

Supplement #4 The Rhythms

Rhythm is a function of time. Time organizes sound into music. The more you are "plugged into" the rhythm, the better your playing will sound. Why do we use our strongest hand for the strumming or picking? Because we need that accuracy and strength for the most fundamental and important part of music making. Most of us forget this because we become unavoidably preoccupied with the fretting hand and all the other details.

Timing

The **DOWN BEAT** and the "CLOCK" will be tied together in this way...

CLOCK tic-----tic-----tic-----tic-----tic-(on and on)...all even
 BEAT / / / / /


How fast or slow the beat is (what speed the clock ticks) is called **the tempo**.

These beats are grouped together in **measures**. Most all the material in this book has four beats in each measure. (This is one measure of four time.)

CLOCK tic----- tic----- tic----- tic-----
 BEAT / / / /

We will count the down beats like this...

COUNT one two three four



.FOOT-tap... tap... tap... tap...

(I recommend moving your right foot down to the down beats.)

These are called the down beats, my foot goes down on each one--it is like the "clock" tapping. In four time, these are called the **quarter notes**.

This one measure ("bar") of four time simplified might look like this...

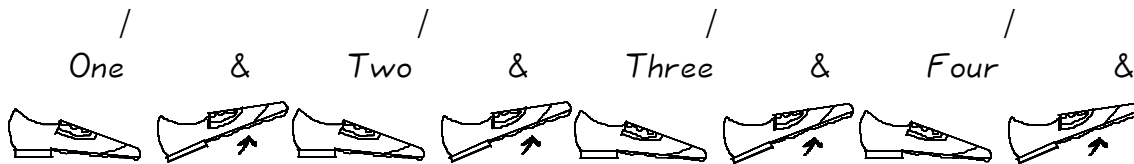
BEAT	/	/	/	/	
COUNT	one	two	three	four	

Let's look at two fundamentally different rhythms

Straight eighth notes and swinging eighth notes, which I'll call **shuffle**.
 These both have the same down beats (quarter notes) that we just looked at.
 We need to look at the up beats (eighth notes) to tell us more.

You will notice that my foot also goes up, between each beat (obviously).
 This is an easy way to think about dividing each beat into half...if we do this
 on four beats... we've got 8 equal divisions (called eighth notes).

I count these eighth notes like this...

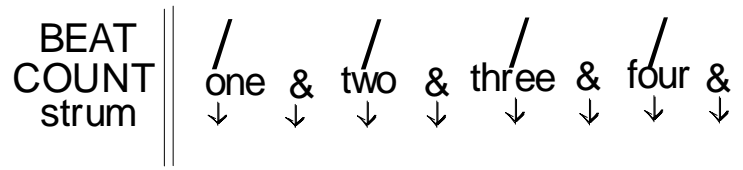


These 8 equal evenly spaced down beats and up beats I call...

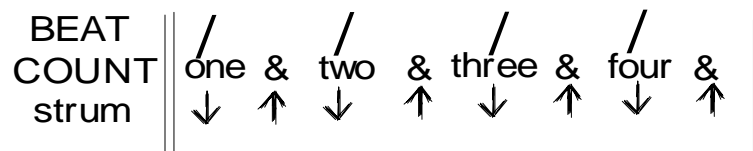
Straight Eight Rhythm

Lets look at the "strumming" or "picking" for this rhythm...

Strumming all down on the straight eighth beats. (All evenly spaced).



Alternating down and up strums on the straight eighth beats. (all evenly spaced).



*Same for "strumming" chords or "picking" individual strings (notes).

But the main type of rhythm used in this book and in a lot (if not most) "standard blues" is called The Shuffle Rhythm (swingin' eighths)

This shuffle rhythm is sometimes called "boogie-woogie" or "swing", but, these terms are used loosely and do not always apply. I will use the term shuffle. The down beats and up beats are not evenly spaced like the straight eighth notes. I think of the sound of a horse "loping". Count like this...

Beat / / / / ("clock")
One (rest) & two (rest) & three (rest) & four (rest) &

Strumming (or picking) all down on **shuffle** rhythm, (swinging eighths), would look like this...
(loping-swingin')
Not evenly spaced...

BEAT	/	/	/	/	/
COUNT	one	& two	& three	& four	&
strum	↓	↓ ↓	↓ ↓	↓ ↓	↓

Alternating down and up on **shuffle** rhythm, (swinging eighths), like...

BEAT	/	/	/	/	/
COUNT	one	& two	& three	& four	&
strum	↓	↑ ↓	↑ ↓	↑ ↓	↑

THEORY ?

Actually each beat is divided into three equal parts (triplets) instead of two. For the **shuffle** rhythm, or swinging eighths, you could count it like this...

...Beat / / / / ("clock")
 1 (2) 3 --- 1 (2) 3 --- 1 (2) 3 -- 1 (2) 3
 One---trip---let Two---trip---let three---trip---let four-trip---let
 One (rest) & two (rest) & three (rest) & four (rest) &



Note: In some slow blues we will be playing these triplets without that rest.