

10 Advanced Licks

Every
Drummer
Should
Know



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10 Advanced Licks Every Drummer Should Know

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10 Advanced Licks Every Drummer Should Know

When it comes to learning licks and developing chops it can be difficult to figure out what's worth spending time on among the hundreds of examples that can be found online, in records, and in drum solos.

That's why I thought it would be useful to put together a list of 10 of the most common advanced licks we hear great drummers play over and over.

They are challenging but not so hard that we are likely to get stuck, and so they can be a great starting point to improve our phrasing and soloing skills.

As we know, playing fast and complex stuff is best achieved by starting slow and doing lots of repetitions.

Even more importantly, in this case, we first need to understand the underlying subdivision, placement, sticking, hand/foot combination and orchestration involved.

Once that's all clear we are on our way to mastering not only these ideas but also any new lick we discover.

Let's take example number 1. It's based on a three note cell: right hand, left hand and kick (RLK). It's played in sextuplets and while the left hand hits the first Tom, the right hand moves between the Floor Tom and the Snare, in order to play backbeats on 2 and 4.



For best results, we should spend a few days on the underlying cell RLK: if we have trouble playing accurate fast successions of these three notes, of course playing the whole lick will be next to impossible.

In many examples (like Lick 2, 3 and 5) a three note cell is placed over sixteenth notes (3 against 4 polyrhythm) to make things more interesting.

In such instances we can start practicing the basic cell using a matching subdivision (like for instance triplets for a three note cell), and only later integrate the correct placement.

Temporarily removing layers of complexity (like specific orchestrations or subdivisions) is always a good strategy when tackling advanced materials. And it's also crucial to eventually sound perfectly accurate.

Let's not forget that anytime we play something fast and complex, it has to be ultra precise.

Studying these examples is also a great way to develop musicality while practicing technique, since advanced licks are by definition based on technical stuff.

As usual the best approach to make the most of these phrases is to learn them not only as they are written, but also by experimenting with parameters: playing them over different subdivisions, at different dynamics and tempos, with different accents and especially with different orchestrations and permutations, like extensively shown in '30 Ways to Practice a Vinnie Colaiuta Lick'.

Ultimately the goal should be to learn a lick inside out and personalize it to the point that we can make it part of our style, instead of just copying the way someone else played it.

Therefore, as an optional exercise, let's pick our favourite lick and learn how to play it employing all the elements listed above.

Last but not least, let's keep in mind to use these licks to make music. Unless it's the right musical context/moment, we should refrain from playing them.

Being able to play something doesn't automatically equal a free license to do it all over the place.

Here is the [link to the YouTube video](#) in which I play the examples shown in the booklet.

You can also click on each transcription on the next pages to access the related video demonstration.

If you are interested in more ready-to-use licks to work on, feel free to check out the related resources below, and also in the main website menu the 'Chops' and 'Phrasing' submenus which contain dozens of examples to pick from.

Related resources:

[Drum Chops Mastery - Gospel Chops & Beyond - Free Excerpt](#)
[6 Licks: Vinnie Colaiuta, Steve Gadd, Aaron Spears, Gavin Harrison](#)
[10 Top Drummers' Signature Licks](#)
[How to Improve Your Drum Chops](#)

