

Louise Beer - Hand out lesson 4

Introduction to DJing part 2



I have written this to give you an overview of how to beatmatch two tracks together.

Beatmatching is essentially having one track playing then getting a second track in time with the first track, letting them play together for a while and then taking the first track away, so you have transitioned from one track to another in a seamless blend of music which will sound like one continuous track.

One of the first things to consider when learning to DJ is what style of music you want to play. Really there are no rules and a lot depends on if you want to just play for your own enjoyment or if you are intending to play to an audience.

Preparing your tracks

The tempo or speed of the music is important so it's worth gathering a selection of tunes together that are of a similar tempo and a similar genre to practice with. It's also really important to know your tracks that you are going to DJ with. So I would suggest finding approximately 10 tracks and listen to them until you know them inside out.

Getting ready to mix

I would start off with two tracks with nice clear kick drums at the beginning. Have one track ready on each deck. Techno or House are probably the best genres to start learning with and once you get used to DJing you could start experimenting with genres with breakbeats such as Breakbeat Hardcore, Jungle and Garage.

Track structure

Start off by playing the track on the left deck and listen to its structure. Nearly every dance music track has a breakdown around two thirds of the way through it which lasts about 16 or 32 bars. A breakdown is a section where some or all of the drums drop out and you are left with synth or piano sounds or minimal drums then at the end of the breakdown the main drums kick back in this is also known as the drop. Count the bars from the drop, after 8 bars drop in the track on the right deck. If you are unsure about what bars are check out my previous handouts.

Getting your tracks playing at the same tempo.

Firstly though, you'll need both tracks playing at the same speed or tempo. You do this by getting the kick drums of two songs playing in time with each other

Move the crossfader to the left hand deck, make sure the volume fader is up on the left channel and let the track play so you are listening to it through the speakers.

When you have your first tune playing on the left deck press the cue button for the right deck and play the track on the right deck and listen to it through the headphones. (you won't hear it through the speakers because the crossfader is on the left)

If you are DJing with turntables, CDs, a controller, you will be able to speed up or slow down each deck with a pitch fader. Move the pitch fader up and down on the right deck and listen to the track speeding up and slowing down.

Play the track on the right deck and listen out for the first kick drum beat. Let the track play from the beginning and a few beats into the track, put your fingers on the right deck and wind the deck in an anticlockwise direction until you can't hear any more beats. Now push the deck forward until you hear the first beat again and move the deck backwards and forwards over the first beat, practice doing this in time with the track playing on the deck on the left.



Once you have got the hang of this movement you are ready to let go of the right deck and start getting the two tracks in time with each other.

Wind the right hand deck back until the play head or needle is just behind the first beat then let the let go of the deck so it plays. Do this at the start of a 16 bar sequence on the left deck. (Check out my previous tutorials if you want to know what a 16 bar sequence is). You can do this early in the track on the left deck as for now as you are just getting your track on the right deck in time with the track on the left deck not playing it through the speakers.

Move the pitch fader up and down on the right deck until both beats from each deck are playing at the same speed.

Fine tuning.

This may take a lot of practice depending on the format you are using. Once the second track is in time with the first track you may have to nudge the deck to speed it up or slow it down to get it in time. If you are using CDJs it's good to do this process by ear but you can look at the BPM counter on the left deck and adjust the pitch on the right deck so it is showing the same BPM as the left deck. You may still have to nudge the deck back and forth to get them in sync.



If you are using a controller to DJ with or a computer you can also use the sync function to beatmatch and quickly get the two tunes in time. With the first track playing press sync button on the right deck before bringing in the track on the right deck.

If the beat on the new deck hits before the beat on the current record then the new record is too fast; reduce the pitch and manually slow the speed of the new record to bring the beats back in sync.

If the beat on the new deck hits after the beat on the current record then the new record is too slow; increase the pitch and manually increase the speed of the new record to bring the beats back in sync.

Continue this process until the two decks are in sync with each other. It can be difficult to sync the two records perfectly, so manual adjustment of the records is necessary to maintain the beat synchronization.

Once you have the tempos matched in whichever format you are using you can think about when to bring in the second track so you can mix together the two tracks and play them together over the speakers.

Beatmatching!

As I mentioned before I would generally count 8 or 16 bars after the drop (which follows the breakdown) then bring in the track on the right deck.

Make sure the volume fader is up on the right deck then move the crossfader into the centre with your left hand as you let the right deck go with your right hand. Let the both tracks play in time with each other you may have to nudge the deck to get the two tracks in time.

After 8 or 16 bars move the crossfader over to the right so that you only hear the deck on the right.

Get a new track ready on the left deck and go through the instructions above in reverse so you will be mixing a new track on the left deck with the track you already have on the left deck.

You can practice listening to tracks and their structure and imagining where you would bring in the start of the second track. Eventually you will instinctively know when to mix in the second track.

I hope you enjoyed this hand out

Please let me know if you have any questions

All the best

Louise