

Table of Contents

I. Introduction	3		
About This Volume.....	3		
About The Author / Acknowledgements	4		
II. Technique.....	5	V. Rolls	52
The Technique Triangle.....	5	<i>Rolls and the Technique Triangle</i>	<i>52</i>
Wrist Turn: How you move the stick.....	7	<i>Fulcrum Pressure and Finger Assistance.....</i>	<i>53</i>
Fulcrum: How you hold the stick.....	12	Higga-Digga Fulcrum.....	54
Rebound: How you allow the stick to move	18	A Little Quicker on the Drag	56
Approaching the Drum.....	20	Slurred Tap-Five Modulation	58
III. Accents and Taps	22	Grip ‘n Go	60
<i>Accents, Taps, and the Technique Triangle.....</i>	<i>22</i>	Tap Spaces.....	62
<i>Doublestops as a Powerful Tool for Improvement</i>	<i>23</i>	Put Some STANK on it!	64
Singlestroke Pyramid	24	What a Drag	66
Tap Pentagon.....	26	Fine Fulcrum Figures	68
Hot Singles	28	For The Three	70
Have Some Triplets	30	Five Camps.....	72
6ths and 12ths.....	32	VI. Flams	74
IV. Doublestrokes	34	<i>Flams and the Technique Triangle</i>	<i>74</i>
<i>Doublestrokes and the Technique Triangle.....</i>	<i>34</i>	<i>Tacet Height Grace Notes.....</i>	<i>75</i>
<i>Forearm Assistance</i>	<i>35</i>	<i>Tacet Height Attacks.....</i>	<i>76</i>
Dub-Dubs	36	Got Any Grace Notes?.....	78
Irish Hang Time.....	38	Moving Flats.....	80
Hang Time.....	40	A Better Flam Accent Breakdown.....	82
High Gravity Stick Control	42	Flam Backbeat.....	84
The Hidden Eighth Note	44	Swiss Fritters	86
PDD-Detail.....	46	4,22,33	88
Cinco-Pated Doubles.....	48	Lead Shupps Grid.....	90
Anything With Paradiddles.....	50	Accent and Rebound Quality.....	92

About The Author

Matthew Lemieux is a musician, composer, and educator with a background in battery percussion. Originally from Cary, NC, he was first exposed to rudimental drumming on the drumline at Cary High School, under the tutelage of SCV-alum Will Goodyear.

He was a performer with the world-class WGI ensemble *Constitution* in 2008, and as an undergraduate student, he marched with the NC State *Power Sound of the South* marching band, serving as drumline captain for two years. During this time, he worked closely with instructor John Antonelli to develop and refine the line's exercise program and performance repertoire. Outside of school, he assisted John as a battery instructor for the Athens Drive High School marching band and indoor drumlines from 2009–2011. Matthew received his Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering from North Carolina State University in 2011.

After moving to Utah to continue his education, he remained involved in the marching arts, serving as the snare drum instructor for Weber State Indoor Percussion (now *Gold Spike Percussion*) for the 2014/2015 seasons, consulting for high school programs in the Carolinas, and curating FatMattDrums.com, a massive repository of original drumline cadences, warm-ups, and exercises. Matthew earned his Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering from The University of Utah in 2017. He works as a process engineer in Southern California, where he lives with his wife, Jessica, and their amazing children.

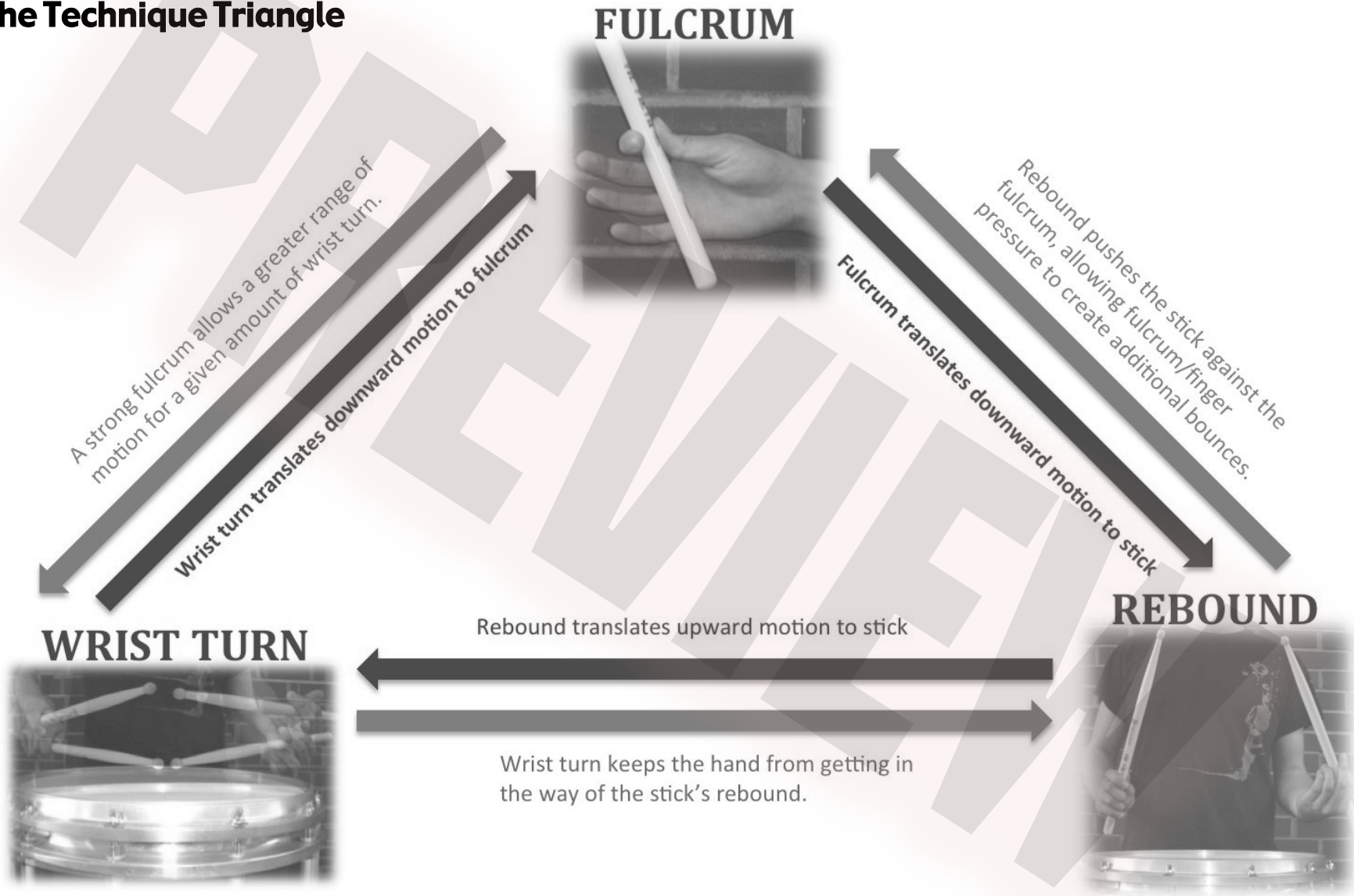


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II. Technique

The Technique Triangle



III. Accents and Taps

Accents, Taps, and the Technique Triangle

Wrist Turn: These kinds of exercises (legatos, accent/tap, and singlestroke roll) work on your stick motion at its most basic. Every stroke is motivated in exactly the same way (except for some doublestrokes in *Have Some Triplets*), and this motion defines the ideal that we only begin to deviate from as speed demands the incorporation of forearm assistance and fulcrum pressure. With accent-tap figures, there is the added challenge of “cushioning” the rebound to lower heights and upstroking to higher heights, but these demands do not affect the basic motion of throwing the stick into the drum.

Rebound: The concern for rebound is fairly straightforward: allow the stick to rebound if you are re-attacking at the same height, and otherwise, *simply don't*. To play a tap after an accent, you have to *cushion* to a lower height, but this cushion is actually an inaction, rather than an action. Simply leave your hand where it is once it has risen to the tap height, instead of pulling it all the way up to the original attack height.

Fulcrum: Your performance on these exercises is not likely to suffer if you maintain poor fulcrum construction or consistency, so you can probably get away with neglecting the fulcrum. The challenge, then, is to maintain a strong and consistent fulcrum throughout this material, so that you are comfortable with the fulcrum being intact all the time. In this manner, the fulcrum can always be there when you need it, and you will be well-trained for your fulcrum to become engaged without hindering the wrist turn and rebound motions that are otherwise the focus of these exercises.

Doublestops as a Powerful Tool for Improvement

Many of the exercises in this volume involve performing certain rudiments and breakdowns as *doublestops* (where both sticks strike the drum at the same time). This practice can serve many purposes, depending on the specific application:

- Both hands play identical parts as doublestops, and each hand checks the timing and sound quality of the other. Additionally, you can observe how the sticks move to ensure that both sticks are achieving the rudimental demands using identical motions. This practice is especially useful with a mirror and/or video camera.
- The hands play concurrent but differing accent tap figures to simulate singlestroke roll patterns while using the nonlead hand to check consistency of timing and motion.
- “Flat” flams, where one hand plays a tap while the other plays an accent at the same time, as a contrast to true flams (where the low note strikes before the accent) in order to develop better control of grace notes.
- Offset patterns, where both hands play the same rudimental figure, offset in such a way that some strokes coincide, but they are not the same stroke (e.g., the first note of one doublestroke lining up with the second note of another).
- One hand plays a pattern while the other hand plays a consistent pulse (e.g., quarter notes), causing some rests to be filled in and some strokes to become doublestops, checking the timing and consistency of the lead hand’s pattern.

Note that some of these exercises put an especially high-level demand on your ability to play quality doublestops consistently. It is not easy to line everything up perfectly, whether the hands are doing different things or playing identical patterns. If you have to line up, for example, the first note of one doublestroke with the second note of another, subtle yet poor tendencies in how you achieve doublestops will manifest as dirt that may be very challenging to eliminate.

When the hands are playing identical patterns, hand-to-hand differences in how the smaller muscle groups achieve rudimental demands can cause a frustrating amount of dirt (rhythmic imprecision), especially in traditional grip, where all motions except for the “karate chop” forearm assistance motion are completely different between the hands. A temptation will be to rely on larger muscle groups to achieve clean doublestops, as these are the motions that are easiest to match between your two hands; however, this practice will lead to an overreliance on forearm motion and the building of bad habits.

Accept that there will be dirt at first and that it may be difficult to eliminate. Still, commit to good technique and to truly matching the motions of the two hands. The purpose of this volume is to challenge you; **do not take any shortcuts on the path to improvement.**

Singlestroke Pyramid

Many singlestroke roll builders start you off with a lead hand rhythm before filling in the inner beats. This exercise says, “forget that!” Your hands will be moving *all the time*, and you will create the singlestroke roll patterns by varying how they relate to each other in time. After all, you should be able to play a boatload of taps at the tempo that you want to play quality singlestrokes at. The control demand here is for smoothly switching between the doublestops and the singlestroke rolls. Use a mirror and/or video camera to observe how the stick motions match between hands on the doublestops; on the singlestrokes, *listen* for inconsistencies in sound quality between the hands.

This is a great exercise for focusing on consistency and sound quality at lower dynamics, but it will also be beneficial to rehearse it at higher dynamics (at least at the slower tempi) to unmask inconsistencies in legato strokes. As the range of motion varies (different heights), discrepancies in stick motion between the hands may manifest differently, presenting different challenges for hand-to-hand uniformity at different dynamics.

For further practice, add accents. These could be accents on every beat 1, accents on every quarter-note downbeat, accents on every eighth note, etc. For the singlestrokes, decide whether you will only keep the accent on the lead hand or if you will put the accents on both hands even through the single strokes (e.g., RLrlrlrl RLrlrlrl).

Singlestroke Pyramid

♩ = 72, 80, 88, 96, 104, 112, 120

The exercise is written on a single staff in 4/4 time. It consists of 19 measures. Measures 1-4 are eighth notes, measures 5-8 are sixteenth notes, measures 9-12 are thirty-second notes, and measures 13-16 are sixty-fourth notes. Measures 17-18 are eighth notes, and measure 19 is a quarter note. The notation includes a large, faint watermark of a hand drum. The exercise is divided into sections A, B, C, and D, each marked with a box containing the letter. Section A starts at measure 5, B at measure 9, C at measure 13, and D at measure 17. Each section ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The tempo is indicated as 72, 80, 88, 96, 104, 112, 120 beats per minute.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19

A B C D

2 2 2 2

The Hidden Eighth Note

This exercise directs your attention to the eighth-note pulse that is hiding within triplet rolls, but which often goes unrecognized. Approaching triplet rolls in this way allows you to hear the roll differently than you might be used to, and it also directs your focus to the second note of the diddles on the second triplet partial. By feeling the second note of that diddle as being on a strong beat (the eighth-note upbeat) instead of merely being an ornament that decorates the triplet check pattern, you will be better able to strive for sound quality and rhythmic accuracy on a wide range of roll figures.

What this exercise excludes is the actual eighth-note check (sticking: R L L R R L L R), instead substituting a pattern with the first note of the doublestroke already added. You may rehearse it with the eighth-note check instead, but it is likely that you are familiar enough with eighth notes that the benefit would be minimal. Using the huckadig-type rhythm as the base pattern drives home the focus on doublestroke quality, brings your attention to the space between the tap and the first doublestroke of a tap roll, and creates a more rhythmically-defined structure into which the added diddles on the fill-in patterns fit.

While playing the base pattern, focus especially on allowing the second note of each doublestroke to rebound to the original height. Translate this approach to the fill-in patterns as well, so that you are not doing unnecessary work on the stick. A common source of poor timing and sound quality on rolls is the failure to effectively use rebound. The addition of forearm assistance or fulcrum pressure to put extra downward pressure on the stick—while useful for achieving a quick second note—can often lead to a tendency to kill the rebound. Strive to maximize rebound at speeds where forearm assistance and fulcrum pressure are necessary, and it will work wonders for your endurance and sound quality.

Grip ‘n Go

This exercise tests your ability to choose a suitable fulcrum pressure for a quick doublestroke speed and reliably apply it, despite differing amounts of space between doublestrokes. It is in 15/16 time to create some interesting feels that still offer a straightforward turnaround to switch the lead hand. There is not a great demand to change the fulcrum pressure you establish for the roll speed—only to apply it consistently—although throwing accents into the pattern may complicate things.

The first four measures are written at a single height (tap height), but you should explore different heights here as well. At slower tempi, this exercise can pull double duty as a double beat exercise, so try it with big, slow, legato doublestrokes that rebound. The benefit of the rest of the exercise is not lost at slower tempi either; managing the varied hang time, doublestops, and cushion strokes will be challenging for different reasons than quicker diddle figures will be. Still, it will pay off at faster tempi, where it is extremely important for the second note of each doublestroke to rebound (even at the tap height), for the sake of endurance and speed.

Lastly, check yourself periodically to ensure that you are not maintaining too much tension in your hand for the necessary fulcrum pressure; it can be very easy to tense up for the duration of an exercise like this because there are not many figures that demand changes in fulcrum pressure. Relax!

Quality Control for Rudimental Drummers – Rolls

Grip 'n Go

♩ = 72, 80, 88, 96, 104, 112, 120, 128, 136, 144, 152, 160

♩. = 96, ~107, ~117, 128, ~139, ~149, 160, ~171, ~181, 192, ~203, ~213



Flam Backbeat

This exercise consists of patterns designed to juxtapose the one-handed demands of certain flam figures with the flam figures themselves, within a structure that maintains a consistent “2 and 4” backbeat. The backbeat gives you something musically comfortable to fit the odd multi-beat stickings into, so you should more easily hear inconsistencies on multi-beat and drag timing. When the flam rudiments make their appearance, you should focus on what changes you have to make, relative to the skeleton pattern, in order to achieve proper grace notes. The timings of the one-handed breakdown are not identical to that of the rudiment itself, and a tendency will be to tense up in order to fit the grace notes where they go; this tension will affect sound quality on your other taps, drags, and accents, so keep your ears open. Strive for quality flams, but also strive to maintain a consistent touch and sound quality between the skeleton backbeat and the flam figures.

Flam Backbeat

♩. = 120, 128, 136, 144, 152, 160, 168, 176

Flam Accent

12
8

Flam Drag

5

Cheese

9

Flam Five

13

A *Flam-Tap / Flam Accent*

17

Flam-Tap / Flam Drag

21

Flam-Tap / Flam Five

25

Tag

29

r r | R | r r r | R | r r r | R | r L r | R | r | l r L r | l l r L r | l l r L r | R | r L r |

r rr | R | r r rr | R | r r rr | R | r L rr | R || r | ll r L r | ll r L r | ll r L r | R || r L rr |

r r | RR | r r r | RR | r r r | RR | r LL r | RR | r | l l r LL r | l l r LL r | l l r LL r | RR | r LL r |

r rr | RR | r r rr | RR | r r rr | RR | r LL rr | RR || r | ll r LL r | ll r LL r | ll r LL r | RR || r LL rr |

r | r L | l l r | R r r | r | r L | l l r | R r r | r | r L | R | r | R r L | r | r L | R | r | R r L |

r | r L | l ll r | R r r rr | r L | l ll r | R r r rr | r L | R ll r | R r L rr | r L | R ll r | R r L |

rr | r L | l ll r | R r r rr | r L | l ll r | R r r rr | r L | R ll r | R r L rr | r L | R ll r | R r L |

rr | RR || r LL rr | R || r L | R || r L | R || r L | R || r L | R || r L | R || r L | R