



Improving Your Ability To Play In Time

By Jason Wilford

From time to time, I encounter guitarists who have a lot of trouble playing music in time. While there are many ways to overcome this, and sometimes it can be an uphill battle, but here are some quick tips to help master this skill:

- Tap your foot to any song you're listening to. Feel where the beats land and try to get as on time as possible.
- Tap your foot while playing simple rhythms on the guitar. Your main goal here is to not let the rhythm stop at any point. Start with just down strokes and try maintaining the pulse as you practice this over and over. Eventually start incorporating this into more syncopated rhythms.
- Play along with songs or backing tracks. This might seem like a 'no-brainer', but many people skip this part out entirely. The benefit of this is that it is like practicing with a full band. Notice where you are coming off time, and try to correct it.
- If you are having trouble with the chord changes of a song, focus on those first before attempting to play in time or put any rhythm to it. Isolate each individual chord change and practice them over and over.
- Practice rhythms with your picking-hand only, so that you don't have to think of more than one thing at a time. Play an easy chord with your fretting hand, and work on getting the rhythm down. Loosen your strumming-hand wrist and feel the beat as you do this.

If you practice these things on a consistent basis, you will build your ability to hear and play rhythms in correct time. This can sometimes be a long process, so hang in there and keep practicing!