

CLASSICAL TO JAZZ PIANO

#9 LESSON

By Greg Lloyd.

Improve Your Timing in Four Steps with a 'Cool' Hand Clapping Exercise and Make the Metronome Your Friend

This hand clapping exercise is great to help you feel comfortable with four rhythms and make the metronome your friend.

1. Do each exercise without the metronome to start, **just say the words**.
2. When you feel ready, **add in the metronome with the words**.
3. Then **change the words to the numbers** I have suggested.
4. When you feel ready, **add in the metronome with the numbers**.

For some people the metronome will be easy to add in, and for other people it will not. It's different for everyone. The important thing is to be patient and honest with yourself and to try and have fun with it.

Step 1 - Clapping the Crotchet or 1/4 note

The following four steps are in in 4/4. This step is the crotchet (1/4 note).


1. To start, just say the word **'Bat - man'**.
2. Now clap your hands every time you say **'Bat'**. You are now clapping a crotchet (1/4 note).
3. It is important to feel the **offbeat** with the word **'man'** as it helps you land on the **'Bat'** evenly. You can make up your own word as long as it has two syllables.
4. When you feel ready change the words to **'1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and'**.

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CROTCHET or 1/4 NOTE



A musical staff in 4/4 time showing four quarter notes on a treble clef. The notes are on the first line (G4), first space (A4), second line (B4), and second space (C5). Below the staff, the words 'Bat - man' are written under each note, with a hyphen between 'Bat' and 'man'. Below the words, the counting '1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &' is written, with '1' under the first note, '&' under the first space, '2' under the second note, '&' under the second space, '3' under the third note, '&' under the third space, '4' under the fourth note, and '&' under the fourth space.

Bat - man Bat - man Bat - man Bat - man


1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

Step 2 - Clapping the Quaver or 1/8th note

To clap the quaver (1/8th note) all you need to do is clap the offbeat as well.

1. So now clap '**Bat**' and '**man**' then you have the quaver (1/8th).
2. When you feel ready change the words to '**1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and**'.

QUAVER or 1/8th NOTE



A musical staff in 4/4 time showing eight eighth notes on a treble clef. The notes are on the first line (G4), first space (A4), second line (B4), and second space (C5). Below the staff, the words 'Bat - man' are written under the first two notes, 'Bat - man' under the next two, 'Bat - man' under the next two, and 'Bat - man' under the last two. Below the words, the counting '1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &' is written, with '1' under the first note, '&' under the first space, '2' under the second note, '&' under the second space, '3' under the third note, '&' under the third space, '4' under the fourth note, and '&' under the fourth space.

Bat - man Bat - man Bat - man Bat - man

1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

Step 3 - Clapping the Triplet

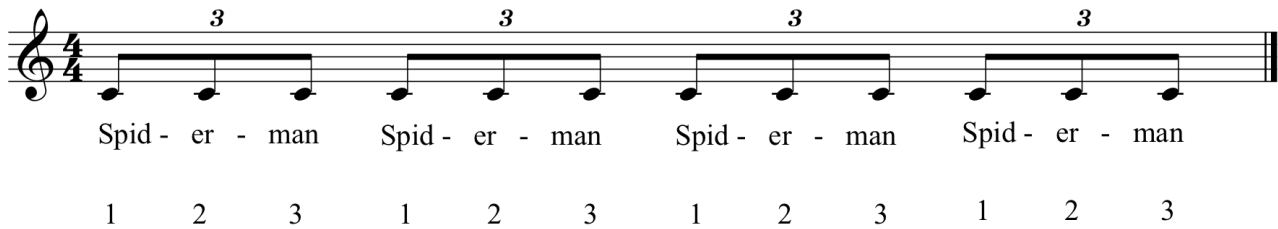
1. In music, a **triplet** is a tuplet of **three successive notes of equal duration**.
2. Like the last two steps just **say a word with three syllables**. I have chosen to stay with a superhero theme so I used '**Spid - er - man**'. You can use any three syllable word you like.
3. Just **clap each syllable** and you are clapping a triplet.
4. When you feel ready change the words to '**1-2-3, 1-2-3, 1-2-3, 1-2-3**'.

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TRIPLET



Spid - er - man Spid - er - man Spid - er - man Spid - er - man

1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3 1 2 3

Step 4 - Clapping the Semi Quaver (16th note)

1. To clap the semi quaver (16th note) say the word '**Rock - e - fel - ler**' or another four syllable word of your choice and **clap each syllable**.
2. When you are ready, change the syllables to the words '**1 - e - and - a, 2 - e - and - a, 3 - e - and - a, 4 - e - and - a**.'

SEMI - QUAVER or 1/16th NOTE



Rock - e - fel - ler Rock - e - fel - ler Rock - e - fel - ler Rock - e - fel - ler

1 e & a 2 e & a 3 e & a 4 e & a

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Step 5 - Making the Metronome Your Friend

Once you feel comfortable with these four rhythms, with saying the words and clapping them, a great thing to do is to **put all four rhythms to the metronome**. This is when this exercise gets hard. I have found that the **saying the words at the beginning really helps**.

Many students have asked me why put this exercise to the metronome? The answer is all good music holds time. 98% of the time music should be **even**, especially in Blues and Jazz, and if you want to be a good musician you need to hold time as best as you can. Make the metronome your friend. Many students struggle to hold time and it is a well-known fact that **practising with the metronome can really help you learn to hold time**.

I wasn't friends with the metronome when I started out. I didn't like putting it on and was not impressed this 'clicking thing' was telling me I wasn't holding good time, "no way - it's wrong... not me! I don't speed up or slow down... there must be something wrong with the metronome!" I used to get so frustrated with the metronome and with myself. However, nowadays I rarely practice without it.

So how did I make the metronome my friend? I did this exact exercise. It really builds up your confidence with your timing. I do this exercise with every single student. Then when they are ready I get them to hand clap the rhythms of the piece they are working on using the techniques in this exercise:

1. Clap the rhythms using words.
2. Clap the rhythms while **counting aloud or saying the words aloud**.
3. Clap with the metronome while **counting aloud or saying the words aloud**.

The improvements achieved in musicianship with this exercise are quite amazing.

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Step 6 - Counting Aloud or Saying the Words Aloud

Most of my students don't count aloud initially when doing this exercise and I have to keep reminding them to do so. Some say, "I'm counting in my head", or "it's harder when I count aloud", however even though it can be harder when you count aloud, it really helps your timing because it makes you think of the rhythm at hand without using your ear. Your ear can be mistaken.

The most important thing about this exercise is the "counting aloud" because you can hear if the tempo is speeding up or slowing down – if you count in your head you can't hear it. Your mind thinks it's doing it right but it may not be. Your ear can get it wrong. So to really get the benefit of this exercise it is imperative that you **count or say all the words in this exercise aloud** :) I guarantee you will feel much more confident about any rhythms you approach in any piece if you use these techniques of counting aloud and clapping the rhythms.

I start all my students at **60 beats per minute** with this exercise and recommend that you start at this tempo too.

There is no right or wrong amount of time to learn to do this exercise. Every student is different and each student picks it up in their own time. So don't rush and have some fun with it. Watch the video and practice the exercise as best as you can and I guarantee your timing will improve!

Step 7 - Clapping all four rhythms in one exercise

This step is for the student who is really on top of all of the rhythms within this exercise. Don't worry if you can't do it now. You will be able to do it if you keep practising.

What makes this exercise difficult is the transitions between each rhythm. Most of my students find the 1/4 note and 1/8th note fine but when the triplet and 16th note appear it can take them some time before they lock into the rhythm. Just let this happen and it will come to you organically when you are ready, if you do it enough.

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Please do SHARE and LIKE to the universe.

See you soon.

Take it easy,

Greg.

P.S. Please email me at: greg@classicaltojazzpiano.com with any questions you have or future lesson ideas you would like me to cover for you.