

Aeron's Strumming patterns for "layering" on Ukulele

Aeron's favourite Strumming Patterns for Beginners (and a lot of others too!)

Here are some of my favourite versatile strumming patterns which I use all of the time. You can use these patterns to play hundreds, EVEN thousands of different songs on ukulele (I'm not exaggerating guys!)

Foundations of Strumming

Strumming need not be fancy or complicated. Strumming conveys the rhythm of a song or piece of music. It needs to be STEADY, CONSISTENT and IN TIME.

THIS is what makes it pleasing to play. **Just make sure to keep a loose and relaxed wrist.**

The first 6 strumming patterns, are in 4/4 time signature. This means each pattern is played to a steady, consistent count of four: 1, 2, 3, 4 repeated over and over.

You can use these patterns for any song counted in four beat measures.

As you practice each of these strumming patterns, count out loud, or say the strum pattern.....Down, down, or down up , etc.,

You can even use a metronome or an app download to help keep your strumming steady. Playing along with songs you like is also a good practice. I do this all the time and particularly when I'm working out, what is for me, a "new song."

Please Note that ALL the DOWN strums are "ON the beat" Count each as 1,2,3,4.

These are called quarter notes because there are 4 beats in one measure or bar.

Pattern 1 This is a straight down strum ONLY pattern over 4 "down beats"

| | | | | | | | |
|----------|--|----------|--|----------|--|----------|--|
| 1 | | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | |
| D | | D | | D | | D | |

Pattern 2

This pattern involves adding an up strum on the "and" in between the 4 down strums.

We shall call these "&"s the "upbeats" You are now playing eighth notes. **Why?**

This will be your most popular beginner strum in the early stages of playing.

| | | | | | | | |
|----------|--------------|----------|--------------|----------|--------------|----------|--------------|
| 1 | & | 2 | & | 3 | & | 4 | & |
| D | U | D | U | D | U | D | U |

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Pattern 3 (This is my "go to pattern" for versatility)

Just miss out the first "up" strum on the & between beats 1 and 2

| | | | | | | | |
|----------|--|----------|--------------|----------|--------------|----------|--------------|
| 1 | | 2 | & | 3 | & | 4 | & |
| D | | D | U | D | U | D | U |

Pattern 4 ** Another "go to versatile strum" for the bulk of 4/4 songs.

I use this strum for most songs that I play. **It always sounds good.**

Just miss out the **first and the last "ups"** after beat 1 and beat 4.

| | | | | | | | |
|----------|--|----------|--------------|----------|--------------|----------|--|
| 1 | | 2 | & | 3 | & | 4 | |
| D | | D | U | D | U | D | |

*****Remember to SAY the Down and Up strums as you play them.*****

This will make it easier to connect the physical action of strumming to the mental activity of internalisation in your brain. These strums will soon become second nature to you.

Now for something different

Pattern 5 Let's play Calypso

There is not a strum or a count on Beat 3 in Calypso. It is a rest or silent beat.

| | | | | | | | |
|----------|--------------|----------|--------------|--|--------------|----------|--------------|
| 1 | & | 2 | & | | & | 4 | & |
| D | U | D | U | | U | D | U |

Pattern 6 Another Calypso strum! This is good too!

| | | | | | | | |
|----------|--|----------|--------------|--|--------------|----------|--------------|
| 1 | | 2 | & | | & | 4 | & |
| D | | D | U | | U | D | U |

*****NOTE*****

Some songs NEVER seem to "fit" into our usual 4/4 song pattern. This is usually because it is in a different time signature. It could be a waltz.

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Here is a different timing for some of our songs. **Do you fancy a waltz?**

The Waltz time is in 3/4 time signature There are only 3 beats here guys
This time you count ONLY to 3. Just like 1 2 3, 1 2 3, 1 2 3 and so on.
Play what you see.

Pattern 7

Accentuate the CAPITAL letter on the first down strum. The other strums are a little softer. **That's Amore by Dean Martin sounds good with this strum.**

| | | | | | |
|----------|--|----------|--|----------|--|
| 1 | | 2 | | 3 | |
| D | | d | | d | |

Pattern 8

Up until now we have strummed Down on the counts and Up on the "&s"
Here is an exception to the rule where we strum UP on the count of the beat on 2 and 3. It is an interesting change from the norm because this strum is really well suited to the Traditional song The Wild Rover

| | | | | | |
|----------|--|----------|--|----------|--|
| 1 | | 2 | | 3 | |
| D | | U | | U | |

Pattern 9

Waltz variation. Another 3/4 time waltz rhythm adding just ONE upstrum between beats 2 and 3. **Delilah by Tom Jones sounds good with this strum**

| | | | | | |
|----------|--|----------|--------------|----------|--|
| 1 | | 2 | & | 3 | |
| D | | d | u | d | |

Pattern 10

Waltz Variation Another 3/4 time waltz rhythm adding upstrums before and after beat 3. This is one of my favourites.
Annie's song by John Denver sounds good with this strum.

| | | | | | |
|----------|--|----------|--------------|----------|--------------|
| 1 | | 2 | & | 3 | & |
| D | | d | u | d | u |

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Here's another thing guys! There is another rhythm strumming pattern which will almost complete your arsenal of strums to include almost all the songs you would ever want to play and enjoy. This one involves the use of the triplet strum. This is where each beat in our 4/4 time count is split into 3, giving us 12 beats in total for each measure.

Pattern 11 Emphasise the **D strum ON** the beat count and use less attack between the beat counts. The little d's.

You can use this strum pattern for The Wonder of you and I can't help falling in love with you by Elvis Presley.

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|---|---|----------|---|---|----------|---|---|----------|---|---|
| 1 | | | 2 | | | 3 | | | 4 | | |
| D | d | d | D | d | d | D | d | d | D | d | d |

Pattern 12

This is a little bit tricky to play and sing at the same time because the pattern changes ON EVERY count.

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1 | | | 2 | | | 3 | | | 4 | | |
| D | U | D | U | D | U | D | U | D | U | D | U |

Pattern 13 This is the one I use a lot. I find it easier to play and sing along.

This is NOT strictly a strum. It is an "arpeggio", which really means "play like a harp." Pluck the strings one after the other as below. I've also included the tablature, if it helps to clarify this pattern.

| | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| 1 | | | 2 | | | 3 | | | 4 | | |
| 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 |

Using the thumb **[T]** index finger **[I]**, middle finger **[M]** and ring finger **[R]**

Play a C chord. Then try it on other chord shapes

A]-----3-----3-----] Repeat

E]-----0-----0-----0-----0-----] Repeat

C]-----0-----0-----0-----0-----] Repeat

G]-----0-----0-----] Repeat

T I M R M I T I M R M I

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NOTE; If you wish you can use your little finger as an "anchor" on the ukulele body to prevent your wrist from aching whilst you pluck the arpeggio.

Pattern 14 Simple Reggae Strum The mutes are known as "chunks"
Ska and reggae rhythms generally work on the backbeat or up strums.

Don't count beats 1 and 3. Focus on the "&'s"

Start by saying Up Down Up, Up Down Up, etc

Use your "spare fingers" to just touch all the strings to mute them.

| | | | | | | | |
|---|----|--------------|----|---|----|--------------|----|
| 1 | & | 2 | & | 3 | & | 4 | & |
| | Up | Down Mute | Up | | Up | Down Mute | Up |

Pattern 15 A little change from the one above

| | | | | | | | |
|---|------------|------|----|---|------------|------|----|
| 1 | & | 2 | & | 3 | & | 4 | & |
| | Up Mute | Down | Up | | Up Mute | Down | Up |

Pattern 4 revisited This versatile strum is really good for "chunking" for almost all songs in 4/4 time. It always sounds good.

Just miss out the first and the last "ups" after beat 1 and beat 4.

| | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|---|---|--|
| 1 | | 2 | & | 3 | & | 4 | |
| D | | D | U | D | U | D | |

Now try it with the "chunks or mutes" on beats 2 and 4 as indicated

Pattern 16

| | | | | | | | |
|------|--|---------------|----|------|----|---------------|--|
| 1 | | 2 | & | 3 | & | 4 | |
| Down | | Down Chunk | Up | Down | Up | Down Chunk | |

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Pattern 17

Now try it with the "chunks or mutes" on all the counted beats 1, 2, 3 and 4 as indicated. This means you mute all the down beats and fret your chord on the Up beats or "&'s" only. This sounds like you're playing a drum. You'll soon be learning to dance and play reggae!

| | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|--|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------------|--|
| 1 | | 2 | & | 3 | & | 4 | |
| Down Chunk | | Down Chunk | Up | Down Chunk | Up | Down Chunk | |

Playing in a group

It would also be interesting and probably more fulfilling to play different strumming patterns with a group of your friends. Each member could select his/her favourite strum pattern whilst someone else could play a different pattern an arpeggio or maybe even a melody accompaniment. Just like an orchestra.

Below are a set of blank grids for you to print out and make up your own strumming patterns;

Enjoy yourself..... it's later then you think.

4/4

| | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|
| 1 | | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | |
| | | | | | | | |

4/4

| | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|
| 1 | | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | |
| | | | | | | | |

4/4

| | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|
| 1 | | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | |
| | | | | | | | |

3/4 time

| | | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|---|--|
| 1 | | 2 | | 3 | |
| D | | d | | d | |

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3/4 time

| | | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|---|--|
| 1 | | 2 | | 3 | |
| D | | d | | d | |

3/4 time

| | | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|---|--|
| 1 | | 2 | | 3 | |
| D | | d | | d | |

There's also a 6/8 pattern too:-)

6/8 time

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|
| 1 | | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | | 1 | | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

6/8 time

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|---|--|
| 1 | | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | | 1 | | 2 | | 3 | | 4 | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |