

# Time Signatures

We aren't going to play any 4/4 time signatures because you already know this style. Let's try some others.

These may not be the most 'fun' or 'challenging' exercises, but you need to know all of this before we move into Reggae and other strumming lessons for these time signatures. All of these exercises are performed at 120 bpm. Since the chords are easy, you should be able to play these with no problem.

Remember that 4/4 time is considered 'common time' and 'simple time'. Here is an example of the other time signature definitions.

**Simple Time** - Like 4/4, this also includes 2/4 and 3/4.

**Compound Time** - The simple times can be grouped into triplets, or groups of three. This is a compound time signature. The 6/8 could be called 6/4 if you were playing quarter notes, but we're playing eighth notes, so it's 6/8. This is the same for 9/8 as being 9/4 if played using quarter notes. This ALSO applies to 12/8, where it would be called 12/4 if we were playing quarter notes. EASY!

**Asymmetric Time** - Time signatures with beats not being divisible by two or three are called asymmetric time signatures. which are composed of five or seven beats. This includes eleven and thirteenth beats as well. The accents are important, as they show the beat arrangement.

I allow the beat to run a while so that you can hear the idea. I then play along. I HIGHLY recommend doing this until you are comfortable. Don't worry so much with the accents right now. Just count in your head according to groupings of each value.

In each exercise, I say "Think..." What I mean by this is that if you are confused with actually COUNTING the notes out, you can simplify it by just counting each beat. When you get down to the 3, 6, 9, 11 I'll explain further.

## Exercises

### 2/4 (Simple Time)

There are two beats to the bar, with all the beats being quarter notes.

(Think 1, 2 - Each beat gets a 1 and then a 2 and repeats)

Am C G Em

Gtr I

	0	0	0	0	3	3		
<b>T</b>	1	1	1	1	3	3		
<b>A</b>	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>B</b>	0	0	3	3	2	2	2	2
					3	3	0	0

## 3/4 (Simple Time)

There are three beats to the bar, with all the beats being quarter notes.

(Think 1, 2, 3 and change to the next chord)

Am C G Em

Gtr I

	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	3			
<b>T</b>	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	3			
<b>A</b>	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>B</b>	0	0	0	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2
							3	3	3	0	0	0

## 6/8 (Compound Time)

There are six beats to the bar, with all beats being eighth notes.

(Think 1, 2, 3 - 1, 2, 3 which is **two** groupings of **three**, or **2x3**. That = 6!)

Am C G Em

Gtr I

T	0 0 0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0 0 0	3 3 3 3 3 3	
A	1 1 1 1 1 1	1 1 1 1 1 1	3 3 3 3 3 3	0 0 0 0 0 0
B	2 2 2 2 2 2	0 0 0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0 0 0	2 2 2 2 2 2

## 9/8 (Compound Time)

There are nine beats to the bar, with all beats being eighth notes.

(Think 1, 2, 3 - 1, 2, 3 - 1, 2, 3 which is **three** groupings of **three**, or **3x3**. That = 9!)

Am C G Em

Gtr I

T	0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0	3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3	
A	1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1	1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1	3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3	0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
B	2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2	0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0	2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2

## 12/8 (Compound Time)

There are twelve beats to the bar, with all beats being eighth notes.

Think 1, 2, 3 - 1, 2, 3, - 1, 2, 3 - 1, 2, 3 which equals **four** groups of **three**, or **4x3**. That =12!)

Am C G Em

Gtr I

T	0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0	3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3	
A	1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1	1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1	3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3	0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
B	2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2	0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0	2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2

## 5/4 (Asymmetric Time)

There are five beats to the bar, with all beats being quarter notes. There are accents as followed:

- Measure 1 - accents on 1 and 4
- Measure 2 - accents on 1 and 4
- Measure 3 - accents on 1 and 3
- Measure 4 - accents on 1 and 3

(Think 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. This one is tricky because it makes you feel out of time.

Just count 1-5 to make it easier. Switch even if you don't feel like you want to!)

Chords: Am, C, G, Em

Gtr I

	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	3	3	3					
<b>T</b>	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	3	3	3					
<b>A</b>	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>B</b>	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2
	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
											3	3	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0

## 7/8 (Asymmetric Time)

There are seven beats to this bar, with all beats being eighth notes. There are accents as followed:

- Measure 1 - accents on 1 and 4
- Measure 2 - accents on 1 and 4
- Measure 3 - accents on 1 and 5
- Measure 4 - accents on 1, 3, and 6

(Think 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. This one also makes you feel out of time.

Just count 1-7 and switch no matter how you feel about it.)

Chords: Am, C, G, Em

Gtr I

	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	3	3	3	3	3						
<b>T</b>	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	3						
<b>A</b>	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>B</b>	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	2	2	2	2
	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
														3	3	3	3	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	

# 11/8 (Asymmetric Time)

There are eleven beats to this bar, with all the beats being eighth notes. The accents are as followed:

- Measure 1 - accents on 1, 4, 7, and 10
- Measure 2 - accents on 1 and 7

(Think 3, 6, 9, 11. REAALLLLYYY confusing. Just do it!)

I love thinking it this way, because you just shorthand the beats instead of counting too high.

Just don't think of the first two beats, and think only of the 3rd time you play each beat.

This may confuse some of you that are used to conventional methods, but it has always worked for me. All odd numbers, all between three.

	Am	C
Gtr I		
T	0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0	0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
1	1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1	1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1
2	2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2	0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0 0
A	2 2 2 2 2 2 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 0 0 0	3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3



**Video Reference:** Much more material is covered in our Strumming School DVD. Please refer to Chapter 2 "Time Signatures" on the DVD for additional information.