

# Meter Madness – Wall Balls

by Oren Logan



**Topic:** Meter Follow & Quick Reaction; responding to aural cues; responding to visual cues

**Suggested Grade(s):** 3<sup>rd</sup>—5<sup>th</sup> (Can be done with lower grade levels but stick with lower levels or keep things simple.)

**Objective:** Students will demonstrate their ability to react quickly to music meter changes and aural cues by rolling, bouncing, and tossing tennis balls. Students will also demonstrate how to prepare their body to best demonstrate these patterns through good body Crucis and Ana-Crucis (as well as Meta-Crucis).

**Materials:** Tennis Balls, Piano (or other instrument to improvise different Meters on).

**Approximate time per Level:** 5-10 minutes

**State/National Standards:** 2020 Colorado Academic Standards: Meter: Identify and demonstrate various time signatures including 2/4, 3/4, 4/4

**Rationale/Directions:**

These 5 levels of this tennis ball activity are meant to scaffold students learning and help them identify, feel, and move to different meters of music. I have divided them into “levels” instead of lessons, as I like to take the pace of my students when progressing through levels. I also find that this activity can be great for all grade levels in helping students recognize and move to beat/meter. I simply spend more time on higher levels with older students and utilize/adapt lower levels for younger students.

**Level 1: Crucis & Ana-Crucis**

1. Feeling the 1 measure phrase – listening for Crucis/Ana-Crucis in the Meter
  1. Students roll a tennis ball to partner sitting across from them. Students roll when the music plays, stop the ball when the music pauses.
  2. Teacher improvises a 4/4 Meter tune emphasizing downbeats and lingering on beat 4 for a good Ana-Crucis.
  3. Students roll and stop the ball with the meter of the music.
  4. Teacher improvises music in different meters and students respond. Note: I make my first improvisations with different Meters very basic to help students recognize what they are listening for.

### **Level 2: Differentiating Meter**

1. Add different actions for different Meters
  1. Meter of 2 – “Bounce/Catch” with a partner
  2. Meter of 3 – “Toss - & - Catch” with a partner
  3. Meter of 4 – “Roll - 2 – 3 - 4” with a partner
2. Teacher and/or student can help demonstrate to do each action with a good set-up (Ana-Crucis) to help students be successful.
3. Student improvisation – Once students have the basic meters 2,3,4, I like to improvise patterns in 5 and 6 and give students creative control on what they do for these new meters
  1. Example: Students roll the ball down their arm to their partner for a Meter of 6
  2. Example: Students roll ball behind their back for a Meter of 5

### **Level 3: Hip & Hop**

1. Once Students have mastered Level 2, put students into a group of 4 (have two groups combine)
2. Students now bounce, toss, roll their tennis ball in a circle
3. Hip & Hop: Teacher adds vocal cues “hip” and “Hop” (or you can use high and low trills on the piano).
  1. Hip = Switch directions in the circle
  2. Hop = Roll to the partner across from you

### **Level 4: Full Class Meter Madness**

1. Combine all students into 1 big circle in the room
2. Students and teacher follow rules from previous levels but with the full class.

### **Level 5: Adding Difficulty**

There are many ways to add difficulty to encourage student attention, concentration, and social integration for this activity. Here are a few examples:

1. Adding Tennis Balls – Repeat Levels 1-4 but give more students tennis balls (2 balls per pair, 2 balls for group of 4, 4 balls for an entire class to start). A great end goal would be to have all students with a tennis ball in a full classroom group moving their ball with the Crucis and Ana-Crucis of the played Meter.
2. Adjusting Tempo – Have students follow different tempos that require them to move slower or faster. You can even add in more aural cues that have students move 2x or ½ the speed you improvise at. I would limit improvisation to even Meters to start here.
3. Student Improvisation/Composition: Have students come up with a new way to express each Meter pattern in their own way. This really helps demonstrate which students have mastered this concept, and which students might need a bit more help!
4. Standing up – Have students repeat some of the levels standing up. Students have a lot of fun doing this, but you may need to start with lower levels again.
  - a. When standing up, demonstrate what a good body Crucis and ana-Crucis might look like for different meters
    - i. Example: bending knees during a “bounce-catch”

**Assessment:**

Excellence in Eurhythmics	1 – Not Trying	2 – Arrhythmic Not Yet	3 – Errhythmic With Music but no “Flow”	4 Eurhythmic Mastery – with music and great “Flow”
Level 1	Student makes no attempt at activity.	Student rolls the ball when music is being played but is not with the Music.	Student rolls ball with the correct meter of music, but doesn’t show Crucis or Ana-Crucis (flicking ball to partner instead of winding up to roll)	Student rolls ball to partner & shows great bodily flow by “winding-up” rolling the ball → Crucis & Ana-Crucis

Level 2	Student makes no attempt at activity.	Student rolls, bounces, and tosses the ball to the music, but doesn't use the appropriate movement, or is behind/ahead of the music.	Student uses the appropriate movement for the music being played, but there is a delay between switching, or doesn't use Crucis & ana-Crucis	Student uses the appropriate movement for the music being played and demonstrates little to no delay between switching actions.
Level 3-4-5	Student makes no attempt at activity.	Students follow the music and aural cues but demonstrate a great delay between the music and movement.	Students follow the music and aural cues in time with the music, but movement is rigid or sudden (no anticipation, only reaction).	Students follow the music and aural cues in time with the music and show great understanding of body Crucis and Ana-Crucis with little delay.