

HAND DRUMMING CRASH COURSE: PART FIVE



BY MARK POWERS

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Welcome to lesson five! If you've been following along with this series (and practicing!), by now you have the Heel/Toe technique rockin' and a few basic stroke combinations under your belt. What time is it? You got it . . . time to put 'em all together! Remember- take each rhythm slowly and count, count, count.

First, we'll combine our Heel and Toe with some Open tones. Play a right-handed Heel/Toe, a left-handed Heel/Toe, and then four alternated Open strokes.

Example #25

Musical notation for Example #25 in 4/4 time. The notation consists of a single staff with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The first two measures each contain a half note with a diamond-shaped head, representing a Heel/Toe stroke. The first measure is for the right hand (H above, R below) and the second for the left hand (H above, L below). The next four measures each contain two quarter notes, representing Open strokes. The first measure has notes on the first and second lines (O above, R below), the second on the second and third lines (O above, L below), the third on the third and fourth lines (O above, R below), and the fourth on the fourth line and space (O above, L below).

H	T	H	T	O	O	O	O
R	R	L	L	R	L	R	L
1	&	2	&	3	&	4	&

Now, let's add a Slap into the mix and create a very 'pop'-y sort of feel. This would fit perfectly behind a funky acoustic guitar groove during the 'open mic' over at the local coffee shop!

Example #26

H T H T S O O
R R L L R R L

H	T	H	T	S	—	O	O
R	R	L	L	R	—	R	L
1	&	2	&	3	&	4	&

Of course, no discussion about Heel/Toe would be complete without mentioning 'Tumbao,' arguably the most common conga rhythm in Latin music. Here the left hand- often referred to as 'la mano secreta' (the secret hand)- uses Heel and Toe strokes to keep the groove flowing in-between the right hand Slap and Opens.

Example #27

H T S T H T O O
L L R L L L R R

H	T	S	T	H	T	O	O
L	L	R	L	L	L	R	R
1	&	2	&	3	&	4	&

Let's check out 'Tumbao' in 6/8 time signature. This is almost identical to our 4/4 version . . . the only difference is that we are now removing one Heel and one Toe from the middle of the pattern.

Example #28

H T S T O O
L L R L R R

H	T	S	T	O	O
L	L	R	L	R	R
1	2	3	4	5	6

Practice playing each of these rhythms along with some of your favorite tunes. Be creative, see what other Heel/Toe ideas you can create on your own, and I'll catch you next time!

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