

### In brief

- Choose a clip to exercise to; the clip will loop endlessly.
- Use the **Audio** button on your remote control to toggle between different rhythm patterns (available on most clips)
- Use the **Menu** button on your Remote Control to stop the clip and to back to the main menu, where you can choose the next footwork exercise.

### More details

This DVD series is organized very differently from other dance DVDs. So it is very important you spend a few minutes reading these instructions carefully to make the most of it.

**What is in the DVD?** This DVD is not for passive entertainment. This DVD is a timing program with exercises for you to do and exams along the way. Doing the exercises involves clapping your hands in time to the music with different instruments, different speeds and increasing levels of difficulty! You can work your way through the program by selecting each of the different clapping exercises, one by one, and then performing them by following the DVD. You can test your progress by checking your clapping against what you see and hear in the DVD and by selecting the “test yourself” clips when you are ready. At all stages, you need to actively participate to get the most out of the DVDs.

**What do I need to know?** To use this DVD series you need no knowledge of salsa dancing because you are only clapping in order to learn the timing. It may help to have some knowledge of musical timing, some of which is explained in our DVD ‘*Salsa on the Spur of the Music*’. Knowledge of musical timing will help you to make more sense of some clapping exercises, but it is not necessary in order to perform them. Some people learn better with some theoretical knowledge, if you are one such person, have a look at the DVD ‘*Salsa on the Spur of the Music*’; if you learn better ‘by doing’ just proceed to the clapping exercises.

**How do I use the DVDs?** These DVDs are for active learning and take commitment. They include a choice of more than 90 individual clips and each clip is a separate clapping exercise. Each clip loops forever, that is, it repeats continuously without stopping so that you never need to rewind. It is designed this way so that you can do each exercise for as long as you need. When you are happy with your progress and you want to change exercise, press the **Menu** button on your Remote Control. This will stop the clip and bring you to the DVD menu, where you can choose the next clapping exercise.

**How should I proceed through the DVDs?** Now, let’s see how the DVD series is organised.

## Instructions for Disc A (Volume 1)

**Disk A.** When you first start Disk A you will see a menu like the one in Figure 1

- 1) Select the title **The very basics of musical timing**, with your remote control and press **Play**. This Chapter contains a basic ‘non-salsa’ rhythm in 4 beats. This may sound to you like most ‘western’ rhythms you hear on the radio. The very first thing you need to do is to be able to clap to those 4 beats steadily. The second thing is to recognise which is the first beat, which the second etc. This is what these clapping exercises are designed for. The menu for this chapter is shown in Figure 2. You can choose which beats you want to clap to (1-5, 2-3-6-7, etc) and the speed (slow or fast) by selecting one of the titles on the left hand side of the screen and pressing play. A clip will start to play showing the hands clapping to the chosen beats, as in Figure 3. Try to follow the hands and synchronise your clapping to the rhythm.

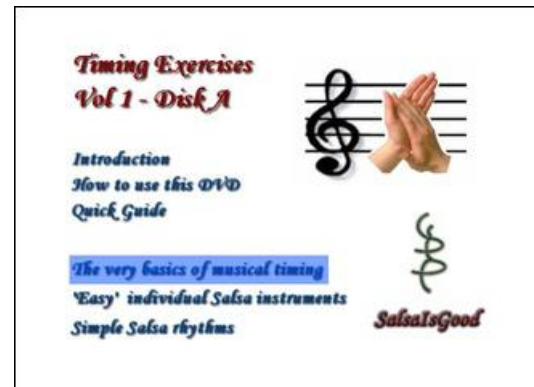


Figure 1



Figure 2

Notice the beat counter on the bottom left: it shows all the 8 beats of a typical music phrase, with the beats you have to clap to highlighted in blue. Remember, the clip loops forever, that is, it never stops so you can practise your clapping until you are satisfied with your progress. To stop the clip, press the **Menu** button on your remote control. The ability to clap to the correct rhythm of the music is necessary whether or not you dance salsa: it is universal to all kinds of social dancing. Some people have an instinctive, unconscious understanding of music; if you are one of those people, you will probably simply need to scan through these exercises once. If you

are not one of those people, we suggest you stick to these clapping exercises until you master them.

Check your progress against the set of clips called ‘Test yourself on beat...’ in which the clapping guide on the video comes and goes. When the guide disappears, keep on clapping to the music following your internal clock. Once the guide comes up again, check that you are in synch with it. If you consistently find yourself in synch, then you can progress to the next chapter; if not, keep doing the exercises. In salsa music finding the beat will be harder so if you do not succeed in this basic rhythm it will be much more difficult in the more complex salsa rhythms.



Figure 3

- 2) Once you have mastered the previous chapter (but only then!) proceed to Chapter **Easy individual Salsa instruments** (from the main menu as in Figure 4). Once you choose this chapter you will see a menu as in Figure 5). This section contains the basic rhythm that some salsa instruments play in common salsa. These are the 'easy' rhythms, as in the ones that are easier to follow and easier in which to recognise the beat. Once again, explanation of the role of these instruments in salsa music can be found in our DVD 'Salsa on the Spur of the Music'.



Figure 5

5. Practise along in order to learn to recognise those beats.
- 4) Each instrument in salsa may play a different rhythm, to give variety to the music. By using the **Audio** button on your DVD remote control you can toggle between different rhythms. Try to press the 'Audio button' and you will see you can choose among 4 different Conga rhythms (other instruments may have 2 or 3 different rhythms). You can challenge yourself by learning to follow different rhythms for each instrument, so that not only do you learn to listen to different subtleties in the music, but also so that you never get bored!
- 5) Once you have mastered the Conga rhythm, try the other 'easy' salsa instruments: Bongo, Guiro, Maracas and Cowbell.

- 6) Once you have understood the basic rhythm of these instruments, proceed to the chapter **Simple Salsa Rhythms** (from the main Menu, as in Figure 6). Here, you will find a menu similar to the one we described for the Conga. Choose which beat you want to exercise with and then choose the speed. With the **Audio** button of the remote control you can toggle between 3 different salsa songs; here is where you can check how to bring your understanding of the salsa rhythm to a full song with basic instrumentation, including a piano and a bass.
- 7) Once all this is under control, (but only then!) you can progress to **Disk B**.



Figure 4

Choose any instrument by highlighting its icon and pressing **Play** on the remote control. For example, choose the Clave, as in Figure 5.

- 3) As for the previous chapter **The very basics of musical timing**, here you will see a set of clapping exercises: the exercises allow you to practise clapping to the different beats of the music: beat 1 and 5 (1-5), beats 1,3,5 and 7 (1,3,5,7) etc. Each of the clapping exercises comes at two speeds, slow and fast. Choose an exercise, for example 'Clap beats 1-5 to Conga - slow'. You will see a video clip of the hands clapping beats 1 and



Figure 6

## Instructions for Disc B (Volume 1)



Figure 7

DVD 'Salsa on the Spur of the Music' and our CD 'Salsa on the Beat').

Being able to follow the bass helps you to develop a nice feel for the salsa groove. Timbales and cascara are less important for a social dancer but they provide further challenges for an understanding of advanced complex rhythms.

8) Finally, the cherry on the cake. The final Chapter **Real Salsa Loops**, from the main Menu as in Figure 9, contains loops taken from different real salsa songs. Here, not only can you apply your musical understanding to real songs as you may encounter them on the dance floor, but also you may check your progress with the 'test yourself' tracks. See if you find your clapping in synch with the video guide when it comes and goes.

This is the ultimate way to check whether salsa rhythm is now in your hands, or even better, unconsciously settled in your brain.

**Final note.** These DVDs can be used both on a DVD player and a computer. If you use them on a DVD player you will notice a slight delay at the point when the exercises loop (every 40-50 seconds). This is not a defect of the DVD, it is just due to the laser point of the DVD player moving along the disk. This delay does not occur when you use the DVD on a computer.

As you may expect it contains more challenging rhythms. Choose the chapter **More challenging individual Salsa instruments**, as in Figure 7. Here you find the most challenging salsa instruments: piano, bass, timbales, cascara and clave, as you can see in the Menu in Figure 8. They are more difficult because their rhythm is more syncopated, more diverse or more complex. Understanding how the piano works is very useful because most salsa songs are based on piano playing. Being able to dance to the clave is a must for any advanced salsa dancer but also a considerable challenge for beginner and intermediate students; spend plenty of time on this (the clave rhythm is properly explained in both our



Figure 8



Figure 9