

How to hear the beat in a song?

I've heard this comment a lot from people at their first dance lessons. We tend to think that having a good sense of rhythm is an inborn ability rather than an ability that you can acquire through practice. The truth is everyone can learn how to read music and develop a better sense of rhythm. First, you need to find the beat in a song and this post will show you how.

What is a beat? How do I find it?

Think of the ticking sound of a clock. The ticking of a clock is consistent and so is the beat of a song. While you don't normally hear the clock ticking unless the room is really quiet and you intentionally focus on the sound, finding the beat of a song is similar to that. The lyrics are like the TV in your living room. Before you can hear the more subtle sounds in your room, you have to turn off the TV. So, when you listen to a song, try not to pay attention to the lyrics or melody but find the base of the song and you will find the beat.

Exercise to help you find the beat of a song!

1. Find a pop song that has a strong base/beat. Any club music and songs from the 80's would work.
2. On a piece of paper, write the numbers 1 to 8.
3. Play the song and tap the beats on your paper.

Once you get good at finding the beat in songs with strong beats, you can move on to other songs that have more quiet beats.

Most songs can be counted in sets of 8, but songs like waltzes only have 6.

Practice makes perfect.

You will find it easier and easier as you practice counting to more songs. Eventually, you will be able to hear the beat as soon as a song begins. And once you get good at tapping with your finger, you should also tap with your foot and eventually engage your whole body until you feel like you are moving, or dancing, to the beat of a song!