

Markings For A Repeatable Set-up - Drum Setups Discussed

What Needs To Be Marked There are three basic concerns; the floor spread, the component heights, and the component angles. Let start with the floor spread. I use a commercially made drum carpet called a Gig Rug. I use it because it is thin enough to roll up and fit into my hardware case and because it has a "creep-stop" barrier for my bass drum. You may have something else that you like, but my method for repeating the exact same floor spread each time starts with simply marking the hardware placements on the rug. I use small strips on duct tape to mark the placement of the feet of the stands and throne, the floor tom legs, the pedals, and the spurs of the bass drum. I use duct tape because if I decide to change something, all I have to do is remove the tape and replace it with the new markings. I make a "U" shape with the tape strips around the outside of all of the stand leg rubber tips. I also outline the pedal footboards with tape strips. This is my foundation for placing the other hardware and components. Some cymbal stands, and other pieces of hardware now have memory locks that allow you to re-assemble certain adjustments in the same way every time. That's great and I use them. But in case you don't I'm going to talk about ways to mark stands that don't have memory locks or don't have them in certain places places that are still critical adjustments for a repeatable set-up. First the stand tripods. I simply mark the center tube's height at the spot where the center clamp tightens with a mark of a Sharpie pen. I draw a line onto the center tube at the top of the clamp line and I add a small vertical line, with the Sharpie, at the position where the thumb screw tightens the clamp. That marking looks like an upside down letter "T". The top line of the "T" is the mark for the height of the tube and the vertical line gives me the lateral spot. I do these markings for other tiers of each stand. I also do it for the cymbal rods. It is a simple way to give you the correct length and the correct spot where the thumb screw aligns every single time. For cymbal tilters, I make a mark across the two sides of the ratchet when the tilter is in the correct position. Thereafter, to get the correct angle each time, all I have to do is align the two marks on the ratchet. This works for other component adjustments that have a ratchet type adjustment (snare stands, cymbal booms, etc.). For rack toms, depending on the kind of mounts you have, you decide what sort of marks the Sharpie can make to indicate the same positioning each time. For example, if you have a vertical tube in a bracket on your bass drum, you can mark the height, as you would the cymbal stand leg clamp. You can mark the position where the thumb screw aligns with a vertical mark. I use different heights on my floor tom legs, so I add an additional code to assure the exact same positioning for them each time. I place the floor tom upside down and mark each leg bracket 1, 2, or 3. Then, when I have each leg height exactly where I want it, I make a mark at the place it aligns with the bracket and the also mark corresponding number on the leg. When I use two floor toms, I do the same except I use A, B, and C on the second tom markings so I don't get the legs confused. I also want my snare drum in the stand basket at the same position each time. I mark the bottom snare drum head's counter-hoop with a dot on each side of the snare stand basket's rubber tip that faces me. Thereafter, I can simply line the two little dots on either side of the rubber tip and have my snare "just right" again. Now I have multiple cymbal stands and other pieces of hardware that look alike when they are not assembled so I mark where they go in my set-up onto each piece. For example, a cymbal stand base may be marked "LC" for left crash or "LCR" for left crash/ride. The next tier and the cymbal rods will have the same codes. Should you want to change your adjustments, the Sharpie ink comes off easily with rag and rubbing alcohol. I personally use blue sharpies for marking my gear because it shows up well even in dim light. Well, that's the basis of my method for marking my gear. As I take hardware out of the case I simply look at the "component" code and stack the corresponding pieces with one another. I flop out the rug and then position the bass drum and the pedals first. Then everything else can be assembled and be placed and positioned right "on the mark". Cheers! Ken Sanders

About the Author

Ken is using [Drum Hardware](#) manufactured by [Premier Drums](#). Ken is also an active [Drum Forum](#) member at Drum Solo Artist where he is answering drum related questions, and helping drummers with tips and advices.

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