

DRUM GUIDE

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Learning a new instrument is exciting, rewarding and at times challenging for all beginners, however, we understand that there is pressure on the parent as well. Which is the right instrument to buy for home practice? What do they need for their lessons? What do you need to do to support this venture? This short guide has been written from our list of FAQs and will hopefully answer any questions you might have. If you need any more information, you can get in touch any time via e-mail or phone and we will be happy to help.

What do I need to buy for lessons?

Books

Your child will be learning from two books to begin with.

1. Rockschool Drums – Debut (2018)
2. Introducing Drum Kit (Trinity Guildhall Drum Kit)

Please discuss the recommended syllabus with your child's teacher before purchasing a book.

Drumsticks

Buying the correct kind of drumstick is important; while your child is developing and growing it is recommended to get the right weight of stick for their size. There are many different brands and styles to choose from and it can quickly get confusing.

When ordering sticks online you can choose any make of stick in the following sizes:

- Under 10s – 7A wood-tip drumsticks
- 10 and above – 5A wood-tip drumsticks

*Drumstick sizes vary from 9 through to 2, with 9 being the smallest and 2 being the biggest. Alternatively, the ideal pair of sticks for your child can be purchased from us at £12 a pair.

Drum Kit

In order to get the most out of lessons and to progress through practice, a drum kit will be required for playing at home. This is the largest financial commitment and there are a lot of options available, so you need to consider the following things:

Acoustic or Electric?

Acoustic

Purchasing an acoustic drum kit can be a daunting process as there are many different makes and models on the market. The good news is that most entry-level drum kits are good quality and will last a reasonable length of time, up until the player decides to move onto a more sophisticated instrument for playing in bands or recording.

A second-hand kit is often the best way to go in terms of financial value for money. New entry-level kits start from around £500-£700 whilst second-hand kits can be found for around £250- £400. These pre-owned kits often have accessories bundled into the deal – such as a drum stool or a pair of sticks. You can find a good beginners kit on sites such as eBay.co.uk / Gumtree.co.uk; from time to time Rhythm Room also has refurbished pre-owned kits for resale.

When selecting a kit, the key thing to ensure is that the kit has the correct number of drums and cymbals. This is crucial as all these elements will be needed to practise everything that is covered in the lessons. Not buying a complete kit will mean that extra parts will have to be purchased at a later date or in some cases, a whole new drum kit. Please see the diagram below detailing all the pieces the kit requires.



Can anything be done to control the volume of an acoustic kit?

You can purchase drum and cymbal 'mute' packs; these are rubber pads that can be placed on each drum and cymbal, reducing the volume by over 90%. These can be purchased online.

Does an acoustic kit require maintenance?

Like any instrument, a drum kit needs to be maintained to ensure it sounds and performs at its best. Each individual drum will occasionally need their 'heads' or 'skins' changed as they get used and worn (hopefully from many hours of practice!). Correct drum heads can be purchased directly from us, with prices per head ranging between £12 for the smaller drums and £40 for large drums (like the bass drum). A drum 'key' will also need to be purchased online in order to tune each drum correctly and keep the drum tuned throughout its life span. Drum keys are fairly inexpensive and usually universal to all makes/models of drum kit. We would be more than happy to arrange for one of our teachers to show you how to tune the kit, either at home or in lessons.

Not everyone has the space (or neighbours!) for a full acoustic drum kit in their home. In a lot of cases, an electric drum kit provides the perfect solution. These kits take up less space in the room; can be flat-packed against walls/put in cupboards when not in use; and provide the user with full control over the volume. Please be aware that to use an electric kit you will need to purchase an amplifier or headphones.

A 'beginner' electric drum kit can be purchased new from between £300 and £500. Second-hand kits can be found from as low as £100 to £350, depending on the make, model and how many accessories are provided. When purchasing an electric drum kit it is important to buy the right configuration - please see the below images for reference. Models such as the one on the left are to be avoided. This is due to the limited movement range of the pads/pedals and the missing bass drum pad. Compared to the correct configuration image on the right, we see the pads are spread out and further adjustable, and additionally the bass drum pedal on the floor has a pad of its own; this is particularly important for when the student starts to move on to faster bass drum patterns. We would suggest that it is well worth spending a little extra to get a kit that will last longer (such as the one on the right) before an upgrade is needed.

Acoustic

Pros

- No amplification needed, fewer accessories, easier to pick up and play,
- Unmistakeable acoustic sound, which cannot be replicated on an electric kit.
- Second hand acoustic kits can be very inexpensive.

Cons

- More difficult to control the volume.
- Larger, takes up more space.

Electric

Pros

- Smaller, and can be folded down when not in use.
- Volume is easily controlled and can be played using headphones, good for quiet practice at home..
- Built in metronome.

Cons

- additional equipment costs - requires an amplifier or headphones.
- A good quality electric drum kit can still be quite expensive, even second hand.