

The Truth About Hand Technique

By: Bruce Becker

The Ups & Downs

The single paradiddle is most common, but to better illustrate the downstroke and upstroke nature of its movement, let's start with a double paradiddle: R L R L R R L R L R L L

- 1) If we accompany that sticking with triplets as our rhythm of choice, the choreography will be easy to follow: downstroke on count 1, upstroke on count 2, downstroke on count 3, and upstroke on count 4. This will create an easy to follow dance to support the sticking.

Down Up Down Up Down Up Down Up

R L R L R R L R L R L L

- 2) The double paradiddle played with 8th notes in 3/4 time.

Down Up Down Up

R L R L R R L R L R L L

- 3) For this exercise, let's look at the movement of the single paradiddle, stressing the downstroke accent, still adhere to the upstroke but no accent.

Down Up Down Up Down Up Down Up

R L R R L R L L

- 4) We will examine a potential accent structure for the triple paradiddle. The first two accents are by getting a free stroke on the first accent and then stopping or catching the second accent, and upstroke on the third accent.

R L R L R R L R L L

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- 5) For exercises 5 and 6 we will look at the double paradiddle in triplets once again, but stress only the down accents on exercise 5, still following through with an upstroke on counts 2 and 4. With exercise 6 the accents will only be played on counts 2 and 4 to get comfortable with only the upstroke accents with a soft touch on the downs.

R L R L R R L R L R L L R L R L R R L R L R L L

6)

R L R L R R L R L R L L R L R L R R L R L R L L

- 7) In this exercise we're looking at the paradiddle-diddle. The right hand downstroke is followed by an up with the right hand double stroke or left hand lead left downstroke followed by left hand upstroke doubles. We'll analyze each hand individually with exercise 8.

Down Up Down Up Down Up Down Up

R L R R L L R L R R L L R L R R L L R L R R L L

L R L L R R L R L L R R L R L L R R L R L L R R

- 8) A focus of each hand individually: it is like playing the jazz ride cymbal pattern backwards. I will break up the upstroke to two syllables: uh-up. Once the flow has been established, add the opposite hand and fill in between the lead hand.

Down Uh - Up Down Uh - Up Down Uh - Up Down Uh - Up

R L R R L L R L R R L L R L R R L L R L R R L L

L L L L R R L L L L L L L L R R L L L L

- 9) In this exercise we can arrange to use the paradiddle-diddle over 16th notes and using two paradiddle-diddles and a single paradiddle alternate from first bar to second bar.

R L R R L L R L R R L L R L R R L L R L R R L L

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- 10) On the bounce stroke, allow the stick to bounce freely over the balance point and stop on the second accent. Watch the upstrokes and downstrokes carefully and make it swing like a tap dancer.

Down Up Bounce Stop Up Down Up Bounce Stop Up

R LRLRL R L L R L R L R L R R L RLRLR L R R L R L R L R L L

- 11) Remember while there will always be up and down strokes, the up in () should not pull an accent off the the drum! We want to control the touch and density of the strokes.

Down Up Down Up Down (Up) Down Up Down Up Down (Up)

R L R L R R L R L R L L RLRLRLRR L R L R L L R L R L R R LRLRLRL

- 12) Again, watch the touch on the upstrokes on count 4 of the second and fourth measures. Smooth upstroke and nice touch.

Down Up Down Up Down (Up) Down Up Down Up Down (Up)

R L R L R R L R L R L L RLRLRLRR L R L R L L R L R L R R LRLRLRL

- 13)

Down(Up)Down(Up)Down(Up) Down(Up)Down(Up) Down(Up)Down(Up)Down(Up) Down(Up)Down(Up)

RLRLLLRRLRLRLRR LLRLRLLLR L RL RR LRLRLRLRLRLRLRL RRLRLRLRL R L RL L