The following lesson is excerpted from "A Fresh Approach to the Snare Drum" by Mark Wessel.

"A Fresh Approach to the Snare Drum" is the most comprehensive method available that simultaneously provides instruction for rhythm reading, technique fundamentals, rudimental training, coordination and musicianship necessary for today's well rounded percussionist! The accompaniment CDs make practicing FUN by utilizing percussion instruments and grooves from around the world!

Ask for "A Fresh Approach to the Snare Drum" at your local music store, or order online at mwpublications.com
It is important to develop a daily regime of practice on “technique” exercises in order to develop good fundamentals. On page 76, you will find a list of recommended exercises, along with suggested tempo markings for each lesson. Use this chart to track your technical progress from lesson to lesson.

For this lesson, practice exercise #1 and #2 on page 77 – first with a metronome, then with the accompaniment CD.

**Fill in the Blanks!**

Fill in the blanks to provide the definition for each time signature.

1. **\(\frac{3}{4}\)**
   - There are ____ beats in each ____________
   - The _______ _______ receives one beat

2. **\(\frac{2}{4}\)**
   - __________________________

3. Draw five quarter notes and 5 quarter rests

4. When you count quarter notes or rests, you will always start on count “one” for the first note or rest in the measure. Write the counts in under the notes and above the rests in the following measures. Watch the time signatures!

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<th>1</th>
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<td>(3)</td>
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5. Special Note:
   Before you begin the Playing Exercises, you may wish to practice the special exercises that are included in the Appendix on page 54 in the back of this book. These drills are provided for extra practice on the new material covered in each lesson.

**Playing Exercises**

Practice counting each exercise out loud to a metronome before you play. Use an “alternating” sticking, and strive for the same relaxed rebound stroke that you used in the sticking exercises in Lesson One. When you’ve worked up all 6 lines, try playing along to the accompaniment on track 3 on the CD.

**HOT TIP:**
Try tapping your foot while you play. This will not only help you to keep a steady tempo, but it will also develop the necessary hand to foot coordination required to play the drumset!

As you play through these lines, think of “playing your foot” on the quarter rests!
The second type of stroke that you will learn is called the BOUNCE stroke. If you've ever heard a “drum roll,” then you already know the type of sound that a multiple bounce produces!

Using only one motion, strike the drum and SQUEEZE the stick at the fulcrum to start the stick bouncing. As the stick bounces, gradually RELEASE the pressure to lengthen the bounce. Try to develop a long multiple bounce by playing several on each hand (notated with a “z” through the note stem):

\[ \frac{1}{4} = 60 \]

To develop a smooth sounding “buzz roll,” you must first spend time developing long, relaxed multiple bounces!

Go back through this lesson and bounce all of the quarter notes in the first 6 lines (quarter note = 60). When you can produce a good sounding “buzzzzzzz” on each stroke, bounce the quarter notes with an “z” in the following exercise and duet. Try to make each bounce “bleed” into the next stroke.

The DOWNSTROKE (or “controlled stroke”) is the third of 5 strokes for the snare drum. It is used to stop the stick from rebounding off the drumhead. To execute the downstroke, start with the hand in the “up” position. Strike the drum exactly as you would for a rebound stroke, except instead of allowing the stick to bounce back up, SQUEEZE it slightly with the fulcrum and back fingers at the moment of impact with the drumhead. The goal is to freeze the stick about 2 inches above the head after it impacts on the head, then to immediately RELAX! Be careful to not use so much tension that you “smush” the stick into the drum! In this exercise, play a downstroke, then use the quarter rest to lift the stick back to the “up” position:

\[ \frac{1}{4} = 70 \]

Repeat several times on each hand to develop the DOWNSTROKE

Don’t try to strike the drum harder to produce a downstroke. The height of the stick and weight of the wrist & forearm will take care of the volume.
Exercise #6: “Stick Control 2”

This is a more difficult exercise to develop control over rebound strokes using various sticking patterns. Stay relaxed and listen for a consistent sound from hand to hand. Watch that the quarter notes are given their precise rhythmic value (don’t rush them)! Play measure 1 & 2 three times, then meas. four & five.

Exercise #7: “Mr. Freeze”

Use this exercise to work on downstrokes (described on page 9), taps (described on page 14) and upstrokes (described on page 11). Squeeze the stick slightly on each downstroke to control the rebound and “freeze” the stick 2 inches above the drum, then immediately relax the hand for the taps and upstroke. Play the taps as soft, relaxed wrist strokes (2–3 inches), then lift on the upstroke to prepare for the next downstroke.

Exercise #8: “Bucks in Three”

Using the same basic technique as Exercise #7. Strive to play the exercise at two heights: 12 inches (a “full” stroke) for the accent and 2–3 inches for the tap and upstroke. Remember: let the weight of the forearm and wrist take care of the volume of the accent! Don’t use any more tension than is necessary!

Exercise #9: “Extended Doubles”

ONLY practice this exercise with your hands on your legs or with the sticks on a pillow! Stay relaxed, but do not allow the stick to bounce.

Exercise #10: “Flam Prep”

Use this exercise to isolate the soft, relaxed grace notes of the flam as described in Lesson 7. Remember: two heights – 12 inches for the PRIMARY stroke, 2 inches for the grace notes. Exercise C should be played with an upstroke motion on the final grace note to prepare for the flam on the opposite hand.