

“El Golpe del Pilon” or Pilon rhythm:

NOTATION KEY:

T= TOUCH: The entire left hand is placed flat on the underside of the drum

> = SLAP with the left hand on the underside of the drum

O = OPEN Stroke with Stick

+ = MUFFLED Stroke with Stick (**left hand** (weak hand) is muffling on the underside of the drum). The stick should **bounce off** the drum and not “dig in”! This could be described as “semi-muffled” because only the bottom head is muffled. The sound is **not** the same as the one produced by muffling on the top head.

These patterns are notated in 2/2 or cut time (The pulse is felt on beats one and three).

Tempo is about 150 -160 bpm (where the half note is the beat).

The *Pilon* is the “main groove” of the *conga santiaguera* and as played about 90-95% of the time in performances. Tambora Pilon, or more often, Pilon is also the name of the largest and lowest pitched bass drum in the ensemble.

(BASS DRUM#1 “PILON”—LOWEST DRUM)

1	+	2	+	3	+	4	+	1	+	2	+	3	+	4	+
O			>	+				+			>	+			
R			L	R				R			L	R			

BASS DRUMS #2 AND 4: “TAMBORAS” “REDOBLANTES” “CONGAS” OR “GALLETAS”; These two take turns improvising or keeping time. Generally they are tuned slightly higher than the Pilon drum.

Most common pattern:

1	+	2	+	3	+	4	+	1	+	2	+	3	+	4	+
						T		+						>	O
						L		R						L	R

This version is easier for some people because the left hand is marking time more often:

1	+	2	+	3	+	4	+	1	+	2	+	3	+	4	+
				T		T		+				T		T	O
				L		L		R				L		L	R

Other versions:

1	+	2	+	3	+	4	+	1	+	2	+	3	+	4	+
			>			>		+			>			>	O
			L			L		R			L			L	R

The muffled stroke on beat one of the second bar should be louder than the other muffled strokes here:

1	+	2	+	3	+	4	+	1	+	2	+	3	+	4	+
			>	+		+		+			>	+		>	O
			L	R		R		R			L	R		L	R

BASS DRUM#3 (SMALL, HIGHEST, “REQUINTO”— similar to a large tom tom)

1	+	2	+	3	+	4	+
O		>	+			+	
R		L	R			R	