

Beginner Strumming

This PDF is designed to go right along with the DVD. Print it out and keep it in front of you while working through the lessons.

Introduction

You don't need to know much to get started with our Beginner Strumming, but if you can't play basic open chords, expect to spend a little more time on each lesson. After all, learning chords is a challenge at first. I'll make sure that you're comfortable with them by the time we're done. I've included everything you'll need in order to work through the lessons.

Nobody said playing guitar would be easy, so please don't get discouraged at any point. Take your time and go step-by-step. Stop and spend extra time on the things that you find particularly difficult.

I've heard all of the excuses. "I've got no rhythm", "My fingers won't go there", "I'm tone deaf", or "My fingers hurt". None of this is true (except your fingers *will* hurt). You **DO** have rhythm, everybody has rhythm, and I'll prove it to you.

I've designed these lessons to help make you a confident strummer. You'll improve your timing, chord knowledge, and learn a lot about rhythm. Please work through each lesson one at a time in chronological order. While it's called "Beginner Strumming", we'll be diving into some fairly deep waters towards the end of the course. As I said, I'll explain everything in detail as we go along, so if you jump around you're bound to miss something. Stick to the plan, man.

Special Features

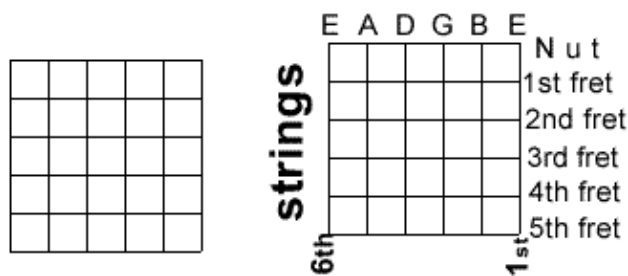
The Special Features section of the DVD you will find some basic lessons for those of you who don't already know how to read a chord diagram or common open chords. Below is what you'll need to follow along with the Special Features videos

1. How To Read A Chord Diagram

Chords are 3 notes played at the same time. There are all types of chords. The most common chord is the major chord. Minor chords and Dominant 7th chords are used quite often as well. Some of them may have strange sounding names at first, but don't let the name scare you.

Chord diagrams show you how to play new chords. This lesson (with video) will show you how to read a chord diagram.

Below is a blank chord diagram. *Think of it as a picture of your guitar sitting in front of you.* The 6 vertical lines represent the 6 strings on a guitar (low E on left side, high E on right). The horizontal lines represent frets except for the top line which is the nut of the guitar.

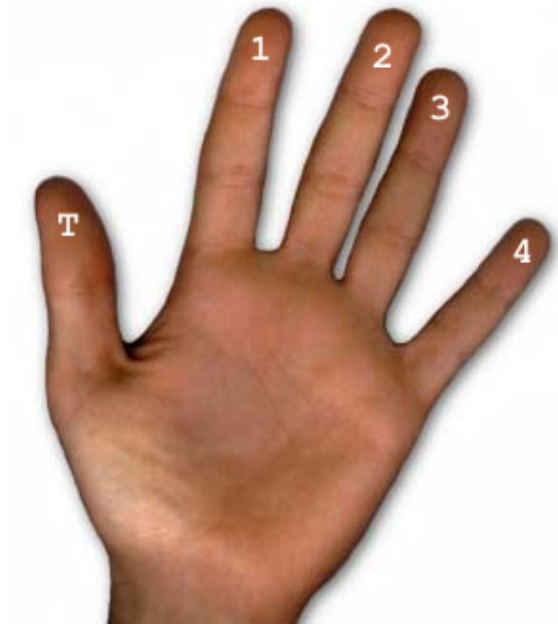


Black dots on the diagram tell you what fret and string to place your fingers. Numbers inside the dots tell you which finger to

use.



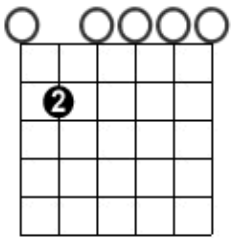
White dots mean to play the string open. Here's how the fingerings are mapped out on your hand:



②=second finger

Try it!

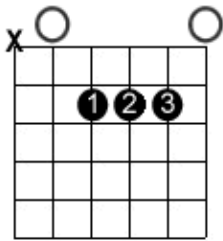
To play the chord on this chart, place your 2nd finger on the 2nd fret of the 5th string and **strum all six strings**.



You just played an E minor 7th chord!

Important:

If you see an "X" on a chord chart that simply means that you do not strum that string, otherwise all strings are played. In the example A chord below you'll see an "X" over the 6th string. This means that the string is not used in the chord, so you will not strum it when playing the chord.



To play this chord, you place your 2nd finger on the D string (4th) at the second fret, your 3rd finger on the B string (2nd string) at the second fret, and your 1st finger on the G (3rd) string second fret. The A string (5th) and High E string (1st) will be played open ("open" means that the string is not fretted, but strummed in the chord pattern).

Playing Chords

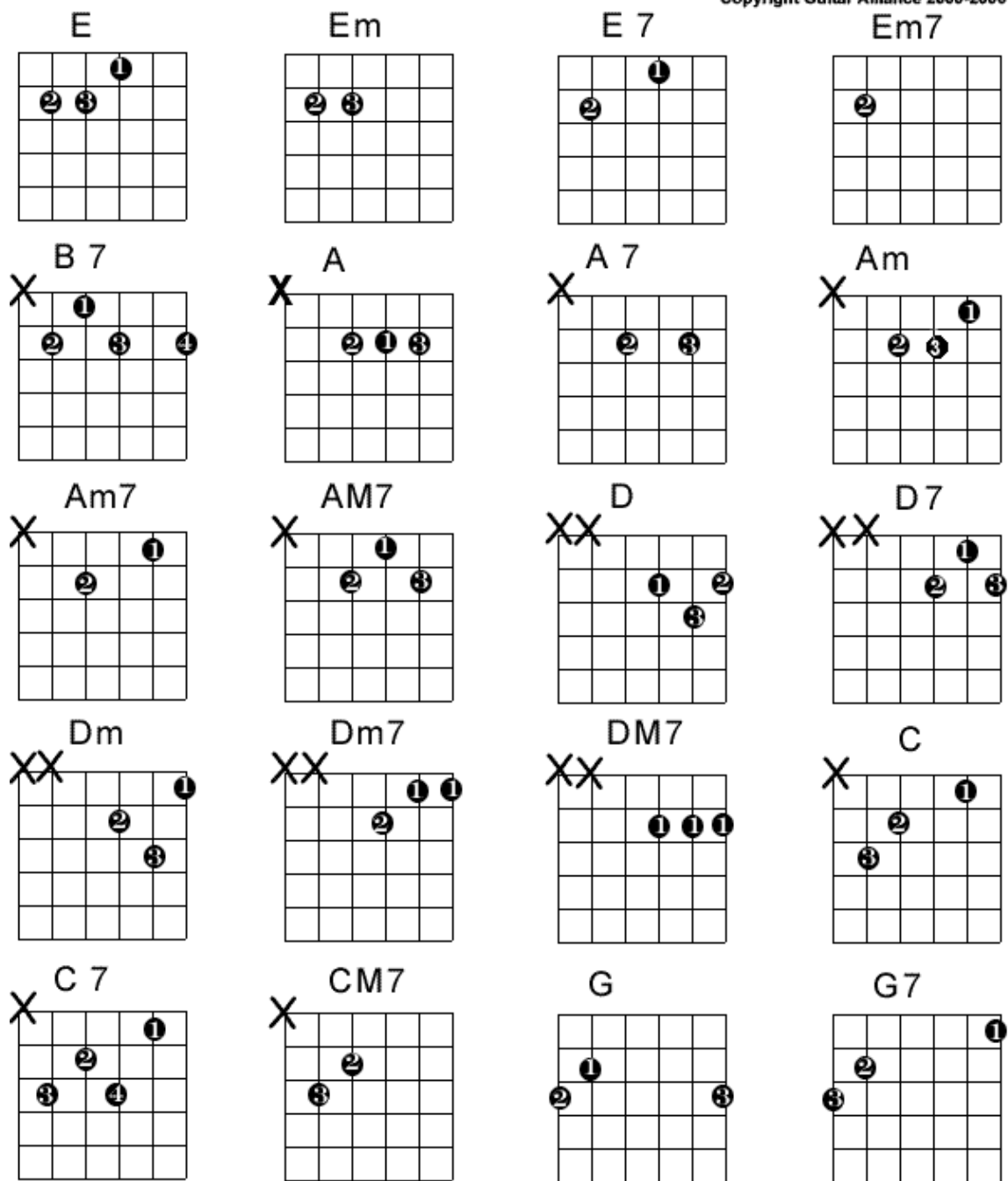
When you're first learning to play chords, it can be **very** difficult to get your fingers to cooperate. After a few days of practice your fingers will start remembering where to go. It's important to spend a little time everyday with problem chords until you are comfortable with playing them. Your fingertips on your fret hand will become sore and tender to the touch. If it becomes too painful, by all means stop practicing for the day and try again the next day. With steady practice you will develop callouses on your fingertips and this won't be any more problem. If you're hearing a buzzing sound or the sound of the notes being played sound dull, then your not pressing hard enough on the strings, or one or more of your fingers is catching a nearby string. When you strum the chord each not should ring out clearly. You may find it hard at first to press all of the strings down firmly against the frets. Don't worry, your hands will build up the strength in no time with practice.

Some Random Tips:

- Don't let your fingernails get too long! They will prevent you from fingering the fretboard correctly.
- Make sure your fingers are standing straight up and down. Otherwise they may mute other strings.
- When playing chords your fingers should be arched at the joints so that your fingertips come in contact with the strings and not the flat fingerprint part of your finger.
- Your fingers should make contact with the strings slightly behind the frets if at all possible. The further your finger is from the fret the harder it is to apply the proper amount of pressure, hence the more likelihood that you'll get a "buzzing" sound.
- The size of your hand and the width of your instrument's neck can significantly affect which fingers you use to play the chords. All of the chord charts on this site use the most commonly used chord fingerings. These fingerings will work for 95% of all guitarists.
- You may come across a suggested chord fingering that you simply cannot contort your fingers to play. In this case try experimenting with alternate fingerings.

2. Common Open Chords

Open strings sound great on the guitar. That's why open chords (chords that use 1 or more open strings) are so popular to play. In the "Common Open Chords" video from the Special Features section will show you how to play the following open chords::



3 & 4: Supplemental Videos

Just watch "Intro To Open Chords" and "Barre Chords" videos. You don't need anything to go along with them.

The Beginner Strumming Lessons

Lesson 1: Whole Notes

Here's the exercise for this lesson:

Following The Beat

When listening to music, you might find yourself tapping your foot along with the beat. The beat keeps track of the song's time, by creating a regular pulsation against which the length can be measured.

The beat may be fast or slow, but it must be regular. Each beat has to have the same duration.

You've all heard the lead in to a song when the lead singer counts to four and then the music begins. Or perhaps you've heard a drummer click the drum sticks together to begin a song. In both cases they're setting the tempo for the song. The tempo is simply the speed at which the song is played.

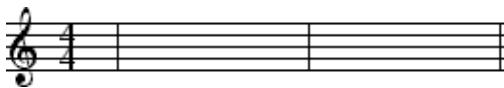
Standard Time

Standard time, the most common time, means the music gets 4 beats per measure.

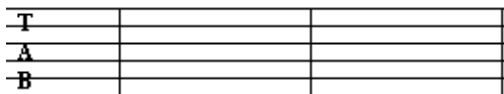
Measures

When writing music down on paper for other musicians to play the music is divided into what is called **measures**. The measures are divided with vertical lines. The lines that musical notes are placed on are called **staves**.

Can you see the vertical lines in the music staff below?



Same thing here in this tablature staff:



Each of our lessons feature an exercise that is four measures long.

Note: The funny looking symbol at the far left is a treble clef. This is just signifying that the music staff is for a treble clef instrument (which the guitar is), but it is of no concern to us at this point. We'll talk about the two 4's stacked on top of each other right next to the treble clef next.

Whole Note

The whole note gets four beats per measure. It looks sorta like an egg on its side:

Whole Note



Lesson 2: Half Notes

Here's the exercise for lesson 2:

Diagram illustrating the exercise for Lesson 2: Half Notes. The exercise consists of two measures, each with four half notes. The first measure is for the C chord and the second for the G chord. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. The notes are C4, E4, G4, and B4 for the C chord, and G4, B4, D5, and F#5 for the G chord. The fretting hand positions are indicated by numbers 0-3 on the strings.

Half notes get 2 beats per measure (or half the measure). They look like this:

Half Note



Lesson 3: Whole Notes And Half Notes

This exercise combines whole notes with half notes. We know by now that a whole note gets four beats and that a half note gets two. For this exercise we will strum the C chord on the 1st beat and hold it for a count of four. Then, in measure two we will strum the C chord on the 1st and 3rd beats. We'll repeat the same strumming pattern in measures 3 and 4 using the G chord.

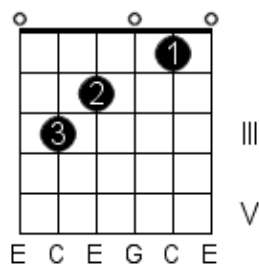
Diagram illustrating the exercise for Lesson 3: Whole Notes And Half Notes. The exercise consists of four measures. Measures 1 and 3 are for the C chord, and measures 2 and 4 are for the G chord. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. The notes are C4, E4, G4, and B4 for the C chord, and G4, B4, D5, and F#5 for the G chord. The fretting hand positions are indicated by numbers 0-3 on the strings.

Chords As A Unit

The most important thing to remember when playing chords is that each note in a chord must be pressed down as a unit, not separately. Here's something you can practice that will help you establish the habit of

pressing down each chord as a unit.

C



1. First, press down a C chord.
2. Next, lift your fingers off the strings about a half-inch as a unit, keeping the chord formation.
3. Then press your fingers back down onto the strings, firmly and quickly, keeping the formation.
4. Strum the chord. If any of your fingers miss the proper position in the chord, correct them and repeat the drill.

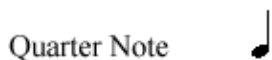
Lesson 4: Quarter Notes

In this lesson we'll play straight quarter notes. Here's the exercise:

| | C | | | | G | | | | D | | | | C | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| A | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| B | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| B | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| B | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | | | | | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |

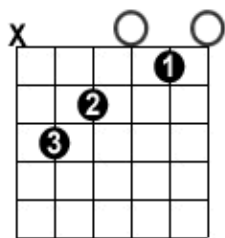
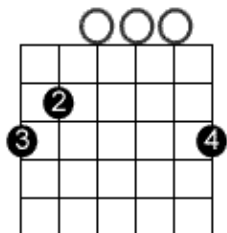
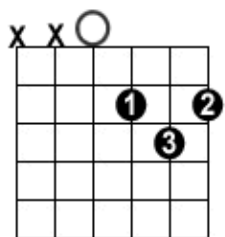
A quarter note is a note that represents the duration of one beat. In other words it gets one beat.

It looks like this:



You remember that I told you that a song in standard (4/4) time gets 4 beats per measure, right? That would mean that the song it would get 4 quarter notes per measure, because a quarter note gets one beat. That's why it's called a quarter note. There are 4 quarters in a whole. For example, a dollar bill can be divided up into 4 quarters. To strum quarter notes we'll strum on each beat. In measure one we'll play the C chord four times on each of the four beats. In measure two we'll use the same strumming pattern while play a G chord. The third measure we'll change to a D chord and then close things out in measure four with the C chord again.

Chords Used

C**G****D**

Lesson 5: Quarter Notes Part 2

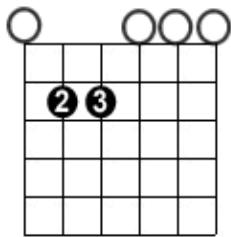
In this lesson we'll be sticking with quarter note strumming, but we'll use some fresh chords.

| | Em | | | | Am | | | | D7 | | | | F | | | |
|----|----|---|---|---|----|---|---|---|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 17 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| T | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| A | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| B | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | | | | | | |
| | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | | | | |

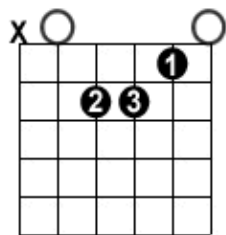
Chords Used

Em

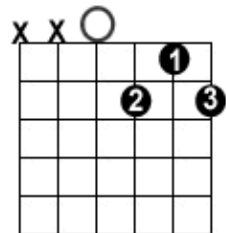
This is pretty easy chord to play. You'll strum all six strings.



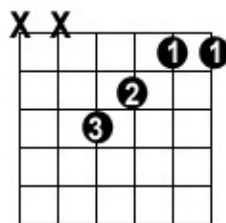
Am



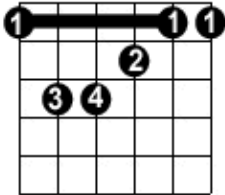
D7



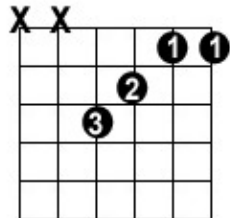
F



Many people consider this version of the F chord a fundamental chord pattern and include it in discussion of open chord, but the F chord is really a fragment of the E shape barre chord:



Take off the bottom two notes and you end up with what the Mel Bay book suggested was the F major chord pattern. You might not be quite ready for barre chords just yet (it requires hand strength that takes a little time to develop). The abbreviated version will work nicely for now and set you up for learning barre chords later:



Lesson 6: Combination Exercise

Let's take whole notes, half notes, quarter notes, and jumble them all into one exercise. Do you get confused or lost following along? Recap if you need to. A whole note gets four beats, a half note gets two beats, and a quarter note gets one beat. It's a simple concept, but sometimes our hands don't do what we tell them to do. That's why we practice!

| | C | G | D | C |
|----|---|---|---|---|
| 21 | | | | |
| T | 0 | 3 | 2 | 0 |
| A | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 |
| B | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 |
| B | 3 | 2 | 0 | 2 |

Lesson 7: Eighth Notes

Let's meet our new note! It's an eighth note. You can play two eighth notes per beat. That makes a total of eight eighth notes per measure (hence its name).

25

C G Em D

T 0 0 0 0 0 3 3 3 3 0 0 0 2 2 2

A 1 1 1 1 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 3 3 3

B 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 2 2 2 0 0 0

By itself it looks something like this:

Eighth Note



So, if you see an eighth note by itself, it will have a dangling flag. If you see more than one eighth note in a row, the flag connects to the next eighth note. Look at the first four notes in our exercise above. They are four eighth notes in a row.

Counting for eighth notes adds a new trick to our game. Typically we can count them as:

"one and two and three and four and"

We say "one" on the first beat and in the empty space between the first beat and the second beat we'll say "and". This is where your timing will be challenged. We cut a measure up into eight equal pieces. The key word here is "equal". It's easy to rush it. If you are tapping your foot. The down motion, where you tap your foot on the ground, is the "one" and as your foot comes up (the up beat) it's on the "and".

You can also think of it as a pendulum swinging. Down, Up, Down, Up Up to this point we've only had to use a down stroke to strum the strings. The introduction of eighth notes requires use to begin using the down, up, down, up strumming motion. It's just like tapping your foot. Down on 'one', up on 'and'.

Lesson 8: Straight Eighth Notes

We're sticking with eighth notes in this lesson. This lesson's exercise is straight eighth notes.

29

C G D C

T 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0

A 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1

B 0

Basic Eighth Note Strumming Pattern

The most basic strumming pattern used is the alteration of down and up strokes for eighth notes. From this basic pattern, a few different patterns can be made simply by leaving out some attacks in the guitar strumming pattern. Here are some examples:

| Beat | 1 | + | 2 | + | 3 | + | 4 | + |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pattern 1 | ↓ | ↑ | ↓ | ↑ | ↓ | ↑ | ↓ | ↑ |
| Pattern 2 | ↓ | | ↓ | ↑ | ↓ | | ↓ | ↑ |
| Pattern 3 | ↓ | ↑ | ↓ | | ↓ | ↑ | ↓ | |

Pattern 1 – In relation to the beat, we have a simple ‘down up down up’ pattern over and over. The down is the 1, and the up is the ‘and’. An example of a song that could use this pattern, if played quite rigidly, would be “Across The Universe” by The Beatles. D, U, D, U, D, U, D, U with no rests to take up time in the pattern. Later I’ll show you why this song technically doesn’t fit in the basic pattern, but for now it will suffice.

Pattern 2 – In relation to the beat, we have another pattern that starts with the ‘down’, but this time, on the ‘and’ we don’t play anything. We then play another ‘down’ on the 2, and then an ‘up’ on the and. Repeat the ‘down’ on the 3, then nothing for the and – and finally a ‘down’ on the 4, followed by an ‘up’ on the and. If we were to count out in our standard way then it would look like this: D, rest, D, U, D, rest, D, U. Notice that there are still 8 total beats played, but the rest takes place of two of the beats.

Pattern 3 – Pattern three is actually much easier than it looks. What you have here is a ‘down’ on the 1, and ‘up’ on the and, a ‘down’ on the 2, and then a rest/nothing on the and again. Repeat this again and you have eight total beats. D, U, D, rest, D, U, D, rest. Again, two rests here.

Lesson 9: Chord Changing

You don’t have to play the same chord over the entire measure. Many songs feature a chord change within the measure. A few songs have multiple chord changes in one measure. In this lesson’s exercise we’ll back off of the timing aspect of strumming and focus on chord changing. All of the chords in this lesson should be familiar to you by now, too.

33

| | C | G | D | C | D | G | C | D |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| A | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| B | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 |
| | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 |

Here’s a drill that you can do to help you change chords faster:

1. Start with C, lift, and press down the G chord.
2. Release, then press down the D chord.
3. Release, then press down the C chord.
4. Release, then press down the G chord.
5. And so on...

Keep it slow and practice any mistakes as you go along.

Lesson 10: Quarter Notes And Eighth Notes

In this lesson we're mixing eighth notes with quarter notes. We're also changing chords in the middle of the measures, so not only are you rhythmically challenged, but your chord changing ability will be challenged as well. Keep on your toes!

The musical notation shows a sequence of chords: C, G, D, C, D, G, C, D. The fret numbers for the fingers are as follows:

| Finger | Measure 1 (C) | Measure 2 (G) | Measure 3 (D) | Measure 4 (C) | Measure 5 (D) | Measure 6 (G) | Measure 7 (C) | Measure 8 (D) |
|--------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| T | 0 0 0 0 3 3 | 2 2 | 0 0 0 0 | 2 2 2 2 3 3 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 2 2 |
| A | 1 1 1 1 0 0 | 3 3 | 1 1 1 1 | 3 3 3 3 0 0 | 1 1 | 1 1 | 3 3 | 3 3 |
| B | 0 0 0 0 0 0 | 2 2 | 0 0 0 0 | 2 2 2 2 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 |
| B | 2 2 2 2 2 2 | 0 0 | 2 2 2 2 | 0 0 0 0 | 2 2 | 2 2 | 0 0 | 0 0 |
| B | 3 3 3 3 3 3 | 3 3 | 3 3 3 3 | 3 3 3 3 | 3 3 | 3 3 | 3 3 | 3 3 |

Minimum Movement=Maximum Speed

Many beginner books will advise you to take your fingers off the fretboard and place them into a new chord-shape. The reason they do this is that you need to develop muscle memory as to the various shapes. Remember in "Friends" the episodes where Phoebe was trying to teach Joey how to play guitar, but wouldn't let him even touch a guitar until he had learn the hand-shapes? And how angry she was when he admitted he'd gone into a guitar shop and tried some of them out? There's nothing wrong with this initial approach (well, there was with Phoebe's, obviously unless you only want to play Air Guitar). You do have to know the various shapes. The problem comes when they tell you to move from one shape to the next. Because they've told you to take your fingers right off, then on again, most people try to do that during this next learning stage. But I ask you a question. What's the point? Let's consider a common chord change, that of A min to C maj:



OK, what's the difference? Only one finger has had to move, the 3rd. Everything else has stayed in the same

place. So why take all 3 fingers off, only to put 2 of them back down exactly where they were before? It's like a broken pencil: pointless.

This neatly serves to illustrate my next point: that of anchors. Look for fingers that are common to both chords, then keep them still... Only move the ones that need to move. (You'll already have realized that anchors are integral to minimum movement and vice-versa)

OK, so what happens when you go between 2 chords that have no common fingers? Consider G maj to D maj:



This sequence shows the transition slowed down massively to demonstrate the moves. The 4th finger provides an absolutely rock-steady anchor about which the other 3 fingers can pivot. The 2nd and 3rd fingers move across, maintaining their shape. Once clear, the 1st finger can move into position. The D shape goes down and it is only in the last split second that the 4th finger comes off.

Lesson 11: Quarter Notes And Eighth Notes Part 2

This is a fairly common strumming pattern that's found in many songs.

| | C | | | | G | | | | D | | | | C | | | |
|--------|------|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|------|----|
| Stroke | Down | Up | Down | Up | Down | Up | Down | Up | Down | Up | Down | Up | Down | Up | Down | Up |
| 41 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| T | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| A | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| B | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| B | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3 |

Strumming Stroke Timing

One common mistake that should be avoided is to use the stroke patterns as a way of maintaining timing. A guitarist should be able to place either stroke at any time for the desired attack. Down and up strokes do have a slightly different flavor to the sound, and sometimes it can sound better to use the same stroke twice rather than alternate.

The best way to develop the ability to use either attack on demand is to practice patterns that aren't based around the basic down and up stroke pattern shown above. Below gives a few examples of strumming patterns to try out.

| Beat | 1 | + | 2 | + | 3 | + | 4 | + |
|-----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pattern 4 | ↓ | ↓ | ↑ | ↓ | ↓ | ↓ | ↑ | ↓ |
| Pattern 5 | ↑ | ↓ | ↓ | ↑ | ↓ | ↑ | ↑ | ↑ |
| Pattern 6 | ↑ | ↑ | ↓ | ↓ | ↑ | ↑ | ↓ | ↓ |

Pattern 4 – D, D, U, D, D, D, U, D is the pattern here. We’ve still got eight beats, with the counts showing as 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and. Notice the pattern is actually the same over and over if you break it down. D, D, U, D / D, D, U, D.

As you can see, you’re really only learning the first four strums of this pattern. This is actually the case in most strumming patterns. I’ll get into the problem with that in a moment.

Pattern 5 - U, D, D, U, D, U, U, U is a different pattern than you may be used to. In it, we don’t have a repeating pattern if you break it down into 4’s.

We have U, D, D, U / D, U, U, U instead. Have you ever seen a pattern USED like this? One that makes sense to strum? I didn’t think so. I haven’t. Reggae doesn’t count, because usually Reggae starts on the ‘and’ as opposed to the ‘1.’ However, if you want to practice using the concept of arrow/strumming patterns, this one might help you learn to sight read the pattern that is ‘called for’ on a given song...if you find one that uses it. If not...at least you learned a new pattern.

Pattern 6 – U, U, D, D, U, U, D, D is another pattern that will help you learn to sight read strumming patterns, but will more than likely never be used. If you are noticing a correlation between a song starting on the ‘up’ being rather uncommon, you’re right.

There are rare instances when a song starts on the ‘up’ and as I look back I DO NOT recall one single time that I have ever used an ‘up’ pattern to start a song. As a matter of fact, I pretty much use the same template for strumming patterns OVER and OVER and OVER and OVER....(and over) again with a majority of the songs I play. I’ll prove it to you in just a second.

There are far, far more patterns that can be developed outside the basic up and down pattern as well, which is the point of practicing these types of patterns. The variety of potential patterns expands greatly by being able to perform up and down strokes on demand in any necessary rhythmic position.

Lesson 12: Quarter Notes And Eighth Notes Part 3

Same strumming pattern as the previous lesson, we’ll just be using different chords.

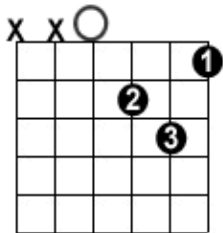
[illegible]

Chords Used

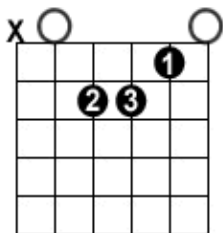
Newton's Third Law of motion says that for every action is and equal and opposite reaction. One could say this about music, also. The major chord produces a sound that can be considered "happy" while the minor chord sounds "sad". The interaction between major and minor chords is what drives many songs.

The Am, Em, and Dm are the most commonly used shapes, because of their ease of use. They are the chords we're using in this lesson's exercise.

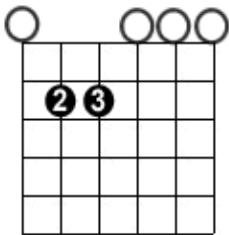
Dm



Am



Em



Lesson 13: Constant Chord Changing

Do you think you've got chord changing down? Are you, at least, getting better? I hope so, because this lesson's exercise is going to put it to the test.

| | C | Am | Em | C | C | Am | Em | C | C | Am | Em | C | C | Am | Em | C |
|----|---|----|----|---|---|----|----|---|---|----|----|---|---|----|----|---|
| 49 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| T | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| A | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| B | 3 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 3 |
| 0 | | | 0 | | | | 0 | | | | 0 | | | | 0 | |

STOP Kenny! I Can't Handle It

Chord changes still bother you? Take some time to play through these easier exercises:

| A | D | A | E |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

| G | C | G | D |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

| Em | Am | D | G |
|----|----|---|---|
| | | | |

| D | Am | C | D |
|---|----|---|---|
| | | | |

Lesson 14: Constant Chord Changing 2

This lesson's exercise is similar to the previous lesson, but we've changed up the strumming pattern.

53

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| A | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| B | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| B | 3 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| | | | | 0 | | | | 0 | | | | | | 0 | | |

Strumming, for a guitarist, generally is used specifically to refer to when a guitarist loosely plays a series of basic guitar chords with the same rhythmic set of up and down strokes.

One common mistake among beginner guitarists is to use guitar strumming patterns in place of proper rhythmic control or to try to regulate any guitar into a strumming pattern. This is usually only used for more background rhythm parts, and should not be confused with acoustic guitar lessons on techniques that are intentionally more precise.

Loose vs. Sloppy

Strumming is usually a very loose style of guitar playing, but that isn't the same as playing sloppy. The actual rhythm should still be precise, with the loose falling in the slight ability to hit or miss a couple of extra strings with each stroke.

If the bottom three strings are targeted in a stroke, it is fine for only the bottom two sound, but if the stroke completely misses, then that should be taken as an indication that the playing is too sloppy.

Lesson 15: Rhythm Variation

Let's switch things up. This strumming pattern is similar to the one used in our previous lesson, except we've reversed the quarter notes and eighth notes.

57

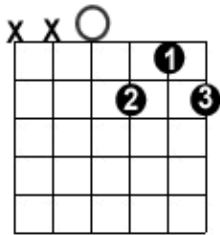
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| A | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| B | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| | | | | | | | | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| | | | | | | | | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Meet The 7th Chord

There are 3 types of 7th chords. Dominant, major and minor. The dominant 7th chord is the most commonly

used. It's common symbol is simply a "7". For example: C7 is an C dominant 7th chord. The dominant 7th includes the 1st, 3rd, 5th, and flat 7th. Read up about chord construction to learn more about the theory behind how chords are formed. It's good information to possess.

D7



Lesson 16: Straight Eighth Seventh Chords

This lesson's exercise is straight eighth notes. We'll be using more dominant 7th chords and a minor 7th chord.

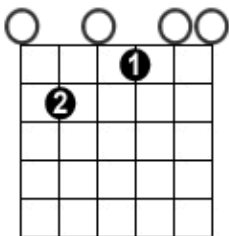
| | E7 | | | | | | | | Dm7 | | | | | | | | C7 | | | | | | | | G7 | | | | | | | |
|-------|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Staff | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| T | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| A | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| B | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| B | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| B | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | | | | | | | | | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |

This lesson's exercise is straight eighth notes. We'll be using more dominant 7th chords and a minor 7th chord.

Chords Used

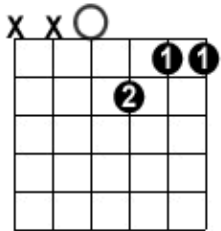
Think of these chords as building upon the chord shapes you already know for them. We're just adding a note.

E7

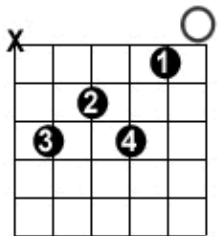




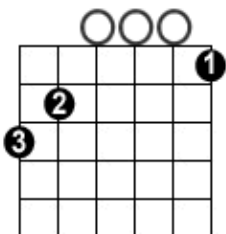
Dm7



C7



G7





Lesson 17: Rests

65

Dmaj7 Am7 B7 Dm7

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| A | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| B | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Okay, we've had sixteen lessons, so far. Things have gone smoothly and everyone had fun. In this lesson I'm going to hit you over the head with some new things. First of all we'll be playing some different chords (one, the B7 in particular, is kind of difficult for beginners to play). Second of all we'll be introduced to the quarter rest. Resting sounds easy. I picture laying on the couch. Rests in music is quite similar. During a rest you don't play anything. Sounds easy, right? The part where you don't play is easy, but you still must be engaged with the song to maintain your timing.

Quarter Rest

A Quarter Rest gets the same value as a quarter note, but instead of playing, you rest for that duration. There are 4 quarters in a whole. For example, a dollar bill can be divided up into 4 quarters. (.25 + .25 + .25 + .25 = \$1.00). We rest for a quarter of the measure. That's why it's a quarter rest. Here's what it looks like.



So, when we see a quarter rest we rest for one beat. We still have to count it (in our exercises: 1 and 2 and rest and four and) , so we know exactly when to come back in.

Lesson 18: Rests Part 2

Let's practice our quarter rests again.

Lesson 18 musical notation (measures 69-72). Chords: A7, Em7, Cmaj7, B7. The notation includes a guitar staff, a piano accompaniment staff, and fretboard diagrams for the bass, arpeggio, and treble staves.

Lesson 19: Rhythm Challenge

This lesson's exercise mixes eighth notes with quarter rests. Pay attention, because the strumming pattern does not stay the same throughout the entire exercise.

Lesson 19 musical notation (measures 73-76). Chords: E, A, E, D, E7. The notation includes a guitar staff, a piano accompaniment staff, and fretboard diagrams for the bass, arpeggio, and treble staves.

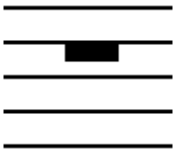
Lesson 20: Half Rests

Lesson 20 musical notation (measures 77-80). Chords: D, D7, F, G7. The notation includes a guitar staff, a piano accompaniment staff, and fretboard diagrams for the bass, arpeggio, and treble staves.

Are You A Whole Gentleman Or Only Half A Gentleman?

In addition to quarter rests, we have whole rests and half rests. A whole rest is easy. You just rest for the whole measure or four beats. A half rest is half of a whole, so we rest for two beats.

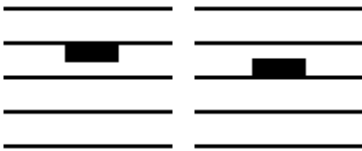
A Whole Rest looks like this:



The half rest looks like this:



They look very much alike, so how do you tell them apart. I'll tell you an easy way to remember which is which. First, let's look at them side by side:



Now imagine that the thick black box is a hat. A whole gentleman would take off his hat. A half gentleman would leave his hat on. Get it?!

Lesson 21: Whole Note, Whole Rest

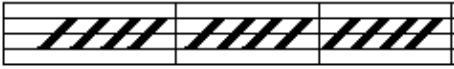
At this point you might be saying "Gosh Kenny, the lessons are getting easier and easier". True that, but think of it as the calm before the storm!

In this lesson's exercise we're going to spend half the time doing nothing. Can you tell what type of rest we are using? What would a whole gentleman do? He'd take his hat off...

| | E | | A | |
|----|---|--|---|--|
| 81 | | | | |
| T | 0 | | 0 | |
| A | 1 | | 2 | |
| B | 2 | | 2 | |
| | 0 | | 0 | |

Slash Sheets

Here is a blank slash sheet in 4/4 time:

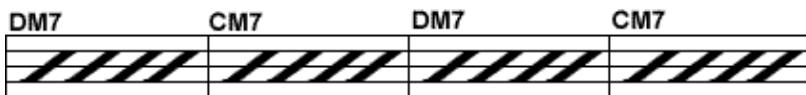
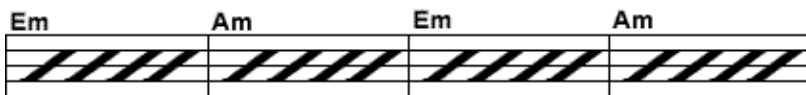
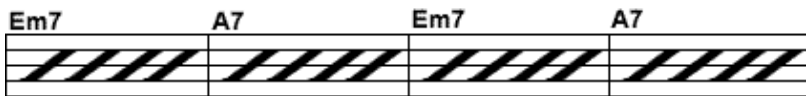


A slash sheet represents a chord progression and tells us how many beats we play the chord. The chord that you play is labeled on top of the staff. The example below tells us to play a C chord for 4 beats:



Strum What You Feel

With slash sheets you are left to create your own strumming pattern. See what kind of strumming patterns you can come up with in the examples below:



Lesson 22: Eighth Rests

So far we've come across whole, half, quarter, and eighth notes. We soon found out that there are whole, half, and quarter rests as well. Does that mean that there are eighth rests, too? You betcha!

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| A | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| B | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |

The Eighth Rest

An Eighth Rest would look like this (same value, but instead of playing it, you rest for that duration):



It's kind of a funny looking thing, but I don't make the rules. The eighth rest deems that you rest for half a beat.

Count out our exercise above: one and two and three and four and. We strum on the beat 1, 2, 3, 4, and rest on the "and".

Lesson 23: Playing On The Upbeat

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| T | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| A | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| B | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |

One of the most distinguishable rhythms is found in reggae music. Typically, in much of music, the down beat is what is accented. In ska and reggae music, it's the up beat that is accented. Hence in this lesson's exercise we will rest on the down beat and strum on the up beat. Strumming it with an up stroke will help you from getting confused. If we count it out (one and two and three and four and) we'll discover that we're strumming on the the up beat (the &) while resting on the down beat, so maintain your down, up, down, up strumming motion to keep time, just don't hit the strings on the down beat.



Lesson 24: Triplets

93

| | | | | |
|---|-------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|
| T | 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 | 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 |
| A | 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 | 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 | 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 | 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 |
| B | 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 | 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 | 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 | 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 |

Just when you thought things we're getting easy... Some of you might have a breakdown looking at this lesson's exercise, so let me break down the exercise for you instead...

The Triplet

The triplet is a group of three notes to be performed in the time of two ordinary notes of the same kind. In our exercise we're using eighth note triplets. That means that we are going to play three notes in the duration of two eighth notes. Some confusing. It's not really. It's all about subdividing the beat. Instead of counting it as 1 and 2 and, we'll count it as tri-pl-et. Since it's an even number of notes, we'll use a little trick to fit the extra note in. We'll give it a bit of a swing. The notes that bookmark the middle note will actually be of a slightly shorter duration than the one in the middle, creating the swing effect (similar to a swing on your swing set). They are notes that go by quickly, so you'll want to maintain a down, up, down, up strumming motion.

Lesson 25: Strumming Challenge

Alright, grasshopper. You've come a long way. I hope you've paid close attention to your lessons, because now we're going to put all that you've learned together for one final challenge.

You can consider yourself a "Beginner Strumming" graduate once you are able to play this lesson's exercise. It requires you to constantly change chords and the rhythm is has no set pattern, so every step of it require your full attention.

Can you do it?

Of course you can. Wax on, wax off!

97

Dm7 F Em7 Amaj7 C7Cmaj7 Dmaj7 Em G7

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----|-------|-----|-----|-----|-------|---|---|
| T | 1 1 | 1 1 1 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 0 0 | 2 2 2 | 0 | 1 |
| A | 1 1 | 1 1 1 | 0 0 | 2 2 | 1 0 | 2 2 2 | 0 | 0 |
| B | 2 2 | 2 2 2 | 0 0 | 1 1 | 3 0 | 2 2 2 | 0 | 0 |
| | 0 0 | 3 3 3 | 0 0 | 2 2 | 2 2 | 0 0 0 | 2 | 0 |
| | | | 2 2 | 0 0 | 3 3 | | 2 | 2 |
| | | | 0 0 | | | | 0 | 3 |