



10 BAD DRUMMING HABITS

AND

HOW TO FIX THEM

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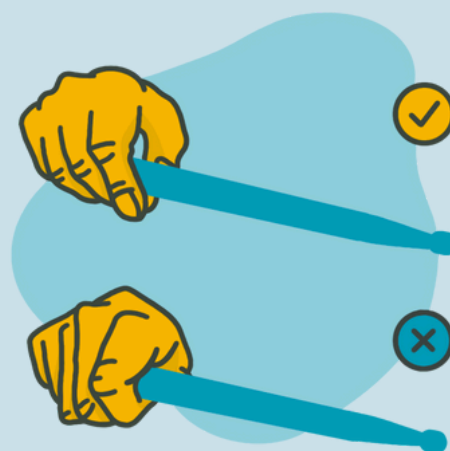
10 BAD DRUMMING HABITS AND HOW TO FIX THEM

When we are learning a new skill or hobby, we don't intentionally set out to take shortcuts or develop bad habits. They are simply, and quite innocently, a byproduct of not knowing any better. The slippery slope begins when those habits become ingrained into your day-to-day drumming, becoming difficult and time-consuming to correct, and ultimately limiting your development as a musician. To help you set out in the right direction, we have compiled a list of 10 bad drumming habits, and some tips on how to address them early on. If these bad habits apply to you, fixing them will lead to better progression and way more fun!

Some of these habits may apply to you, even if you are a more experienced player.

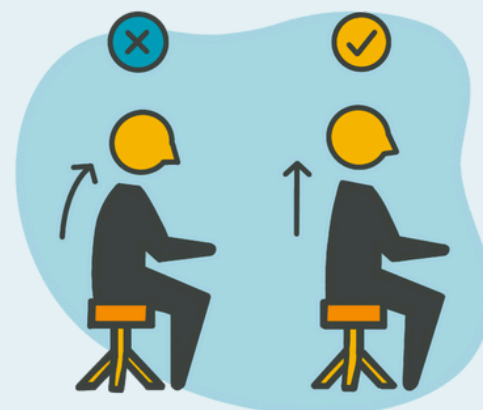
1 Bad grip

How we hold the sticks is essential to drum set control. While it is certainly true that how you hold your sticks is a fairly subjective matter, there are some basic guiding principles that you can follow to make sure that you are on the right track. Many beginner drummers hold their sticks too tight, too loose, or develop other bad habits that can ultimately lead to frustration, and even discomfort.



2 Bad posture

Having good posture behind the drum set will not only help build better control, but it will also help keep your lower back and neck in good shape. Our hands and feet are more responsive when we sit up straight on our lumbar spine. Slouching can make your drumming sloppy, and can also cause discomfort. Drumming should not be painful. Check out [this article](#) for more information.



3 Speeding up or slowing down

Timekeeping is our Number 1 priority! Be careful not to commit the cardinal sins of drumming: speeding up (rushing), or slowing down (dragging) while playing a groove. There are lots of ways to improve your timekeeping, from practicing with a metronome to counting out loud when learning drum beats and fills. Just being aware of the importance of timekeeping can help you focus on it. [This article](#) will help you with ideas and tips.



4 Striving for speed too soon

There's nothing wrong with wanting to develop speed and play fast grooves—it's a lot of fun! It is very important, however, to understand that speed is nothing but a byproduct of control, and depends on working on several key fundamentals. If you don't follow these fundamentals, you can end up with untidy grooves, rushed fills, tired arms, and a lot of frustration. [This article](#) gives you essential information on developing speed.

5 Breaking drumsticks

With good drumsticks costing around \$15 a pair, there are some good economic reasons for not breaking them regularly! The majority of breakages occur from holding the stick too tight, hitting too hard, or not striking drums and cymbals at the correct angle. If you are regularly breaking sticks, you should definitely examine your technique.



6 Overplaying

After you have spent a lot of time learning drum beats and fills, it is natural that you want to practice them in a musical situation. This can include playing along to music at home, or playing in a band with friends or at school. Beware of overplaying. Ask yourself if the groove you are playing is appropriate to the music. Give the music space to breathe by not cramming it with notes. Be tasteful with drum fills, and don't fall into the trap of playing for yourself, and not the song. You'll hear this a lot in music: less is more. Listening to music can help you understand this.

7 Not paying attention to dynamics

When we refer to [dynamics](#), we are effectively talking about how hard or soft we play our notes. This is a key area of musicality on the drum set. There are various strokes that we can play to help us achieve this, but just being aware of the overall dynamics of a song is a prerequisite. If the song is a subtle and relaxed ballad, we don't need to be hitting like we are playing for row Z at the Olympic Stadium.

8 Not counting

A recurring message in my online lessons is that counting is essential to developing rhythm, timekeeping, and making beats easier to understand and play in the early days. Counting out loud is highly recommended, and the students who do this are always the ones who develop faster and have a better grasp on the fundamentals of drumming.



9 Ignoring the fundamentals

And talking of which, paying attention to the fundamentals of drumming will set you up for success. Understanding basic grip and bass drum technique, developing good posture, learning to [read music](#), understanding [sticking](#), developing good timekeeping, learning to count music, practicing with a metronome, learning the [rudiments](#) and dynamic strokes—these are all basic foundational aspects of drumming that are learned and applied over time. All of these key areas are covered in depth on [Drum Ambition](#).



10 Not striking drums and cymbals musically and safely

Remember to hold the drumsticks in a relaxed (but under control) grip. This takes the pressure off the drum heads and cymbals when you hit them, allowing them to sing, and prolonging their life. If you are pitting (denting) your drum heads or cracking cymbals, this is a sign that you should be examining your technique. Remember to hit your crash cymbals with a “glancing” motion, as demonstrated in my Drum Ambition Lessons. Allow the drum sticks to rebound off the drum heads, and don't bury the tips of the sticks in the drum heads.

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Drum Ambition has over 100 videos dedicated to the beginner drummer. We focus on the essential fundamentals, beats, and drum fills that will give you the perfect introduction to your drumming adventure. Our [curriculum](#) is structured, goal-orientated, and a lot of fun.

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