PASIC CLINIC

Bass Drum Essentials

Mastering weight distribution

Mike Packer



— SESSION GOALS

Learning Outcomes

1. Identify the four primary bass drum strokes, how they relate to the Moeller technique, and where each applies.
2. Understand the importance of weight distribution when executing bass drum strokes.
3. Practice and perform with the weight distribution that aligns with your desired sound quality.
4. Apply these motions in groove and vocabulary contexts.

— YOUR CLINICIAN

About Me

Drummer, educator, author, and business owner — bridging arts programming products ad services, professional performance, and contemporary drum education.

Inventor of the DW 5000 Heel-Less Bass Drum Pedal.

PERFORMED WITH

Wilson Phillips · Lorna Luft · Nils Lofgren · Los Angeles Philharmonic

AUTHOR

Bass drum technique books · the Drum Channel Method · Modern Drummer contributor

BOOK SERIES PRODUCER

Playing Techniques series with Ralph Humphrey and Joe Porcaro - Hudson Music Publications

SETUP

Set The Table

Throne

Throne height

Thigh at a slight downward angle

Distance to the bass drum

Knee behind the ankle

Pedal

Footboard angle

Set to taste

Spring tension

Moderate, allowing for the beater to have a large range of motion

Beater angle & height

High and back far enough for full range of motion

Foot positiion

Toes rest of the "sweet spot" of the footboard

01

Weight Distribution in Bass Drum Technique - Connecting the Dots!

- Relating bass drum motions and weight distribution to Moeller
- Why weight placement matters for every stroke
- How weight shapes sound quality and volume
- Practical tips across genres and dynamics

— MOTION · NOTATED “P”

The Preparation (Prep) Motion

Sets up any motion that comes after it · Hand similarity: Moeller prep stroke

90% thigh

10% toes

POSITION

Foot parallel with the ground

Thigh just below parallel

TIMING

One 8th note before the first note on downbeats or upbeats; on the downbeat or upbeat before an “e” or “a.”

DONE CORRECTLY

You’re in position to play any figure accurately

DONE INCORRECTLY

A stray note before the first intended note

Less rhythmic accuracy

Weaker sound quality

PRACTICE TIP

Practice without the beater!

— MOTION · NOTATED “D”

Down Motion

Occurs just after a single note, or the last note of a group

WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION

1. From playing position, transfer the weight to the heel
2. At the same time, drop the heel to the heel plate

BENEFITS

The beater rebounds out of the head. When you’re not playing, the foot and leg rest on the ground, completely relaxed.

02

The Four Primary Bass Drum Strokes

T

Toe stroke

Heel down

L

Leg stroke

Most common

A

Ankle stroke

Fast consecutive notes

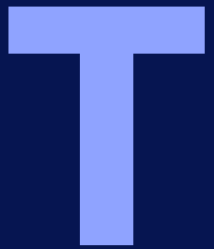
U

Upstroke

Bridge between groups

STROKE 1 OF 4

Toe Stroke (Heel Down)



Hand similarity: wrist strokes

USE CASE

Primarily jazz and Brazilian styles — though it works in any style (JR Robinson)

SOUND & VOLUME

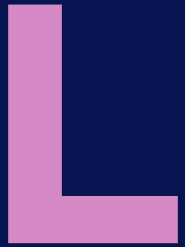
- Primarily legato (beater out of the head)
- Soft to medium volumes

LOGISTICS

- Foot rests on the footboard
- Pivot the heel to send the beater into the head
- Return to resting position

STROKE 2 OF 4

Leg Stroke



Hand similarity: Moeller whip stroke

USE CASE

The most commonly used stroke — applies to any musical genre

WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION

Heel → thigh → heel

Resting → playing motion → resting

LOGISTICS

- Lift from the thigh, toes on the pedal
- Drop the thigh and strike the drum
- Return to resting position

SOUND & VOLUME

- Legato (beater out of the head) and/or staccato (beater into the head)
- All volumes

STROKE 3 OF 4



Hand similarity: Moeller tap stroke

Ankle Stroke

USE CASE

Fast consecutive notes

LOGISTICS

- Lift from the thigh, toes on the pedal
- Pivot the ankle and strike the drum
- Return to resting position

WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION

Beater out of the head: heel → thigh → heel

Beater into the head: heel → thigh → toes

SOUND & VOLUME

- Legato (beater out of the head) and/or staccato (beater into the head)
- All volumes

STROKE 4 OF 4

U

Hand similarity: Moeller prep stroke (playing on the way up)

Upstroke

USE CASE

A bridge between consecutive groups of notes

The first note of the rocking technique

LOGISTICS

- From resting position, pivot the ankle
- Strike the drum while raising the thigh
- Play the ongoing notes, then return to rest

WEIGHT DISTRIBUTION

Heel → thigh → heel

Beater out of the head

SOUND & VOLUME

- Legato (beater out of the head)
- All volumes

— PRACTICE

Demonstration and Practice

Slow to fast to slow — notice the transition points between playing motions

SLOW

Single leg strokes

MODERATE

Add consecutive rebound

FAST

Transition to ankle strokes

MODERATE

Back to leg strokes with rebound

SLOW

Single leg strokes

— EXERCISE

6, 5, 4, 3, 2 — Toe Strokes & Leg Strokes





Constant rebound Keep the beater moving — let it rebound after each stroke instead of resting on the head. More speed, less effort.

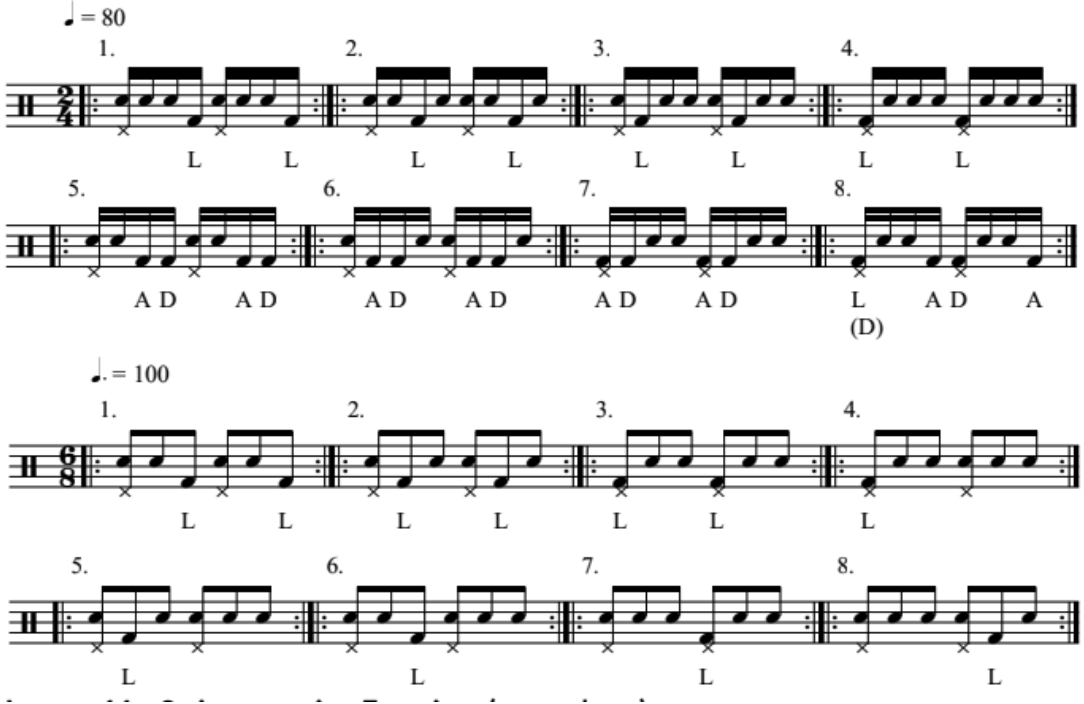
— EXERCISE

6, 5, 4, 3, 2 — Ankle Strokes



— EXERCISE

Vocabulary Development — Hand & Foot Combinations



— EXERCISE

Consecutive Doubles — Fast

Lesson 8 - Bass Drum Consecutive Doubles (Fast!)

When playing groups of two notes quickly the ankle stroke and down motions are applied. There is not time for the heel to rest in between the groups of notes. Begin the preparation for the next stroke immediately after the previous down motion. While doing the ankle down motion, the weight stays on the thigh. This allows the foot to be relaxed and control the rebound of the beater.

As an example, when I play a roll, each hand is in continuous motion while playing diddles. If I play fast doubles with my feet it's the same idea. There should be no break in the rebound of the bass drum beater.



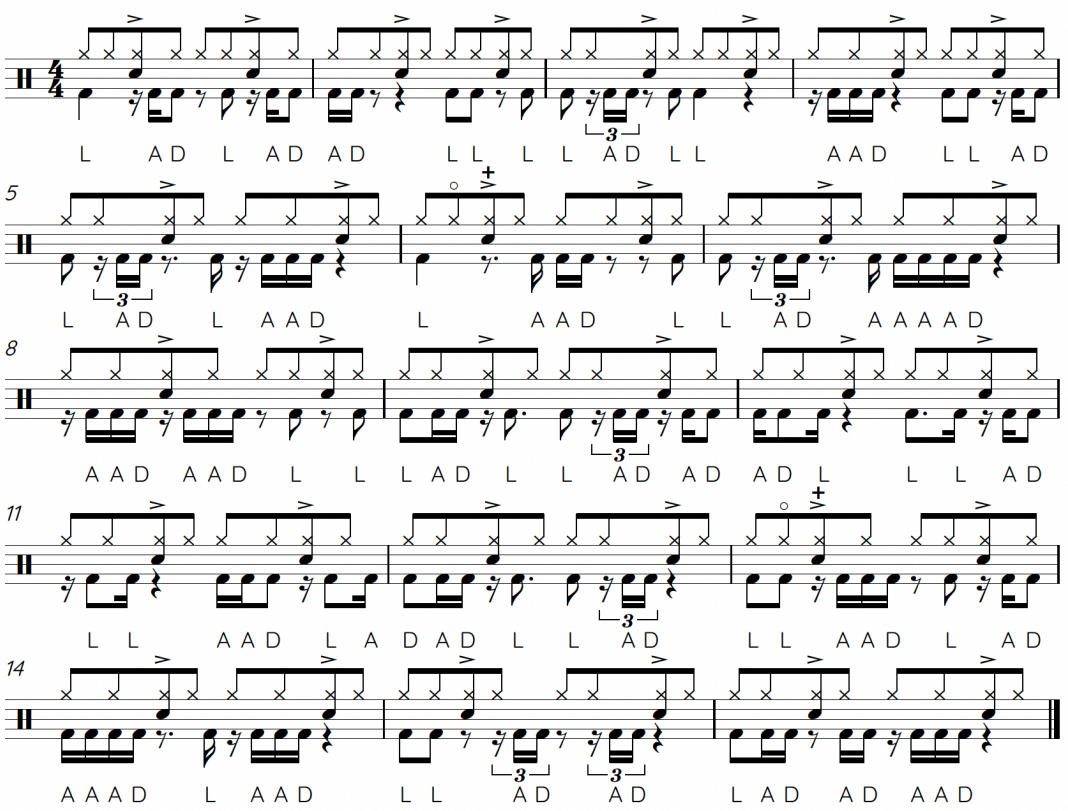
— ETUDE

Groove Etude

Combines the motions, rhythms, and weight distribution from this session.

TARGET TEMPO

80 BPM



— Q & A

Any Questions?

RESOURCES

Please visit

Thank You

Mike Packer