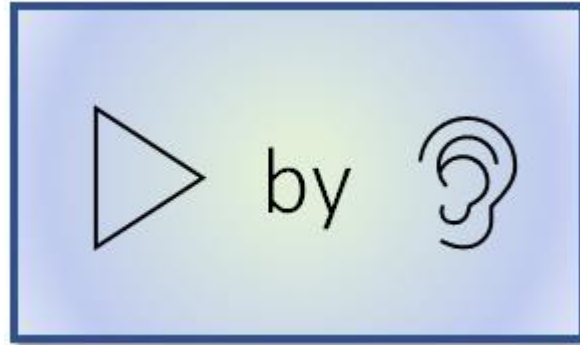


Rhythm & Strum Patterns



Class I – What's On The Menu ?

Introduction



- Goal of this series of classes is to help you to add variety to your pick and strum patterns and have more fun with different rhythms.
- We will emphasize right-hand techniques
- Practice the exercises with just your right hand; no chords or song needed.
- Homework: Use the new strum patterns to play along with three of your favorite songs that have different rhythms.
- Important!: There are no “right” or “wrong” strum patterns! If you’re on the beat, and it sounds good to you, you’re doing fine.

Introduction



**“To play a wrong note is insignificant;
to play without passion is inexcusable.”**

— Ludwig van Beethoven

Introduction: This Week



1. We'll start with some basic Foundation Patterns and Counting Exercises
2. Basic right hand techniques
3. Put the em**PH**asis on the right syl**L**ABLE
4. ... and combine all of the above



1. Foundation Patterns & Counting

- Strumming is all about rhythm
- Counting out loud will help you to hear rhythms the same way we sing out loud to hear chords and intervals.
- We'll count with patterns that mimic the rhythms:
 - "One – two – three – four "
 - "One-and Two-and Three-and Four-and"
 - "One-eee-and-a Two-eee-and-a Three-eee-and-a Four-eee-and-a "
 - It also helps to clap your hands on the downbeat ("one ,two, three, four")



1. Foundation Patterns & Counting

- Simple Quarter Notes:
 - Down – down – down - down.
 - “One, two, three, four”
- Simple Eighth Notes:
 - Down/Up – Down/Up – Down/Up – Down/Up...
 - “One-and, two-and, three-and, four-and.”
 - This will be the foundation for almost all the strum patterns we use
- Now, change it up a little bit:
 - Down – Down/Up – Down – Down/Up
 - “One, two-and, three, four-and”.
 - Use an “air strum” on the missing “ands” – keep your wrist moving consistently
- Let’s flip that last pattern:
 - Down/Up – Down – Down/Up – Down.
 - “One-and, two, three-and, four”.
 - (what song does that remind you of?)



2. Basic Right-Hand Techniques

- You don't have to strum all four/six strings at the same time, every time.
- These variations will give you some building blocks for your strum patterns:
 - “Pluck-strum”: pluck the single bass (root) note, then go back and strum all the strings. Use a down – down motion.
 - “Pluck strum-a”: Pluck the single bass(root) note, then pluck another note in that chord on the “Two-and”. Use a down – down/up motion.
 - Mix it up: Play pluck-strum for the first three measures of a section, then a pluck-plucka on the fourth – adds some shape to the song and tells listeners that a change is coming up.



2. Basic Right-Hand Techniques

- Experiment with different motions to change the sound of each individual strum
- Speed: change the speed at which you strum through the strings
- Pick: try out felt picks, soft picks, fingernails, thumbs and listen to the different sounds.
- Try playing back by the bridge, then up closer to the neck
- Volume: practice playing softer or louder with the strength of your strumming.



3. emPHAsis ! - Exercise 1

- No chords or singing – just your right hand strumming
- Play a simple “One-and-Two-and-Three-and-Four-and” pattern
- Start with equal emphasis on all four down/up strums
- Now emphasize the **One** with a little bit louder/ faster attach
- Play four measures of that, then switch to emphasizing the “**Two**”
- Keep going all the way up to **Four** and repeat.



3. emPHAsis ! - Exercise 2

- No chords or singing – just your right hand strumming
- Play a slow “One-and-Two-and-Three-and-Four-and” pattern
- Start with equal emphasis on all four down/up strums
- Now, emphasize the “and” on each down/up strum.
- What does that remind you of?



4. Put It All Together

- “Boom-Chock”
 - **ONE**, two, **THREE**, four.
 - Down, down, down, down.
 - Pluck the bass/root note on the “Boom”, and strum the rest of the chord on the “Chock”
 - Try it on “Wagon wheel”
- “Boom-Chicka”
 - **ONE**, two-and, **THREE**, four-and.
 - Down, down/up, down, down/up.
 - Pluck the bass/root note on the “Boom”, then strum the rest of the chord on the “Chick” and again on the “-a” upstroke.
- Mix and match these two patterns up to add variety.



4. Put It All Together

- Reggae rhythm:
 - one, **TWO**, three, **FOUR**
 - Pluck Strum - Down, down
 - ... and/or Pluck Strum-a – Down, down/up
 - Try it with “Nuh woman, no cry”
 - Chords: C – G – Am – F C – G – C – C



4. Put It All Together

- Some rhythms have common “names”
- In NOLA you’ll hear about “Chanka-chank” rhythm
 - **ONE**, two-and, **THREE**, four-and.
 - **Down**, down/up, **down**, down/up.
 - When the Saints go marching in
 - Notice that the missing “and” after the One is an upward “air strum” keep your wrist bouncing!



4. Put It All Together

- Sometimes, the notes you DON'T play are as important as the ones you do.
- Sample Calypso rhythm:
 - Down, down/up, (rest)/Up, Down/Up
 - “One, two-and, ...-and, four-and”
 - Give it a bit of “swing”
 - Try it with “Don’t worry, be happy”



4. Put It All Together

- Slow Blues-y Rhythm
 - “One, two-and, three, four-and”
 - Loosen up on the precision of your beats – “Swing it!”
 - Try it with a basic 12-bar blues
 - Chords: G7 , C7 and D7



4. Put It All Together

- Irish Jig Rhythm
 - “**ONE**, two, three, **Four**, five, six.”
 - **DOWN**, up, down, **Down**, up, down”
 - Try it with the Christmas Jig
 - Chords: D G | D D | A A | D D
 - D G | D D | A A | D D

Homework!



- Pick two or three favorite songs of yours to play
- Find ones with different tempo's or rhythms
- Experiment with emPHAsis and strumming patterns