

How to Strum a Guitar

Make sure your guitar is in tune, and you have a guitar pick, using your fretting hand, form a G major chord on the neck.

While holding your pick properly, practice playing the following example, which is a very basic strumming pattern:

▣ = Strum down & **▽** = Strum Up

$\frac{4}{4}$ Strum 1: **▣ ▽ ▣ ▽ ▣ ▽ ▣ ▽**
Count: 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

Count out loud: 1 and 2 and 3 and 4 and 1 and 2 and (etc.) notice that on the "and" (often referred to as the "offbeat") you are always using an upwards strum.

Listen to strum 01.mp3 and play along (have the mp3 loop repeatedly). If you are having problems keeping a steady rhythm, keep playing along with the mp3.

Here are a few things to keep in mind as you learn to strum your guitar:

- If you are playing an acoustic guitar, make sure to strum directly over the **sound hole**
- On electric guitar, strum over the body (different locations will give you different sounds), not over the neck
- Make sure all strings are ringing **clearly**
- Make sure the volume of your downstrums and upstrums are **equal**
- Be careful not to strum too hard, as this often causes strings to **rattle**, and produces an undesirable sound
- Be careful not to strum too softly, as this will produce a "**wimpy**" sound. Your pick should be striking the strings with a relatively firm, even stroke
- Think of your elbow as being the top of a pendulum; your arm should swing up and down from it in a steady motion, never pausing at any time.
- Having said that, the bulk of the picking motion should come from a rotation of the wrist, rather than from the forearm. Keep your wrist loose when playing. (Like shaking water off your hand!)

(The mp3 strums are using the G chord unless otherwise noted)

When you have mastered strum 02, practice strumming along with the faster version noted as strum 02 Faster (most of the strums have a faster version)

$\frac{4}{4}$ Strum 02: **▣ ▽ ▣ ▽ ▽ ▣ ▽**
Count: 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

Ms. Black's Strum:

4/4 Strum 03: **▣ ▣ ▽ ▽ ▣ ▽**
Count: 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

4/4 Strum 04: **▣ ▣ ▽ ▽ ▣**
Count: 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

Freebird Strum:

4/4 Strum 05: **▣ ▣ ▽ ▣ ▽**
Count: 1 & 2 & 3 &

Strum 5A: Freebird Strum with all the chords changes

4/4 Strum 06: **▣ ▣ ▣ ▽ ▣ ▣**
Count: 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

4/4 Strum 07: **▣ ▣ ▣ ▽ ▣ ▣ ▣ ▣**
Count: 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &

4/4 Strum 08: **▣ ▽ ▣ ▽ ▽ ▣**
Count: 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &