

Bar 5: Sixteenth notes / 4 notes for every beat

In similar fashion, the rests also have the same values respectively, only here, you “rest” or don’t play.



Bar 1: Whole rest / Last 4 beats each

Bar 2: Half rests / Last 2 beats each

Bar 3: Quarter rests / Last 1 beat each

Bar 4: Eighth rests / 2 notes for every beat

Bar 5: Sixteenth rests / 4 notes for every beat

Next, we will go over ties and dotted notes.

Dots - Adds half of the notes value to it / Ex: Dotted Quarter Note = Quarter note + Eighth note

Ties - Ties two note values together

Here is an example that covers both ideas:




The first dotted quarter note is worth one + an eighth note. That eighth note that follow will start on the upbeat and it is held until the next of beat 3.

## Time Signatures

Next, it is important to briefly discuss time signatures. If you look at the beginning of the example above, there are two numbers.

The top number will be the number of beats per measure while the bottom number will determine which note gets the beat.

For example, in a  measure, the top number means there are 4 beats and the bottom number means the quarter note gets the beat. If the bottom number was an 8, it would be 4 eighth notes in a beat, and so on.

## Metronome

Lastly, before moving on to actual strumming examples, I believe it is important to discuss using a metronome. In the beginning, it is a good idea to use one as it provides a good steady pulse behind your playing and helps you develop your time feel. If you do not have one on hand, there are tons of websites and apps that offer free metronomes with all kinds of fun features for your use.

Remember, there is no rush here. If you have to start at a very slow tempo, that is perfectly normal and, in fact, I would even recommend it. It is better to establish good habits and time feel early than to have to try correcting it later because you rushed in the beginning stages.

### Example A

Now let's go over some examples. It is usually good practice to get all of your downstrokes on downbeats and upstrokes on upbeats. A good way to achieve this is to always keep your picking hand in an up-and-down motion and strum when the pattern calls for it.



Here, you have 2 quarter notes followed by 4 eighth notes. You might have noticed little symbols above the staff. These are indicators of downstrokes and upstrokes. The first two are downstrokes, and the "V" shape is for upstrokes.

As far as metronome use is concerned, in a 4/4 measure, you would usually set it so that each "click" is one quarter note. I would recommend 110 or 110 BPM to start out.

### Example B

This next example is great over a simple rock beat at walking pace. By walking pace, I mean somewhere between 110-140 BPM. There is a basic repeating fragment here of a quarter note followed by 2 eighth notes.



Always pay close attention to the strum pattern. This is important for time and feel.

### Example C

If you recall the example we used for ties and dots, here it is again. This is a great pattern to play over drum beats that aren't very "driving". In other words, drum beats that do not place heavy emphasis on beats 2 and 4.



This example is also great for going over the concept I described earlier. That is, try to always keep your strumming hand in an up and down motion going at the rate of the smallest subdivision.

In this case, that's eighth notes. In other words, try to keep your strumming hand moving up and down as if you were playing straight eighth notes, but only strum when the pattern asks you to do so. This concept takes a little bit of time to develop, but the end result will be a more natural feel.

### Example D

In this last example, we are going to go over a pattern in a 6/8 time signature. Remember, that is 6 eighth notes per measure.



Once again, play close attention to the strumming pattern. It probably feels more natural for accents to be placed on downstrokes, but in this case, the measure is felt as 2 eighth note triplets. The eighth note downstroke after the first quarter note is actually the weaker beat and the upstroke will be stronger. That is also something you should consider when setting your metronome to work on this. Every 3 eighth notes here should be one "click" from your metronome. That is how this time signature is felt.

### Closing Thoughts

With these four patterns, you should be able to handle a good number of strumming scenarios. The next step would be to learn songs from your favorite artists. This is always a good way to get new material and see how they approach things. Remember, take it slow. It is always better to take your time developing good habits early than it is to correct bad ones later on.

## About the Author

Marc-Andre Seguin is the webmaster, “brains behind” and teacher on [JazzGuitarLessons.net](http://JazzGuitarLessons.net), the #1 online resource for learning how to play jazz guitar. He draws from his experience both as a professional jazz guitarist and professional jazz teacher to help thousands of people from all around the world learn the craft of jazz guitar. [Learn the Basics of Guitar Strumming](#)

One thing I have noticed among beginners is that they usually learn a few simple melodies a couple of chords. While this is a great starting point, I also notice that they often lack the rhythmic aspect of it. There does not seem to be a clearly defined rhythm and strumming pattern. There is no need to worry. Today, we are going to give you a few that you can use right away and also explore some basic rhythmic concepts to give you a better understanding of how these ideas should be approached.

## Rhythmic Concepts

Before getting started, we will have to go over some basic rhythm reading. We will keep this simple, but it is necessary in order for me to be able to communicate these ideas to you effectively.

Here are the basic note values we will be using:



Bar 1: Whole note / Last 4 beats each

Bar 2: Half notes / Last 2 beats each

Bar 3: Quarter notes / Last 1 beat each

Bar 4: Eighth notes / 2 notes for every beat