

BATTERY TECHNIQUE

(Bass Drum)

Grip and Form:

- 1) RELAX!
- 2) The resting position of your beads will be about one inch above the surface of the drumhead. Your sticks will be at about a 90° angle from each other. There should be a slight downward angle of the sticks from the hand to the bead. Stick beads will always be together in the center of the head unless noted in the music or by an instructor. This has a ton to do with your individual sound quality, timing, and awareness. You will get a much bigger sound when you are striking the drum in the same place over and over again as opposed to roaming around the drumhead. Inability to keep your beads in the center of the head indicates a lack of awareness. Bass Drummers will be required to play in the center of the head.
- 3) The thumb will be across from either the index finger or the middle finger (this is your fulcrum), depending on the application. For anything requiring pressure, the index finger will be used. For any relaxation based exercise or excerpt, the middle finger will be used. This will become less of a visual change and more of an internal refocusing of energy.
- 4) It is very important that you hold the stick in the right place. If you choke too far up or down the stick, it will result in a significant loss of control and rebound.
- 5) DO NOT confuse relaxation with sloppy and uncontrollable playing.
- 6) Breathe while you play and keep your shoulders, neck and face relaxed. For instance, if you are clenching your jaw when you play, your brain is associating what you do with tension and it will eventually make its way down to your hands.
- 7) We will strive for as uniform a technique as possible from section to section. Bass drummers, I'm sure you have all heard technique comments such as "it's like playing snare drum sideways." While that can be true, I want to define it a tad more. Most bass lines play with a grip similar to that of a snare drummer's left hand traditional grip, meaning that they rotate the same muscles to strike the drum. We will be playing more like that of a snare drummer's right hand, using those same wrist muscles to strike the drum. To practice this, try standing in

front of one side of the bass drum and playing it. When it starts to feel natural, move to your normal position and try to apply the same feel.

- 8) This is a general guideline to our technique. Laying out a technique guideline on paper is sketchy at best due to the many interpretations each individual player will have of the information given. So use this as a guide and strap on your helmet for the season!
- 10) Go hogs!