

How to play the Didgeridoo

Basic drone and rhythm techniques

Getting a good seal: Place the mouthpiece of your didgeridoo to one side of your mouth. Most often right handed people to the right, left handed to the left. Your lips are looser in the middle. On the side they are tighter, that is why you can control the airflow better and you will obtain a much shaper sound.

Important: Never breath in through your mouth, this loosens your airtight seal and creates bad habits. Always breath in through your nose and once you get to the circular breathing exercise you will already be in the habbit of using your nose.

Drone: Practise "blowing a raspberry" Keeping your lips loose and relaxed, breath out through your mouth while vibrating your lips.

Bass Drum Effect

Stop the vibration/drone with your tongue, slowly at first and then faster...

Use your voice as an imitation of

1. a Dingo: scream while your drone
2. a Kookaburra: ku, ku, ku while you drone
3. Hummmm for the meditative style

Trumpet

Tight lips and a lot of pressure, try to do the trumpet the same as you have been doing in No 1, mainly tongue work. (Spit effect)

Kangaroo

Again you will be using your tongue. Try doing a wolf whistle. Now, do this again and concentrate on your tongue movement. It is the same movement you do while you vibrate/drone, but remember to keep your cheeks tight. Use your hands to make sure your cheeks are in the right position - tight.

Deep Sound

By now you have probably realised the didgeridoo is a wonderful rhythm instrument. With No 5 you can change the sound of a didgeridoo, by creating more volume in your cheeks, by lowering your jaws. The vibration gets looser and you will lose more air, but the sound will get deeper.

Lung Vibration

Instead of regular air pressure from your lungs, try now a "puff, puff, puff ..." – Remember from your lungs - not your mouth.

6 ½ Well Done

Try slapping your cheeks while they are all puffed up when droning. The lungs are used as air backup to play these rhythm patterns. Building up muscle control and strength in your cheeks is most important in successful playing.

Circular Breathing

1. Blow
 2. Puff
 3. Sniff
1. Blow: Start with your basic drone.
 2. Puff: Then let your cheeks fill and using only your cheek muscles, squirt this air out (tight raspberry)
 3. Sniff: Now sniff in through your nose, short breaths only. Continue on with your blow, squirt, sniff. Get it technique perfect. Once your cheeks are strong enough you will be able to follow your sniff with pressure enough from your lungs for a drone - then you will be circular breathing.

And now - enjoy practicing :-)