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Loosen Up! Here's a new twist on an old warm up routine with which you can combine related standard hand & foot techniques, in a dependent manner, to build a strong foundation for your technique.

"8 to 1" Imagine playing a steady 8th note pulse at a moderate tempo. In this exercise you'll work your right limbs in unison alternating with your left limbs as follows:

[: 8R / 8L | 7R / 7L | 6R / 6L | 5R / 5L | 4R / 4L | 3R / 3L | 2R / 2L | 1R / 1L | 2R / 2L |
3R / 3L | 4R / 4L | 5R / 5L | 6R / 6L | 7R / 7L :]

Parallel Techniques between Hands & Feet

Section I: Hands: Wrist control (aka Gladstone Technique) – a relaxed closed finger grip in which all notes are played with no bounce as down strokes (keep wrists loose). **Feet:** Toe strokes (aka heel down) – keep weight on stool, not pedal; All strokes are played w/heel down, keep ankle loose, w/toes pressing pedal down/beater into head.

Section II: Hands: Finger Control (incorporating Moeller Technique) – wrist drops for 1st note, bounce stick w/fingers (like dribbling a basketball) for remaining notes, keep "back fingers" in contact w/stick. **Feet:** Leg strokes (aka heel up) – keep weight on stool, not pedal; Lift leg from torso, all strokes are played w/heel up (about 1 – 2 heel inches off the bottom of the pedal, bouncing ball of foot on springy "sweet spot" of the pedal. Keep ankle & knee loose.

Section III: Hands: Wrist/Fingers Alternating (aka "open/close" or "drop/snap" technique) – wrist up/stick perpendicular to playing surface, drop wrist/open fingers at contact of stick to head & let stick rebound back. Then snap fingers shut, sending stick back to surface, pulling wrist back up at second contact of stick to head. This stroke should also be practiced reversed ("close/open"). **Feet:** Toe/Heel Alternating (aka rocking technique) – Alternate heel down/toe strokes (see Section I) with heel up/leg strokes (see Section II), by rocking foot up & down on the footboard of the pedal, executing a toe stroke, lifting heel & executing a leg stroke, dropping heel back down into position to repeat the sequence. This stroke should also be practiced reversed ("Heel/Toe").

Practice Tips: Set a metronome to the desired tempo you wish to warm up with (think of the click as 8th notes and play in unison with it). I try to run each section 3 times, segueing directly from one section to the next. **Experiment with tempo** – slow to moderate tempos are good as you develop the various techniques, increasing the tempo as you become more fluid with them. **Experiment with dynamics** – greater control is gained by running this exercise through a variety of dynamic levels. Experiment w/varying degrees of soft and loud volumes. Try incorporating crescendos and decrescendos. Use your imagination. This exercise requires discipline but the benefits are great. You can loosen up, improve your technique, stamina, consistency & control all at once. Give it a try!