

6 Metronome Games to Enhance Time Awareness

The metronome is an indispensable tool for musicians to practice with a steady pulse and accurate subdivisions. Drummers need to be especially mindful of this since they are usually the primary time keepers and feel providers of an ensemble. A digital metronome with the following features is recommended: volume control, headphone jack, mute button, tap-in mode, and subdivision mode. In addition to simply playing along with a basic pulse, there are other ways to use the metronome. Here are six games to enhance your time awareness and rhythmic accuracy:

- 1. More space between beeps** - set the BPM (beats per minute) to half or quarter of the tempo you are working on. This is especially helpful for players who tend to overly rely on the metronome, requiring them to internalize the pulse.
- 2. Use the subdivision mode for accurate syncopated rhythms** - practicing syncopated (off-beat emphasized) rhythms while hearing all of the subdivisions (notes between the pulse) helps accurate note placement. For example, set the metronome on 16th notes to practice 'e' or 'a' rhythms.
- 3. Use the metronome as off beats** - think of the beeps not as the pulse, but as off beats instead. For example, you could think of the beeps as the 'and' (up-beat 8th note) to strengthen your awareness of those rhythms.
- 4. Switch between visual (muted) and auditory (look away)** - find out which skill is weaker and develop it. Try alternating between using both senses and only using the weaker one.
- 5. Use tap-in to guess BPM** - think of a tempo and tap it in to see how close you can get. Linking songs you know with their BPM is a good way to recall tempos.
- 6. Use software, apps, or higher-end metronomes for practicing odd meter** - make sure you practice odd-meter playing (such as 3, 5, 7, etc.) with a metronome that is capable of this. 'Time Guru' is an excellent app.

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