



# BACKSTICKING AND TRICKS

This chapter is truly “next level” as the techniques discussed are mainly for show, but can teach you a lot in terms of finesse and control of the sticks. I will cover:

- I. **OLD SCHOOL BACKSTICKING**
- II. **SINGLE NOTE STICK DRIBBLE** (Walk the Dog)
- III. **STICK ON STICK RUDIMENTS**

I used to not teach my students’ backsticking or tricks because I did not want them to get lost in learning the “flash” of drumming. As I taught more, I realized the benefit of learning backsticking and certain tricks: how to relax, how to play more open diddles, better timing – not to mention they are a lot of fun!

*The topics covered are the basis for many other tricks. Once you have these down, experiment and come up with your own ideas!*

## I. OLD SCHOOL BACKSTICKING

This method of playing the drum is called “backsticking” because we play with the back (or butt) of the stick. When learning the motion for backsticking, stay as relaxed as possible and remember to keep your motions very efficient. The less you have to move to get the stick around, the better you will sound and the faster you can go.

### RIGHT HAND



Start with the stick in playing position.



Raise the wrist slightly and kick the stick out with the heel of your palm, holding the stick with just your fulcrum.



Strike the drum with the butt of the stick and a fluid motion (the bead should be pointing toward you at about a 45 degree angle).



Reverse the process to return your stick to your regular grip.

### LEFT HAND



Start with the stick in playing position.



Raise the wrist just enough for the stick to clear the rim and turn your thumb towards the drum. While doing so, let your bottom fingers (ring and pinky) off the stick.



Strike the drum as you would if playing matched grip. Reverse the process to return your stick to your regular traditional grip.



More detail of the left hand fingers and how they aid in getting the stick over to the backstick:



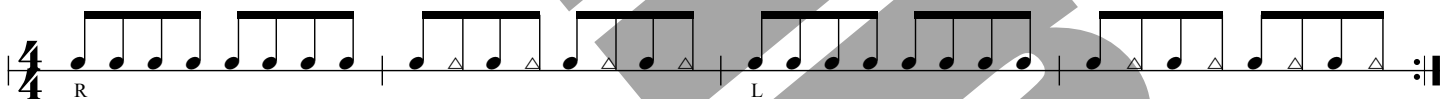
*FOR BOTH HANDS, KEEP THE MOTION OF THE ELBOW TO A MINIMUM.  
THE LESS MOTION OR THE ARM AND ELBOW, THE MORE FLUID YOU WILL LOOK AND SOUND.*

**THE DVD IS A GREAT WAY TO LEARN THESE TECHNIQUES. THERE ARE ALSO MANY, MANY MORE TRICKS AND BACKSTICKING PATTERNS DEMONSTRATED!**

**8 on a HAND BACKSTICK**

For this exercise, work to have the regular note and backsticked note sound as similar as possible. With the right hand, use the rebound from the note prior to help get the backsticking motion fluid, in the left hand, don't go back to a "true" traditional grip until the last note (just keep the stick pivoting in your fulcrum), this will help you with your speed.

Focus on having the same fluidity to the backsticked measures as the straight 8 on a hand.  $\Delta$  = BACKSTICK



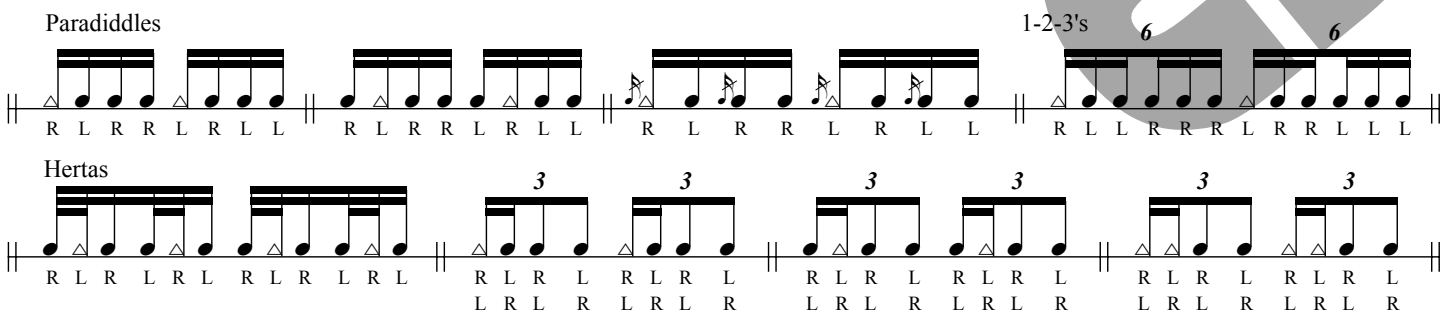
**HAMBONE**

To create rhythms while backsticking that are more interesting, try putting doubles between each backstick. Play very relaxed and open diddles at Level 6 or below. Strive to have the backstick note match the sound of the double strokes.



*Remember to keep your motions as efficient as possible. The less arm and elbow motion you have, the better you will sound and the faster you can go. Try to think of backsticking as just "a flick of the wrist".*

Below I have notated other ways / rudiments which you can backstick.



**EXPERIMENT WITH ALL THE RUDIMENTS AND PATTERNS YOU KNOW AND BACKSTICK EVERYTHING THAT YOU CAN – THE POSSIBILITIES ARE ENDLESS!**

## II. SINGLE NOTE STICK DRIBBLE (*Walk the Dog*)

This trick is a way of playing single notes while playing stick on stick. I find it easiest to play the right stick on the left (if playing traditional grip).



Start by playing eighth notes at a medium tempo on the left hand.



Keep the fulcrum very loose and start to play the same tempo with the right hand on the left stick, about 2" to 3" from the bead of the stick.



Once you start "dribbling" the stick with the right hand, the left hand just keeps the stick in place.

### IMPORTANT:

*Do not try to play the notes with the left hand, let the right hand do all the work.*

Once you have the notes being played by the right hand, experiment with where the stick bounces best for you. Realize you are just creating a balance point (fulcrum) in the hand that is holding the stick. This fulcrum can be anywhere (the rim, up and down your arm, on your leg, tongue, etc.). Experiment with as many different ideas as you can!

### WALKING THE DOG

To move the stick around, the right hand "leads" the left stick to where it wants to go. If you want to move the stick up your arm, gently angle your left arm up and play the left stick in that direction. You are basically "dribbling" the stick to the desired location. To move the stick through your fingers while dribbling, turn your hand over and dribble the stick through your fingers. Below are some pictures of the stick being "walked" on the rim:

