Talas

Just as raga provides the melody in Carnatic music, tala provides the rhythm. Every Carnatic composition is performed within a repeating rhythmic cycle called a tala.

An anga is a rhythmic unit that forms part of a tāla. There are three angas used to construct the seven main Carnatic talas:

- Laghu (I)
- Dhrutam (O)
- Anudhrutam (U)

Laghu

The laghu is the only anga whose length changes. It always begins with a clap, followed by finger counts.

Counting a laghu is as follows:

- Beat 1 = Clap (palm facing down)
- Continue counting on the fingers.
- If more beats are needed, begin another clap-and-finger sequence.

Jati	Total Beats	Counting
Tisra	3	Clap → Pinky → Ring
Chatusra	4	Clap → Pinky → Ring → Middle
Khanda	5	Clap → Pinky → Ring → Middle → Index
Misra	7	Clap → Pinky → Ring → Middle → Index → Clap → Pinky
Sankirna	9	Clap → Pinky → Ring → Middle → Index → Clap → Pinky → Ring → Middle

Dhrutam

A dhrutam is always 2 beats. The length never changes.

It is performed as:

- Clap (palm facing down)
- Clap (turn the palm upward)

Anudhrutam

An anudhrutam is the shortest anga. It is always 1 beat. It consists of only only clam (palm facing down).

7 Basic Talas

The entire Carnatic tāla system is built from different combinations of these three angas.

Tāla	Structure
Dhruva	I O I I
Matya	I O I
Rupaka	O I
Jhampa	I U O
Triputa	I O O
Ata	I I O O
Eka	I

Notice that the laghu (I) is the only anga whose length changes. The dhrutam (O) is always 2 beats, and the anudhrutam (U) is always 1 beat.

Jathis

A jati determines how many beats are in the laghu.

Since only the laghu changes, each of the seven tālas can have five different versions (there are five jatis).

Jāti	Beats in the Laghu
Tisra	3
Chatusra	4
Khanda	5
Misra	7
Sankirna	9

Take Triputa Tāla, whose structure is: I O O. If the laghu changes, the total number of beats changes as well.

Triputa Tala's 5 Combinations

Jāti	Calculation	Total Beats
Tisra	3 + 2 + 2	7

Chatusra	4 + 2 + 2	8
Khanda	5 + 2 + 2	9
Misra	7 + 2 + 2	11
Sankirna	9 + 2 + 2	13

35 Talas

Since there are:

- 7 basic tālas
- 5 jātis

That makes 7 × 5 = 35 Tālas

The chart below shows all 35.

Tāla	Structure	Tisra (3)	Chatusra (4)	Khanda (5)	Misra (7)	Sankirna (9)
Dhruva	I O I I	11	14	17	23	29
Matya	I O I	8	10	12	16	20
Rupaka	O I	5	6	7	9	11

Jhampa	I U O	6	7	8	10	12
Triputa	I O O	7	8	9	11	13
Ata	I I O O	10	12	14	18	22
Eka	I	3	4	5	7	9

Chapu Talas

Coming Soon!!!