The 5 Ear Training Tools used by Every Pro Musician

If you want to sound like a great musician, you have to hear like a great musician...

Here are the 5 tools you need to achieve the ears of a pro.
Don't make the mistake of treating ear training as an isolated or "theoretical" activity. If you want your ear training to be enjoyable and practical, it's important to **connect it to the actual music-making you want to do**!

**Use your instrument to improve your ears**, putting your new listening skills into direct use from the beginning, and making sure every skill you practice in ear training is something you can relate to your instrument.

In fact, many of the musical greats did **only** this kind of ear training, building their listening skills while practising their instrument. They may have always had their instrument in hand, but without a doubt, their mind was on their ears as they perfected their craft.

**Note:** your "instrument" may be a guitar or piano - or it could be Garageband, Sibelius, or your decks, however you express yourself musically. Or it could even be...
Your ability to understand what you *hear* in music is intimately related to your ability to *express* it using your own original instrument: your voice.

**You don't need to be a great singer to use your voice for ear training.**

Sing back what you hear, practice ear training drills using your voice, and never be afraid to use your voice as a way to express yourself musically.

And don't forget you have an inner voice too.

Whether they perform as a singer or not, the great musicians of the world all know the power of their voice to train their ears and express their musicality.
When you hear a riff that makes you want to dance, it's because the musician behind it has spent hours practising to a rock-steady beat, more than likely provided by that all-time favourite musical tool: the metronome.

Rhythm is an often neglected area of ear training, but it's one aspect of music which can immediately separate an amateurs from a pro.

Before you can play around with complicated rhythms and move the audience with your groove, you need a rock solid sense of the beat. Practising with a metronome (or looping drum samples if you prefer) internalises that steady pulse of music in you so that your own music can fly freely on top of it - always precisely in time.

Then again, it's possible they relied on the flesh-and-blood equivalent: a good drummer. Which leads us neatly on to...
Don't try to go it alone in ear training. Music only truly has meaning when it's shared between people, most powerfully through musicians playing together to create a sound that's far greater than the sum of its parts.

**Include your musical friends in your ear training** by practising together, and putting your listening skills to use whenever you collaborate. Don't be afraid to admit what you don't yet know. You'll often find that you can learn a lot from those whose ears are stronger than yours in a particular area - and the reverse will also be true: you can share your own kind of ear training expertise with them in return.

Even musicians who've made their name as a "solo" performer almost never perform solely alone, and in every case they've learned from a series of teachers, mentors and collaborators as they trained their ears to become the musician they are now.
Your ears truly are the source of your musicianship. Don't take them for granted!

Feed them, train them, and develop them, and every aspect of your music will improve.

Listen to great music (expand beyond your favourites) and make the effort to listen actively. Allocate time in your music practice to work on your ears, not just your instrument.

Many of the all-time great musicians lacked formal training. Most weren't just "naturally gifted" from birth, they had to put in hours of hard work. They come from every country, age and style of music....

But they all have one thing in common:

A great pair of ears.
BONUS

Top 5 Tech Tools for Modern Ear Training
The leading provider of ear training games, Theta Music offer over 35 games to help you improve your musical ear. Create your free student account and get started!

HookTheory is an all new way to train your ears online, pairing YouTube music videos with interactive music editors to teach you to work out melodies and chords by ear.

This online ear trainer lets you practice intervals and melodies by ear using randomly generated tunes. Also available for iPhone and Android!

We're musicians more than business-people here at easy ear training but we do at least have the sense to mention our own ear training apps! Try free ear training on your iPhone or iPad with RelativePitch or Step and a Half.

Train your ears just by listening: load up your phone or MP3 player with special ear training MP3s and train whenever you have your earphones in!

Need some MP3s to use? Get free interval and chord packs and more at EasyEarTraining.com/Downloads

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