

Lesson 20

# The Pitch-Time-Music Practice Method

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David Dempster

<b>Course</b>	<b>Read &amp; Play Music</b>
<b>Book 1</b>	<b>Read and Play Simple Tunes</b>
<b>Part 3</b>	<b>Pitch + Time = Music</b>
<b>Lesson 20</b>	<b>The Pitch-Time-Music Practice Method</b>

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## LESSON 20:

# THE PITCH-TIME-MUSIC PRACTICE METHOD

We saw from the start that music is made of pitch and time.

**Pitch + Time = Music**

We've applied that in **Book 1** by learning pitch first, and then time second. That's following the principle that it's good to learn one thing at a time.

Well, we can apply the same principle and the same sequence in learning to play new pieces of music.

First, a short review of what you learned in the last lesson.

# REVIEW

## SEE WHAT YOU CAN DO

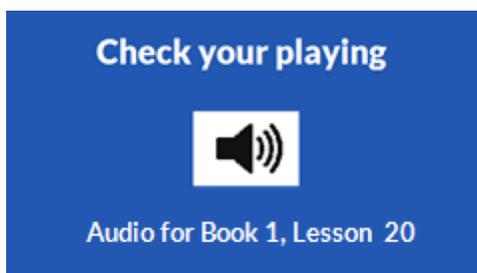
This is a review of what you learned in *Lesson 18: Read and Play Pitch and Time*.

Let's make sure you can do all this well before you go on.

**STEP 1: COUNT ALOUD and PLAY** the music below.



**Answer to STEP 1:** If you'd like to check the accuracy of what you played, you can compare it to an audio recording:



Click the blue box above,  
or find the audio on your **Book 1 Course Materials** page at  
[www.dempstermusic.com](http://www.dempstermusic.com)

How did that go? If you had any trouble with it, do a bit more work on the exercises of *Lesson 18* or earlier. If you did fine, carry on.

# MUSIC THEORY

## BUILD YOUR KNOWLEDGE

### Introduction

The Pitch-Time-Music practice method has 3 steps:

Step 1: Pitch

Step 2: Time

Step 3: Music

#### **Step 1: Pitch**

You already know how to play accurate pitches:

Apply Know-Before-You-Go

#### **Step 2: Time**

And you already know how to play with accurate time:

Apply Count-Point-PlayC

#### **Step 3: Music**

The final step is to put it all together and play the music (pitch + time). And here is how to do it:

Start slowly

**In step 3, you find a speed slow enough that you can play the music accurately: accurate pitches with accurate timing.**

By the time you do step 3, you've already played the pitches with no hesitation (step 1), and you've already played the timing with no hesitation (step 2). You will then be able to put them together and play the music (step 3), *provided you don't start too fast.*

This rule – 'Start slowly' – couldn't be simpler! And yet, many music students get into trouble and may even give up completely because they don't know it or don't apply it.

When you play music, you should feel in control. If you start playing too fast, you'll feel like someone learning to ski who is going down too steep a slope. You feel out of control, like you're about to crash at any moment.

When you get that out-of-control feeling while playing music, it means you started too fast. Instead of plunging ahead and making mistakes, go back and start again at a slower speed.

When you find a speed slow enough, you will feel like a beginning skier who has chosen a gentle slope, and is confident he can execute all the motions without falling.

You may have to start at an unbelievably slow speed. You'll see me demonstrate that in the video that's coming up shortly.

When you find the right speed, you will play accurately. Then you can gradually increase your speed, little by little. You'll feel in control all along the way.

Oddly enough, by starting slowly like that, you end up making faster progress.

## The Pitch-Time-Music practice method

So we have a 3-step approach to learning to play new music: The Pitch-Time-Music practice method.

Here's a summary of how it works:

### **Step 1 – Pitch: Know-Before-You-Go**

- **PLAY** the pitches, making **no mistakes**.
- **REPEAT** until you can play the pitches with no hesitation while looking at the printed music and not at your hand.

### **Step 2 – Time: Count-Point-PlayC**

- **COUNT** the beats while **POINTING** at the music.
- Then **COUNT** while **PLAYING** middle C.
- **REPEAT** until you can do that with no hesitation.

### **Step 3 – Music: Start slowly**

- **FIND A SPEED SLOW ENOUGH** that you can play the correct pitches with correct timing.
- If you feel uncertain about playing any part of the music correctly (correct pitch, correct timing), **START AGAIN AT A SLOWER SPEED**.
- **REPEAT** until you can play the music with no hesitation while looking at the printed music and not at your hand.

When you apply the above 3 steps one after the other, you have a powerful approach you can use in learning any new music.

# PRACTICAL

## BUILD YOUR SKILL

In these short exercises, you'll apply the Pitch-Time-Music practice method in learning to play new music.

## How to do these exercises

I'm going to have you watch a video where I'll demonstrate all these exercises. Do the exercises along with me, or pause the video after each exercise and then do it for yourself.

You can refer to the above summary of the Pitch-Time-Music practice method as needed.

Watch this video now, and follow the instructions on the video:



Click the blue box above,  
or find the video on your Book 1 Course Materials page at  
[www.dempstermusic.com](http://www.dempstermusic.com)

Here are the exercises shown in the above video, so you can refer to them:

## Exercise 1:

### Easy pitch, easy time

The fingering on the first 2 notes (finger 1 then finger 5) puts your right hand in a 5-finger position. Keep your hand in that position for the rest of the music.

1. Apply the Pitch-Time-Music practice method. Here are the steps:

**Step 1: Pitch** – Know-Before-You-Go:

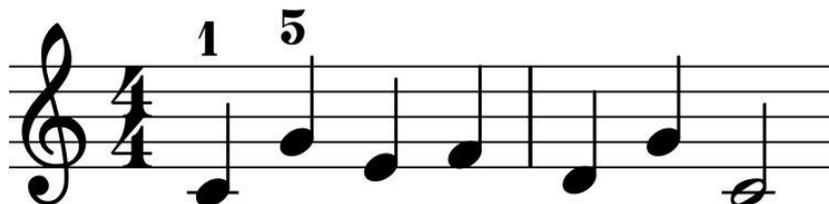
- Play the pitches, taking all the time you need so you make no mistakes
- Repeat until easy

**Step 2: Time** – Count-Point-PlayC:

- Count and point
- Count and play middle C
- Repeat until easy

**Step 3: Music** – Start Slowly.

- Pick a slow speed so you can play correct pitches with correct time
- If you feel uncertain, pick a slower speed
- Repeat until easy



## Exercise 2: Tricky pitch, easy time

1. Apply the Pitch-Time-Music practice method. Here are the steps again:

**Step 1: Pitch** – Know-Before-You-Go:

- Play the pitches, making no mistakes
- Repeat until easy

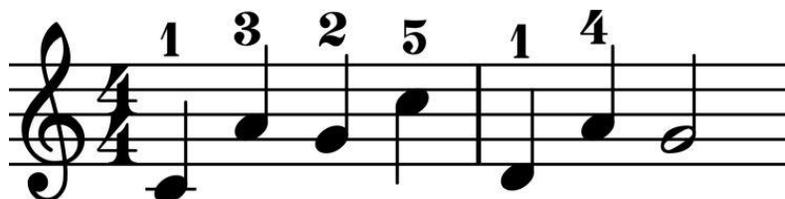
**Step 2: Time** – Count-Point-PlayC:

- Count and point
- Count and play middle C
- Repeat until easy

**Step 3: Music** – Start Slowly.

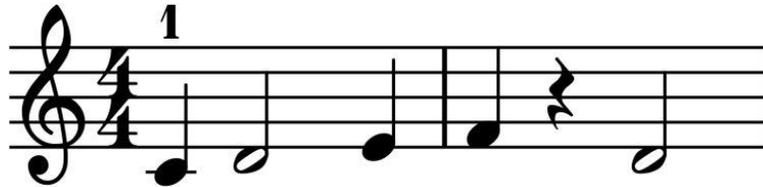
- Pick a slow speed so you can play correct pitches with correct time
- If you feel uncertain, pick a slower speed
- Repeat until easy

These pitches are quite tricky. When you do the Pitch step, make sure you do enough repetitions until you *really can play the pitches easily*. After you feel you've achieved that, try doing another 5 repetitions. It will make the following steps (Time and Music) much easier.



## Exercise 3: Easy pitch, tricky time

1. Apply the Pitch-Time-Music practice method.



## Exercise 4: Tricky pitch, tricky time

Tricky pitches again. Make sure you do enough repetitions of the Pitch step until it really is easy.

1. Apply the Pitch-Time-Music practice method.

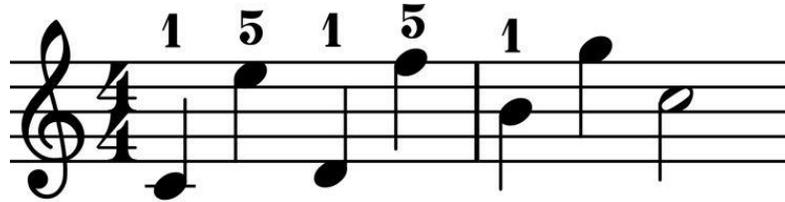




## Exercise 6:

### Very difficult pitch!

1. Apply the Pitch-Time-Music practice method.



## Exercise 7:

### Thumb-under

1. Apply the Pitch-Time-Music practice method.





## Tune 1:

### Your second composition!

Earlier I had you write a composition, but at that point you only knew about pitches. In real life, composers also specify the timing of their music. Now you know all about time, you can write a composition that does that too.

Do each step as you read it:

1. **GRAB** a blank piece of paper and a pen or pencil.
2. **DRAW** a staff of 5 horizontal lines.
3. **DRAW** a treble clef on the staff, at the left edge.
4. **WRITE** the time signature to the right of the treble clef. Let's make it 4/4.
5. The creative part: **DRAW** one or more notes and/or rests that add up to 4 beats. That's the first measure of your composition. The notes can have any pitches you want.
6. Now **DRAW** a bar-line to the right of them.
7. **DRAW** notes and/or rests for the second measure. Again, they need to add up to 4 beats.
8. **DRAW** a new bar-line, and so on.
9. When you've finished, **DRAW** a double bar-line at the end.
10. Now prop the music up in front of you, and **READ** and **PLAY** your new composition. Apply the Pitch-Time-Music practice method.

Very well done on writing your second composition!

## What's next?

Time to play!

**Go on to your next lesson**



Click the green box above,  
or find Lesson 21 on your Book 1 Course Materials page at  
[www.dempstermusic.com](http://www.dempstermusic.com)