

Excerpt from: The Mental Approach to Drumming

Today, as drummers, we're all spoilt – endless DVD's, videos, books, websites – all of them offering a mind-boggling array of technical, performance and musical advice. Just deciding which ones to watch or read is a task in itself – then you have to decide which parts of those DVD's or books you need to learn, which bit of advice is going to work for you (that's the important bit)– by which time, you have double vision and a grinding headache!

However, the solution is here – there is one piece of advise this old pro can give you which applies to EVERYTHING – yes, EVERYTHING!!

No matter what material you are using to learn this wonderful art of drumming from, what particular skills, or what exact piece of music you might be trying, there is one aspect of drumming that is the lynch-pin of the entire art – an aspect that, because we take it for granted, will seem very obvious at first glance – until you stop, put down your sticks, and have a much closer look at it!

And that aspect? – The **mental approach to drumming**.

Yeah sure, we all know that to do anything you have to have a certain mental capacity, we all use our brains to learn, so what is this bloke on about?

Like I said, it seems obvious, but when you break down that mental aspect, and actively think about what's going on in your head when you're drumming, or learning a new technique, what you find can have a profound effect on both your physical approach to the art, your self-confidence in your own ability and ultimately, your technical and musical skills.

So let's take a look at this mental thingy!

The best way to put this is by listing, so here you go –

1. When we learn anything new, neural pathways are formed inside the brain – physical connections that create a pathway in the brain that, if you like, hold the memory of that action, or knowledge.

KEY: The more you repeat that action, the stronger the pathway becomes – the benefit to us – the more natural the action seems to be, and the easier and easier it becomes to execute. We know that 'practice makes perfect', but this is how it actually works. The human body needs to repeat an action at least 500 times before it even begins to recognise the action as a muscle memory, but the great thing is, if we know this, it greatly improves our confidence that if we practise regularly and with focus, we will **DEFINITELY IMPROVE**.

Knowing this gives you confidence that your hard work will indeed pay off, that all the time you are hammering out those tedious paraddiddles, even if you FEEL you are not making progress, you can take comfort knowing that you ARE, and that it is very much worth the grind!