

Tips for shimmy practice

This is a blog post inspired by a question by Laura of UK/Ireland after working with the [Shimmy Sessions DVD's](#), as well as by an amazing 'deep' 3/4 shimmy technique practice breakdown shared by [Boženka](#) during her [Training Weekend in Würselen, DE](#) last weekend.

Enjoy!

Tips for practising your shimmies at different speeds

- It depends a bit on the specific kind of shimmy you are practising, but in general doing the movements at a slower speed and focusing on evenness in tempo and range of movement (left and right leg) helps to make your body (and mind!) feel more comfortable with the movement. Practising it faster every now and then is definitely also helpful to challenge shimmy dexterity, but if you notice that the shimmy goes 'rogue' then slowing the pace down until you 'refind' it during practise makes the training session most efficient.
- It is also good to keep in mind that while doing the movement slowly you can go for maximum range of movement, but when speeding up the movement becomes smaller. So for the faster practice try to focus on precision and tempo, but with a smaller range, rather than compromising the movement quality in order to keep the movement 'big'.
- To practise shimmies at different speeds you can try them without music from super slow to gradually faster and faster, then slower again, trying to keep the rhythm 'even' at different speeds. Then you might find that some 'speeds' (fast or slow!) might be easier than others, which is good to know for 'target practice'.
- When I train and/or teach 3/4 shimmies (up or down) myself, I practise slow first, then medium speed, then faster movements with breaks in between sets/steps. After a while, if the shimmy technique/sequence starts to feel easier and 'controlled' in tempo, we go for faster movements without breaks, like the build-up in the shimmysessions and shimmies [DVDs/ Online Classes](#)
- If the faster speed of the DVD/Online class is a bit too much right now you can always go for half that speed for instance, while still following the music's general down beat, this way you can follow along with me to the music, but at a more comfortable tempo until the shimmy becomes easier (which it will, eventually! it just takes time, patience and conscious practice)
- When I practise the 'regular' shimmies (eg egyptian shimmies and hip shimmies) I usually combine it with other tasks around the house eg folding laundry, ironing, making breakfast, brushing teeth.. that are not too mentally demanding and can be done 'upright' This way I get some bonus practice in, which is always beneficial.

- Focusing on engaging your glutes slightly and lifting the back of your ribs to free up movement also helps to relax the hips and legs, which makes the shimmy feel less like 'work', which is the ultimate goal.
- Also remember that medium speed shimmies are usually fast enough to match most music, so having an 'even' shimmy will give you more than being able to 'warp speed' it.
- Keeping your core engaged deeply (pelvic floor, glutes, lower belly) while shimmying helps to concentrate the movement and conserve 'shimmy energy'. Deep breathing, focusing extra on the exhalation also helps to keep the shimmy relaxed even at higher speeds.
- Making sure to warmup well, and to stretch and relax your muscles (and mind) before and after the training session helps tons towards having a 'high quality' shimmy practice session.
- In very short my answer would be: Yes, definitely keep practising at slower speed, but also try to go even slower, AND speed it up to beyond your comfortable speed very now and then to challenge yourself and to see if the shimmy is becoming easier/more comfortable over time.

Bonus tip: Sometimes, when a practice session feels especially uncomfortable, it can be a sign that you are learning/improving/changing your movement, even though you don't have the 'benefits' of it yet right away. I've noticed at times that about 2 days after a 'difficult' practice session my movements have made a 'quality jump' - so this is something to experiment with as well.

Good luck and happy shimmying!!

xxx K.
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PS: For those interested in shimmy-specific [online classes](#) and [DVDs](#), check out the respective links!