

## LEARN TO MIX

Place two identical records/CD's on your decks, and set the pitch to 0. On most decks, a green light will come on to let you know it's at 0 and it'll probably click into place. By starting the decks at the same time, the two tunes should be playing at the same tempo, so you don't have to worry about the pitch control.

Set your mixer up so that the channel faders are both up and the crossfader is in the middle position. This means you'll hear both tunes when they're playing. Don't worry about your headphones for the moment.

Go to one of your decks, and put the needle on the record near the beginning, and let it play. Now put your finger on the record, and turn it backwards until you pass the beginning of the first beat.

Now (with your finger still on the record) wind the record forward a bit, until you hear the bass beat. Then go back a bit until you've hit the very beginning of the beat again. Some will advise that it's nice to do a small scratch with the tune, rocking back and forth over the beat so you're comfortable with where it is.

Now press stop, leaving the needle just before the beat. Start the other deck and let it play. Listen to the tune that's playing and hear where the bass beats are occurring.

Go back to the stopped deck. Put your finger on it, holding it still, and press start. The deck should be running underneath the stopped record.

One tune should be playing out through your amp (master) and heard on your speakers, and the other one (cue) stopped by your finger. Try to rock the cued record back and forth in time with the master record that's playing. Then, when you feel comfortable with hearing the beat you're rocking back and forth at the same time as hearing the beat from the tune that's playing, let it go.

Chances are you haven't let it go at a point in the tune where everything will match audibly, but as long as the bass drums are occurring at the same time, that's all that matters for now.

So. You've let go of the cued tune. One or two things might have now happened.

1) You let go perfectly in time.

2) You let go too early (Stop the tune, wind it back, try again).

3) You let go too late. (see above). Number 2 and 3 are common problems. You'll either have choked at doing it and let go too soon or late, or maybe it's just that the deck wasn't running at full speed when you let go, so though you let go in time, it's not at the same speed as the other deck, and thus is out of time. What to do if you suspect this is to give the record a light push when you let go, sending the deck up to the correct speed - and hopefully making both beats happen at the same time.

Keep at it. Restart and keep doing it until you're comfortable with it, and you can do it nearly everytime.

The next part of this beginning stage is being able to fix little errors without stopping the deck and starting over. It's a bit difficult, because you have to know what you've done wrong, but the application is easy enough.

There's a few methods:

If you've started the beat too soon, and it's running ahead of the one that has been playing, then you need to slow the deck down a bit. By far the safest and easiest way of doing this is to rest your finger on the side of the deck plate lightly (where the bumpy bits are) and apply a little pressure to slow the deck down very slightly. When you've slowed it down so the beats are now aligned, take your finger away.

If you have not started the cued beat fast enough, and it's now lagging behind the other one, you need to speed the deck up slightly. Some DJ's place their finger on the label of the record, and 'help' it turn a little faster. There's a couple of problems that can be associated with this though. 1) You thump your finger onto the record, making the needle jump and 2) You may not be helping the record round fast enough and you may actually be SLOWING down the deck.

Below are a few other methods:

1) Instead of using the label of the record to turn the record faster, grip the center spindle of the deck and turn that.

2) Instead of touching the side of the deck to slow it down, use the pitch fader on the turntable. Decrease the pitch until the records are in time,

then return it to the original position. The only problem with this is that it's tricky to get the pitch fader EXACTLY back to the original position - unless that position was the 0 pitch mark of course.

Choose whatever method you wish - it's up to you.

Seems pretty basic doesn't it? Well, there's two reasons for learning this part of DJ'ing. The first is that it's vital that you can start records at the right time and get things happening the way you want them to at the points you want them to. The other point of this is that it gets you familiar with the feel of touching your records (remember, your parents have probably told you for years not to touch the main part of a record, just the edges), teaches you the feel of the deck fighting against you when you're trying to hold the record stopped, and just gets you used to the feeling of it all.

So you've learnt how to start a record. The next thing you have learn is how to change the tempo of the tunes using the pitch control in order to make the tempos of the two tunes be same.

This is the hardest part of basic DJ'ing that you'll encounter. You can expect the first part above to only take you a couple of hours or so, this next bit when taken to its fill extent can take people anything from a couple of days to a couple of months, or even worse, a couple of years. What it hinges on is:

- (1) How much practice you put in.
- (2) How well you can train your brain to listen to two different tunes.
- (3) How much of an attention span you have.
- (4) The decks you're using.

Still keep your two tunes on the decks, and still keep both channel faders up and the cross fader in the middle - you're still not using your headphones yet.

Move the pitch slider on one of the two identical tunes so it's now running faster than normal (to about the 2% mark or so).

Now, do what you were doing before, keeping the other tune at 0 pitch. Within a second or two after you start the deck, the beats will start

galloping away from each other. Speed up the deck so that it is at 0 pitch and back in line with the other tune.

Increase the pitch. You're allowed to cheat at this point. You know that if you set it to 2%, the tunes will now be running at approximately the same tempo, and won't go out of time as quickly as you first tried it.

But, what will happen in about 98% of the time, is that after 20 seconds or so, the two beats will start to drift out of time again, and give enough time will start galloping again.

There's a reason for this. Though you've set the two pitch faders to 2 percent, it's a visual thing on the fader that you've used. You've not actually set both to bang on 2%, you set one of them to (for example) 2.1% and the other to 2.5%. This 0.4% of a difference in pitch can mean anything up to and even over 1 beat for every minute set this way of a difference.

So. When you hear the two tunes drift, what do you do? The first thing you'll probably think is "How do I know whether the cued tune I've just sped up and adjusted is now running too fast or too slow?"

The best thing to do for now is just go through a trial and error process. Just assume it's running too slow, and speed up the record a bit. Now, you've either just speeded up a tune that was already running too fast, thus putting it WAY out of whack, or you've just got the beats aligned.

If you've fixed it by speeding up, then move the pitch fader VERY SLIGHTLY up a bit. We're not talking a lot for now, just a little bit, a millitmetre if you can.

If you're not left with a galloping beat, then slow the cued record down a bit, till you are back in time, and then reduce the pitch a slight amount.

If you keep going through this process you'll eventually get both tunes running at the same tempo.

Repeat this process as long as you can. Set the pitch to different positions, on both decks, and learn to change and adjust the pitch, both in large course changes (from -6% to +3% etc) and from deck to deck.

Up until now, you have been aided by the fact you're using two tunes of identical Beat Per Minute (which is what the tempo relates to). So, by

setting one pitch fader to +4%, you know that if you set the other to that area, you're going to be VERY close to getting the tempos correct.

The next step would be to still use the same tunes, but when changing the pitch, try not to look at the other one and match it, try to use your ears. This takes discipline, but it can be done. Just listen to what's happening to the beats, and try to decipher whether it means you have to increase or decrease the pitch.