



2026

Battery Packet

Approach

Here at Old Line, we believe we have an approach to battery percussion instruments that fits and is dependent on the style of music we choose to perform. Our technique will continue to evolve based on the needs of the ensemble and the repertoire selections each season. We don't believe there is a right or wrong technique, but rather that they are tools utilized to achieve different musical intents and skill sets. We like to define what the stick should feel like in the hand to achieve the sound we are looking for. We take into consideration that each individual is built from a unique anatomical standpoint so we don't stress over everyone looking exactly the same. We don't want to inhibit the individuals natural abilities in the pursuit of a stylized visual presentation.

Instead of instructing the players on what to do, we allow everyone to approach the drum as

they are most comfortable (to an extent) while providing insight on areas of improvement. There will be guidelines, but in the end we want each member to feel as comfortable as possible while producing a high quality sound off the drum. While working to achieve the same sound, members will naturally approach the stroke the same way and will inherently end up looking similar. If an individual's technique is inhibiting them from achieving the desired sound, then we will make adjustments. As we jump forward into the packet, we will explore in great detail instrument specific approach to provide everyone a base foundation of the technique.



Technique Philosophy and Application

Grip and Stroke Types:

It is important that the drum be at the right height for you. We will not sacrifice individual comfort for matching drum heights across the line. A rough guideline is this: With your hands relaxed down by your side, bend at the elbow until your forearm is relatively parallel with the ground. From there, the elbow down to the head, should have a very slight downward angle. For Bases, the forearm will be approximately parallel to the ground.

For all sections, we will employ a "stacked" or "Three Point" fulcrum approach. Traditionally, we place the thumb across from the index finger, but for the purposes of producing our characteristic sound and flow, we will employ the "Three Point" fulcrum approach. The build of this technique has the index finger slightly extended and relaxed, the thumb now across from the middle finger. The rest of the fingers will wrap naturally around the stick; they should be loose and relaxed but not leave the stick. The difference between

this grip and the traditional right hand grip is more of an internal refocusing of energy to different parts of the hand. It is also imperative to play in the proper zone on the drum head. There is no way to balance a sound if the players don't play in the same part of the head.

The stroke will lead with the fulcrum and initiate from the wrist but it is not isolated to just the wrist. The arm and fingers will move naturally when different muscle groups are needed. Using the arm, wrist, and fingers in conjunction allows you to utilize the full range of muscles; from the big power muscles to the small, fast, twitch muscles. We like to talk about the 3 levers in percentages. The whole mechanism is 100% which will be distributed amongst the levers depending on what the music calls for. The stroke should have velocity and weight transfer, and this is what allows you to get a full sound. It's not about how hard you hit the drum, but rather, how fast. You should utilize the arm's "dead weight" in the stroke and allow the drum to assist you by using the rebound and motion of the rebound.

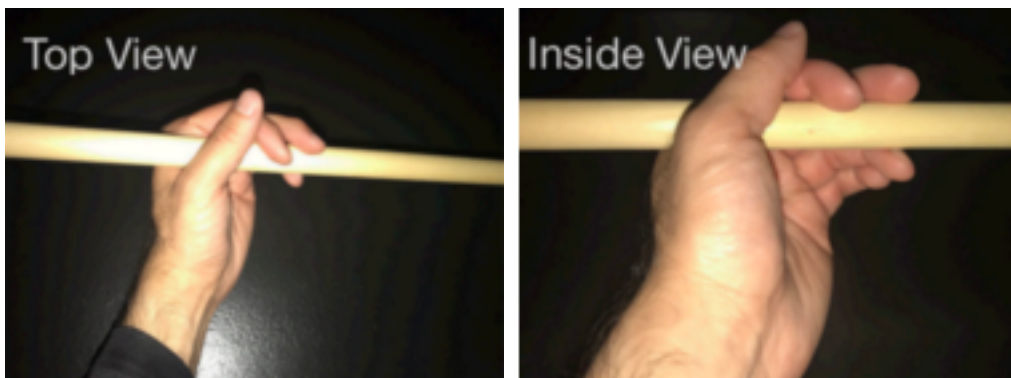
The main stroke types are: Full-Stroke, Downstroke, Taps, and Upstrokes. Taps are essentially full-strokes at a small volume. With Full-Stroke & Tap strokes, the rebound should return the bead to the point of initiation, hence the "rebound stroke." With a downstroke, the stroke should feel the same as a full-stroke prior to hitting the drum. As the bead contacts the head, the wrist motion should return to a position that controls the rebound to the next intended volume. The players should avoid squeezing the fingers to stop the stick as this will cause a change in sound and "touch." The upstroke is the reverse: it begins with the same stroke as a tap and then after contact, the stick is lifted by the wrist motion turning the stick up to a greater height. Again, the less variation in hand-shape and pressure on the stick, the less variation in sound.

Technique Philosophy and Application

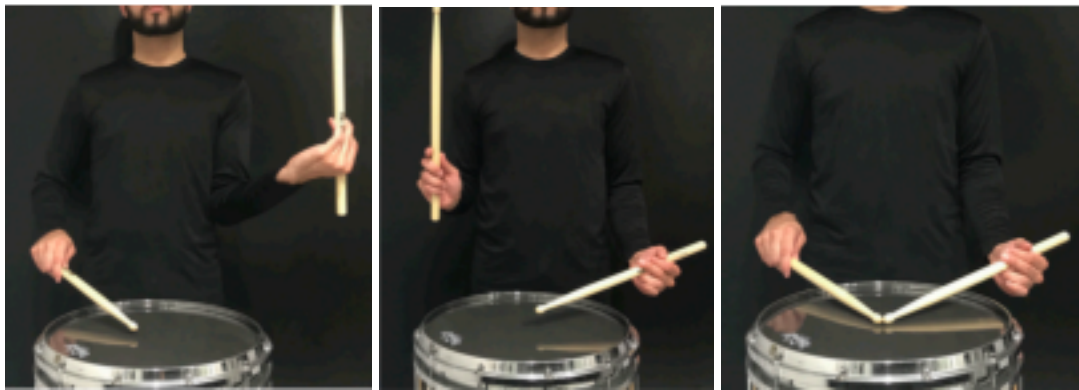
Snare:

For the Left-Hand Traditional grip: The back of the stick should rest in the "webby" connection between the thumb and index finger. The thumb should connect with the index finger roughly at about the first knuckle of the index finger. The middle finger should rest on top of the stick within its natural curvature. The stick rests on the cuticle of the ring finger and the pinky curls naturally underneath. The entire hand should have a natural curvature with the hand resembling the shape of a "C" (from the top view). No unnecessary tension or "manufacturing" of the hand should be done. The hand shape should be in "neutral position," and no flexing or condensing is required.

The stroke will rotate around the fulcrum point using pronation or supination of the FOREARM and NOT the wrist (because the wrist doesn't actually rotate), resembling the motion of a turning screwdriver.



For Snares and Quads: The matched-grip will be “American” grip. This means it will be rotated slightly outwards in relation to the drum. We want to utilize the best of both German grip (hand flat, wrist access) and French grip (Hand vertical, finger access). Usually, the crease created between the thumb and index finger will approximately be a 45° angle. The bead to the elbow should create a straight line.



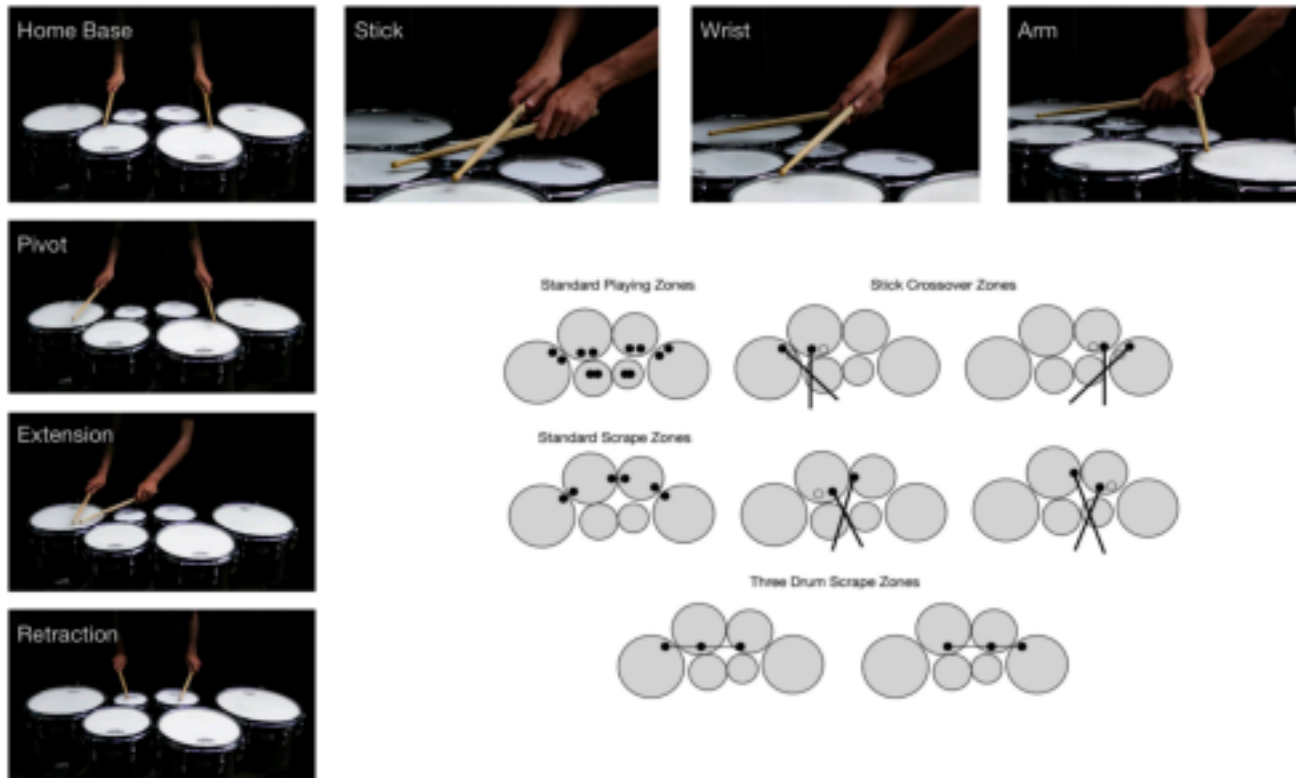
Technique Philosophy and Application

Quads(Tenors):

The “home” base is RH over Drum 1 and LH over Drum 2. This is where your hands will rest when not playing and should always be returned to in spaces or rests. Our basic technique revolves around the “Three Points of Alignment.” These are the elbow, the fulcrum and the bead of the stick. We aim to keep these in alignment for unification of “around” technique as well as maintaining of the Y-axis (vertical) technique when adding motion on the X-axis (horizontal).

There are three main X-axis motion you will need to master: Pivot, Extension and Retraction. Pivoting (side to side) from the elbows controls the motion near home base. Extension is moving the forearm and wrist forward away from the body which allows motion reaching across to the opposite side of the drums. Retraction is the opposite of extension which allows you to move back towards home base as well as in towards the

spock drums. In general, the wrist and position of the forearm will control the Y-axis and will match the motion the other sections employ. When playing crossovers, avoid bending the wrist so not to cause poking at the drumhead. The crossovers will either be a stick on-stick, wrist-on-wrist, or arm-on-arm crossover depending on how many drums the crossover covers.



Technique Philosophy and Application

Bass:

The forearm should be parallel to the ground. The mallet will be slightly turned in towards the head (imagine the downward angle for Snares/Quads). The bottom of the mallet should not be visible from the audience perspective. The motion should resemble that of playing on a flat drum, just turned on the side. No unnecessary bends in the wrist are needed. Your thumbnail should be visible to you at all times during the extension of the stroke. The motion should feel like you are mimicking the motion of playing table tennis or ping pong. Its not as broad spectrum as one may think. It is definitely more focused and controlled then what one perceived. The prep stroke (aka Prep) should be just as smooth as the playing stroke. Don't get in your own way. Only prep as much as needed to accomplish the tempo and rhythm being asked of you!



Cymbals:

The Old Line Plates will use playing and movement techniques influenced by the modern East Coast approach and exercises inspired by the [Seavine Cymbal Education](#). Please use the information in this packet to fine-tune your habits to match our technique.

What to do before auditions:

Build arm strength. This is usually the toughest obstacle for unconditioned cymbal players after the off-season. At auditions, we hold the cymbals all day and muscle failure will get in the way of executing the right technique. Hold cymbals at the correct positions for extended periods of time & complete exercises several times in a row without breaking.

Familiarize yourself with this packet, note any technique differences from what you're used to, and practice them before arriving.

Build your own personal performance quality. Practice while looking in the mirror and experiment with different ways of moving your face and head throughout the exercises to portray confidence.

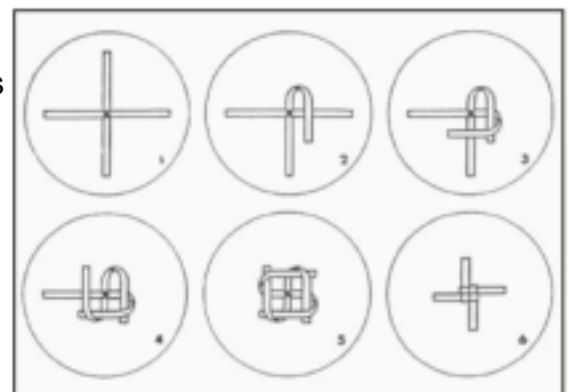
Technique Philosophy and Application

GETTING STARTED

Stretching: Always stretch your arms, hands, and wrists before practicing cymbals to prevent injury.

[Wrist Stretches Examples](#)

Straps and Pads: The Old Line Plates will use straps made from flat nylon webbing. Once all four leads of the strap are inserted through the pad and then through the cymbal, refer to the diagram to the right on how to secure your plates.



THE 6 PILLARS OF CYMBAL PLAYING

Positions: Uniform positions across a line ensure that everyone looks the same and approaches playing the same way. Visually, positions also play an important role. Cymbal players use positions like dancers do—as checkpoints of stability and texture in the midst of choreography.

Flash Points: Cymbals are so visually interesting because of the light that reflects off of them. The “flash point” is the exact position and time within a movement that light hits the metal towards the audience. What makes cymbal lines look visually “clean” is when every person’s flash points happen at the same time and in the same position.

Flips: Flips are a way of using one’s wrists and fingers to create a standardized flash point when moving from one position to another.

Music: Years of history and experimentation have led to the modern East Coast approach to creating quality cymbal sounds in the most efficient and visually appealing way.

Release & Reloads: In the 2000s, East Coast cymbal players began to find ways to vary the possibilities of positions and movement by stylistically moving the hand out of the traditional Garfield grip and eventually out of the strap altogether.

Performance: With no harnesses, cymbal players have more freedom and potential for movement. Cymbal players should develop confidence and control over their bodies that can be seen in their posture, approach to marking time, and facial expressions. Each movement from head to toe should be an intentional performance choice.

Cymbal Audition Material

Individual Material:

Prepare a 30 second solo to a song of your choice using visuals and sounds to display your visual style.

[Seavine Cymbal Education](#): If you are looking for inspiration for your visual sequence, check out the “grips”, “release and reload”, and “juggles” sections of the Seavine Cymbal Education series. This is a great resource to help expand your visual vocabulary and start the creative process, but you do not have to use material from this source.

Learn the structure of the following exercises:

Flip Exercises:

[Ups \(up flip breakdown\)](#)

Practice always to the song “Things in Life” by Nameless Warning, feet in open second

[Downs \(down flip breakdown\)](#)

Practice always to the song “Death of a Bachelor” by Panic! At the Disco, feet in open second

[Outs \(out flip breakdown\)](#)

Practice at 120 BPM or a song of your choice around that tempo, mark time during exercise

[Off the hand](#)

Practice always to the song “You Don’t Know Me” by Ben Folds, feet in open second

[Flip Block 1](#)

Practice at 120 BPM or a song of your choice around that tempo, mark time during exercise

[Flip Block 2](#)

Practice at 120 BPM or a song of your choice around that tempo, mark time during exercise

Preparation and Logistics

Preparation:

The success you have during the audition, and overall success of the Batterie is heavily dependent on the amount of preparation you do beforehand. A couple of practice tips:

Be diligent with your practice regime.

Practice everyday in order to build the muscles necessary.

Shorter, focused practice sessions distributed throughout the day are more efficient than one long session all at once.

Practice with PROPER technique

It does you no good to “get through” the music with bad technique.

Start SLOW!

Build the correct mechanics and stroke types FIRST, then work on speeding it up.

Get in front of a mirror

Pay close attention to the details of your stroke pathways, stick angles, bead placements, etc.

USE A METRONOME!

Practice on a drum (if possible).

A pad just doesn't feel or sound the same.

Record yourself

Great practice tool to see and hear exactly what you are doing.

Use the "Slow-Motion" tool.

Preparation and Logistics

What to Expect / Bring:

If you are asked to be a member of the drumline, there are certain things you should expect:

Attendance at rehearsal is mandatory.

It is paramount that you communicate potential conflicts and time needs to the admin and staff as soon as possible so that we can plan accordingly. Time management of your family, school, work, and social schedules need to allow you to attend every rehearsal.

Winter Video Assignments are due each week.

Please schedule travel / vacations around these dates.

You will need a Practice Pad and Marching sticks.

Earplugs are required! It's loud, SAVE YOUR EARS.

Water Jugs are required. At least 1 gallon.

Wear athletic clothes / shoes

Invest in a good pair of shoes for the season

Exercise Preparation and Full Batterie Warm Ups

To recap, Again, this is not the end-all, be-all for technique. This is just a compilation of all the things we consider at Old Line, and a set of “guidelines” to adhere to. In the end, you are here to play and make some music so have some fun!

Exercises & Warm-Ups

Below is a packet of “Basic Skill Sets” that cover a multitude of isolated motions and rudimental vocabulary. Regardless of section, these exercises are good for every drummer to have in their arsenal. This packet also contains Full Batterie exercises that will primarily comprise our “Warm-Up Sequence.” Keep in mind that everything is subject to change and be ready for anything. We could ask you to play something that is not in the packet. Prepare everything in this packet with a metronome and the ability to marking time through everything. The tempos are listed but be ready to play it slower or faster.

Definitions:

Dynamics:

Our approach is to use dynamics and not “heights.” We define dynamics based on the sound we want. To correlate our system with the “height system” use the conversions below.

pp = 1” (grace notes) / beneath fulcrum

p=3” (taps)/0°/flat wrist

mp=4”/15/1/8 wrist turn

mf=6”/22.5°/1/4 wrist turn

f=9” /45°/1/2 wrist turn

ff=12”/67.5°/3/4 wrist turn

fff=15”/90°/full wrist turn

fff=18”/90/ full wrist turn plus lift

Again these are all relative. This is a general guideline and remember to **USE YOUR EARS!**
Exercise Preparation and Full Batterie Warm Ups

Set Positions/ Mark-Time / Duts:

The sticks will start down by our sides already in both hands. The sticks will come up on beat 7 of the count-off. The sticks will go down on beat 3 between reps and come back up on the subsequent beat 7.

We will mark time with the heels together and toes apart (1st position). The ENTIRE foot will come slightly off the ground. There will be a natural sway and flow to the

mark-time as well.

As a default, start marking time with the LEFT foot.

Start marking time the last 4 beats of the count in.

You will continue marking time between reps

The duts will be short yet articulate. We will dut the last 4 counts of the count-off with the syllable "dut."

