

Timpani Basics

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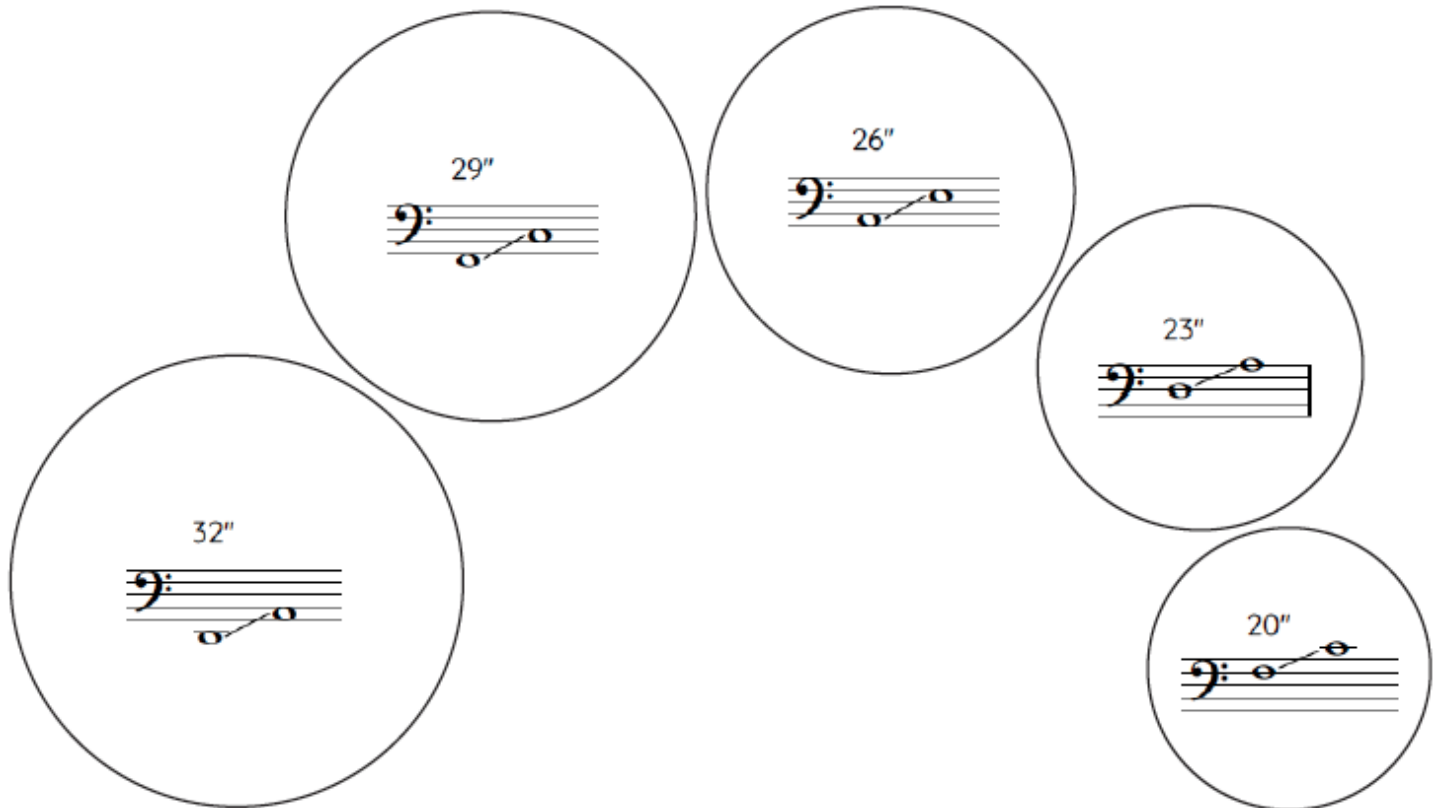
Setup

- Make sure all drums are evenly spaced, with easy access to all pedals and playing areas
- Use a height adjustable stool (timpani are not height adjustable, but stools are!)
- Check ranges for consistency and balanced tension, and gauges for accuracy

Sizes and Ranges

	32"	29"	26"	23"	20"
Standard	D2-A2	F2-C3	A2-E3	D3-A3	F3-C4
Extended	C2-Bb2	E2-D3	G2-F3	C3-A3	E3-C4

Standard Ranges



Grip Basics (apply to any grip)

- Start with arms hanging down at sides
- Bend elbows, making angle slightly wider than 90 degrees
- Create a fulcrum (pivot) point between thumb and first finger
- Let back fingers curl lightly around mallet

Technique Options

- German: thumbs facing each other, shafts angled inward about 90 degrees, use wrists and fingers
- French: thumbs on top, shafts parallel to each other, use rotation of forearm and fingers
- American: thumbs and shaft angles halfway between French and German, motion like a Rubik's cube

Rebound

Natural Rebound/Full Stroke

- No resistance at all from fingers, should be able to freely pivot at fulcrum
- Feels like bouncing a ball, head throws stick back at you
- Try with all three grips, RH only and LH only. Then, try this exercise:

8-4-2-1

The image shows two staves of musical notation in bass clef. The first staff contains six measures of eighth notes, with fingerings R---, L---, R---, L---, R---, and L--- written above the notes. Above the first two measures, the text "8-4-2-1" is written. The second staff contains four measures of eighth notes, with fingerings R R L L--- and R L--- written above the notes.

Articulation

Levels are infinite, but basic three are: Legato, General, Staccato

- Stroke speed (velocity) and fulcrum pressure have the biggest impact
- Optionally, you can also change technique
 - Legato: French | General: American | Staccato: German
- Practice each level individually first, using 8-4-2-1

Consistency

- No matter what your chosen articulation level is, every note should sound exactly the same
- Work toward consistency on one hand, then match both hands
- Practice the Timpani Articulation Exercises for consistent sounds within each articulation level

Moving Around the Drums

- Be as efficient as possible by rebounding over new drum immediately after striking first drum
- Keep consistent beating spots, even when moving quickly
- Try Spatial Awareness for more practice

Muffling

- When to Muffle
 - Do not muffle every notated rest. Only muffle if there is a *musical* reason to do so. For example:
 - If there is a silence or sudden change to a soft dynamic in an ensemble setting
 - When matching the note length of another performer (brass, etc.)
 - When you want a note to resonate without the dissonance of other notes ringing through: muffle the previous drum as you strike the new drum (“simultaneous” muffle)
- Muffling Technique
 - Keep mallet in a line with forearm, move straight forward and backward for efficiency
 - Keep fulcrum intact, use back three fingers to muffle.
 - If the head is still resonating, spread fingers for more surface area contact, and add side of palm
 - Keep thumbs facing upward! This will keep back of mallet from hitting the head/rim, and is especially efficient for French grip
 - Apply enough pressure that the fingers don’t buzz against head, but not so much that the contact sound is audible
 - Make sure you’re muffling most resonant part of head in order to make the sound fully stop
 - Consider how abruptly or tapered you want sound to stop, adjust speed of muffle accordingly
- Types of Muffling
 - Opposite Hand
 - Same Hand
 - Simultaneous
 - Use when moving from one drum to another, clear out previous drum’s sound

Rolls

- Adjust beating spots, slightly wider than general playing area (in front of closest two lugs)
- Metered vs. not: Depends on length
 - Short rolls are easier to play consistently when metered
 - Longer rolls don’t usually need to be metered - just listen for an even and resonant tone
- Use a legato stroke, even when you’re playing a metered roll