

Strummer Camp: 2019 – Day 13: The Shuffle

The exercises featured today are based on a few elements. I'll address each one as we take a look at the tab provided.

Exercise 41:

E A D B7

What you have here is an absolute standard in basic blues shuffles. Notice here that the groupings are arranged in two's throughout. In other words, each movement is built around two eighth notes attached to each other. There is then a break in the attachment after each group of two. While you won't always have tab in front of you, a general rule in blues shuffles is it will FEEL as though there is an arrangement in either groups of two's (as seen above) or even groups formed around triplets.

At first glance you'll definitely see that there are eight 8th notes within each measure, which constitutes 4/4 time as well as a “whole” measure each. However, what you don't see in the tab above (but will see in a moment) is the tempo marker, which arranges this standard run into something that emphasizes the need to create a shuffle. Here's what you don't see from above:

$$\text{♩} = 80 \left(\text{♩} - \overset{\text{3}}{\text{♩}} \right)$$

Why didn't I show it, right? Well – this goes back to the many ways in which instructors or even fellow musicians might tab something out or write it out for you. Without the above tempo marker, you wouldn't have any way of knowing that the passage IS a shuffle passage.

If you were to verbally say what that tempo marker means, it would likely be spoken as:

bum-bum – bah – bah ← **Try it!** Use the hyphens to create the pause in your speaking.

It seems goofy, but if you look at the hyphens you'll notice I squished the bum-bum together. From there, I spaced the hyphens out. Even though the tempo marker has a triplet in it to

indicate a slightly more “quick” value, you don't actually need that. You can identify the shuffle itself by simply thinking two things:

1. You can identify the shuffle due to the eighth note groupings. They are in 2's.
2. You see a triplet in the tempo marker, which tells you that 3 notes take the place of 2.

Neat, huh? Had you not been provided with a tempo marker at all, you would have to look at the groupings. Had you not seen the note value groupings, you would then assume that the actual tab shows number-based groupings of two as well.

In other words, you are playing the “2” on the tab twice and then the “4” on the tab twice. Any time you see an arrangement like that, you should always assume it's a blues shuffle.

Now, you can also emphasize this progression as a second guitarist if you want WITHOUT playing the same shuffle – or even the same basic E – A – D – B7 strumming progression.

It will still have the overall tones used (mostly) in the progression itself, but you won't sound like you are duplicating the same thing.

I chose to use a capo to do this because it won't require you to play any serious barre chords, but you CAN play the same chords in another position to get the same overall effect.

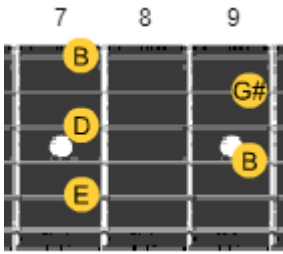
The next exercise is going to show you how to do that.

Exercise 42: (optional)

The image displays musical notation for Exercise 42, featuring a blues shuffle progression. The notation is presented in two systems: a top system with a single staff and a bottom system with four staves (two for guitar and two for bass). The top system is divided into four measures, each labeled with a chord: E, A, D, and B. The E measure contains two eighth-note chords, the A measure contains two eighth-note chords, the D measure contains two eighth-note chords, and the B measure contains two eighth-note chords. The bottom system shows the corresponding fretboard positions for each chord, with fingerings indicated by numbers 0-4. The E measure shows a standard E chord (0 0 0 2 2 2) and a variation (0 0 0 2 2 2 4 4 4). The A measure shows an A chord (0 0 0 4 4 4 5 5 5) and a variation (0 0 0 4 4 4 5 5 5). The D measure shows a D chord (0 0 0 2 2 2 3 3 3) and a variation (0 0 0 2 2 2 3 3 3). The B measure shows a B7 chord (0 0 0 1 1 1 2 2 2) and a variation (0 0 0 1 1 1 2 2 2). The notation includes a capo on the 7th fret, indicated by a 'C' and '7' above the staff. The bottom system also includes a 'H' (harmonic) marking under the B measure.

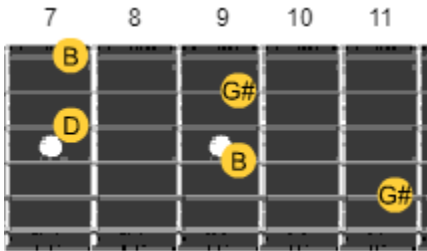
This one uses a capo on the 7th fret and looks REALLY crazy, right? Well, it's not all that crazy – it's just ultimately the same progression. First, let me show you what chords you are actually playing over (or under) that E shuffle you saw in Exercise 41.

The E Frame (Measure 1) :



The first chord you play is actually an E7. Since the capo is covering the 7th frets, your shape is actually just an A7 shape.

The tab doesn't call for playing the Low E, so I wouldn't.



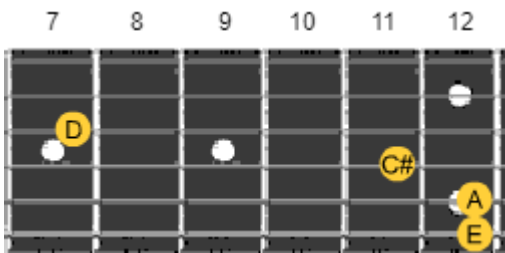
This is the second chord you play. Guess what? It's a G#dim chord. Yep. You just played a freakin' diminished chord. If you weren't aware, any diminished chord is strange.

The E frame in the original shuffle ONLY played E (low E open) and B (fret 2 on the A string) with a follow up of C# (4th fret A string). The E Major chord uses E, G#, and B.

I used that additional guitar to get some more official tones for the E. What did I do? I simply added the G# note in using the capo part.

If you were wondering where the C# came in for the original E blues shuffle, it's just a common thing in the world of blues music. The C# note itself is the root note of the relative chord in the key of E Major. Since E Major and C#m (minor!) are relatives, the C# note itself is used to help create the shuffle.

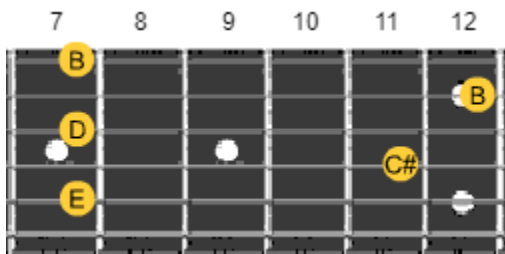
The A Frame (Measure 2):



Remember in the last installment when I talked about inversions, right? Well, what you are playing here is pretty much just an inverted A Major chord.

A Major uses A, C#, and E.

Again, the capo is taking care of the D note on the 7th fret, and while the D note is NOT included in the standard A Major chord, I left it there because it will help hint at the next chord coming up in the shuffle. Naturally, it'll be a D Major chord. But first, we need to check out the next chord in the A frame.



What the heck kind of chord is this? Well, it isn't one. However, when you combine the notes used here you will find a general mixture between a partial A Major and a partial E Major. Huh?

The A Major uses A, C#, and E. We have C# and E.
The E Major uses E, G#, and B. We have E and B.

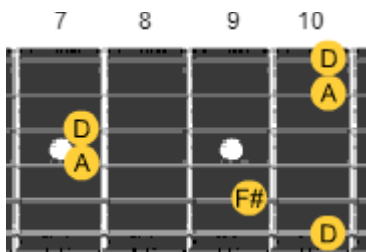
The only other note here is a D note. Once again I used the D note to emphasize the next chord, which will be a D shuffle. If you look back at the shuffle, you'll find that the A shuffle uses an open A (open A string) combined with an E note (2nd fret D string) followed with an F# note (4th fret A string).

Once again, the A Major has a chord relative of F#m. We are only using the F# note itself.

I chose not to use the "A" note in the capo version because the shuffle is using an A.
I chose not to use the "G#" note in the capo version (the [3] note in the E Major chord) and instead decided to place two B notes in the mix. Why?

Because the B note is the [5] in the E Major chord. It's SUPER dominant. In other words, it is the strongest note (other than the root note) not only in the E Major chord, but also in the E Major scale. ANY note in the [5] spot in ANY scale (or chord) is the dominant tone.

The D Frame (Measure 3):



Luckily this won't take much explanation at all. You are definitely seeing a G Major chord shape, but once you break it down, it's using all the notes in the D Major chord!

D Major uses D, F#, and A. That's ALL you got here. Just remember that we are playing this using triplets, so you will want to strum DDD – UUU (repeated)

Diagram illustrating the D Frame (Measure 3) across four measures, showing fret positions and string numbers for notes E, A, D, and B.

Measure	Notes (Fret)	Strings
1 (E)	0 (0)	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
2 (A)	2 (2), 4 (4)	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
3 (D)	0 (0), 2 (2), 3 (3)	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
4 (B)	2 (2), 4 (4), 5 (5)	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6

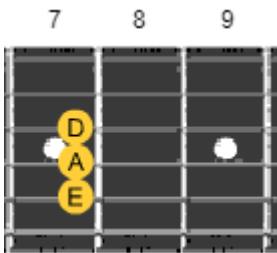
Handwritten notes below the diagram indicate fret positions and string numbers for each note in the D Frame:

- E:** 0 0 0, 2 2 2, 0 0 0, 2 2 2, 0 0 0
- A:** 0 0 0, 4 4 4, 6 6 6, 0 0 0, 4 4 4
- D:** 0 0 0, 2 2 2, 3 3 3, 0 0 0, 2 2 2
- B:** 0 0 0, 1 1 1, 2 2 2, 0 0 0, 2 2 2

I just placed the mean the reference again to help you see what I mean. You will want to strum DDD on the first set of triplets in D. Then strum UUU on the next set. Repeat. It's trickier than it might seem for sure.

B Frame (Measure 4):

The first part of this comes in rather quick, but it's actually an Asus4 chord, thanks to our friend - the capo.



This is the first part of the A frame. I used it as a “bridging the gap” concept as well as to interject a basic chord phrasing option.

Any suspended chord is neither Major nor minor. Thus, it TENDS to work well in any situation.

As mentioned earlier, this is an Asus4 chord, but it's also a Dsus2 chord. Those two chords are ultimately the same thing as they use the same notes. You can call it either one.

The reason a suspended chord (sus2 or sus4) is neither Major nor minor is because of the way they are constructed.

ANY sus4 chord uses the 1 – 4 – 5 ← notice there is no “3” or “b3” here.

ANY sus2 chord uses the 1 – 2 – 5 ← notice there is no “3” or “b3” here.

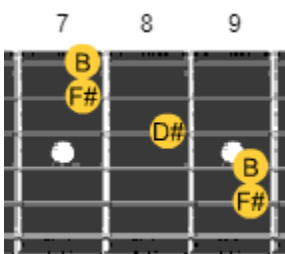
The only way you can truly identify a Major chord is if it has a 1 – 3 – 5 in it.

The only way you can truly identify a minor chord is if it has a 1 – b3 – 5 in it.

Suspended chords have neither. Thus, they are “suspended” (or in purgatory if you want to be creepy about it, ha!)

So, I just thought, “suspend something here!” - and the capo made it super easy.

After that, I followed up with a normal ol' B Major chord:



What does that chord look like? It looks like an E Major, right? The shape is that of an E Major, but our capo has transposed it.

Thus, we actually have B, D#, F#, which is a B Major chord.

Remember that the 7th fret notes are covered for us by the capo.

Exercise 43:

This is pretty much straight forward. It's the same overall idea as the first shuffle, but this time we are working that fretting hand. It's a bit of a stretch, but this is the kind of shuffle you will find in blues songs as well as songs that aren't *full on* blues songs from artists like Aerosmith, ZZ Top and Lynyrd Skynyrd.

Note: I HIGHLY recommend playing this as DU DU over and over. It'll make you feel like SRV without all the difficulty (ha ha)

Exercise 44:

This is all about getting two sets of triplets down for each measure. As you play this you REALLY need to think “trip-uh-let trip-uh-let bum” and it'll be way easier.

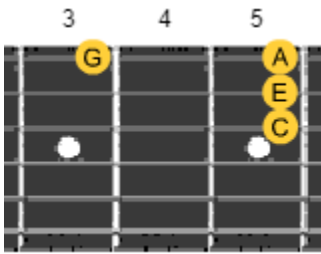
Here's what you are physically playing over (or under) the main G shuffle:

The first measure moves from a QUICK Bm to a straight up Em. The relative chord of G Major is Em.

Why did I pick the Bm, though, right?

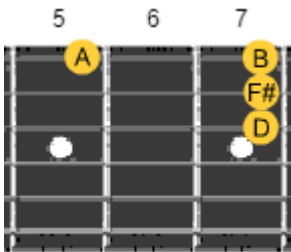
Well, it's the minor 3rd (iii) in the G Major scale.

You don't really have to know that, but I thought I'd toss it in.



This is played over the C frame. Had I not placed that “A” note in there, you'd be playing a “little” C Major (A Style) barre chord. (x-3-5-5-5-3)

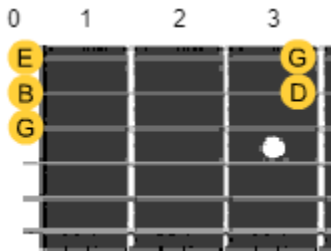
The A, E, and C stacked together is an Am (little), which is the relative of C Major. Nifty ;)



While I like to THINK of myself as creative, this is basically the same idea, so I'm not really working magic. Had I not placed the B note in there, you'd just have a little version of a D Major (A Style) barre chord. (x-5-7-7-7-5) – but you know I don't like those.

The stacked 7's here is just, yep....another Bm.

Earlier I said that the Bm is the (iii) in the key of G Major. It is. In this case, the Bm is also the relative chord of D Major. So, you know...if the shoe fits, right?



This is the last “G” frame, and it should be super easy to figure out. If you look closely, this is just a combination of E, G, B, and D.

G Major uses G, B, and D. The relative of G Major is Em, which uses E, G, and B. So, the E comes in and just sits for a second.

Your Assignments:

I will be providing you with a bunch of videos. The ones you need to focus on are the play-along videos for each of these lessons.

I would recommend, if possible, to try all 4 exercises. I've set them up so that both tabs are on one screen, so you don't need 4 videos. You just need 2. You can simply repeat the same video for either tab. If you don't have a capo, no worries.

We are actually WAY ahead of schedule in terms of exercises, so there will be plenty more coming for that.