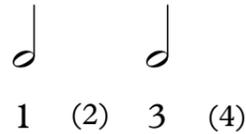


Reading Rhythms

Reading rhythms is a valuable skill, and is much easier than you might think! It comes down to simple division; a whole note lasts for 4 beats, so:

1/2 notes last for 2 beats each, and look like this...



Practising strumming with a metronome. Set the metronome to 80bpm and choose a chord to practise on. Hold the chord and first play on beats 1,2,3 and 4 (on each of the clicks) with downstrokes and then repeat.

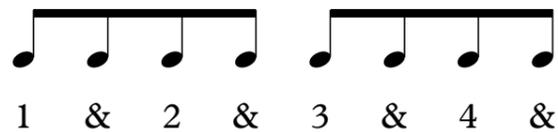
Look at your right hand as you do this exercise, and notice that your hand passes the strings upwards in between downstrokes, if you make contact with the strings on the way back up,

...it follows that 1/4 notes last for 1 beat each, and look like this...



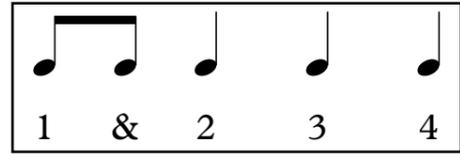
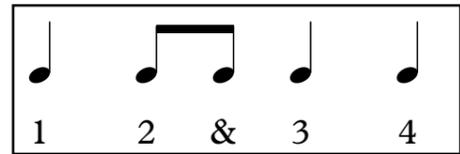
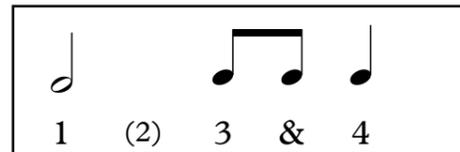
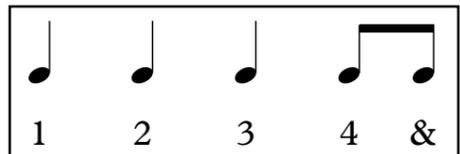
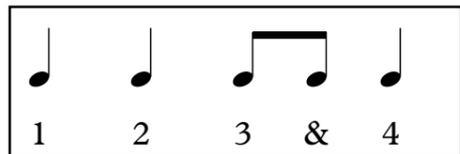
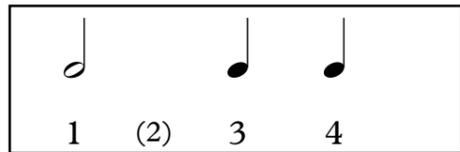
Make sure you're counting them, either in your head or out loud so that you always know which beat you're on.

you'll get 1 & 2 & 3 & 4 &, try looping this, as we've split each quarter note in half, these are now eighth notes, which look like this:



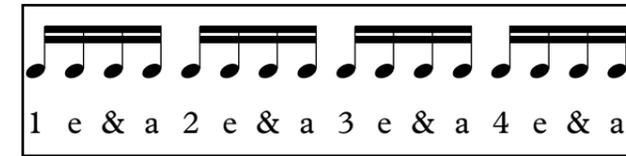
The trick to time-keeping and consistency in your rhythm playing is to keep your right hand moving in this down-up-down-up motion, what ever the rhythm you're playing. Imagine a pendulum swinging, and keeping time.

Once your hand is moving in a consistent motion, you can pick and choose which strums to make contact with the strings on and which ones to miss, creating more interesting rhythms, try these examples:

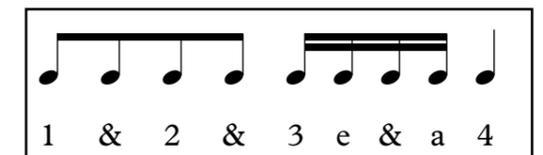
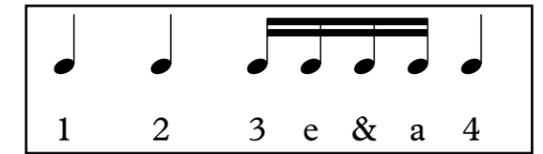
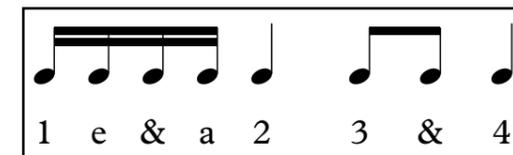


Subdividing even further, splitting the eighth notes in half will give us sixteenth notes, at which point our downstrokes will fall on the

numbers and the &'s, with the upstrokes falling on the 'e's' and 'a's'. A bar of 16th notes looks like this:



Mixing all of these note values together will give us more complex and interesting rhythms, try these examples.



Try strumming these rhythms with a chord progression, the chords we've covered so far sound great in any order. Also try mixing and matching the rhythms, the examples above are all single bars, but put two of them together and you'll get a more interesting 2 bar loop.

Practise them to a metronome, and also make up your own rhythms and notate them, writing them down will benefit your ability to read them. You can refer back to this page to work out rhythms later in the book.

Accents & Dynamics

A simple, but effective way to give your rhythm playing more depth is to be mindful of your dynamics; accenting certain beats will bring a rhythm to life. Accents are notated with a '>' underneath the relevant beat.

More often than not, in 4/4 timing, you'll be accenting beats 2 & 4. Think of a standard rock drum beat and where the snare would be placed. Try the following rhythms with the accents:

