

## 2. Benefits of practising with a metronome

Throughout my years of teaching and doing piano accompaniment, I noticed that many students do not use the metronome and they dislike practising with the metronome.

Why?

The reasons they gave were many, such as “It’s too noisy”, “It’s very difficult”, “I can’t keep up with the metronome”, “The metronome is too distracting” or “It’s very boring”.

Well, sorry to say that, so long as you have a metronome or mobile phone metronome app in good working condition, the metronome is always right.

The purpose of the metronome is to keep your pulse steady. If you find the metronome too fast for you, it means that your speed is too slow. If you find the metronome too slow, it means that your speed is too fast. It’s that simple.

What you can do is to adjust the metronome speed to one which you are comfortable with (for example, a crotchet = 60), and start practising from there. Once you get the hang of it and is confident enough to play the piece a little faster, you can increase the metronome speed by a few clicks (for example, a crotchet = 64), then another few clicks (a crotchet = 68), and keep practising this way until you’re able to reach the speed stated in the music. From our experience, by the time you’ve reached the stated speed, assuming that you have been practising diligently with the metronome, you would have much better control of your speed. If you find yourself rushing through a piece or slowing down too much, turn on the metronome and keep it on until you are confident enough to keep a steady pulse without the help of a metronome.

Another benefit of practising with the metronome is that, no matter how nervous you are during exams, competitions or concerts, you will still be able to maintain a steady speed as the pulse is already ingrained in you. Not only that, the metronome will also enable you to notice if you are playing extra beats or not enough beats in a bar or passage. It will also help you to focus better while practising, and it will enable you to be more secure technically especially during technically demanding passages or pieces.

You can use the metronome not only for pieces. You can also use it when practising scales, arpeggios, and also any technique exercise, or whenever you find the need to.

Try it! It’s fun!

**Note:** *When buying a metronome, get those battery- or electronically-operated ones. Even better, download any free metronome app from your smartphone. Those old-fashioned triangular metronomes which require you to wind them up at the side will not function accurately once the winding mechanism deteriorates over time.*