

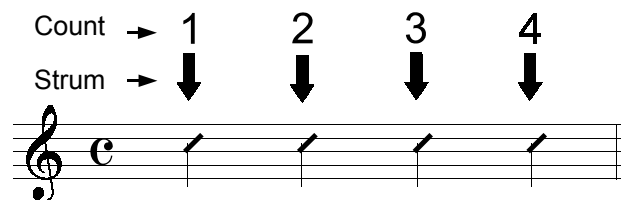
Rhythm is one of the elements that defines music. If this element is absent, you are producing noise not music. To be a good musician you must have a good, working understanding of rhythm. If you don't, you will probably not get to play in the band. Rhythm is **very** important. It is the repetitive hook upon which everything else hangs.

Playing rhythm must sound effortless. As long as you have to think about what your hands are doing, keep practicing, you don't have it yet. With that in mind, play the exercises in this section until you can do them effortlessly.

It is not a bad idea to use a metronome to help you keep time. Metronomes do a good job but are not a lot of fun to use because they don't sound very good. For a little more money you should check out some of the drum synthesizers. They will sound more like real drums and some of them have different kinds of beats pre-programmed. It's a lot more fun playing to something that sounds like a real drummer. Whether you use a metronome or a synthesizer real drummers will thank you for the time you spend acquiring good timing.

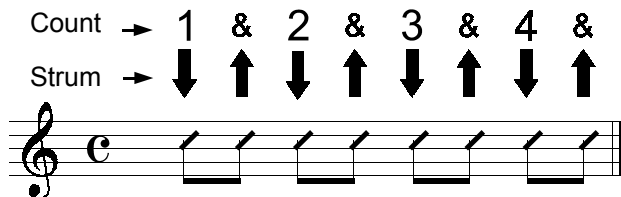
Music, as you know, is divided into units of time called beats. Most popular music is measured in groups of four beats. Strumming the guitar is like patting time to the beat — take a down stroke on the beat.

Figure 1



Here I will state the obvious, between each of the down strokes there is an up stroke. The up strokes are called "and". A down stroke and an up stroke are the two halves of one beat.

Figure 2



Strumming down, up, down, up etc. is the basic right hand (the hands will be switched if you play a left handed guitar) motion for **all** rhythm. By leaving out certain down or up strokes, you will be able to achieve different rhythmic styles. The ones you leave out are as important as the ones you play. Silence is a part of rhythm. When you leave out a down stroke or an up stroke, **your right hand still needs to make the move**. You don't want your right hand to do a lot of starting and stopping.

## Use This Technique To Play the Exercises On the Back

Mute the strings by laying the fingers of your left hand lightly across all six strings. Now, with the strings muted, with your right hand, strum down, up, down, up etc. (Figure 2) so that you are sounding like a clock ticking. This muted technique will allow you to work on your strumming without having to stop to change chords. Add chords as soon as you are comfortable strumming the rhythm