



REVELATION FITNESS INSTRUCTOR MANUAL

Chapter 6: Cueing and the Importance of Music

Cueing for Safety

As fitness instructors, we're responsible for keeping our participants safe as best we can. This means it's necessary to have basic knowledge and understanding of the kinetic chain and essential fitness form to keep people moving safely and successfully. Does this mean you need to memorize the name of every muscle and bone? No. But it does mean you need to consider what your students know about the body so they can relate and self-correct as needed.

For instance, you wouldn't tell someone to make sure their patellas are staying posterior to their metatarsals in a squat. But you would model correct form and talk through a self-assessment from the ground up, following the kinetic chain and using terms they know. For example, to cue while doing a squat, you may say, "I'm going to make sure my weight is in my heels and my hips are back so that my knees stay behind my toes."

When cueing for safety, we want to make sure we're consistent in the terms we use and are giving tangible points to use for self-assessment. Don't try to be fancy with anatomical terms to show how much you know. Use words that relate to your students so they can be safe and successful in your classes!

While our words are important, we also need to include physical demonstrations for those who need the visual reminder or aren't sure what part of the body we're talking about. Raising your arm, pointing to a foot or the direction you're going to move first, or fully demonstrating the move before you do it are great examples of cueing. You want to consider doing both verbal and physical cues so the information is solidified with more than one style of learner.



No matter what type of fitness you're teaching, these things stay true:

- **Be consistent.** Use correct anatomical terms and fitness move names, but make sure they're also easily understood by participants.
- **Transition in time.** Set participants up for success by telling, modeling, and letting them know what's coming in time to prepare for the next move. This will look different in choreography than it will in metabolic circuits, which we'll talk about later.
- **Show progressions.** Break down movements and show the progression from part to whole, simple to complex, slow to half time.
- **Speak to the entire group when teaching good form.** "Eyes up, everyone!" is much more effective than saying, "Karen, lift your eyes!" We don't want to call anyone out. We want to give a reminder to the whole group. That way, even those who are doing the move properly have the opportunity to self-check.

Cueing will take practice, especially if you're new to learning these terms and techniques yourself! As you continue to grow as an instructor, cueing will begin to come naturally. Soon, you'll be speaking the language of a seasoned fitness instructor who can effectively move bodies in every direction!

Music

Did you know that as a Revelation Fitness Instructor, you're a worship leader? It's true! You get to create a space for people to move in joy and freedom as they worship the Lord with their whole selves!

"Let the peace of Christ keep you in tune with each other, in step with each other. None of this going off and doing your own thing. And cultivate thankfulness. Let the Word of Christ—the Message—have the run of the house. Give it plenty of room in your lives. Instruct and direct one another using good common sense. And sing, sing your hearts out to God! Let every detail in your lives—words, actions, whatever—be done in the name of the Master, Jesus, thanking God the Father every step of the way." —Colossians 3:15-17 (MSG)

Group fitness is about community, and music is a way to bring people together! Music sets the tone for worship.

Ways to Incorporate Music in Your Classes

Music in the Background



The music you choose to play in your classes motivates participants and sets the mood. It has the power to encourage and push your students to get comfortable being uncomfortable. Circuits, boot camp, and interval training are a few of the formats where you can play music in the background for inspiration and motivation. Think of ways to creatively weave music into your class format to motivate participants when it gets more challenging, and encourage them to rest when necessary.

Music in the Foreground

With music in the foreground of class, you're following the beat as you move. Moving to the beat of the music is a powerful way to create unity in your classes. Cardio dance, kickboxing, cycling, and drumsticks are a few formats where movement is matched to the beat. Even if you only do this type of movement for one song or a few minutes, there's something beautiful about getting people to move together in this way.

Please keep in mind you do *not* have to use the beat in a Revelation Fitness class. You get to move people in the way that God is calling you to, and moving to the beat is only one option! But don't be afraid to learn and experiment, especially if hearing the beat or moving to the beat doesn't come naturally to you. It may take practice, but you are qualified! Ask the Lord for a vision for how He wants you to use music in your classes. Don't be afraid to step out of your comfort zone if He's inviting you to try a new way of moving!

Beats and Musical Terminology

The beat is the basic measurement of time and rhythm when it comes to the music we use in our fitness classes. The beat is made up of regular pulsations that are made up of strong and weak pulsations. The strong pulsations make up the downbeat, and weak pulsations form the upbeat.¹ The downbeat is best understood by clapping your hands along with a song.² You're clapping the downbeats. An upbeat occurs between the downbeats. When clapping along with music, the upbeat is when you pull your hands away from each other.³

A measure is a group of beats formed by the regular occurrence of a heavy accent on the first beat or downbeat of each group. Most fitness music is in 4/4 time, which means there are four beats in a measure. The strong accent happens on the first

beat of each measure. So if counting, “1-2-3-4, 1-2-3-4...” the “1” has the strongest accent of all the beats in the measure. In fitness, this means you’ll usually want to start new movements on the strong downbeat of the “1” or first beat.

If this musical terminology has your head spinning, it’s okay! You may understand it better by listening to music while trying to find the strong downbeat. Clap along with the music to find the beat, and clap the loudest on the first beat of each measure. You’ll have plenty of time to practice, learn, and grow in this area!

Calculating BPM and Why It Matters

Tempo is how fast or slow a song is. The tempo of a song can be calculated by determining the beats per minute (BPM).

To determine the tempo of a song (BPM), play the song and count the beat for ten seconds and multiply by six. Or, count the beat of the song for fifteen seconds and multiply by four.

You can also download a free metronome app that will help you identify a song’s BPM. Or, you can do a Google search for “‘name of song’ BPM” and you’ll probably find its BPM.

Knowing the BPM of a song will help you determine what type of movement is appropriate to pair with it.

Music Tempo for Common Group Fitness Modalities

BPM (beats per minute)	TYPE OF WORKOUT
<100	Most often used for background music for slower classes like Pilates or Barre, yoga, or stretching classes. Use slower music for cool downs as well.
100-122	Beginner step classes, low end of low-impact aerobics, and hip-hop classes. Also appropriate for choreographed songs using bodyweight or hand weights with a strength focus & slower movements.
122-129	Group fitness classes with mid-advanced cardio, low-to-mid impact aerobics, some dance-based fitness classes, and aquatic fitness classes.
130-160	Faster paced movement classes, mid-to-high impact classes, some dance-based fitness classes, kickboxing, and some martial arts-based classes.

These BPM suggestions are just general guidelines. Know the purpose of your music, and know your participants. If you have a group of seniors, you may consider slowing down the tempo of your warm-up and cardio conditioning. If you find yourself leading more advanced participants, they may have the ability to pick up the pace and use faster music. Your participants should be able to perform movements with good form and full range of motion (ROM). Make sure your music isn't too quick, forcing your students to compromise their form. Safety should be your biggest consideration. Remember, you're there to set your students up for success!⁴

Christian vs. Non-Christian Music

As a Revelation Fitness Instructor, you're free to use both "Christian" and "non-Christian" music in your classes. In all things, keep in mind that you're not just representing the ministry of Revelation Wellness, but Christ and His Kingdom.

Though the enemy has twisted and distorted music in sinful ways, music belongs to the Lord. We can help redeem music for His glory—even "secular" music. Everyone is searching for love, power, strength, inspiration, and connection. Music doesn't have to be overtly Christian to speak to those things! "Secular" or popular music may even help those who don't yet know Jesus connect more with your classes as they recognize songs.

Of course, you should use discretion when choosing songs. Be sure to check the lyrics before you use a song in class. You can do this by searching online for "'name of the song' lyrics." You may not realize a certain word or phrase is in the song until you

see the lyrics written out. It can be frustrating to hear an amazing song that you'd love to use in your class, only to find it may not be appropriate when you check the lyrics. There's not always a black and white answer when it comes to song choice. We may even choose differently as individual Revelation Fitness Instructors. Listen to the Spirit within you and aim to be above reproach when it comes to your music choices.

Above all, have *fun*! There's so much good music out there. It may take some time and effort to find what works for you, but enjoy the process of finding new songs and artists to use as you lead your classes in worship!

Music Licensing



Revelation Wellness operates under a 501(c)(3) with music licensing through ASCAP and BMI. As an instructor, you'll likely fall under the category of fair use while submitting student teaching to Revelation Wellness.

According to YouTube.com, "Fair Use is a U.S. law that allows the reuse of copyright-protected material under certain circumstances without getting permission from the copyright owner.

However, Fair Use is determined on a case-by-case basis, and different countries have different rules about when it's okay to use material without the copyright owner's permission. In the U.S., works of commentary, criticism, research, teaching, or news reporting might be considered fair use, but it can depend on the situation."⁵

When in doubt, we advise you to use royalty-free music or reach out to an expert in your area to confirm your specific situation and music licensing.

Upon certification, you may discuss the protocol for using music in class with the venue where you decide to teach. If you choose to operate as an LLC or individual and have concerns, we again recommend that you use royalty-free music or reach out to a local expert to confirm your specific situation and music licensing.

There are several royalty-free music sites out there. We encourage you to do your own research as this is a very personal matter. That said, here are a few we're aware of:

- <https://www.epidemicsound.com/>
- <https://www.premiumbeat.com/>
- <https://www.musicbed.com/>

Combining Music and Movement

When using movement in the foreground, there's no right or wrong way to put music and movement together, as long as it's done with correct form and safety considerations. You get to be creative!

Start by listening to music. How does that particular song inspire you to move? Play around with adding cardio, strength, kickboxing, drumsticks, or dance movements to the beat! You may have to experiment with it for a while, or it may come to you quickly. Either way, try to find joy in the creative process!

Often we'll see several Revelation Fitness Instructors come up with completely different types of movement for the same song. It always serves as a reminder of how uniquely God has created each of our brains and bodies—and they're all good!

The more you know your music, the easier it will be to lead choreography-based classes or segments. Many Revelation Fitness Instructors like to practice "car choreography." This is where you listen to music as you drive and do the movements in your head. When you know the changes in a song, you'll be more confident when you lead it.

Cool Down Music



The cool down is one of the things that sets a Revelation Fitness class apart. Unlike most fitness classes where the cool down lasts only a few minutes, a Revelation Fitness class embraces an extended period of rest. Your cool down music sets the tone for a posture of rest and receiving what the Lord has done in your participants during the workout.

Listen to the Holy Spirit during this time. He may ask you to speak and encourage. He may prompt you to be still and allow the melodies and lyrics of the song to speak to the participants. Whatever He leads you to do, remember that His Word never returns void!⁶

Consider choosing music that supports your intention for the class to drive the message home. Don't forget: you are a worship leader! Be you, have fun, and enjoy the process of learning to put music and movement together in the way God is calling you to. It truly is a "get to"!

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1. Bryant, Cedric X., Todd Galati, Daniel J. Green, Jessica Matthews, and Sabrena Merrill. Chapter. In *ACE Group Fitness Instructor Handbook: The Professional's Guide to Creating Memorable Movement Experiences*, 66. San Diego, CA: American Council on Exercise, 2018.
2. "Song." Musical Dictionary, March 21, 2019. <https://musicaldictionary.com/song/>.
3. "Music." Musical Dictionary, March 21, 2019. <https://musicaldictionary.com/song/>.
4. Bryant, Cedric X., Todd Galati, Daniel J. Green, Jessica Matthews, and Sabrena Merrill. Chapter. In *ACE Group Fitness Instructor Handbook: The Professional's Guide to Creating Memorable Movement Experiences*, 67. San Diego, CA: American Council on Exercise, 2018.
5. "YouTube Copyright & Fair Use Policies - How YouTube Works." YouTube. YouTube. Accessed May 2021. <https://www.youtube.com/howyoutubeworks/policies/copyright/#fair-use>.
6. See Isaiah 55:11.