

Isaku Kageyama

<http://www.isakukageyama.com>

Naname Fundamentals – Lesson 1

How To Grip The Sticks

1. Find the fulcrum. The fulcrum of the stick gives you the most rebound when striking the drum. Holding the stick too long or too short yields less rebound. To find the fulcrum, pinch the stick with the thumb, index finger, and middle finger, and drop the stick on the drumhead. Experiment by pinching different parts of the stick to find the spot that gives you the most rebound.
2. Once you've found the fulcrum, grip the stick tightly with the pinky and ring fingers. Try swinging the stick back and forth, gripping with only the pinky and ring fingers.
 - a. When playing soft (pianissimo), it's standard to pinch the stick using the thumb, index, and middle fingers. The stick should be firm in your hand for maximum control.
 - b. When playing loud (fortissimo), the sticks are usually held with the pinky and ring fingers. The pinky and ring fingers are connected to the largest muscle in the arm, giving you the strongest grip.
 - c. On one end of the velocity spectrum, you have the very soft notes, which are played using the thumb, index, and middle fingers. On the other end, you have the very loud notes, which are played with the pinky and ring fingers.
3. For most practical purposes, I find that most of the notes I play fall somewhere in between the spectrum. Therefore, I grip with all five fingers, and distribute the strength of my grip according to how soft or loud I want each note to be.

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Finding A Good Stance

1. Align the surface of the drum with your left shoulder. When you fully extend your left arm, the tip of your stick should be at the center of the drum. Match your right hand so that both arms are fully extended and the tips of the sticks are at the center of the drum.
2. Start with your legs shoulder width apart. It should be easier to stand with the knees "locked," as opposed to slightly bent. Gradually, spread your legs until you reach a point where your knees naturally bend. Usually this happens approximately when your feet are about the width of your outstretched hands.
3. Straighten your right knee, and pick up the slack by slightly bending your left knee. You should feel your weight equally distributed, so that you are not leaning in any particular direction.

Playing The Drum

1. Maintaining the angle of the drum, raise your right stick until it is parallel to your body. We'll call this the "Ready Position."
2. Keep your wrist steady, and lower your elbow so that it approaches your hip.
3. Make a straight line to the center of the drum with your right hand. The tip of your stick should strike the center of the drum.
4. Repeat steps 1, 2, and 3 until you feel comfortable. It usually helps to count, "Up, Two, Three."
5. Once you feel comfortable, try condensing steps 2 and 3 into one motion. Try counting, "Up, Down"
6. With the left hand, raise the arm to the "Ready Position," where you cannot go any further without shifting your hips.
7. Bend the elbow. Again, your elbow will approach the hip. Repeat steps 3 and 4.

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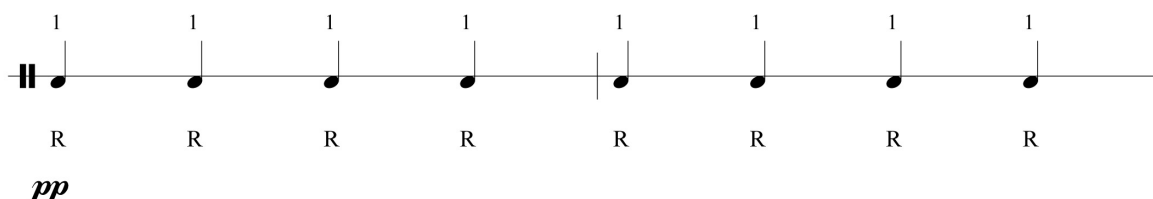
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Exercises

Try alternating hands – Right, Left, Right Left. When you play with the right hand, move the left hand into the “Ready Position,” and vice versa.



Start at a slow tempo (60 bpm – one beat for every second).

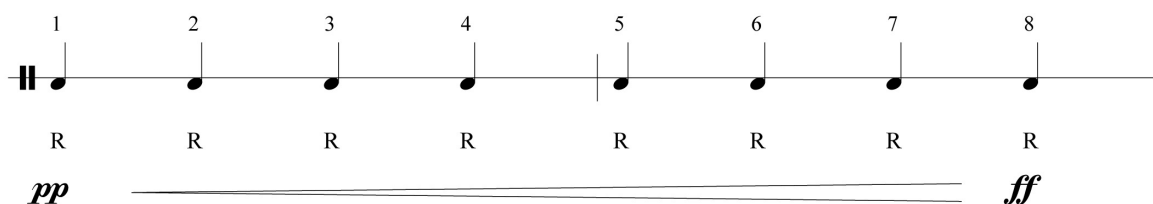


Try playing the following rhythm at 60 bpm. The R denotes that all notes are played with the right hand, and the “1” denotes that all notes are played at a velocity of “1” on a scale of 1-8 (1 being the softest). You should be lightly tapping the drum once every second with the right hand. Repeat with the left hand.

Once you are comfortable with the right and left hands, try alternating the hands, so you are playing Right, Left, Right, Left. All notes should still be played at a velocity of “1.”

Try playing the same rhythm, but with all notes being played at a velocity of “2.” You can achieve a slightly higher velocity by raising the tip of your stick to a slightly higher position than “1.” Repeat with the left hand.

Once you have played all velocities from 1-8, try playing the following rhythm.



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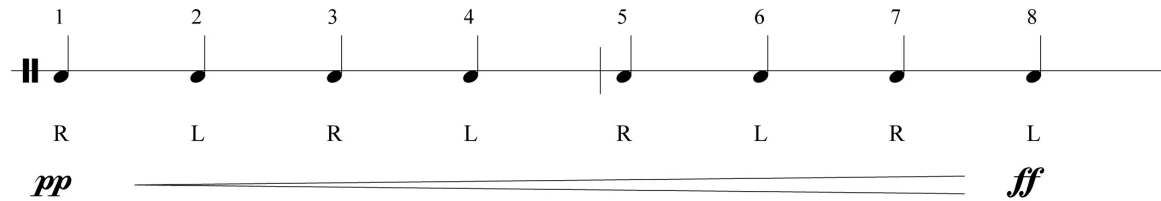
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With only the right hand, you should be playing one beat per second, gradually increasing the velocity with each stroke. Repeat with the left hand.



Finally, try the rhythm with alternating hands. Each note should still sound louder than the previous note.

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