

MHS Percussion General Packet

Welcome to the Mayfield High School Percussion section. This program has a long tradition of excellence and we hope to build on that this season. This packet contains general information that is the basis for everything we will do this semester. Please take the time to read (and re-read) all parts. Understanding of these concepts is crucial to our success with more difficult concepts later in the season.

Expectations

- Show up! We can't teach you if you aren't here!
- Be on time (at least ten minutes before rehearsal begins)
- Have all your materials
- Be prepared musically (whatever you were told to work on last time)
- Have a positive attitude and try as hard as you can!

Materials

- Three ring binder with plastic sheets
- Pair of drum sticks: Innovative Percussion FS1
- Practice Pad: Vic Firth 12" Split Top or any gum rubber pad
- Metronome: The Korg Digital MA-30 or any met capable of subdivision

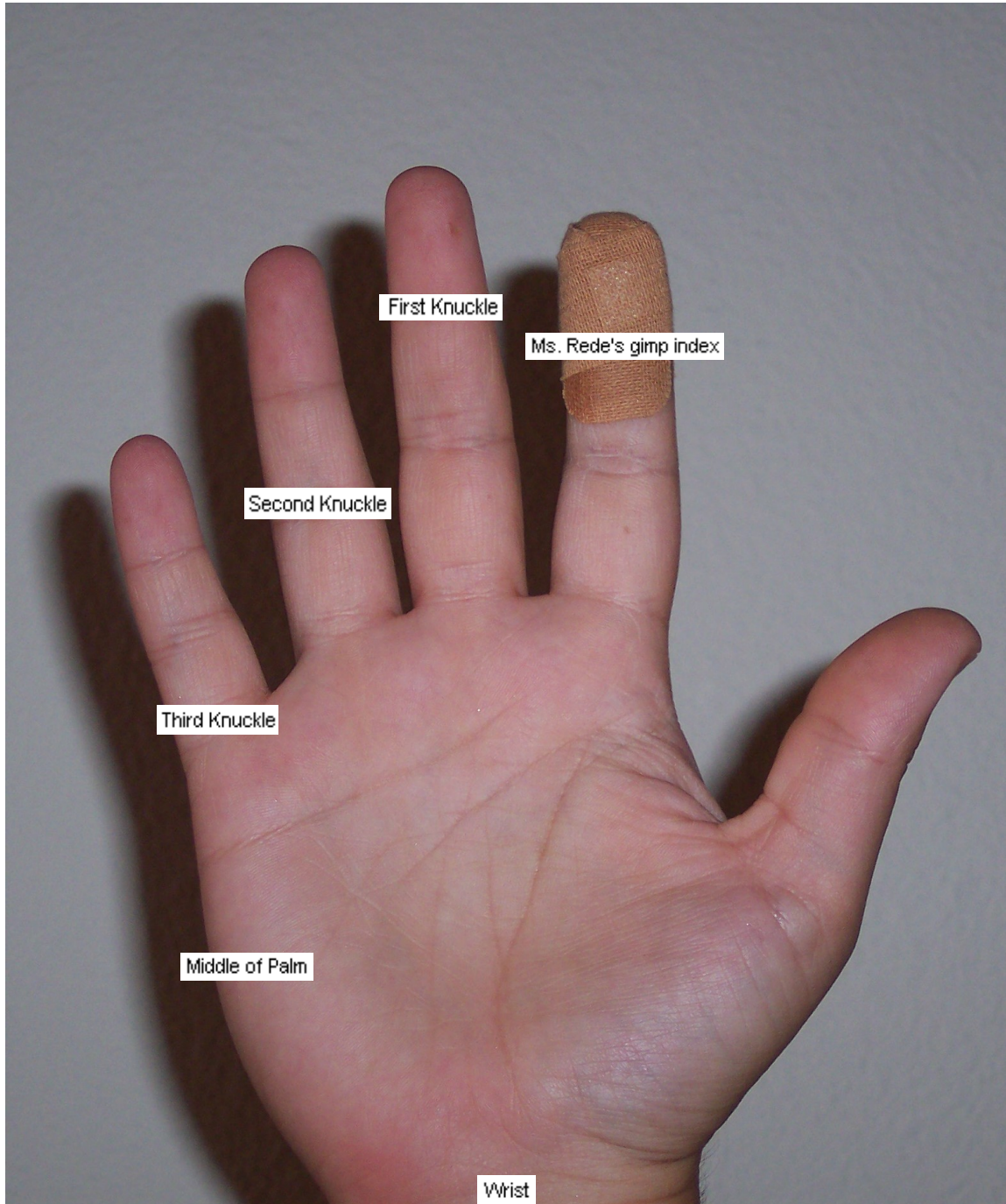
Stance/Posture

Good technique starts with having a good foundation. Playing percussion is a physical activity, so good posture will allow you to be most efficient.

- Feet should be about shoulder width apart
- Knees relaxed, not locked
- Strait line from heel to back of neck
- Shoulders relaxed and down

Stand a comfortable distance from the practice pad/drum/keyboard so that your arms and elbows aren't in a weird position. Avoid tension in any part of your body. If you feel tension anywhere, stop, take a breathe and RELAX! Tension keeps your muscles from working as efficiently as they can.

Parts of Hand



Technique and Basic Stroke

Sticks are an extension of the forearm and should rest in the natural curve of the hand.

Stand with your hands relaxed at your side:



Notice how your hands naturally curve.

This is the look you want to achieve with the sticks in your hand:



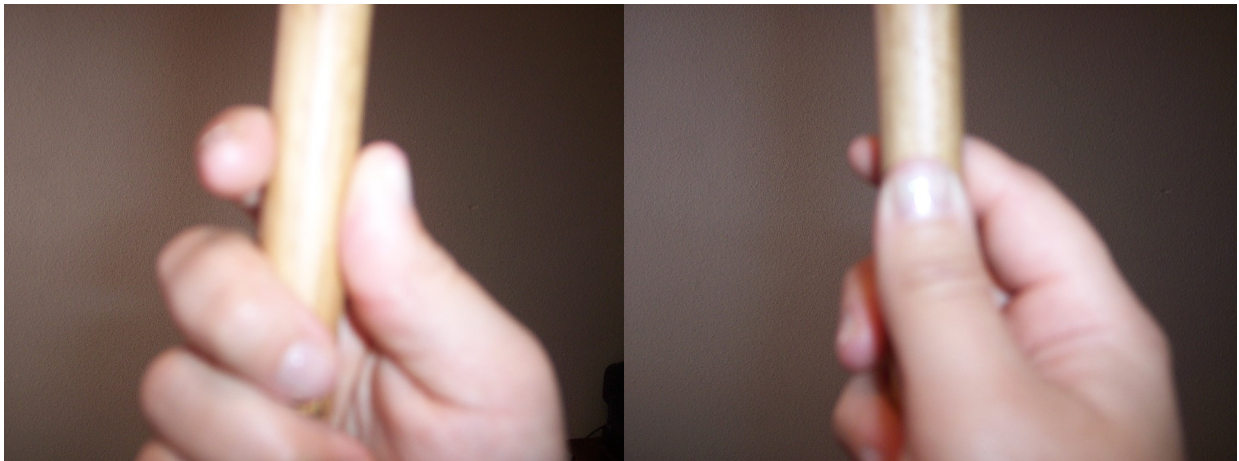
The Fulcrum

A fulcrum is the support or point of support on which a lever turns in raising or moving something.

In drumming the fulcrum is a crucial part of the technique and stands as the main lever allowing the stick/mallet to rotate.

Match Grip

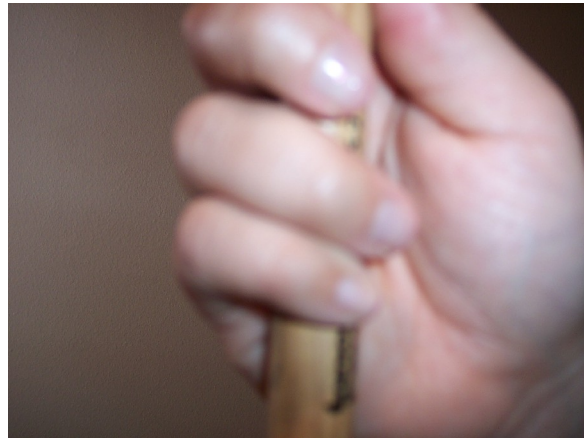
There are three principle points of connection of the fulcrum:



1. Thumb is flat, parallel, and centered with the shaft of the stick
2. Index finger is connected at the first joint and creates a cross with the thumb
 - Top of the index finger should be level with the thumb or further towards the tip of the stick (depending on length of finger)
 - The thumb should NOT be the furthest up the stick
3. Middle finger is connected between the first and second joint with a relaxed curve

These three connection points create a triangle and are the driving force behind our technique.

The ring and pinky fingers should wrap naturally around the stick:



All of these connection points should lie naturally in your hand and should look as your hand does when it's relaxed at your side.

The stick should cross naturally across the middle of your palm, between your third knuckle and your wrist.



Common Mistakes

Thumb too far towards tip:



Sticks held in fingers:



Sticks are too parallel with arm:



Basic Stroke

Starting Position

Holding the sticks as described previously, place your palms parallel to the ground, and then relax your hand so that your thumbs turn slightly upward.

Create a 90° angle with your sticks, and then relax your arms inward to where they naturally want to fall.

With all of this “in check,” bend from the wrist straight up (keeping the same angle) raising the sticks to approximately 12” off the drum/pad.

This is up position:



Piston Stroke

Starting in the up position, initiate the stroke straight down; there is no prep before the stroke. The stick quickly rebounds to the exact starting position. In this stroke there is a noticeable “pause” before the next stroke is initiated. We will begin with this stroke, but eventually move on to the legato stroke. All strokes can be played both ways.

Legato Stroke

The word legato means smooth and connected without breaks between notes. In our case we are talking about the look rather than the sound of the stroke. The rebound of the stroke will be slightly slower than that of the piston stroke. This creates a continuous motion eliminating any pause between strokes.

Extended Stroke (incorporating arm)

Starting in the up position, raise your sticks an additional three inches, bending from the elbow. Start the stroke by moving down from the elbow the three inches. Continue the motion as described above, but let the stick rebound to the extended up position. Practice smoothing out the motion between the elbow and wrist until it is one motion. The stroke about look smooth and connected without any disruptions

Tap Stroke

This stroke is the same as the piston (and eventually legato) stroke except it is defined at three inches. This stroke is still generated from the wrist, not finger or arm. Listen for quality of sound and try to get the biggest sound possible

Down Stroke

The initiation of this stroke is the same as the piston; however, the stick rebounds to tap position (three inches). The stick is stopped by the weight of your arm, no tension or force is involved.

Up Stroke

The up stroke is the exact opposite of the down stroke. The stick starts in the tap position, is initiated down, and then rebounds to the up position. Practice until you can achieve a smooth rebound from the low to high position.

These four stroke types are the foundation of percussion. Everything that we will play will be related to these strokes and the level at which we master them will determine the success and cleanliness of our ensemble. Take care of business at home so that we can be our best when together!

Things to keep in mind

- Practice in front of a mirror as much as possible
- Make sure your stick is always traveling straight up and down, not slicing at an angle
- Always keep your upper body relaxed and never clamp down on the stick
- Play “into” the head using the natural rebound. A “fake” rebound occurs when you think more about the motion of the sticks and not enough about quality of sound
- “Fake” rebound is referred to as feather tapping which is HORRIBLE!
- Use a metronome at LEAST half the time

John Wooden Quotes

John Wooden is the former coach of the UCLA basketball team. UCLA won 10 national championships with Wooden in 12 years.

The best way to improve the team is to improve yourself.

Big things are accomplished only through the perfection of minor details.

As long as you try your best, you are never a failure. That is, unless you blame others.

It is one of the most beautiful compensations of this life that no man can sincerely help another without helping himself. (Ralph Waldo Emerson)

Do not permit what you cannot do to interfere with what you can do.

Do not permit fear of failure to prevent effort. We are all imperfect and will fail on occasions, but fear of failure is the greatest failure of all.

Being average means you are as close to the bottom as you are to the top.

We are many, but are we much?

Acquire peace of mind by making the effort to become the best of which you are capable.