

It's important to understand right from the start that there are a number of approaches to drum technique. The methods I am going to show you are the ones that I have been taught, and that work for me.

For example you may have seen someone demonstrating finger strokes, yet in the first few pages of this pdf I will be teaching you to play from the wrists only, and to keep the fingers wrapped around the sticks so they don't move. The reason for this is that in my experience, playing from the wrist is the most versatile stroke of all. (We will be learning finger techniques in time).

Legendary jazz drummer, Tony Williams speaks about this in the 1985 drum clinic he gave (see Youtube - Tony Williams Drum Clinic 1985 pt. 2/3, 7m55s).

We are going to learn the 'Matched Grip,' which means both sticks are held in exactly the same way.

There are three types of Matched Grip:

- **French Grip**
- **German Grip**
- **American Grip**

French Grip - The stick is held with the thumbs on top and the knuckles at the side.

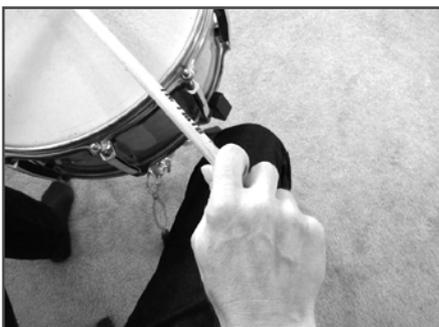
German Grip - The knuckles are on top and the thumbs are at the side.

American Grip - Is somewhere in the middle with the sticks being held at 45 degree angles.

We are going to learn the German Grip:

German Tympani Grip

Knuckles on top - Thumbs at the side



Posture, Grip and Basic Technique (1)



1. Sit closer to the front end of the stool with the back straight.



2. Wrap all fingers round the stick with 1 cm protruding at the base.



3. Both sticks are held in the same way. This is called 'Matched Grip.'



4. The thumb and index finger grip the stick together and opposite each other.



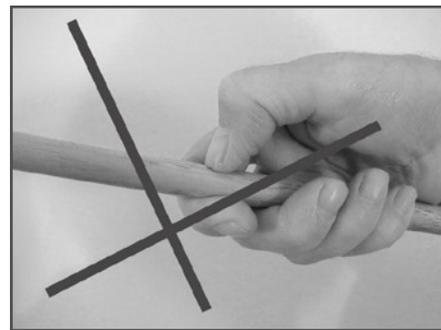
5. The other three fingers wrap around as support.



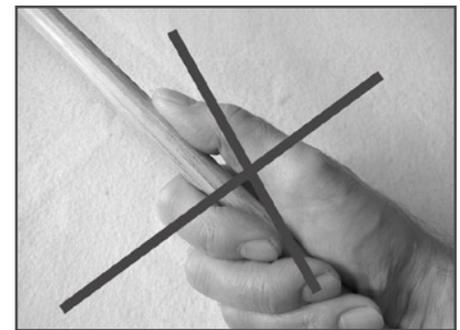
6. The stick should rest in the first crease of the index finger.



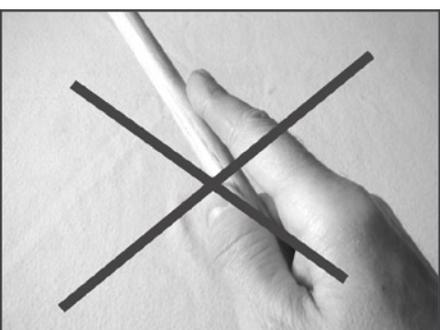
7. The thumb lies flat on the stick, opposite the index finger.



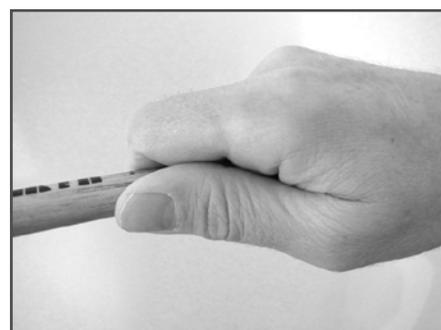
8. Don't let the thumb arch up.



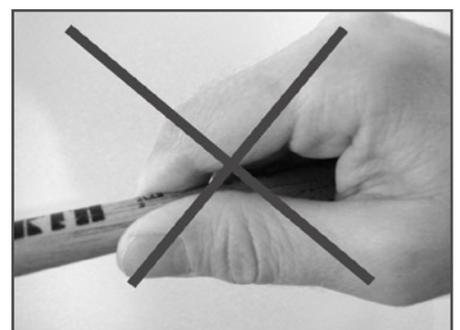
9. Don't let the thumb ride up the stick (also see No6).



10. Don't let the index finger lay across the stick.



11. Minimise the gap between the thumb and index finger.



12. Not like this.

Posture, Grip and Basic Technique (2)



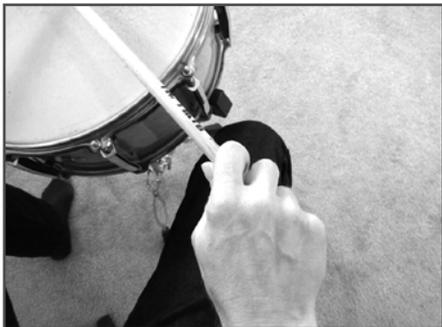
13 Position the wrists so the sticks form an equilateral triangle.



14. The arms fall naturally at the side of the body. Tips of sticks in middle of drum.



15. Don't stick the elbows out.



16. Knuckles on top, thumb at side. You should be able to see all four knuckles.



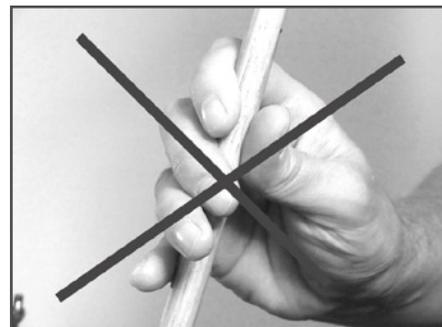
17. Slowly raise the sticks using the wrists only.



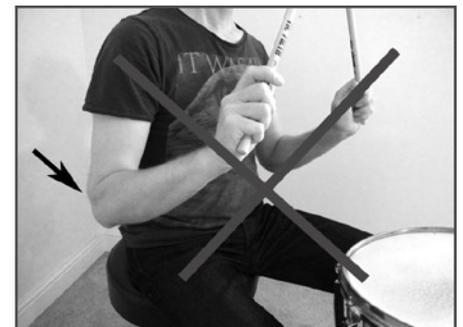
18. Maintaining the wrist motion raise the sticks to about 80 degrees.



19. The fingers stay wrapped, ensuring the wrist does the work.



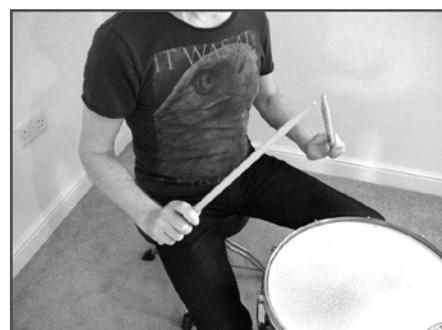
20. Don't allow the fingers to open.



21. And don't move from the elbow..



22. ..or you'll strike the drum at the wrong angle.



23. Following these guidelines the wrist remains just above the drum.



24. And when you strike the drum, the stick is parallel to the drum.

The late Jeff Porcaro spoke about practising 'Snap-Ups' (see Youtube/Jeff Porcaro Instructional video/6.52s), and I do recommend watching this gem of a video by one of the great drumming legends!

Snap-Ups are where you 'snap' the stick back off the drum, immediately after it's been played.

Another way to think about this is to play as if you've **just touched a hot stove** - the stick returns immediately to meet the tip of the other stick at the top position:



At slow to medium tempos this will result in the tips of the sticks meeting at the top with a momentary pause. We call this:

'Stop At The Top'

Snap-Ups help with playing at faster speeds because:

**'The faster you can get the stick OFF the drum -
the faster you can get it back ON the drum.'**

Striking a drum is not just about playing *down* into the drum - you also have to get the stick back *off* the drum. It's a two stage process. As well as developing speed, practising snap-ups will also give you better stick control.

Although snap-ups help with faster speeds it's essential to first do lots of **slow tempo** practice, making sure you are playing with correct technique. This can't be rushed - if you try to play fast before you've accomplished the technique at slower tempos it will be counter-productive for you.

Snap-Ups are also called wrist strokes or full-strokes (because the stick makes the 'full' journey from up-to-down-to-up, as well as being called rebound strokes - although at this stage we are not using a rebound/bounce - this will come later.

However, bear in mind that the amount of rebound you can achieve varies from surface to surface, eg a floor tom tom has less rebound than a snare drum so will require more 'lifting' assistance from the wrist - as we are learning here.