

RHYTHM

The most important thing to understand about strumming is that it is a form of rhythm. Rhythm is the beat or pulse of a song. It gives it feel or vibe. It's the steady and consistent tempo or timing. You can be the fanciest strummer but unless it is in time it is worthless.

The strumming pattern you mostly use is in a 4/4 time signature (also known as the meter of a song). The meter of a song divides the song into small sections known as measures or bars. There are many different time signatures. At the beginning of a piece of music you might see: 4/4, 3/4, 6/8.

The top number represents how many beats there are in a bar (or measure). The number on the bottom represents the kind of note a beat gets. Take for example 4/4 time signature, there are 4 beats per bar and each beat gets a quarter note. This means you count 1, 2, 3, 4 etc.

In 3/4 there are 3 beats per bar and each beat gets a quarter note. This means you would count 1, 2, 3, 1, 2, 3, etc.

The count is what is being called out at the start of a song. It tells us to play 4 beats per Bar and the speed at which the 1,2,3,4 is called out tells us the tempo to play at.

You will see that whether it is 4/4 or 3/4 the length of time to play the notes is dictated by the bottom number. Even though we are only playing 3 notes in 3/4 they are still quarter notes so it still needs to take the same time to play the 3 notes as it does the 4 notes. By playing only 3 notes but making them last the same amount of time as 4 notes the sound comes out as a waltz. This is what 3/4 time is.

When we strum up and down in 4/4 time we are dividing each of the quarter notes by 2. So it is 1+2+3+4+ etc. Hopefully you can see that we are playing an up down strum in the time it takes us to play 1 down strum. All that we have done is play 4 more up strum (+) notes but in the same time it takes us to play a 1, 2, 3, 4.

In summary it is the top number you use to count and strum to. The drum and Bass helps us to keep steady time as we strum.