

PURCHASING DRUM AND PERCUSSION EQUIPMENT.

WHAT DRUMSTICKS SHOULD I BUY?

Drumsticks come in different types and quality levels. Good quality drumsticks are usually made of a hardwood like hickory and are straight, well balanced equal in size and weight with both drum sticks looking the same. Cheap drumsticks are often made from cheaper woods like pine and often have quality control issues resulting in them breaking more often.

For beginners I personally recommend using a 7A (small) or 5A (Medium) size drumsticks with a nylon / plastic tip. Try to buy something from a professional manufacturer such as Vic Firth, Vater, Pro Mark or Regal tip. You may also encounter Zildjian drumsticks, although Zildjian are a cymbal company they also produce good quality drumsticks.

Drumsticks retail between \$15 - \$40 depending on the quality and design.



SHOULD I BUY A DRUM PAD, AND WHAT ARE THEY FOR?

A drum pad is essentially a snare drum simulator. They are a rubber or wooden playing surface that drummers can practice snare drum rhythms on. These are very useful if you are learning to play snare drum in a school or community concert band or your teacher uses snare drum rhythms to help with your drum set studies.

However, drum pads are not as useful for practicing rock, pop and jazz drum set rhythms that use hi hat and bass drum pedals etc.

Drum pads range in price from about \$20 - \$80



PERCUSSION PACKS.

Percussion packs contain a drum pad, a stand, a glockenspiel and some sticks and mallets as well as a travel case with wheels for easy transport.

These are a great starter package for if the student needs to learn both keyboard percussion (Glockenspiel / Xylophone) and snare drum as part of their school band program.

Some of these (like the one shown here) can also come with an actual snare drum as well.

These packages can be a little harder to source and are often only stocked by dedicated percussion stores. However they can usually be ordered in if requested.

Drum and percussion companies like Pearl, Yamaha, Mapex, Ludwig and Majestic all make these packages at this time.

They retail for around \$500 - \$700



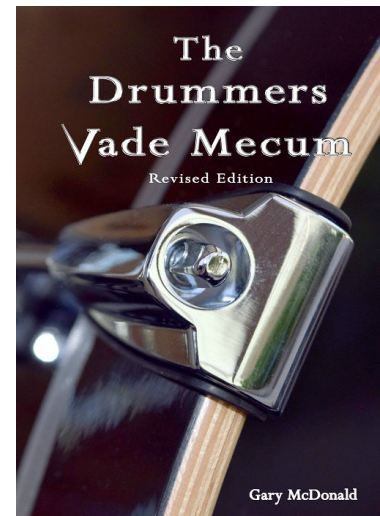
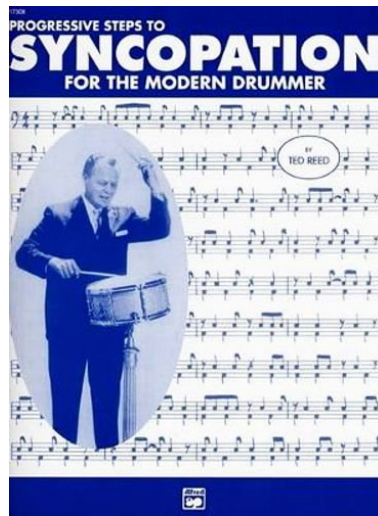
BOOKS.

There are a variety of different drum books on the market and depending on what the teacher they may use one or more of these types of books.

RHYTHMS AND EXERCISE BOOKS

These books are a collection of rhythms and exercises that students study in order to gain technique, coordination and rhythmic control. These books also help students with their ability to read music.

Although these books can seem like a very technical, non-musical approach to learning an instrument they are a very powerful way to develop playing techniques and reading abilities.

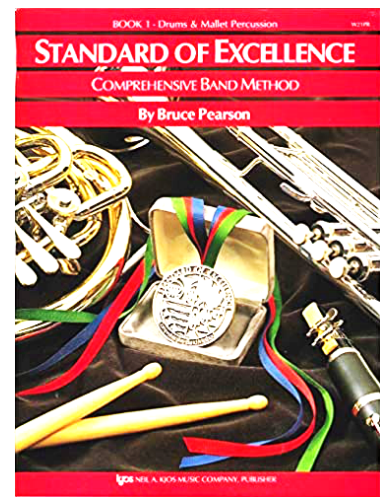
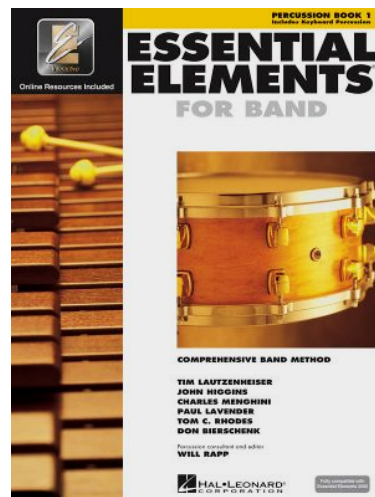


BAND METHOD BOOKS.

Band method books are most often used in schools that run orchestra / concert bands. These books are specifically designed for getting groups of students playing together. Each band member is given a book for their specific instrument and the music written in it corresponds to the music written in the other band members instrument books.

These books are typically used for beginner to intermediate school bands only.

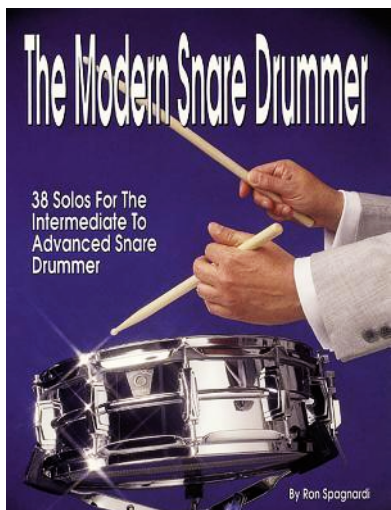
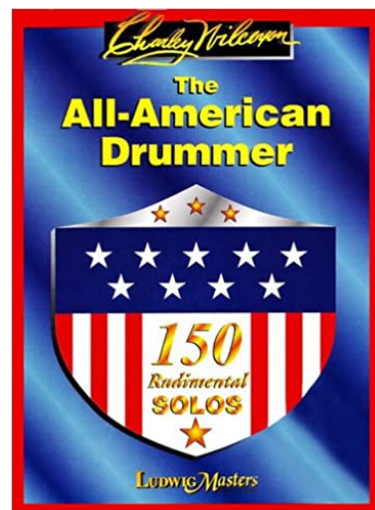
Some teachers also use these books as an alternative to exercise and rhythm books explained above.



ETUDE / SOLO MATERIAL BOOKS.

Etude and solo material books are very similar to exercise and rhythm books but differ in one major way. The material is typically much longer, more complicated and much more demanding.

Material from these types of books are often used for auditions, music competitions and music exams.



PLAY ALONG BOOKS.

Play along books are a collection of songs compiled into book format so as students can learn to play them. Each book is usually based on a particular artist, or a particular style of music.

These books have accompanying audio files that the student can play along with while using the written music provided in the book.

These books are great for developing the ability to read music, understand of song structure.

They are also very useful for doing music exams or those needing to do solo drum / percussion performances.



MUSIC GRADE / EXAMS BOOKS.

Another common type of book is the graded music exam book, these are typically used for music exams such as those available through the AMEB (Australian Music Examinations Board)

These books are specifically designed for the course / syllabus being studied.

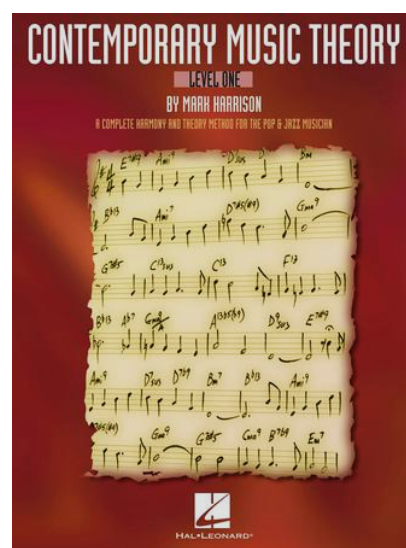
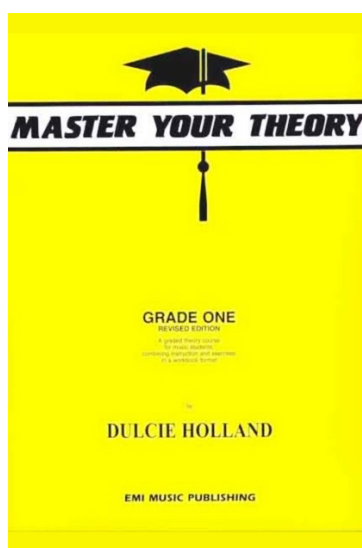
Most students will require more than just one book if doing these types of courses. It is common for these books to reference material in other books.



MUSIC THEORY BOOKS.

These books are designed to help students learn about music theory and understand how music is put together. You will often see these sorts of books being used in music schools, universities by those studying for music exams.

Most students find these type of books dull, boring and practically useless unless they are studying music at school or formally in some way.



OTHER TYPES OF BOOKS.

There are various other books on the market that are a combination of all the different book types listed above. Some are partly rhythms / exercise books, that also have etude / solo, or play along material in them. Examples of these are; *Alfreds drum method*, *Rhythm Section Drumming*, *The Drummers Enchiridion*.

OTHER EQUIPMENT.

MUSIC STANDS

A music stand is a very valuable item for any music student who wants to or is expected to read music.

Music stands come in a variety of styles and quality. Smaller, cheaper, collapsible music stands are really only designed to hold a few pages of music or a thin, light text book. They are really only useful to beginners, but are easily portable if the stand needs to be transported to lessons. Stronger, thicker collapsible music stands are available if larger books or heavier folders need to be used.

The best stands to use are the larger professional orchestral music stands. These are a bit harder to transport as they don't fold up as small but the durability is far greater and they don't collapse under the weight of heavier books.

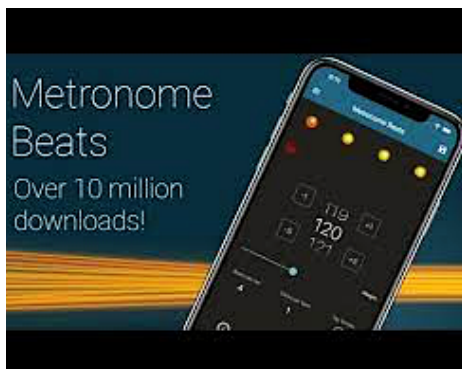
\$30 - \$100



Metronomes.

Although most students hate using them, metronomes are an important aspect of learning to play music. They provide a steady pulse to practice to and allow a music student to know if they are speeding up, slowing down or generally playing out of time. Regular practice with a metronome will help students refine their sense of timing.

There are two types of metronomes I recommend. Either a metronome app such as *Metronome beats* or *Pro metronome*, (*Speak beat is also a good for younger beginners*). These are often free from an app store and can be easily used from a mobile device. Or a dedicated digital metronome. I suggest getting one with a headphone jack.



Older traditional style metronomes are not really suitable for drumming as they are often not loud enough and it can be hard to find a flat surface to sit them on that is within easy access.

FREE - \$100

PURCHASING A DRUM SET.

Drum sets tend to come in 5 different levels. The best option is to buy a drum set made by a well know reputable company such as Pearl, Gretsch, Yamaha, Sonor, Ludwig, Premier, Mapex or PDP.

1. **Beginner / Junior drum sets.** These are small / miniature drum sets made for young children. They are more of a toy than a drum set and are not serious enough to be made by drum set companies. They can sometimes come with cartoon or movie motifs such as Disney or Hello Kitty. Teens and adults will usually break this type of drum set pretty quickly, assuming they can even sit at it to play it.



Beginner / Junior drum set.

2. **Beginner / Entry Level.** These are basic, full size drum sets often made by serious drum companies but at a cheap price point. The wood is often cheap ply wood and the metal components are thinner, less durable and can bend somewhat easily. The cymbals are not true cymbals and the entire set is for personal practice only. They tend to retail between \$500 to \$1000 depending on the quality.

Cheaper less durable non brand name drum kits: *DXP, Boston, Power Beat, Legend, Sonic Drive, Ashton.*

More trusted drum kits by professional drum companies at this level are: Pearl "Road show" Tama "Stage Star" Mapex "Prodigy" PDP "Centre Stage" series.



Beginner Entry Level Drum Sets.

- 3. Student / Semi Professional drum sets:** These are most often found in high school music departments and are the most common sort of drum set people will see in real life. They are designed for the serious teenage to adult student and are often used by drummers who play semi-professionally, and can be used professionally if treated well. The wood is better quality and the metal components are more durable. Spare parts are more readily available and they come in a larger variety of colours. This type of drum set is usually only made by drum set manufacturers such as Pearl, Mapex, Sonor, PDP, Tama etc.

These drum sets are often sold as a package with a seat, cymbals and a set of sticks. And range in price between about \$1200 to \$1800 for the full package depending on what it comes with. Pearl "Export", Yamaha "Stage Custom" Mapex "Armory" are all examples of this type of drum set.



- 4. Professional:** These are serious drum sets for serious players and are made of the best and strongest quality materials. Designed for the best sound possible. They are also designed with visual appeal with glitter or wood grain finishes. They are also the most varied in design with each drum kit type being used for a different musical setting. These range from very large set ups for rock and heavy metal bands to small set ups for small Jazz ensembles. They are often purchased as individual pieces. Price: \$2000 and up (for the drums only.)



- 5. Custom Shop:** These are designer drum sets usually bought by collectors and serious drummers with money to spend. They are designed and made specifically for the player. All the wood, metal, paints and finishes are custom made. These drum sets can often be seen at big stadium concerts and are often played by celebrity drummers such as Lars Ulrich (Metallica) Ringo Star (The Beatles) etc.

The price of these drum sets can be thousands of dollars per drum, making them extremely expensive.

TASKS	BEGINNER / JUNIOR SIZE	BEGINNER/ ENTRY LEVEL ADULT	STUDENT/ SEMI PROFESSIONAL	PROFESSIONAL	CUSTOM SHOP
Personal practice at home	Yes*	Yes	Yes	Not advised	No
Rehearsals at home	Yes*	Yes	Yes	Not advised	No
Rehearsals away from home	No	Not advised	yes	Not advised	No
Small performances (EG: A school assembly)	No	Not advised	yes	Not advised	No
Medium Performances (EG: Short performance at a small pub or club)	No	No	Yes	Yes	Not advised
Large Performances (A) (EG: Large club, Small festival or medium entertainment centre)	No	No	Not advised	Yes	Yes #
Large Performances (B) Large Entertainment centres, Big Festivals, Stadium shows	No	No	No	yes	Yes #
Light Touring	No	No	Not advised	Yes	Yes #
Heavy touring	No	No	Not advised +	Yes	Yes #

Yes* = Kit should not be played by adults as they may break parts.

Not advised + = Can be used, but be aware parts maybe stolen or lost on tour.

Yes # = These drums are expensive, should be protected, parts may not be able to be replaced easily.

Electronic Drum sets.

Electronic drum sets are common place and serve several purposes.

1. For quieter practice at home
2. A small compact set up if there isn't much space
3. Use in recording studios
4. To augment live set ups if electronic sounds are needed.

Electronic drum sets are often bought in an attempt to keep practice noise to a minimum, and they can do this. However, there are several downsides to learning on an electronic drum set.

1. The drum sizes are usually very different to an acoustic drum set, so the player feels very uncomfortable when playing a regular drum set. This often causes mistakes and frustration.
2. The student will not learn how to tune drums properly as electronic drums do not need to be tuned.
3. You are dependent on electricity to make them work.

Electronic drum sets are also less durable than acoustic drum sets with the electronic sensors in the pads eventually wearing out or breaking. Especially if they are hit hard for long periods of time. Which is quite common for beginners to do.