

Muting Quarter and Eighth Notes

This first lesson demonstrates basic strumming. Strumming is a vital & basic skill for guitarists. It can be the rhythmic engine of a song. Strumming is the 'brushing' or 'scratching' of the strings in large strokes. Like a pendulum, the hand continues to move (up & down rather than side to side), always keeping time.

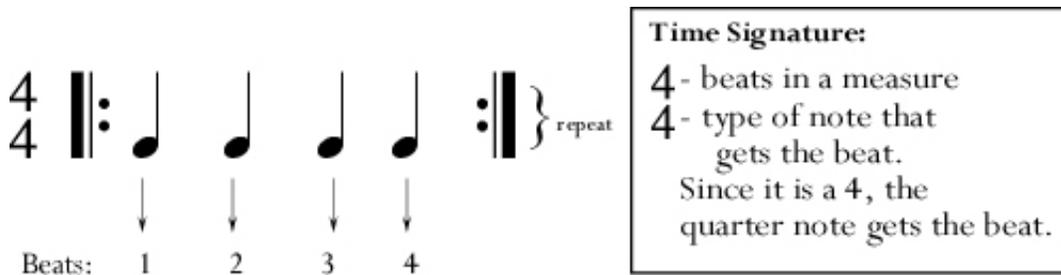
To strum, you can use a pick, or the thumb, or thumb/fingers.

When starting to play guitar - when learning to strum- never stop the 'motor hand' until the end of the song or progression.

When you jam with drummers, watch them watch your strumming hand. It is a time-keeper.

Remember What We Talked About With Quarter Note Strumming!

Start with strumming just down - use open strings (don't touch with fretting hand). It won't sound pretty, but it will work.



4
4

Beats: 1 2 3 4

Time Signature:
4- beats in a measure
4- type of note that gets the beat.
Since it is a 4, the quarter note gets the beat.

Things to Keep in Mind...

- Range: you don't have to hit all of the strings all the time - when strumming down, focus contact with lower 3 or 4 strings (low is towards the sky - upside-down).
- Realize that you are MISSING on the way up.
- The primary motion for strumming is a combination of twisting your forearm and wrist [from the elbow and wrist] with a slight chop from the elbow. If strumming with your fingers, the fingers can move as drivers on their own, but a slight turn/chop will give it a little more weight.

Now that we have refreshed our memory on this basic concept, let's apply a mute to it.

We started with down strumming.

Let's try the same down strum, but this time we will mute. A mute is created by lightly touching the strings without pressing.

In this case, mute all of the strings (make sure all of them are covered with the fretting fingers, and it doesn't matter WHAT strings you are barring). You should hear a blocked sound, also known as the 'chuck' or 'klunk.'



Variations...

1. You can mute all downstrokes.
2. You can mute the first downstroke, but play the second. Mute the third, but play the fourth.
3. You can play the first, mute the second, play the third, mute the fourth.
4. Etc....(apply your own interpretation).

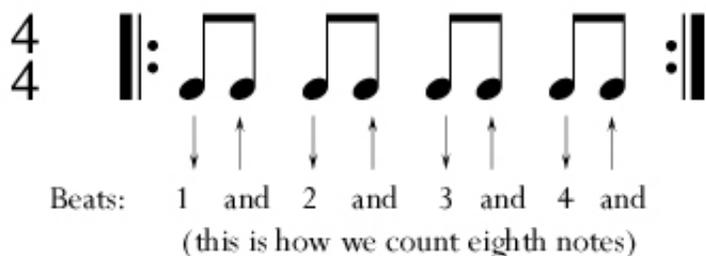
Whether strumming opens or mutes for quarter notes (one beat - the down), you are hitting, missing, hitting, missing, etc.

Now, we will hit, hit, hit, hit, hit...when strumming down and up.

This will now be notated (drawn) with ***eighth notes*** (a half a beat) in 4/4 time.

Again, the motion of the hand does not stop and you don't have to hit all the strings all the time. Try this on open strings. You can also do this with mutes, and combinations of opens and mutes.

Use open strings or mutes, or a COMBINATION. Get creative! We can emulate a drum set.



Beams are used rather than flags to make 8th's easier to read:

reads better than:

Variations...

1. You can downstroke and play the first "1" and upstroke the "and" while muting.
2. You can downstroke and MUTE the first "1" and upstroke and play the "and" open.
3. The same applies to each and every eighth note set. EXPERIMENT!

Note: Muscles have memory. By doing this exercise above for long enough, your arm will not want to

stop once you start changing chords. Everything will start to feel like a windmill, regardless of muting or playing even OPEN notes on the guitar.

- a. You will get more complex patterns by MISSING more, or muting more up and downstrokes.
- b. Missing creates gaps in the sound & creates more interesting rhythmic patterns.
- c. Less is More.

Also, adding mutes to strumming creates personal style. Creating a personal style is a most worthy goal for any player. Another responsible thing to do is become a solid rhythm player by applying mutes to any set of note values, be that they are quarters, eighths, halves, etc..

These are possibilities for all us.

Since this is an open exercise, there is no need for audio or video. The key here is to get you accustomed to the fretboard, so playing anywhere on the guitar will work just fine.

The Lesson Breakdown..

In this exercise, you should have accomplished the following:

1. Down-strumming basic OPEN string quarter notes.
2. Down-strumming basic OPEN string quarter notes with mutes on each stroke.
3. Varying basic quarter note patterns using up and downstrokes while playing/muting.
4. Varying basic eighth note patterns using your own personal goals and ideas for strumming.
5. Realized that it's not always necessary to play a given chord when learning to strum. Open NOTE strumming is also effective for timing accuracy.

Here are a few open variations you may want to try. Again, these are ALL open strings:

Variation 1:

Here are all open strings being played using quarter notes, with the first played open, then muted.

Variation 1 - QUARTER Notes

Gtr I

	0	x	0	x	0	x	0	x
T	0	x	0	x	0	x	0	x
A	0	x	0	x	0	x	0	x
B	0	x	0	x	0	x	0	x
0	0	x	0	x	0	x	0	x

Variation 2:

Here is the same concept using eighth notes.

Variation 2 - Eighth Notes

	0	x	0	x	0	x	0	x
T	0	x	0	x	0	x	0	x
A	0	x	0	x	0	x	0	x
B	0	x	0	x	0	x	0	x
0	0	x	0	x	0	x	0	x

Variation 3:

Here is a switch from starting with a mute using quarter notes, then playing the open strings.

Variation 3 - Quarter Notes

	x	0	x	0	x	0	x	0
T	x	0	x	0	x	0	x	0
A	x	0	x	0	x	0	x	0
B	x	0	x	0	x	0	x	0
0	x	0	x	0	x	0	x	0

Variation 4:

The same concept as above, but using eighth notes.

Variation 4 - Eighth Notes

NOTE! Remember that we switch up from quarter to eighth notes within the exercise.

Overall Variation:

If you are concerned that you aren't playing ANY chords at all, here is a suggested pattern I would use to work on muting and playing using up and downstrokes:

Chord Progression:

As used in tablature...

Variation 1:

This run is using quarter notes. All you have to do is play the first chord presented, and then mute it. Play it again, and then mute. The same applies throughout.

Am				Em				
Gtr I								
	0	x	0	x	0	x	0	x
T	1	x	1	x	0	x	0	x
A	2	x	2	x	0	x	0	x
B	0	x	0	x	2	x	2	x
	0	x	0	x	0	x	0	x

F				G				
	1	x	1	x	3	x	3	x
T	1	x	1	x	0	x	0	x
A	2	x	2	x	0	x	0	x
B	3	x	3	x	2	x	2	x
	1	x	1	x	3	x	3	x

Variation 2:

Here is the same variation, but using eighth notes. The same is applied:

	Am				Variation 2				Em			
T	0	x	0	x	0	x	0	x	0	x	0	x
A	2	x	2	x	2	x	2	x	2	x	2	x
B	0	x	0	x	2	x	2	x	2	x	2	x
	0	x	0	x	0	x	0	x	0	x	0	x

	F				Variation 2 cont'd.				G			
T	1	x	1	x	1	x	1	x	3	x	3	x
A	2	x	2	x	2	x	2	x	0	x	0	x
B	3	x	3	x	3	x	3	x	0	x	0	x
	1	x	1	x	1	x	1	x	3	x	3	x

Variation 3:

This one is different. Here you are FIRST muting the strings (using quarter notes) and then applying the chord.

	Am		Em					
T	x	0	x	0	x	0	x	0
A	x	1	x	1	x	0	x	0
A	x	2	x	2	x	0	x	0
B	x	2	x	2	x	2	x	2
B	x	0	x	0	x	2	x	2
B	x	0	x	0	x	0	x	0

Variation 3 - Quarter Notes cont'd.

	F		G					
T	x	1	x	1	x	3	x	3
A	x	1	x	1	x	0	x	0
A	x	2	x	2	x	0	x	0
B	x	3	x	3	x	0	x	0
B	x	3	x	3	x	2	x	2
B	x	1	x	1	x	3	x	3

Variation 4:

This is the same variation as above, but using eighth notes:

	Am		Em	
T	x 0	x 0	x 0	x 0
A	x 1	x 1	x 0	x 0
B	x 2	x 2	x 0	x 0
	x 2	x 2	x 2	x 2
	x 0	x 0	x 2	x 2
	x 0	x 0	x 0	x 0

Variation 4 - Eighth Notes cont'd.

	F		G	
T	x 1	x 1	x 3	x 3
A	x 1	x 1	x 0	x 0
B	x 2	x 2	x 0	x 0
	x 3	x 3	x 0	x 0
	x 3	x 3	x 2	x 2
	x 1	x 1	x 3	x 3

NOTE! Remember that we switch up from quarter to eighth notes within the exercise.