Clapping tīn tāl

Each tāl (time-cycle) can be shown using your hands. An equivalent in Western music is a conductor conducting the beats of a bar throughout a piece of music using either their hands or a baton.

To learn how to clap tīn tāl, while speaking the āṭukḍā you can break the task into SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound targets to ensure the learning process is quick and efficient:

**Step one**
To speak the numbers of the mātrās of tīn tāl, that is from one to 16, practice clapping on mātrās one, five and 13 (the tālis) and waving on beat nine (the khāli). This may prove a little trickier than it first sounds, but don’t be put off if you don’t succeed on your first attempt – remember, practice makes perfect.

Once you are fairly confident that you’re clapping and waving at the correct time, use the video clip to simultaneously listen to the spoken āṭukḍā, so you become familiar with the task.

**Advice to ‘take away’:** when clapping, keep your strong hand on top and your weaker hand on the bottom – watch the video clip to see how this is done.

**Step two**
Once you can clap or wave tīn tāl, speak the mātrā numbers from one to 16 and at the same time listen to the spoken āṭukḍā; practice speaking it yourself. There’s no need to rush this step and you may find it helpful to alternate between speaking the tablā bol and word-rhythms. This will help with internalising the structure of the phrases and the rhythm of the āṭukḍā. Practice this until it becomes second nature.

**Advice to ‘take away’:** If you study Indian Takeaway – Rāg and Tāl Basics with a friend or colleague, allocate time to practice together. Your progress should be quicker and team work is always good for keeping focussed on the task in hand.

**Step three**
Now you are ready to show all the intermittent beats in addition to the four main beats: one, five, nine and 13.

Gently mark out the three intermittent beats after the tāli and khāli using three fingers (your ring finger, middle finger and index finger); your little finger is not used as the use of this finger is replaced by claps on beats one, five and 13 or a wave on beat nine.
Practice working your way from your ring finger to your index finger. Watch the video clip to ensure you are doing it correctly.

Advice to ‘take away’: try alternating between speaking just the mātrā numbers and speaking the word-rhythms or tablā bol of the ṭukṛ – this might prove challenging but don’t lose heart and keep practising.