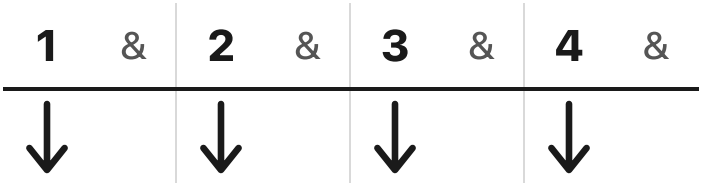
Starter patterns

Your strumming hand never stops: down on every number, up on every &. A blank means the hand still moves but misses the strings.

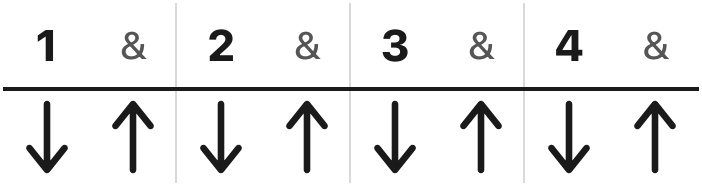
1. QUARTER NOTES



Four downs, one on each beat. Get the chord changes smooth with this first.

Try it on G – C – D – G.

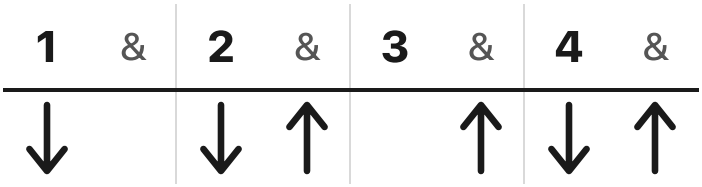
2. EIGHTH NOTES



Down on the numbers, up on the &s. Keep the upstrokes light.

Try it on C – Am – F – G.

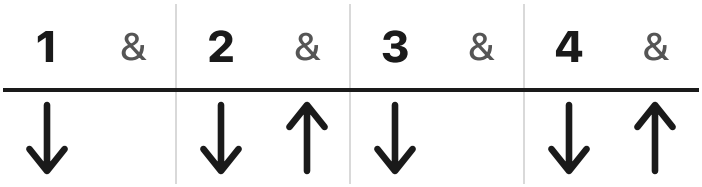
3. THE CAMPFIRE STRUM



Down, down-up, up-down-up. The hand swings down on 3 but misses.

Try it on G – Em – C – D.

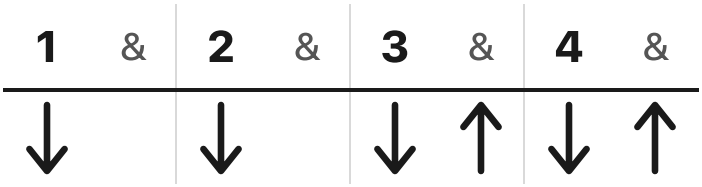
4. ROCK STRUM



Down, down-up, down, down-up: the same half bar twice.

Try it on A – D – E – A.

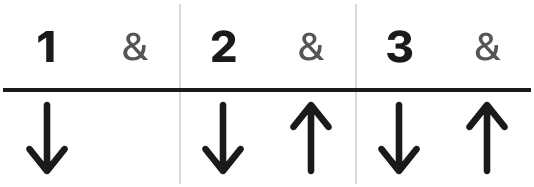
5. POP BALLAD



Two plain downs, then down-up, down-up to push into the next bar.

Try it on C – G – Am – F.

6. WALTZ · 3/4 TIME



Three beats in a bar: down, down-up, down-up.

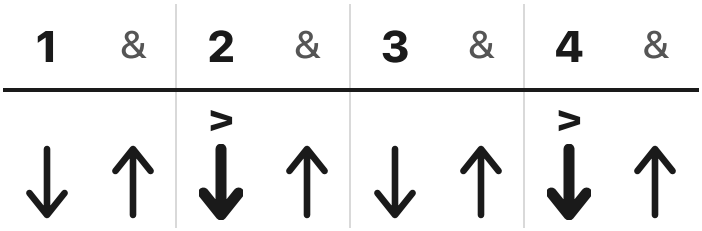
Try it on C – C – G – G.

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More patterns

An arrow with > above it is an accent: strum that one harder.

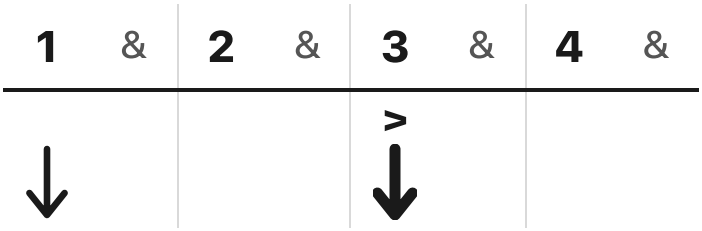
7. BACKBEAT ACCENTS



Eighth notes with the accent on 2 and 4, where the snare drum hits.

Try it on E – A – B – A.

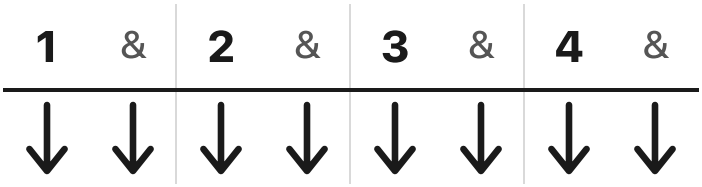
8. HALF-TIME FEEL



Just two strums, the second one harder. Good for slow songs.

Try it on D – A – Bm – G.

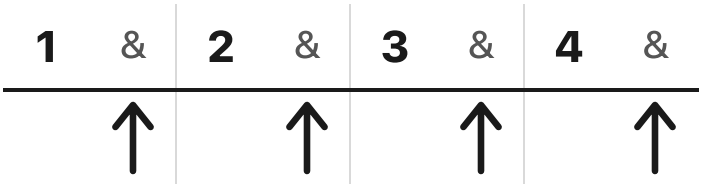
9. PALM-MUTED CHUG



All downstrokes on the eighths, with the side of your picking hand resting on the strings by the bridge.

Try it on E – A – B – E.

10. REGGAE UPSTROKES



Only the &s, with short, choppy upstrokes. Lift your fretting fingers right after each one to stop the sound.

Try it on C – F – G – F.

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