

The Fulcrum Exercise

Fundamental Focus on Fulcrum

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Trans. Lemieux

This exercise will help you to focus your fulcrum (further explained on the attached pages) while building the rest of the grip. The point is eventually for the stick to move in the same way and the motion to feel the same way as when you grip with only the fulcrum, regardless of the additional fingers on the stick. The repeated sections should be played multiple times before moving on to the next segment.

To “bring it in” with the right hand grip (as noted in the exercise) is to have the stick “live” closer to the palm of the hand, so that the wrist turn may put more energy into the stroke at a given height; it is a subtle adjustment that should not affect the fulcrum but will require the motion of the hand to more closely track the movement of the stick.

♩ = 80 – 144

1. Just the fulcrum
R R R R R R R R

3. Fulcrum plus middle and ring fingers
R R R R R R R R

5. "Bring it in" (Complete grip)
R R R R R R R R

2. Fulcrum plus middle finger
R R R R R R R R

4. All fingers on stick
R R R R R R R R

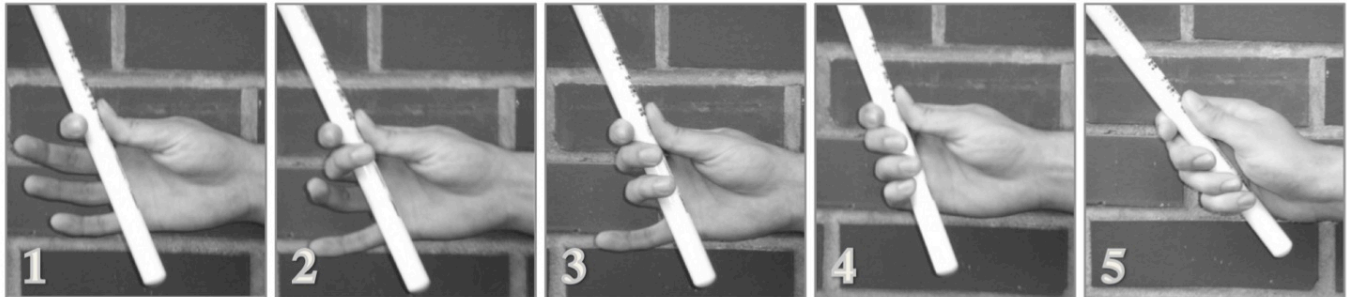
6. 1. Just the fulcrum
R R R R R R R R

5. Complete grip
R R R R R R R R

5. Complete grip
R R R R R R R R

4. All fingers on stick
R R R R R R R R

1. Just the fulcrum
R R R R R R R R



Left Hand Traditional Grip

1. Just the back part of the fulcrum
(Thumb and "web of hand")
L L L L L L L L

3. Intact Fulcrum plus Middle Finger
L L L L L L L L

2. Intact Fulcrum
(Connect thumb and forefinger)
L L L L L L L L

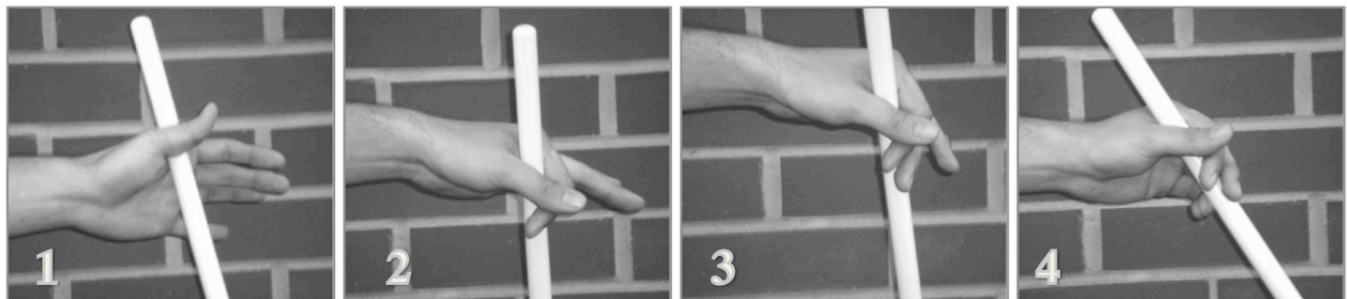
4. Add ring and pinky fingers (complete grip)
L L L L L L L L

5. 1. Just the back part of the fulcrum
(Thumb and "web of hand")
L L L L L L L L

4. Complete grip
L L L L L L L L

4. Complete grip
L L L L L L L L

2. Intact Fulcrum
(Connect thumb and forefinger)
L L L L L L L L



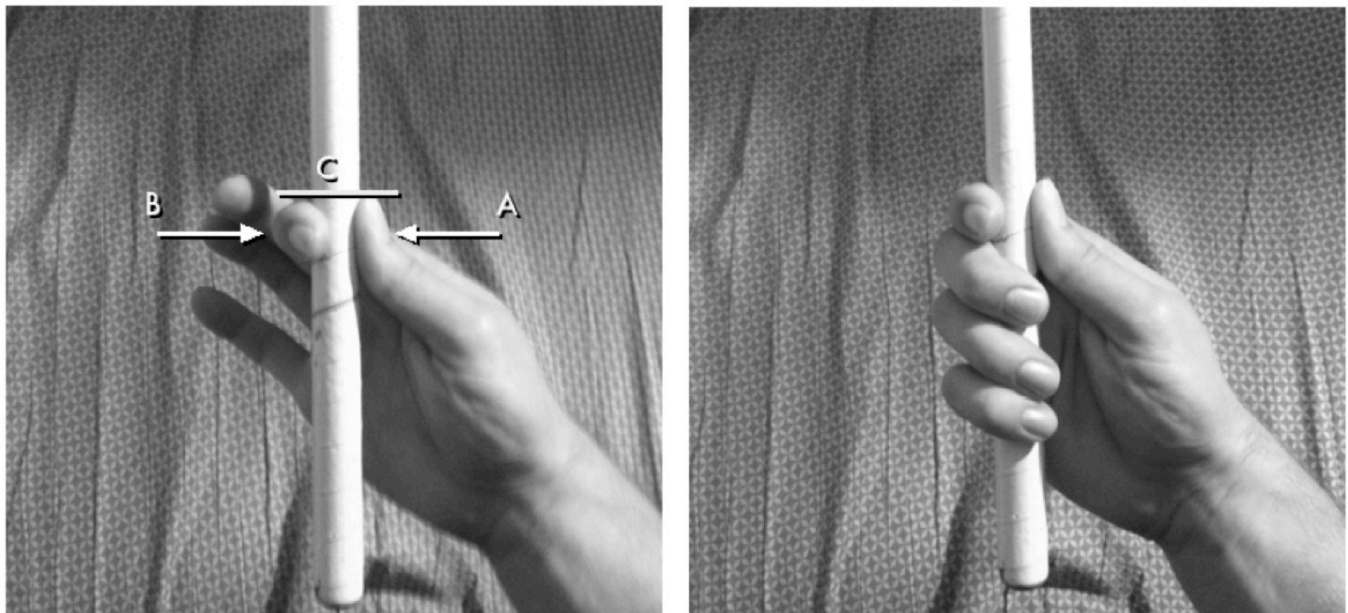
Description of Fulcrum and Grip

Adapted from *Quality Control For Rudimental Drummers*

The Fulcrum: How you hold the stick

The fulcrum is the most important part of a grip. For many situations, the stick functions as an extension of the hand, moving just as the hand does; however, the stick is also allowed some freedom to move within the hand, especially necessary for faster figures that require action from the fingers. The fulcrum is the pivot point for that motion, which comes into play at the moments when the bead strikes the drumhead. It is the part of the hand that actively exerts force on the stick (through engagement of the muscles) in order to hold onto it, and it should be well established at all times. It may become more engaged for crushes and faster multi-beat figures, but it is always present, even when you think it may not *need* to be.

Right Hand Fulcrum



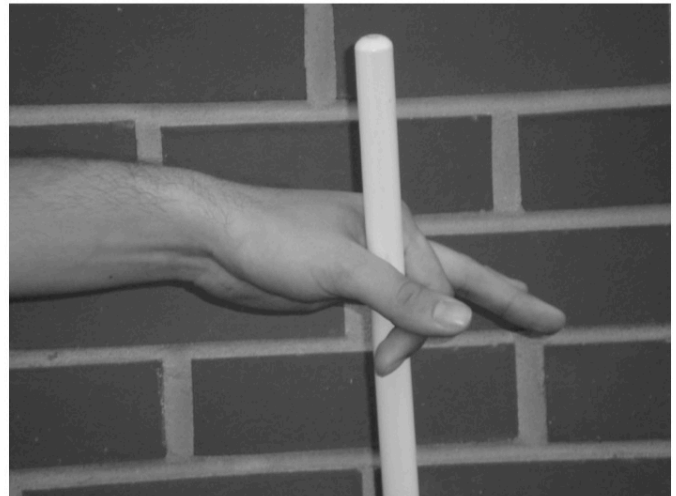
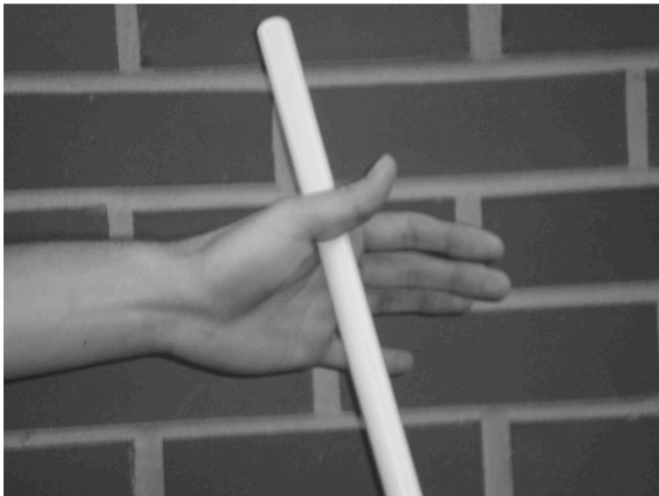
- Force **A** is exerted by the padded part of the thumb, almost directly opposite where the thumbnail meets skin.
- Force **B** is exerted by the middle segment of the forefinger, but closer to the finger's *second* joint from the hand: i.e., not directly in the center of the middle segment.
- The imaginary line **C** connects the tip of the thumb with the edge of the forefinger and is perpendicular to the stick. This guideline ensures that forces **A** and **B** exactly oppose each other.

Right Hand Grip



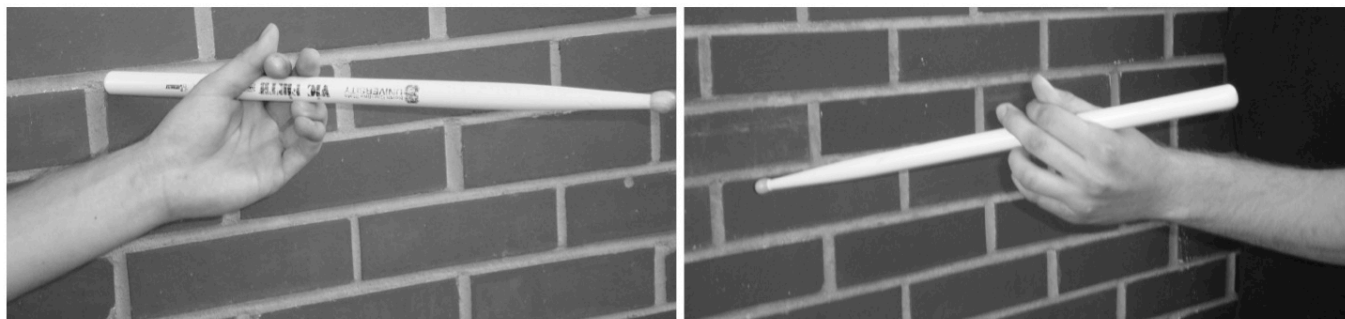
- Once the fulcrum is established, the other fingers wrap gently around the stick (left). When additional pressure is needed from the fulcrum (e.g., for buzz and quick drag figures), the fingers will provide assistance, taking some of the burden from the fulcrum in order to enhance endurance and sound quality. On accent-tap figures, the fingers simply “being there” will get in the way of the stick’s rebound without any additional tension or work on your part.
- The same angle established in the demonstrations for *The Hot Stove Exercise* should be maintained (right) when the stick is added.

Left Hand Fulcrum (Traditional Grip)



- The stick is first gripped by the “webbed” part of the hand (left). The force exerted by the thumb is balanced by the force exerted by the hand; this is straightforward, as the stick will immediately rotate if the forces do not directly oppose.
- The thumb is then connected to the forefinger. The padded part of the thumb, almost directly opposite where the thumbnail meets skin, contacts the forefinger at the knuckle farthest from the hand. Depending on the size of your fingers, it may rest on the middle segment of the forefinger, but it will be more towards that knuckle than towards the hand.
- The thumb/forefinger junction does not exert force on the stick unless it is pushing the stick downward for a stroke. Otherwise, this part of the fulcrum rests gently on the stick.

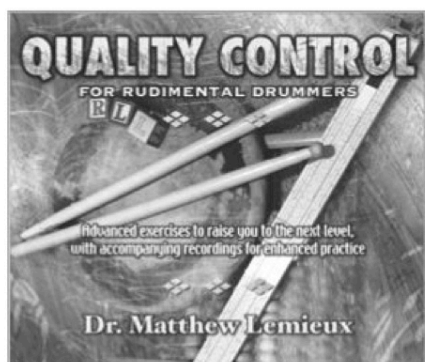
Left Hand Grip (Traditional Grip)



- The middle finger rests gently on the stick. It serves no purpose; however, removal of the middle finger from the stick is a sign of unnecessary tension in other parts of the grip.
- The ring finger and pinky act as a single unit, with the stick resting on the cuticle of the ring finger. When the hand rotates to lift the stick, the force is translated from the ring finger to the stick. So while this component of the grip must not be allowed to hinder the motion of the stick, you should not fall into the habit of pulling these fingers off of the stick to free it up (e.g., for faster diddle figures), as those fingers need to be there for any sort of upstroke.*
- An imaginary line drawn between where the thumbnail meets skin and where the stick rests on the ring finger will also intersect with the junction of the thumb and forefinger, as well as the contact area between the forefinger and the stick.



* Side note: Players with poor ring finger habits will struggle with two-height figures like tap-fives and paradiddles: such figures will certainly be hampered by the ring finger exerting force on the stick at the wrong time, but if these fingers are pulled away from the stick to free up the doublestrokes, they will not be there to assist in the necessary upstrokes for two-height rudiments.



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