

# DETERMINING TIMPANI HEAD SIZES

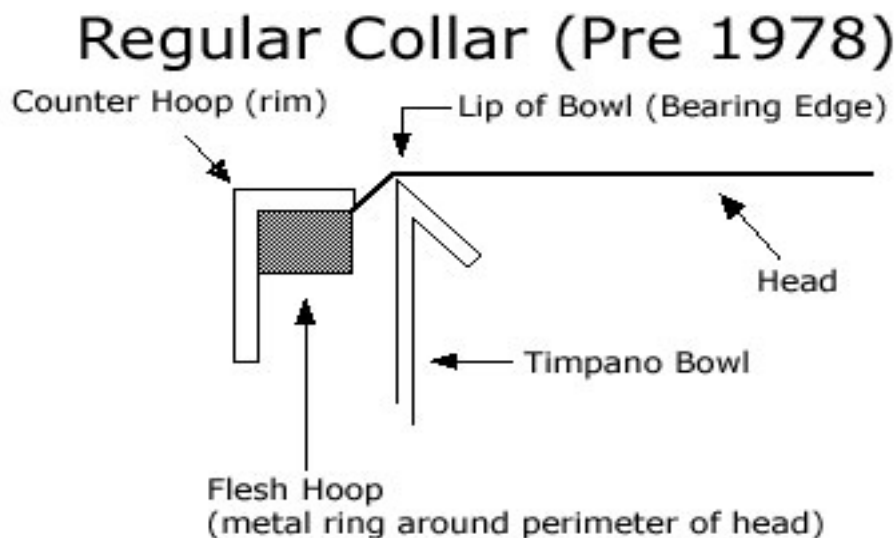
Jeffrey H. Vick  
jeffreyhvick@gmail.com

529 South Black Avenue  
[www.jeffreyhvick.com](http://www.jeffreyhvick.com)

Bozeman, MT 59715  
(406) 570-5154 (mobile)

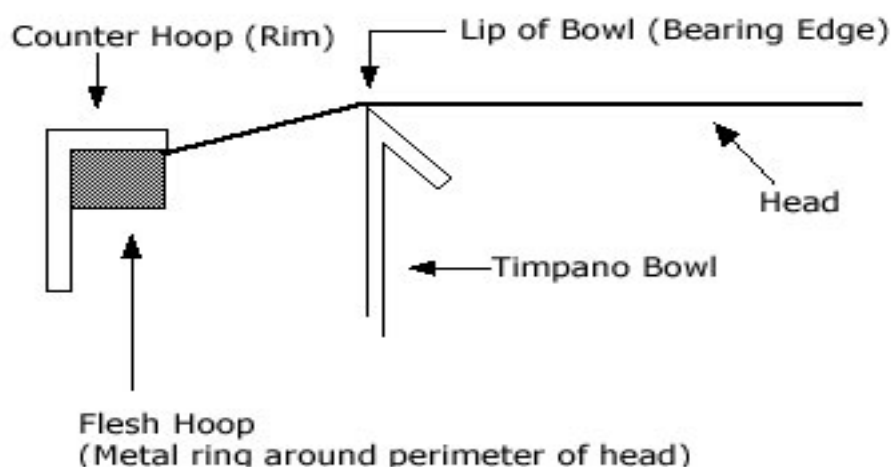
Unlike a Snare Drum Bass Drum, or Tom, Timpani use a different method to determine the size head that is needed. Timpani heads extend beyond the edge of the bowl, thus needing a larger diameter head than the actual size of the drum itself. The crucial piece of information needed to determine the proper head needed is how far the head extends beyond the bowl. A 29" timpani would need a 30" (regular collar/non-extended) or 31" head (extended collar).

If there appears to be little to no space between the lip of the bowl (the bearing edge) and the counter hoop (or rim), then you have a drum with a regular collar. These drums were probably made before 1978. Older Ludwig, WFL, Slingerland or Leedy drums are commonly found that fit this description. Determining the actual size of the drum itself can be tricky. Before 1978, manufacturers such as Ludwig made drums in many different sizes. (20", 23", 25", 26", 27", 28", 29", 30") A good rule of thumb for pre-1978 drums is to add 1" to the drum size to obtain the actual head size that is needed. The exception is for older 23" drums, which need a 24 ¼" head.



If your drums were made after 1978, manufacturers began to standardize sizes. There appears to be a 1"-2" space between the lip of the bowl and the counter hoop. This is what is commonly referred to as an extended collar. This means you will add 2" on to the size of the drums. After 1978 the manufacturers standardized most of their drum sizes to 20", 23", 26", 29", and 32", so their heads are 22", 25", 28", 31", and 34" respectively. Exceptions to this rule are the top of the line drums such as the Adams Philharmonic, Walter Lights, the Yamaha 9000 series drums, and Premier. In general, the 2" rule will apply on most other post 1978 Ludwig, Yamaha, or Adams timpani.

## Extended Collar (After 1978)



The best way to determine the correct size head you need is to take the head off the drum and measure the outside diameter of the head. Outside diameter means from one side of the metal ring to the other. If the head is still on the drum, you can measure from inside one tension rod across to the opposite tension rod:



^ Measure from HERE across to opposite side

Another thing to watch out for with Ludwig Timpani and Ludwig Heads:

- A 26" Ludwig Timpani with a Regular Collar will use a Ludwig 26" Regular Head, or a 27" Remo Head
- A 26" Ludwig Timpani with an Extended Collar will use a Ludwig 26" Extended Head, or a 28" Remo Head.

RESOURCES: Remo Percussion, Steve Weiss Music