

# Try This Now

**How to start learning and teaching the ways the brain learns music best**

Gregg Goodhart - The Learning Coach   gregggoodhart.com

## Additional Learning Interventions for Contextual Interference

**Note Grouping:** Playing a set number of notes then stopping and holding the last note for at least twice the value you had been previously playing. I've found groups of 3's (dots are two) through 7's are enough. For an added challenge start your repetition with 1 or 2 or however many less notes than your target grouping. Now the gaps will be in different places challenging you even more. For example; after doing some reps with groups of 3 try playing the first note, hold that longer, then do groups of three. Next time play the first two notes then begin groups of 3, etc.

**Pausing Before String Crossings:** For string instruments only (but similar adjustments could be made to other instruments). Sometimes this is exactly where the issue is and everything else is fine. Doing this addresses that problem.

**Sequences:** Rep the passage with 3 note sequences, 4 note, 5 note, whatever.

**Add A Note:** Play the first note, then the first two, then 1-2-3, 1-2-3-4, 1-2-3-4-5, etc. This is a very powerful tool that is underused because it takes so long to get through. I generally count one time through this exercise, if the passage is not really short, as 10 reps.

**Right Hand Only:** Self-explanatory. Lefty guitarists adjust as necessary. For bowed strings this obviously only means the bow action on the open strings without the left hand. For keys, percussion and key system wind instruments try it with one hand then the other. For keys try playing the right or left hand part with the opposite hand.

**Groups of 4 and 8 forward and backward:** Play the first four notes of a passage you are trying to master forward and backward (or just forward). Do this at least 4x. Then do the same with the next four. Then do it with the first 8. Continue through the passage like this. A variation would be to do this starting with the first note, then the second, then the third, etc. This would take a long time, but using it sparingly in your rep scheme can be beneficial. Make sure to keep the fingering or bowing true to what it normally is both forward and backward.

**Adding Accents:** Add accents deliberately to whatever passage you are trying to master. Really emphasize the accent. Do it on the odd note, the even notes, every third, fourth, whatever note. Try alternating every third then fourth. This is harder than you may think and really forces concentration.

If you've found this helpful and want to share, thanks! Please send folks to my website, [gregggoodhart.com](http://gregggoodhart.com), where they can pay a few bucks to get my copyrighted intellectual property. © Gregg Goodhart 2022

# Additional Learning Interventions for Contextual Interference

**Duple in triple and triple in duple:** Set your metronome and play things in duple time as triplets. Take something in 6/8 or in triplets and play four notes to the beat.

**Make up Rhythms:** As you can see note groupings are just specific rhythms applied to your isolated repetitions. Make up your own rhythms, maybe make them more than a measure long, try all sorts of things like triplets to sixteenth notes to a double dotted rhythm. Write down some random rhythms and try them, or go to [rhythmrandomizer.com](http://rhythmrandomizer.com) and have it make them up for you. You can use examples from rhythm teaching texts as well. Each time you have to navigate something new the brain focuses and learns.

## **Go forth and create your practice!**

Hopefully these ideas will spark creativity in your practice. I came to all of them in that way, and am finding new ones all of the time. I was just making things up to help my practice, and you should too. Don't worry if you are not good at doing so at first. Just keep trying it and you'll get better at creative solutions over time. We teachers have a word for that – learning. You are learning how to improve your practice.