



One walk through the drum department of your local music store can be overwhelming if you are new to the drumming scene. There are a lot of items available to enhance your drumming journey but just how much is really necessary? In my humble opinion, I'd start with these very affordable items.

Practice Pad

(\$30-40)

A practice pad is a great place to start developing skill in the hands, even if you don't have a drum kit, yet. Plus, a pad is quiet, portable and remains a huge asset when you do eventually get a drum kit. I would recommend getting the largest pad available to provide a more solid feel and experience. 12" sizes are ideal and there are several options available. These can be easily found at local music stores or online.

Drumsticks

(\$7-12 per pair)

Choosing a pair of drumsticks can be largely overwhelming if you don't know too much about it. There are many different brands and many different sizes and types for each. For a beginner, you can't go wrong with "5A wood tip" or "7A wood tip" sticks. (The 7A is a bit lighter stick.) The main quality brands are Vic Firth and Pro-Mark. Other reasonable options include Vater, Zildjian, Goodwood & Sound Percussion Labs.

Headphones / Earbuds

(\$5-100)

One of the best ways to improve on the drums is by playing along with recordings, but to do this you will need a set of headphones or earbuds. You don't have to spend a ton of money, but the better they are, the more detail you can hear as you try to pick out the nuance of drum parts over screaming guitars!

Drum Tuning Key

(\$2-4)

A drum key is a small metal T-shaped key that has a square hole on the bottom. It is used to tune your drums. The key fits on to all the square shaped lugs that go around the rims of your drum kit. As you tighten or loosen the lugs, the pitch of the drum goes higher or lower. Most likely you should have gotten one of these with your drum kit, but it never hurts to have a few laying around.



Metronome (Metronome App)

(Free-\$20)

A metronome is a device that produces a steady beep or click, indicating the tempo (speed) of the music. It is an invaluable tool for helping potential drummers learn to develop steady and consistent "time" as they play.

These days, the best and easiest option would be to download a metronome app for your tablet device or phone. Many choices are available for iOS and Android devices. Most choices start out free, but offer a few extra "bells and whistles" for only a few dollars. I recommend "Pro Metronome" (iOS / Android) and I strongly recommend spending the few dollars that it takes to unlock the full version. The extra features that will be available in the full version can make a huge difference during practice time!

Hearing Protection

(\$1-40)

When you aren't playing along with recordings, it isn't a bad idea to have some form of hearing protection in your ears. Any type of earplug should work fine, or you could even use large ear muffs.

Pillow / Blanket

(free)

No, I'm not kidding! You can help your bass drum sound 10x better by putting a small pillow or a blanket inside it. Just remove one of the heads and lay the pillow / blanket inside, preferably where it can touch the batter and resonant (front and back) heads a little. The finished result will give the kick drum more of a solid "THUD" than a bouncy "BONG." I've gotten a lot of compliments on my bass drum sound thanks to this trick.

Dampening Gel Pads

(\$5-10 per pack)

Sometimes drums can sound very "boomy" and might ring out for a few seconds after you hit them. There are times when this is a good thing, but there are also occasions where you won't want the ring to last as long. Several different companies make small gel pads (about an inch wide) that you can apply to the drum head and it will reduce the length of the ring out. They are easy to apply and just as easy to remove should you need to.