

## Getting Ready For Recording Studio Work - Drummers Help Guide

Not all of us instinctively possess a good internal clock. The good news is that you can develop excellent time by first, being aware of its importance; second, by evaluating your own playing; and, third, by doing something constructive about it. One way to develop good time is to play along with recordings.

These days there is an overabundance of CDs available to you. Once upon a time, the only drummers who appeared on records were quality players. Now, any Tom, Dick, or Harry can make a CD in a home studio, so you have to be careful in your selection. You want to play along with the best, not the kid next door who has rushing and dragging problems. In Appendix A, you will see a list of professional drummers together with some of their most significant recordings. All of these drummers play with good time, though some of the studio players such as Vinnie Colaiuta, JR Robinson, Hal Blaine, Jeff Porcaro, Jim Keltner, Larry London, and others have a particularly acute sense of time that is worth studying.

Studio musicians most commonly dwell in Los Angeles these days, but New York City, Memphis, and Nashville can all be considered recording capitals of the world. Studio drummers typically work on a whole host of projects ranging from film and TV scores, to jingles for TV advertisements, to backing up famous singers, to standing in for a member of a rock band who has great looks, but doesn't record particularly well. Often studio or session drummers are asked to play with a click track as they record. A click track is the same as a metronome, which you will learn about shortly. Studio drummers are constantly under the gun, because, for a music producer, time is money. Session drummers are expected to learn material quickly, play with both rhythmical clarity and accuracy, understand just about any kind of "feel" or style of music, and most of all, play with great time. So, when trying to improve your time, it's a good idea to familiarize yourself with the work of session drummers and to play along with their recordings.

When you play with recordings you will not only improve your sense of time but you will gain a sense of what it's really like to play in a band. You will also gradually learn a repertoire of tunes by playing with CDs and begin, almost through osmosis, to learn about appropriateness in drumming.

Following is a list of issues to think about when playing along with recordings. Ask yourself, what style of music am I playing? What is the main groove being played by the drummer? How would you describe it? Where does the drummer play fills? Do the fills help the music to develop and climax? If so, how? Where does the drummer make shifts in the feel of the tune? This may include dynamics, changing the ride pattern or ride surface, or laying out altogether in a section. Is the drummer playing a lot of notes? In other words, do you detect a lot of activity or is he or she playing with a lot of space? What is the structure of the tune? If it's a Top 40 tune, are there verses, choruses, a bridge or middle eight, a coda? Is the drummer pushing the beat, laying back on the beat, or playing straight down the middle of the beat?

Playing with recordings is a simple procedure. All you need is a Disc man or Walkman, a pair of headphones, and a collection of recordings to pull from. Using headphones that completely cup around your ears is a good idea, because this will minimize the sound of your drums and allow you to focus on the pulse of the recorded music. These kinds of headphones are a little more expensive, but well worth the price.

Be careful not to turn the music up too loud when playing along with recordings. It's better to quiet yourself down. Earphones turned up too loudly can cause hearing damage.

### About the Author

There are a lot of different [Drum Samples](#) and [Drum Loops](#) widely available everywhere, nevertheless Eric recommends using [Drum Triggers](#) for studio work, triggers will minimize the studio time, and will help both the drummer and the engineer to achieve greater results.

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