

In funk music, rhythmic complexity influences dancing desire

April 16 2014



This shows a groove drum-break. Credit: Maria Witek

Rhythmic drum patterns with a balance of rhythmic predictability and complexity may influence our desire to dance and enjoy the music, according to a study published April 16, 2014 in the open-access journal *PLOS ONE* by Maria Witek from University of Oxford and colleagues from Aarhus University, Denmark and Oxford University.

Many people find themselves unable to resist moving their bodies to the thumping beat of hip-hop, electronic, or funk music, but may feel less desire to dance when listening to a highly syncopated type of music, like free jazz. Researchers interested in understanding how the structure of this music affects our desire to dance have studied the role of rhythm in eliciting [pleasure](#) and [body movement](#). They used a web-based survey to investigate the relationship between rhythmic complexity and self-ratings of wanting to move and pleasure. Over 60 participants from all over the world listened to funk drum-breaks with varying degrees of syncopation. Participants then rated the extent to which they made volunteers want to move, as well as how much pleasure they experienced.

Based on the results, the authors suggest that listening to rhythmic drum patterns with a medium degree of syncopation elicited a greater desire to move and the most pleasure, particularly for participants who enjoyed dancing to music regardless. Researchers suggest that listeners enjoy a balance between rhythmic predictability and complexity in music. The authors posit that the relationship between body movement, pleasure, and syncopation is important in people's responses to groove [music](#).

Maria Witek added, "In this relatively small population, we found that medium syncopation in groove invites the most pleasure and wanting to move. Our findings help us understand how certain musical rhythms can stimulate desire for spontaneous body-movement."

More information: Witek MAG, Clarke EF, Wallentin M, Kringelbach ML, Vuust P (2014) Syncopation, Body-Movement and Pleasure in Groove Music. PLoS ONE 9(4): e94446. [DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0094446](#)

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