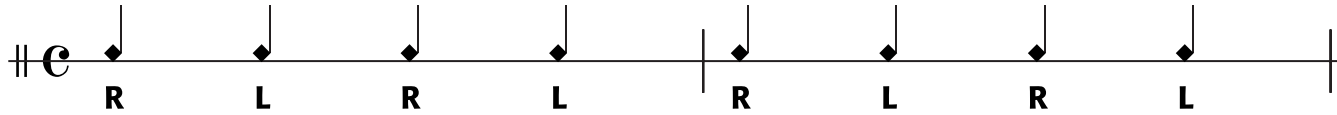


Most of the musical examples contained in this book are demonstrated at either 100 bpm ($\frac{4}{4}$), or 120 bpm ($\frac{6}{8}$).

Bass 



B	B	B	B	B	B	B	B
R	L	R	L	R	L	R	L

Key	
B	= Bass tone
R	= Right hand
L	= Left hand

The Open Tone

This is the fundamental tone of the conga—the sound of the head as it vibrates in its natural state. The open tone is the most resonant tone and produces a distinct pitch. As with the bass tone, it's best to have the drum off the floor, either tilted or mounted in a stand. When you play the open tone, focus the weight of your hand into the lower part of the fingers, which act as one unit when they strike the drum. The fingers are not rigid, nor are they soft—just firm enough to stay together and produce a solid tone. The hand strikes the head so the knuckles (where the fingers meet the palm) are lined up with the edge.



Open tone top



Open tone side

To Play the Open Tone:

Start with your arm in a relaxed position and the drum at a comfortable height.

1. Raise your hand and arm from the elbow.
2. Allow gravity to pull your hand towards the head.
3. Strike the head with your wrist and hand flat, focusing the weight into the lower part of the fingers.
4. Allow the hand to rebound back to the starting position while the drum resonates.

To produce a full open tone, make sure your hand is relaxed. The goal is to get the head moving and then get out of the way to allow the head to sing freely. Be careful not to strike the rim with the palm; if this is occurring, you may be dropping your wrist. A similar technique to the open tone is the *muted stroke* for which the hand stays on the head after striking it. Leaving your hand on the head (playing a muted stroke) may help you learn how **not** to play the open tone. As with all the tones, allow the hand and arm to be in a relaxed and natural position before and after each movement.



Open tone hand area