



# Atlanta Quest

## Audition Materials

2024



---

CYMBALS

---



# Atlanta Quest 2024

## Cymbal Technique Guide

Thank you for your interest in being a part of the Atlanta Quest and Q2 Cymbal Lines!

**Control · Aggression · Quality**

### WHAT TO EXPECT AT AUDITIONS:

Here at Atlanta Quest, we strive to promote a stress-free and relaxed audition environment and that philosophy is echoed through the rest of our organization. While it is an audition, we want you to feel relaxed and in control of everything you do. Regardless of any outcome of your audition, we hope you have an enjoyable weekend and are able to leave with a positive and educational experience.

At the first audition, we will spend a majority of our time defining and teaching the foundations of our technique.

This will include:

**Playing positions:** vertical, horizontal/gumption, etc

**Playing techniques:** crashes, chokes, taps, sizzles, and other timbres/methods.

**Flips:** variations, timing, pathways, quality of motion.

**Short visual and musical phrases:** releases & reloads, simple to complex split patterns, visual sequences.



We will teach a few exercises that we use to break down and reinforce these visual and musical concepts, as well as a brief audition etude. Also anticipate a short but intensive visual/marching block; please come prepared with athletic apparel including tennis shoes, no flip-flops or sandals please.

## CRITERIA:

**Musicality:** While cymbals are often seen as a visual complement to the ensemble, they are in fact an instrument and will be played as such. At Atlanta Quest, we always approach cymbal playing with the best sound quality possible, whether it's a crash, a sizzle, or any other timbres you can imagine.

**Strength:** Cymbals are a very physical instrument that requires high levels of arm/shoulder/core control. While we will do plenty of strength training throughout the season, make sure you put in ample preparation before the audition that way you are not struggling with the physical side of the instrument, and can perform to the best of your ability.

**Presentation:** What do we mean by presentation? This is how the line is viewed from an outside perspective. From how we rehearse to how we carry ourselves in the lot and in the show, we strive for a confident, stoic mentality that reflects our professionalism. At auditions, you will be presenting yourself to the staff as well as your fellow peers. Things we will be looking for: positive attitude, confident mentality, desire to learn, and how you interact with other auditionees.

**Visual:** For cymbals, the visual package includes the following: our flip ups/downs, playing positions, simple to complex visual sequences, as well as body/cymbal control while on the move. In everything you do visually, we encourage you to think about these concepts: accuracy, explosiveness, and control; these will be further defined at auditions.



## Positions:

For the first audition, we would like for you to have a general understanding of the following positions:

- **Set**
- **Hip Rest**
- **Horizontal**
- **Vertical**

## Set

The set position is our home base, or “attention” position. For set, your cymbals will be in line with the seam of your pants and about 2 fingers distance away from your body. You’ll want to keep the elbows out and away from our body, with a slight bend. The goal with our set position is to look as strong as possible, while also being as relaxed as possible. This can only be maximized by standing with tall, lifted posture; the ribcage is lifted upwards and out of the hips by engaging the core muscles, body weight is presented slightly forward and not in the heels.



## Hip Rest

Hip Rest is not used as often as our other positions, but is still an important position to be comfortable with for visual purposes. At hip rest, we look for a V shape with the cymbals in front of our body. The same 2 finger displacement from the set position will be the distance between the bottom edges of our cymbals. We use the wrists and fingertips to manipulate the cymbals in order to prevent the knots from flaring out forwards, or angling too deeply inwards. Much like the set position, the goal is to have strong elbows while also remaining as relaxed as possible.



## Horizontal

Horizontal is the position that we generally spend the majority of our time using. It is not quite a true "horizontal" angle, but instead you want the cymbals to be in line with your body as if you were wearing a seat belt in a car. This angle should be just slightly more than a 45 degree angle, as well as maintaining a 2 fingers distance between the cymbals. Your cymbals will be in line with the center of your chest, and should be a nice comfortable distance away from your body (not too close, not fully extended). Much like all of our other positions, the goal is to look big and strong, while also staying as relaxed as possible.



## Vertical

Vertical is our other most commonly used position; unlike horizontal, this position is much truer to its name. The knots of the cymbals should be in line with your eyes, whereas the common tendency is to hold this position slightly lower than necessary. Much like Horizontal, you want to be a comfortable distance away from your body. The cymbals should be 2 fingers distance apart all the way around at vertical as well.



## Audition Materials:

As part of the audition process, we would like for you to come prepared with the following exercises to the first audition:

- **Flip Exercise A**
- **Flip Exercise B**
- **Crash Breakdown**
- **Crash Choke Breakdown**
- **Tap Choke Breakdown**
- **Crash/Crash Choke/Tap Choke**
- **Gripz**
- **Contact**

We will go over each of these exercises briefly at auditions, but again, the expectation will be that you come prepared to perform each exercise to the best of your ability. Along with instructions for each exercise there is a YouTube video accompanying each description, to help give you a better idea of how exactly to perform each assignment.



## Flip Exercise A

<https://youtu.be/YH8McL79V70>

This exercise breaks down our normal flips, starting slow and then building up speed to our regular “fast” flips. This exercise is composed of four parts: 3 count flips, 2 count flips, fast flips every 4 beats, and fast flips every 2 beats). No matter the count structure, the pattern you will follow will always be as such:

1. **Hip Rest**
2. **Horizontal**
3. **Vertical**
4. **Set**
5. **Vertical**
6. **Set**

The “3 count” flips are actually 2 full beats, so you can think about starting the motion on 1, and ending on 3.

The “2 count” flips are actually 1 full beat, so you can think about starting the motion on 4, and ending on 1.

The fast flips are thought of as instantaneous. While physically impossible, the goal is to start and stop the motion on beat 1. For these flips, you may find it helpful to *wait longer, move faster, hit harder*.

## Flip Exercise B

<https://youtu.be/C-xQwMEeZF4>

This exercise breaks down our flips that use contrary motion, where the hands perform different tasks simultaneously (often referred to as Sones/Jones/Bones flips). Flip Exercise B comprises of the same exact count structure as Flip Exercise A, however the pattern that you will follow for each part is different.

1. **Horizontal**
2. **Vertical**
3. **Horizontal**
4. **Set**

The first flip from Set to Horizontal is a normal flip every time you encounter it. All of the following flips will always be contrary motion (left hand does an inward flip, whereas the right hand will do an outward flip).

## Crash Breakdown

<https://youtu.be/y5lq1y9Y3po>

Crash Breakdown will begin with flipping up to horizontal position on beat 5 of the count-off. Start by pulling back in 4 Counts to prep position and holding 4 Counts. Then you will move the blade to the front contact point (2 ½ inch in from the blade) contacting the cymbal and you will hold for 4 Counts. You'll then retract back to the prep position in 4 Counts. From there you will move forward in four counts contacting the cymbal at the contact point on Count 3 and pushing through with palm finishing at the contact point on Count 4 then holding for an additional 4 Counts. You'll finish by moving in 4 Counts back to horizontal position holding for Counts 5,6,7,8.

Next you'll:

- Move 2 Counts to the prep position and Hold 2 Counts.
- Move the blade 2 Counts to the contact point and Hold 2 Counts
- Move 2 Counts back to the Prep position holding 2 Counts.
- Next, push through the contact point in 3 counts. Contacting the blade on contact on beat 2 and pushing through and contacting the palm on the contact point on the an of 2 finishing on beat 3.
- Beat 4 is a Dead count. No motion
- Finish by returning to horizontal position 5,6,7,8.
- You will then play 4 regular crashes with the prep being on beat 4, playing on beat 5, and returning to horizontal on beat 7.



## Crash Choke Breakdown

<https://youtu.be/0DdK7r2J4rU>

For the Horizontal Crash Choke Breakdown you will play a normal crash, but the choke will be offset to count 3, then count 2, then on one. The goal of offsetting the choke is to establish a quality crash sound, that is unaffected by moving to the choke. The pattern for this exercise is as follows:

1. Prep on 8, Crash on 1, Choke on 3, Reset on 5 (x2)
2. Prep on 8, Crash on 1, Choke on 2, Reset on 5 (x2)
3. Prep on 8, Crash on 1, Choke on 1, Reset on 5 (x2)



Generally, our reset after a crash choke will be on count 3, but for the sake of the exercise, it will always fall on count 5. After playing the final crash choke, you will push down back to set, instead of resetting back to horizontal.

## Tap Choke Breakdown

<https://youtu.be/KuZIKQQJ6UU>

The Tap Choke Breakdown follows the exact same count structure/pattern as the Crash Choke Breakdown, but this time around the focus is creating a great Tap sound before choking the sound off. As always, keeping the hands relaxed and the fingers off of the cymbals before the choke will help create a resonant sound.



## Crash/Crash Choke/Tap Choke

<https://youtu.be/pEqu8CCHHAK>

Following our breakdowns of each of our main 3 sounds, we will put the 3 together in a short sequence to work on the consistency of each sound in a more realistic show-like context. As the name says you will play a Crash, a Crash Choke, and a Tap Choke, and then repeat that sequence 2 more times. For each sound, you will always prep on 8, play on 1, and then reset on the following beat 3. As with the Crash Choke and Tap Choke Breakdowns, you will push down to set after the final Tap Choke, instead of resetting to Horizontal.

## Gripz

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1s0CUL-2d2K>

Purpose: To use each grip style in context as well as increasing fluidity moving from one grip to the next.

Instructions: Be able to perform this exercise with your right hand only, left hand only, and both hands simultaneously. All movements initiate on count 8 and land on count 1 EXCEPT: **The bolded instructions** \*\*\* -- These instructions initiate on 7 and land on count 1.

- Flip to port during the count off
- Release to dinner plate
- Reload to standard vertical
- Release-Reload to standard port
- Release-Reload to backwards hand
- **Release-Reload to table top** \*\*\*
- Fling cymbal up and back to (closed) two finger
- Release cymbal, keeping the strap tight around your thumb, to backward four-fifths
- Reload to vertical four-fifths
- **Release-Reload to standard port** \*\*\*

- **Release (two rotations/removing thumb from the strap) to catch the cymbal perpendicular with the ground with your thumb, keeping middle a ring in strap\*\*\***
- Raise the cymbal straight up (leading with your pinky) switching your
- thumb into the strap and catching the cymbal with your pinky, ring, and middle
- Release to thumb dinner plate
- Reload to thumb hip rest
- Release to thumb dinner plate (flat) with your cymbal out to your side perpendicular to the ground
- Reload to thumb vertical
- Drop cymbal inward, release the strap, and catch cymbal perpendicular to the ground

### **Contact Exercise**

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-B2YJ1wYI0J5v>

Purpose: To develop confidence while your hand is completely disassociated from the strap.

Instructions: Begin the exercise with one cymbal in your right hand, gripping with your thumb, index, and middle finger, with the strap facing away from you (to your right).

### **Swing And Flip (16 counts)**

- Swing the cymbal to your right until it is parallel with the ground (strap towards the sky) -- **Count 1**
- Push the cymbal downward and rotate it so that the cymbal is in your armpit with the strap facing towards you. Your hand should be underneath the cymbal -- **Count 3**
- Roll the cymbal forward and catch it in the starting position, this time it will be facing the opposite direction (knot to your right) -- **Count 5 (hold 6-7-8)**
- Swing the cymbal to your right until it is parallel with the ground (strap towards the ground) -- **Count 1**
- Push the cymbal downward and rotate it so that the cymbal is in your armpit with the knot facing towards you. Your hand should be underneath the cymbal -- **Count 3**
- Roll the cymbal forward and catch it in the starting position (strap to your right) -- **Count 5 (hold 6-7-8)**

### **Contact Toss (16 counts)**

- Rotate the cymbals inward, flipping the cymbal, and catch it in your hand at a dinner plate position with the strap facing upward -- **Initiate on count 1 and land on count 2**
- Drop the cymbal inward catching it at the starting position (knot to your right) -- **Count 5**
- Rotate the cymbals inward, flipping the cymbal, and catch it in your hand at a dinner plate position with the knot facing upward -- **Initiate on count 1 and land on count 2**
- Drop the cymbal inward catching it at the starting position (strap to your right) -- **Count 5**

### **Switch (8 counts)**

- Lift the cymbal, leading with the top of your hand, and switch which way the cymbal is facing by rotating the cymbal inward with your thumb and index finger. Catch the cymbal exactly how it started except now the knot is to your right (your hand should be on top of cymbal) -- **Initiate count 1, land count 2**
- Repeat the above instructions, this time instead of catching the top of the cymbal you will bring the cymbal higher and catch the bottom of the cymbal (strap to your right) -- **Initiate on count 5 and land on count 6**

### **Put It All Together (8 counts)**

- Roll the cymbal forward, out of your hand, and catch it in the starting position (strap to your right) -- **Count 1**
- Swing the cymbal to your right until it is parallel with the ground (strap towards the sky) -- **Count 3**
- Bring the cymbal back towards you as if you're going to flip it into your armpit. This time follow through the motion and flip the cymbal up on to your hand in a dinner plate position with the strap facing the sky -- **Count 5-6-7**

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Half (32 counts)**

- Refer to video for catch positions
- All catches are 8 count phrases that either
- Catch on 1 and land on 5
- Catch on 1&3 and land on 5
- When complete switch hands and repeat all instructions on your left hand

### **FAQ:**

#### ***Do I need to bring my own cymbals?***

While we will have a couple pairs of cymbals available, it is highly recommended that you bring your own cymbals to the audition.

#### ***I don't think I'm ready...I don't know if I should come to the audition.***

Yes you are! The worst thing you can do is cut yourself from the audition, you never know what the possibilities are if you don't take that first step.

#### ***How can I get stronger before the audition?***

Anything and everything, you can lift weights, go running, work on core strength exercises (sit ups, crunches, etc..). But the best way to get better at holding your cymbals is simply that; holding your cymbals. Try holding your cymbals up for a minute, then 2 minutes, and keep building from there.

#### ***I've never played cymbals before, can I still come to auditions?***

We will be teaching all of our fundamentals at auditions. Experience is helpful, but by no means required; we still encourage you to come for a great learning experience!

Thank you for your interest in Atlanta Quest. Please contact our staff if you have any questions!

- Kellen Matthews, [k.matthews1722.km@gmail.com](mailto:k.matthews1722.km@gmail.com)
- Steve Nelson, Branden Annakie, Kevin Caruso, Anna Koh

# Cymbals

Up to 152 BPM: 9"/top to B  
160BPM+: 4"/As written

## NDA

Atlanta Quest 2024

AQ Staff

♩ = 160-192

7

12

17

21

24

28

32

38

42

45

51

Normal: crash/crash choke  
X: hi-hats  
Triangle : tap/tap choke  
Diamond: sizzles

# Counter Flams OG

Atlanta Quest 2024

$\text{♩} = 112\text{ish}$

*f*

5

9 **A**

15

18

Detailed description: This block contains five staves of cymbal notation for the piece 'Counter Flams OG'. The first staff is in 4/4 time and begins with a tempo marking of 112ish and a dynamic marking of *f*. The notation uses various symbols: 'x' for hi-hats, triangles for tap/tap choke, diamonds for sizzles, and normal notes for crash/crash choke. The notation is divided into measures by vertical bar lines. The second staff starts at measure 5, the third at measure 9 (marked with a boxed 'A'), the fourth at measure 15, and the fifth at measure 18. The notation includes rests, accidentals, and various rhythmic patterns characteristic of cymbal playing.

Normal: crash/crash choke  
X: hi-hats  
Triangle : tap/tap choke  
Diamond: sizzles

Cymbals

# Counter Flams - Tag

Atlanta Quest 2024

AQ Staff

♩ = 112ish



*f*

