

I'm not a robot



























bass drum dampening: Stuffing a thin bedsheet in your bass drum will dampen a good amount of punch and make the sound more focused and punchier. Using a thicker will kill the ringing completely and make the sound even deeper. A pillow will give a similar effect, obviously changing with the size. If your material is resting against the batter or resonant bass drum head (or both), it will stop the drumhead from ringing out, and will kill its higher frequencies. Similar to the above, you can also use foam as a bass drum muffler. Cut it to size, and use double-sided tape to stick it to the drum shell once you've found the perfect sound. For a milder dampening effect, you can cut a newspaper into strips and partly fill your bass drum with this. This helps to control the higher frequencies, while still allowing your bass drum to remain more open sounding. All of the above techniques are often used in the recording studio to get a more focused and punchy bass drum sound. Stuffing your bass drum is a very effective way to stop your bass drum ringing out. Just remember that the more you put in, the more you'll reduce your volume, so this may not always be great for live playing (especially without a bass drum microphone). If you need to make your bass drum quieter, completely stuffing it with a blanket (or thick foam) can be a great solution. Gibraltar SC-BF Bass Drum Felt Strip Gibraltar make perfect sized felt bass drum dampening strips you can install between your bass drum head and the drum shell. These strips rest against the drumhead, reducing the ringing and focusing the sound much more on the midrange and low end. The sound becomes deeper, punchier, and more controlled. These felt strips are usually sold in two-packs, meaning you can double up for a more dramatic dampening effect if one strip isn't enough. These felt bass drum dampening strips are cheap, and they're the perfect weight and thickness for the job. You can use them on just the resonant side, or on both the batter and resonant bass drum heads (John Bonham style). When you're installing these felt dampening strips, make sure they're pulled fairly tight against the bass drum head as you tighten the bass drum lugs. Depending on where you place them (and how many you use) you can stop your bass drum ringing slightly, or quite dramatically. Place the bass drum felt strip towards the outside of the drum for the smallest effect, or right across the center for the greatest amount of bass drum dampening. Make Your Own Felt Bass Drum Dampening Strips If you're a little handy, you can make your own felt bass drum dampening strips. Buy some felt, and cut it to size. Between 2 and 4 inches is a good width, or more if you want a greater dampening effect (smaller bass drums will require less). Make sure the felt strip is pulled tight enough to rest against the bass drum head when you're installing it. If you can't find felt (most fabric stores should have it), you can fold up some thinner material to do a similar job. To install a felt bass drum dampening strip, completely remove the drumhead. Lay the felt across the drum, then put the drumhead back on. As you're tightening the head, pull the felt strip tighter so that it makes good contact from one side of the head to the other. You can cut the ends back once the drumhead is installed, but leave enough to easily reinstall if you ever decide to remove it. Cutting A Port Hole In Your Bass Drum Bass drum port holes fall into the dampening category, because (like most of the other options here) they reduce the ringing, and give you a more focused sound. You'll have different effects depending on the size and placement of your hole, and explaining all of this stuff requires a whole other article. Luckily, we've got you covered... Take a look at our huge overview of bass drum port holes, covering everything you need to know: How port holes affect your sound, where to place them, how big they should be, and the best ways to cut them. Removing The Resonant Head: Bass Drum Dampening This is a much more extreme bass drum dampening method, and will completely remove the ringing from your bass drum. If you want a short, quick thud, then try this one out. All of the sound will come from the batter head when doing this, so you might need to adjust your batter head tuning. Some advice: If you go with this bass drum dampening method long-term, it's important to protect your bearing edge on the resonant side (especially if you move your kit around). For bearing edge protection, cut a giant hole in an old bass drum head, leaving 1-2 inches around the edge. This will allow you to put your resonant side bass drum hoop on, keeping your bearing edge in top shape while giving you a resonant head-free sound. If you want to stop your bass drum ringing out, this is a great method. Change your bass drum beater If you're using a hard beater, you're going to have a much more cutting and loud bass drum sound. Try a fluffly beater, which has the smoothest and warmest sound, if you're trying to dampen your bass drum. Check out the ultimate bass drum beater guide for more on beaters! Final Words on Drum Dampening If you've read this far, you should have an excellent idea of the different methods to dampen and muffle drums and drumheads. You can combine the different methods for a greater drum dampening effect, and modify them depending on your environment and situation. The most important thing to remember with drum dampening is to experiment, and this is important regardless of whether you're a complete beginner or a seasoned pro. Experimentation is the best way to learn, and even professionals will keep messing around until they find their perfect sound. When to use drum dampening will vary depending on your situation... A loud vs. quiet show; recording big, small, tight, or open sounding drums; needing to muffle drums for quiet practice; or just looking for a more interesting sound. Think about what each song or situation requires, and how your drums fit into the bigger picture. Always use your ears, keeping in mind what the listener will hear - the audience, the microphones, your neighbours, or just yourself in your practice room. What's the best drum dampening method you've used? Got any other good drum dampening methods that aren't listed here? Let us know! Back to Top Want More Free Drumming Resources? Check out the Drumhead Selector - The internet's BEST tool for finding your perfect drumhead. Search, filter, and compare Aquarian vs Evans vs Remo drumheads. Line up any combination of heads to see every feature listed side-by-side. Filter drumheads by drum type, sound, ply, durability, responsiveness, surface type, thickness, special features and more to quickly find the perfect drumheads for your kit. Take a look at the internet's most comprehensive drumhead comparison chart. See equivalent drumheads across the huge Aquarian, Evans, and Remo range, and use the search box to filter through the noise. Looking for top drum accessories and gifts? Take a look at our roundup of great drum accessories and the best drum gifts for drummers. If you're looking for the best ways to make your drums quieter, check out our top tips to reduce drum volume. Drums are one of the loudest instruments, and freely being able to practice at all times is a luxury that most of us don't have. Keeping noise levels down is something that all drummers have to deal with at some point, so a few successful strategies have popped up over the years. If you need to make drums quieter, you're not alone. I, and many others, have had to learn how to quieten drums over all the years that I've been playing. Here are some tried and tested methods that are guaranteed to reduce the volume of drums and allow you to keep practicing. How to Make Drums Quieter Here's a quick rundown of the best ways you can make your drumming quieter. Invest in an electronic drum set: they are much quieter than acoustic kits and allow you to play using headphones, minimizing the external noise. Install mesh drumheads and low-volume cymbals: these tools are designed to produce less sound without compromising the feel and response of playing. Time your practice sessions: especially if you live in a shared living space or have noise restrictions. Use a practice pad in between sessions on the acoustic kit. Communicate with neighbors or housemates: letting those around you know about your practice schedule and discuss potential solutions or compromises to help maintain a harmonious living environment. Optimize room acoustics: Adding acoustic panels or foam to the walls of your practice space can help absorb sound and reduce overall volume levels. Soundproofing and Sound Insulating Before we get into the working methods, it's important to understand the concept of soundproofing first. A lot of people will tell you that hanging panels on the walls and blocking all the gaps in the windows and doors will do the trick, but that's actually called sound insulation. It makes the drums sound better in the room, and it drops the volume slightly due to all the harsh overtones being cut out, but it doesn't drop the volume enough to keep peace with your neighbors. To fully soundproof a room, you need to build another room within the room so that no sound can escape the air gap that you've created. It's an expensive process, and it's not something that we can all do easily. Also, the drums will still be very loud in a soundproofed room, so you won't be protecting your own ears when you play. The following methods will drop the sound for both you and your neighbors. Muffling Muffling refers to when you put objects inside the shells or on top of the drumheads of an acoustic drum kit. A muffled drum won't resonate as much, leading it to have a shorter and tighter sound. Drums are at their loudest when they resonate freely, so applying muffling to a drum will drop the volume depending on how much you apply. Bass drum muffling is important in drumming. Without muffling, bass drums have booming tones that fill a room up very quickly. The bass drum volume also travels through floors. You can put a towel or a pillow inside the bass drum shell to stop it from booming so much, and a tight kick sound will be heard instead. For the toms and snare dampening, you'll need to attach dampening tools onto the drumheads. This could be Moongels, tape, or towels. The more muffling you add, the more dead the drums will sound. Sometimes, too much muffling makes them sound worse, but that's okay for quiet practice. Electronic Drums If you know how to make drums quieter but you're still getting noise complaints, you should consider buying a good electronic drum kit. Electronic drum kits include a set of rubber or mesh drum pads with rubber cymbals. The volume you get from them is around the same level as what you hear when playing on a practice pad. You have the benefit of connecting a set of headphones to hear all your drum parts without anyone else hearing them. Most mesh pad kits like the Alesis Nitro are quiet enough not to bother anyone if you close the door while playing. However, the sound from the bass drum pad can still travel through the floor, so you may need to put the kit on an absorbing platform if you're playing in an apartment space. Getting an electronic kit isn't ideal, considering that you have to buy a whole new set, but it's one of the most effective ways of keeping drum noise down compared to playing acoustic drums. Low Volume Cymbals and Drumheads Low volume cymbals and drum heads are tools that you can put on your acoustic drum set to drop the sound by a significant amount. Low volume cymbals have dozens of perforated holes in them, and they usually drop the sound level to about 20% to 40% compared to your regular cymbals. You can find low volume cymbals that are the same size as your regular ones, so it will still feel like you're playing the same drum set. Low volume drum heads are mesh drum heads that you place on your shells instead of regular heads. They feel the same as the mesh heads from electronic drums, and they also drop the sound levels significantly. Remo and Zildjian used to offer the best low volume drumhead and cymbal package, but many other brands have introduced their own version of the concept. That gives you many options to pick from! Brushes and Hot Rods If you don't want to add anything to your drum set to change how it sounds, consider using brushes or hot rods instead of regular drumsticks. Brushes are mainly used for jazz drumming, as they produce sounds from the drums that work for jazz ballads. You can sweep them across the snare drum to create a brushing sound. Hot rods are more versatile, as you can play all the same grooves and fill that you would play with regular drumsticks. They'll just lower the volume of what you're playing. Another name for hot rods is rute sticks. These are sticks that have a bundle of thin sticks taped together. They feel a lot better to use compared to brushes if you're just looking to play the same things on the kit. Practice Pads Practice pads are designed for practicing your hand technique and pattern playing without making too much noise. They're typically quite small, allowing you to take them with you anywhere. However, a good method of dropping the volume of your acoustic kit is to place a few pads on top of your drumheads. You can create a practice pad drum kit like this. To quieten the cymbals, you can buy cymbal mutes that latch onto the wingnuts of all the cymbal stands. You get cymbal mutes for the drums as well, but practice pads give you better stick response, and having the ability to take them anywhere makes them more versatile. So, I'd suggest using a combination of both instead of using only drum and cymbal mutes. Dynamic Control Another method of making drums quieter that people overlook is to work closely on your dynamic control. Playing the drums quietly is a lot harder than it sounds, but you'll be able to play your kit without bothering anyone if you work on the skill. It's naturally not as satisfying as whacking the drums to make them resonate as much as possible, but it's a viable way of playing to keep your neighbors happy. A good way of playing softer is to keep your limb movements small. The higher you lift your arms to play the drums, the louder your strokes will be. Try your best to lift your wrists rather than your arms, and your dynamic control will improve over time. You may have to play at gigs where you can't make a lot of noise, so practicing this skill at home will help you for future settings. Conclusion There are several ways of knowing how to reduce drum noise, and each has its pros and cons. The best thing is to use a combination of the methods mentioned above to see which one you stick with the most. Electronic drum kits are an easy solution vs acoustic drums, but it's not one that everyone can do. It's also the most expensive option besides fully soundproofing your practice space. It's both a blessing and a curse that drums are so loud. They sound epic when played in full force, but not everyone wants to hear them all the time. So, you need to make a plan to keep practicing, and all the tips I mentioned will work very well.