

The Groove Guide

Name of Product: The Groove Guide

Company: Drum Perfect

Price: \$149.95

Reviewer: Linda Pitmon

Usefulness: Two Cymbals (out of four) 

The Groove Guide promised to be a tempo guide to help you in a variety of situations: live, in the studio or just at rehearsal. It was easy to get up and running, easier than I would have imagined when I opened the box and saw a box, some cords and a couple of mysterious black and silver items. I couldn't really picture how this would look once it was all set up, and in fact, it would've been helpful to have a picture or drawing to look at before attempting to connect the dots (just a personal preference). Turns out it was just a matter of plugging one end of the cord into the Sensor Device and the other end into the input on the Readout Box, and then plugging the box into the wall. The cord that plugs into the wall is annoyingly short however, so I needed to employ an extension cord to get from the wall over to my kit with the LED Readout Box. The most time intensive aspect of this process was simply attaching the Sensor to the snare drum by removing a lug and slipping it through the slot in the Sensor and re-tightening the lug to secure it to the head of the drum. This allows the Sensor to detect when the snare is hit and the rate of the strikes. The BPM (Beats Per Minute) are then displayed electronically on the box that either sits near your feet (where I had it placed) or you can attach it to a cymbal stand with the help of the mounting post that comes with the Groove Guide. You still need to have a clamp to attach the post of the box to your stand and that's unfortunately not included. The Groove Guide is also set up with an extra input that can be used to connect you to electronic drums. I was playing with an acoustic kit so I didn't explore that aspect of the product.

This device is supposed to help you learn to keep tempo by showing you an LED readout that will show you the BPM at which you're playing. Unfortunately, you usually hit the snare every OTHER beat so you need to take that into account when you look at the readout. If you're playing the snare on 2 and 4, and you want to play the song at 100 beats per

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minute, then ideally you want the readout to display 50 when you're playing. That's right, you have to do MATH, which is hard enough for me to do when I'm sitting down with a calculator, much less rocking with my friends and two empty beer bottles at my feet. To make matters more complicated, if you're playing fills, the numbers on the box spin like roulette wheel (478, 20, 45 etc.).

I don't see that the Groove Guide would be all that useful in the studio, where typically one would rely on a click track for enforced tempos. A click track is an audio metronome played through headphones to play along to, and I feel it's more accurate as a time-keeping device--and probably less of a distraction for the user in a studio situation--than the Groove Guide. Having said that, however, I CAN recommend this device to beginners and those just wanting something to play along to while practicing steady grooves. I found it useful as a visual aid while I was coasting on a groove song with my guitar player.

Playing with good tempo is essential for all drummers, so I highly recommend some time-keeping device to practice with if you're a serious student or professional. I would be more likely to recommend that a player invest in a basic click track though, which can be comparable in price and perhaps easier to use.