process, so start at the beginning and work through the packet. It is suggested to take one or two ideas at a time to work on. Learn that small amount of technique, practice it, and gain a greater understanding of it before moving on. All the advanced concepts are fundamentally based upon the previous concepts, so an understanding of the core concepts in this packet is necessary for progression onto advanced drumming.

Practice with a metronome is highly recommended. Using a metronome will allow an exact, perfect tempo to play along with. This will promote accurate rhythms and the ability to play much more consistently. When using a metronome, ensure you are actually playing with the metronome to gain useful practice. Also, play in front of a mirror and check how your hands move. Make sure you flow when you play and avoid awkward, jagged motions that look uncomfortable. Feel the rebound and use it to your advantage. Keep your hands relaxed and fingers on the stick, turn your wrists, and hit the drum with some strong velocity. Play with confidence and don’t be afraid to ask questions.

Throughout the summer, the Iowa State Drumline will be hosting several drum camps to facilitate improvement among its current members and potential new members. These camps are valuable sources of information and instruction regarding technique. It is highly recommended to attend some of these camps to get a hands-on look at technique.

Technique is not something that can be learned overnight. It is a long process, and perseverance is necessary. With enough time and practice, the concepts covered in this book will become a fundamental part of your drumming.

Good luck and happy drumming!
Striking the Drum

General
The general theory of how to strike a drum may seem complex, but once understood, it will come naturally. It promotes drumming on a higher level, allowing the player to play louder and faster with less effort. More complex rhythms and parts are now easier to play with a full and resonant sound.

The key to our technique is to maintain control while being relaxed. When grasping the stick, turn your wrists so that the top of your hand is approximately parallel to the drum head. This allows your wrist to rotate and bend in a more natural motion. To minimize tension in the hand, grasp the stick in a manner where it is safely within your hand, but as if someone could grab the stick out of your hand. The stick should be free to move just a little. The thumb and middle fingers, with the help of the index finger, contact the stick the most, forming the fulcrum for the stick, while the rest of the fingers lightly touch the stick to direct its movement. It is important that you do not grip the stick excessively with your thumb and index finger. The back end of the stick stays close to the palm during the motion as the wrist does the work to drive the stick, not the fingers.

The actual stroke is a wrist-initiated movement, wherein the wrist turn drives the motion of the stick. When turning the wrist and striking the drum, keep your hand and arm relaxed. This will cause the motion of the wrist turn to also move the arm. What actually happens is that the striking of the drum is a wrist movement, but the arm follows along. The added benefit of this is that the weight of the arm is used to drive the stick into the head, creating a fuller sound.

One good analogy of this motion is the “police knock.” The motion of striking the drum is the same as a heavy knock on a door. In this motion, the wrist turns to knock on the door, but the weight of the arm is used to apply more energy to the door and create a louder and more powerful knock. Using this
analogy, place a drumstick in your hand and replace the door with a drumhead. Maintain relaxation in
the hand while playing to promote better resonance and more comfortable playing.

Once the drum has been struck, do not choke off the motion of the stick. Stay relaxed and allow the
rebound of the stick to drive it back up. In effect, you are only driving the stick down and the rebound
from the head drives it back up. Your hand does not pull the stick up, but merely follows the movement
of the stick and directs its upward motion in the proper direction: straight up/out. This way, you are
doing less work as you only have to drive the stick down. Depending on heights and tempos, it may
seem as though the stick spends the majority of its time in the up position as the stick goes down fast,
comes up fast, and then waits in the up position until the next stoke. This is because volume comes
from velocity. At low tempos, a fote note should require relatively the same stick velocity as faster
tempos.

Relaxation has been previously mentioned several times, and for good reason. Playing relaxed and
minimizing tension in the hand, wrist, arms, and upper body will allow you to play better more easily. In
terms of sound quality, a relaxed grip will allow for greater resonance of both the stick and the
drumhead, leading to a more consistent, fuller, and louder sound. In terms of what you can play, by
reducing tension in the hand, wrist, and arm, you can play faster and louder with less fatigue, and thus
also play longer and more comfortably. The impact from the stick hitting the head is not absorbed as
much by your body and instead goes to creating more sound, as well as keeping problems such as Carpal
Tunnel Syndrome and Tendonitis at bay.

Accents
Accents are straight forward applications of the previously mentioned technique. The stick is driven
down by the wrist, strikes the head, and then the rebound of the stick off the head drives the stick back
up. The hand stays relaxed throughout the entire motion.

Depending on whether the next stroke is another accent or a tap, the stick is either allowed to rebound
fully to the up position or is stopped lower to allow for a tap. If the stick is kept down after the accent,
make sure to not choke the stick before and while it hits the drum. This will then allow full resonance of
the drum head.

Taps
Taps are very similar to accents, just on a much smaller scale. They too make use of the “police knock”
idea. When playing taps, the stick will spend most its time in the up position, with the stroke being a
fast down and a rebound back up.

Do not assume playing lower means playing weakly. When playing taps, still play with a full and
powerful sound, just from a lower initial height. The weight of the arm is used to give the tap added
power and fullness of sound. While the arm is used to give a full sound, ensure that the movement of
the stick still comes from the wrist with the arm following along and that the motion of the stick is not
solely from an arm motion.
Doubles
Doubles at slower tempos and doubles at faster tempos require a slightly different approach. At slow tempos, a double consists of two individual wrist turns, one for each hit of the drum. As the tempo increases, gradually apply more downward force on the stick, so once the stick hits, it rebounds and then is quickly forced down again, using the rebound of the stick to help complete the double. Note that the transition from individual wrist turns to a more singular stroke is a gradual one, not a transition at a specific tempo. Playing doubles with wrist turn is a more accurate and powerful way of playing, so this method should be used as much as possible as long as the tempo is appropriate. Practice will allow you to increase the tempo at which accurate wrist turns are playable and improve your ability to play full and powerful rolls.

It is important to maintain consistency among the two hits in the double. Each drum strike in the double should sound equal so when playing rolls, it sounds as though a string of equal notes are being played. Do everything you can to minimize “pulsing,” or placing an emphasis on the first note in the double. With a few rare exceptions, the height of doubles and rolls should be low enough to ensure the first and second impact of the double is of equal height, volume, and fullness.

Posture
A sometimes overlooked element in drumming is one’s posture. Good posture has two important benefits: it promotes better playing and marching, and it is aesthetically pleasing to the audience. When describing proper posture, think of your body as a series of points. These points are your ankles, hips, shoulders, and head. All of these points should be in a line. Keep your back straight, shoulders back, and maintain this theoretical line. When standing, shift your weight forward so 2/3 of your weight is on the balls of your feet. This promotes a more confident and aggressive stance, while also allowing your body to be more responsive to sudden movements or changes in direction. Also, when playing, don’t look down, but instead keep your chin and eyes up. This gives an appearance of strength and confidence. While maintaining good posture, stay relaxed. Avoiding excessive tension in the arms, shoulders, and back will allow you to play better and more comfortably for longer periods of time.

Marking Time
Time is marked with the whole foot leaving the ground and returning to the ground with the sole of the foot remaining parallel to the ground throughout the entire motion. The foot strikes the ground on the downbeat. For 4/4 time, the left foot strikes the ground on beats 1 and 3, while the right foot strikes the ground on beats 2 and 4.
Miscellaneous
Success in the drumline will require you to have a strong internal pulse which is best achieved through constant practice with a metronome. This is something that many take for granted, but with some quality time spent with one, it will pay off. Part of the audition process will involve seeing how good of a grasp you have on playing rhythms “in time” with a metronome. This is something the entire line will all work together to get better at, but having a solid foundation is the key to a successful start to the season.

Other Pertinent Information

Rehearsal Schedule
The Iowa State Drumline rehearses at all full marching band rehearsals, which occur from 4:30 pm to 5:50 pm Monday through Friday. On top of that, an ensemble rehearsal is held from 7:00 pm to 10:00 pm on Thursday nights. Once a week, each section will hold a sectional at a time determined by the availability of each individual section’s members.

Games
On game days, plan on devoting 8+ hours to the drumline for the gameday rehearsal, preparation, other gameday activities, and the football game itself.
Marching Technique

Forward step
To start to move straight forward, the energy comes from the right toe. No forward lean is used to initiate the movement. The first feeling in the body comes from the right toe in an explosion of energy. As the right toe pushes off the center of the body moves directly forward as if there were a string pulling the core of the individual. The left leg, which should be allowed only a small amount of knee bend, comes forward and the toes of this foot reach their max height when the heel comes in contact with the ground. The toes of the left foot should stay flexed as long as possible through the step. After the right foot lifts from the ground, the right knee bends very slightly and for just long enough to allow the right foot to pass the left foot without dragging on the ground. From this point on the step is exactly the same as the left foot step. Feet and legs should be parallel at all times.

*Notes: Legs should be straight on downbeats in all steps. Transient motion should be continuous and fluid especially through the core of the individual. Ankles should pass on the “and” counts.

Backward step
Starting the backward step is the same as starting the forward step, where an explosion of energy should come from the right toe. The left leg should move backward to contact the ground simultaneously with the explosion of energy. To take step two, the individual should slightly flex the toes of the right foot to make the bottom of the foot pass gently over the ground. If the foot will graze the ground (not dig into it) and little or no knee bend is needed to pass the right foot by the left foot. Feet and legs should be parallel at all times.

*Notes: All the forward step notes apply. The forward presence needs to remain constant in the backward step. The individuals should think about pushing and placing rather than sticking a foot out behind them and pulling themselves back. This pushing and placing will smooth transient motion and help maintain posture.

Crab step
The same explosion of energy is needed in the first step. Since you want your center of body over the path, you will have one foot in front of the path and one foot behind the path. When moving left, the left foot is behind the path and the right foot is in front of the path. Moving right, the opposite is true. The feet should stay “out,” which is to say not parallel to the yard line, but rather in about 45 degrees out from parallel. This should be more ‘natural’ for most people.

In order to keep transient motion even and fluid, the ankles will not cross on the “and” counts due to the physical nature of the step. It is ‘natural’ to have the open step be a larger step than the closed/crossed step; this should not be ignored or avoided. The smooth motion from step to step is more important than having the timing changed to achieve an even meter of leg crossing.
*Notes: There is a large tendency to move back when moving left and right when moving forward. It is also a very common tendency to move the hips in this similar fashion. The hips must stay in line, or parallel, with the line of the shoulder.

**Forward to back transition**
The general principle of this step should be that the weight is over the last step. This is to say that if the dot is on the yard line, the right foot should be on the yard line, with the weight directly over the line, and with the left foot in its last position with no weight on it. This is done so you can pick up the left foot and re-articulate step one as to feel all the pulses in the measure. The weight must, however, stop on count eight and not cause a break down in posture. This is achieved by squeezing through the calf and hamstring muscles to stop to forward momentum.

**Back to forward transition**
This follows the same principal as the section above. The weight arrives over the right foot on count eight and the left foot is lifted and re-articulated for step one. This is done for optimal weight control over the largest surface area possible and for the ability for all players to feel every beat in the piece, which would be lost with a “dead count.”

**Right to left transition**
This is a fairly easy one. Count eight delivers the left foot ahead of the path and the right foot behind the path. Count one, the left foot moves to behind the path (no side to side difference), then step two moves the right foot both in front of the path and in the left direction for a full size cross over step. This isn’t very common in Iowa State’s marching band drill.

**Left to right transition**
Count eight should deliver us to a “tight-rope” position on the yard line with the right foot in front of the path and the left behind the path. Step one should be made with the left foot staying behind the path in a full sized cross over step. Step two should be made with the right foot taking a full sized open step and move behind the path. Finally, the left foot moves to its place in front of the path and takes yet another full sized cross over step. This is also not very common in Iowa State’s marching band drill.
**Box Drill**
The diagram below shows the direction changes in a box drill. Please note that the right foot leads the transition by planting parallel before every direction change.
**Snare**

**Snare Specific Technique**

**Traditional Grip**
Different from any other section of the line, snare drum utilizes an unmatched grip, called “traditional grip.” The rotation comes from the wrist, but the motion is different from the right hand (which uses matched grip). While matched grip “knocks on the door,” traditional grip “turns the door knob.” The stick should sit in the pocket of skin between your thumb and index finger, and rest on top of the front knuckle of the ring finger. The pinky should remain connected to the ring finger. Connect your thumb to the first knuckle of your index finger, and don’t ever break the connection. This will help provide significant control to your playing. Finally, the middle finger curls in slightly and rests comfortably on top of the stick.

Be sure to always lead with the bead when playing, and not the arm. The thumb is where a significant portion of the power comes from with this type of stroke. Try to keep the gaps between all your fingers closed, but don’t squeeze them together; it should be comfortable when playing. Be aware of the tendency to strain your middle finger, or allow it to awkwardly curl in while playing. This is referred to as “the claw” and can cause discomfort and does not look good. The middle finger doesn’t do much during the stroke; it simply is along for the ride. Also, try to keep the ring and pinky fingers close to the stick when playing, especially at higher heights. This will help to control the stick more and is visually superior as it keeps everything tighter.

**Playing Zones**
The snare drum utilizes 4 playing zones, the center, halfway, edge, and gut edge. Each zone provides a specific sound and volume that are used according to what the dynamics of the music call for, and will be clearly defined for each piece of music. Most music that is played will be played directly in the center of the head. For reference (on a 14 inch, Yamaha snare drum), use the lugs around the drum. If you drew straight lines from the 3 o’clock lug to the 9 o’clock lug, the beads of the sticks should be directly on this line, and if you drew a line from the 12 o’clock lug to the 6 o’clock lug, the beads should equally split this line. Halfway would be drawing a straight line between the 2 o’clock and 10 o’clock lugs, and edge would be a straight line between 1 o’clock and 11 o’clock. Gut edge is the same distance from the rim as edge, but is located at the 2 o’clock lug, or directly over the snares that line the bottom of the drum.
Snare Specific Body Posture

Body Angles
When playing traditional grip, snare drummers sometimes have a tendency to lean over slightly to their left to compensate for the difference in hand to hand technique. Always stand up straight when you play, and practice achieving higher heights without having to compensate by leaning. If you were to put on a carrier, it would cause your drum to tilt differently from the rest of the line and look different. Over time, this can even cause strain on your back.

Set Position
When standing at set, you will have the sticks in and they should be held the same way as the normal grip. The idea behind this is that when the sticks are brought out (to tacet position), nothing in the grip changes. At set, the sticks should be held parallel to the drum. The left pinky should be gently touching the top of the rim, and the middle finger of the right hand, if fully extended, should be able to touch the top head of the drum. This will ensure your sticks are not awkwardly angled, or unparallel to the rim.

Tacet Position
This position is how you stand with the sticks out. This is also called “playing position”. The best way to start is with sticks in your hands and let your arms hang by your sides, relaxed. Make sure your shoulders are relaxed and down with no tension. When you bring the sticks up, your left arm should not be parallel to the ground, but slightly angled downward. This will be the height you adjust your drum to. When you hold your sticks out, they should be angled slightly downward, with about two fingers worth of space between your stick and the rim. Try to avoid the tendency to have more or less space than that, as the more extreme angle will affect your sound quality. Any of the strokes we play should be initiated from this position and must be “bead first”, meaning a good, strong wrist turn, and not leading with the arm. As higher heights are played, more arm will incorporated into the stroke, but the wrist motion must be maintained.
Tenors

Tenor Specific Technique

Playing Zones
The spock drum/drums should be played in the center of the head. Drums one and two should be played on the part of the head that is closest to you (southern part). Drum three should be played on the northwestern part of the head. Drum four should be played on the northeastern part of the head. The playing zones for drums 1, 2, 3, and 4 are approximately 2” from the rim. Also, when playing on the 3 drum with the right hand or the 4 drum with the left hand, one must be sure to not open the grip up too much. The stick should never be pointing out or be angled farther away from the body than straight forward.

Arounds
When playing arounds, you must not change your stroke technique from the previously discussed technique. The specific hand technique is exactly the same as if playing eights on a single drum. As you move from drum to drum, the technique in your hands should not be affected by the lateral movement in your arms. Good playing zones must be maintained during arounds while maintaining strong taps and accents.

Sweeps
When playing sweeps, the basic stroke is a double, or diddle. A quality double stroke must be maintained throughout the sweep. During this double stroke, the arm is moved to allow striking of a different drum. In theory, the double stroke and the arm motion are two independent functions, and they are aligned at the same time to produce a sweep.
Consistent Playing Across Drums
Due to the variation in drum size across the drums, when changing drums, one must apply more or less energy to maintain a consistent sound. For example, when moving from the 2 drum to the 4 drum, one must apply more energy to the stick to produce a full sound out of the bigger 4 drum. Do not confuse this with playing higher, louder, or faster. It is just compensating for the size variation of the drum to still maintain a consistent sound.

Tenor Specific Body Posture

Body Angles
When playing, relax the arms and shoulders, and let them hang as much as possible. The angle of your elbows will vary depending on what drums are being played, but in general, keep your elbows from sticking out while maintaining relaxation and a tension free upper body.

The wrists should be angled so there is a smooth transition from forearm to hand, avoiding an awkward angle in the wrist. This allows for more comfortable and smoother playing. One way to check this is to ensure that the top of the hand is approximately horizontal and the sticks sit comfortably in the hand and roughly form a 90 degree angle. There should be a slight downward angle of the stick when playing. This is so you are playing down into the drum, not on the drum.

Set Position
The tenor set position is standing with good posture and sticks in. The two sticks need to be horizontal, with both sticks the same height from the drum. When in set, the sticks are approximately 4” above the spock drum/drums. Stay relaxed and avoid tension in the upper body.

Tacet Position
The tacet position for the tenors is both sticks out with a slight downward angle from hand to the tip of the stick. Place the tip of the right stick above the playing zone for drum 1 and the tip of the left stick above the playing zone for drum 2. The tips of both sticks remain 1” – 2” above the drum head.
Bass

Bass Specific Technique

Grip
When holding the mallet, the grip is similar to a snare drum match grip except the hands are rotated so the wrists are vertical instead of horizontal. The bottom (butt) of the mallet should be flush with the bottom of the hand so it can’t be seen from an outside viewer. Because of the mallet’s design, the player must not choke up on the mallet. Using the entire length of the mallet will give the player maximum velocity which will allow for maximum resonance, volume, and mallet control. The thumb and index finger form a “fulcrum” on the mallet. If one were to drive a nail through the thumbnail, it should come out the index finger. The rest of the fingers should be wrapped around the mallet very naturally without any tension. The grip must be approached with relaxation in mind.

Bass Drum Stroke
Relaxation is the key to ensuring the best tone quality when playing the bass drum. There must not be any tension approaching the drum. The stroke is initiated with wrist rotation, comparable to the turning of a door knob. Although the stroke is initiated with wrist rotation, it is not only a rotation of the wrist. The arm naturally follows this movement and begins to rotate with the wrist, especially at higher dynamic levels. Swiveling, wrist break, and making circles with the path of the mallet are undesirable. The mallet needs to follow one arching, straight line path from point A to point B and back. The arm needs to move naturally. As the drum is struck, the elbow will naturally move away from and then back toward the player’s body. This motion must not be restricted. Also, don’t force this elbow movement. Restricting and forcing will produce a poor quality of sound (less resonance).

Playing Zones
To create the most dynamic sound, the bass drum is played in the direct center of the head. This is the “sweet spot” to the drum and produces the best sound. Playing on the center of the head creates a unified tone and a full resonating sound not only for each individual drum, but for the entire bass line. Aesthetically, everyone must play in the center of the head to ensure a unified appearance and group dynamic.
Dynamics
At Iowa State, we use three simple stick heights to determine dynamics. It is important that everyone in the bassline, without exception, approaches these dynamic levels the same way. If everyone is not playing with the same velocity at the written dynamic level, the balance and blend from player to player will suffer along with clarity. Essentially all strokes have the same intensity, while increasing and decreasing the distance and speed at which the mallet strikes. As tempo’s increase, players will reach a point where it is not possible to still produce a “good” sound out of the drum at certain dynamic levels. In these cases, the inch level will be lowered, slightly, to ensure quality of sound and tempo control.

Our basic levels are defined as follows:

- **p** piano – 10 degrees/3 inches
- **mf** mezzo – 45 degrees
- **f** forte – 90 degrees/ flat to the ground

2’s, 3’s and 4’s
Making sure that the members of the bass line all understand how to interpret 2’s, 3’s and 4’s is crucial to the success of the line. 2’s, 3’s, and 4’s are simply 16\(^{th}\) notes, triplets, and 32\(^{nd}\) notes, respectively. Here are four general rules that must be applied in the order presented.

1. **Timing**: Start the figure at precisely the correct beat and time. (Ex. 2 & 4)

2. **Articulation**: To get each note to speak clearly, the player must slightly crescendo each figure. With the elongated resonance of the bass drum, the 2\(^{nd}\), 3\(^{rd}\), and 4\(^{th}\) notes are slightly covered up by the previous resonance. To prevent this, a slight crescendo produces a fluid, even tone when heard from a distance.

3. **Spacing**: Whether a 2, 3, or 4, each note must fill the correct spacing within the measure. 2’s, 3’s, and 4’s must not be too open or to closed, but fill the space with perfect, even spacing.

4. **Balance and Blend**: Each member of the line must make an effort to blend and balance musically and dynamically with the other members of the line to create an even, full line sound.
**Bass Specific Body Posture**

**Body Angles**
It is important to stand with good posture when approaching the drum. The fore arm is to remain parallel to the ground, while the mallet stays at a constant 45 degree angle. When playing, keep your head turned at a 45 degree angle.

**Set Position**
With the sticks properly gripped, comfortably reach forward and form a relaxed grip on the drum. The sticks must remain exactly vertical in the set position with the bead of the mallet resting one inch above the player’s eye.

**Tacet Position**
The bead of the mallet must be placed in the center of the head approximately ½ of an inch from the playing surface. The mallet should be either parallel, or slightly turned in toward the surface. The hand should be as close to the rim as possible without coming into contact with it. There should be a natural, slight angle between the top of the forearm and the highest point of the hand (the thumb). The elbows should rest near the player’s body, but not be touching. The upper arm should hang in a very relaxed, natural position. At no time should the player have tension anywhere from the shoulder muscles on down the arm through the hands. The bottom of the forearm should be parallel to the ground. The angle of the mallet should be 45 degrees up from horizontal.
Cymbal Specific Body Posture

Body Angles
Your body is made up of many angles. When at set position your anklebones, hips and shoulders should be in line. You should stand up tall like someone is pulling a string from the top of your head. With this your chest should be out and shoulders down and rolled back. Your head should be up and eyes 10 degrees above the horizon. This creates a nice forward presence.

Set Position

Up Set
Please see “Up Set” in Tacet Position section below.

Down Set
Please see “Down Set” in Tacet Position section below.

Tacet Position

Depending on the song this position could be any of the following

Hi-Hat position
Cymbals are together and resting on the left side of your waist (often the hip bone works well as a resting point). The left cymbal is on the bottom and the right cymbal is on the top. Both cymbals are angled in close towards the body at a 45 degree angles.
**Up Set**
Both cymbals are in a vertical position (perpendicular with the ground), with the center of the bells of the cymbals at eye level. The cymbals are 2-3 inches apart.

![Up Set Image](image1.png)

**Down Set**
Both cymbals are again perpendicular to the ground, but separated with the left hand cymbal by the left hip and the right hand cymbal by the right hip. Both bells are at hip level, with elbows bent slightly straight back, but the cymbals never rest against the body.

![Down Set Image](image2.png)
Cymbal Specific Technique

Cymbal Effects

Crash
Start with both cymbals at the up set position. Move the bottom edge of both cymbals away from each other into an A shaped position while keeping the top edges in place. Then move the top edges away from each other to form a V shape while keeping the bottom edges in place. This should all be done in a fluid motion. Bring the cymbals back together (The bottom leading just slightly) and throw them together. Once they hit repeat the same A-V pattern and then return both cymbals to vertical set.

Hi-Hat
Start with cymbals in the hi-hat position. Open the cymbals in a motion similar to a clam opening, with the contact point with body as the hinge point. The bottom cymbal should move more than the top cymbal. Close the cymbals, again using the body contact point as a hinge. Fingers stay on the cymbals at all times.

Choke
Start with both cymbals at the up set position. Move both cymbals slightly apart before throwing them back together. Fingers come off the cymbal briefly at the point of impact, but as soon as impact is made, pull the cymbals as hard and fast as possible into the chest. Put fingers back on the cymbal to help control the cymbals as they are pulled back into the chest.

Sizzle (down)
Start in hi-hat position. Open the cymbals like a hi hat, moving the bottom cymbal more than the top one. When you close the cymbals, pull them away slightly from the body and do not close them all the way. The cymbals should be in slight contact with one another so that they vibrate against one another to make a sizzling sound, but they should not be pressed together. The right hand cymbal is on top and is slightly further away from the body, overlapping the left hand cymbal by no more than 2 inches. Fingers come off the right hand cymbal, but not the left hand cymbal. To stop the sizzle sound, press both palms together firmly.

Slide Choke (down)
Follow all directions for the sizzle. To stop the sound, however, slide the right hand cymbal that overlaps slightly back over the left hand cymbal, catching the air pocket. This always has a rhythmic sense to it. For a quarter note slide choke, start the sizzle on beat one and pull it shut for the choke part on beat two. For an eighth note slide choke, start the sizzle on beat one and pull it shut on the off beat (the ‘and’ of beat one).

Smash
Start in the up set position. Let the cymbals drop into the hi-hat position, closing them together a couple inches from the body. As they fall, the cymbals rotate to switch from being perpendicular to the body as they are in the up set position to being angled like they are in the hi-hat position. After the
cymbals close, they continue to move until they rest against the body as they do in the hi-hat position. Be careful not to bend at the waist or move the torso at all during this hit. Only the arms move.

**Tap (up)**
Start at the up set position. Angle both cymbals at 45 degree angles, making an A-shape. Keeping the A-shape, move the right hand cymbal over so that the left hand cymbal nearly touches the inside of the right cymbal, 1/2 between the edge of the bell and the outer edge. Moving the right wrist, strike the edge of the left hand cymbal with the inside of the right cymbal. Fingers stay on both cymbals at all times. Make sure to keep the A-shape at all times, and watch to make sure only the wrist moves to strike the cymbal.

**Tap (down)**
Start with your left cymbal tilted at a 45 degree angle in the high-hat position. Place your right hand at a 45˚angle tilted the other way. Place the right cymbal centered over the inside bell of the left cymbal. Tap the center of the left cymbal with the right cymbal, moving in a circle like motion. Bring the cymbal back to the center position after each tap. Keep the left hand stationary at all times, only moving the right hand to make the tap sound. Moving your right arm in the circular motion brings out the sound resonance.

**Tap-Choke**
Start at the up set position. Angle both cymbals at 45 degree angles, making an A-shape. Keeping the A-shape, move the right hand cymbal over so that the left hand cymbal nearly touches the inside of the right cymbal, 1/2 between the edge of the bell and the outer edge. Moving the right wrist, strike the edge of the left hand cymbal with the inside of the right cymbal. Fingers stay on both cymbals at all times. Make sure to keep the A-shape at all times, and watch to make sure only the wrist moves to strike the cymbal. Pull the cymbals into your chest as hard and fast as possible to dampen the ringing.

**Dynamics**
Dynamics will be played with velocity and not largeness of movements. The louder we want to play the faster we make our movements. The same goes for quieter dynamics. The movements will stay the same but the velocity will decrease.
Contact Information

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First draft of this book was composed by Brett Ebert, Kelsey Knief, Luke Sesker, Dave Reid and Scott Szurek in 2011. Iowa State’s vision is to educate as many people as possible and not hold the information above as proprietary; please feel free to distribute this book as well as any music found on the Iowa State University Drumline webpage. For comments, suggestions, corrections please feel free to e-mail drumlineinstructor@iastate.edu OR leadership@iastate.edu