

LESSON 1: UNISON HANDS USING QUARTER NOTES IN 4/4**KEY POINTS**

- The word 'unison' in this course has to do with notes that are played together with two or more limbs in synchronization, as opposed to alternate or opposite notes played one after the other with two or more limbs.
- The word 'independence' means that two or more limbs are functioning independent of one another, or where there is no obvious connection between the lines of rhythm. A good example is a Samba rhythm where the bass drum and hi hat are separate from the hand rhythm. This is not to say that the two lines of rhythm aren't corresponding in time and space. Drumming always involves some connection between the limbs.
- The word 'dependence' means that two or more of the limbs are relying on one another, or are playing the same pattern together, much like the bass drum follows the right hand in a simple 8th-note rock groove.
- The word 'interdependence' is the most appropriate word to use when describing what drummers do. At any given moment, the drummer is seen with all limbs in some sort of combination and coordination, where each limb plays a part in the whole process of the rhythmic presentation.
- Always maintain the first beat of the measure by counting the measure and feeling the importance of the 'one' of the bar. Drummers are the keepers of the beat and the organization of the beat, which involves an awareness of the time signature.
- It is important to consider that motion and rhythm are functions of technique and the sounds or tones of the drum set instruments act as the creative elements. So, as the sound or tonal color changes as you voice, don't let this affect the manner in which the motion and rhythm are being applied.
- Each exercise gives you the opportunity to change your motion, which affects sound and phrasing, change the tempo, and change the voicing, which perhaps gives the rhythm more color and melody.



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R.H. 4/4

L.H. 4/4

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LESSON 2: UNISON HANDS USING 8TH-NOTES IN 2/4**KEY POINTS**

- John Riley's description of interdependence states, when all the limbs know what each is doing in the musical phrase.
- Perhaps to use the word 'exclusion' to describe independence is a bit misleading. Suffice it to say that limbs that act independent of one another is just that, but still work together as a part of the rhythmic phrase.
- The body mechanics are what is being developed in these lessons, so that eventually the mind does not have to focus on what the limbs are doing, but rather how they are being utilized musically. The mechanics of motion become secondary in the mind as the body begins to function in a sort of 'auto pilot' manner.
- The motion used to play will determine what kind of sound that you want to produce. Tone production, phrasing and volume are all involved in the choice of motion used.
- Syncopation is the emphasis of a note that is typically weak according to its position in the measure. Upbeat notes are always weak compared to downbeat notes. Syncopation usually involves a combination of downbeat and upbeat stress notes in phrase development.
- One has the ability to phrase the notes of both hands. This is good practice and the viewer should change the phrasing of each exercise in order to further develop the ability to coordinate the limbs and control phrasing.
- The phrasing of the left hand changed from the outside release to a downstroke emphasis to both notes being stressed, where the motion was more of a wrist turn fullstroke-downstroke motion.
- If you are unintentionally flamming between the hands, check the motion of each and continue focusing on the coordination or synchronization of the hands.
- Ghost notes are those notes that come before or after a note that is stressed. The ghost notes tend to affect the phrasing of the music and can sometimes help in the maintenance of timekeeping by filling in the gaps between the major notes of the phrase.



1 R.H. L.H. 2/4

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LESSON 3: UNISON HANDS USING 8TH-NOTES IN 4/4**KEY POINTS**

- Always challenge yourself when you practice and find alternate ways to rephrase the same rhythmic exercise. This will give you plenty to work on.
- The phrasing of a two-note idea in the left hand can change as stress is applied to the second note as well. When playing toms, which typically have heads that are looser than the snare, it is sometimes necessary to apply more stress due to the lack of rebound response.
- A prime goal of coordination is to be able to control the motion, and consequently the phrasing of each limb independent of the other.
- Always consider how practical the practice elements actually are. Ask yourself whether it is just an exercise that seems to have little meaning or is purely academic. Rather, let the practicing be something accomplished that can ultimately be used in the real world of drumming.
- With any phrase, changing the location of the stress note(s) can change the whole affect or feel of the rhythmic phrase.
- Repetition is the key to getting better and being a more consistent, dependable player. The goal is not to play every exercise in a practice session, perhaps, but rather to spend more time on each exercise in an attempt to find new ways to phrase, voice, coordinate, etc.
- Set short and long range goals for yourself in your development. This helps to keep your practicing organized and goal oriented.
- Sound is what captures the attention and interest of the listener, not the technique or the motion that the player is using.



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L.H. 4/4

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LESSON 4: UNISON HANDS USING A LEAD HAND BROKEN RHYTHM IN 4/4**KEY POINTS**

- Find the most ideal snare drum angle based on how you play and which grip the left hand is using. It may be necessary to compromise and find a middle ground position when traditional and matched grips are used interchangeably.
- The position of the arms may need to adjust according to the needs of the music. The most ideal playing position is considered home base, however, especially as it relates to body comfort and good ergonomics.
- Motion that is contrary requires special consideration as the body gets used to the opposite position or motion required.
- Always try different tempos for each exercise. It may change the way you approach the phrasing. It also helps develop better motion. Dynamics are also to be applied as you practice. Work toward having a good range of dynamic ability, from very soft to very loud.
- The continued benefit of practicing with a left-hand lead is that it develops the ability to be more ambidexterous, or have more equal facility with both hands in the lead position. It also opens up the drum set to the right hand as the melodic limb as the left hand provides the timekeeping pattern.
- As you practice, the left hand lead will find its place in your playing. Without practicing, it may never be a useful alternative to the right and as the lead hand.
- Melodic development can extend the usage of a small idea or motif and make the rhythm more interesting. It also helps develop one's ability to lengthen the rhythmic phrase and still maintain the metric flow.



LESSON 4 EXERCISE SHEET : UNISON HANDS USING A LEAD HAND BROKEN
RHYTHM IN 4/4

Straight 8ths

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LESSON 5: NON-UNISON OR LINEAR HANDS IN 4/4

KEY POINTS

- Applying each hand to a different voice brings out the rhythm of each and expands the usage and creative nature of the rhythmic idea. It's up to the player to take advantage of the drumset sounds as the exercises are developed.
- Each hand also has the ability to change the phrasing of the rhythm by changing the note(s) that gets more emphasis.
- The listener is not necessarily interested in the techniques or stickings that are used in the presentation of an idea. Rather, they hear the results of the efforts of the player. It is important, then, for the player to have as much control of the technical and theoretical aspects of the elements of drumming in order to provide the listener with the best musical experience possible.
- Exercise variations include motion, which affects phrasing, tempo, dynamics and drum set voicing. Always take the time to explore voicing options with each exercise. This helps to develop one's creative approach.
- The beauty of linear playing is that each limb maintains its own rhythm. Voicing one or the other or both enhances the linear effect and gives the idea more tonal meaning.
- Feel free to create your own rhythms. After a while, you will begin to have the ability to apply a rhythm in countless ways on the drum set. The idea is not to memorize your ideas as they are created. Instead, think of your practicing as developing musical and rhythmic vocabulary that you will draw upon when you sit down and play some music.
- Learn to control an idea by it's sound. The sticking is not necessarily the important element to focus on. Listening to and controlling the rhythm of one hand in the linear style automatically creates the rhythm of the other.



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R.H. 4/4
L.H. 4/4

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LESSON 6: UNISON FOOT MOTION**KEY POINTS**

- There will be alternate methods of motion when it comes to the feet. Drummers tend to devote more attention in their practice to the hands, and most teachers focus on hands, not usually the feet. Consequently, for years drummers have been on their own regarding techniques for playing the foot instruments.
- Always maintain awareness of body balance by keeping the upper body straight and feeling the weight of the upper body in the seat. This allows the feet to lift up and not disturb the body's ability to remain balanced.
- Keep the upper body out of the equation as you play the foot exercises. Keep arms relaxed and to the side. Do not hold on to the drums.
- The motion that allows the beater to rebound off the head is the system that is the focus of these lessons. One may, however, use a different motion and even play into the head according to the dictates of the music. Your best sound, however, is when the beater bounces off the head.
It is also important to note that when this kind of motion is used, the foot finishes with the heel on the heel plate or floor with no tension in the leg.
- The so-called 'dead stroke' leaves the beater against the head upon impact. The player plays forward and into the head without a rebound. The bass drum set-up will need to accommodate this technique, otherwise the sound will not be satisfactory.
- A good place to start with regards to the beater throw is to set it at about a 45 degree angle. Setting it closer to the bass drum head reduces resistance and potential volume. Setting it further away from the bass drum head increases resistance and also potentially increases volume output. In this position, one may find that the beater actually hits the top of the foot, something you may want to avoid. Spring tension also affects resistance. The pedal should be set up to accommodate the foot.
- Preparing on time makes the note happen on time. If you struggle with improper timekeeping or bad timing, investigate the prep motion. You will discover that when that motion is corrected, your timekeeping and phrasing suddenly improves.
- For a louder note, simply 'load' the beater by letting it come further out or back from the head.



LESSON 6a: HI-HAT FOOT MOTION

KEY POINTS

- The Hi-Hat is a different instrument, yet one can use many of the same techniques as the bass drum.
- Strive to get a good chick sound by placing the foot at the sweet spot usually down from the top of the pedal board, similar to the placement of the foot on the bass drum pedal. Pressure needs to be applied to keep the cymbals closed as you play the note with a leg stroke in the heel up position.
- An alternate sound would have the leg down stroke to initiate the bass drum motion allowing the cymbal to splash according to the desired sound.
- Notice that in all the lessons, the left and right legs are working in the same way with the weight in the seat for optimum balance.
- The alternate method would be to keep the foot on the pedal board and rotate the ankle up and down, and keeping the heel on the heel plate (heel down technique).

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LESSON 7: UNISON FOOT MOTION

KEY POINTS

- Once the body learns how each limb functions independent of the others, the player does not have to think mechanically as much any more. The body is now responding to what it has learned about motion and independence of motion, called muscle memory.
- The method being advocated is the heel up position, simply because it works so well with today's requirements of the drummer to hit with power, to play a lot of notes and to play with some speed. The heel down position will never allow for the kind of upper end dynamic range that much of our music requires. Furthermore, the phrasing of the notes may affect the kind of motion that is being used.
- The ankle motion can be developed so that it provides the necessary volume and punch. Be patient as the technique is being developed as you practice. Another consideration regarding motion is the style of the music. For example, in a bossa nova or samba feel, many would advocate the heel down method because it allows for better phrasing. The ultimate choice is left to the player, whose responsibility it is to play with the most correct phrasing.
- As one listens to and compares the heel down and heel up methods, there is a difference in the attack. The heel up method adds extra attack to the note. This shows that tone and articulation are affected by the motion being used.
- Over time, the body becomes used to the foot motion that has been practiced, just as in the hand motions, and starts to require less mental attention. This is the goal of practicing.
- Avoiding bodily injury must be a priority in terms of motion used in playing. It makes perfect sense to stay relaxed and use the muscles in the body in the most efficient way.
- For fast creative quick notes, the leg stays up for the ankle rotation motion, then it goes down for the second note of the two consecutive notes in the phrase.



LESSON 7 EXERCISE SHEET : FOOT MOTION, COMBINING QUARTER NOTE AND 8TH-NOTES WITH THE BASS DRUM

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7 $\frac{4}{4}$

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9 $\frac{4}{4}$

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11 $\frac{4}{4}$

Note: Hi hat also plays beats 2 and 4 for all examples.

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LESSON 8: THE FEET IN ALTERNATE MOTION USING QUARTER AND 8TH-NOTE RHYTHM**KEY POINTS**

- As a reminder, the control of dynamics does not necessarily require a change in the motion being used. Rather, dynamics are achieved by how far from or close to the head the beater is, or how much the cymbals open up in the hi-hat.
- Any two or more consecutive notes played at a tempo where the leg motion cannot manage the tempo must use the ankle rotation motion. The other option is to use a heel down method. The choice is made between these two methods based on volume and phrasing, and which one seems to be able to be controlled better.
- When things aren't going quite right, look at each limb and see if you can correct the problem. Watching what you do can increase the amount of focus you give to that limb. Of course, if that doesn't work, stop and start again.
- In practice, one may want to compare the sound and tone of the heel down and heel up techniques. In this way, one can make the best choice when it comes to the music.
- Repetition is the key to success. Practice each exercise until you can play it several times in a row correctly.
- The leg motion will add more emphasis to the note than the heel down motion. This will be a consideration when choosing the motion to use.
- You want to be able to achieve the results of what the musical demands are with proper technique. This is, after all, what good technique is all about.



LESSON 8 EXERCISE SHEET : THE FEET IN ALTERNATE MOTION USING
QUARTER AND 8TH-NOTE RHYTHM

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|| 4/4

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|| 4/4

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|| 4/4

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|| 4/4

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|| 4/4

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The exercises are as follows:

- Staff 1: Quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note.
- Staff 2: Quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note.
- Staff 3: Quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note.
- Staff 4: Quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note.
- Staff 5: Quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note.
- Staff 6: Quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note.
- Staff 7: Quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note.
- Staff 8: Quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note.
- Staff 9: Quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note.
- Staff 10: Quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note, quarter note, eighth note.

LESSON 9: ONE HAND, ONE FOOT IN UNISON

KEY POINTS

- Target the instruments by noticing where you are striking the drum in order to achieve the desired sound.
- It is typically more challenging to play the exercises slower due to the increase in space between the notes. This space can affect one's timing and even the motion.
- The word 'polyrhythm' is defined as a rhythm that combines more than one line of rhythm. The prefix 'poly' means more than one. Usually, the relationship creates a ratio of 2:3 or 3:2. Multiples of this can include ratios of 3:4 and 4:3.
- There are at least four ways that the exercises in this lesson can be practiced:
 - a. Right hand / Right foot
 - b. Right hand / Left foot
 - c. Left hand / Right foot
 - d. Left hand / Left foot
- Practice enough until the limbs remember how they move in coordination with the others.



1 R/L R/L R/L R/L 2 ETC.

B. D./H.H.

3

5 6

7 8

9 10

11

4 Versions:

R.H./R.F.
L.H./R.F.
R.H./L.F.
L.H./L.F.

LESSON 11: ONE HAND, ONE FOOT IN ALTERNATE MOTION**KEY POINTS**

- The body needs to understand and develop the motor skills which allow the motions used in drumming to occur more naturally.
- Always remember that tempo plays a big part in the ability to coordinate the limbs. Also, the motion used for the faster tempos may require a change in the way the foot moves and plays the rhythm.
- The spacing between consecutive notes in one limb must remain consistent and even. Paying attention to motion is the key to improving rhythmic phrasing.
- In the exercises, use the left hand as both a melodic voice and a time function voice.

The faster tempo will more than likely use the ankle motion in conjunction with the leg motion for any two or more consecutive notes. The heel down method is another option.

- The hi hat is generally the last limb to be integrated into a 4-way playing method, due to the fact that in most instances, it is playing an unchanging timekeeping role.

Consider the following options when doing the exercises for this lesson:

- a. Increase the tempo.
- b. Change the phrasing of the limbs.
- c. Change the volume of the limbs.
- d. Change the foot motion from heel up to heel down.
- e. Change the sound of the notes of any limb. The hi hat can be employed using a splash motion.

Also, during the exercises, remember to practice them using all four versions:

- a. Right hand / Right foot
- b. Right hand / Left foot
- c. Left hand / Right foot
- d. Left hand / Left foot



LESSON 11 EXERCISE SHEET : ONE HAND, ONE FOOT IN ALTERNATE

MOTION (RIGHT HAND)

1 R/L R/L R/L R/L etc. 2

B.D./H.H.

3 4

5 6

7 8

9 10

11 12

13 14

15 16

All Versions:

R.H./R.F. L.H./R.F.

R.H./L.F. L.H./L.F.