

GENERAL TECHNIQUE/ GRIP

A relaxed, natural grip is essential for effective drumming. There are three main grips used in modern playing. Many players use the Matched Grip, Germanic style, in which you play with the sticks held the same way in both hands. Palms facing down. It is the most versatile of the all percussion stick/ mallet grips. This grip is described in detail below. There is another version of the matched grip called French Grip, which was developed mainly for playing fast and relaxed single stroke rolls on timpani. It is also used by many top drum set players such as Carter Beauford, Billy Cobham and Simon Phillips, and involves a slight rotation of the hand so that the thumbnail faces upward (the palms face toward each other). The French grip can be learned later. Since it builds on the principles of the Germanic grip. Also used for drum set is the Traditional Grip, in which the left hand cradles the stick in the style of marching band snare drummers. Players such as Buddy Rich, Tony Williams, Steve Gadd and Max Roach as well as many other great players use this grip.

Matched Grip (Germanic):

1. Hold the stick with the fulcrum (grip / balance point) between the flat part of your thumb and first joint of your index finger (Fig. 1). The Fulcrum: The Pivot point on a lever. (In our case the pivot point of our drumstick). Imagine there is a pin going through the center of the thumbnail and emerging through the first knuckle of the index finger. This is the basis of the Central Grip (see fig. 3 below).

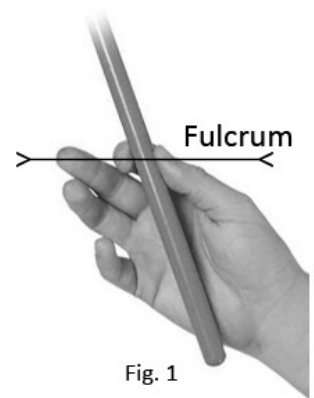


Fig. 2



2. Let the butt of the stick rest on the soft part of the palm at your hand below your pinky just above the wrist (Fig. 2). This part of the hand is referred to as the *shock absorber* since it acts as a pad to absorb the energy of the rebounding stick.

3. Wrap your other three fingers loosely around the stick and do not squeeze. Do not close the space between your thumb and index finger and keep only the first knuckle of the index finger on the stick. This is called the *Control Grip* (Fig. 3) and it is the starting point from which you will learn the techniques in these lessons.

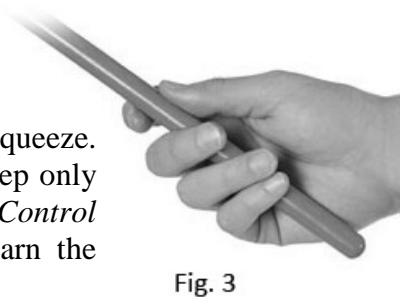


Fig. 3

Note that it is also possible to close the space between the thumb and fingers and drop the second knuckle of the index finger on to the stick. This is called the *Power Grip* (Fig. 4) and is used for harder playing (medium to loud) and same faster figures utilizing open double strokes. **Marching and rudimental players and corps often use the Power Grip.**



Fig. 4