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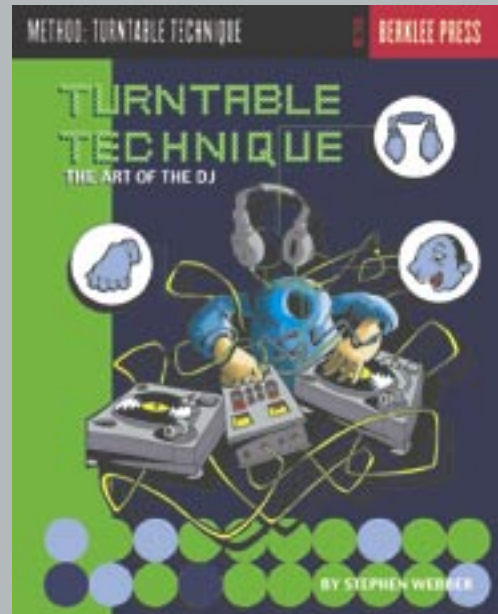
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**Turntable Technique:
The Art of the DJ**
Stephen Webber

Chapter 6
The Basic Scratch

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The Basic Scratch

The **basic scratch** is also known as the “baby scratch.” For the basic scratch, you only manipulate the record, not the fader. You can scratch virtually any sound, with a wide variety of results.



Side 1, track 4.

We'll start out using *Turntable Technique*, side 1, track 4. It's useful to have a track like this, with plenty of sustained sound, in case the needle skips to a different part of the track. If you don't have *Turntable Technique*, use a record that has a track with constant white noise.

On the mixer, put the volume fader up and the crossfader to the center.

Playing the Basic Scratch

1. Place the record on top of a slip mat on the turntable's platter.
2. Press the start/stop button to start the platter spinning.
3. Carefully place the stylus at the beginning of the track.
4. Let the white noise play for a few seconds.
5. Press the start/stop button again to stop the record.
6. Place the tips of your index, middle, and ring fingers on the record, and slowly drag the record back and forth. Keep your wrist relaxed and your motions fluid.

Congratulations, you're scratching! Experiment with scratching at different speeds. Improvise (make up) different rhythms.

Study the following pictures, as well as figures 7.7 and 7.8 in the next chapter, for correct hand position.



Fig. 6.1. Basic scratch (forward)



Fig. 6.2. Basic scratch (back)

The pitch of the scratch (how high or low it is) depends on two things: the pitch of the recorded track, and the speed that you are dragging the record. Notice the changing pitch of the sound as you alter the speed of your scratch.

The volume of the scratch also depends on two things: how high you set the faders on the mixer, and how fast you drag the record (the velocity of the scratch).

On lightweight, less expensive turntables, the tone arms may tend to bounce, skipping the needle to different sections of the track, or sometimes even to different tracks. Skipping can be a signal that you are pushing down too hard, bouncing the record.

To avoid skipping, lighten your touch. Turn the record with your fingers, moving it smoothly back and forth with only a slight, constant pressure. Let your fingers pivot. Remember, no bouncing!

Tips:

- Practice on both turntables.
- Practice both hands.
- While improvising rhythms, remember that the silence between the notes is just as important as the notes themselves.
- Use a light touch to reduce skipping.

Adding a Beat

When you feel comfortable with the basic scratch, try adding a beat on the second turntable and playing along.



Side 1, track 2.

On the mixer, raise the volume faders for both turntables, and set the cross-fader to the center. On your second turntable, cue up a second copy of *Turntable Technique* to side 1, track 2. This track features a groove that is perfect to scratch over. You can also experiment with other tracks that have medium-tempo grooves and some musical space you can fill with scratch rhythms.

Be tasteful, and try phrasing your scratches like a melody or a conversation.

