

# The Weaker Side: Achieving Technical Balance

By Stephane Chamberland

**W**e drummers are so dedicated to increasing the knowledge of drumming that it's extremely rewarding to be able to teach and share our skills every day. We have the opportunity to observe the common challenges that drummers encounter. With the evolution of drumming, open handed playing is becoming more popular because we need more refined tools to play the new and challenging grooves and concepts in all styles of music.

The most common challenge that students have is developing equal balance between both their hands and their feet. *The Weaker Side* is the first step to achieving equal balance between all limbs. Imagine how much more control you would have in your playing if your hands and feet were equal in execution. In my journey, I've had the privilege of studying with Dom Famularo, a great mentor, for many years. Dom was working on a way to develop our weaker hands and feet and to liberate us from the barrier of the older concepts we had learned. Together, we explored the horizon and decided to co-write a book called *The Weaker Side*. This book is all about programming muscular strength into your weaker side for your hands and feet. The ultimate objective is to be able to perform any of the ideas you hear in your head. The more developed your skill, the easier it is for you to consistently express your musical ideas. In any artform or sport, it's important to think about technique. Techniques are tools that will help you express what you feel, and good technique will prevent pain and damage to your muscles. We know a successful technique by the results we get from using it.

Imagine having two right hands or two right feet. That is what we call freedom! It affects the way we play, the way we sound, and even the way we set up our drums. Performing music creates new challenges. We cannot resolve a challenge without changing the thought process that created the challenge. Let me give you a couple of exercises that will help you think differently and focus on the weaker parts of your technique.

It is very helpful for us as musicians to know our strengths and weaknesses. When we acknowledge our weakness, it leads to action. But remember, there is no shortcut. It's all about doing a little bit every day. We must plant the seed, water it every day, and be patient as it grows. But this process will lead to constant and never-ending improvement. Consistency will guarantee your success in technique, drumming, and in life. As a student of mine always says, "Success equals effort over time". There is no magic to it though it may look like that sometimes.

Here are some exercises for your weaker side. The top notes are played with your weaker side and the bottom notes are played with your stronger side. If you want to know more about this concept, you may want to check out my book *The Weaker Side* that I co-wrote with Dom Famularo. It consists of fifty-two pages so you can work on one page a week. That makes one full year of working on the book. There are also thirty exercises ranging from fifteen seconds to one-minute each. The primary goal is to work on technique, but you could also use the book many different ways to develop other skills as well. For example, use the bass drum and hi-hat pedals to play the written sticking while playing the jazz ride pattern in the triplets section. We can honestly say that *The Weaker Side* is a follow up to George Lawrence Stone's book, *Stick Control*.

It's better to practice slowly at first and increase the tempo a little bit everyday. While playing the exercises, keep in mind to always watch your technique in the mirror, and use a metronome to monitor your tempo and a clock to mark how long you practice each exercise. Keep track of your progress and your improvement. You may want to record yourself to analyze your work. For more information go to: [wizdom-media.com](http://wizdom-media.com) or [stephanechamberland.com](http://stephanechamberland.com) or [domfamularo.com](http://domfamularo.com)



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