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Track 1



Online audio is included with this book. This recording can make learning with the book easier and more enjoyable. This symbol will appear next to every exercise that is on the recording. Use the audio to help ensure that you are capturing the feel of the exercises, interpreting the rhythms correctly, and so on. The track numbers next the symbols correspond directly to the exercise you want to hear. Track 1 explains how the recording works. Have fun!

About the Author

Pete Sweeney has been a professional musician since 1983. He has studied with Dave Calarco, Joe Morello and other notable drummers. He has also attended the Drummer's Collective in New York City.

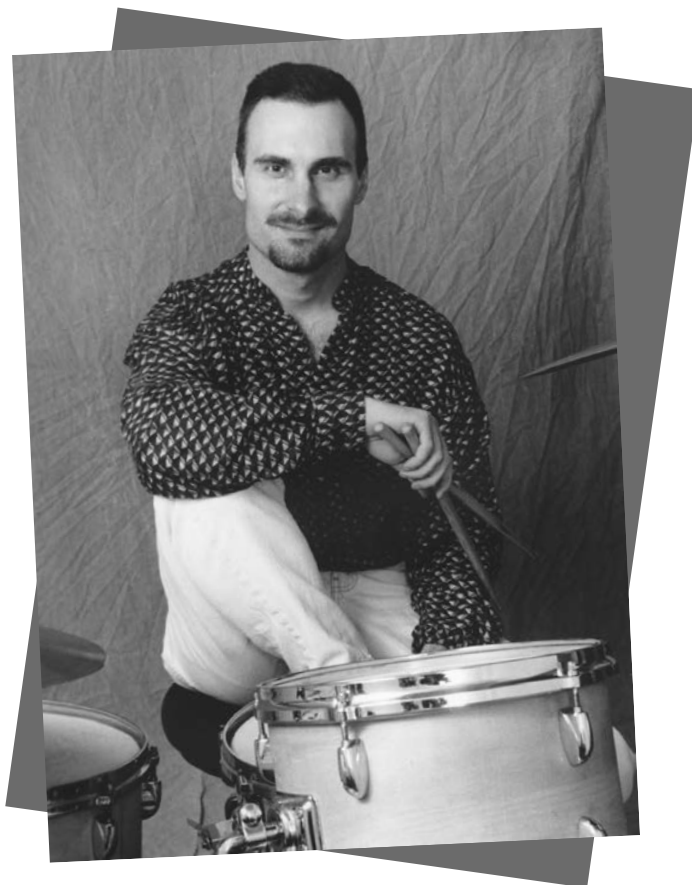
Pete has been a faculty member at the National Guitar Workshop since 1993. He has performed with many great musicians, such as Duke Robillard, Ronnie Earl, Mick Goodrick, Frank Gambale, Nick Brignola and Johnny "Clyde" Copeland.

Pete has also toured the United States and Canada with various musical groups and has appeared on CDs featuring a wide variety of musical styles, including big band, rock, funk and jazz. He recently toured with former Allman Brothers guitarist "Dangerous" Dan Toler and Ireland's Tony Kenny. Pete has performed on a Grammy-nominated CD with Jay Traynor and the Joey Thomas big band, and he can be heard on the soundtrack for the Miramax motion picture "The Castle."

Pete endorses Vic Firth sticks, Sabian cymbals and Aquarian drumheads. He lives in Chatham, New York.

Acknowledgments

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Introduction

Welcome to Drums for the Absolute Beginner. If you've always wanted to play the drums, this is a great place to start. The lessons in this book take you from holding the sticks and reading rhythms to playing the rudiments, beats and fills that are the basis of every drummer's technique to learning the various instruments in the drumset.

Here are a few suggestions to keep in mind as you begin working through the book:

1. Once you find a tempo (playing speed) for an exercise, be careful not to speed up or slow down. If you want to play something faster or slower, stop and begin a new tempo. Being able to maintain a steady tempo is one of the most important skills a good drummer must have.
2. If you feel your hands getting stiff or tight, stop for a few minutes and relax.
3. Have fun! If you enjoy practicing, you'll do it longer and more often. Good luck!

● Tuning the Drums

One of the secrets to getting a good drum sound is making sure that all the tension screws that hold the rim and drumhead are equally tensioned all around the drum. Here are a few suggestions for achieving equal tension on your drums.

Start with a Good Drumhead

It's possible to make an old drumhead sound reasonably good, but it's far easier with a head that hasn't been worn out. If there are small holes or large dents in the head, it's a good idea to replace it. This will make a huge difference in how the drum will sound.

Tuning a New Drumhead

Once you've replaced the drumhead, put the rim on and replace the tuning screws in the lugs. As you do this, evenly turn the screws until they are as tight as you can get them with just your fingers. Now, use a drum key to twist each tuning screw half a turn, moving in a clockwise motion around the drum. Be careful not to over-tension any of the tuning screws, since that will affect the overall tension of the drum. At this point, you can begin to tune the drum, either by adjusting the screws in a clockwise direction or by using a cross-tensioning method; both are shown below. You'll notice that the *pitch* (highness or lowness) of the drum rises as you tighten the screws. Continue to turn the screws until you arrive at a tensioning that sounds and feels good to you. Remember that the looser the drumhead, the more difficult it will be to play, since there will be less rebound from the stick. Experiment to find a tuning that you like.

Cross-Tensioning

One way to tune is a method called *cross-tensioning*. This system maintains even tensioning around the drum throughout the tuning process. Tap the head about two inches from each rod to be sure the pitch is consistent around the drum. If it is not, adjust individual tension rods as needed.

The numbers show the order in which the tension rods are tuned.



Clockwise Tensioning

You can also tune the drum in a clockwise fashion. Start at 1 and tighten each rod one half turn each time. Do this until the drumhead feels firm. Again, tap the head about two inches from each rod to be sure the pitch is consistent around the drum.





Getting the Whole Set in Tune

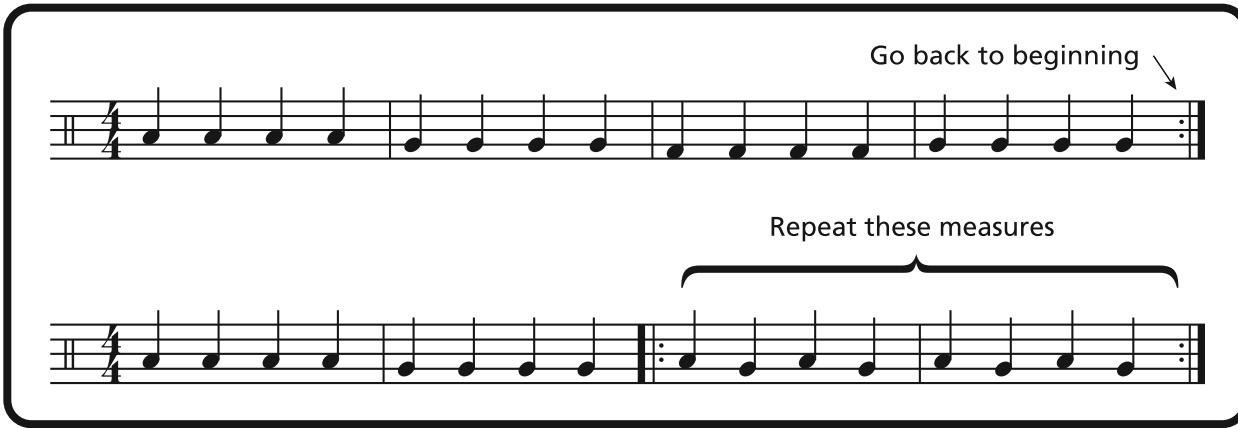
It's a good idea to tune your set by beginning with either the lowest drum (bass drum) and tune the remaining drums from lowest pitch to highest, or to begin with the highest drum (usually the snare) and tune the remaining drums from highest pitch to lowest. Experiment to get an overall sound that you like.

● Repeat Signs

This is a repeat sign: 

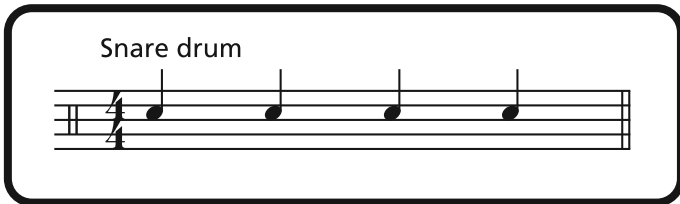
Repeat signs are a way of saving space in music. When you come to a repeat sign, go back to the beginning of the exercise and play again from there. Sometimes, only part of an exercise is repeated. When that happens, repeat signs surround the measures that are to be repeated. The first will have two dots on the right side, and the other will have dots on the left.

Right-facing repeat 	Left-facing repeat 
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● Snare Drum Exercises

Here's an exercise that uses a little bit of everything you've learned so far. First, you'll be playing on the snare drum. Music for the snare drum will be notated on the third space up from the bottom of the staff:



As you play through this exercise, it's a good idea to count aloud and tap your foot so that you'll always know where you are in a measure and will be able to keep a steady tempo. Try to read slightly ahead as you play so that you can anticipate what comes next. Remember to give quarter rests their full value as you count.

Exercise 9

Track 10 



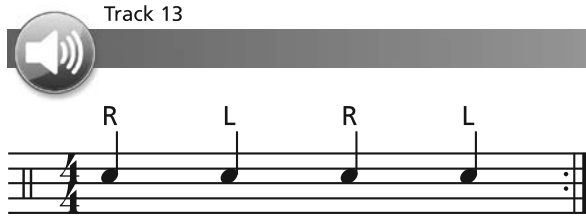
● Rudiment: The Single-Stroke Roll

Rudiments, the basic playing vocabulary of the drums, have been around for years. The first rudiment we'll look at is the *single-stroke roll*. The single-stroke roll uses one stroke per hand: R-L-R-L. (Left-handed players can reverse these instructions—that is, start with the left hand and alternate the hands.) Listen as you play to make sure that your playing is even and that the hands sound the same.

Here's an Exercise of the single-stroke roll using quarter notes:

Exercise 12

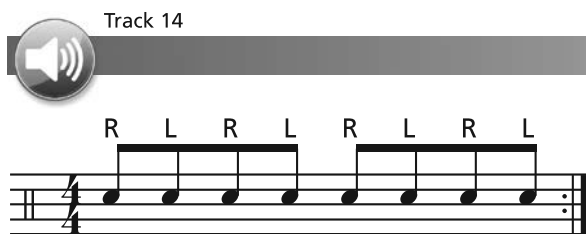
Track 13



Here's an exercise of the single-stroke roll using eighth notes:

Exercise 13

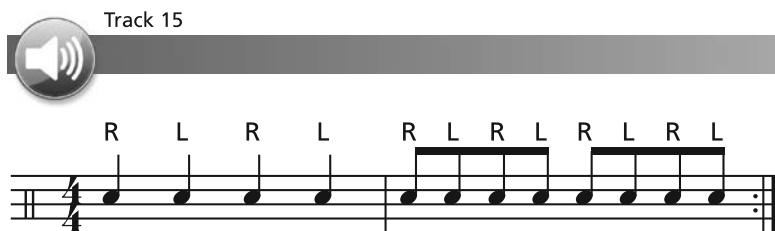
Track 14



Exercise 14 begins with quarter notes and changes to eighth notes. Be sure to maintain the single-stroke sticking as you make the transition.

Exercise 14

Track 15



This exercise will help develop your ability to play the single-stroke roll. Remember that each half note has a value of two beats.

Exercise 15

Track 16

