

2022-2023



EMPYREAN
PERCUSSION

MARCHING CYMBAL
METHODS

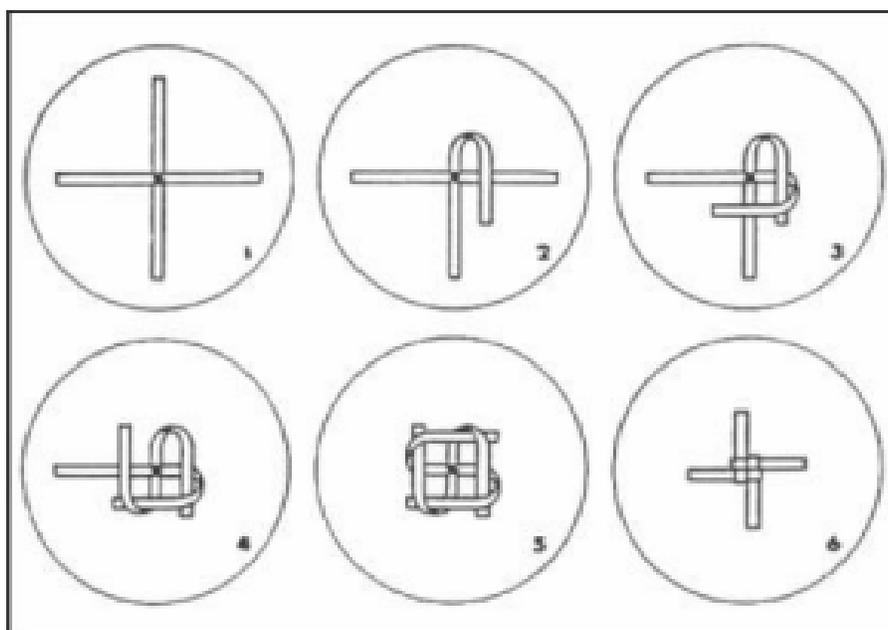
INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your interest in Empyrean Percussion!! We're excited to welcome you into our approach & tradition. We will use playing and movement techniques influenced by the modern East Coast/midwest approach and exercises inspired by the [Plateline Resource](#). Please use the information in this packet to fine-tune your habits to match our technique.

GETTING STARTED

Stretching: Always stretch your arms, [hands, and wrists](#) before practicing cymbals to prevent injury.

Straps and Pads: We will use straps made from flat nylon webbing. Once all four leads of the strap are inserted through the pad and then through the cymbal, refer to the diagram to the right on how to secure your plates.



THE 6 PILLARS OF CYMBAL PLAYING

1. **Positions:** Uniform positions across a line ensure that everyone looks the same and approaches playing the same way. Visually, positions also play an important role. Cymbal players use positions like dancers do—as checkpoints of stability and texture in the midst of choreography.
2. **Flash Points:** Cymbals are so visually interesting because of the light that reflects off of them. The “flash point” is the exact position and time within a movement that light hits the metal towards the audience. What makes cymbal lines look visually “clean” is when every person’s flash points happen at the same time and in the same position.
3. **Flips:** Flips are a way of using one’s wrists and fingers to create a standardized flash point when moving from one position to another.
4. **Music:** Years of history and experimentation have led to the modern East Coast approach to creating quality cymbal sounds in the most efficient and visually appealing way.
5. **Release & Reloads:** In the 2000s, East Coast cymbal players began to find ways to vary the possibilities of positions and movement by stylistically moving the hand out of the traditional Garfield grip and eventually out of the strap altogether.
6. **Performance:** With no harnesses, cymbal players have more freedom and potential for movement. Cymbal players should develop confidence and control over their bodies that can be seen in their posture, approach to marking time, and facial expressions. Each movement from head to toe should be an intentional performance choice.

PREPARING FOR AUDITIONS

- **Build arm strength.** This is usually the toughest obstacle for unconditioned cymbal players after the off-season. At auditions, we hold the cymbals all day and muscle failure will get in the way of executing the right technique. Hold cymbals at the correct positions for extended periods of time & complete exercises several times in a row without breaking.
- **Familiarize yourself with this packet,** note any technique differences from what you're used to, and practice them before arriving.
- **Build your own personal performance quality.** Practice while looking in the mirror and experiment with different ways of moving your face and head throughout the exercises to portray confidence.
- **Prepare a 32-count cymbal solo** to a song of your choice using visuals and sounds (if desired) to display your visual style, creativity and ability.
- **What to bring to auditions:** Sneakers, athletic clothes, cymbal sleeves, water, & cymbals/straps if you have them. We'll have a limited number of cymbals to provide at auditions, but we recommend auditioning on the cymbals you're already comfortable with if possible.
- **Introduce yourself:** We encourage all auditionees to sign up for registration and join our Facebook Interest Group. Those can be found here:
 - <https://www.empyreanpercussion.org/join.html>
 - <https://www.facebook.com/groups/820642388927375>

EXERCISES

- **Flip Exercises:**
 - [Ups \(up flip breakdown\)](#)
 - Practice always to the song “Things in Life” by Nameless Warning, feet in open second
 - [Downs \(down flip breakdown\)](#)
 - Practice always to the song “Death of a Bachelor” by Panic! At the Disco, feet in open second
 - [Outs \(sones flip breakdown\)](#)
 - Practice always to the song “Half of the Way” by Vulfpeck, feet in open second
 - [Flip Block 1](#)
 - Practice at 120 BPM or a song of your choice around that tempo, mark time during exercise
 - [Flip Block 2](#)
 - Practice at 120 BPM or a song of your choice around that tempo, mark time during exercise
 - [Flip Block 3](#)
 - Practice at 120 BPM or a song of your choice around that tempo, mark time during exercise

- **Sound Exercises (mark time during all):**
 - [Vertical Crash Choke Breakdown](#)
 - [Horizontal Crash Choke Breakdown](#)
 - [Vertical Crash Choke Breakdown \(with flips\)](#)
 - [Horizontal Crash Choke Breakdown \(with flips\)](#)
 - [4-2-4 Sound Exercise](#)