

# Count Tap Clap

Coordinating the relationship between rhythm and pulse

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CTC is a method to learn and practice rhythm, subdivision and the relationship between rhythm and pulse. It does not take the place of a “counting system.” Unfortunately, humans are not naturally super-coordinated. We need tools. We need to practice.

**COUNT** – time    **TAP** – foot    **CLAP** – rhythm

## A Few Examples

### 4/4 – four quarter notes per measure

**COUNT** (1 2 3 4)      **TAP** (quarter notes)      **CLAP** (rhythm)

**COUNT** (1+2+3+4+)      **TAP** (quarter notes)      **CLAP** (rhythm)

**COUNT** (1 2 3 4)      **TAP** (half notes)      **CLAP** (rhythm)

### 3/4 – three quarter notes per measure

**COUNT** (1+ 2+ 3+)      **TAP** (quarter notes)      **CLAP** (rhythm)

**COUNT** (1 2 3)      **TAP** (dotted half note)      **CLAP** (rhythm)

### 6/8 – six eighth notes per measure

**COUNT** (1-2-3-4-5-6)      **TAP** (dotted quarters)      **CLAP** (rhythm)

**COUNT** – ?      **TAP** – ?      **CLAP** – rhythm

When students **Count** a steady, subdivision of the meter or measure *out loud* and **Tap** their foot, they externalize the feeling of rhythm and pulse more dramatically than when they just tap their foot. When they **Clap** the rhythm of the music along with this steady, audible subdivision, they can feel and hear where the notes belong in each measure. With practice, they are better able to coordinate rhythm and pulse and make music with a stronger feeling of time. Ultimately, students are able to play together more successfully.

## **Getting Started (Beginners)**

1. Develop a steady, even foot tap (see Master of the Alphabet).
2. When it's time to play a song or even a few notes, begin CTC with quarter notes, half notes and whole notes (one, two and four-count notes).
3. Show students how this transfers to reading music.
4. Or, alternately, just begin CTC when you begin reading music.
5. CTC everything: exercises, songs, ensembles, band pieces.

## **Getting started (More advanced students)**

1. Perform foot tap "check-up". Do students have a steady, even foot tap?
2. Practice Basic Coordination/Rhythm exercises.
3. CTC everything: exercises, region music, etudes, ensembles, band pieces.

## **When to CTC**

1. CTC before teaching a new or unfamiliar rhythm or time signature.
2. CTC before positioning/fingering/rehearsing a piece.
3. CTC when the ensemble is having difficulty playing in time or moving together.
4. CTC to prepare to rehearse a piece at a new tempo.

## **How to CTC**

- How to CTC a particular piece depends on the skill level and experience of the students. It also depends on the meter, tempo, style and the rhythmic demands of the music.
  - Decide what you are going to **Count** (a steady, repeating subdivision of the measure); decide what you are going to **Tap** and then; **Clap** the rhythm.
  - You decide or let your students decide. Experiment. Be creative. Practice. Have fun.
1. **Count big beats** (quarters, half notes or dotted quarters) **or Count subdivisions** (eighths or 16ths). You decide.
  2. **Tap** your foot with the count or count subdivisions and tap big beats. You decide.
  3. **Clap** the Rhythm.

## **Why to CTC**

1. CTC helps students learn to feel and coordinate rhythm in time.
2. With improved rhythmic coordination, students are better able to listen and play together.
3. Students become more aware of how their individual part fits into the music.
4. If students know how to "count rhythms," CTC is an additional and meaningful rhythmic challenge that teaches subdivision and rhythmic coordination.
5. Rhythmic coordination allows ensembles to breathe and move together which ultimately allows the ensemble to play with more beautiful phrasing and tone.