

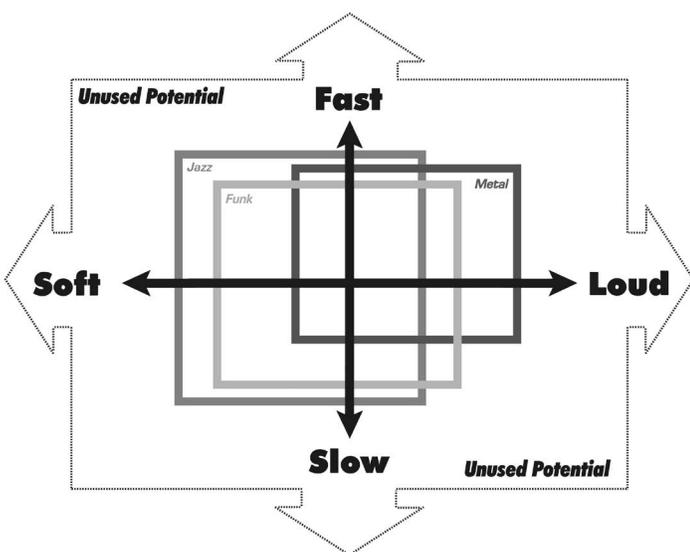
From Hand Technique to Feet

By Stephane Chamberland

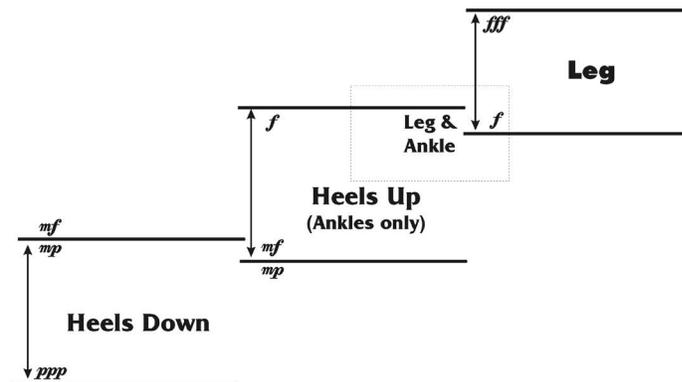
What is technique? A technique is a way of doing something. For example, a paradiddle is not a technique, but a rudiment. The way you play a rudiment is the technique. The more techniques you know, the greater the number of tools you have in your toolbox to complete a desired task. We can go back to the greats, such as George Lawrence Stone, who was famous for teaching wrist techniques such as the “free stroke” (formal technique). Sanford Moeller was more into arm techniques, such as what has become known as the Moeller technique (informal technique), and Billy Gladstone was known for finger techniques (formal techniques)—without forgetting applications such as the pumping motion and the definition of the “upstrokes” and “downstrokes.” I highly recommend checking out Dom Famularo’s book *It’s Your Move* to get more detail about all these terms, and also Jojo Mayer’s *Secret Weapons for the Modern Drummer* DVDs Vol. 1 (hand technique) and Vol. 2 (foot technique), which inspired me to write this article.

FROM HANDS TO FEET

I was blown away when I started to realize that all the techniques I was learning for my hands were also applicable to the feet. At that time, Dom Famularo and Joe Bergamini were still working on their book *Pedal Control*, which would explain in detail all the techniques for the feet in much the same way as their book *It’s Your Move* did for the hands. I was fortunate to have been asked to join them in working on this book. The first section teaches the techniques, and the second section gives lots of practical exercises to get comfortable with and develop what you studied in the first section. It covers basic foot techniques like the heel down, heel up (ankle), heel up (legs), entire leg, and much more. I’m going to share with you an exercise from *Pedal Control*, but first, let’s look at a diagram. In music we use dynamics to play from soft to loud, and different techniques to play from slow to fast. The following diagram illustrates the range of expression of how each style fits into each technique needed:



Building a great technique is like making a great salad. We select different elements to make up the salad. If we take the time to choose quality ingredients, it will affect the final result. If we choose the best vegetables, the finished salad will be amazing when we put everything together. Technique is the same. We learn and master each single technique first, then we start mixing them together. The final result would be to know all the positions, all the techniques, and all the possibilities to put them together. So, while grooving, in the same way we play dynamics on snare and hi-hat, we can do the same for the bass drum. We can play accents, flams, and drags on the pedals. That being said, we will use heel down, heel up, legs and ankles, and the entire legs from the hip on down to better serve the music.



Example 1 is an exercise from *Pedal Control* to spark some joy into your practice routine:

Now imagine how you could incorporate such ideas into your grooves. Whether you play double bass or single pedal (one foot on the hi-hat), you will be blown away by the myriad possibilities. Have fun and be patient with your progress. Practice little by little on a constant basis and you will see the evolution. There’s an old saying, “The devil is in the details.” It’s in the details that you will see the difference.

Stephane Chamberland is an internationally recognized drummer, clinician, educator, and author who has performed and recorded with numerous musicians and played hundreds of live shows. Stephane is currently based in New York City, playing with his own jazz quartet while freelancing with about 30 bands per year. Stephane maintains a busy private teaching schedule on Skype and in-person, coaching students from 15 countries. He is the co-author of the books *The Weaker Side*, *Drumset Duets*, and *Pedal Control* with Dom Famularo and Joe Bergamini. He also edited the latest editions of *Stick Control* and *Accents and Rebounds* by George Lawrence Stone. As a clinician, Steph has presented hundreds of clinics and master classes in stores, schools, camps, and festivals in the U.S., Canada, Taiwan, Brazil, Europe, Singapore and China. For more information, visit www.stephanechamberland.com.

