

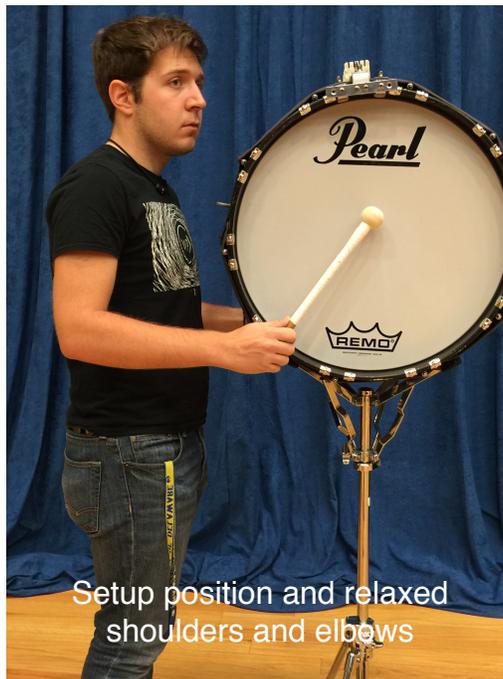
Bass Drum Setup Guidelines

The following guidelines will create a uniform setup for the bass line

1. **Natural Curve of the Hand:** All fingers and the thumb should assume their natural position as if the arm was hanging down by the side. Relaxation of the fingers and hands is crucial. All fingers should make contact on the stick. See stroke guidelines.
2. **Starting Position:** The mallet should form a 45 degree angle from the forearm. The forearm should be parallel to the ground.
3. **Relaxed Elbows/Shoulders:** Start by exhaling and rolling back your shoulders - relax. This will help the elbows to rest comfortably in a direct line downward from the shoulders. Avoid making contact with the elbow to the body.
4. **Mallet Placement:** The mallet head should be in the center of the drum. The mallet head will rest about 1/2" off of the head. Use a mirror to check your accuracy.



Natural curve of hand



Setup position and relaxed shoulders and elbows



Mallet placement

Bass Drum Grip Guidelines

The following guidelines will provide the bass drummer with a consistent approach for holding the sticks.

1. **Finger and Thumb Contact Points:**

- The pad of the thumb and index finger (between the first and second knuckles) will grip the mallet.
- There should be little to no space between the side of the thumb and the side of the hand.
- Hold the mallet as far back as possible, the mallet sits in the fatty part of your hand
- The other three fingers should be curved and relaxed around the mallet.
- All fingers will make contact with the mallet. The back three fingers will make contact at the tips. There should be a bit of “breathing room” between the stick and the palm.

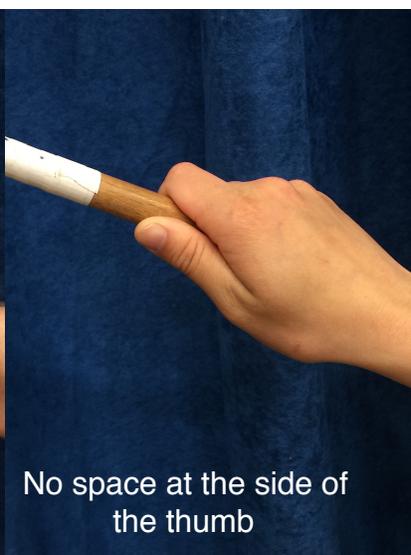
2. **Palm Angle:** When the mallet head makes contact with the drumhead, the palm’s angle will be close to flat.

3. **Fulcrum:** This is where the stick pivots. The fulcrum is between the thumb and the index finger (between the first and second knuckle). The middle finger may be added to this for certain passages of music. The fulcrum must be maintained at all times.

4. **Pressure Points:** The pressure points are at the fulcrum. The amount of pressure at the fulcrum will change depending on what is needed for the music. For example, fast rolls and buzz rolls will require more pressure. High dynamic legato-strokes and slow, open rolls will require less pressure.



Contact points, hold as far back as possible



No space at the side of the thumb



Palm angle is flat



The fulcrum and pressure point

Bass Drum Stroke Guidelines

The following guidelines will provide the bass drummer with a consistent approach for playing the drum.

- 1. Grip Maintenance:** Monitor all guidelines for setup and grip. None of these ideas should change when you start to play.
- 2. Path of the Mallet:** The stroke path should be a smooth arc from the fulcrum (pivot point). Bad stroke paths are usually a product of incorrect palm angles and incorrect stroke technique. This may cause a slicing motion away from the drum (palm is at the incorrect angle) or a circular or elliptical motion (palm angle changes from upstroke to downstroke).
- 3. Initiate the Stroke from the Wrist:** All stroke motion is initiated from the wrist. When you do this correctly you will see an obvious bend in the wrist and rotation in the forearm during the stroke. Gravity will help to produce a natural break in the wrist. Any arm motion that is added is as a consequence of the wrist turn. There are no “arm only” strokes.
 - a. Rotate the forearm
 - b. Allow the wrist to break naturally
 - c. Keep all fingers on the stick
 - d. Use “turn and snap” rotation
- 4. Use the Natural Rebound:** Allow the mallet to naturally rebound off of the head. Avoid tension in hands and squeezing the mallet, which may cause a stiff and unnatural feel. Do not “lock” the wrist.
- 5. Height/Sound Consistency:** Concentrate on duplicating the exact height of each stroke (on one hand or hand-to-hand). This along with consistent playing zones and a consistent firmness in your fulcrums will create a consistent sound between your hands. Our height system is as follows: P 3”, MP 6”, MF 9”, F 12”, FF15”
- 6. Control the Opposite Stick/Mallet:** When one hand is playing, the other must remain in the starting (setup) position.

