

# Rhythm Play!



## Rhythm Activities and Initiatives for

Adults, Facilitators, Teachers, and Kids!

Kenya S. Masala

Illustrations by  
Crystal Presence & Gabriela Masala

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**info@fundoing.com**

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Kenya Masala and Source Consulting Group  
Austin, Texas; USA

**kenya@sourceconsultinggroup.com**



This book is dedicated to my amazing wife and life partner Gabriela, who brings the magic and music of play to my life every day.

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*For more information or to purchase additional copies of this book and other materilas, contact Kenya Masala at:*

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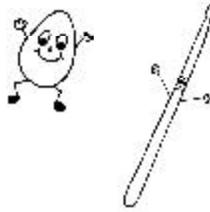
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Terra Ruddy Sola Diamond & River Summer Crystal Yarrow  
Baba Olatunji Mamady Keita Fara Tolno Abdoul Doumbia Kulu  
Bruce Rudolph Martin Klabunde Jeremy Crytzer Robert Patterson  
Arthur Hull Christine Stevens Leza, Kimi, Kep, Sol, Erica, Mike

Thank you!

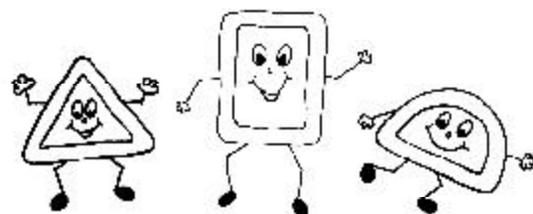
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*"All people from all walks of life, all colors,  
have various things that they can do together to create harmony,  
and it is the simplest thing to make music and sing together."*

**Baba Olatunji**

## Introduction

By reading this book, and experiencing these activities, you'll tap into your innate sense of rhythm; even if you've thought you had none. Indeed, everyone has rhythm! Having worked with thousands of people all over this country (and folks from other wonderful lands) I can say that everyone has rhythm. It's just a fact. Your heart beats, you walk, you breathe, your eyes blink; it's all rhythm. And, if you didn't have rhythm, you wouldn't know when you were *off* the rhythm! How's that for some fun logic? But really, what it all comes down to is that we all have innate rhythm, and it's a wonderful thing to explore.

### Benefits

The benefits of drumming and rhythmic play are many, and there are now specific scientific studies proving these benefits. The therapeutic value of drumming is also gaining great recognition. Youth and adults, people with disabilities, people experiencing ADHD, and people in recovery, all benefit from the powerful yet simple experience of group rhythm. *(See the Health Rhythms section at [www.remo.com](http://www.remo.com) for a fantastic overview of these breakthrough studies.)*

Hospitals, schools, and prisons are becoming increasingly aware of the healing, soothing, and educational value of rhythm, song, and dance. All ages experience the neurological and physical benefits that come from participating in rhythm and movement circles. Rhythm bridges cultural boundaries and brings people together. It's not just fun; it really *is* good for us! In many rhythm experiences, I've watched as hundreds of people feel the magic, cut loose, and light up in ways they've never before experienced.

## Using this Book

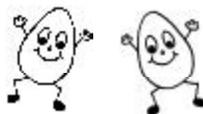
This is an ever-evolving collection of activities using various, easy-to-find rhythm instruments. They are perfect for use in team building and music therapy sessions, classroom learning (making learning really fun) and for conference energizers. The activities fit almost any age; if a participant can firmly hold a stick and use it to hit another object in a regular pattern, they can do just about all of these activities. The activities are broken down into instrument-specific sections. Some activities will crossover; that is, you can use various instruments for the same activity. Activities that defied a specific category are found in the **Multi-Instrument Games** chapter of the book (pg. 97).

***You don't have to be a musician to facilitate these activities.*** As I mentioned earlier, anyone and everyone has rhythm. While practice helps (as with anything) there are some simple techniques for immediate rhythm creation. In the second section, you'll get lots of tips on instant rhythm creation. If you want to take your rhythm facilitation to the highest level, read the book *Drum Circle Spirit* by Arthur Hull, the Granddaddy of drum circle facilitation. Or better yet, check out one of his dynamic trainings. You can find more of his information at [www.drumcircle.com](http://www.drumcircle.com).

I suggest that you try these activities yourself before you do them with a group (unless it's a group of facilitators and you are experimenting). Give yourself some practice, and minimize the uncomfortable element of surprise that can occur when an activity does not go the way you intended. The activities are written in a very kinesthetic manner; you'll better understand the directions if you actually get up and try them as you read.

Certain activities in the Sticks, Boomwhackers® tuned percussion tubes, and Sound Shapes® sections are sequenced. That is, the skills and challenges build from one activity to the next in specific order. To get the most out of these activities, I recommend having your group do the first activity in each sequence before moving to the next.

Feel free to modify as you go; I encourage you to explore and play around with the ideas here, and let me know what you create. The world of rhythm is indeed infinite, and can provide hours of very interesting activities, so play, play, play! That's really what this is all about.





## Skills Index

Besides the opportunity to play and have fun, these activities can be used to develop or practice specific skills in leadership, group cohesion, and affective skills enhancement (active listening, clear communication etc.). The **Activity Skills Index** on page 137, lists the primary skill focus for each activity, the challenge level, and the appropriate age group for each activity. The index is a great reference for matching an activity with a group.

## Challenge Level

The activities range in challenge level from 0 to 5. A challenge level of “0” means the activity is very easy to facilitate and easy for participants to do with little explanation. These are great energizers, warm-up or quick transition activities. A challenge level of “5” means there is more facilitation required and thus more skill building during the activity. These are great for problem solving and focused team building, and you may want to debrief the experience to reinforce learning. Regardless of the challenge level, each activity can be modified to make it easier or more difficult depending on your group’s needs.

## Variations

In the **Variations** section of each activity, you will find ways to extend an activity as well as suggestions for adding challenges. These suggestions can often provide insights for making the activity unique to your group and situation, and can increase the versatility of an activity.

## Equipment

For equipment all you need are the instruments covered in the book (egg shakers, sticks, Boomwhackers®, and Sound Shapes®) plus a large cowbell or jam block (see page 21). Quantity depends on your budget and group size. Instrument details are covered at the beginning of each section.

## Celebrate!

Throughout the activities, you'll notice instructions to celebrate. This is important. When you praise and acknowledge individual or group accomplishments it keeps the spirit of rhythm and play alive. Rhythm and music making can sometimes feel risky for participants, so consistent, supportive encouragement invites even the shyest person to jump in and experience the groove. Celebration feeds the soul of exploration.

## Play Activities

If you've never facilitated group play activities, (and even if you have), you may want to explore other books and training methods (not necessarily rhythm based, but still totally fun). They will help you practice the "play" mind. Some of my all time favorites are by Chris Cavert ([www.fundoing.com](http://www.fundoing.com)) and Sam Sikes ([www.learningunlimited.com](http://www.learningunlimited.com)). Their websites are definitely worth a visit. More information is available in the **Resources** section on page 123.

## More Training

All the activities in this book can be experienced in single- or multiple-day training sessions led by Source Consulting Groups's facilitators. Training sessions are one of the best ways to fully understand the power and joy inherent in Rhythm Play.

Enjoy, keep groovin', and keep in touch!  
[kenya@sourceconsultinggroup.com](mailto:kenya@sourceconsultinggroup.com)  
[kenya@rhythmoflifedrumming.com](mailto:kenya@rhythmoflifedrumming.com)



Everybody has rhythm.

# Stick-Stick-Shoe-Floor

## GROUP SIZE

**Minimum:** 2

**Maximum:** 40+

**Challenge Level:** 1

## TIME

5 to 10 minutes

## INSTRUMENTS

1 pair of sticks per person

## Formation

Large Standing Circle or Standing Conglomerate

## INSTRUCTIONS

**1)** This is a great follow up to ***Call and Response*** on **pg. 43**. Once all participants have sticks, play a Pulse and invite everyone to play it with you. Call out a 4-count stop to end the Pulse.

**2)** Explain that this activity will be like “follow the leader;” say, “I’ll play, then you’ll play and do whatever I do.” Again, start out with a very simple pattern, like a four count played on sticks (*1-2-3-4* and the group responds playing *1-2-3-4*). Then take it from there, adding to or modifying the call, making a funny face or a body movement as you call out simple rhythms. Do this for about a minute. (Remember to keep the calls and movements simple enough for your particular group to follow, but challenging enough to keep them interested.)

**3)** Once the group is in the groove, sit down (cross-legged style) so you can hit your sticks together, and also hit the floor. This brings another tone into the pattern, so a simple riff might be: *stick-stick-floor-floor* (the group responds), then you play *stick-floor-stick-floor*, and so on.

*Caution:* some wooden floors may be marred or scratched by sticks, so test this out in a corner before you start the activity or get permission to hit the floor. Keep the tempo slow enough so that the group can follow, only speeding up as the group can follow; you want to keep a sense of unity, not chaos. For some groups, saying the words *stick* and *floor* when you strike the sticks or floor helps tie the verbal in with the kinesthetic.

4) Now uncross your legs and stick your feet out in front so you can add hits on your shoes. A pattern might be: *stick-stick-shoe-shoe* (hit sticks together twice, then hit your shoes twice); the group responds, copying what you've done. Then try *stick-stick-shoe-floor*. Here's another: *stick-shoe-floor-shoe*, or *stick-stick-floor-floor-shoe-shoe-shoe* and so on. The patterns you create are unlimited (just remember your group's ability). Feel free to explore and play around; it's really fun!

## NOTES

This activity takes call and response and group focus to more kinesthetic heights; keep chanting *stick*, *floor*, or *shoe*, as necessary to keep your group in the groove.

## Variations

Go around the circle (if the group is not too large) and invite each person to create a riff to which the group will respond. Encourage them to integrate their shoes, the floor, and even (*softly!*) tap on a body part (their own, not someone else's!) as part of the rhythm pattern; e.g., *Sticks-floor-shoe-shoe* (group responds), then *sticks-floor-shoe-thighs* (group responds), etc.

You can add a "Simon Says" component to this activity. Remind the group to play what you play, **regardless of what you say**. So if you **say** *stick-shoe-floor-shoe*, but you actually **play** *stick-shoe-stick-shoe*, you'll be able to "fake them out" adding more challenge to the fun (and more reasons to focus). No one has to be "out" if they mess up (unless that would work for your group); it's just a great way to bring more laughs.



## Overview

The activities in this book are multifaceted, and can be used to facilitate learning on many levels beyond increased rhythmic ability. This sections outlines the primary skills practiced or developed by an activity. Keep in mind that the learning experience is dependent on *your* intentions for the activity; the way you facilitate the process directly affects the outcome. This index is primarily an overview and you may find more specific skill building occurring as you become comfortable with the various activities.

Along the with skill focus, the index reviews the challenge level for each activity (ranging from 0 to 5). A challenge level of "0" means the activity is very easy to facilitate and easy for participants to do with little explanation. These are great energizers, warm up or quick transition activities. A challenge level of "5" means there is more facilitation required, and more skill building happening during the activity. These are great for problem solving and focused team building and you may want to debrief the experience to support learning. Regardless of the challenge level, each activity can be modified to make it easier or more difficult depending on your group.

The index also provides information on the best age group for each activity. The age groups are general:

**Youngers:** K to 3rd grade

**Middles:** 4th to 6th grade

**Olders:** 7th to 10th grade

**Adults:** 10th grade to Adults

Use this as a guide and remember that simple modifications to an activity make it easier or harder depending on the makeup of your group.

Even though these activities can be used to teach and to learn, their primary intent remains simple: have fun!

## Connecting with Rhythm 15

Brain Rhythm (Pg. 18)

**Specific Skill Focus:** Kinesthetic (body) awareness, Listening, Multi-tracking, Focusing

**Best Age Group:** Can be modified to work with all age groups

**Challenge Level:** 0

The Pulse (Pg. 20)

**Specific Skill Focus:** Listening, Cooperation, Group Cohesion and Connection, Concentration and Focus

**Best Age Group:** Can be modified to work with all age groups

**Challenge Level:** 0

Rhythm in the Kitchen (Pg. 22)

**Specific Skill Focus:** Listening, Cooperation, Creativity

**Best Age Group:** Can be modified to work with all age groups

**Challenge Level:** 1



## Eggs and Small Shakers 25

Shake the Eggs (Pg. 27)

**Specific Skill Focus:** Listening, Following directions, Group Cohesion

**Best Age Group:** Can be modified to work with all age groups

**Challenge Level:** 1

Eggs Up Eggs Down Down (Pg. 29)

**Specific Skill Focus:** Listening, Following Directions, Concentration and Focus

**Best Age Group:** Can be modified to work with all age groups

**Challenge Level:** 0

Eggstremely Quiet (Pg. 31)

**Specific Skill Focus:** Listening, Concentration and Focus, Integrity

**Best Age Group:** Middles through Adults

**Challenge Level:** 2

Amoebeggs (Pg. 33)

**Specific Skill Focus:** Cooperation, Creativity, Problem Solving, Group Cohesion

**Best Age Group:** Middles through Adults

**Challenge Level:** 2

Take It Pass It (Pg. 34)

**Specific Skill Focus:** Listening, Cooperation, Group Cohesion and Connection

**Best Age Group:** Middles through Adults

**Challenge Level:** 2

Egg Drop Soup (Pg. 38)

**Specific Skill Focus:** Cooperation, Creativity, Problem Solving, Concentration and Focus

**Best Age Group:** Olders through Adults

**Challenge Level:** 3

## Drum Sticks

41

### Call and Response

(Pg. 43)

**Specific Skill Focus:** Listening, Cooperation, Concentration and Focus, Group Cohesion

**Best Age Group:** Can be modified to work with all age groups

**Challenge Level:** 0

### World Tour

(Pg. 45)

**Specific Skill Focus:** Cooperation, Group Cohesion

**Best Age Group:** Can be modified to work with all age groups

**Challenge Level:** 0

### Stick-Stick-Shoe-Floor

(Pg. 47)

**Specific Skill Focus:** Listening, Cooperation, Concentration and Focus, Group Cohesion

**Best Age Group:** Can be modified to work with all age groups

**Challenge Level:** 1

### Sound of One

(Pg. 49)

**Specific Skill Focus:** Listening, Cooperation, Problem Solving, Creativity, Communication

**Best Age Group:** Middles through Adults

**Challenge Level:** 3

### Sticky Situation

(Pg. 51)

**Specific Skill Focus:** Listening, Problem Solving, Concentration and Focus

**Best Age Group:** Middles through Adults

**Challenge Level:** 2

## My Sticks Your Sticks (Pg. 53)

**Specific Skill Focus:** Listening, Cooperation, Group Cohesion, Problem Solving, Communication

**Best Age Group:** Olders through Adults

**Challenge Level:** 3

## My Sticks Your Sticks Dosie Do (Pg. 58)

**Specific Skill Focus:** Listening, Cooperation, Group Cohesion, Problem Solving, Communication

**Best Age Group:** Olders through Adults

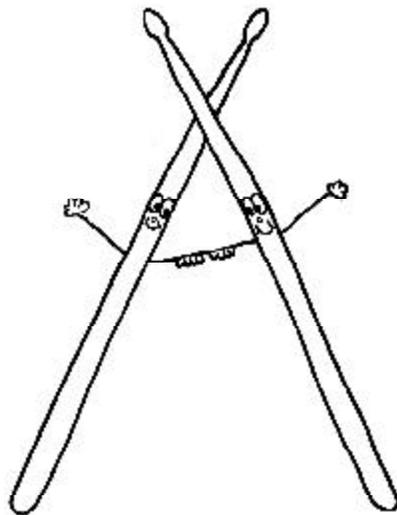
**Challenge Level:** 4

## My Sticks Your Sticks Challenge (Pg. 61)

**Specific Skill Focus:** Listening, Cooperation, Group Cohesion, Problem Solving, Communication

**Best Age Group:** Olders through Adults

**Challenge Level:** 5



## Boomwhackers® Tuned Percussion Tubes 63

Play a Boom Together (Pg. 65)

**Specific Skill Focus:** Listening, Cooperation, Group Cohesion, Communication

**Best Age Group:** Can be modified to work with all age groups

**Challenge Level:** 0

Peek a Boom (Pg. 67)

**Specific Skill Focus:** Listening, Group Cohesion, Concentration and Focus

**Best Age Group:** Can be modified to work with all age groups

**Challenge Level:** 1

1 Boom, 2 Boom, Red Boom, Blue Boom (Pg. 69)

**Specific Skill Focus:** Listening, Cooperation, Group Cohesion, Concentration and Focus

**Best Age Group:** Can be modified to work with all age groups

**Challenge Level:** 2

Colors of the Rhythm (Pg. 71)

**Specific Skill Focus:** Listening, Cooperation, Group Cohesion, Creativity, Concentration and Focus

**Best Age Group:** Middles through Adults

**Challenge Level:** 3

Maculele (Pg. 73)

**Specific Skill Focus:** Cooperation, Creativity, Concentration and Focus, Problem Solving, Communication

**Best Age Group:** Olders through Adults

**Challenge Level:** 5

## Sound Shapes®

77

### Math Pulse

(Pg. 79)

**Specific Skill Focus:** Listening, Cooperation, Group Cohesion, Concentration and Focus, Basic Math Skills

**Best Age Group:** Can be modified to work with all age groups

**Challenge Level:** 1

### Shape Up!

(Pg. 81)

**Specific Skill Focus:** Listening, Cooperation, Problem Solving, Creativity

**Best Age Group:** Can be modified to work with all age groups

**Challenge Level:** 1

### Size Em' Up

(Pg. 83)

**Specific Skill Focus:** Listening, Cooperation, Group Cohesion, Concentration and Focus

**Best Age Group:** Middles through Adults

**Challenge Level:** 1

### Soup's On

(Pg. 85)

**Specific Skill Focus:** Listening, Cooperation, Group Cohesion, Creativity

**Best Age Group:** Middles to Adults

**Challenge Level:** 2

### Bowl a' Beats

(Pg. 87)

**Specific Skill Focus:** Listening, Cooperation, Problem Solving, Communication

**Best Age Group:** Olders through Adults

**Challenge Level:** 4

## Beat Vortex

(Pg. 89)

**Specific Skill Focus:** Listening, Cooperation, Problem Solving, Communication

**Best Age Group:** Olders through Adults

**Challenge Level:** 5

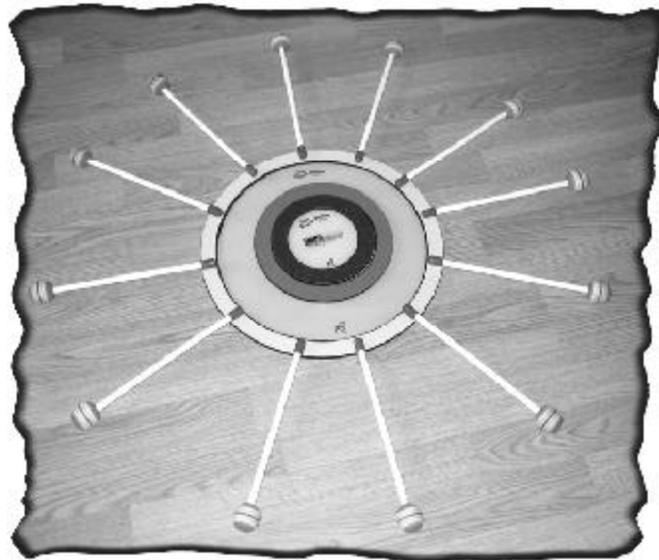
## Top Ten Challenge

(Pg. 91)

**Specific Skill Focus:** Listening, Cooperation, Problem Solving, Communication, Creativity

**Best Age Group:** Olders through Adults

**Challenge Level:** 5



## Multi Instrument Games 93

Rhythm Machine (Pg. 95)

**Specific Skill Focus:** Listening, Cooperation, Group Cohesion,

**Best Age Group:** Can be modified to work with all age groups

**Challenge Level:** 1

Small Group Groove (Pg. 97)

**Specific Skill Focus:** Listening, Cooperation, Group Cohesion, Creativity

**Best Age Group:** Middles through Adults

**Challenge Level:** 2

Rhythm Stories (Pg. 99)

**Specific Skill Focus:** Listening, Cooperation, Group Cohesion, Creativity, Language Arts

**Best Age Group:** Middles through Adults

**Challenge Level:** 2

Rhythm Conversations (Pg. 101)

**Specific Skill Focus:** Listening, Cooperation, Group Cohesion, Creativity, Language Arts

**Best Age Group:** Olders through Adults

**Challenge Level:** 3

Sound Wave (Pg. 103)

**Specific Skill Focus:** Listening, Cooperation, Group Cohesion, Concentration and Focus, Problem Solving

**Best Age Group:** Olders through Adults

**Challenge Level:** 3

Follow the Leader

(Pg. 105)

**Specific Skill Focus:** Listening, Cooperation, Group Cohesion, Creativity

**Best Age Group:** Olders through Adults

**Challenge Level:** 4

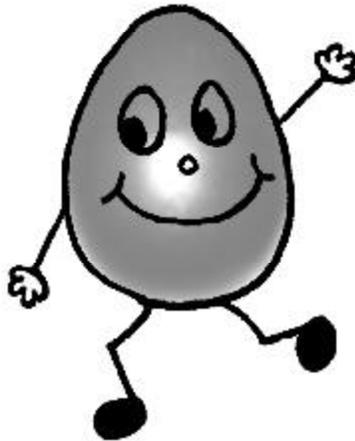
If I Play...

(Pg. 107)

**Specific Skill Focus:** Listening, Cooperation, Group Cohesion, Concentration and Focus, Problem Solving, Math Skills

**Best Age Group:** Olders through Adults

**Challenge Level:** 4



# About the Author...

**Kenya S. Masala** is a charismatic community and human development consultant, certified teacher and curriculum specialist. His unique blend of skills as an educator, facilitator, and percussionist inspire real learning and community building with clients ranging from the corporate world to youth. He provides interactive keynotes, facilitates seminars, leadership and youth development training, ropes courses, and educational percussion programs. He also designs and develops multimedia curricula and presentations on a national level.

Kenya enthusiastically creates highly effective learning and community building experiences, authentically motivating individuals and groups of all ages.

Kenya is a REMO Drums endorsed drumming facilitator.

For more information, and to schedule trainings or order materials, contact Kenya at:

[www.sourceconsultinggroup.com](http://www.sourceconsultinggroup.com)

[www.rhythmoflifedrumming.com](http://www.rhythmoflifedrumming.com)

[kenya@sourceconsultinggroup.com](mailto:kenya@sourceconsultinggroup.com)

