



AUBURN UNIVERSITY MARCHING BAND: PERCUSSION

Thank you for your interest in the 2025 Auburn University Drumline. The Auburn University Marching Band has a proud tradition of excellent performances and great school spirit, and we are excited for you to become a part of that tradition.

The AUMB is looking for exceptional players who are dedicated, responsible, and hard-working. During the audition process we will ask you to do things that may be new or different from the way you've learned them previously – we encourage you to be flexible and keep an open mind. You will find that there are many viable ways to approach your instrument. We simply ask that you do your best to learn our way so that we can be a unified team. Many people ask what is required to make the line – the answer is to have a great attitude, work hard, and hold yourself to a high individual standard.



During the first weekend, you will play individually, with the section you're auditioning for, and with the percussion section as a whole. We typically have more people audition than we have instruments for. For this reason, we ask that you choose a first choice and a second choice of instrument to audition on. If for some reason we are unable to offer you a spot on your preferred instrument, we still want you to be a part of the percussion section in a role that can utilize your strengths.

Included in this packet are audition exercises and music. We expect you to learn this music before coming to auditions; we will use it to teach technique, establish concepts, and introduce other fundamental ideas. Regardless of difficulty, you should always emphasize ***precision***. This means precise rhythms, precise heights, precise beating zones, correct pitches, and consistent tempo (practice with a metronome). We also want you to play with ideal sound quality at all times. Those auditioning for a section in the battery (snare, quads, bass, cymbals) must be prepared to mark time to all music.

We're thrilled that you're interested in joining the Auburn University Drumline and can't wait to meet you at the audition!

Sincerely,
The AUMB Percussion Staff



TECHNIQUE PROSE

REBOUND STROKE

Power and fluidity are the top priorities when executing a rebound stroke. This means calibrating the perfect balance between fluid preps, high-velocity strokes, and a rebound that works in equal partnership with the playing surface.

FLUID PREPS:

All initial preps – whether single or double-handed – should use a modified Moeller stroke. This simply means that the butt of the stick moves first. It's much more subtle than a traditional Moeller stroke – just enough initial wrist pout to add fluidity to the prep. We will inject more Moeller when playing up-strokes.

To be clear, we don't use Moeller for every note. We only use it when moving a stationary stick from the down position to the top of the stroke – i.e. strictly for initial preps and up-strokes.

This principle is isolated in the AU Rebounds exercise. Each time you are instructed to *lift* you should use a fluid, modified Moeller prep.

HIGH-VELOCITY STROKES:

Our brass section plays very loud. If we don't play with high-velocity strokes, we won't be heard. The balance is, you must still use fluid preps and play with rebound (there are cases where you will be asked to play *marcato*, to be defined later).

This velocity is created from a combination of back-finger support (or thumb for traditional grip) and wrist snap. While we don't initiate the stroke with the back fingers – we drive primarily the wrist – the fingers play an essential supporting role. They help propel the stick through space and create more acceleration toward the playing surface.

Wrist snap is central to our approach. Similar to the last-second snap used when throwing a baseball/shooting a basketball, it adds an extra level of rotational velocity that significantly increases the fullness of our ensemble sound. Our definition of wrist snap is as follows:

The break of wrist that occurs when the point-of-contact is below the hand.

This requires that the wrist be in a neutral/slightly pouted position when the stick makes contact with the playing surface. The wrist should not be pouted to the extent that stick hits the playing surface with a glancing trajectory – the adjustment is subtle. This does not apply to left-hand traditional grip, as the motion occurs in a different anatomical context (elbow pronation vs. wrist break).

Another reason we use this “neutral wrist” approach is to emphasize health for our students. Playing with the wrist in a perpetually engaged position can lead to overuse-related injuries such as tendonitis and carpal tunnel syndrome. Our approach keeps the wrist in a more natural, low-stress position while still allowing us to produce a full sound.

Note: many groups do not play this way. The most common approach is to have the wrist in a perpetually engaged/concave position, pulling the stick into the playing surface with back fingers. Our approach, grounded in physics and anatomy, allows us strike the desired balance between power and fluidity.

EQUAL PARTNERSHIP:

A truly efficient/ergonomic rebound stroke requires that we work in equal partnership with the rebound of the playing surface. For most instruments in our ensemble, that implies the following process:

1. Drive the stick into the head from the desired height à
2. Relinquish control of the stick and allow Newton's third law to act unhindered à
3. Control the rebound to stop the stick at the desired height (of the following note)

There are, of course, certain nuances to this process:

- Certain parts of the hand stay engaged during the rebound (such as the back fingers staying connected to the stick), but they simply accompany the motion driven by the playing surface. In other words, no part of your hand or arm should hinder Newton's third law (*every action has an equal and opposite reaction*).
- Some playing surfaces don't possess as much rebound as others (such as marimba or bottom bass). Even then you must still work in partnership with the playing surface – you just have to do a little more lift-oriented work to accommodate for the lesser rebound. The trick here is that your lift has to be precisely timed (not too late, and not too early). Failure to properly time your lift will result in a less-than-ideal tone and/or inefficiencies in your motion.

MARCATO PLAYING

Certain musical contexts make a rebound stroke impractical or unnecessary. In these contexts we will use a marcato stroke. These moments will be defined on a case-by-case basis.

A marcato stroke is initiated the same as a rebound stroke, but very briefly hinders the rebound after making contact with the playing surface. A lift is then initiated immediately following the contact. This is typically a stylistic choice, as it indisputably less efficient than a rebound stroke.

We often use a marcato style when playing the alternating stickings of *Motion* at slower tempos.

HEIGHT CHANGE

First let's lay out the details of our heights system:

Dynamic	Height
pp	1"
p	3"
mp	6"
mf	9"
f	12"
ff	15"

Slash dynamics (i.e. *f/**mp*) are used to communicate accent/tap relationships. The first dynamic indicates the accent height and the second indicates tap height. For example, *f/p* would indicate 12" accents and 3" taps.

We use a three-tiered height system here at Auburn. The slash dynamics communicate accent/tap heights, and tenutos are used to delineate a middle ground between the two. In this light, tenutos should be interpreted as 3" below the defined accent height.

Sometimes crescendos/decrescendos will be book-ended with specific dynamics. When encountering crescendos or decrescendos that don't specify a beginning or ending dynamic, it should be assumed that the heights gradually traverse from the tap height to the accent height (or vice versa).

DOWNSTROKES/CONTROLLED STROKES

Changing between these heights requires a combination of downstrokes and upstrokes. A downstroke is executed simply by suppressing the rebound of the stick. The back fingers, bottom of the palm, and the forearm work as a team to absorb the force created by Newton's third law (aka "rebound"). In other words, the goal of a downstroke is to intentionally hinder Newton's third law – as opposed to rebound strokes where the goal is to leave this law "unhindered".

While the back fingers apply to pressure to the stick during a downstroke, they should not go so far as to squeeze the stick. We view pressure and squeezing as related but distinct concepts along a spectrum. The back fingers should apply pressure, but not to the extent that the muscles and tendons in the hand/fingers become tense.

The lower-outside quadrant of the palm also plays a significant role in the downstroke, especially as a shock absorber. An efficient downstroke requires that this fleshy quadrant of the palm remain in contact with the stick at the end of the stroke.

Weight from the forearm is the third and crucial piece of the downstroke puzzle. Don't mistake this as a necessity for elbow movement – some downstrokes don't require any initiation from the elbow. This is more about making sure the forearm has leverage on the bead of the stick and transfers its weight through the top of the hand to suppress rebound.

You cannot play effective downstrokes if your hand doesn't have leverage on the bead of the stick. Like the “neutral wrist” concept outlined earlier, this requires that the resting position of the hand be higher in the vertical plane than the point of contact on the playing surface. This can be overdone, resulting in a severely steep stick angle and a glancing contact with the playing surface. Be sure you explore these extremes when practicing and find the point on the spectrum where you can play with both leverage and direct/maximum impact into the playing surface.

Snare drummers should keep in mind that the left thumb will often fill the role of the back fingers in the right hand. Be sure that the thumb is connected to the first knuckle of the index fingers so that the suppression force can properly transfer through the stick. Similarly, pressure can be applied by the pinky/ring finger combo, but not to the extent of squeezing.

While we typically use “downstrokes” in our day-to-day vocabulary, we sometimes refer to them as “controlled strokes.” This semantic change can be helpful for those who have trouble staying relaxed when playing downstrokes. When playing downstrokes, what you are essentially doing

is controlling the rebound. This includes a height change from 12" to 9" in the "downstroke" category. In other words, it uses the same procedures/anatomy outlined above, but to a lesser extent. We will use this vocabulary at times to draw comparisons between traditional 12-to-3 downstrokes and smaller height changes/gradual decrescendos.

UPSTROKES/MOELLER STROKE

Typical upstrokes have a simple execution – lift the stick to the desired height using the prescribed ratio of wrist and elbow. We will use this technique on a case-by-case basis, but our default upstroke uses a modified Moeller stroke. This simply means that the butt of the stick moves first.

It's much more subtle than a traditional Moeller stroke – just enough initial wrist pout to add fluidity to the upstroke. It's very important that we don't over-dramatize the motion. We will play traditional Moeller strokes on occasion, but this modified approach is extremely subtle. Here's a good litmus test – place your sticks in the rest position, then pout the wrist until the bead touches the playing surface. At this point the wrist pout/inversion process stops and you begin whipping/correcting back to a traditional position of bead-above-hand (*caveat: when doing this test make sure the fulcrum is stationary in the vertical plane*).

Here's another way to think about it: in the specific context of upstrokes starting at 3", the 'tap' will strike the playing surface as the wrist is rising. In fact, it is the pout of the wrist and the resulting inversion of the stick that causes the bead to – more or less – collide with the playing surface.

The end result should be gains in efficiency and fluidity. You can also add velocity to your stroke through the whipping motion and proceeding snap as your wrist crosses the neutral plane.

DOUBLE STROKES AND TRIPLE STROKES

Effective execution of double strokes requires that the performer possess complete control of the following variables both between and within all note pairings: stick height, velocity, beating zone(s), and rhythmic space. Successfully achieving these goals necessitates a careful and complex partnership between the elbow, wrist, fulcrum, back fingers, and the rebound of the playing surface. While these relationships can be viewed as a sequence, the relationship is not that simple. Regardless, an oversimplified sequence of motion is outlined below:

1. The elbow initiates the stroke from the prescribed stick height
2. The wrist supports this elbow motion at a predetermined, context-driven ratio
3. The stick strikes the playing surface
4. The bead of the stick rebounds according to Newton's third law, but pressure is applied at the fulcrum to keep it (the fulcrum) relatively stationary in the vertical plane
5. The back fingers flex open (but stay in contact with the stick) to allow the stick to rotate around the fulcrum
6. Once reaching the desired height of the second note, the back fingers act like a spring (in partnership with fulcrum pressure) to snap the stick back into the playing surface
7. The fingers stay closed in a feeling that resembles a downstroke
8. The energy from this 'downstroke' is transferred into an elbow-led rebound – the feeling is similar to pushing yourself off the ground with your hands
9. Stop the rebound at the desired height and repeat

Again, this is oversimplified, as it glosses over some important nuances.

ELBOW/WRIST RATIO

Double strokes are rarely (if ever) driven by 100% elbow. We use varying ratios of elbow to wrist depending on stick height and hand speed. They also vary depending on the rebound of the playing surface (i.e. quads

might use a different ratio on the spock vs. drum 4 for the same exact roll figure). Below are some general rules of thumb:

- Elbow is the primary driver, so it should never generate less than 50% of the stick height
- Slower hand speeds necessitate more wrist support and therefore a higher percentage of wrist
- Faster hand speeds typically weight the ratio towards the elbow
- Higher stick heights necessitate more wrist support and therefore a higher percentage of wrist
- Lower stick heights typically weight the ratio towards the elbow

It's important to remember that these variables are not mutually exclusive. For this reason, we don't use a fixed system of ratios. There would be so many interconnected options and it would be impossible to remember. Instead we take it case-by-case. Sometimes we just test out the roll with different ratios and decide in the moment what provides the greatest amount of control over stick height, velocity, beating zones, and rhythmic space.

FULCRUM PRESSURE

The amount of pressure applied by the fulcrum – thumb, index finger, *and* middle finger – is an integral variable in this system, but one that really complicates the equation. Typically, the smaller the space between bounces, the greater the fulcrum pressure. This again varies across various combinations of stick height and hand speed (*it's important to remember here that hand speed and the space between notes are closely related concepts but not exactly the same*).

Because our approach to these techniques is largely driven by the elbow and back fingers, fulcrum pressure can seem to fade into the background – especially when playing paradiddle figures, isolated double strokes, or loud/open rolls. Fulcrum pressure becomes much more important when playing faster roll speeds – so important in fact that the role of the back fingers becomes less essential.

DOWNSTROKE/ENERGY TRANSFER

It can be confusing and sometimes counterproductive to refer to the end of a double stroke as a downstroke. We use this vocabulary simply as a comparison to the *feeling* of a typical downstroke. Often, the space between double stroke pairs is very small, meaning you have very little time to prep for the next note and no luxury to waste time downstroking. That's why we often refer to the back fingers as a *spring* in this context. They have an elastic nature that wants to be in equilibrium (i.e. the resting position), but the act of repeatedly stretching and releasing the spring prevents it from truly coming to rest.

The most important thing to take away from this downstroke comparison is the transfer of energy into the lift. Instead of absorbing the shock of the impact like we would during a downstroke, we transfer that energy into the elbow as it quickly retracts and moves the stick back to the top of the stroke. It's not a rebound in the traditional sense, but the goal is the same – be as efficient as possible when preparing for the next note.

TRIPLE STROKES

Triple strokes use the exact same sequence and initiation of motion, but have to rely a lot more on the back fingers and the rebound of the playing surface to enhance the quality of the third note. In addition, executing all three notes with equal stick height and velocity requires sheer power from the back fingers – there's no way around it.

At Auburn, most triple strokes in our vocabulary call for a natural decay. This not only reduced the workload on the back fingers, but also inject a natural inflection to the phrase. In this case the sequence of motion is still the same, but it will a little bit like dribbling a basketball down to the floor. Using a natural decay often results in the undesirable side effect of collapsed rhythms. Therefore, it is imperative that the back fingers – though working in partnership with rebound – have full control of the stick height and rhythmic space.

GRIDS

Simple steps to successful gridding:

1. Mark time (or manifest the pulse in some way) at all times
2. Play with accents only w/ a met if you're having trouble keeping your feet in time
3. BE PRECISE – being approximate just so you can play fast or play a difficult rudiment is a complete waste of your valuable time
4. Challenge yourself – grids possess an arguably endless spectrum of difficulty, meaning that even the best drummers can find a grid/tempo that causes them to fail
5. Grids are beneficial for EVERYONE (*cymbals and front ensemble included*)

Here's a list of potential grids to start with – but this is only the beginning! Try something new if you've “mastered” the possibilities below.

- Flams on accents
- Flams on 1 (or any partial), move the accent
- Flam drags
- Cheeses
- Tap drags
- Tap fives
- Tap rolls
- Full rolls
- Diddles on 1 (or any partial), move the accent
- Paradiddles
- Flam paradiddles
- Book reports
- Buzz presses on dotted 8ths, move the accent (duple only)
- And many more

Instructions for Specific Exercises

TIME & FLOW:

Battery

- Play with full rebound
- Keep the feet in time and focus on rhythmic **precision**
- Play with **power and flow**
- Quads: perfect the rhythms on a single playing surface
- Basses: from A-B, practice the split variation w/ 1s, 2s, 3s, and 4s
 - B-end has no unison or split variations – as written *only*



Front Ensemble

- Prioritize rhythmic **precision** by playing on a practice pad with a metronome
- Play with full lift/rebound
- Play with **power and flow**
- Pay close attention to the dynamics

THREE HEIGHTS:

Battery

- Control the downstroke to keep taps low, use rebound for consecutive notes of the same height
- Tap sound should be full
- Use correct double stroke technique at low heights
- Read carefully over our heights system (*listed above*)

Front Ensemble

- For mallets this exercise is all about inside 2's
 - Anchor your grip in the middle finger
 - Hold no larger than a 4th when playing inside 2's
 - Keep the hands low
 - Use torque to create stick height
- Rhythm section should focus carefully on rhythmic **precision**
- Synths: start thinking ahead about your choice of sound

ROLLING INTERVALS:

Battery

- Play at a variety of tempos and heights (6" is default, but we play it all the way from 3" to 12")
- Maintain a high level of rhythm **precision** and diddle quality
- Double and triple check your execution of the metric modulations
- Challenge yourself with higher tempos to work on chops

Mallets

- This exercise is all about changing intervals – use the fulcrum/middle finger to manipulate the inside mallet as you toss between small and large intervals
- It's imperative that you change intervals as soon as possible after playing the previous note, but maintain **fluidity**. This is not a piston stroke exercise
- Rhythm section: rhythmic **precision** is difficult in this exercise and should be top priority

75764:

Battery

- Play the written dynamics – taps at 3" and accents at 12"
- Experiment with all of the suggested inserts, focusing on quality of flams, use of modified Moeller, and precision of rhythm
- Explore some inserts note listed on the page
- We will not mark time to this exercise

Front Ensemble

- Stay relaxed – the musical content is not easy, but the musical style calls for an effortless fluidity and gentle touch
- Marimbas, the crossover is not that difficult – don't overthink it
- Make sure you are using correct lateral technique outlines in the technique prose

BASICS:

- Focus on the ground-level fundamentals
- Apply the details outline in the technique prose
- Play in a mirror whenever possible to ensure you are following our technique guidelines
- Record yourself so you can hear any imperfections from an objective perspective
- Challenge yourself to rehearse any potential variations specified on the page

You may be expected to demonstrate:

Bass

- Memorization of the audition music and marking time while playing
- Rudiments – you will be asked to play them in the context of the exercises or separately. Be sure to work on the rudiments defined in exercise instructions.
- Sight-reading
- Marching fundamentals
- Learn the part of the drum you'd like to audition for. Drum #1 (smallest) is at the top of the staff, #2 is the note below that, etc. Large noteheads on the middle line are unisons.

Cymbals

- Memorization of the audition music and marking time while playing
- Sounds/plating techniques
- Sight-reading
- Marching fundamentals (including our Pregame jog)

Snare

- Memorization of the audition music and marking time while playing
- Rudiments – you will be asked to play them in the context of the exercises or separately. Be sure to work on the rudiments defined in exercise instructions.
- Sight-reading
- Marching fundamentals

Quads

- Memorization of the audition music and marking time while playing
- Rudiments – you will be asked to play them in the context of the exercises or separately. Be sure to work on the rudiments defined in the exercise instructions.
- We may come up with some arounds on the spot – be ready to learn quickly!
- Sight-reading
- Marching fundamentals

Mallets

- Memorization of the audition music
- All twelve major and minor scales
- Sight-reading
- Proficiency in 4-mallet (Stevens grip) and 2-mallet playing
- Knowledge of the four basic 4-mallet stroke types: double-vertical, single-independent, single-alternating, and double lateral

Synth 1

- Memorization of the audition music
- All twelve major and minor scales
- Proficiency in piano fundamentals
- Sight-reading

Synth 2/Percussion

- Memorization of the audition music
- All twelve major and minor scales
- General proficiency in auxiliary percussion and snare drum
- Sight-reading

Drum Set

- Memorization of the audition music
- Various drum set styles (rock, funk, jazz, bossa nova, soca, etc.)
- Sight-reading



Questions? Post it in the MS Teams audition group to benefit everyone.

For more individualized inquiries email Dr. Locklear at

acloo17@auburn.edu

Time

Cymbal Line

Locklear

A $\text{♩} = 128-142$

crash

$\text{H}\frac{4}{4}$

f

5

Time & Flow

Cymbal Line

Locklear

A $\text{♩} = 128-142$

crash

4/4 time signature. The first measure starts with a crash cymbal (indicated by a large 'x' on the first note). The following six measures show eighth-note patterns with grace notes and dynamic *f*.

B sizzle

slide choke

hi-hat

8/4 time signature. The first measure shows a sizzle cymbal (indicated by a 'z'). The second measure shows a slide choke (indicated by a 'z' with a line through it). The third measure shows a hi-hat pattern (indicated by a 'z' with a line through it). The dynamic is *mf*.

11 sizzle stir

4/4 time signature. The first measure shows a sizzle stir cymbal (indicated by a 'z' with a line through it). The dynamic is *f*. The following three measures show eighth-note patterns with grace notes.

C feet spread, left heel on the half note

mark time, quarter note

8/4 time signature. The first measure shows a cymbal pattern with dynamic *ff*. The second measure shows a space for visual. The following two measures show similar cymbal patterns.

20

A/B split

8/4 time signature. The first measure shows a cymbal pattern with dynamic *ff*. The second measure shows an A/B split (indicated by two different cymbal patterns).

Cymbal Line

Three Heights

Inspired by NC A&T's Double Dribble

$\text{♩} = 132-150$

slide choke A hi-hat

Locklear

A

slide choke A hi-hat

mf

7

7

B clank

crash (vertical to horizc)

p

C

clank

crash (vertical to horizc)

f

sizzle smash

20

20

23

23

Cymbal Line

Rolling Intervals

Locklear

A $\text{♩} = 132-168$

crash crisp hi-hat

4/4 time signature. Crash cymbal on the first beat, followed by a crisp hi-hat on the second beat. The pattern repeats. Dynamics: **mf** and **mp**. Measures 1-4.

5

Continuation of section A. The pattern repeats with dynamics **mf** and **mp**. Measures 5-8.

B

Musical notation for section B, showing a sustained note pattern. Measures 9-12.

mp

12

Continuation of section B. The pattern repeats. Measures 13-16.

mf **mp**

C $\frac{3}{\text{♩}} = \frac{5}{\text{♩}}$

16 sizzle/stir

A/B crash chokes

uni.

space for visuals

space for visuals

slide choke

Musical notation for section C. It includes a sizzle/stir, A/B crash chokes, a unison (uni.) section, and a slide choke. Dynamics: **f**, **mf**, and **mp**. Measures 17-20.

D $\frac{5}{\text{♩}} = \text{♩}$

space for visuals

big prep visual smash

Continuation of section C. It includes a big prep visual smash. Measures 21-24.

Joe's Jam

$\text{J} = 112$

Joe Murfin
rev. Locklear 2023

Sheet music for a wind instrument, page 2, featuring six staves of musical notation with various dynamics and performance instructions.

Staff 1: Measure 4. Dynamic **f**. Measure 5: **mp** followed by **f**. Measure 6: **mf**. Measure 7: **2**. Measure 8: **24**. Measure 9: **31**.

Staff 2: Measure 5: **3**. Measure 6: **4**. Measure 7: **18**.

Staff 3: Measure 11: **11**. Measure 12: **18**.

Staff 4: Measure 20: **20**. Measure 21: **24**.

Staff 5: Measure 26: **26**.

Staff 6: Measure 31: **31**.

Performance instructions: "on 'a'" and "NOT 'and'" are written above the staff.