



Body awareness starts and ends with knowing your rhythm. Groove is optimal motion patterns and an internal "beat" that allows performers to excel.

Consistent performance of any kind is premised upon an internal rhythm of movement that can be repeated to allow for maximum performance and pleasure. It is an athletes' best friend to ensure consistency and control over all of the large muscles in performance. Rhythm is the inside clock that puts your body in the best position to get proper sequencing, mechanics and all of the physical stuff you don't have time to overthink about come game time.

We all walk with our own rhythm, and we all have our own breathing rhythm. Athletes have a regular, recurring motion that allows them to be consistent in practice and in games. So, refine and adjust your rhythm groove any time by following these easy steps . . .

— Slow is smooth and smooth is fast. Know the exact feeling and internal clock with which you perform best. Your first adjustment after taking a deep, exaggerated breath and a brief self-talk should be a rhythm re-check. Are your feet going too fast? Are you herky-jerky with your motion? Is a specific muscle impacting my groove? If so, feel the rhythm of the beat you know puts you back on the groove.

— Check in with your breathing rhythm. If the center of your universe is off—either by being too slow, too fast or erratic—your body groove is gone.

— Practice groove moves daily.

— Check in with your groove meter while walking or listening to music. Listen to your heartbeat in a lecture. Tap your feet to different patterns each day.

Each practice or pregame routine should have a rhythm check-in. Whether it is a moment where you hum, count or sing during your preparation, or bounce and dance to the rhythm of your activity, just check-in and look silly! While jogging, stretching or doing band work are all great times to practice grooving.

In the end, some have rhythm all the time and some lost it quickly. But knowing the feel and beat of your rhythm for a specific activity is the first step in being on rhythm groove come game time. The best of the best stay in their rhythm all day long.

Pre-action rhythm (PAR) shows up everywhere on the field. Timing efficiency is premised on a repeatable rhythmic movement that allows the body to know when to go or how to be on time. Visual rhythm allows the eyes to tell the body to get ready to swing and when to swing. The great teachers constantly use this word when discussing hitting and pitching. I'm convinced it is the foundation in which the end result—command of the strike zone or being on time while hitting—is decided.

Teaching cues to help athletes find their PAR include, "Slow to go; Listen to your controlled beat; Dance with the target; Little moves to set up big moves; Tap, sing or sway into action; Start the clock."

In short, pre-action rhythm sets up all of the "stuff" the crowd actually sees.

