

It's Your Move

Motions and Emotions

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INTRODUCTION

It's Your Move is about achieving your maximum potential as a player. This book is the culmination of questions that have been asked of me globally during private teaching for 30 years, many masterclasses, clinics, large drum expos, and almost 40 years of professional playing. The exercises contained herein are vignettes to spark fun and creativity. This book is for your hands and feet, on pad and drum set. It will help you better understand the ability of your hands and feet. The title of this book means two things. First, it's up to you. Your desire to be a better player is like a chess game. I offer the seed of an idea, a "first move." Now react: it's *your* move. It is your choice alone. Second, it's your *movement*--the way you move your body when you play. The techniques in this book will challenge you to look at every detail of the way you play drums and *question it*. Drumming is a dance composed of our outward physical motions, which project our inner expression and emotion, hence the subtitle *Motions and Emotions*. Every drummer must find their own movement that suits the music they play and their own personal artistic expression.

During my early studies, I accumulated a lot of information and developed these exercises as a path to the capability of full artistic expression on the drums. These are not stylistic exercises; rather, they are applicable to all styles. My teachers, Ronnie Benedict, Al Miller, Joe Morello, Colin Bailey, and Jim Chapin, all shared a great amount of knowledge, and what they passed on to me is contained in a new form in this book. I would also like to acknowledge my classes with Joe Porcaro, Shelly Manne, Louie Bellson, Roy Burns, John Guerin, Charlie Perry, Jim Keltner, and Ralph Humphrey. All of these great artists have shared much with me and showed me the classic techniques of drumming. I have redesigned and adapted these techniques from classical and rudimental origins and applied them to the modern drum set. Early drum-set performers used thinner sticks and single-ply heads and played in acoustic bands in acoustically designed rooms with little or no miking. Today, we use heavier sticks, double-ply heads, amplified music in large halls (sometimes with poor acoustics), and the microscopic ear of close mikes on all of our drums! Thus we need to apply the tried-and-true concepts with a new eye toward the future.

The drum set as an instrument is very young. I feel we are still in a very exciting formative period for this art form of drum-set playing. To find out where we are going, I believe we must find out where we came from. As the new millennium begins, we must push our art form forward even further. The things I learned from my teachers are historic techniques. I felt the time had come to document them in a proper way. You will notice there are illustrations in this book. Gene Krupa, on being shown a manuscript for a book Joe Morello was working on, suggested Joe include pictures to clarify the techniques. Joe mentioned this to me long ago. Years later, I met wonderful artist Steve Leahy and remembered this idea of illustrations, so this book, years after Krupa's comment, now includes illustrations to show the concepts.

Making yourself better will take commitment, time, and perseverance. *For the most growth, you must take the path of most resistance. Practice what you do not know.*

Working on things you already know is *maintenance*. Although maintenance is important, it should constitute a smaller part of your practice routine.

Practice Tips:

1. *True practice is a re-programming process:* Everyone has old habits; being aware of them is very important. These habits sometimes unknowingly hold us back from achieving our potential. Bad habits must be understood. Then, as the new technique is learned, constant reinforcement is necessary to build new habits. Think of your bad habits as *misinformation*. First you must be aware of the old barriers; then break them down; *then* build new abilities.

2. *Go slowly at first:* Your mind learns and reprograms habits by constant repetition. When building technique, you are reprogramming your muscle memory. Slow, consistent, correct strokes will ensure that you are reprogramming your old habits with more effective ones. Practicing slowly actually *speeds up* the learning process!

3. *Use a mirror:* Practice in front of a full-length mirror to observe your form. You become the teacher and student! The student is in the mirror: carefully watch what is done and correct it with what you have learned. Teaching the technique to yourself can only reinforce you to program it as a habit! This goes for drum set and pad. Remember: *The consistency of how you sit is directly related to the consistency of how you hit*. Be sure to pay close attention to your posture as well. Sit up!

4. *Use a watch / Importance of time lengths:* Hang a watch or clock with a second hand next to your music stand. Assign a time length to each exercise. A minimum of one minute each is recommended. This serves two purposes. First, you must focus on each pattern long enough to assist the reprogramming process as you improve your technique. Repetition is crucial. Second, this will allow you to manage your daily schedule for maximum effectiveness. For instance, if you know you have 20 minutes to practice, you can choose exercises and know exactly how long each one will take, hence enabling you to plan various effective practice routines throughout your week.

5. *Use a metronome:* The metronome is a very effective tool for fine-tuning your time feel. But also think of it as a gauge to measure your improvement. It may frustrate you as you begin learning each exercise, but it will also inspire you as you see the tempo increase as you improve!

6. *Use audio and video taping to chart your progress:* Many of these concepts deal with movement. Taping yourself is the best way to check yourself. Although audio taping can tell you if patterns are being played smoothly, video taping is better for the overall picture: you can see where the tension points are or pinpoint any other obstacles that may need work.

7. *Stay relaxed at all times:* You should strive for complete relaxation. Stop if you feel tension or strain during an exercise. There is a major difference between *tension* and *intensity*. Tension is the tightening of your muscles. Intensity is full commitment and total focus. You must be totally relaxed to achieve a high level of intensity.

8. *Stretch and Strengthen:* One of the goals of this book is to improve your technique by physically conditioning your muscles. You will *stretch* for flexibility and fluidity and *strengthen* for endurance and power. Although you should be very relaxed, remember you can still push yourself.

9. *Concentrate:* Effective practice requires total concentration. There can be no distractions. If you practice at home, isolate yourself from the phone, other people, TV, and other interruptions. Schedule a time to practice and devote full time to it. Staying focused solely on the practice material is the only way to master these techniques. Concentration is defined as “to fix one’s attention” or “to focus one’s thoughts.” Only with full concentration can you maximize the rewards of practice.

10. *Be patient:* Don’t try to speed your way through the material in this book. It will take time to master these concepts. Digest the material over time, and be patient with yourself.

11. *Seek out an instructor* for the personal guidance of your talent. Attend drum and percussion events in your area, including those featuring artists with whom you are unfamiliar. Ask questions and take advantage of every opportunity to learn.

12. *Left-handed players:* Many of the exercises in this book are intended to begin with the weaker hand for greater challenge and development. If you come across patterns that start with the left, you should reverse the sticking and start with your right.

Note: Unless otherwise indicated, exercises are in 4/4 time.

A NOTE OF HISTORY:

George Lawrence Stone lived from approximately 1880–1960. He learned the Free Stroke technique from his father as it was passed down through generations of drummers. His book *Stick Control* was written with this technique in mind. Joe Morello was Stone’s protégé, to whom the book *Accents and Rebounds* is dedicated. Joe taught me the Free Stroke in the mid-1970s.

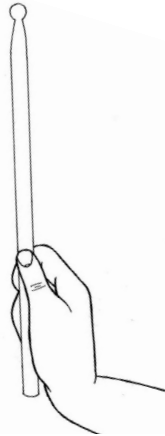
Sanford Augustus Moeller was also born in the 1880s and died in the 1960s. He observed many drummers including old soldiers from the Civil War who, in their nineties, still had great power and speed for drumming. This is when Moeller began to notice the correlation between motion and speed. Moeller is the S.A.M. referred to in the dedication of Jim Chapin’s famous book, *Advanced Techniques for the Modern Drummer*. Jim learned this technique from Moeller in 1938, and then Jim taught it to me circa 1978. Jim was Moeller’s best student, to the point that when Gene Krupa at the height of his career requested to return to lessons, Moeller, who wasn’t teaching anymore, recommended that Krupa study with Jim.

The Free Stroke

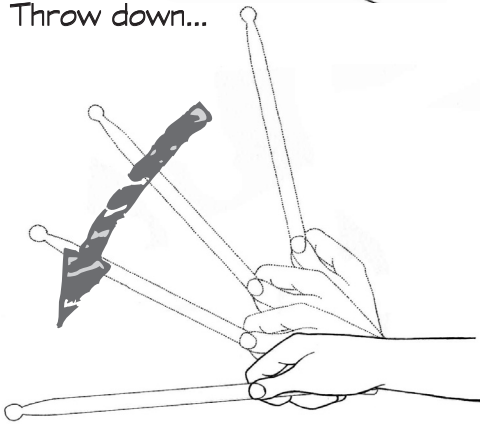
THE FREE STROKE:

Start from full stroke position.
Forearm is parallel to ground.
Think down.
Throw down.
Don't pull up.
Don't squeeze.
Let the stick bounce up.
Follow the stick up.
End in full stroke position.
Relax.
Concentrate.

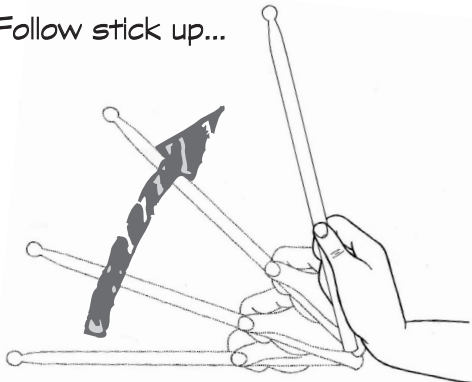
1. Think down...



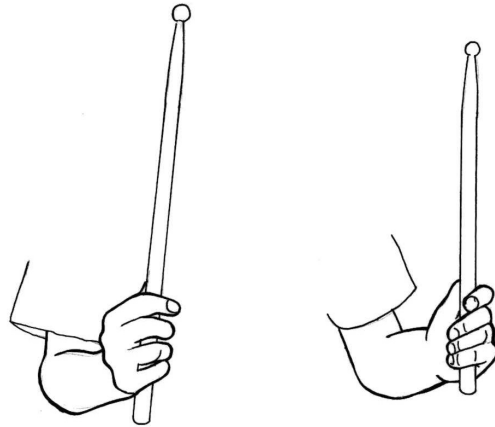
2. Throw down...



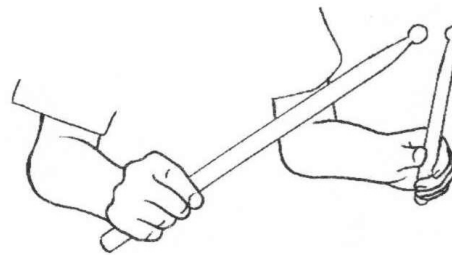
3. Follow stick up...



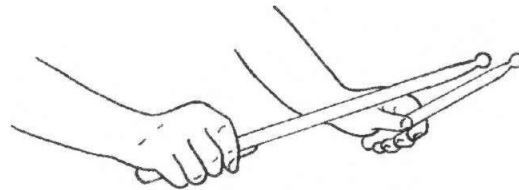
STROKE HEIGHTS & DYNAMICS



Full Stroke: 15"-18" (*f-fff*)

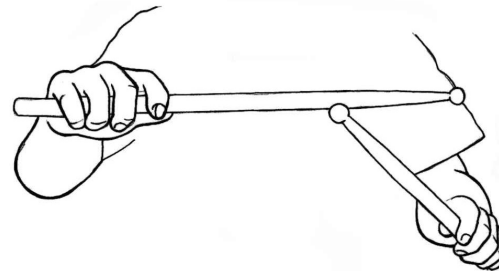


Half Stroke: 5"-9" (*mp-mf*)



Low Stroke: 1"-4" (*p-ppp*)

Fig. 4: Stick-Over-Stick Exercise for the full, half, and low stroke: If you hear the sticks click before the pad, you pulled up. Think down! Shown here using the half stroke.



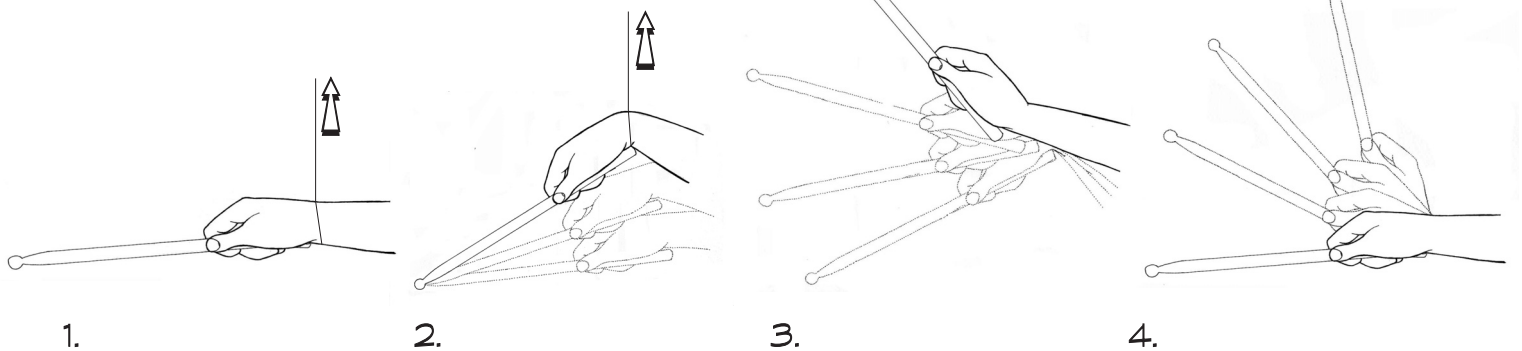
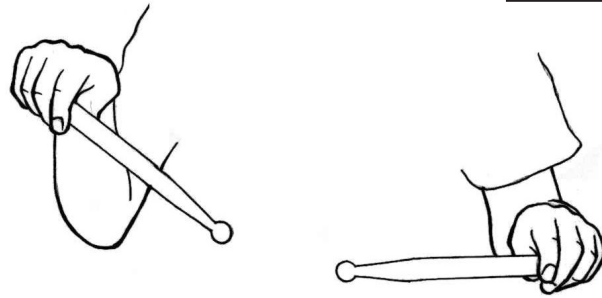
The Moeller Stroke

"Whipping Motion"

FLIPBOOK BOX
 Flip the pages of the book back-to-front and watch this space to see the Moeller Stroke in motion!

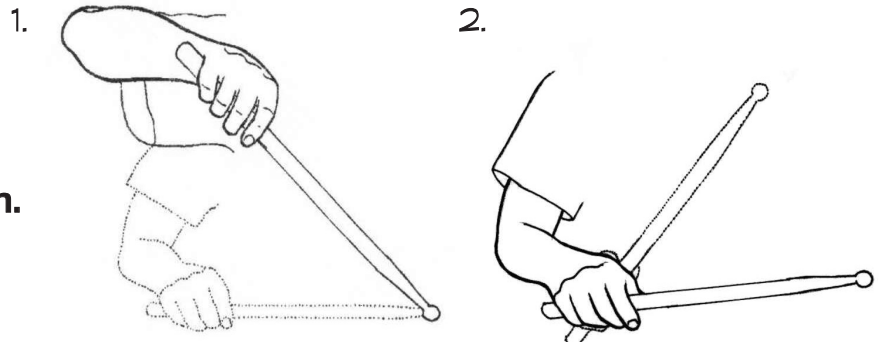
LOW MOELLER:

Uses whipping motion.
 Imaginary puppet string lifts wrist.
Wrist moves up first!
 Tip of stick follows.
 End in natural starting position.
Note: Low Moeller is basic Moeller motion; learn Low before Half or Full Moeller.



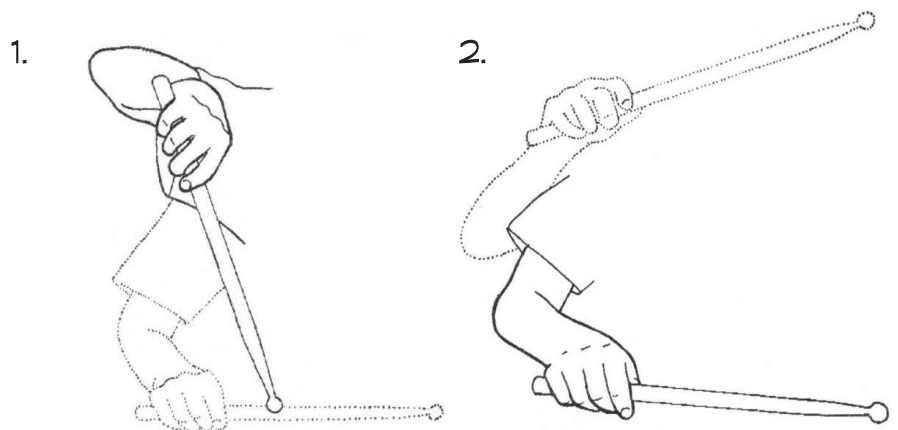
HALF MOELLER:

Elbow lifts out first.
 Wrist follows.
 Elbow drops; wrist follows.
 Tip of stick hits with whip motion.
 End in natural starting position.

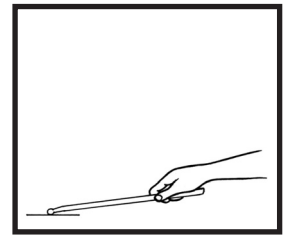


FULL MOELLER:

Elbow lifts out first;
 highest motion.
 Hand lifts above head.
 Wrist follows.
 Shoulder muscles involved.
 Full range of arm motion.
 Stick whips over head.
 Whip down for extreme power.
 End in natural starting position.



Upstrokes: Pull Outs



Metronome marking ♩ = 40-76

Practice slowly, on pad.

Play each measure until smooth and clean.

Play each pattern 4x with no accents, then 4x with accents.

Practice using both Formal and Informal Pull-Outs.

Suggestion: Play non-accents as low strokes, accents as full strokes.

A Open Roll

R R L L
 L L R R

R R L L
 L L R R

R R L L
 L L R R

B Inverted Open Roll

R L L R
 L R R L

R L L R
 L R R L

R L L R
 L R R L

C Triplets

R L L
 L R R

L L R
 R R L

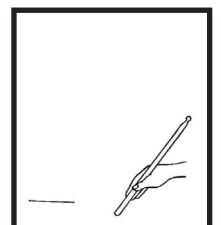
L R L
 R L R

D Double 4-Stroke

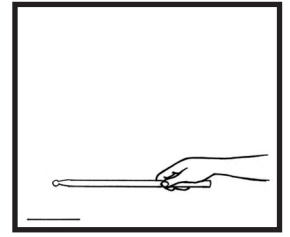
R R L L
 L L R R

R R L L
 L L R R

Now mix the patterns from open roll into double 4-stroke into triplets. Use your own combinations.



Downstrokes: Control Strokes



Metronome marking ♩ = 40-76

Practice slowly, on pad.

Play each measure until smooth and clean.

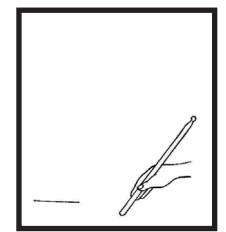
Play each pattern 4x with no accents, then 4x with accents.

Practice using both Formal and Informal Control Strokes.

Suggestion: Play non-accents as low strokes, accents as full strokes.

A	Open Roll	 R R L L L L R R	 R R L L L L R R	 R R L L L L R R
B	Inverted Open Roll	 R L L R L R R L	 R L L R L R R L	 R L L R L R R L
C	Triplets	 R L L L R R	 L L R R R L	 L R L R L R
D	Double 4-Stroke	 R R L L L L R R	 R R L L L L R R	

Now mix the patterns from open roll into double 4-stroke into triplets. Use your own combinations.



Flam Facility - Part 1

A Test in Precision and Control

Metronome marking ♩ = 40-76
Read the exercises downward.

Exercise A Right Flams

♩ R ♩ R ♩ R ♩ R

♩ R ♩ R ♩ R ♩ R

3 3 3 3

♩ R ♩ R ♩ R ♩ R

♩ R ♩ R ♩ R ♩ R

5 5 5 5

♩ R ♩ R ♩ R ♩ R

Exercise B Left Flams

♩ L ♩ L ♩ L ♩ L

♩ L ♩ L ♩ L ♩ L

3 3 3 3

♩ L ♩ L ♩ L ♩ L

♩ L ♩ L ♩ L ♩ L

5 5 5 5

♩ L ♩ L ♩ L ♩ L

Shuffle the Four-Stroke

Metronome marking ♩ = 60-144
Practice on pad.

1

1 - L RRL L LL LL L

2

2 - L RLR L LL LL L

A

1 - L RRL L LL LL L
2 - L RLR L LL LL L

B

1 - L LL RRL L LL L
2 - L LL RLR L LL L

C

1 - L LL LL RRL L L
2 - L LL LL RLR L L

D

1 - L LL LL LL RRL
2 - L LL LL LL RLR

E

1 - L RRL L RRL L LL L
2 - L RLR L RLR L LL L

F

1 - L LL RRL L RRL L L
2 - L LL RLR L RLR L L

G

1 - L LL LL RRL L RRL
2 - L LL LL RLR L RLR

H

1 - L RRL L LL LL RRL
2 - L RLR L LL LL RLR