

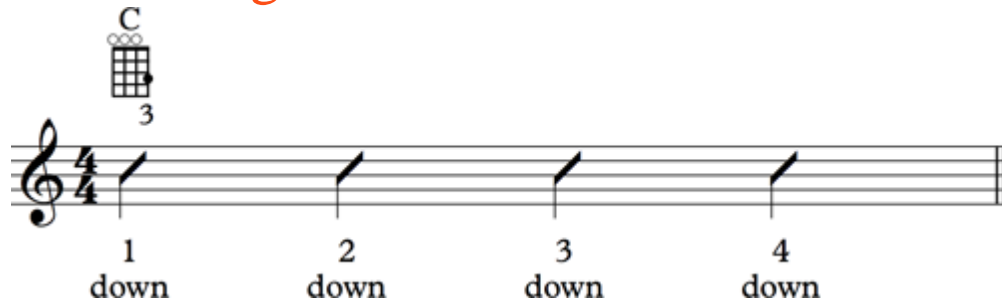
Foundations of Strumming

The first thing to realize about strumming is that it's not about how fancy or complicated you make a strumming pattern. Since strumming is a form of rhythm, in order to be effective, it must be consistent and steady. A steady, consistent strumming rhythm is always more pleasing to listen to than a really complicated strumming pattern played out of time.

The following strumming patterns are played in 4/4 time signature. This means each pattern is played to a steady, consistent count of four: 1, 2, 3, 4, repeat. You can use these patterns for any song counted in four.

As you practice each of these strumming patterns, count out loud, and even use a metronome to keep your strumming as rocksteady as possible.

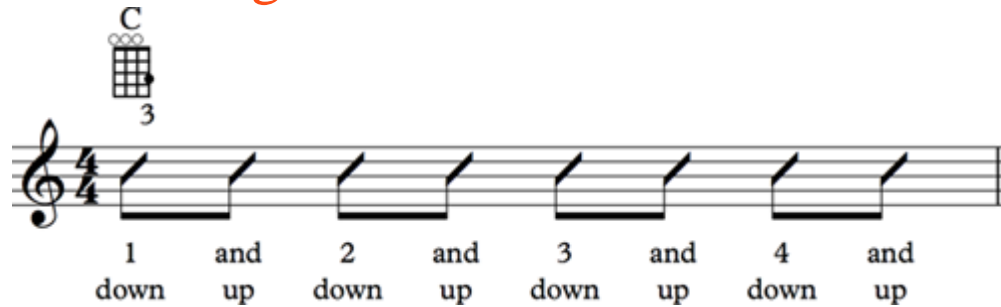
Strumming Pattern #1



Before learning any other strumming pattern, learn this one. This pattern is very simple, as it is only down strums, but it is highly effective. For example, in the [Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah"](#), I use all down strums for the last half of the song.

As you practice this, set your metronome, count out loud, and focus on lining up your down strums with each beat. Try to make your strums as even in tone and in volume.

Strumming Pattern #2

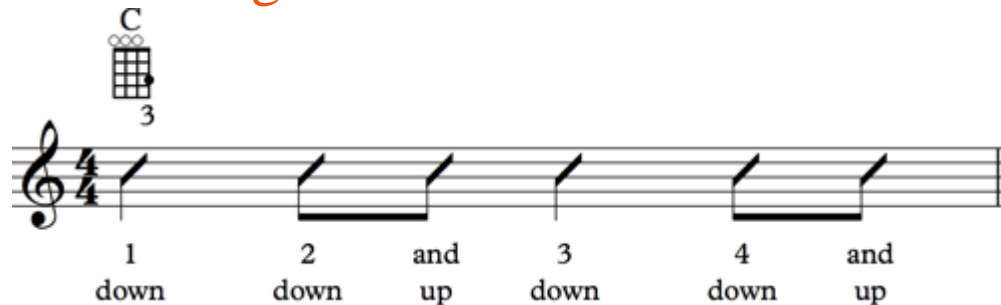


A musical staff in 4/4 time with a treble clef. Above the staff is a chord diagram for C major, showing an open C string, and the number 3 below it. The staff contains four measures. Each measure has a downstroke on the first half and an upstroke on the second half. Below the staff, the following text is written: "1 down", "and up", "2 down", "and up", "3 down", "and up", "4 down", "and up".

When you have the previous pattern mastered, add in up strums between each down strum to make the pattern more interesting. You would count these up strums in between the main beats by counting the word “and” like: 1 and, 2 and, 3 and, 4 and, repeat.

In addition, practice changing between chords on the first beat of the strumming pattern. For example, you might switch between a [C](#), [Am](#), and [E](#) [chord](#). Take your practice further by coming up with your own chord progressions too.

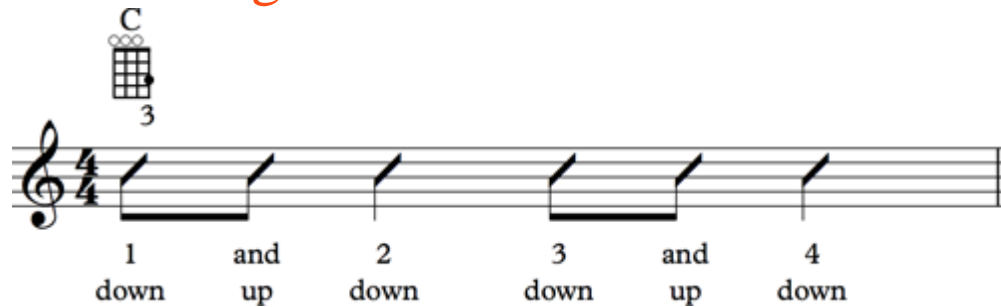
Strumming Pattern #3



A musical staff in 4/4 time with a treble clef. Above the staff is a chord diagram for C major, showing an open C string, and the number 3 below it. The staff contains four measures. The first measure has a downstroke on the first half. The second measure has a downstroke on the first half and an upstroke on the second half. The third measure has a downstroke on the first half. The fourth measure has a downstroke on the first half and an upstroke on the second half. Below the staff, the following text is written: "1 down", "2 down", "and up", "3 down", "4 down", "and up".

This strumming pattern combines the first two patterns. For this pattern, insert an up strum on the “and” of beats 2 and 4.

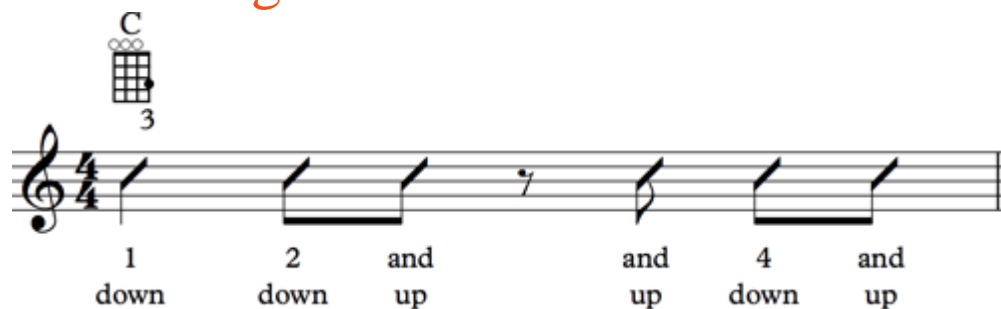
Strumming Pattern #4



The diagram shows a C chord fingering (C major) above a 4/4 time signature. The strumming pattern is written on a single staff with four beats. The first beat has a downstroke, followed by an upstroke on the 'and'. The second beat has a downstroke. The third beat has a downstroke, followed by an upstroke on the 'and'. The fourth beat has a downstroke. The counts '1 down', 'and up', '2 down', '3 down', 'and up', and '4 down' are written below the staff.

You can get creative by rearranging the order of your down strums and up strums within the count of four. This pattern is like pattern #3, but in this pattern, you insert an up strum on the “and” of beats 1 and 3.

Strumming Pattern #5



The diagram shows a C chord fingering (C major) above a 4/4 time signature. The strumming pattern is written on a single staff with four beats. The first beat has a downstroke. The second beat has a downstroke, followed by an upstroke on the 'and'. The third beat has an upstroke on the 'and'. The fourth beat has a downstroke, followed by an upstroke on the 'and'. The counts '1 down', '2 down', 'and up', 'and up', '4 down', and 'and up' are written below the staff.

This strumming pattern is sometimes referred to as the calypso strum. This pattern is the most complicated out of all of the patterns. This is because the down strum on beat 3 is removed and you only play an up strum on the “and” of the third beat. You’ll want to be sure to watch the video at the link below to get the feel for this one. Once you get it down, you’ll find that it’s an easy pattern to apply to a lot of different songs.