

# Cymbal Technique

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## General

- Always strive for a good tone.
- Play with intensity, but play musically.
- Visual projection and uniformity should always be a priority.
- Every technical transition is an opportunity for visual effect.

## Grip

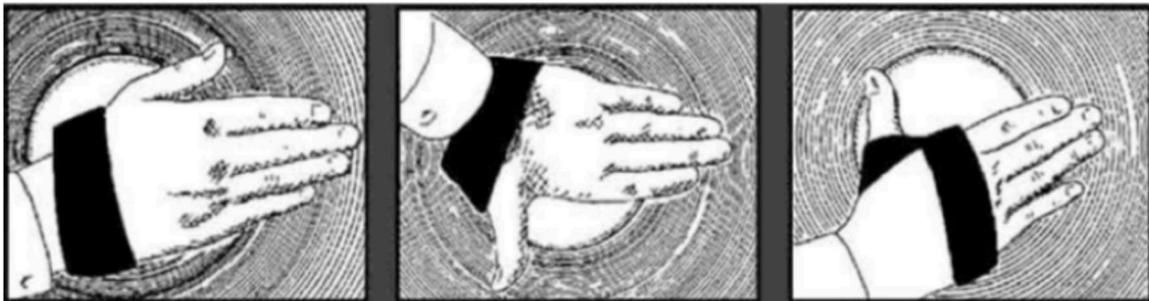
The MW cymbal line uses a modified “Garfield” Grip. With this grip, the weight of the cymbal is distributed over the entire surface of the palm, allowing for cymbal control and the reduction of hand tension.

**Step 1:** Hold the cymbal in a vertical position and put the entire hand through the strap to the wrist.

**Step 2:** Turn the hand so the palm is facing away from the pad of the cymbal.

**Step 3:** Rotate the entire hand downward and turn the palm toward the cymbal until it touches the pad. The strap should rest at the base of the thumb and index finger.

Note: The strap may have to be loosened if the grip is too tight. It is important to keep the fingertips off the surface of the cymbal in order to allow the instrument to vibrate freely.



## Positions

**Set Position** - At set position, the cymbals will rest next to your side, about an inch away from your body. Keep elbows slightly bent so as to facilitate rapid movement to the playing position.

**Horizontal Port** – Begin by holding both cymbals out in front of you, away from your body. The right cymbal hovers over the left, with 1” – 2” separating them. The center of the cymbals should be about mid-chest height with the edges lining up at an angle from the left shoulder to the right hip.



**Vertical Port** – Hold the cymbals out in front of your face, vertically. You should be looking directly in between the 1” – 2” gap of the cymbals. This position is used for traditional crashes and to facilitate movement to the “ding” and “zing” position.

**Others** – Other positions are often used for visual effect, and include:

*tabletop/ride* - hold both cymbals in front of body with palms facing down, creating an imaginary table. Used prior to “unloading” and when holding cymbals for snare players,

*rock ride* - hold both cymbals in front of body with palms facing directly in front of you . Used when holding cymbals for snare players.

*high rock ride* – start from the rock ride position and extend your arms above your head.

*iron cross* – hold cymbals to with outstretched arms to your right and left with palms facing down.

*zombie* – start from “iron cross” and move your arms inward so that the cymbals are in front of your body at shoulder height, palms down.

*inverted iron cross* – same as “iron cross”, but palms face up.

*chestplate* - bring your palms to your chest, interlocking the right cymbal edge underneath the left cymbal pad. Elbows should stick out. This is an alternative set position.

*faceplate* – start from “chestplate” and bring your elbows in to your side, pushing the locked cymbals up just below your eyes.

## **Transitions**

These movements are used to transition between positions in a visually uniform and appealing manner.

**Drag and Lock** – Any drag and lock movement begins with a “pop”, or sharp initiation of motion. Then slowly move the cymbals to position (usually 1 full count). At the end of the drag, “lock” into place with a sharp stop of motion. This is most commonly used when transitioning from set to HP or VP.

**Flips** – Flips are often used specifically for visual effect. However, they can also be used to transition between positions. A flip-up begins by throwing the cymbals down and back while using arms and shoulders to flip the cymbals quickly around and into position (usually HP or VP). A flip-down begins by letting the cymbal back (thumbs away from body) and using arms and should to flip the cymbals quickly around and into position (usually set).

## **Rudiments**

**Vertical (Traditional/Orchestral) Crash** – This crash begins at vertical port. The cymbals move slightly away from each other. The bottom edges move first (“A” position), followed by the top edges (“V” position). This is known as the prep motion. As the cymbals move toward each other, the bottom edge should strike slightly before the top edge in a flam-like effect. If the flam is too open, it will cause almost two distinct crashes. If it is too closed, it will case the crash to pop. Following the crash, the cymbals move outward from each other and make the same motion as the prep (“A” then “V”), resting at VP.

**Horizontal Crash** – This crash begins at horizontal port. The cymbals move similarly to the vertical crash, but at an angle in front of the body.

**Forward Crash** – This crash begins at horizontal port. To prep, bring the right cymbal back to your shoulder while your left cymbal angles in slightly. The right cymbal edge should be pointed at a spot 2 inches in from the front edge of the left cymbal. After the prep, bring the cymbals together, making contact with the right cymbal edge at the spot it was pointing. Be sure to always make contact with the front edge first, followed by the back edge. Lastly, push the right cymbal forward, extending the arm fully. At a later count, return back to HP.



**Choke** – To play a choke, execute either a traditional or forward crash. Immediately following the crash, bring the cymbals into your armpits, and push in with your fingers to press the back edge of the cymbal against your forearm. This should pin the cymbal between your side and arm, effectively muffling the sound.

**Hi-Hat** – Begin at HP. Flatten the cymbals parallel to the ground. The effect is created by bracing one cymbal in a stationary position and playing the second cymbal against it in a “hinged” motion. The sound that is desired is a short, accented popping sound, similar to the hi-hat on a drum set. The two cymbals are aligned exactly, producing the choked sound by trapping air between them.



**Fusion/Slide** – Starting from hi-hat, or forward crash, slide the right cymbal on top of the left, where the outer edge hits ½ way between the bell and edge of the left cymbal, allowing them both to continue vibrating after impact. After the right cymbal slides on the left, it is brought back straight toward the body. Catching the air pocket inside of the cymbals stops the sound. The cymbals maintain contact at all times. The desired sound is a “sizzle then choke” effect.

**Tap** – Begin at vertical port. Tilt the right cymbal at a 90-degree angle to the edge of the left cymbal forming a “T”. By bending the right wrist the right cymbal should “tap” the left cymbal. These are generally soft in volume.

**Zing** – Begin at vertical port. Tilt the left cymbal at a 90-degree angle to the edge of the left cymbal forming a “T”. To produce a zing, scrape the edge of the right cymbal along the inside of the left cymbal from the bell to the edge.

### **Holding for Snares**

Often times, the cymbal players will hold for the snares. Different songs require either a closed hi-hat effect or ride cymbal pattern. All of the different sounds will most likely be used to emulate the sounds of a drum set. For hi-hat effects, hold the cymbals horizontally, with the right hand over the left. Hold the cymbals slightly offset, to allow for more of a sizzle sound. When holding for ride, the cymbals can be held either over or under hand. Always hold the cymbals in a position as to allow the snare drummers to reach them easily without bending or stretching.