

Bass Drum Pedal Maintenance for Better All-around Performance

Probably no piece of drum hardware is put under more stress and strain than a bass drum pedal, and no other component is more important to keeping the beat going. Any drummer who's experienced kick pedal failure due to a broken chain or slipped spring knows that feeling of frustration when the bass drum slips or starts making distracting sounds—or has had to stop a studio recording session due to squeaks and other noises. Often these problems are due to metal fatigue and friction.

Often problems with metal fatigue and friction are the culprit, and can be addressed with lubrication.

There are a handful of maintenance products for hi-hat stands and kick pedals on the market today that target basic pedal maintenance and upkeep. Most of these standard lubricants have limited capabilities when it comes to maintaining and protecting modern, more complex drum kit hardware components and assemblies.

Pedals take a beating - Again, it's no secret that pedals take a beating, demonstrated most vividly in the the extraordinary demands of highly kinetic genres like drum'n'bass and speed metal. Drummers now routinely shell out from \$200 to \$600 or more for higher-end pedal assemblies. Some double-pedal assemblies have well over 100 distinct points that greatly benefit from lubrication. These can include springs, bearings, hinges, chains, drives, universal joints, angle cams and adjusters.



Double Bass Drum Pedal with Split-Cam Design.

Preventing cross-talk - Annoying squeaks, friction, or sluggish response aren't just distracting annoyances—they drive recording engineers crazy, and eat up valuable studio time. Newer design isolation mounts help to prevent cross-talk among toms and various other components of your kit, especially important if you're a session player. Proper lubrication and maintenance also help isolate and decrease vibration from the various drum set components and increase the clarity and separation of your drums during performance. And your engineer will thank you!



Lubricating u-joints for smooth, vibration-free response.

Lubricate for long-term protection - Conventional machine oils, Teflon-and silicone-based formulas, chain and other inferior lubricants tend to move around—they're unstable and migrate to other parts of your drums while attracting dirt, grime, and other debris. These debris particles remain present, suspended in oil and contributing to premature wear. Reinforced Teflon compounds tend to have similar problems when exposed to atmosphere. Factory lubricants often fall short of any effective long-term protection.



Applying barrier film lubricant to all moving metal parts.

New technologies deliver more effective lubrication - New introductions into the musical instrument maintenance market take a different approach, employing impact-resistant barrier film technologies. Instead of using petroleum, Teflon, and other conventional lubricants, these micro-barrier technologies appear to be highly effective in handling hours of rigorous use (and sometimes abuse) of drum pedals. Tests of various kick pedals using barrier-film lubricants demonstrated quiet, noise-free action and fluid, instantaneous response. Barrier-film agents are also less messy, and won't build up or migrate, remaining in place to deliver effective lubrication throughout punishing stage or studio use.



Lubricating footboard, hinge, and heel plate.

And finally, a good drum kit maintenance program should not be limited to your pedals. Regularly check your hardware to ensure screws, keys, clamps, and other components are tightened securely. You may want a separate case for your bass pedal to keep it secure from your other hardware. After checking out your hardware, lubricate hi-hat stands and pedals, thrones, mounts, racks, and all other moving metal parts of the drum set to keep the over-all sound, performance, and response of your drums at the highest levels. And finally, to return to the bass drum pedal, keep it well tuned-up and lubricated with some of the exciting new technologies now available, and your kick pedal will keep kicking for years to come!