Eight on a Hand

Purpose: This exercise focuses on the basic velocity stroke. The exercise seems simple, but there are many things to think about.

1) Stick motion: Do your sticks move exactly the same way for every stroke?

2) Sound Quality: Does every stroke sound the same? How about from left to right hand? Make sure you play every note with the same exact volume. Some common mistakes:

   a) Pounding the last note of each hand when stopping the stick from rebounding.
   b) At higher tempos, playing the first note higher than the rest of the notes... just because it is easier to play the first note higher doesn't mean you should.
   c) Pounding the very last note of the exercise.
   d) Playing the right hand louder than the left... don't be the guy with the weak left!

3) Rhythm and Timing: How perfect is your eighth note rhythm? Some common areas where mistakes occur:

   a) First two notes of the exercise: The first note defines the exercise starting point and the second note defines the tempo. You must internalize the tempo before you start so that these two notes are 'perfect'.
   b) Hand-to-hand transfers: It is very common for people to warp the rhythm when switching hands. The key here is to think of the exercise as a steady stream of eighth notes while ignoring the fact that you are switching hands.

4) Variations to this exercise:

   a) Play 16, 32, or 64 on a hand.
   b) Play exercise at different heights; 1", 3", 9", 12", 15", Full.
   c) Play exercise as all double stops, checking that the stick motion from left to right is the same.
   d) Play on low-rebound surface to improve muscle strength and endurance
   e) Play exercise with each individual finger on right hand and the thumb on the left hand to improve hand / finger strength