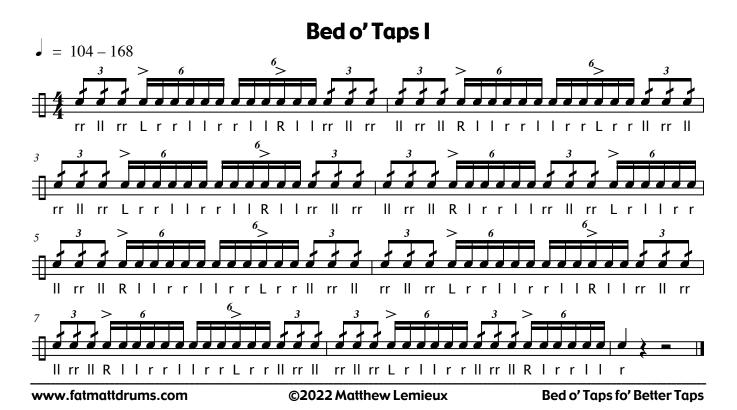
Bed o' Taps fo' Better Taps

M. Lemieux

These two exercises are intended to bridge the gap between roll fundamentals and accenttap fundamentals. It is very common that players who have painstakingly developed sufficient stroke velocity and fulcrum control for playing quality doublestroke rolls will nevertheless find those habits affected by the addition of accents to create two-height figures, like paradiddles and tap rolls. The demand for *not following the stick back to the accent height* tends to be difficult to integrate into an already extensive list of demands, creating a tendency to tense up in order to control the rebound of the accent. This added tension adversely affects doublestroke quality and timing.

This first exercise creates a groovy feel around inverted and straight roll figures in order to get you comfortable with leaning into a doublestroke that follows a relaxed *cushion stroke* (stroke that does not rebound to its attack height). Watch out for the paradiddle-diddles in measures 4 and 8, as these figures offer less time between the accent and the doublestroke on the same hand. The point is to execute a comfortable cushion stroke that rebounds to the tap height, leaving the accent hand optimally ready to execute a solid doublestroke at the low height. As tempo increases, it may become inescapable that the paradiddle-diddles feel differently from the inverted rolls, but at slower tempi, a discrepancy in your comfort level between the two kinds of R-rr figure (Rlrrllr vs. Rllrrll) could tell you something about how your accent-tap habits interact with your doublestroke habits. Listen to the solid "bed of taps" that the accents fit within; listen to how the accents might affect the timing or sound quality of the taps. Listening will point you towards the right corrections.



Another weak spot in accent-tap fundamentals tends to be the aggressive upstroke required to quickly transition from the low, quick, fulcrum-involved doublestroke into the high, relaxed accent.

A common waypoint on the journey towards awesome doublestroke rolls is to put so much velocity into the doublestroke that it overpowers the performer's rebound fundamentals. This "transitional" habit adds a lot of power to the doublestroke, leading to rolls which sound better than they did when the performer was playing with less velocity. Players with this habit are ultimately sacrificing efficiency for sound quality, but the cost in endurance is subtle enough that they get away with it... until upstrokes are thrown in. When upstrokes are added, it becomes a significant problem that the second note of the doublestroke is not efficiently rebounded. Instead of already being relaxed and simply lifting the stick from the tap height, the performer has to become relaxed and then lift the stick from *below* the tap height in order to hit the accent in time. To eliminate this extra work from the upstroke and accent motion, one must aggressively attack the doublestroke (for power and sound quality) while also allowing the second note of the doublestroke to comfortably rebound back to the tap height. By achieving high velocity and efficient rebound at the low height, there will no longer be tension working against the upstroke, and the upstroke will be assisted by the rebound of the second note of the doublestroke. The assistance from the small amount of rebound may be minimal, but it happens at a critical time in the upstroke: when the muscles begin engaging to lift the stick up.

Whereas the previous exercise focused on poor accent-tap habits adversely impacting rolls, this exercise focuses on sub-optimal roll habits adversely impacting accents. It is the same problem from the other direction.

