

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**"

This strum has a lot going for it as it can have many variations

You could play **ALL** the down strums with equal "attack." So that they all sound the same.

1		2		3		4	
D		D		D		D	

You could emphasise Beat 1 and "ease back" on beats 2, 3 & 4.

Note Capital "**D**" for emphasised strum and lower case "**d**" for lighter strums

1		2		3		4	
D		d		d		d	

Try this pattern out then vary it by putting the emphasis on beat 2, then beat 3 and lastly on beat 4. Just move the capital **D** along the line.

Another great variation is strumming on the **“Back Beat.”** This is very effective. What you are trying to do is emphasise **beat 2** and **beat 4** the back beats. I prefer to use my thumb for the softer beats 1 & 3 and my fingers for the beats 2 & 4.

1		2		3		4	
d		D		d		D	

Pattern 2 “The beginner strum with down and up strums”

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. It can be used for most tunes in 4/4 time. However, it is often **overused** and may eventually curtail the development of your strumming unless you move on to some of the other strumming patterns below.

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

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*** AND NOW FOR SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT**

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.

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 this 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.

A bicycle built for two and The Black Velvet Band both sound good with this strum pattern.

1		2	&	3	&
D		d	u	d	u

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 groups of 3, giving us 12 beats in total for each measure.

The Triplet count looks like this **1 2 3, 2 2 3, 3 2 3, 4 2 3**

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	2	2	3	3	2	3	4	2	3
D	d	d	D	d	d	D	d	d	D	d	d

Pattern 12 Using your index finger and Thumb

This is a little bit tricky to play and sing at the same time. However, if you persevere it will be extremely rewarding. The technique is a **down strum** with the **Index finger (I)** followed by a **down strum** with the **Thumb (T)** then an **up strum** with the **Index finger**. Repeat the pattern **Index, Thumb, Index** over and over.

1	2	3	2	2	3	3	2	3	4	2	3
D	D	U	D	D	U	D	D	U	D	D	U
I	T	I	I	T	I	I	T	I	I	T	I

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

Below is the same pattern written in Tablature. Enjoy

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-----]

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

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

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

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

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.