

# Strumming

The most common technique used by guitarists in all types of music is the **strum**. You'll strum with your thumb and index fingers, and, if you have a pick, use that too.

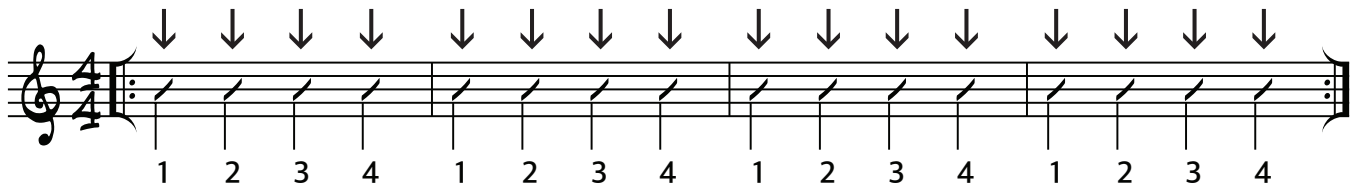
## DOWN STRUM

1. Place your thumb on the 6th (lowest) string.
2. With your thumb nail or flesh of the finger dig into the strings toward the ground, and produce sound from each open string.
3. This strum motion toward the ground is called a **down strum**. Try this several times.

At first you might get caught up in a string, or the sound may be uneven. Be easy on yourself, and just experience the downstrum with 6 open strings.

Now use this chart and strum the pattern of 4 down strums in each measure. The downward arrow is used to indicate a down strum. This will be called a **quarter note strum**.

### EXERCISE 1 QUARTER NOTE STRUM



Did you notice the motion of your hand after each down strum? The hand moved up to prepare for the next down strum. This is similar to motion we use to make our next strum, the up strum.

## UP STRUM

1. Plant your index finger on the 1st (highest) string.
2. Dig the index through the strings away from the ground. Try to make a clear full sound with each string.
3. The strum that moves away from the ground is an **up strum**.

Try this several times with the various right hand (RH) strum techniques; index, thumb, index/thumb combination, and pick.

And now look at the chart and you'll strum a pattern of 4 up strums in each measure. The upward arrow is the symbol for an up strum. This is also a **quarter note strum**.

### EXERCISE 2 QUARTER NOTE STRUM

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

## COMBINING THE DOWN AND UP STRUM

The next step is to combine down and up strums into an **eighth note strum**. The eighth note strum moves down on the downbeat 1, 2, 3, 4, and up on the upbeat, represented by the plus sign (the “and” of the beat).

Downbeats are the numbered beats in a measure. For example a measure that contains 4 beats has 4 downbeats counted 1 2 3 4. Music that contains 3 beats per measure contains 3 beats counted 1 2 3.

Upbeats occur in between downbeats and are indicated with a + sign. Music with 4 beats per measure also contain 4 upbeats, 3 beats per measure have 3 upbeats per measure.

### EXERCISE 3 EIGHTH NOTE STRUM

1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +

To develop more interesting strums the next examples take away strums. The trick is to continue to move down and up in continuous eighth note motion. Remember to move down on the down beats and up on up beats, even when you don't strike the strings.

Exercises 4 and 5 combine down and up strums using quarter and eighths notes in new patterns.

### EXERCISE 4

1 2 + 3 4 + 1 2 + 3 4 1 2 + 3 4 + 1 2 + 3 4

### EXERCISE 5

1 2 + 3 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 4 + 1 2 + 3 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 4 +