



# Connect with Zills

because joy changes everything

## 5 Steps to Growing Zill Skills with Joy

by Jenna Woods, Author of *The Dancing Cymbalist*

These five steps are a simple guide to help you play your zills with joy no matter *what* you're playing – whatever rhythm, sound, pattern, flow or riff. Following these steps is the key to effectively growing your skill and awareness playing zills – while loving the journey!

### 1 Prepare

**Prepare** means to commit, condition and center yourself.

**Commit:** Decide you're doing this. Schedule times and a place where you are free from interruption, free to be loud, and safe from criticism. Turn off your phone. Ask family members to pretend you're gone.

**Condition:** Do whatever exercises you need to be able to play the way you want to play. Stretch, relax, loosen, strengthen.

**Center:** Let everything else go. Breathe. Be fully present and involved the whole time you are playing zills.

### 2 Practice

**Practice is more** than repetition. Effective practice uses strategy that matches your personal learning style.

**Feeling frustrated** means you're trying to play too much too fast too soon for where you are in your skills. It indicates a challenge, and it's always a sign to adjust your strategy.

**Come back to where you are** and strategize from there:

- Know clearly what you are able to do now.
- Know clearly what you want to be able to do.
- Think through how you could get to your goal from where you are. What are the challenges? Would it help to master one challenge before any another?
- Break each challenge into micro goals, and then prioritize them.
- Design each practice session around the single next micro goal.
- Put in the time with your zills, even if it's only for a few minutes a day.

### 3 Play!

**Forget about practicing!** This is *play time*. Play by yourself, play with a friend, make up zill games, play with or without music. Cut loose, experiment, be silly, get goofy, try anything, be outrageous with your zills. Try things you think you can't do yet - you might surprise yourself!

**Laugh, enjoy yourself!** Delight in the sounds and patterns you play, revel in the "mistakes" you make, enjoy the whole delicious ride!

**When we're having fun, we're whole**, and our spirit moves in free spontaneous expression. Forget about that too, and have a really good time!

### 4 Relax

**Take a deep breath.**

**Take off your zills and let go of it all.** Let go of thinking about what you've just done. Feel how you feel, and let all the rest of it go. Breathe into the feeling until it is complete.

### 5 Reflect

**Reflect** on your experience while it is fresh and you can remember easily.

**Consider questions like this:**

- What was really fun?
- What shifted in my playing?
- What did I do that was effective and helped me?
- What didn't work so well?
- What was I doing when I got frustrated?
- What is the challenge that my frustration indicated?
- What strategy could I use to progress through that challenge?

*In summary,*

**When you Prepare, Practice, Play, Relax and Reflect**, you can delight in learning with more ease, with your whole self. Try it and see what happens. I look forward to helping you grow - and there's plenty more when you're ready for it!

Jenna