How to Use this book

The Rhythm Ear Training Method offers you a number of ways to work with the material. You have two different types of MP3 audio files:

1. You hear a metronome count off, a rhythm and a verbal answer to what rhythm was played

2. You hear a metronome count off, a rhythm and you write down on music paper the rhythm you heard.

In both cases there are PDFs available to see each rhythm written out on a music staff.

If you are completely new to notating rhythms a "Understanding Rhythm" PDF has been included which teaches you how each rhythm is written.

All rhythm exercises are played at three tempos. This lets you gradually increase the difficulty of each exercise.

Each of the 12 Levels of this Ear Training Course introduce a different set of rhythms. Each level's rhythms are the common rhythms that you would find in music. Uncommon rhythmic groupings such as triplets starting on the "ands" of beats have not been included in this release. There will be future releases containing these less played rhythms.

As with all ear training studies the key to success is repeated listening each day. Please read through this book so that you understand all the ways you can use the Rhythm Ear Training Series and for information on how you can get the most out of each exercise.
Rhythm Ear Training Series

The Rhythm Ear Training Series is a major expansion of the Ear Training Series and the Rhythm Series that Muse Eek Publishing has built over the last 20 years. The Rhythm Ear Training Series has some very new and intriguing ways to practice rhythmic ear training which will let you do rhythm ear training anywhere you can listen to an MP3 player as well as ideas on how to take the exercises presented in the book and apply them to real music. These kinds of forward thinking music educational tools will make a serious difference in your ability. The only other component necessary is your dedication of time and energy to work on the exercises in a consistent way over a long period of time. This of course is where memory comes into play. The only way you remember anything is to think about it often. The same is the case for ear training or any other aspect of learning music.

How to Approach the Rhythm Ear Training Exercises:

Here is a list of some recommended ways to approach this Rhythm Ear Training. When in doubt about any aspect of your learning, we encourage you to contact us so that we can help you help yourself.

1. All exercises found in Levels 1-12 give you a four beat count off. Some Levels are in 2/4 but you are still given a four beat count off to help you establish the time before you hear the rhythm example. When the four beat count off starts give yourself two beats of listening before you start to tap or feel the pulse. It is common for students to get over anxious and start trying to count with a metronome before they have established the beat inside of themselves. Don’t make this mistake. Allow yourself a few beats to feel the rhythm first.

2. Listen to the rhythm and then see if you can repeat it in your mind. In a way this is similar to One Note Ear Training Singing exercises where you try to pre hear a note. In this case you are trying to remember the rhythm you just heard so that you can play it back in your head and dissect its components.

3. You should be able to identify a rhythm after hearing it three times. If you can’t do that, keep working on the exercise.

4. Learning to hear a rhythm and be able to write it down are both important tools to have in your tool chest. Being able to hear a rhythm and identify it will help you in rehearsals with other musicians. It will also help if you are transcribing music. Being able to write a rhythm down will help you in composing, and transcribing a solo or song. Being able to write down a rhythm will also help you to visualize it when you hear it, which will help you remember it.

5. You can tap your foot in the beginning but eventually you want to internalize time so that you just feel it. That is a long term process so if you are just getting started with music, and you want to tap your foot or your hand to get the feeling of the beat and help you decipher the ways the beat is being divided, go ahead for now. Muse Eek has created one book and one MP3 download to help you develop a feeling for time rather than counting time. If you are interested in developing this side of your musical ability please see the book “The Big Metronome” and the MP3 download “MetroDrone.”
Currently Available Levels

Rhythm Ear Training Level 1 contains exercises concentrating on the following rhythms:
Half, Dotted Half, Quarters. A four beat count off is given and the exercise is one measure of 4/4.

Rhythm Ear Training Level 2 contains exercises concentrating on the following rhythms:
Dotted Quarter, Quarters and Eighths Rhythms. A four beat count off is given and the exercise is one measure of 2/4

Rhythm Ear Training Level 3 contains exercises concentrating on the following rhythms:
Dotted Quarter, Quarters, Eighths, Triplets. A four beat count off is given and the exercise is one measure of 2/4

Rhythm Ear Training Level 4 contains exercises concentrating on the following rhythms:
Sixteenths, Dotted Quarter, Eighths. A four beat count off is given and the exercise is one measure of 2/4

Rhythm Ear Training Level 5 contains exercises concentrating on the following rhythms: Halfs, Dotted Quarters, Quarters, Eighths. A four beat count off is given and the exercise is one measure of 4/4

Rhythm Ear Training Level 6 contains exercises concentrating on the following rhythms: Quarter, Eighths and Sixteenths. A four beat count off is given and the exercise is one measure of 4/4

Rhythm Ear Training Level 7 contains exercises concentrating on the following rhythms: Dotted Quarter, Eighths and Sixteenths. A four beat count off is given and the exercise is one measure of 4/4

Rhythm Ear Training Level 8 contains exercises concentrating on the following rhythms: Dotted Quarters, Eighths and Quarter Note Triplets. A four beat count off is given and the exercise is one measure of 4/4

Rhythm Ear Training Level 9 contains exercises concentrating on the following rhythms: Eighths and all Quarter Note Triplets Permutations. A four beat count off is given and the exercise is one measure of 4/4

Rhythm Ear Training Level 10 contains exercises concentrating on the following rhythms: Sixteenths and Quarter Note Triplets. A four beat count off is given and the exercise is one measure of 4/4

Rhythm Ear Training Level 11 contains exercises concentrating on the following rhythms: Quarter Note Triplets all Permutations and Sixteenths. A four beat count off is given and the exercise is one measure of 4/4

Rhythm Ear Training Level 12 contains exercises concentrating on the following rhythms: Quarter, Eighths, Quarter Note Triplets all Permutations and Sixteenths. A four beat count off is given and the exercise is one measure of 4/4.
Quick Start

Each student will be at a different level when they start this ear training. We have given you exercises that vary greatly in the level of complexity. In general, beginning students should start with Levels 1-4 and more advanced students should start with Level 5. That said, each level contains three different tempos so you may find that you need to adjust to a lower level when you take the tempo of each exercise into consideration.

Each student will have their own personal work patterns. Some students will want to work only with the exercises that give a verbal answer because they mostly do their rhythmic ear training with the iPod while commuting, or other times when writing down rhythms is not practical. But if possible, doing both exercises for each level is the best for your music education and doing each of the three tempos is also important.

The “3 times” rule: If you can listen to an example three or less times and get the rhythm correctly you can move on in level and disregard listening to that example again. Of course getting so you can recognize the rhythm in one listen is the best but in a practical musical situation usually you are fine if you can get a rhythm within 2 to 3 times of hearing it.

Remember that memory is the most important aspect of this rhythm ear training. Whatever level you are working on, trying to do five to ten minute practice sessions five to ten times a day is the best approach.

If you have problems understanding a rhythmic level or how to write it out look at the “Understanding Rhythm” PDF which will give you a detailed explanations of each metric level and each rhythm that can exist at that level.

Try to apply the rhythms by playing on your instrument, but more importantly play each rhythm with songs that you know. There is a list of tunes to use later on in the book and we highly recommended that you take each 2/4 or 4/4 rhythm and play it along with various songs to get a “real music” application of all rhythms. This will also help you to understand how each rhythm phrase fits or doesn’t fit with each song you play.

Understanding rhythmic levels will help you to identify rhythms. If we take all music into consideration, the number of rhythmic levels is enormous. But if we think about the common ways rhythms are expressed in most contemporary popular western music, we find that there are four levels. Basic pulse in the levels is defined by the speed at which you are tapping your foot.

Level One: Rhythms are moving either at the basic pulse or slower. Some of the common rhythms found at this level are whole notes, half notes and dotted half notes.

Level Two: Rhythms are moving at twice the basic pulse. Some of the common rhythms found at this level are eighth notes and quarter note triplets

Level Three: Rhythms are moving at three or four times the pulse. Some of the common rhythms found at this level are sixteenth notes and triplets.

Level Four: Rhythms that are moving at six or eight times the pulse. Some of the common rhythms found at this level are thirty second notes and sixteenth note triplets.

There are whole styles of music based on some of these rhythmic levels and that’s why it’s important that you understand them. Later in the book we will show you how to use the exercises found in the Rhythm Ear Training and apply these exercises to real music. This should help you internalize these basic pulse levels in a visceral way.
Rhythm Ear Training

Rhythm is one of the most under-practiced and misunderstood aspects of music. Obviously every note that is played in music has its associated rhythm so it’s an integral part of any musical gesture. Developing a refined sense of rhythm like a refined sense of pitch has various facets. Understanding this puzzle and where your current ability fits in and what you need to work on can be hard to figure out. As always, we encourage you to contact Bruce via email to talk about your current musical skills so that he can figure out the best course of action to improve your ability.

Pitch based ear training requires a student to do a number of different types of exercises in order to use their skills effectively. You need clinical exercises to develop your basic skills along with direct application to apply them to music. You also need listening and singing exercises to develop the two basic aspects of good aural skills. The same holds true for rhythm ear training. You need exercises to build up your ability to:

1. Understand and recognize a rhythm when you hear it.
2. Be able to write down a rhythm.
3. Be able to play back a rhythm that someone asks you to play.
4. Be able to interact with a rhythmic feel or phrase in a musical way.
5. Be able to recognize or play a rhythm in a live musical situation.

Developing all of these aspects of rhythm requires a number of different exercises. This Rhythm Ear Training series deals with the first two aspects of building up your recognition of rhythms. If you have worked with our Ear Training Series you already know that memory is key to developing your ear training skills. The same is true for the rhythm based ear training. But often students are unaware of the true magnitude of their rhythm problems so ask yourself these questions:

Do I feel my rhythm is weak when playing chords or trying to groove with other musicians?
When I have to read music are many of the mistakes I make related to rhythm?
Do I have a tendency to speed up or slow down when I play or read music?
Do I lack rhythmic diversity when I’m soloing or writing music?
When I’m transcribing music do I find it hard to figure out rhythms?
If someone shows me a rhythm do I have a hard time duplicating the sound?
When composing is it hard for me to translate the rhythms I hear in my head into rhythmic notation?
Do I have a hard time getting a musical flow happening when I’m playing or improvising?
Do I not know in a general way what rhythm level is being played when I’m listening to or playing music?

All of these problems can be symptoms of poor rhythmic skills. These can cause you not to perform well, get lost when playing music and not be connected in a meaningful way to the music you are listening to or playing.

By working with the Rhythm Ear Training Series you will develop the following strengths:

The ability to recognize rhythms when you hear them or see them written on a page.
A much more robust vocabulary of rhythms that you naturally play when you are performing music.
A more consistent tempo as you play music when playing the time signatures presented.
An understanding of how music is put together rhythmically.
Enhanced speed and accuracy in your playing
More meaningful interactions with other musicians.
Ability to learn new music faster.
Rhythmic accuracy that will have people connecting with you physically when you play.