

NOISE FROM DRUMMING – Factsheet 2

Environmental Protection Act 1990

How can I minimise Noise Disturbance from Drumming?

Times

Give careful consideration to when you are playing. Give consideration to others and be reasonable.

Talk to your neighbours

It is important to talk to your neighbours and explain that you will try your best to minimise disturbance and that you want to know if you are disturbing them. It is better that they come to you first than the local authorities.

People will also be more likely to complain if they do not know how long you will be practicing for. If you explain that you do not wish to cause undue disturbance and will definitely stop before a certain time in the evening.

Similarly it can help if you explain that you will not practice for more than a certain amount of time in a single session. However it is important that you keep to your word as to not do so will ruin any good will you may have created by explaining to your neighbours

Physical control measures

There are a number of different ways of reducing the noise from your kit which can vary in cost and effectiveness. It is not always the case that the most expensive methods are the best.

Thick rubber practice pads can be purchased from most music shops that sell sticks or kits. These practice pads will create a similar response to a drumhead but will produce hardly any noise. Experience has shown that a well-chosen hard back book can have a similar effect. Totally silent mesh heads can also be bought that can be tensioned to exactly the same response as your existing heads, however they are expensive and are not so quick to fit as practice pads. A heavy fabric garment or scarf draped over a cymbal will completely dampen any ring from most cymbals and would be considerably cheaper than expensive brands of plastic practice cymbals.

A Second Kit

Complete practice kits can be bought but it would be wise to make sure you have exhausted the cheaper options before spending money that you may prefer to spend on upgrading your existing kit. Often they can be positioned to match your acoustic kit, and if not completely the same in terms of numbers of drums it is not necessarily bad to have a slightly different set-up as you may need to be able to adapt to different set-ups when performing at different places.

An electronic kit would allow you to practice into headphones and cause no disturbance whatsoever and would also allow accompaniment to a CD.

Consider where you practice.

The room in which you practice will have a big effect on the potential noise disturbance you might be causing. A marquee outside your house may improve the situation for your family but will increase the likely disturbance to neighbours. On the other hand the use of cellars and lofts cause noise and even vibration disturbance, which will travel to all physically attached property. If the room in which you practice has windows it is important to keep them closed and heavier curtains are the more likely contain the noise when they are drawn together. It may also be worthwhile to experiment with an old mattress against windows that are facing neighbours property. If you are practicing with windows closed and curtains drawn together make sure you have a fan and some cold drinks as you are likely to get hot.

Separate practice rooms and studios can be expensive and time consuming if you have to dismantle and reassemble your kit each time you use them. Sharing it with a friend or other band member could reduce some of the cost of hiring a practice room. Make sure you can trust whoever you decide to share costs with.

After you have arranged a lift to and from a practice room and paid for the hire of the room you may want to reconsider if the cost of a practice kit is as expensive as you first thought

Practice patterns and habits

It would also help to think about how much of your practising can be done on a pad. Ask yourself if so much of your practice has to take place on the full kit. Many of the rudiments and sticking patterns can be practiced just as well on a pad. It may relieve your stress/frustration after a hard day to make a lot of noise but your frustration relief may cause stress in other people, which isn't really fair on them.

Please note that all South Norfolk Council fact sheets are available in large print, cassette form or alternative languages upon request

