

TRIANGLE TECHNIQUE

BY JOSH GOTTRY

The instrument itself is quite simple in design - a piece of metal shaped like a triangle. However, there is obviously much more to playing a triangle than holding it up by a string and hitting it with an old bolt or piece of scrap metal as it spins in circles.

THE TRIANGLE CLIP

Before the triangle can be played properly, it must first be mounted appropriately. The triangle should be mounted on a clip with two small loops of fishing line or another lightweight material. One loop should be larger than the other and shouldn't touch the triangle. This loop will serve as a "safety net" in case the other breaks. The inside loop should be slightly larger than the triangle's diameter, so the triangle will remain as stationary as possible while playing.



HOLDING THE TRIANGLE

Once you have found or made an appropriate clip, slip the triangle through the small loop, such that the open corner is on the same side as the hand you will be using to hold it (in most cases, the left side). Rest the tip of the clip on your middle finger and the back of the clip on your thumb. Use your index finger on top to steady the clip and your third and fourth fingers for muffling. Hold the triangle at eye level so that you can see the music, triangle, and conductor at the same time. This also allows the audience to see the instrument you are playing!

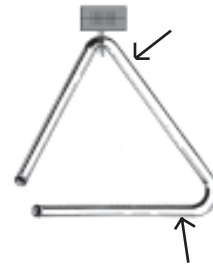
MOUNTING THE TRIANGLE

If you need to clip the triangle to a stand, either for rapid passages which require two hands or to facilitate a quick switch to another instrument, there are two primary options. In cases where you simply need to change instruments rapidly, clip the triangle to a music stand and play it in the same way as you normally would. For rapid rhythmic passages, use two clips - one in each closed corner, and play between the clips on what is now the top of the triangle.



STRIKING THE TRIANGLE

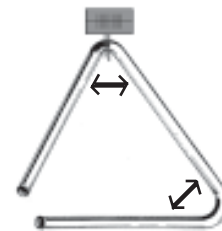
The triangle should be played on the bottom bar, near the closed corner, or on the closed side near the top.



Always allow the weight of the beater to strike the instrument - don't force the beater into the triangle. Use small lifting strokes, moving the fingers and wrist only - no arm motion. This will allow for a more consistent stroke and more consistent sound. Remember that even a slight movement of the beater will change the sound of the triangle.

TRIANGLE ROLLS

Rolls can be performed in either closed corner of the triangle.



Always strive for a smooth and fluid motion with both sides of the corner being struck evenly. As necessary move closer to the corner for softer rolls and further away for louder rolls.



Josh Gottry is an active percussion instructor, performer, and composer in Gilbert, Arizona. He serves as an instructor for several local percussion ensembles and private percussion students, and performs regularly as both a soloist and ensemble member. As a composer, Mr. Gottry is a three-time ASCAP grant recipient with seventeen works published for percussion. Josh Gottry is a clinician for Mike Balter Mallets, Pro-Mark Sticks, and Yamaha Percussion.