

# Getting the Most from Your Strumming

Strumming is something that only a guitarist can do. No keyboard or drum machine can copy the sound of a great guitarist strumming open strings. Good strumming technique can add rhythm, accents and excitement to your playing. And, if you are working with a singer, learning how to strum comfortably is a must.

This lesson covers some important keys to take your strumming to the next level.

## Strumming Basics

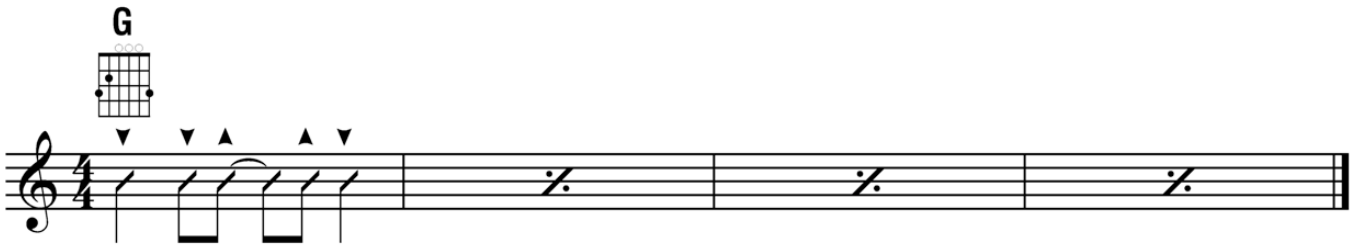
Here are a few basics to keep in mind regarding strumming.

- 1) Use a lighter gauge nylon pick - either a medium or a light.** Nylon picks will not tear like plastic picks will under the stress of constant strumming. A .73 or less size works best. But be aware that if your pick is too light then it will be too flexible for good strumming.
- 2) Grip the pick with a firm grip but a light touch.** Hold the pick strong enough to not lose hold but also the pick should have a little bit of play between the fingers so that it contacts the strings with some flexibility.
- 3) Keep your wrist loose.** The proper motion for strumming is as if you were flicking water off of your hand.
- 4) Strive for smooth and even strumming - not choppy.** Smooth strumming comes from one continuous down and up movement with your arm and wrist with no hesitations.

For example, when strumming eighth notes the downbeats are down strokes and the upbeats are up strokes. (Notice the one measure repeat symbols.)



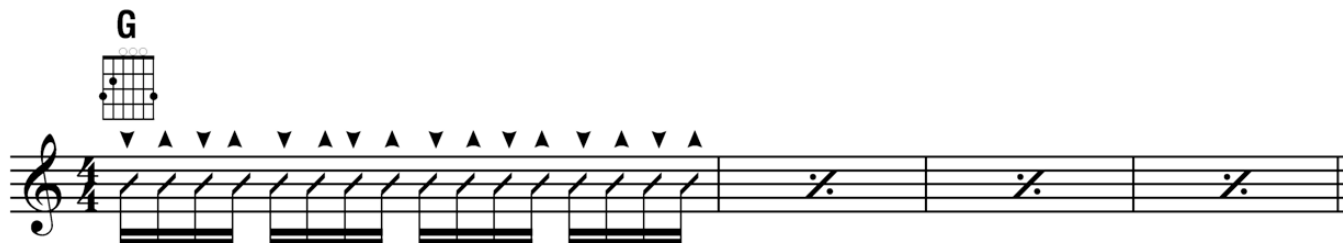
Here is a typical eighth note based strumming rhythm. Notice how the pattern of down strokes on the downbeats and up strokes on the upbeats remains consistent.



## Advanced Strumming

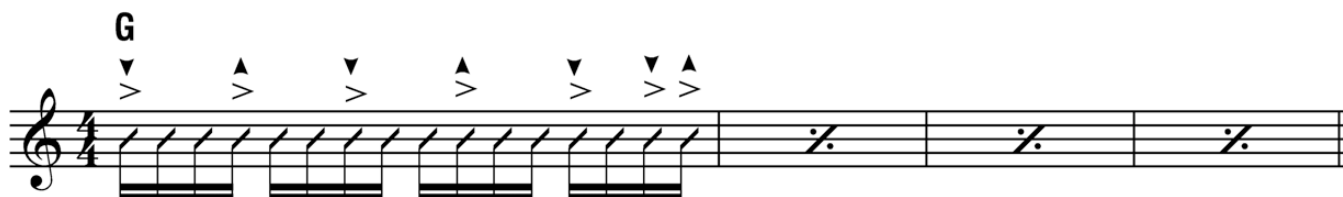
Advanced strumming rhythms are based upon an underlying sixteenth note pulse. The strumming hand is still doing a consistent down-up pattern - now twice as fast.

**G**



Here is the example played in the video using accents. Notice that the strumming pattern of down-up remains consistent.

**G**



When the non-accented notes are dropped the down-up motion remains.

**G**



Strumming is a skill that comes naturally for some players but for others takes a bit of practice. Nevertheless, it is a skill every guitar player should know.

### Playing Tip

**To strum softer use the side of your pick - brushing the pick across the strings at angle.**

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## Steve Krenz

As an educator, Steve is best known for the top-selling guitar instruction course, **Gibson's Learn & Master Guitar** that received the 2011 Acoustic Guitar Magazine Player's Choice Award for Best Instructional Material. As a professional guitarist in Nashville, Steve's broad playing experience includes playing guitar with a symphony orchestra, to jazz big bands, to performing with numerous Grammy-winning artists like Donna Summer, Michael W. Smith, Bryan White, The Fifth Dimension, Israel Houghton, and Tommy Sims.

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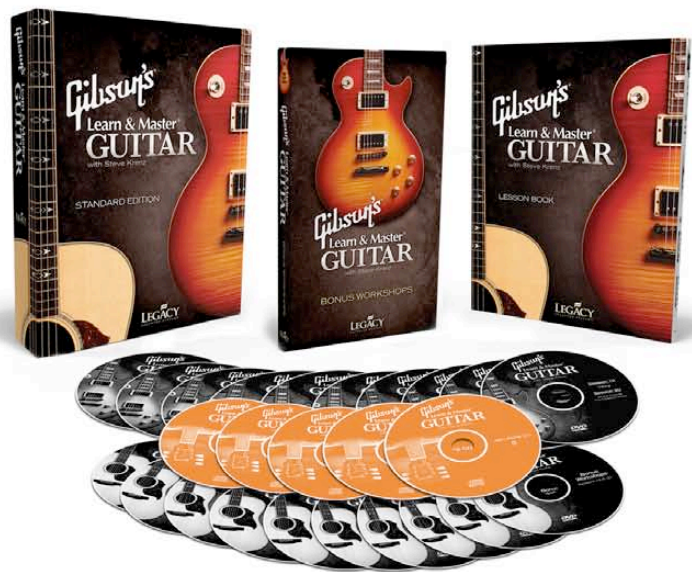
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