

How to help you child practice drums (with or without a drum kit!)

So your child has just come home with a brand new pair of sticks and some sheets of gibberish and is asking for your help as they need to practice. The first thought in your mind is “HELP!” as you’ve no idea what to do to help them really learn and understand what they are doing.

If you’ve got a few minutes to read this guide then I will explain all that you need to know to best support your child as they start learning the drums!

First lets get a common myth dealt with, “My child doesn’t have access to a drum kit for practicing on, so is unable to practice.” WRONG! Your little cherub can use their legs and stamp on the floor (or tap their feet if you prefer) and they can hit a cushion or pillow that is placed on a chair with their sticks. They could stand at a table and use a cushion or pillow on their lap, they can sit on any chair and tap their legs with their hands. In short, they can practice without a drum kit very easily! Lucky you!

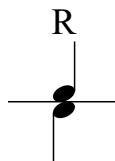
Drum Music - Decoding the Impossible?

When you look at the drum music that your child has brought home, try to stem the rising panic and relax. It really is easier than it looks. The first sheet they have been given is called “**Exercises for the Hands**” and each line is clearly marked with which hand to use. If they struggle with which hand is which, you can put a red dot on their sticks or an R or L on the hands.

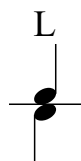
The next sheet is “**Exercises for the Feet**” and is the same as the Hands sheet, but using the feet. For ease, students are encouraged to look at these notes as Blobs for the right foot, and Crosses for the Left foot. This really does help even though it sounds silly! An important point to see here is that notes for the feet point downwards whilst the notes for the hands point upwards.



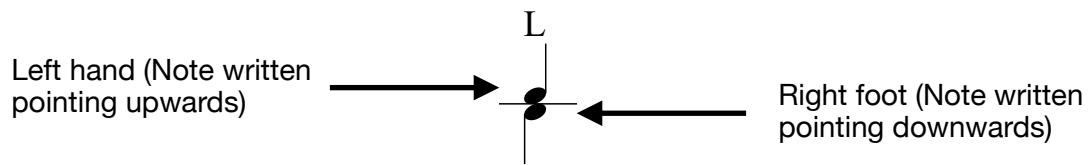
The third sheet (**Combined Exercises with Single Foot**) is where things start to look slightly different. Here, you can see the following written on the sheet:



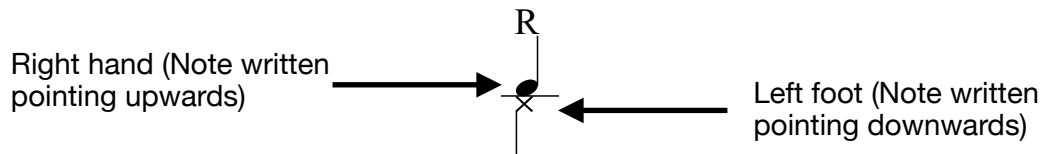
Most students look at this and (correctly) work out that they need to play their right hand and their right foot together. Then the next line they see this:



They then try to play the Left hand and the left foot. But it should be the Left hand and the RIGHT foot. Confused? Let me explain a little more:



The notes written for the hands look exactly the same as each other and point upwards, whereas the notes for the feet look different and are pointing downwards. The example below shows another common mistake: Here we can see that we need to use the Right hand, but which foot?



One other thing, try to encourage your child to count out loud whilst they are practicing. The voice is so useful for keeping them in time and learning the patterns quickly!

Lastly, When they get on the the page called Rudiments, the notes look different and can cause mild panic to ensue. The notes look different because they are counted differently. The basic coordination remains the same as it has been throughout all of the previous sheets! Panic no more!

So, now you know how to decipher the notes, you can now breathe a sigh of relief and get on with helping your ever excited child to practice!