

The Hand in the Drum

Vary the shape of your hand and the pressure applied to the head to generate different sounds.

Players may use the flat of the hand, the heel of the hand, the edge of the little finger side of the hand, a “C” shape formed by the heel of the hand and the fingers tips. Sometimes only a single finger is used.

Experiment to discover the different tonal qualities of the drum. Each drum will produce different sounds depending upon the amount of pressure applied, the amount of skin contact, the position of the interior hand, and the relative location of the interior hand versus the tipper strike. There are no set rules. It is impossible to generalize for all drums and all players.

Start with these combinations of hand and tipper locations.

Low Pitch Sound

- Hand in the drum at 12 o'clock
- Tipper between 4 and 6 o'clock for right hand players 6 and 8 o'clock for left hand players
- Rest the interior hand lightly on the drum head. Position the hand so that at 1 o'clock only the pad of the middle finger lightly contacts with the drum head. The object is to dampen the drum, not to alter the pitch of the drum. Often only a finger touch produces the best. Sound.

High Pitch Sound

- Hand in the center of the drum
- Tipper at 3 o'clock for right hand players and 9 o'clock for left hand players
- Press against the drum head firmly with the palm of the interior hand
- The object is to push hard enough to change the pitch and timbre of the drum.

Exercise

Hand at 12 noon	Hand at Center	Hand at 12 noon	Hand at Center
Light pressure with	Heavy Pressure	Light pressure with	Heavy Pressure
Middle finger 1 o'clock	flat of the hand	Middle finger 1 o'clock	flat of the hand
Tipper at 6 o'clock	tipper at 3 o'clock	tipper at 6 o'clock	tipper at 3 o'clock
↓ ↑ ↓ ↑	↓ ↑ ↓ ↑	↓ ↑ ↓ ↑	↓ ↑ ↓ ↑