

Pulse Percussion and POW Percussion

2018 Cymbal Technique Packet



By: Pulse Percussion Staff

Introduction

Hello and welcome to the Cymbal Technique Packet for Pulse Percussion. The information and philosophies contained in this packet will help in getting all of us to start the season with the same approach and mindset.

Key Points:

- Please note that this is to be used as a tool and a reference, but is not the **ONLY** source of our technique
- Remember, this is the way that Pulse Percussion will play, and it definitely is not the **ONLY** correct way to play
 - Be open to other ideas
 - Try to learn from other ensemble's ideas/techniques as much as possible
- Keep in mind everyone's hands and body are shaped differently, and some minor adjustments within the technique may have to adjust (within reason)
 - Further explanation and details will be brought up when in person
- Always strive for personal greatness and consistency as ensemble clarity begins with individual clarity
 - If you can't play well by yourself, there is no chance the ensemble will

Goals:

- Always strive for a **BIG/STRONG** uniform quality of sound as you play---quality of sound is everything
- Always strive for a relaxed physical sensation, your hands should feel "comfortable"
- Efficient Motion/Use of energy while maintaining rhythmic accuracy at all times
- Create presence behind the instrument---"big upper body" while maintaining relaxation
- Practice as often as you can with a met, marking time, in front of mirror to encourage absolute consistency
- **ALWAYS** strive for perfect rhythms, sound quality, and consistency
- Present yourself in a way that shows maturity and confidence at all times

We are looking for people who:

- Have a desire to become a better percussionist and enjoy performing at a high level
- Do not think in terms of difficult or hard but know that you need to practice to get comfortable with your instrument
- Strive for a mature and consistent understanding of timing and sound quality
- Have a solid technical foundation and the ability to learn and adapt to new approaches.
- Give 100% or more all the time and have fun doing it
- Have a sense of humor and want to have a good time playing drums while running around a basketball court

Holding the Cymbals

- Straps sit on the webbing between the thumb and index finger and should be pulled behind the wrist
- Hands should be relaxed with fingers spread apart, lightly touching the cymbals
- Straps should be tight enough that the palms stay flush against the pads at all times (no cupping)

Positions

Set:

- Hands and cymbals are down at the sides of the body with a slight bend at the elbows
- Cymbals should hover off the hips and be completely parallel

Flat:

- Cymbals create a “sash” from left shoulder to right hip with a 2 inch space in between
- Hands should be just below the sternum with forearms parallel to the ground
- Distance from chest varies depending on body shape and arm length
 - Rule of thumb: far enough that the cymbals don't hit the body when playing
- Elbows should be lifted away from torso with symmetrical spacing

Choke:

- Elbows should be pinned down against the torso with each cymbal tucked underneath the arm
- Each cymbal has three points of contact with the body: the armpit, the top of the hip, and the forearm
- The front of the cymbals should be spaced 2 inches apart

Port:

- Hands and cymbals are up in front of the face with the webbing just below the nose
- Cymbals have a 2 inch space in between and are completely parallel

Prepping for a Crash

Left Arm:

- At the flat position, hand is relaxed and fingers are off
- Slightly curl the wrist inward using the forearm muscle (only moving the wrist)
- The angle of the cymbal should still match the flat angle

Right Arm:

- At the flat position, hand is relaxed and fingers are off
- Pull the arm back similar to drawing a bow and arrow
- Forearm stays parallel to ground with the back of the cymbal sitting on the outside of the bicep
- The angle of the cymbal should still match the flat angle while the blade of the cymbal is pointing at the contact point (1.5 inches from the front edge of the left cymbal)

Playing a Crash

- Starting at the “prep” position, the right cymbal will move in a straight line path towards the left cymbal, through the contact point, and to the full extension
- Using the webbing and not the palm, push the right cymbal towards the contact point while maintaining the flat angle as it approaches the left cymbal
- The front blade of the right cymbal should touch the contact point first at which point the cymbals should make a 30° angle
- The right cymbal will continue its path through the contact point until the back ends of the cymbal come together
- Once the back ends of the cymbals make contact, right arm will straighten its path to extend directly in front of the body

Ancillary Sounds

Press:

- Push both cymbals into each other while offsetting the right cymbal down by 1 cm
- Fingers stay on the cymbals and hands will push into each other to cut off sound quickly
- This mimics a closed hi-hat

Sizz:

- Push both cymbals into each other while offsetting the right cymbal down by 1 cm
- Fingers are off the cymbals allowing them to vibrate
- Hands control the pressure between the cymbals to create the sustained sound
- This mimics a slightly-opened hi-hat

Sizz-suck:

- Push both cymbals together exactly like playing a sizz
- Once the sizz starts, extend the right cymbal straight forward for the length of the note
- At the cut off, hands will push into each other while sliding the right cymbal back to create a vacuum effect
- This mimics a slightly-opened then closed hi-hat

Tap:

- Cymbals are positioned at an A-shape with the top of the cymbals at eye level
- Hinge the right wrist up to raise the right cymbal until perpendicular to the ground
- At the top of the cymbals, strike 1 inch from the edge of the right cymbal into the blade of the left
- Finger will release at the moment of contact to allow the tap to ring
- This mimics a ride cymbal

Tap Choke:

- Cymbals are setup exactly like playing a tap
- After the tap is played, both arms move down into the choke position
 - Rule of thumb: arms do not begin moving to choke until after contact is made
- This mimics a choked splash cymbal

Ding:

- The top of the left cymbal and the bell of the right cymbal are positioned just above the nose at a 90° angle
- The right hand moves away and then towards the left cymbal, striking the bell with fingers off
- This mimics the bell of a ride cymbal

Zing:

- The top of the right cymbal and the bell of the left cymbal are positioned just above the nose at a 45° angle
- The left cymbal will be more angled while the right will be more vertical
- Push the top of the right cymbal into the grooves of the left cymbal while also pushing up
- This mimics scraping a cymbal