

Handbell Techniques

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Technique	Symbol/s	Description of Execution
Body echo	BE Body Echo	touch the bell lightly against clothes
Brush damp or body damp	BD	pull the bell casting down over the body or use a hand to partially damp
Controlled diminuendo	CD	after ringing the bell, slide a hand or finger(s) up the outside of the casting toward the rim
Damp Sign		the cessation of sound in LV passages – may also appear on note stem for a selective damp
Echo		lightly touch the rim to the pad and lift bell
Gyro		rotate the bell sideways in a circle with wrist motion as in twirling a baton
Hand Martellato		place the hand on the outside of the casting instead of on the handle while striking the table
Let Vibrate/ Laissez Vibrer	LV	all bells keep sounding regardless of note value until a damping sign is notated – R, LV, 
Mallets		strike the casting at the same place the clapper strikes, use a loose wrist and bounce the mallet off the bell - use drum sticking patterns for rhythmic sections - in the air/on the table
Mallet Lift		strike the casting with the mallet and immediately lift the bell off the table
Mallet Roll		use two mallets on the outside of the casting to produce a drum roll effect in the air/on the table
Martellato		no more than 6 inches off the pad and keep the bell handle parallel to the table
Martellato lift		use the above method and lift or lightly bounce the bell off the pad
Muted Martellato		mostly used in solo ringing – place one or two fingers on casting while striking on the table

Pluck	PI	flip the clapper up - keep hands off the casting
Pluck lift	PI 	throw the clapper and lift the bell off the table
Rim brush/sizzle	RB	ring on beat one, then go horizontal over the table on two, drag bell edge across the table toward the ringer on beat three
Ring	R	standard ringing technique – casting begins upright and is moved away from the body in an elliptical shape with the wrist giving a slight forward flick at the strikepoint
Ring hook	RH	ring one bell normally and then suspend the handle from the little finger
Ring touch	RT	ring the bell very close to the body and then pull the elbow backward to completely damp the bell on the curve of the body
Salute		ring the bell normally and then fully extend the arm into the air
Sforzando	SFZ	ring bell with a hard attack, simultaneously turn your body sideways and use the entire arm (not the wrist) to pull the bell straight back past your ear in an upright position
Shake	<small>Sk or</small> ~~~~~	loosen the grip and let the handle do part of the work or shake sideways on smaller bells
Shimmer		rotate the bell from side to side while in an upright position
Singing Bowl	SB	rub the outside rim of the bell in a clockwise motion with a dowel preferably covered with suede, leather, or dipped in rubber
Swing	Sw 	create a traveling path by using “T” foot position and use a bent arm or fully extended arm swing depending on the space
Table landing damp	TLD	ring the bell normally and then turn it completely upside down and push the rim into the foam with the handle pointing up
Tap pluck	TPI	use the thumb to force the clapper down
Thumb damp	TD	Thumb damp
Vibrato	<i>vib.</i>	loosen the grip on the handle and squeeze/roll the handle by curling fingers in and out