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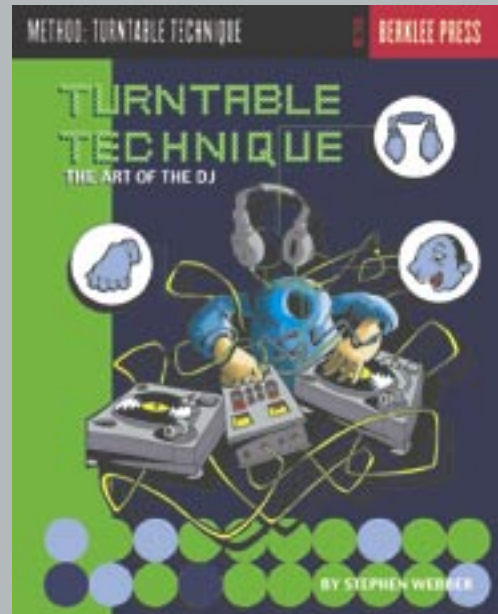
**FREE music lessons from  
Berklee College of Music**

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

Silence and Dynamics

Click CD icons to listen to  
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# Silence and Dynamics

In his commencement speech here at the Berklee College of Music, composer and recording artist Sting advised the graduates that it is the “space between the notes” that is most important. A constant barrage of notes without the contrast of silence will become boring and tedious in no time.

So, let’s learn more about rests:

## Whole, Half, and Sixteenth Note Rests

A whole note rest lasts four beats. In 4/4 time, this is a whole bar, which makes it easy to remember. A whole note rest looks like this:



**Fig. 8.7.** Whole note rest

To remember what a whole rest looks like, think of it as so heavy (being four whole beats long) that it sinks below the line.

A half note rest lasts two beats. In 4/4 time, this is half of a bar. It looks like this:



**Fig. 8.8.** Half note rest

To remember what the half rest looks like, remember that it’s not quite as heavy as the whole rest, so it sits on top of the line.

Sixteenth note rests last one-fourth of a beat, just like a sixteenth note.

It looks like this:



**Fig. 8.9.** Sixteenth note rest

**Dynamics** refers to the volume of a musical passage. Mastering dynamics is key to expressing yourself musically. It is no surprise that DMC world champion DJ Craze is considered a master in his use of dynamics.

A **crescendo** indicates that the music should get louder, increasing the volume. A **decrescendo** indicates that the music should get quieter, decreasing the volume.



**Fig. 8.10.** Crescendo and decrescendo

Obviously, manipulating the up-fader will change your volume. This is an effective way to execute a crescendo or decrescendo.

You can also increase the volume of a scratch by using more velocity. The more area of a record you cover in a set amount of time, the louder the scratch; the less record you use, the lower the volume.

Try scratching sixteenth notes back and forth, increasing and decreasing the velocity of your scratch to create a crescendo and decrescendo.



**Fig 8.11.** Sixteenth notes with dynamics

## Playing Fills

DJs who play with bands (like DJ Swamp who plays with Beck, and DJ Lethal of Limp Bizkit), will often play fills on the turntable between vocal phrases. These could be simple or complex, and could use any number of sounds, including words from the song.



## Side 2, track 3.

### ■ Exercise 14: Fills

This exercise will give you some examples of simple fills to use between musical phrases. Here you're laying out—not playing—every other bar, then filling for a bar. Be sure to get louder during the crescendo and softer during the decrescendo.

(Lay out)

Record:  $\frac{4}{4}$

You can practice fills by playing along with almost any record. On *Turntable Technique*, the first two tracks on side 1 are perfect for filling in between musical phrases. Use a variety of sounds and rhythms.

## Moving On

Don't expect everything to fall into place at once. Mastering the turntable, like any instrument, takes time and practice. Repetition is key. You'll make more progress if you play often (every day, if possible), rather than practicing only once a week for a long time.

Play through new exercises slowly at first, counting out loud. You can play along slowly with the examples by turning the variable pitch control all the way down on your second turntable.