

# 7 DAY STARTER

## PRACTICE GUIDE

YOUR FIRST WEEK PLAYING DRUMS



MILWAUKEE MUSIC LESSONS

# WELCOME TO DRUMS

Learning drums doesn't start with fast fills or perfect timing – it starts with simple, steady steps. In the beginning, any victory is a good victory. Sitting at the kit. Holding the sticks comfortably. Playing your first clean groove. These small wins are what build the foundation for long-term success. Every drummer learns differently and at their own pace, and that's exactly the way it should be. Your only real job right now is to keep showing up. If you don't give up, you don't fail. Make practice a habit first, and we'll shape your skills one beat at a time.

## What You'll Find In This Guide

- A seven day task list designed to get you into the habit of playing
- Simple warm-up exercises
- Daily skill focus
- Tiny wins to celebrate
- Instrument-specific tasks
- Video demonstrations

## If You Need Help Buying An Instrument Or Accessories

You can view our special buying guide which we update on our website every year by clicking this link: [\*\*\[CLICK HERE\]\*\*](#)



# DAY 1 – JUST SHOW UP

**Goal** – Build the habit by touching the instrument and creating a practice space.

## **What to Do Today:**

1. Set up a practice spot.
2. Do 5 minutes of warm-ups.
3. Start developing some coordination
4. Celebrate the win.

## **Warmup Exercise – Coordination Building**

**Instructions:** Drums are a high-dexterity instrument, and everything starts with knowing your rights from your lefts. Before you can groove, you need to get comfortable with limb independence – that ability to let each hand do its own thing. We build that skill by practicing short, simple patterns that challenge your hands in different ways.

**Tip:** You don't need to play these fast. What matters is keeping a steady tempo (that's the music word for "speed") and avoiding uneven or rushed notes. Slow, steady, and consistent always wins at this stage.

## **Sample Patterns**

**RRL RRL**

**LLR LLR**

**RLR RLR**

**LRL LRL**

**RLR LLL**

**LRL RRR**

**RRL LLR**

**LLR RRL**

**RLL LRL**

**LRRL RLL**

# DAY 2 – BUILD THE ROUTINE

**Goal** – Choose a daily practice time and start a streak.

## What to Do Today:

1. Pick a consistent time to practice
2. Do 3 minutes of coordination exercises
4. Practice good counting habits

## Learning To Count

**Instructions:** As the drummer, your main job is to be the steady beat. That means you're always counting – all the time. In the beginning, the counting will feel simple, but as you grow and start learning more complex patterns, you'll rely on those counting skills even more.

Here's the basics you need to know right now: every song has something called a time signature. The most common one is 4/4, which simply means we count the music in groups of four. Each group is called a measure.

We also use different types of notes to decide how long the space is between each drum hit. In this example, you'll see a **whole note** (4 beats), a **half note** (2 beats), and a **quarter note** (1 beat). These note lengths help you organize your timing and stay locked into the groove.

Try playing with the attached demonstration to see if you can play in time with the song: [\[Click Here\]](#)



# DAY 3 – FOCUS BEATS LENGTH

**Goal** – Ten to twelve minutes of focused practice on a small section of song.

## **What to Do Today:**

1. Do 3 minutes of coordination exercises
2. Pick 1-2 measures and focus on playing them really well.

## **Why Focus Is Better**

Playing too much of a song at once can actually slow you down. Repetition is helpful, but short bursts on small sections will get you farther, faster, and with way less effort.

The goal here is simple: see how well you can play just 1-2 measures of a song. When you zoom in like this, your hands learn the movements faster, and later on the full song becomes easier because you already have one section locked in so solidly that it barely needs practice.

**Tip:** A great way to memorize a passage is to slowly cross out notes as you learn them. For example, if a section has eight notes, play all eight a few times. Then choose one note to memorize, cross it out on your music, and play the passage again. Keep crossing out notes one at a time until the entire section is memorized.

# DAY 4 – HEAR IT FIRST

**Goal** – Try to sing your song. Either out loud or in your head.

## What to Do Today:

1. Do 3 minutes of coordination exercises
2. Before practicing your song, you should know what it sounds like before you play it.

## Why This Is Important

This idea comes from something called ear training. High-level musicians can often hear what something sounds like before they even play it – including songs, licks, or patterns they come up with on the spot.

It works the same way we read. When you look at a sentence, you first hear the words in your head. Then you say them out loud. Music should work the same way.

But a lot of people skip that step because their instrument “does the talking” for them. They rely only on muscle memory and hope their hands will figure it out.

Just like phonics, ear training is a skill you have to spend time developing. If you avoid it, you’ll eventually hit a wall in your playing and either get stuck or have to go back later and rebuild your ear from the ground up.

## Snare Kick Exercise

**Instructions:** Practice this passage that alternates between the kick and snare. If you’re still just using snare, you can just use your feet instead of the kick drum.

Try playing with the attached demonstration: [\[Click Here\]](#)

drum.

# DAY 5 — THE PRACTICE PYRAMID

**Goal** – Build a balanced routine that is both fun and structured.

## **What to Do Today:**

1. Do 3 minutes of coordination exercises
2. Before refining your song some more, spend five minutes playing something you already enjoy or experiment and explore for fun!

## **Why This Is Important**

The goal of practice is to push your limits, but that doesn't mean it has to be painful or overwhelming.

One way to keep practice fun is to dedicate part of your session to something familiar – a comfort song, a favorite riff, or even some creative writing time.

Try structuring your session into three parts:

- **Warmups**
- **Work Time**
- **Play Time**

You can do them in any order you like, as long as you stay structured and don't let "play time" take over the whole session.

**Tip:** Creativity is a huge part of becoming a musician. Just like teachers ask students to "put it in your own words," improvisation does the same thing for music. It reveals what you truly know and helps your brain build stronger connections as you explore new ideas.

# DAY 6 — RECORD YOURSELF

**Goal** – Listen back to yourself in an unbiased way.

## **What to Do Today:**

1. Do 3 minutes of coordination exercises
2. Take out your phone or computer and record a 10–30 second segment of you playing.

## **Why Recording Yourself Is Important**

Just like many people don't like looking at pictures of themselves, a lot of musicians can't stand hearing themselves play. The version of ourselves we think we sound like rarely matches what the recording shows.

But that doesn't have to be a bad thing. Being able to look at yourself honestly is an important part of growing at anything.

For others, the opposite is true — they're overly critical and need to give themselves permission to say, "Hey, that sounded better than I expected."

Recording a short clip of your playing helps with both. It gives you a chance to evaluate yourself clearly while also reminding you not to take things too seriously.

**Tip:** When you're done reviewing your recording, don't delete it. Add a quick date or timestamp and save it. Weeks or months from now, you'll be able to look back and see real, undeniable progress.

# DAY 7 — CELEBRATE + STRETCH

**Goal** - Choose next week's goal + one dream goal.

## **What to Do Today:**

1. Do 3 minutes of coordination exercises
2. Play your cleanest section on your instrument and celebrate the win.
3. Set a goal for next week as well as a big 6-12 month goal.

## **Why Setting Long-Term Goals Are Important**

"Shoot for the stars and you'll land on the moon." Having a big long-term goal gives you focus and clarity on the days when practice feels tough. It's just like driving a car or riding a bike — you don't stare right in front of the tire. You look further down the road so you can move in a straighter, more stable line.

**Tip:** Don't be afraid to set a wild goal. We call this a BHAG — a Big Hairy Audacious Goal. Having a BHAG doesn't guarantee you'll hit it, but too many people set tiny goals just to avoid failing.

It's much better to fall a little short on a big, exciting goal than to set the bar low and hit something you knew you couldn't fail.

# BONUS SONGS AND EXERCISES

## Kick Snare Exercise #2

Listen to a demonstration of this exercise: [\[Click Here\]](#)

Musical notation for a drum exercise in 4/4 time. The notation is on a single staff with a drum clef. It consists of four measures. Above the staff, the notes are labeled: Snr, Snr, Kick, Kick, Snr, Kick, Snr, Kick, Snr, Snr, Kick, Kick, Snr, Snr, Snr, Kick. The notes are quarter notes. Measure 1: Snr (quarter), Snr (quarter), Kick (quarter), Kick (quarter). Measure 2: Snr (quarter), Kick (quarter), Snr (quarter), Kick (quarter). Measure 3: Snr (quarter), Snr (quarter), Kick (quarter), Kick (quarter). Measure 4: Snr (quarter), Snr (quarter), Snr (quarter), Kick (quarter). The exercise is marked with a 'drm.' on the left and a double bar line with repeat dots on the right.

## Drum Subdivision Exercise

Listen to a demonstration of this exercise: [\[Click Here\]](#)

Musical notation for a drum subdivision exercise in 4/4 time. The notation is on a single staff with a drum clef. It consists of four measures. Above the staff, the notes are labeled with numbers and '&' symbols: 1, 2, 3, 4, 2, 1 &, 2 &, 3 &, 4 &, 3, 1, 2, 3, 4, 4, 1 &, 2 &, 3 &, 4 &. The notes are quarter notes. Measure 1: 1 (quarter), 2 (quarter), 3 (quarter), 4 (quarter). Measure 2: 2 (quarter), 1 & (quarter), 2 & (quarter), 3 & (quarter), 4 & (quarter). Measure 3: 3 (quarter), 1 (quarter), 2 (quarter), 3 (quarter), 4 (quarter). Measure 4: 4 (quarter), 1 & (quarter), 2 & (quarter), 3 & (quarter), 4 & (quarter). The exercise is marked with a 'drm.' on the left and a double bar line with repeat dots on the right.