

Use of a Metronome

Okay, we all hate them but the fact is if you want to become a good musician you must be able to keep perfect time. Other musicians will not invite you back if your sense of time is off *and never argue with a drummer about timing. He's right and you're wrong.* Remember, time and rhythm is all a drummer does. It's all a metronome does too and it can help you move forward while keeping your progress in perspective.

We all feel we should be moving forward faster than we are. That's just part of being human. We tend to beat ourselves up when we're learning something new, often about things that we'd let anyone else off the hook about. Be kind to yourself and give yourself the time you need to move forward. A metronome gives you an objective way of knowing if you're moving forward or not.

Here's how to use a metronome when practicing. Set the metronome at the speed you want to practice the chord changes and turn it on. First let me just say never set a metronome slower than 60 bpm (beats per minute). It's just about impossible for a beginner to keep an even beat at a slower pace because you're just too new to the idea. A good place to start with chord changes is playing chords at a rate of 30 bpm... but wait, didn't I just tell you not to set the metronome below 60 bpm? That's right. Set it at 60 bpm and strum one time for every two clicks. There's your 30 bpm. Your ear has the advantage of hearing a usable tempo, and your hand gets to work at a slower pace.

After getting the chord changes down at 30 bpm, and when you're comfortable with it in your days practice, the following day bump the metronome up to 70 bpm and play it again at 1 strum every two clicks. That's equivalent to 35 bpm. This method allows you to know absolutely that you were not playing it a lot faster the previous day. It's very common to think you played a lot faster the day before when you did not.

When the metronome hits 120 bpm, return the metronome to 60 bpm and you can now strum once for each click. **Don't be embarrassed the first time you play with someone else, get a metronome.**

What type of Metronome to use is entirely up to you, but here's my suggestion. Get yourself a new metronome rather than using Grandma's old mechanical one. You can get a new quartz metronome easily for under \$30. All it has to do is click and most come with an 'A' note for tuning. I like Quiktime metronomes. They're cheap, easy to use and they easily fit in a case or pocket.

Never use the metronome with an earphone. The click is just too sharp, it will hurt your ear over time.

Is the metronome wrong? I hear this all the time, people claiming the metronomes tempo is wandering all over the place. What I do then is, I record them and playback what they have just played. They can easily see then that it is them and not the metronome. Are they stupid? I hope not, I've made the same claim myself and that's why I always return

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to using a metronome in my practice. Never setting the metronome before 60 bpm will make this claim far less likely.