

10 Bad Drumming Habits and How to Fix Them

When we are learning a new skill or hobby, we don't intentionally set out to take short cuts or develop bad habits. They are simply, and quite innocently, a byproduct of not knowing any better. The slippery slope begins when those habits become ingrained into your day to day drumming, becoming difficult and time consuming to correct, and ultimately limiting your development as a musician. To help you set out in the right direction, we have compiled a list of 10 bad drumming habits, and some tips on how to address them early on. If these bad habits apply to you, fixing them will lead to better progression, and way more fun!

Some of these habits may apply to you, even if you are a more experienced player.

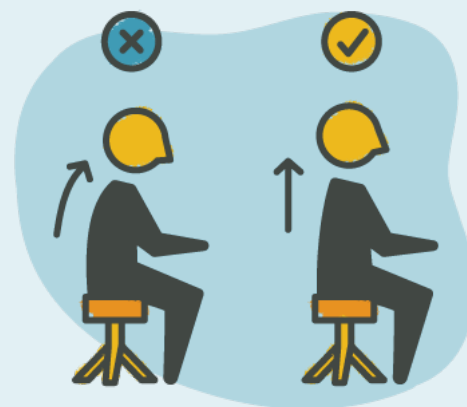
1 Bad grip.

How we hold the sticks is essential to drum set control. While it is certainly true that how you hold your sticks is a fairly subjective matter, there are some basic guiding principles that you can follow to make sure that you are on the right track. Many beginner drummers hold their sticks too tight, too loose, or develop other bad habits that can ultimately lead to frustration, and even discomfort. Check out [this video](#) on good grip fundamentals.



2 Bad posture.

Having good posture behind the drum set will not only help build better control, but it will also help keep your lower back and neck in good shape. Our hands and feet are more responsive when we sit up straight on our lumbar spine. Slouching can make your drumming sloppy, and can also cause discomfort. Drumming should not be painful. Check out [this article](#) for more information, and [this video](#) for advice on developing good posture.



3 Speeding up or slowing down.

Time keeping is our Number 1 priority! Be careful not to commit the cardinal sins of drumming: speeding up (rushing), or slowing down (dragging) while playing a groove. There are lots of ways to improve your time keeping, from practicing with a metronome, to counting out loud when learning drum beats and fills. Just being aware of the importance of time keeping can help you focus on it. [This article](#) will help you with ideas and tips.



4 Striving for speed too soon.

There's nothing wrong with wanting to develop speed and play fast grooves — it's a lot of fun! It is very important, however, to understand that *speed is nothing but a byproduct of control*, and depends on working on several key fundamentals. If you don't follow these fundamentals, you can end up with untidy grooves, rushed fills, tired arms and a lot of frustration. [This article](#) gives you essential information on developing speed.

5 Breaking drum sticks.

With good drum sticks costing around \$15 a pair, there are some good economic reasons for not breaking them regularly! The majority of breakages occur from holding the stick too tight, hitting too hard, or not striking drums and cymbals at the correct angle. If you are regularly breaking sticks, you should definitely examine your technique. [This video](#) will help.



6 Overplaying.

After you have spent a lot of time learning drum beats and fills, it is natural that you want to practice them in a musical situation. This can include playing along to music at home, or playing in a band with friends or at school. Beware of overplaying. Ask yourself if the groove you are playing is appropriate to the music. Give the music space to breathe by not cramming it with notes. Be tasteful with drum fills, and don't fall into the trap of playing for yourself, and not the song. You'll hear this a lot in music: *less is more*. Listening to music can help you understand this.

7 Not paying attention to dynamics.

When we refer to [dynamics](#), we are effectively talking about how hard or soft we play our notes. This is a key area of musicality on the drum set. There are various strokes that we can play to help us achieve this, but just being aware of the overall dynamics of a song is a prerequisite. If the song is a subtle and relaxed ballad, we don't need to be hitting like we are playing for row Z at the Olympic Stadium.

8 Not counting.

If you have watched the first few [free videos](#) on Drum Ambition, you will notice a recurring message. Counting is essential to developing rhythm, time keeping, and making beats easier to understand and play in the early days. Counting out loud is highly recommended, and the students that do this are always the ones that develop faster, and have a better grasp on the fundamentals of drumming.



9 Ignoring the fundamentals.

And talking of which, paying attention to the fundamentals of drumming will set you up for success. Understanding basic grip and bass drum technique, developing good posture, learning to [read music](#), understanding [sticking](#), developing good time keeping, learning to count music, practicing with a metronome, learning the [rudiments](#) and dynamic strokes — these are all basic foundational aspects of drumming that are learned and applied over time. All of these key areas are covered in depth on [Drum Ambition](#).



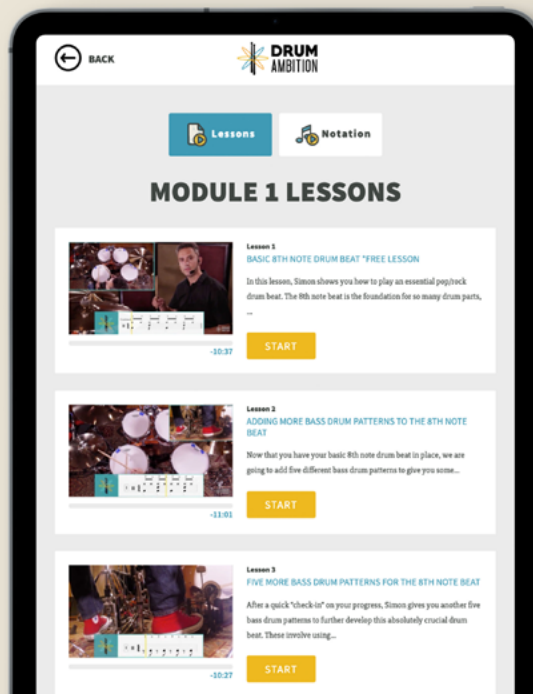
10 Not striking drums and cymbals musically and safely.

Remember to hold the drum sticks in a relaxed (but under control) grip. This takes the pressure off the drum heads and cymbals when you hit them, allowing them to sing, and prolonging their life. If you are pitting (denting) your drum heads or cracking cymbals, this is a sign that you should be examining your technique. Remember to hit your crash cymbals with a “glancing” motion, as demonstrated in Drum Ambition [Lesson 4](#) (2:25). Allow the drum sticks to rebound off the drum heads, and don't bury the tips of the sticks in the drum heads.

Continue Your Drumming Adventure.

Drum Ambition has over 40 videos dedicated to the beginner drummer. We focus on the essential fundamentals, beats and drum fills that will give you the perfect introduction to your drumming adventure. Our [curriculum](#) is structured, goal orientated, and a lot of fun.

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The Ultimate Survival Guide for Beginner Drummers.

10 Bad Drumming Habits and How to Fix Them is one of over 40 Chapters featured in our book *The Ultimate Survival Guide for Beginner Drummers*, written by Drum Ambition Founder and Presenter, [Simon DasGupta](#).

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