

# Strum patterns

Brukulele workshop 13.09.14. Mark Baxter

## Aims

- 1) Play some strum patterns using different rhythms:
    - Straight 8 patterns
    - 16<sup>th</sup> note patterns
    - Shuffle patterns
    - 6/8 patterns
  - 2) Play some songs, or sections of songs, using these strum patterns
  - 3) Use dynamics to make your strumming more groovy and rhythmical
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Tune up

## Different sounds we can make when strumming



Full down strum



Light down strum (eg two strings only)



Full up strum



Light up strum (eg two strings only)



Mute (kill the sound with palm of hand)



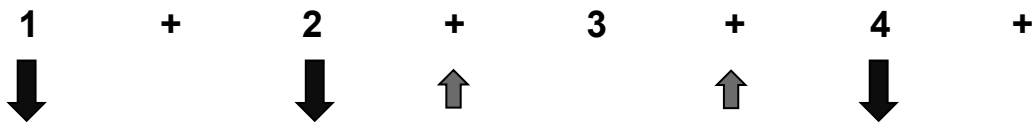
Percussive sound (a muted strum)

## “Straight 8” patterns

Divides the bar into 8 equal parts.

Count a straight 8 pattern like this “1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +”

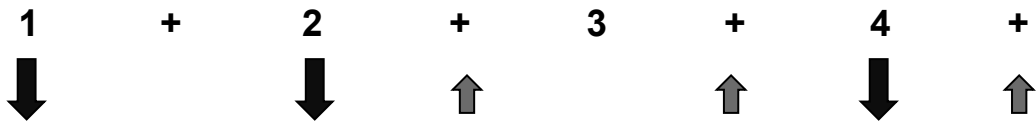
### “Most Famous”



Example – C’mon everybody (riff), Eddie Cochren

A / D / E7 D / A

### “Most Famous” variation



### “Most Famous” with backbeat percussion



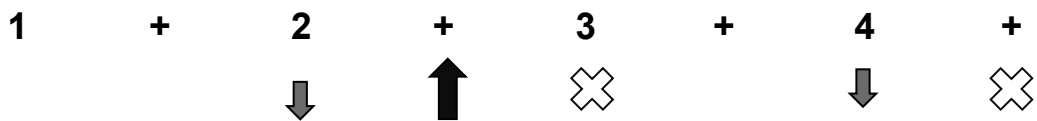
### “Walk the line”



Example – Walk the line, Johnny Cash

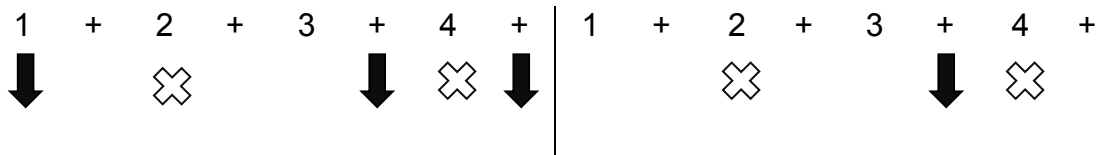
G / G / C / C  
G / G / C / C7  
F / F / C / C  
G / G / C / C

### Reggae



Example – Stir it up, Bob Marley: A / A / D / E7

### “Honky Tonk”



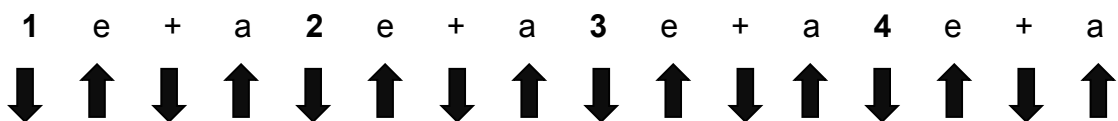
## 16<sup>th</sup> note patterns

Divides the bar into 16 equal parts.

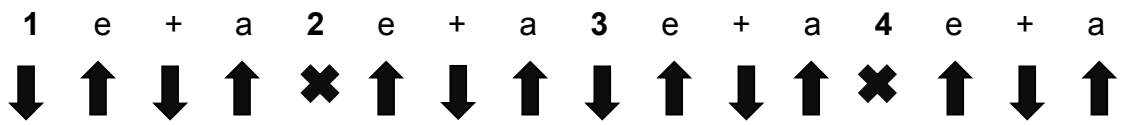
Count a 16<sup>th</sup> note pattern like this “1 e + a 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e + a”

“e” and “a” are arbitrary syllables that are useful for counting (they don’t mean anything).

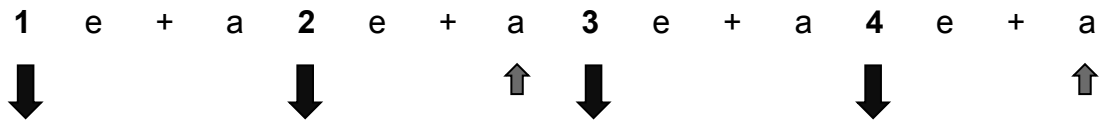
### Basic



### Basic, with added backbeat percussion



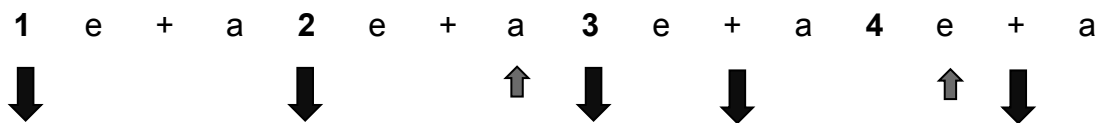
### “Knockin”



Example – Knockin’ on heaven’s door, Bob Dylan, Guns and Roses

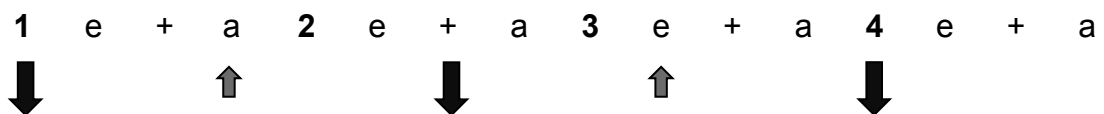
G D / Am / G D / C

### “Keith’s favorite”



Example – You can’t always get what you want (verse), Rolling Stones: C / F

### “Like Bo Diddley” or Funk



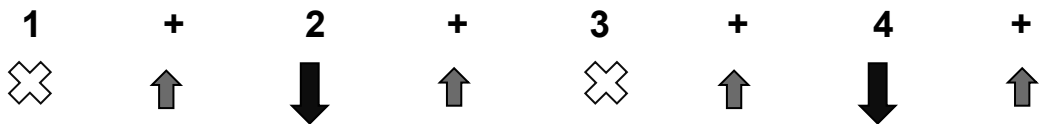
Staccato effect = “jump” fingers of left hand

## Shuffle Patterns

Sub-divides the bar into 12 equal parts: "1 e + 2 e + 3 e + 4 e +"

The "e" notes are often not played when strumming a shuffle, so they are not included in the diagrams below. They should still be counted though.

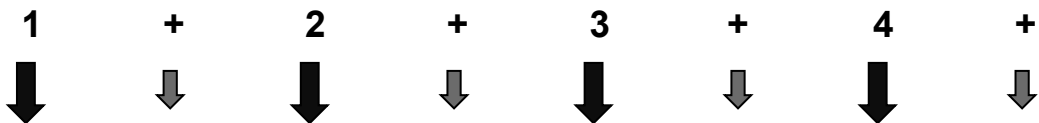
### "The lion sleeps tonight"



Example – Passenger, Iggy Pop

Am F / C G  
Am F / C E7

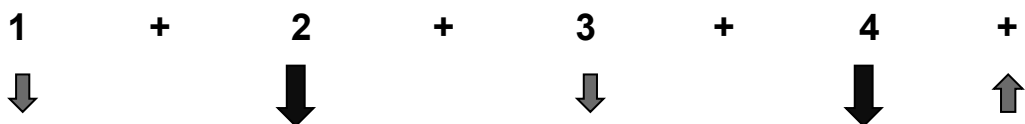
### Blues shuffle



Example – Basic blues in E

E5 / A7 / E5 / E5  
A7 / A7 / E5 / E5  
B7 / A7 / E5 / E5

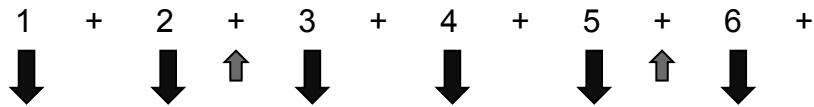
### Jazz swing



Staccato – "jump" the left-hand fingers, especially on beats 2 and 4.  
*By the way, a swing rhythm is basically a fast shuffle rhythm.*

Example: E9 chord

## 6/8 time pattern



Example – Norwegian Wood, The Beatles

E5 / E5 / E5 Dsus2 A / E5

## Lastly, four things that are important for creating a good rhythm

1. **Texture.** Make your strum pattern “3-D”. Include a variety of sounds, eg, full and light strums, muting, staccato sounds, percussive sounds.
2. **Backbeat.** A lot of modern music has a backbeat pulse (eg rock, pop, jazz, blues, rock n roll, punk, hip-hop, funk, soul, disco, industrial metal, gangsta rap, dubstep,..... you name it!). The backbeat is an emphasis on beats 2 and 4. So, 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +. Accent the backbeat by playing beats 2 and 4 louder than other beats, or by using percussive sounds on beats 2 and 4. This will give the rhythm a lot of momentum.
3. **Metronome.** When you are practicing a new song, you have a lot to concentrate on. Eg, remembering a new chord progression, new lyrics, new vocal melody and probably a new strumming pattern too. You don't have enough concentration left to notice if you are keeping good time or not. So, before playing your new song to others, train with a metronome to check you are keeping good time. Also, you can record yourself and listen back to check if your timing is good.
4. **Dance.** You need to dance a little to create a good rhythm. If you are just moving your strumming arm while the rest of your body is totally still, you probably won't keep a groovy rhythm. You don't need to go crazy and jump all over the stage, but just feel the rhythm throughout you whole body. (This is not just some hippy nonsense!). Tap your foot, move your shoulders, nod your head, etc. Creating a groove is a whole-body thing.