

Metronomic Time Exercises

by Michael Lake



This is the written material for the Metronomic Rhythm lessons one and two.

Before getting into the exercises, I'd like to share something with you.

Within this module, I am introducing three types of rhythm: Metronomic, Groove, and Phrase. I talk about them like they are three separate things, but in fact, they are just three interconnected parts of the same thing: a musician's sense of time. I think a good sense of time is achieved only when all three combine.

Why separate them? Because it gives you the opportunity to focus in on and strengthen each of these three component parts of an improviser's sense of time. They need each other. A steady clock gives you the ability to ride the time and create a groove, but without the emotional pulse within your notes, you're just a metronome.

On the other hand, your playing could be emoting, but without steady time, you sound sloppy. You might have a nice groove to your improvised lines but without an interesting rhythm to your phrases, the musical story you're telling won't be nearly as good.

This is one of the great things about being a jazz player. We can create the rhythm of our musical lines and that rhythm becomes part of our musical identity. Do you have a signature to your sense of rhythm as you play over changes? In other words, would someone recognize your playing by the style of your time?

This may seem overly philosophical but before I launch you into the upcoming click track exercises, I want you to know that playing precisely on the beat is just one component of being a rhythmically skilled jazz player. There, I said it and we can move on!



Missing Beats Exercises

Each of these three audio files contain a click track that you will play over. But the click comes in and out in order to challenge your time.

Watch lesson two in order to learn how to play this exercise with these three audio files.



Missing Beats track 1 - Click every three beats



Missing Beats track 2 - Click every five beats



Missing Beats track 3 - Click every seven beats

Tips for practicing this

- **Record your playing.** Musicians tend to think that they play better while they're playing than they really sounded. One reason people resist recording themselves is because they fear the unvarnished reality of the recording. Record yourself and listen back.
- **Play short and light.** The more force you put into the note, the more you're likely to drag and fatter it likely becomes. See if you can mask the clicks with equally short pops of notes.
- **Play other rhythms eventually.** Add variety and fun to the exercise by playing eighth notes, triplets, and other rhythms against scales, intervals, and improvisation.

Click pattern of Missing Beats track 1



Missing Bars Exercises

Instead of playing over a click track missing an odd number of beats, these exercises challenge you to play over a click track missing full bars.

Watch lesson two in order to learn how to play this exercise with these audio files.

Tracks @110 bpm



Bar of click very other bar @110



Bar of click every fourth bar @110



Bar of click every third bar @110



Bar of click every fifth bar @110

Tracks @90 bpm



Bar of click very other bar @90



Bar of click every fourth bar @90



Bar of click every third bar @90



Bar of click every fifth bar @90

Tracks @60 bpm



Bar of click very other bar @60



Bar of click every fourth bar @60



Bar of click every third bar @60



Bar of click every fifth bar @60

Maniacal Metronome

The next exercise uses a crazy metronome. It clicks over a steady 4/4 beat but the clicks are not steady. Some bars contain three clicks, others 5 or 7. And the craziest bars are made up of 3 to 7 clicks with some of them extracted.

There are five versions of the maniacal metronome, each progressively more difficult. The first one is a simple predictable pattern. The second is a bit more complex. Number three is faster, going from 110 bpm to 136 bpm. Number four remains at 136bpm, and number five is back up at 140bpm.

This is another exercise that requires that you hear it, not think it. The pulse is always there, but it is subdivided in complex ways, especially numbers four and five. Notice how well you land on the periodic four quarter clicks bars. Those bars will tell you if you are in time. Do you get to them late or early?

Are you recording and listening back?



Maniacal Metronome #1



Maniacal Metronome #2



Maniacal Metronome #3



Maniacal Metronome #4



Maniacal Metronome #5



■ Rhythm Riding

Playing over these rhythmic beats provides a fun challenge.

Watch video three in module 4 in order to learn how to play this exercise with these audio files. Remember that each rhythm track contains three different patterns. And the higher the number, the more challenging the pattern and rhythms.

For each rhythm track, there is a version containing the three patterns and a version that contains no patterns - just the rhythm. For the rhythm-only tracks, create your own patterns.

Similar to the existing patterns, create your own that repeat at regular intervals on the start of bars as well as irregular patterns that start at alternating parts of bars.

1.  <i>Orbital Funk</i>	2.  <i>Organic AI</i>	3.  <i>Lunar Midnight</i>	4.  <i>Crunchy Pudding</i>
 <i>Orbital Funk No Patterns</i>	 <i>Organic AI No Patterns</i>	 <i>Lunar Midnight No Patterns</i>	 <i>Crunchy Pudding No Patterns</i>
5.  <i>Toys of the World</i>	6.  <i>Time Master</i>	7.  <i>Trail Run</i>	8.  <i>Jungle Juice</i>
 <i>Toys of the World No Patterns</i>	 <i>Time Master No Patterns</i>	 <i>Trail Run No Patterns</i>	 <i>Jungle Juice No Patterns</i>