

Buying and Preparing Zills (Finger Cymbals)

By Jewel

Buying zills

- It's generally the case with zills that you get what you pay for. Cheap zills may have a less pleasing ring. This is OK for practicing, but your zills need to function well, and unfortunately, very cheap zills sometimes don't.
- Be sure to buy zills with two holes for the elastic. If they only have one hole they will wobble on your fingertips, which will make them very difficult to play.
- Check the weight – they should not be so heavy that your hands get tired. For beginners, I recommend a small-medium sized pair (up to around 6cm diameter). Larger zills are harder to control.
- Check the sound – hold two zills by their elastic and strike their edges together. The best zills have a light, ringing tone. Don't go for a pair that are too loud or harsh sounding.

Attaching elastic

- Zills are worn inside the middle (not ring) finger and on the thumb, and held with elastic (see photos below). Use firm, flat elastic that is about the same width as the holes in the zills. Thin or very stretchy elastic will allow the zills to wobble.
- Thread the elastic through the holes from the inside of the zills, around your finger (near the base of the nail), and back through the other hole. Pull the elastic tight and knot on the inside of the zill. You may need help from a friend to tie the elastic.
- The elastic should be tight enough that your zills don't wobble or slip off, but not so tight that they cut off the circulation. It often takes a few goes to get it right, so practice with them and adjust as necessary. To make elastic neater, you can sew it closed flat on the inside, but only do this once you're sure the length is correct.
- Each finger is a different size, so you'll get the best fit if you tie each zill on each finger individually. Mark the inside of the elastic with 'RT' for right thumb, 'R' for right finger, and so forth.

Now, look at the 'gallop rhythm' section here: <http://www.shira.net/zills-44.htm> and start zilling!

