

george lawrence stone stick control

George Lawrence Stone Stick Control: Mastering the Drummer's Bible

Introduction to George Lawrence Stone Stick Control

For drummers seeking to elevate their technique, the name George Lawrence Stone and his seminal work, "Stick Control," are synonymous with foundational excellence. Often hailed as the "drummer's bible," this book has been an indispensable resource for generations of percussionists, from beginners to seasoned professionals. The efficacy of "Stick Control" lies in its systematic approach to developing fundamental drumming skills, focusing on rudimental proficiency and precise execution. This comprehensive guide delves deep into the techniques, exercises, and philosophy behind Stone's revolutionary method. We will explore how "Stick Control" addresses essential concepts like hand technique, grip, limb independence, and rhythmic accuracy, all crucial for any aspiring or accomplished drummer. Understanding the principles outlined in "George Lawrence Stone Stick Control" is not just about practicing exercises; it's about cultivating a disciplined and intelligent approach to drumming mastery. This article aims to provide a thorough exploration of why this book remains the gold standard for stick control development and how drummers can best utilize its invaluable content.

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The Legacy of George Lawrence Stone and "Stick Control"

George Lawrence Stone was a visionary drummer and educator whose impact on modern drumming pedagogy is immeasurable. His dedication to refining fundamental drumming techniques led him to compile what would become one of the most influential drumming method books ever written. Published in 1935, "Stick Control for the Snare Drummer" (though its applications extend far beyond the snare) was revolutionary for its time. Stone's meticulous approach aimed to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application, providing drummers with a structured path to developing unparalleled stick control. His emphasis on precision, consistency, and building a solid technical foundation has cemented "Stick Control" as an essential text in drum education. The book's enduring popularity speaks volumes about its effectiveness and the timeless nature of the principles it espouses. Understanding the historical context and Stone's pedagogical philosophy is key to unlocking the full potential of his methods.

Who was George Lawrence Stone?

George Lawrence Stone (1886–1967) was an American drummer, educator, and author. He was a prominent figure in the early jazz and big band eras, known for his exceptional skill and innovative teaching. Stone was not only a performer but also deeply passionate about developing systematic approaches to drumming education. He believed that a strong foundation in rudimental drumming was the bedrock of all successful drumming. His extensive experience as a performer informed his writing, allowing him to translate complex technical concepts into accessible exercises for drummers of all levels.

The Genesis of "Stick Control"

The creation of "Stick Control" was born out of Stone's own experiences and observations of drumming instruction. He recognized a need for a standardized, progressive method that could address the common technical deficiencies he encountered. Unlike many earlier books that focused more on reading music or specific orchestrations, Stone's primary focus was on the physical mechanics of drumming and developing the hands' dexterity and control. He meticulously designed exercises that gradually increased in complexity, targeting specific muscle groups and coordination patterns. The book's structured progression ensures that drummers build skills logically, avoiding bad habits and fostering efficient movement.

Understanding the Core Principles of "Stick Control"

At its heart, "Stick Control" is built upon a few fundamental principles that underpin its effectiveness. These principles emphasize not just the execution of notes but the manner in which they are played. Mastery of these concepts is crucial for any drummer aiming to improve their fluency, speed, and dynamics. The book systematically guides the drummer through exercises

designed to cultivate muscle memory, precision, and an intuitive understanding of rhythm and stick placement. Adhering to these core principles is paramount for achieving the desired results from the practice regimen.

Developing Hand Independence and Control

One of the primary goals of "Stick Control" is to develop independent and controlled movement in each hand. The exercises are designed to isolate and strengthen the muscles responsible for stick motion, allowing for greater agility and accuracy. By practicing specific patterns and variations, drummers learn to execute strokes with equal force, timing, and clarity, regardless of the surrounding notes or the limb playing them. This focus on individual hand development is a cornerstone of Stone's approach.

The Importance of Precision and Consistency

Precision and consistency are non-negotiable elements in drumming, and "George Lawrence Stone Stick Control" drills these aspects relentlessly. Each exercise requires a high degree of accuracy in stroke placement, timing, and dynamics. The repetitive nature of many exercises serves to ingrain these precise movements, leading to a consistent and reliable output. Drummers are encouraged to focus on playing each note perfectly, rather than rushing through exercises. This commitment to precision builds a strong technical foundation that translates to all aspects of playing.

Fostering Rhythmic Accuracy and Subdivisions

While "Stick Control" is heavily focused on hand technique, it inherently develops rhythmic accuracy. Many exercises are structured around subdivisions of the beat, requiring the drummer to maintain precise timing across sixteenth notes, thirty-second notes, and various accented patterns. By internalizing these subdivisions through focused practice, drummers build a robust internal clock and an innate sense of rhythmic precision, which is vital for ensemble playing and soloing.

Key Exercises and Their Benefits in George Lawrence Stone Stick Control

"Stick Control" is renowned for its systematic progression of exercises, each designed to target specific aspects of drumming technique. These exercises are not merely random patterns; they are carefully crafted to build upon each other, leading to progressively greater control and dexterity. Understanding the purpose of each exercise type is key to maximizing their benefit and improving your drumming.

Single Stroke Rolls and Their Variations

The initial sections of "Stick Control" are dedicated to single strokes (R L R L). These exercises are fundamental for developing evenness between the hands, increasing speed, and improving

endurance. Variations include accented singles, where specific notes are emphasized, teaching dynamic control and phrase shaping. Practicing these consistently builds the essential foundation for all other drumming techniques.

Double Stroke Rolls: Building Speed and Control

Double strokes (RR LL) are another critical element addressed in "Stick Control." Developing clean, even doubles requires significant practice and attention to technique. Stone's exercises for doubles focus on achieving the bounce and rebound of the stick, allowing for effortless execution of rapid alternating doubles. This is essential for creating fluid fills and powerful rhythmic patterns.

Paradiddles and Their Applications

Paradiddles (RLRR LRLl) are among the most versatile rudiments, and "Stick Control" provides numerous variations. These exercises are invaluable for developing coordination, limb independence, and creating intricate rhythmic patterns. Practicing paradiddle exercises strengthens the hands, improves stick control, and opens up a vast array of creative drumming possibilities.

Combination Exercises for Dexterity

Later sections of the book introduce combination exercises, seamlessly blending singles, doubles, and paradiddles. These complex patterns challenge the drummer to maintain precision and fluidity while navigating intricate stickings. They are designed to build advanced dexterity, mental focus, and the ability to execute challenging rhythmic figures with ease.

Developing Proper Grip and Technique

The effectiveness of "George Lawrence Stone Stick Control" is intrinsically linked to how the exercises are executed. Proper grip and technique are not merely about holding the sticks; they are about employing efficient biomechanics to produce optimal sound and speed with minimal effort and injury risk. Stone's methods implicitly encourage sound physical practices.

Understanding Matched Grip vs. Traditional Grip

While "Stick Control" is often associated with matched grip (where both hands hold the stick in the same orientation), its principles can be adapted for traditional grip as well. Matched grip, with its symmetrical approach, is generally considered easier to develop for beginners and offers a high degree of efficiency. Traditional grip, with its asymmetrical hold, has its own unique advantages for certain styles and strokes. Regardless of preference, the core concepts of control, rebound, and stroke execution remain paramount.

The Role of the Fulcrum and Wrist Motion

A proper fulcrum – the point where the thumb and index finger grip the stick – is essential for allowing the stick to rebound naturally. Stone's exercises emphasize utilizing the wrist as the primary engine for most strokes, with the fingers providing control and finesse. This efficient use of the wrist conserves energy, allows for greater speed, and promotes a fluid, controlled stroke. Avoiding tension in the arms and shoulders is crucial for sustained practice and optimal performance.

Utilizing Rebound Effectively

Rebound is the natural bounce of the stick after striking the drumhead. "Stick Control" exercises are designed to encourage drummers to harness this rebound. By allowing the stick to bounce back up, drummers can play faster, with less effort, and with greater consistency. Learning to control the height and speed of the rebound is a key skill that Stone's book helps to cultivate through repetition and focus.

The Importance of Rudiments in Stick Control

Rudiments are the foundational building blocks of drumming technique, and "Stick Control" serves as a vital resource for their development. The book systematically presents and integrates key rudiments, transforming them from abstract concepts into practical, executable skills. Mastering these rudiments through Stone's exercises is essential for any serious drummer.

Single Strokes and Double Strokes as Core Rudiments

As mentioned, single strokes and double strokes are the most basic yet fundamental rudiments. Their consistent and even execution is the bedrock of all drumming. "Stick Control" dedicates significant attention to developing these, ensuring that drummers have a solid grasp of their execution across various speeds and dynamics. This forms the basis for more complex patterns.

Paradiddles for Coordination and Dexterity

The paradiddle, with its unique combination of single and double strokes, is crucial for developing coordination and hand dexterity. The RLRR LRLR pattern, and its inversions, are extensively explored in Stone's work. Regular practice of these exercises builds strength, improves rhythmic interpretation, and allows for the creation of more nuanced and complex musical phrases on the drum kit.

Flam and Drag Rudiments in "Stick Control"

While "Stick Control" is not explicitly a rudiment book in the same vein as the Official PAD.COM Rudiments list, its exercises inherently train the techniques required for flams (two strokes played

very close together, one slightly before the other) and drags (three quick grace notes before a main stroke). The accented and multi-note patterns in "Stick Control" develop the subtle control needed to execute these rudiments cleanly. These rudiments add texture, dynamics, and sophistication to a drummer's vocabulary.

Applying "Stick Control" Exercises to Different Drumming Styles

The beauty of "George Lawrence Stone Stick Control" lies in its universal applicability. While the exercises are presented without specific musical context, their fundamental nature makes them invaluable for drummers across all genres and styles. The techniques learned are transferable and adaptable, enhancing a drummer's ability in any musical setting.

Rock and Pop Drumming Applications

In rock and pop, strong, consistent backbeats, driving eighth-note patterns, and clear cymbal work are paramount. The single strokes and double strokes from "Stick Control" provide the speed, endurance, and precision needed for fast snare rolls, ghost notes, and intricate hi-hat patterns. Paradiddle exercises can be used to create more complex fills and syncopated rhythmic ideas.

Jazz and Swing Drumming Adaptations

Jazz drumming, with its emphasis on syncopation, improvisation, and dynamic nuance, benefits immensely from the control developed through "Stick Control." The ability to play smooth, even singles and doubles is essential for bebop ride cymbal patterns and intricate snare drum comping. Paradiddles can be adapted for syncopated bass drum patterns and snare drum rudimental solos. The overall precision fostered by the book enhances a drummer's ability to interact dynamically with other musicians.

Orchestral and Rudimental Drumming

For drummers focusing on orchestral music or competitive rudimental drumming, "Stick Control" is an absolute necessity. The book's exercises are directly derived from or lead to the mastery of standard rudiments required for these disciplines. The focus on clean strokes, consistent dynamics, and precision is paramount for executing snare drum solos and adhering to the detailed notation common in orchestral scores.

Marching Drumming and Drum Corps

Marching percussion and drum corps rely heavily on precise execution, speed, and endurance. The foundational exercises in "Stick Control," particularly those focusing on single strokes, doubles, and accented patterns, are directly applicable to the demanding techniques required in these fields. The emphasis on military rudiments and clear articulation is honed through diligent practice of Stone's

material.

Common Pitfalls and How to Overcome Them

While "Stick Control" is a powerful tool, many drummers encounter challenges during their practice. Recognizing these common pitfalls and employing strategies to overcome them is crucial for sustained progress and avoiding frustration. The journey of mastering "George Lawrence Stone Stick Control" requires patience and the right approach.

Practicing Too Fast, Too Soon

One of the most common mistakes is attempting exercises at a tempo beyond one's current capabilities. This often leads to sloppy execution and the reinforcement of bad habits. The solution is to always start slowly with a metronome, focusing on perfect execution. Gradually increase the tempo only when the exercise can be played cleanly and consistently at the current speed.

Developing Tension and Arm Strain

Many beginners, and even intermediate players, develop tension in their arms, wrists, or shoulders while practicing. This hinders speed, control, and can lead to injury. It is vital to consciously relax and focus on using the wrist and fingers efficiently. Regular breaks and stretching are also beneficial. If pain occurs, stop and reassess your technique.

Lack of Metronome Usage

The metronome is an indispensable tool for developing accurate timing and consistency. Neglecting its use means practicing without an objective measure of progress. Always use a metronome, even for the simplest exercises. Start at a comfortable tempo and gradually increase it. This ensures that your playing remains precise and solid.

Neglecting Dynamics and Accents

Some drummers focus solely on hitting the notes cleanly without paying attention to the intended dynamics or accents. "Stick Control" contains explicit accents that are crucial for developing musicality and phrasing. Practice exercises with varying dynamics (playing loud, soft, and gradually changing volume) to develop expressive control.

Advanced Practice Strategies for "Stick Control"

Once the fundamental exercises of "George Lawrence Stone Stick Control" are mastered, there are several advanced strategies to continue deriving maximum benefit from the book. These methods

help to deepen understanding, increase versatility, and keep the practice regimen engaging.

Applying Different Dynamics and Accents

Beyond the printed accents, experiment with placing accents on different notes within the patterns. Try playing an entire exercise at different dynamic levels – pianissimo, mezzo-forte, fortissimo. This builds control over a wider range of volume and expression.

Experimenting with Stickings and Limb Combinations

While the book provides specific stickings, try reinterpreting the patterns with different limb combinations. For example, take a single stroke exercise and see how you can incorporate the feet or play certain notes with the left hand while the right plays a different pattern. This is particularly useful for developing coordination for complex grooves and solos.

Incorporating the Full Drum Kit

Once the snare drum technique is solid, start applying the exercises to different drums and cymbals on the kit. Practice paradiddle patterns on the tom-toms, use single strokes on the hi-hats for intricate patterns, and apply double strokes to create snare or tom fills. This bridges the gap between fundamental technique and practical application.

Using "Stick Control" as a Foundation for Other Materials

Use the proficiency gained from "Stick Control" as a springboard for learning other rudimental books, solo transcriptions, or drum set method books. The solid foundation built will make learning more complex material significantly easier and more enjoyable.

The Enduring Relevance of George Lawrence Stone's Work

More than eight decades after its publication, "Stick Control" by George Lawrence Stone remains an essential resource for drummers worldwide. Its enduring relevance is a testament to the timeless nature of its core principles and the effectiveness of its progressive approach. The book's impact continues to shape how drummers learn and practice, ensuring its place as a cornerstone of drumming education for generations to come.

A Universal Language of Drumming

"Stick Control" provides a universal language of technique that transcends specific genres or eras. The exercises address the fundamental mechanics of striking a drum, making them applicable to any

drummer regardless of their musical interests. This fundamental approach ensures that the skills developed are transferable and broadly applicable.

Building a Complete Drummer

Stone's vision was not just about technical prowess but about developing a complete drummer - one who is precise, controlled, musical, and disciplined. "Stick Control" contributes to this by fostering not only physical dexterity but also mental focus, patience, and a deep understanding of rhythmic subdivisions. The commitment to practicing these exercises cultivates a discipline that extends to all aspects of a musician's life.

Inspiring Future Generations

The legacy of George Lawrence Stone lives on through every drummer who picks up "Stick Control" and engages with its challenges. By providing a clear, systematic path to technical mastery, the book continues to inspire countless musicians to pursue excellence in their craft. Its influence is evident in the teaching methods of many prominent drum instructors and in the technical capabilities of countless successful drummers.

Conclusion

In conclusion, "George Lawrence Stone Stick Control" is far more than just a book of exercises; it is a comprehensive roadmap to achieving fundamental drumming mastery. The systematic approach to developing hand independence, precision, speed, and rhythmic accuracy outlined within its pages has proven invaluable to drummers across all levels and genres for decades. By focusing on core rudiments and providing a structured practice regimen, Stone's work empowers drummers to build a solid technical foundation that is essential for musical expression and longevity. Embracing the principles and diligently working through the exercises of "Stick Control" is an investment in one's drumming future, ensuring a lifetime of improved technique, greater musicality, and a deeper understanding of the art of drumming.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is George Lawrence Stone's 'Stick Control' and why is it so influential?

'Stick Control' is a foundational drum method book by George Lawrence Stone, first published in 1935. Its enduring influence comes from its systematic approach to developing fundamental drumming techniques like hand strength, speed, endurance, accuracy, and rhythmic control through a comprehensive series of exercises.

What are the core principles behind the exercises in 'Stick Control'?

The core principles revolve around repetition and gradual progression. The book focuses on single strokes, double strokes, paradiddles, and rudiments, systematically increasing tempo, complexity, and endurance challenges while emphasizing proper technique and a relaxed grip.

Who benefits most from studying 'Stick Control'?

While it's a cornerstone for drummers of all levels, beginners benefit immensely from building a solid technical foundation. More advanced drummers use it for warming up, maintaining technique, and pushing their limits in terms of speed and control.

How should a drummer approach practicing 'Stick Control' exercises?

The recommended approach is to start slowly with a metronome, focusing on evenness, tone, and relaxed execution. Gradually increase the tempo as accuracy and control improve. Many drummers practice specific sections daily or work through the book systematically over time.

Are there common mistakes drummers make when practicing 'Stick Control'?

Yes, common mistakes include playing too fast too soon, neglecting the metronome, developing tension in the hands or arms, inconsistent stroke dynamics, and not focusing on the sound quality of each stroke.

Can 'Stick Control' be applied to different drumming styles?

Absolutely. While the exercises are fundamental, the techniques developed are transferable to virtually any drumming style, from rock and jazz to orchestral percussion and marching bands. It builds the core 'muscle memory' for all stick work.

What is the importance of the metronome when practicing 'Stick Control'?

The metronome is crucial for developing a strong internal clock, ensuring rhythmic accuracy, promoting evenness between strokes and limbs, and allowing for controlled and gradual tempo increases. It's an indispensable tool for progress.

How long does it typically take to see results from practicing 'Stick Control'?

Results vary based on practice frequency, dedication, and starting point. However, consistent practice, even just 15-30 minutes daily, can lead to noticeable improvements in speed, control, and endurance within a few weeks to months.

Are there any modern interpretations or extensions of 'Stick Control'?

Yes, many contemporary drum educators and players have created supplementary materials, books, and video lessons that expand upon the principles of 'Stick Control,' offering new applications and variations for different musical contexts.

What is the legacy of George Lawrence Stone and 'Stick Control' in the drumming world?

George Lawrence Stone is considered one of the most important figures in drum education. 'Stick Control' is arguably the most influential drum method book ever written, and its principles continue to be taught and revered by generations of drummers and educators worldwide.

Additional Resources

Here are 9 book titles related to George Lawrence Stone's stick control, with descriptions:

1. Stick Control: For the Drummer

This seminal work by George Lawrence Stone is the foundational text for drummers seeking to develop precise and fluid control over their stick technique. It presents a systematic approach to mastering rudiments and essential strokes, progressing from fundamental exercises to more complex patterns. The book is widely considered an indispensable tool for building speed, endurance, accuracy, and dynamic control.

2. Advanced Techniques for the Drummer

Continuing where *Stick Control* left off, this follow-up volume delves into more challenging and advanced drumming concepts. It focuses on refining techniques, exploring limb independence, and developing advanced coordination. Drummers will find a wealth of exercises designed to push their technical boundaries and elevate their overall musicianship.

3. The Autobiography of a Drummer

While not directly a technical manual, this book by George Lawrence Stone offers invaluable insight into his life and philosophy as a drummer and teacher. It provides context for his pedagogical methods and the development of his influential exercises. Readers gain a deeper understanding of the man behind the techniques and the dedication required for mastery.

4. Accents and Rebounds for the Drummer

This supplementary book to *Stick Control* specifically targets the crucial elements of accents and rebound control. It breaks down the nuances of striking the drumhead to produce clear and dynamic accents, as well as effectively utilizing the natural rebound of the stick. Mastering these concepts is essential for achieving a wide range of tonal colors and stylistic expression.

5. Groove and Rudimental Drumming

This title, though not explicitly by Stone, often draws heavily on the principles established in *Stick Control*. It bridges the gap between fundamental rudimental technique and practical application in various musical styles. The book emphasizes how to translate precise stick work into infectious grooves and compelling rhythmic figures.

6. The Drummer's Complete Exercise Book

Often compiled to include Stick Control and its companion volumes, this comprehensive resource offers an exhaustive collection of exercises for drummers. It provides a structured curriculum for developing a solid foundation in technique, endurance, and coordination. This book serves as a complete practice regimen for serious students of the drum set.

7. Mastering the Drum Set: A Comprehensive Guide

This type of book frequently incorporates the methodologies of George Lawrence Stone as a core component of its technical instruction. It covers a broad spectrum of drumming skills, including rudiments, hand technique, foot technique, and coordination. The aim is to equip drummers with the tools to excel in a variety of musical genres.

8. Rudimental Drumming: The Foundation of Percussion

Books with this title often highlight the importance of rudimental mastery, directly referencing the importance of works like Stick Control. They aim to demonstrate how a strong understanding and application of rudiments are fundamental to all forms of percussion playing. The emphasis is on building a solid technical base that supports all musical endeavors.

9. The Drummer's Guide to Technique and Artistry

This comprehensive guide would typically build upon the foundational techniques introduced by Stone, extending them into more artistic applications. It explores how mastering control allows for greater expressive nuance and creative freedom behind the drum set. The book encourages drummers to not only execute exercises flawlessly but to imbue their playing with personal style and musicality.

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