

Efficiently Playing The HiHat

Heel-Toe method:

Let's start with "toe". Your toe presses down on the pedal hard enough that you lift your heel (and knee) completely up and off the pedal board. This happens exactly in time with your close note.

*Use this position consistently for your closed hihat notes



Now on to "heel". Your heel hits the butt plate of your pedal, lifting your toes right up. You should feel your heel hitting the plate in time with your open hihat note.



* When pedaling the hihat consistently (for example, playing quarter notes with your left foot) this motion can be applied over and over. It turns into a rocking motion that essentially "plays itself". Remember not to let your foot come off the pedal.

* Don't "splash" the hihat. You want to be able to get a strong closed note and a full open note. Splashing is cool but a different technique from what we're learning here.

Applying The HiHat Heel-Toe Method

Before we start using this motion on the drumset, let's try it on the floor first. Sit on your drum stool but face away from your drumset. Tap your toes onto the floor hard enough that you hear the "pat" of your foot hitting the floor decently loud. As with the description on the previous page, lift your heel and your knee all the way up with this motion.

Rock your foot back to the heel. This is done also hard enough that you hear it on the floor. Remember to lift your toes off the floor on this one. Do that back and forth until you can do it evenly.

I've notated the "floor" notes with a square. Let's count eighth notes out loud while we play this on the floor. Make sure your rhythm is consistent and lining up with your voice. Once you can do both of the following examples easily, start tapping on your leg with your right hand in eighth notes along with your foot.



Spin back around to your drumset now that you've got that down. Now we're going to actually play this on the hihats. Pay special attention to your left foot to make sure you're hitting the pedal board in time. We don't want any flaming between your hand and foot.

*Play the open notes louder, on the edge of the hihats. The closed notes, play them on top of the hihats with the tip of your stick. This makes the difference between the two a little more drastic.

*An "o" above your hihat note means the hihats are to be played open.



Now the other way.



*If any of the following examples are giving you trouble, try them away from the drumset on the floor. Play them very slowly as we did with the heel toe method in the first place. Pretend one of your legs is the snare and the other, your hihats. This will force you to have your left foot in time for all the notes and make it easier when you get back to the drumset.