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## **12 Week Drum Lesson Plan – From Absolute Beginner to Playing with a Band**

The following schedule doesn't cover everything. Mastering an instrument is a lifelong endeavor. However, it provides instructor-led musical and drumming fundamentals necessary to get students playing with confidence in the shortest amount of time possible.

- It is highly recommended students practice daily for 20–30 minutes.

While students can't always practice daily and some weeks may be missed, it is necessary to dedicate time to stay on schedule. Students with prior music experience or a natural sense of rhythm may advance faster, while others may need more time. Just like with any project, falling too far behind will likely jeopardize progress.

### **Month 1 Schedule**

#### **Lesson 1**

Introductions & Drum Kit Overview

- Introductions & background
- Lesson overview and framework (timeline, expectations, etc.)
- Drum set overview – parts of the kit, how to set up
- How drums fit in with other instruments
- Proper sitting posture, stick grip, and striking technique
- Homework = Practice holding sticks and single stroke rolls (RLRL pattern)

#### **Lesson 2**

Intro to Rhythm & First Beat

- Lesson 1 Review
- Quarter and eighth note reading
- How to count time (1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &)
- First full drumbeat (BD on 1 and 3, SD on 2 and 4, HH on 8ths)
- Homework = Practice playing beat with a metronome at 60–70 bpm

#### **Lesson 3**

Hi-Hat Control & Fills

- Lesson 2 Review

- Closed hi-hat technique and foot coordination
- Intro to simple one-bar fills on snare and toms
- Alternating sticking (RLRL, RRLL, etc.)
- Homework = Practice fill exercises and transitions back to the beat

#### Lesson 4

##### Groove, Timing, and Simple Transitions

- Lesson 3 Review
- Consistent timekeeping and groove
- Start/stop technique
- Play through basic 4- or 8-bar loops
- Homework = Continue beat/fill transitions and count measures out loud

Month 1 (approximately 4 lessons). Working knowledge of the following:

- Parts of the drum kit and how they function
- Proper grip, seating, and technique
- Single strokes and quarter/eighth-note rhythms
- One to two basic beats and one-bar fills
- Play 4–8 bar drum patterns at 60–70 bpm with a metronome or slow track
- Stretch Goal: Perform with a slow song or jam track

#### Month 2 Schedule

#### Lesson 5

##### Combining Grooves and Fills

- Lesson 4 Review
- Play a beat with a fill transition
- Understand song sections (verse/chorus basics)
- Homework = Practice fill + groove + fill + groove loop

#### Lesson 6

##### Rhythmic Independence

- Lesson 5 Review
- Syncopated bass drum patterns
- Hi-hat variations (open/closed and accented playing)
- Introduction to basic dynamic control
- Homework = Practice independence exercises with metronome

#### Lesson 7

##### Song Structure and Playing with Tracks

- Lesson 6 Review
- Learn basic song form: intro, verse, chorus
- Count and play through 12- or 16-bar forms
- Jam with a backing track (slow rock, punk, blues, etc.)
- Homework = Play along with a chosen song

### Lesson 8

Developing Consistency and Control

- Lesson 7 Review
- Groove stability and tone consistency
- Fills with toms and crash cymbal use
- Homework = Groove + Fill exercises, and dynamic practice

Month 2 (approximately 8 lessons). Working knowledge of the following:

- One or more full drum beats with fills
- Playing to music or metronome for extended time
- Independence between hands and feet
- Understanding and performing a simple song form
- Stretch Goal: Perform a full beginner-level song with transitions

## Month 3 Schedule

### Lesson 9

More Grooves: Shuffle, Swing, and Variations

- Lesson 8 Review
- Shuffle rhythm and triplet feel
- Adjusting groove to song style (rock vs. blues vs. funk)
- Homework = Practice grooves in multiple feels

### Lesson 10

Expanded Fills and Transitions

- Lesson 9 Review
- Two-bar and syncopated fills
- Understanding fills as musical transitions
- Practice call-and-response style drum parts
- Homework = Create two unique fills and practice returning to the beat

### Lesson 11

Musicianship and Band Playing Concepts

- Lesson 10 Review

- Role of drummer in a band (timekeeper, dynamics, communication)
- Working with guitar/bass/keys
- Homework = Practice jamming with looped guitar or piano backing

## Lesson 12

### Performance and Improvisation

- Lesson 11 Review
- Song performance: chosen song with intro, groove, fills, ending
- Improvisation concepts (fill variations, groove changes)
- Assessment: 1-minute groove, 2 unique fills, play full song
- Homework = Continue building confidence through performance

Month 3 (approximately 12 lessons). Working knowledge of the following:

- Intermediate grooves with variations
- One to two songs performed from start to finish
- Dynamic playing and control over time feel
- How to play with other musicians and understand musical roles
- Ability to play grooves in straight and swing/shuffle time
- Stretch Goal: Create original beat and fill patterns to use in a live jam or group class