

# SUCCESSFUL DRUMMING

THE LIFESTYLE >> THE HABITUAL DRUMMER

BY JARED FALK

It's important, as a drummer, to make steady progress over time. It can often take years to build up the experience and skill required to be a great musician. With that in mind, each and every day is an opportunity to fast-track our progress. The easiest way to fast-track our long term results is to build successful daily habits.

Below are the five sections of The Habitual Drummer™.

## Section #1: Write Down Your Goals

Take a few moments to write down five different goals you would like to achieve as a drummer. Beside those goals, write down exactly what date you would like to achieve them by.

The nice thing about this exercise is that you can complete it anywhere - at the drums or away from the drums, wherever you feel most comfortable. Writing down your goals and timing will help turn the thoughts in your head into tangible goals, which will immediately make them more achievable. The first step in accomplishing a goal is to clearly define it.

## Section #2: Commit To Your Goals Socially

I've known countless drummers who try to hide their goals. I think the idea is that they'll one day emerge from their practice room being an amazing drummer. Unfortunately, this approach deprives them of the opportunity to benefit from powerful social encouragement and support.

In 2012 I posted a video on YouTube to publicly challenge myself to learn a crazy Virgil Donati drum lick. It was something I had wanted to play for a long time, but I just never had the energy or focus needed to master it. In the video, which received over 200,000 views, I explained what I wanted to accomplish and specified the exact date I would be uploading a video of me playing the pattern.

Once this video was public there was no turning back. I would've looked like a fool if I gave up, so I spent countless hours practicing, over several days, until I was able to play it. To this day I still have people asking me to demonstrate the pattern, because the social challenge is something that stuck with them. Committing to your goals socially turns a vague goal into a story that becomes more powerful than any one person's individual motivation.

It's not important for 200,000 people to see the video. It's only important that you commit to your most important goals in front of peers whom you have mutual respect. Give them the chance to participate in your journey and then start taking action to make things happen!

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## Section #3: Set Up A Realistic Practice Routine

Once you've set your goals and made a public commitment to them, it's time to establish a daily practice routine. This is the most important step for habitual drummers, because we can't make progress until we take the time to actually get behind the kit and work on new things.

Start by ranking your five goals - most difficult first. This will help you determine how to break up your practice time. Keep in mind, your goals need to correspond to the amount of practice time you have available in each day. If you only have ten minutes to spend at the kit, your timeline for accomplishing your goals should reflect this. You need to set yourself up for success.

Here is an example of a practice routine for a drummer who has one hour available each day:

Goals	Details	Time
#1	<i>Learn to play the Virgil Donati paradiddle.</i>	<i>20 minutes</i>
#2	<i>Learn to play a new songo drum beat.</i>	<i>15 minutes</i>
#3	<i>Learn to play Funkity Funk Funk.</i>	<i>10 minutes</i>
#4	<i>Work on drum soloing using sixteenth notes.</i>	<i>10 minutes</i>
#5	<i>Increase my single paradiddle speed.</i>	<i>5 minutes</i>

Notice how the list starts with the most challenging goals, and the time is split up based on difficulty. Take a moment to list out your goals below using this approach. List the most difficult things first, and split up your available practice time using the same approach.

Goals	Details	Time

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## Section #4: Track Your Progress

It's important to keep track of your progress over time. This involves writing down what you worked on during each practice session, including any major accomplishments or breakthroughs. You can do this with a simple notebook, a computer document, or a basic journal.

The reason for this is simple: It's easy to think back on past progress and feel like we haven't learned anything new for a while. By documenting your results, you have the opportunity to look back and be reminded of just how far you've come.

This is most valuable when you feel like your drumming has become stagnant. It's also great for seeing where you spend most of your practice time - whether it's at the kit playing songs or at the practice pad working on technique. The more aware you are of what you've been working on and the results it has caused, the more motivated you'll be to keep practicing.

## Section #5: Always End Positively

In section three we outlined a practice routine based on starting with the most difficult goals. This also means you'll end each practice session by spending time on your easier goals, giving you an opportunity to finish on a positive note.

If you end a practice session frustrated with a particularly difficult pattern, then you won't be as excited to return to the kit in the future. It's far better to end a practice session with a positive accomplishment: it leaves you excited to return for more!

## Final Thoughts

In closing, I want to emphasize the importance of developing positive habits - especially when we start out playing the drums. Don't worry what your schedule will be like weeks, months, or even years from now. We can only control the present, and that's why it's so important to focus on making every day count. Daily habits can have such an incredible impact over time!

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GOAL	
Learn to play the Virgil Donati paradiddle.	
Start Date: <u>Sept. 26</u>	
Time/Practice: <u>20 minutes</u>	
Date	Achievement
Sept. 26	Worked on figuring out the exact sticking that Virgil plays.
Sept. 27	Played the pattern slowly on the practice pad... no click yet. :)
Sept. 29	Back on the practice pad, and worked with a slow 60bpm click.
Sept. 31	Took the paradiddle to the kit but stayed on snare and hi-hat.
Oct. 1	Same thing, on the kit but only snare and hi-hat.
Oct. 2	Still mostly on the snare with lots of starts and stops.
Oct. 4	Went back to the practice pad and added faster click.
Oct. 5	Played each side perfectly for about 3 minutes on the snare.
Oct. 6	Moving it around the kit a little.
Oct. 7	Played each side perfectly for about 10 minutes.
Oct. 9	Played perfectly while moving around the kit for 5 minutes.
Oct. 10	Played perfectly while moving around the kit at 100bpm for 10 mins.
Oct. 11	This goal is completed.
<b>COMPLETED</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

