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MP3s  
Included on  
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Examples in  
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# Introduction

This book is about a deeper understanding of foot movement on the drumset. Years of learning, performing and teaching has been the basis of this information. The power of great foot execution adds an intensity to modern music that has revolutionized modern drumming. Simply put, *Pedal Control* is about controlling the pedal! It is about you achieving the ability to play whatever idea your heart and mind dictate!

The objective of this book is to focus on the most-often neglected part of the drummer's body: the feet. Page by page you will better understand your potential and the need for this workout.

Exercises from *It's Your Move* have been used for foot development in Part 2 of this book. Years of teaching have shown excellent results with our students for greater pedal control.

Dom Famularo and Joe Bergamini

## Key

There are three formats for notation used in this book:

1. A single-line staff (for exercises involving one sound source only)
2. A double-line staff (for basic coordinated patterns with hands and feet)
3. A full 5-line staff (for full drumset notation).

The single-line staff is self-explanatory and requires no key. The other two staves are explained below. The drumset notation on the 5-line staff conforms to the PAS Standard for drumset notation.

The diagram illustrates two formats of drumset notation. The top format uses a single-line staff with five lines. It shows four notes: the first two are on the first line (labeled 'BASS DRUM 1' and 'BASS DRUM 2'), the third is an 'x' on the second line (labeled 'HIHAT'), and the last two are on the fourth line (labeled 'SNARE DRUM - RIGHT HAND' and 'SNARE DRUM - LEFT HAND').

The bottom format uses a double-line staff (two parallel lines). It shows a sequence of notes: 'BASS DRUM 1' (first line), 'BASS DRUM 2' (second line), 'HIHAT 1' (x on second line), 'HIHAT 2' (x on second line), 'SNARE DRUM' (first line), 'HI-HAT' (x on second line), 'HI-HAT CLOSED' (+ on second line), 'HI-HAT OPEN' (o on second line), 'RIDE CYMBAL' (x on second line), 'CRASH' (x on second line), 'REMOTE HI-HAT' (x on second line), 'TOM 1' (third line), 'TOM 2' (fourth line), and 'TOM 3' (fifth line).

## Pedal Setup

In addition to developing your muscles to play the pedals, you must also analyze your setup. Your goal is to find the optimum position for your body in terms of relaxation and comfort, to minimize any roadblocks on the way to having complete technical freedom with your feet. Here are some aspects of this to analyze:

### Distance from the Kit:

The distance you sit from the pedals has a tremendous effect on your playing. Look for the most relaxed position of your leg, and tailor your setup to this position. For most people, the thigh and lower leg create an angle slightly greater than 90 degrees when they are relaxed (Fig. 1). This position eliminates stretching and tension. Sitting too close to the drums (Fig. 2) causes the drummer to “pull back” and stretches the muscles of the upper thigh. This can be very fatiguing over time. Some drummers get into this position by trying to set all their drums up under them, instead of at a relaxed distance. Someone sitting too far from the pedal (Fig. 3) is wasting energy stretching their leg muscles and wasting work in the lateral direction as they try to play the pedal.



Fig. 1: Relaxed leg position



Fig. 2: Sitting too close



Fig. 3: Sitting too far away

**Posture:**

Your posture is a key factor in your playing, and not just for the obvious reason that bad posture can cause back problems. Your posture dictates how much air you can take into your lungs when you breathe. When you are sitting up straight, you can expand the lungs fully and take deep breaths. Maximum air intake means maximum oxygen getting to your bloodstream, which in turn leads to greater energy and endurance. On the other hand, when you slouch, you stop that precious extra air from entering your lungs because slouching compresses the chest cavity, stopping the lungs from expanding fully. Maintaining good posture on a long gig may seem difficult because many people slouch when they are tired (which compounds their tiredness!). However, good posture can (and should) be learned and turned into a habit. The best way to check your posture is to make a video recording of yourself in various performance and practice situations, and to set up a mirror to the side of your kit to observe your body position.

**Balance:**

Closely related to posture is your balance, or weight distribution, while sitting at the kit. Are you leaning to one side when you play? This indicates an uneven distribution of weight on your feet, which will make it difficult to play even patterns with the feet. When sitting on your throne, try to find a natural and comfortable position to sit. Don't sit all the way back, with your entire backside on the seat. This encourages slouching, and causes the front edge of the seat to dig into the underside of your thighs while you play. It will also cause you to lean backwards when you play double-foot patterns. By the same token, be careful not to sit too far forward on your seat. This may cause you to lean forward. If you lean forward, you need to counterbalance the weight of your body with your legs. Thus, when you go to play two pedals, that balance is disrupted, which can cause unevenness in your playing.

Take the time to experiment with every position. You will know when it is correct. Trust your instincts.

### Angle of Pedals:

When relaxed, most people sit with their feet positioned like this (Fig. 4):



Fig. 4: Relaxed foot position

As a general rule, you want your setup to conform to your relaxed body position. When setting up your pedals, try to retain the same relaxed angle of your feet. Ideally you'd want to place the pedal directly under your relaxed foot position.

The following photo shows the feet at a greater angle. This position, for most people, would add tension and should be avoided (Fig. 5).

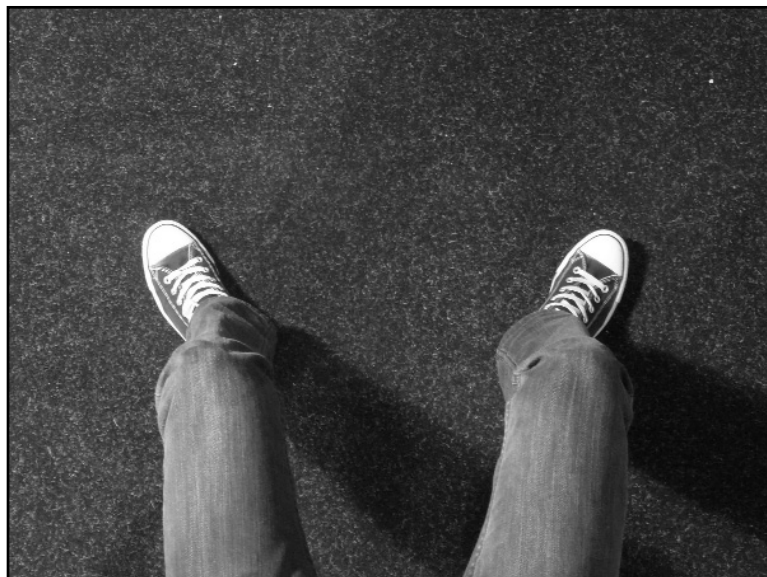


Fig. 5: Tense foot position

So in essence what we are saying is to set up your pedals so they basically sit under the relaxed natural position of your feet. The following photos illustrate this.

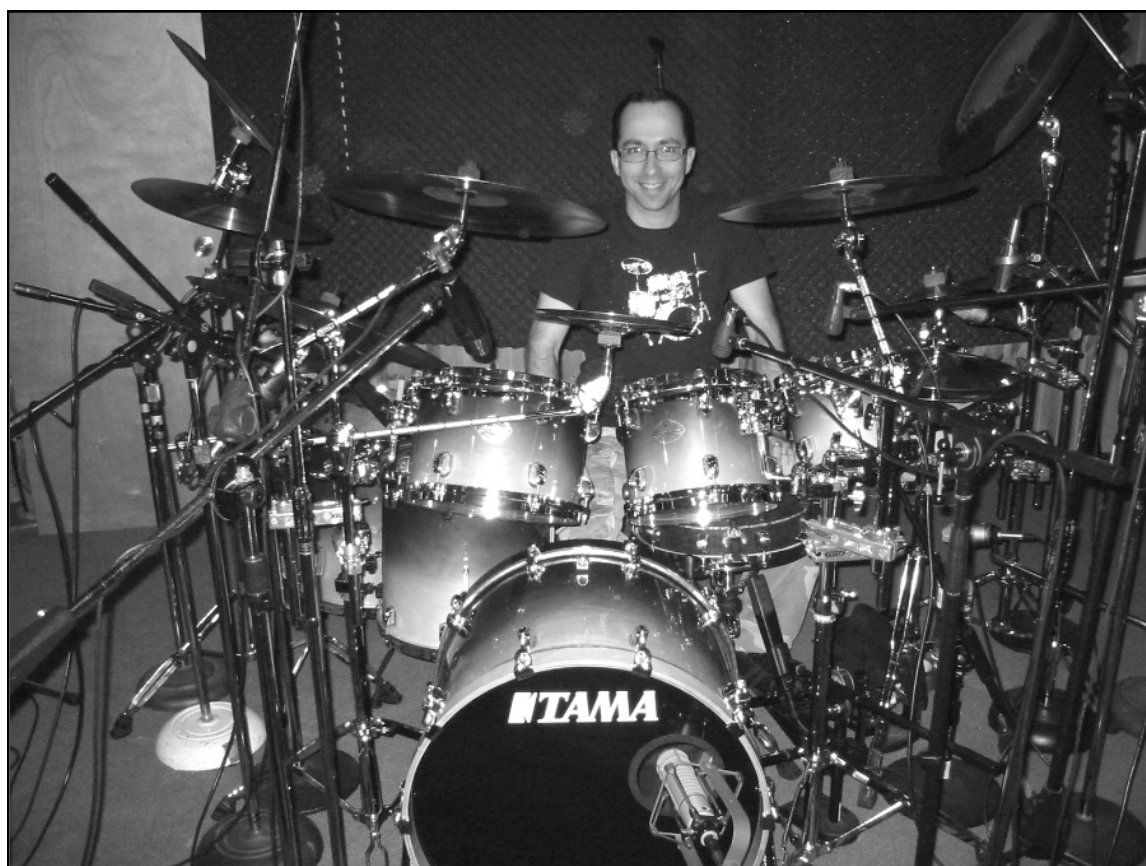
## Pedal Control

Marching Feet solo #2 uses flams, flam accents, flamacues, and flam taps. It is a real test of your accuracy and facility, so be sure to start very slowly and work up to a relaxed marching tempo of 80 BPM.

$\text{♩} = 80$

The musical notation is written on two staves in 2/4 time. The first staff begins with a quarter rest followed by eighth notes. An accent (>) is placed over a pair of eighth notes. The second staff continues with eighth notes, two triplet markings (3) over eighth notes, and an accent (>) over a pair of eighth notes.

Try writing your own rudimental foot grooves, or just improvise and have fun.



Joe in a recording session at Trax East Recording Studio, New Jersey, USA.

# Feet Heat

In this solo your hands and feet play all in unison. The precision and accuracy of playing feet and hands together is the main focus of this exercise. Control comes first; speed will follow later. Everything played by the hands is played at the same time with the feet. This can assist in perfecting your balance (sitting position) and overall approach to the drums. The section entitled Play Together began work on this concept. This solo takes things one step further by adding flam patterns.

The solo is played in unison with hands and feet. It is written for snare drum and bass drum, but you could substitute other sounds instead. Each sound combination will create different colors and effects when played over the sound of the feet. Use alternating strokes in this exercise, and be sure all the flams are crisp and clean. After spending 20 minutes on this exercise, feel the heat in your feet! That's where you want to be!

$\bullet = 84 - 132$

## Pedal Control

Feet Heat #2, in 7/8, presents you with some interesting combinations and a three-bar phrase length.

$\text{♩} = 280$

The musical score is written for a single staff in 7/8 time, with a tempo marking of quarter note = 280. The piece consists of four measures. The first measure contains a complex rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. The second and third measures continue this pattern with various rests and note values. The fourth measure concludes the phrase with a final note and a fermata. The score is presented in a standard musical notation format with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat.





# Hats on Feet

Having incorporated two hi-hats into our playing, one on each side, both Joe and I have opened up our sound options to a whole new level. With both hi-hats closed and your feet on the bass drum pedals, play this solo, noticing that right hand and foot are together, and left hand and foot are together. The sound that is created adds a whole new dimension of power to your playing. Be sure not to flam the sound—the unison notes must be played perfectly together. There are some flams involved; these also must be played crisply and cleanly.

♩ = 84 - 120

The musical score consists of five systems, each with two staves. The top staff represents hi-hats, indicated by 'x' marks, and the bottom staff represents bass drum pedals, indicated by notes. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 84 - 120. The piece is in common time (C). The score includes various rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sextuplets, and is marked with a common time signature 'C'.