

LEARNING TO PLAY THE GUITAR



Intermediate Rhythm Guitar
Anthony Pell BA (Mus)



Including
18 SONGS • 116 AUDIO SAMPLES • 23 VIDEOS

Learning To Play The Guitar – Intermediate Rhythm Guitar

By Anthony Pell

<http://www.learningtoplaytheguitar.net>

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INTRODUCTION

This book is for guitarists who already know the basic skills of guitar playing including:

- How to use a guitar pick for strumming chords, arpeggios and playing melodies
- The open string chords
- Some basic strumming patterns
- A few scales including the essential pentatonic scale

The guitar lessons here are for intermediate level players who know these basics and now want to develop their rhythm guitar playing further.

If you are unfamiliar with any of these topics it is highly recommend to read the 1st book in this series *Learning To Play The Guitar - An Absolute Beginners Guide*. This book will help you learn the basics of guitar playing before tackling the more advanced topics here.

Rhythm guitar is the backbone of guitar playing which includes playing chords and arpeggios as an accompaniment for singers and other instruments in a band. The guitar is a great accompanying instrument in a range of musical styles including:

- Rock
- Metal
- Country
- Blues
- Reggae
- Funk etc.

How to play these different styles on the guitar will be covered in this book. Being able to play in a range of music styles allows you to become a flexible and versatile guitarist which can always lead to getting more gigs!

Mp3 Audio Samples & Video Lessons

*To help you learn the book features many photos, diagrams, exercises and songs. The exercises and songs also include links to mp3 audio samples so you can hear what they sound like as you progress through the book. There are also numerous video lessons that complement the lessons in the book. Look out for the **Mp3 Track** and **Video** icons and links to these audio and video files.*



Audio Sample
Icon



Video Lesson
Icon

A password is required to access the online audio and video files. The password is included in the purchased copy.

If you are reading this on an eReader such as a Kindle you may have to use a PC or Mac to download the audio files and view the video lessons.

So let's start learning to play rhythm guitar!

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LESSON 1 – RHYTHM

Rhythm Notation – The Beat – Bars – Rhythms – Notes and Rests – Dotted Notes – Ties – Time Signatures

Rhythm Notation

In music rhythm is the placement of sounds in time whether it be a drum beat or the strum of a guitar chord. In this book while there will be audio examples to help you to hear how the music is played it is also recommended to have a basic knowledge of how rhythms are written in music notation.

In music notation, time is notated from left to right. Understanding rhythmic notation is essential to learning and studying rhythm.

The Beat

Most music has a steady pulse called *the beat*. It's the steady rhythm to which you tap your foot to or dance to. Think of the music you've heard in a dance club and you can easily imagine the beat. Time in music revolves around this beat.

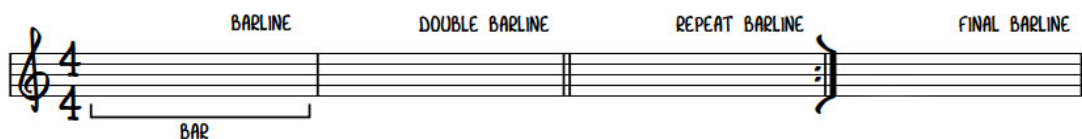
Bars

To help keep your place in music, beats are grouped into bars. Often four beats create a single bar. The steady pulse of a 4 beat bar would be counted as "1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4" etc. Beat one always marks the beginning of the bar. Some music like waltz's have 3 beat bars. Any number of beats can be grouped into a bar. The structure of the song will decide how the beats counted.

Barlines

In music notation barlines separate the musical bars. There are several types of barlines:

- Most barlines are a single line.
- A double barline marks the end of a section of music.
- A final barline is a double barline with a thick second barline marking the end of the piece.
- A barline with double dots on the left of the barline indicates a repeat back to the start of the piece or to the preceding double dot on the right hand side of the barline.



Rhythms

Rhythms in music are based on fractions. As a four beat bar is the most common, all rhythmic labelling is based on a bar containing 4 beats. For example a whole note is 4 beats as it usually fills a whole 4 beat bar while a half note is held for 2 beats. Like it or not rhythms in music are based on mathematics!

Notes and Rests

Rhythm notation will tell you two things about notes: when to play them, and how long they're held for. The length a note is played for is called its note value.

Rests are also included to tell you when, and for how long not to play. Every note value has a matching rest value.

Below are the most common rhythmic values with their counts. A note value that is half the length will be played twice as fast as the slower note. For example a quarter beat note is played twice as fast as a half note.

The + in the **eighth note** example are counted as the word “and” while **sixteenth notes** are counted as “1 e and a, 2 e and a” etc.

WHOLE NOTE AND REST HALF NOTES AND RESTS

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4

QUARTER NOTES AND RESTS EIGHTH NOTES AND RESTS

1 2 3 4 1 2 3 4 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +

SIXTEENTH NOTES AND RESTS

1 e + a 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e + a 1 e + a 2 e + a 3 e + a 4 e + a



[Rhythm Notation Note & Rest Values](#)

Listen to the audio of the Rhythm Notation Note & Rest Values

Dotted Notes

Dots placed after a note add 50% more length or time value to them. For example a 2 beat half note with a dot added after it will now be held for 3 beats.

DOTTED NOTES

1 2 3 4 1 + 2 + 3 e + a 4 e + a



[Rhythm Notation Dotted Notes](#)

Listen to the audio of the Rhythm Notation Dotted Notes

Ties

Ties tie 2 notes together so that only the first of the 2 tied notes is played. This often happens across 2 bars. In the example below the quarter beat notes with the number written in brackets aren't played.



Rhythm Notation Tied Notes

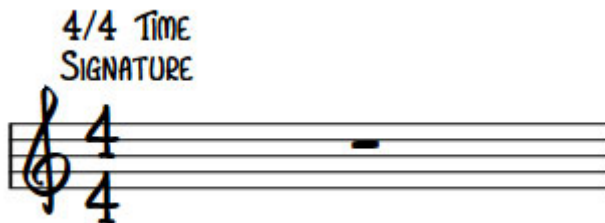
Listen to the audio of the Rhythm Notation Tied Notes

Time Signatures

Time signatures tell you how many beats are in the bars in a piece of music. They are written as two numbers written like a fraction.

- The **top number** tells you how many beats to count
- The **bottom number** tells you what type of note to count.

This means whether you count the beats as quarter notes, eighth notes, or sixteenth notes. Have a look at the examples below.



4/4 Time Signature

4/4 has 4 quarter note beats per bar and is the most commonly time signature in most styles of music. Most pop/rock music is in this time signature which is why drummers often count a band in with “1 2 3 4” to set the tempo (speed) of a song.



4/4 Time Signature

Listen to the audio of the 4/4 Time Signature

3/4 Time Signature Example

3/4 has 3 quarter note beats per bar and is used in waltz's such as the famous "Blue Danube Waltz" by Strauss. Other songs in 3/4 include "The Times They Are A Changin'" by Bob Dylan and "Mull of Kintyre" by Paul McCartney.



3/4 Time Signature

Listen to the audio of the 3/4 Time Signature

6/8 Time Signature Example

6/8 has 6 eighth note beats grouped into 2 sets of 3 eighth notes per bar and is used songs including “Norwegian Wood” by The Beatles, “House of The Rising Sun” by The Animals and “Nothing Else Matters” by Metallica. While ultimately having the same number of beats as $\frac{3}{4}$, 6/8 feels more like two with accents on beats 1 and 4 of the bar, while $\frac{3}{4}$ feels more like three.



6/8 Time Signature

[Listen to the audio of the 6/8 Time Signature](#)

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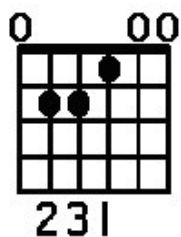
LESSON 2-OPEN STRING CHORDS & STRUMMING

Open String Chords – Common Strumming Patterns – Using & Metronome/Drum Machine – Persistence – ad Strumming – Old Shop Lady – Arpeggios – House Of The Rising Sun – All The Air I Give

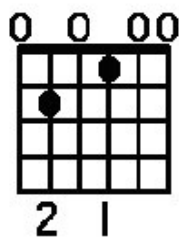
Open String Chords

The 1st book in this series *LTPTG - An Absolute Beginners Guide* introduced the open string chords and gave tips on how to smoothly and quickly change between them. Here is a chord diagram chart showing these chord shapes and their recommended finger numbers.

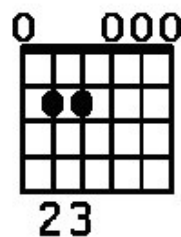
E major



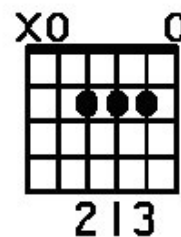
E7



E minor



A major

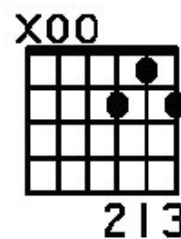
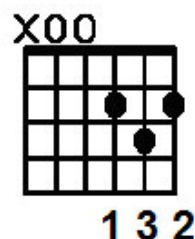
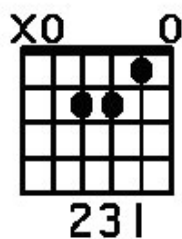
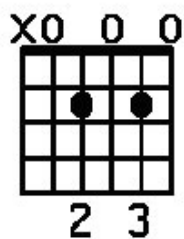


A7

A minor

D major

D7

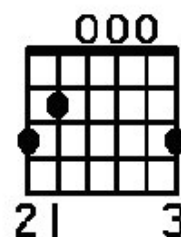
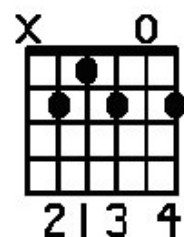
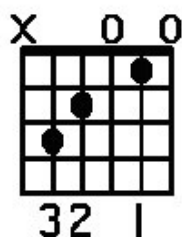
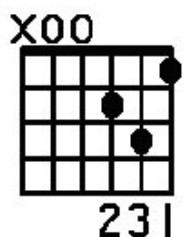


D minor

C major

B7

G major



Common Strumming Patterns

As a rhythm guitarist the two essentials you need to learn to play most songs are open string chords and strumming patterns. So after learning the basic open string chords what are the strumming patterns that every guitarist needs to know? The following 12 strumming patterns and rhythms enable you to strum your guitar through many songs from The Beatles, The Eagles, The Rolling Stones, Bob Dylan and many more.

Using A Metronome / Drum Machine

It is highly recommend to practice all the exercises and songs in this book using a metronome or drum machine to help develop consistent timing. The audio samples throughout this book will use a metronome or drum machine to set a tempo.

To use a metronome or drum machine you set a tempo at so many Beats Per Minute (BPM) and turn it on. The higher the number the faster the beat. For example 50BPM is quite slow while 200BPM is very fast.

One tip for using a metronome or drum machine is to ensure that it is playing fairly loud as they can be hard to hear once you start playing notes or strumming chords and you can easily lose the beat.

Also before you start playing tap your foot along with the beat to get a feel for the tempo. For further example of how to do this watch the *Introducing Guitar Strumming Rhythms & How To Use Metronome Video Lesson*.



[How To Use A Metronome Video Lesson](#)

Watch the *Introducing Guitar Strumming Patterns & How To Use A Metronome Video Lesson*

4/4 Strumming Patterns

Most pop/rock songs are in 4/4 time meaning that there are 4 quarter notes beat to the bar. With most strumming patterns you strum DOWN on each beat. The 4 beats can also be divided in half creating eight beats in the bar - funnily enough they're called eighth beats! UP strums are usually added on the eighth note beats in between the main 4 DOWN strums. Here the DOWN strums are on the ON beats (1, 2, 3 & 4) while the UP strums are on the OFF (counted as "and" written as "+") beats.





Down Strums

Listen to the audio of Down Strums

G

D = DOWN STRUM
U = UP STRUM

D 1 U + D 2 U + D 3 U + D 4 U + D 1 U + D 2 U + D 3 U + D 4 U +



Down Up Strums

Listen to the audio of Down Up Strums

Here are some common guitar strumming patterns for 4/4 time.

Strumming Pattern #1

G

D = DOWN STRUM
U = UP STRUM

D 1 D 2 U + D 3 U + D 4 U + D 1 D 2 U + D 3 U + D 4 U +



Strumming Pattern #1

Listen to the audio of Strumming Pattern #1

Strumming Pattern #2

G
D = DOWN STRUM
U = UP STRUM

D 1 D 2 U 3 D 4 U D 1 D 2 U 3 D 4 U



[Strumming Pattern #2](#)

Listen to the audio of Strumming Pattern #2

Strumming Pattern #3

G
D = DOWN STRUM
U = UP STRUM

D 1 D 2 D 3 D 4 U D 1 D 2 D 3 D 4 U



[Strumming Pattern #3](#)

Listen to the audio of Strumming Pattern #3

Strumming Pattern #4

G
D = DOWN STRUM
U = UP STRUM

D 1 (2) D 3 D 4 U D 1 (2) D 3 D 4 U



[Strumming Pattern #4](#)

Listen to the audio of Strumming Pattern #4

Strumming Pattern #5



[Strumming Pattern #5](#)

Listen to the audio of Strumming Pattern #5

Strumming Pattern #5 is the often used “Down Down Up Up Down Up” strumming pattern used in songs such as “Brown Eyed Girl” by Van Morrison and “Take It Easy” by The Eagles. Check out the Down Down Up Up Down Up Strumming Video Lesson



[Down Down Up Up Down Up Strumming Video Lesson](#)

Watch the Down Down Up Up Down Up Strumming Video Lesson

These 8th note strumming patterns work well for songs with a medium to fast tempo. To make the rhythm guitar in a song more interesting try varying the strumming patterns from the verse to the chorus. At first it can be hard to get used to changing strumming patterns within a song. Think of it like changing gears to vary the feel of the song. Practice the song **Persistence** below to get used to changing strumming patterns.

PERSISTENCE

Chords: C, G, Am, Em, C, Am, D, G, F, C, F, G, Dm, Am, G, C.

Strumming patterns: D D U _ U D U, D D U _ U D U, D D U D U, D D U D U, D D U D U, D D U D U, D D U D U, D D U D U, D D U D U, D D U D U, D D U D U, D D U D U, D D U D U, D D U D U, D D U D U, D D U D U.



[Persistence](#)

Listen to the audio of Persistence

16th Note Strumming Patterns

When playing slower songs strumming patterns using only eight note rhythms can be too slow. To fill the gaps between the slower strums 16th notes are used. 16th notes are twice as fast as eighth notes. 16th note patterns are counted as "1e+a, 2e+a, 3e+a, 4e+a". Here UP strums are played on the OFF 16th "e" and "a" notes with DOWN strums on the "numbers" and "+s".

Here are 3 common 16th note strumming patterns that work well for slower songs and ballads.

Strumming Pattern #6

G

D = DOWN STRUM
U = UP STRUM

D D D U D D D U D D D U D D D U

1 2 + A 3 4 + A 1 2 + A 3 4 + A



[Strumming Pattern #6](#)

Listen to the audio of Strumming Pattern #6

Strumming Pattern #7

G

D = DOWN STRUM
U = UP STRUM

D D D D U D D D U D D D D U D D D U

1 + 2 + A 3 + 4 + A 1 + 2 + A 3 + 4 + A



[Strumming Pattern #7](#)

Listen to the audio of Strumming Pattern #7

Strumming Pattern #8

G

D = DOWN STRUM
U = UP STRUM

D D D D U D U D D D D D D D U D U D D D

1 + 2 + A 3 E + 4 + 1 + 2 + A 3 E + 4 +



Strumming Pattern #8

Listen to the audio of Strumming Pattern #8

Practice the song **Sad Strumming** below which uses a mixture of different 16th note strumming patterns.

SAD STRUMMING

Two staves of musical notation in 4/4 time. The first staff contains four measures with chords G, Em, C, and D. The second staff contains seven measures with chords G, B7, C, G, Em, Am, and D. The notation includes 16th note strumming patterns indicated by 'D' (down) and 'U' (up) strokes. A '5' is written below the first measure of the second staff.



Sad Strumming

Listen to the audio of Sad Strumming

3/4 Strumming Patterns

Not all songs are in 4/4. The next most common time signature is 3/4 with 3 quarter note beats in the bar. The 3/4 time is used in waltzes such as the Blue Danube Waltz. Other songs in 3/4 include Norwegian Wood by The Beatles, The Times They're a Changing by Bob Dylan and Elderly Woman Behind a Counter in a Small Town by Pearl Jam.

Here are some common 3/4 guitar strumming patterns that every player should know.

Strumming Pattern #9

Musical notation for Strumming Pattern #9 in 3/4 time with a G chord. The notation shows a sequence of downstrokes (D) and upstrokes (U) over three measures. A legend indicates 'D = DOWN STRUM' and 'U = UP STRUM'. The sequence is: D 1, D 2, U +, D 3, U +, D 1, D 2, U +, D 3, U +.



Strumming Pattern #9

Listen to the audio of Strumming Pattern #9

Strumming Pattern #10

G

D = DOWN STRUM
U = UP STRUM

1 2 3 + 1 2 3 +



Strumming Pattern #10

Listen to the audio of Strumming Pattern #10

Strumming Pattern #11

G

D = DOWN STRUM
U = UP STRUM

1 2 + 3 1 2 + 3



Strumming Pattern #11

Listen to the audio of Strumming Pattern #11

Practice your 3/4 strumming patterns in the song **Old Shop Lady** below. This song is a little more challenging due to the faster tempo.

OLD SHOP LADY

The musical score for "Old Shop Lady" is written in 3/4 time. It consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a 3/4 time signature. The melody is written on a single line, and the guitar chords are indicated by letters (D, C, G) and chord diagrams above the staff. The second staff continues the melody and includes a measure with a blank line for a guitar solo. The third staff continues the melody and includes a measure with a blank line for a guitar solo. The fourth staff continues the melody and includes a measure with a blank line for a guitar solo. The score ends with a double bar line.

Staff 1: D D D U D D D U D D U D U D U D U

Staff 2: D U D U D D D U D U D U D U D U

Staff 3: D D U D U D D D U D D D U D U D U D U

Staff 4: D D D U D D D D U D U D U D U D U D



[Old Shop Lady](#)

Listen to the audio of Old Shop Lady

Arpeggios

Arpeggios can make chords sound much more intricate and complex in comparison to strummed chords. By playing each note of the chord individually it helps to outline the colour and elements of each chord. These examples will give you some ideas of how you can use arpeggios to mix up your rhythm guitar playing. It is a good idea to practice these with a metronome with a beat on each note plucked.

The traditional folk song **House of The Rising Sun** was famously recorded by The Animals in the 60's. The song is in 6/8 which means there are 6 eighth notes in the bar. Take note of the DOWN UP picking directions to ensure that you're picking correctly with an efficient smooth technique.

HOUSE OF THE RISING SUN

The musical score is written in 6/8 time and consists of four systems of music. Each system has a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a bass clef staff. The chords used are Am, C, D, F, and E. The picking pattern is indicated as 'D D D U U U' and 'SAME PICKING PATTERN THROUGHOUT'. The bass line is written in a simplified manner, using numbers 0, 1, 2, 3 to indicate fret positions. The first system covers measures 1-4, the second system covers measures 5-8, the third system covers measures 9-12, and the fourth system covers measures 13-16, ending with a double bar line.



[House Of The Rising Sun](#)

Listen to the audio of House Of The Rising Sun



[House Of The Rising Sun Video Lesson](#)

Watch the House Of The Rising Sun Video Lesson

The ballad **All The Air I Give** plays arpeggios with 4 chords. Again ensure that you're picking UP and DOWN as indicated for an efficient technique. While there are only 4 chords the string skipping and the varying arpeggio patterns make it harder to play.

ALL THE AIR I GIVE

The musical score for 'All The Air I Give' is presented in three systems, each with a treble and bass staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4. The score includes guitar chord diagrams for G, Em, C, and D. The first system (measures 1-4) uses G, Em, C, and D. The second system (measures 5-8) uses G, C, A, and D. The third system (measures 9-12) uses G, Em, C, D, and G. The bass staff contains arpeggio patterns with 'D' for down and 'U' for up strokes, along with fret numbers (0, 2, 3) and triplets. The treble staff contains the melody line.



[All The Air I Give](#)

Listen to the audio of All The Air I Give

For more arpeggio examples check out [Lesson 8 – Fingerpicking](#), [Lesson 17 – Open Chord Arpeggios & Arpeggio Riffs](#)

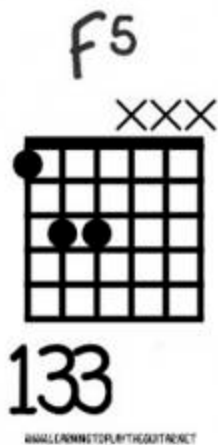
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LESSON 3 – POWER CHORDS

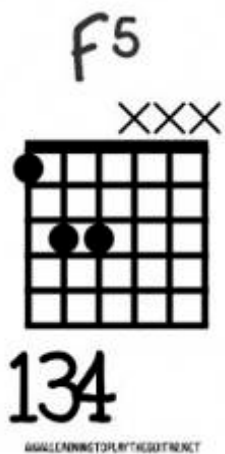
Power Chords – Muting – Finding The Root Note – Notes On The Guitar Neck – Key Signatures – Open String Power Chords – Some Big Stuff

Power Chords

Learning To Play The Guitar - An Absolute Beginners Guide also introduced power chords that are used in hard rock, punk and heavy metal. These were the simple 2 string versions. Here we will add an extra string to play 3 string power chords. There are 2 ways of playing these chords. The first is with fingers 1 and 3 with finger 3 laid flat on the fret board to play 2 strings.



The other is to use fingers 1 3 & 4. When playing power chords this way fingers 3 & 4 are curved in comparison to the flattened finger 3 in the last example.



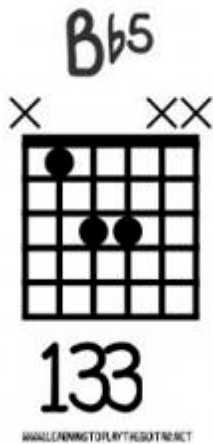
This shape forms the basis of the bar (barre) chord shape which we will look at in [Lesson 6 – Bar Chords.](#)



F Power Chord

Listen to the audio of the F Power Chord

Another example is if you play a power chord with finger 1 on fret 1 of the 5th string it is a Bb power chord as the note on fret 1 is Bb.



Bb Power Chord

Listen to the audio of the Bb Power Chord

Want to learn more and continue reading? Please purchase this book by visiting:
<http://www.learningtoplaytheguitar.net/rhythm-guitar-ebook/>

Show the author that you appreciate their work!