

Strummer Camp: 2019 – Day 15

It's time to trick your mind! I'm partially joking, but the idea in this series of exercises is to try to think in different time signatures. Sure, you can just strum 4/4 until you are blue in the face, but you'll find a ton of songs out there that simply won't work in 4/4 time.

So, I've got a HEALTHY series of exercises for you to check out. Much of what I show below is explained in the online section, but I'll also toss a few extra ideas here.

Exercise 49: Revisiting 16th Notes (increased tempo)

Material Covered - Before I go into exercises in 3/4 time, I would like to revisit a basic 16th note progression using the A and G Major barre chords. If you would rather play the open versions, feel free. However, I think you might be surprised at this progression in barre chord format as there is no fingering change for the fretting hand. This MIGHT very well be easier than the open version.

The image shows musical notation for Exercise 49, divided into two sections: A major and G major. Each section contains a staff with a 4/4 time signature and a 16th note strumming pattern. The A major section consists of four measures of a barre chord (5-5-5-5) followed by four measures of a barre chord (X-X-X-X). The G major section consists of four measures of a barre chord (3-3-3-3) followed by four measures of a barre chord (X-X-X-X). Below the staff is a tablature diagram showing the fretting for each note, with 'X' indicating muted notes. The strumming pattern is indicated by 'M' (down) and 'V' (up) symbols below the tablature.

There's not much to “teach” here as you have already learned this overall concept. This time, I ask that you play it at least 4 times and make sure you mute at the end of each measure over the last 4 groups of 16th notes. The strumming pattern is just DUDU the entire time. You won't need an arrow diagram for this.

Exercise 50: 3/4 Time Basics

Material Covered - While 3/4 time isn't necessarily the easiest thing in the world, it's still considered a common and basic time signature.

This is likely the easiest of the 3/4 exercises, but it's still somewhat odd to "hear" - especially if you have been playing 4/4 time for a while.

First I'll drop the tab on you and then give you a diagram on how to count it.

D = DOWN STRUM
 U = UP STRUM

I prefer this way of counting when dealing with 3 / 4 time because it makes everything plain as day.

Exercise 51: 3/4 Time

Material Covered: Here you will find that the snare beat falls just slightly on the last eighth note grouping. As with the previous measure run, the strumming pattern here is actually very simple.

It's just D - DU-D (repeated)

While you will probably figure this out pretty quick, I've included a counting system for you below:

D = DOWN STRUM
 U = UP STRUM

Exercise 52: 3/4 Time Basics (slightly strummier)

Material Covered - This one is pretty neat to me as it feels like a standard 4/4 time pattern, but it's not. The strumming pattern is rather standard as well, which is another reason why this exercise feels like 4/4. It's just D – DU-DU.

D = DOWN STRUM
 U = UP STRUM

Exercise 53: 3/4 Time – Intermediate

Material Covered - While this exercise isn't super easy, it's important to push ourselves in a way that presents somewhat of a challenge. This is a real pattern found in a song, but the chords have been changed to an EASIER way of playing it. All that aside, it is still pretty tough. This exercise combines a rather tricky strumming pattern of: DD - DU-D - D-DU | D - DU - D

I think the easiest way to approach this pattern is by the beat, not so much the chords used. I give you a little idea there at the end of this brief lesson.

Chords: E, F#m, E, B, E

Strumming pattern (fret numbers):

0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	X	X	X	0
0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0	4	4	4	0
1	1	2	2	2	1	1	1	4	4	4	1
2	2	4	4	4	2	2	2	4	4	4	2
2	2	4	4	4	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
0	0	2	2	2	0	0	0				0

So, here's a tricky one to figure out at first. HOW is this song in 3 / 4 time? Mathematically it is. The total value of each measure is 0.75, which means it can't be anything else. This is further proven in the second measure.

This time I want you to completely avoid thinking of the counting system itself. I want you to duplicate what you hear in my demo. I will give you a neat hint: Count the number of total strums in the first measure WITHOUT counting the value of them. How many strums are there? There are 8 strums. So, could this be converted as a 12/8 “feel” even though the mathematical value is that of 0.75? Yep. In some ways this is actually 12/8 – 3 / 4 (BUT!) you won't hear it as such.

Exercise 54: Stepping Back to 4/4

Material Covered - If you listen to 3/4 for too long, your brain THEN often becomes hard-wired to forget 4/4. This time I'm pushing us back into 4/4 time using eighths and sixteenth notes in a very standard strumming progression.

The pattern here is: DD-DDU-DUD-DD (repeated)

Chords: F, B^b, Dm, C

Strumming pattern (fret numbers):

1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	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	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1

This one should be pretty easy unless you struggle with differentiating between eighth notes and sixteenth notes. However, remember my rule – DU is the 'usual' when strumming 16th notes.

Exercise 55: Strumming (Sometimes Less is More)

Material Covered - There's no doubt you'll know exactly what this song is. While it isn't hard at all to play in terms of value, I also find it to be VERY important that you learn to recognize when not to play. This is a great example on how to identify rests in a song.

The image shows musical notation for Exercise 55. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains a sequence of power chords: E5, D5, and A5. The notes are quarter notes, and there are rests between them. The guitar tab below shows the fretting for each chord: E5 (2, 2, 0), D5 (3, 2, 0), and A5 (2, 2, 0). There are also some rests in the tab.

Exercise 56: Direct 8th Note Strumming (Intermediate)

Material Covered - I think we will both agree that a standard 8th note strumming pattern isn't all that difficult to play or hear. However, there are plenty of times that a direct beat like that can actually be very intricate when a song such as this utilizes rather tricky finger arrangements.

Everything you see below uses power chords, a direct downstrum and even the OPTION to palm mute the entire passage. But - in all honesty, the tab is pretty dang hard.

The image shows musical notation for Exercise 56. The top staff is a treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains a sequence of power chords: E5, G5, F#5, F5, E5, G5, F#5, F5, E5, G5, F#5, F5, E5, F#5, G5, A5. The notes are eighth notes, and there are rests between them. The guitar tab below shows the fretting for each chord: E5 (2, 0), G5 (5, 3), F#5 (4, 2), F5 (3, 1), E5 (2, 0), G5 (5, 3), F#5 (4, 2), F5 (3, 1), E5 (2, 0), G5 (5, 3), F#5 (4, 2), F5 (3, 1), E5 (2, 0), F#5 (4, 2), G5 (5, 3), A5 (2, 0). There is a 'PM' (palm mute) marking at the beginning of the first measure.

Exercise 57: 12/8 Timing Basics

Material Covered - Most every guitar player in the world has heard of 12/8 time. We have also likely played a song in 12/8 time without even realizing it. This is a great example of 12/8 time that actually feels more like a swing style song in 4/4 time.

12/8 time can actually be converted, based on the value of the measures, into a mathematical series that are equivalent to each other, such as 3/4 and even 6/8. However, it's the implication of the notes used that changes the "feeling" or "implication" of what is physically being played. So, is 3/4 or 6/8 mathematically equivalent to 12/8? Yes - but only mathematically.

Long Story Short: If 4/4 time has a total value of 1.00 in each measure (and) 3/4 time will have a total value of 0.75 in each measure, 12/8 time will have the value of 1.50 in each measure.

Every value in this tab will equal 1.50 for each measure, and while it is in 12/8 – it's going to feel like 4/4 with a swing.

♩ = 115

G7 D7 Am C7 G7 D7 Am G7

See that tempo marker? That's an indication that it will have a swing of a quarter note plus a dotted note. Remember that a “dot” takes ½ of whatever value it is being applied and ADDS it to the original value. Thus, the tempo marker/swing pattern will be that of 0.25 + 0.125. That gives us a value of 0.375 overall. That is the same precise value as the first rest in the measure.

Exercise 58: Unconventional Strumming w/Mostly 16th Notes

Material Covered - This song is one that I taught many years back and it really threw beginners for a loop. So, I thought it would be a great exercise in counting 16th notes based on a relatively slow 80 bpm beat.

However, it actually goes beyond that. Not only are you working with a legato slide (which implies 2 16th notes here, with only one being "struck") you also have to play a little mind game in this as the ending of the tab and the beginning of the tab are the same thing. It's a bit challenging to keep track of what you are playing.

A great tell-tale is counting the 11/13 vibrato (which has a tied note following it) as you go through. Once you have played that part 8 times, you will know the measures are complete. This exercise is played as ALL downstrokes, believe it or not.

♩ = 80

(F#) (E) (G#) (A) (G#) (F#) (E)

Exercise 59: 3/4 Time (Slightly Advanced)

Material Covered - This might be harder or easier than exercise 53. It all depends on how you "hear" things. Now that you have played a few 4/4 exercises to get your mind off the 3/4 time concept, it's time to go BACK to 3/4 time for the day. This exercise uses the same 90 bpm 3/4 time you already have. It's also part of a Led Zeppelin song with different chords. This same 3/4 time signature pattern is used in a variety of OLD school church hymns.

The strumming pattern is: DD - DUD - DDU | D - D - DU

The image shows a musical score for a guitar exercise in 3/4 time. The top staff is a standard musical staff with a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. It contains a melody line with six measures of music, each starting with a chord symbol: A, F#m, D, E, D, E. The bottom staff is a guitar fretboard diagram with six strings. It shows the fret numbers for each string in each measure, corresponding to the chords above. The fret numbers are: Measure 1 (A): 0, 2, 2, 2, 2, 0; Measure 2 (F#m): 2, 2, 2, 4, 4, 2; Measure 3 (D): 2, 2, 3, 2, 0, 0; Measure 4 (E): 0, 0, 1, 1, 2, 2; Measure 5 (D): 2, 3, 2, 0, 0, 0; Measure 6 (E): 0, 0, 1, 1, 2, 2. There are also some additional fret numbers (2, 2, 2, 0) written below the strings in the first and second measures. A 4x repeat sign is at the end of the second staff.

As with exercise 53, it is going to feel like it's not in 3 / 4 time at the beginning. It CAN be considered 12 / 8 if you want to get all math-crazy, but the second measure is going to tell us the truth of it all. Yes, there are more strums in the first measure, but that's no different than a lead guitar passage that plays a bunch of notes within a given measure even when the song itself is in 3 / 4 time.

So, you must always relate to the entire passage to fully get through the overall arrangement. As mentioned before, time signatures can equate themselves to other time signatures, but often the tell-tale is the overall arrangement itself.

The whole point from the beginning of this course has been to assign decimals to the notes and rests used. It might seem like a ton to absorb, but the more you assign these properties to notes and rests, the more you can begin to identify the TOTAL value of a given measure or measures.

This will help you in songs that switch time signatures like crazy as well as helps you hear the true essence of a song instead of having to go through each note to find the timing or rhythm. The more you hear the strumming pattern, the easier it gets.

Let's Go Back In Time Real Quick

The other day I presented you with a challenge. The challenge was to determine what other location and chord SHAPES you could use for the song "Come On Up To The House" by Tom Waits.

I gave you the formula, but not the actual chords used. Here are the answers:

	<p>The opening verse arrangement is :</p> <p>G - Em C - G G - (F#) - Em Em I vi IV I I vii° vi vi</p> <p>Next is this:</p> <p>G - Em C - G G - D G I vi IV I I V I</p> <p>The above progression is repeated, then the chorus:</p> <p>G G G Em I I I vi</p> <p>G - Em C - G G - D G I vi IV I I V I</p>
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There's your chord progression using a capo on the 8th fret. Talk about MUCH easier, right?!