

Breaking Too Many Cymbals Is Not Normal For Any Drummer Out There

Cracking a cymbal or two is expected in the career of any drummer. However, players that complain that they have to buy new cymbals every couple of months should take a step back and read the writing on the wall. Cymbals, by and large, are tough instruments. They should provide years of use if you treat them well. If you are playing extremely loud music, raise your cymbals high enough so that you can strike them on the edge multiple times; this means having the ability to make a nice, clean hit even as the cymbal bobs downward. Your ability to "get under" the cymbal will allow you to play loud, articulate crashes without having to clobber the cymbal with all your might. Using an appropriate stick will affect your cymbal longevity, too. Over the last ten years or so, a number of specialty sticks have come out on the market. Some of these sticks are made of plastic and metal or a combination of the two. Only wooden drumsticks should be used, as they help to take the burden off of each crash. After multiple uses, wooden sticks begin to break down and chip. This is actually good! You want to use a stick that is durable but has some give. Metal sticks are particularly murderous to cymbals. Most companies that make metal sticks claim that they're to be used only for practice pads. Unfortunately, some inexperienced players think that they can use them to play louder or to play beats that are "more fat." This is pure silliness. Metal sticks will not only prematurely destroy drumheads by putting huge dents in them; they will demolish your cymbals!

Lastly, the most notorious error is fastening the wing nut down too tightly on your cymbal tilter. If you do this, the cymbal will have limited ability to waver and dip as you strike it. Not only will this choke the sound of the cymbal, it will interfere with the cymbal's ability to endure the impact of the stick. This is the number one reason why drummers crack cymbals. For general cymbal health, keep the wing nut loose on top of the cymbal, use a washer and felt pad under the cymbal, and make sure you place a nylon or rubber sleeve on the threaded portion of the cymbal arm; this is the very tip of the cymbal stand that touches the cymbal itself. You never want metal on metal. If you don't use a sleeve, the cymbal will not only rattle on the stand, it will become, as drummers call it, "key-holed." This means that the center hole of the cymbal will wear down and resemble an old-fashioned keyhole on a door. Hardware health is also important. Hardware can become stripped if you're wrenching the wing nuts and other various screws too tightly. Most drummers consistently do this for fear that a cymbal or a tom-tom is going to come crashing down while they play. This is mostly paranoia.

A basic rule of thumb is that if you're having trouble loosening your wing nuts as you pack up your gear, you're probably screwing them on too tightly. Sometimes stands stick and need a little tap with a drumstick, but this should not be an everyday, every time occurrence. Also, if you start seeing dents in the stand where the screw twists into the metal tubing, or if chrome has flaked away where the screws dig into the stand, you're probably giving it too much elbow grease. In general, your stands will have a much longer lifespan if you're gentle with them.

About the Author

Eric is using [Zildjian](#), and [Sabian](#) cymbals in his drum setup. Eric is also an active [Drum Forum](#) member at Drum Solo Artist where he is answering drum related questions, and helping drummers with tips and advices.

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