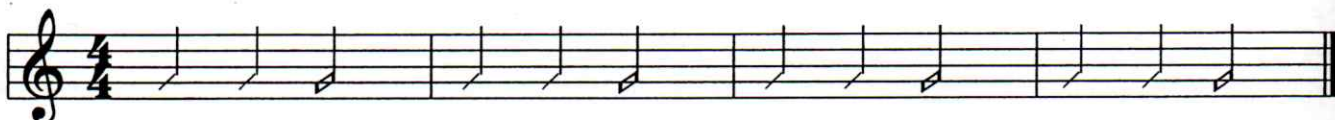


Strum Patterns

The following strum patterns are probably the most commonly used rhythms. Start by practicing chords that you know over these patterns.

Try to keep a strong beat, and accent (play louder) the first beat in every bar.

Pattern (a)



Count 1 2 3 (4) sim.....

Strum D, D, D, (let ring) sim....

Pattern (b)



Count 1 2 and 3 4

Strum D, D/U D, D.

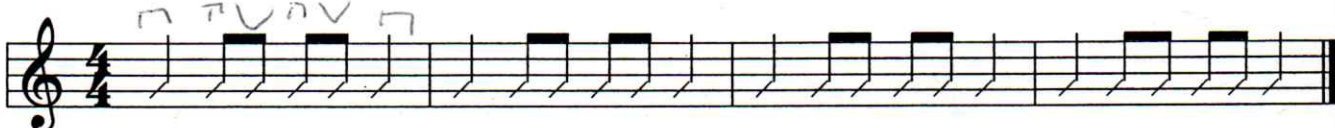
Pattern (c)



Count 1 2 3 and 4

Strum D, D, D/U D.

Pattern (d)



Count 1 2 and 3 and 4

Strum D, D/U D/U D.

Note: In the Registry of Guitar Tutors examinations the rhythm pattern that you play will not be notated. It is up to you to have practised a repertoire of useful rhythmic patterns from which you can select an appropriate one for the style of the piece.

Preliminary Grade

As outlined in the Registry of Guitar Tutors examination handbook, all the pieces for this grade are in 4/4 time, so to begin with play four beats to the bar (four down strums) whilst you practise slowly through this first piece. Try to keep going at the chord changes. As soon as you can, look at the tempo and style markings at the beginning of each piece.

1.

Tip: Note that the double dots at the end of the 6th bar mean: "Repeat from the beginning", if there are no previous double dots.

Moderate tempo

Handwritten guitar fret numbers are written above the staff: I, I, VI, III, VI, I.

Chord progression: C, C, Am, E7, Am, G. The 6th bar (G) contains a repeat sign (double bar line with two dots).

2.

Tip: The double dot signs are shown at the beginning of the 5th bar and the end of the 6th bar, so this two bar section is the bit that you repeat!

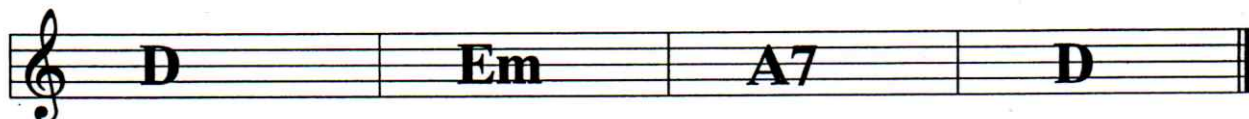
With a swing

Chord progression: C, G, Em, Am, Em, Dm. The 5th bar (Em) and 6th bar (Dm) are enclosed in a repeat sign (double bar line with two dots at each end).

3.

Tip: *If you find that you just can't keep the four strums going whilst you change the chords in time, practise strumming on the first three beats of the bar and then change the chord during the 4th beat.*

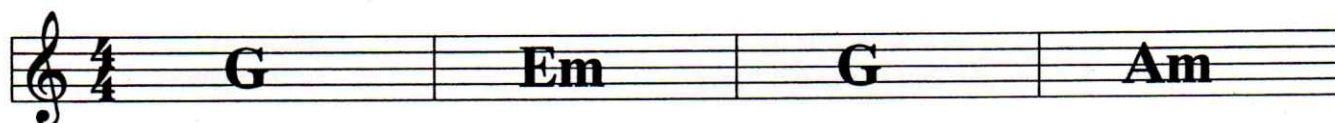
Not too slow



4.

Tip: *If you feel more confident, as you start the chords for the second time on the repeat, fit in an extra strum so that the rhythm starts to build. Make sure that you keep a good strong accent on the first beat of each bar.*

With movement



5.

Tip: Use a 'medium' or 'light' gauge pick initially, as this will travel easier than a 'heavy' gauge pick across the strings.

Moderate

Handwritten guitar tablature for exercise 5. The first staff shows a 4/4 time signature with chords Em, Em, G, and Am. Above the staff are handwritten Roman numerals: I, I, bIII, and IV. The second staff shows chords Em, D, B7, and Em. Above the staff are handwritten Roman numerals: I, bVII, V?, and I.

6.

Tip: Try moving only your third finger when changing from Am to C chord. Watch out for the repeat signs!

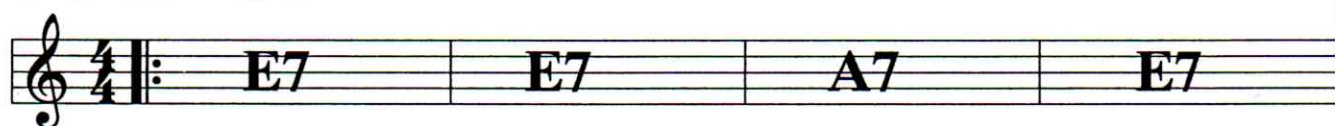
Tenderly

Handwritten guitar tablature for exercise 6. The first staff shows a 4/4 time signature with chords Am, C, Am, and C. The second staff shows chords G, B7, Em, and Em.

7.

Tip: *Think of your favourite rhythm and blues piece whilst you strum this, and try to reproduce that rhythm here.*

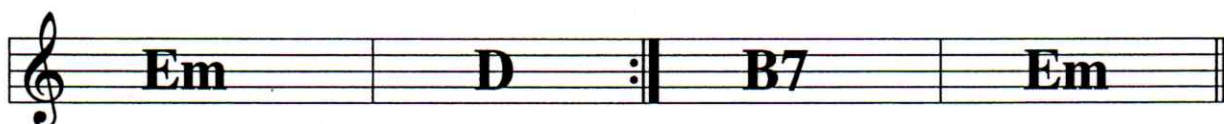
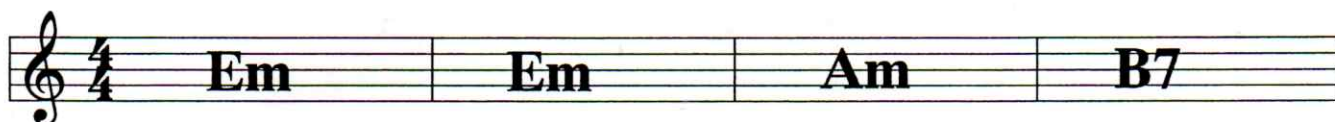
In a blues style



8.

Tip: *When you play, keep the pick tip as straight as you can (at a right angle to the strings) so that up strokes are as easy as down strokes.*

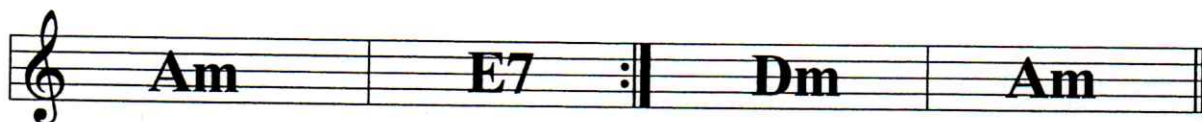
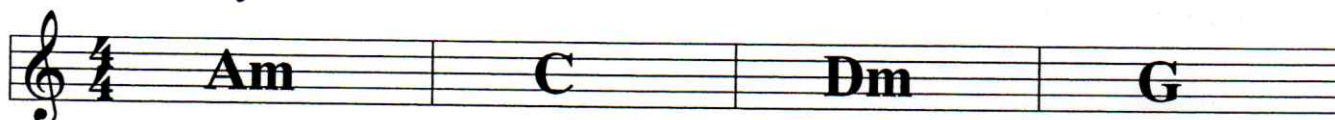
Not too fast



9.

Tip: *When playing the Dm chord, try using your 4th finger, instead of your 3rd, to hold the note on the second string.*

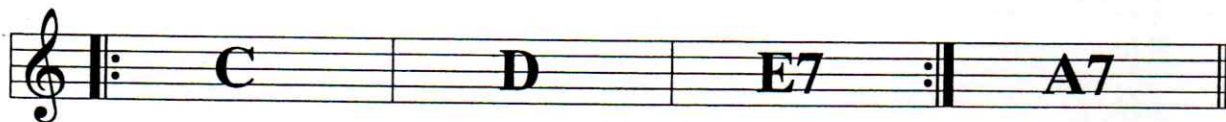
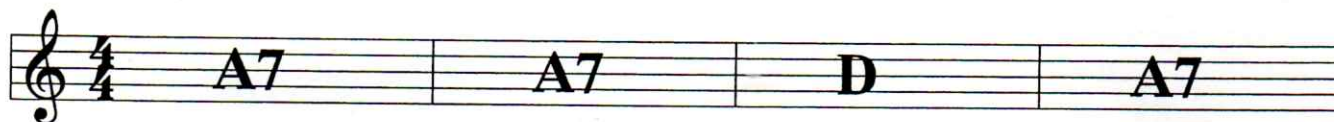
Mournfully



10.

Tip: *If you are tending to hit too many bass notes, making the chords sound muddy, try aiming for one string LESS than you need to play the chord.*

In a blues style



Grade One

Timing

O.K., now we are starting on Grade One and the time signature (the numbers at the beginning of each chord chart) is still 4. This means that you can count four beats in each bar of music and that each beat would be worth a $\frac{1}{4}$ (crotchet).

With your strumming, you could play four down beats across the strings - but this doesn't stop you strumming the strings on the way back up as well!

So, some basic 4 timings could be:



Down-Down-Down-Down/Up

D - D - D / U D

Practise this on one string of a chord, using down and up strokes, then gradually strum more strings.



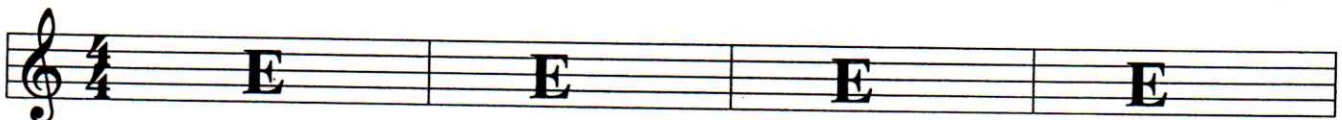
D - D / U D - D

D / U D - D - D

Dynamics

This involves a simple, yet effective, technique, and is one of the most OVERLOOKED sections of the examination - which means that it is a good place for you to pick up extra marks!

There are 3 main symbols that you need to know for this grade, and these are shown below with their meanings. Try and play along following the dynamic markings.



p (play softly)

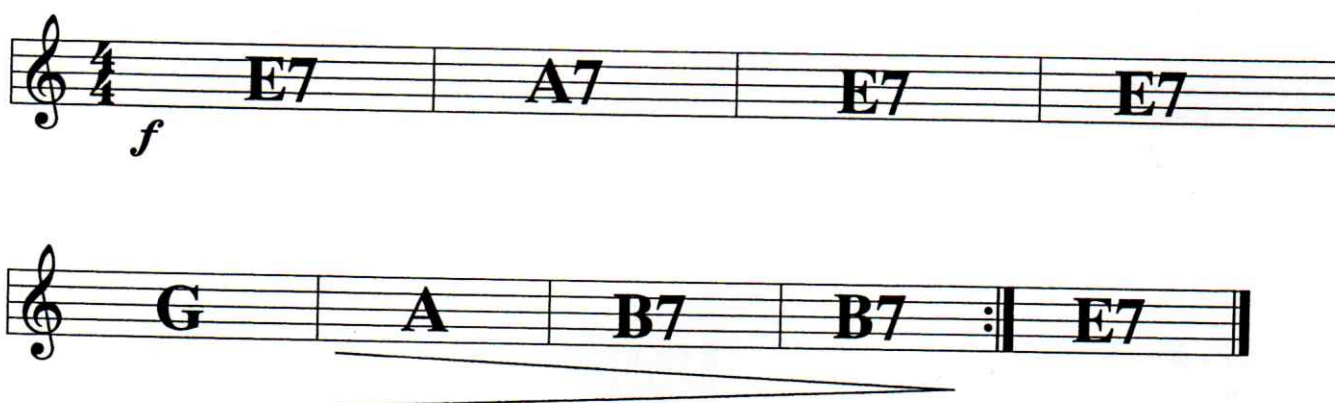
(Gradually play louder) (Gradually softer)



f (Play loudly)

Tip: *Play the repeat, with a variation in your strumming, but keep the same tempo of course!*

1. Uptempo blues style



Two staves of musical notation in 4/4 time. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a 4/4 time signature, and a forte (*f*) dynamic marking. It contains four measures of chords: E7, A7, E7, and E7. The second staff contains five measures: G, A, B7, B7, and E7. A repeat sign (double bar line with two dots) is placed after the second B7 measure. A long, thin wedge-shaped line is drawn below the second staff, starting from the beginning of the G measure and extending to the end of the second B7 measure, indicating a gradual increase in volume.

Tip: *Try to play the dynamics. Look back to the introductory page on Grade One if you need a refresher.*

2. Slowly



Two staves of musical notation in 4/4 time. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a 4/4 time signature, and a piano (*p*) dynamic marking. It contains four measures of chords: Em, Am, Cmaj7, and B7. A repeat sign (double bar line with two dots) is placed after the B7 measure. A long, thin wedge-shaped line is drawn below the first staff, starting from the beginning of the Em measure and extending to the end of the B7 measure, indicating a gradual increase in volume. The second staff begins with a treble clef and a piano (*p*) dynamic marking. It contains five measures of chords: Am, G, C, B7, and Em.

Tip: *Be careful to strum the right number of strings for each chord.*

3. Moderate tempo



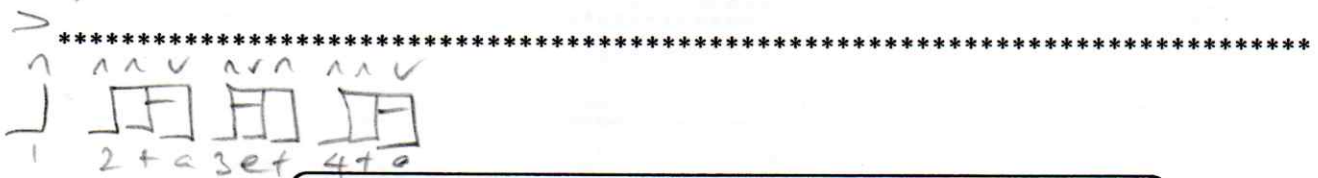
Tip: *Make sure that your fingers are as close to the frets as possible, as this avoids unwanted fretbuzz.*

4. Slow blues style



Tip: You can use either a pick (plectrum) or your fingers to strum. If you use a pick, don't hold it too tightly, as this will lead to muscular tension in your hand.

5. Up tempo



Tip: Keep your right hand fingers off the body of the guitar as this restricts the movement of your wrist.

6. Slowly



Tip: Hold the pick between your thumb and forefinger, with about 6mm of pick showing.

7. With movement

Tip: Try to keep your left hand fingers close to the fingerboard, so that they're ready to play when needed.

8. Fast

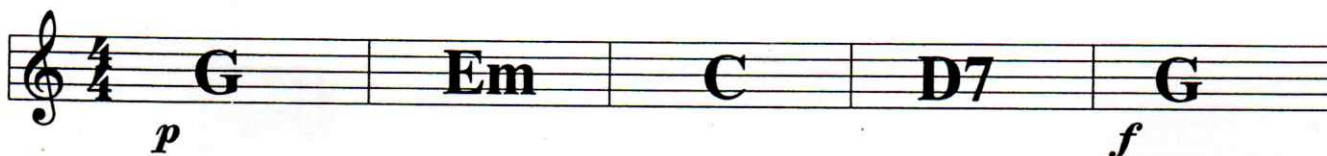
Tip: Strive to play the *FIRST* chord of each bar in time – even if, at first, this results in clipping the previous chord on the 4th beat.

9. Up tempo



Tip: ALWAYS look through the sequence before playing. This way you'll see which chords are coming up, and you can take note of any dynamics and repeat marks.

10. In a ballad style

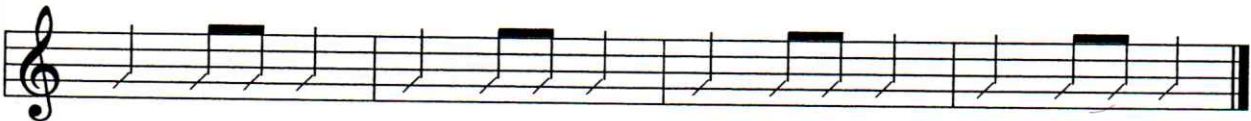
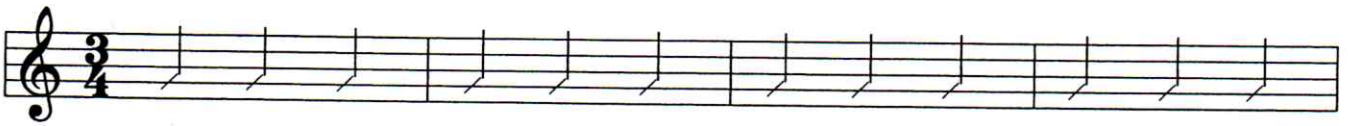


Grade Two

Timing

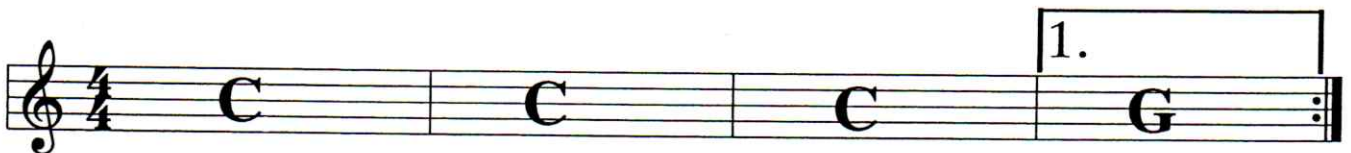
At this grade, there is introduced an additional time signature of $\frac{3}{4}$. This means count three beats to each bar – instead of the normal four. Try counting 1 2 3 | 1 2 3 | etc., saying the first beat louder.

The counting of $\frac{3}{4}$ time may seem less familiar as there are fewer contemporary pieces written in this time signature, but one that springs to mind is *Mull of Kintyre* by Paul McCartney. The count for this would be: 1 2 and 3 | 1 2 and 3 |, (Down, down/up Down), and is shown on the second line of music below.



Repeat Markings

At Grade Two, as well as understanding the standard 'repeat dots' (described in Grade One), you have to be able to follow '1st and 2nd time ending' markings. Try and follow the chord sequence below, which should be played as follows: Play the three bars of C, then the bar of G. Then repeat from the beginning but don't play the G under no '1' (this should be played the first time only), instead go on to the '2nd time ending' which starts with the Am bar, and carry on until the end of the sequence.



Dynamics

The dynamics for this grade are shown below, with their meanings in brackets.

The sequence has been written with straightforward chord changes to allow you to practise one technique, without getting bogged down with any other!

The letters *p* and *f*, stand for piano - forte respectively, and this is how the piano got its name.

The soft - loud instrument!

p (play softly)

(get louder gradually)

f (play loudly)

(get softer gradually)

p (softly)

* More strum patterns

On page 6 there are some strum patterns, but here are some new ones. These could be used on the repeat bars, or all the way through, for a completely different feel. Again, easy chords have been selected to give you a chance to practise this new technique.



I have written the count underneath the strikes. Note that the beats in brackets are NOT played, but just counted. Try to keep all the main beats as DOWN strums, and all the 'and' beats as UP strums.

Count 1 2 and (3) and 4 sim..... 1 2 3 and (4) and sim....

Count 1 and (2) and 3 sim..... 1 2 (3)


Tip: Don't forget that, any chords from the previous two grades can also be included in these sequences.

1. Moderate tempo

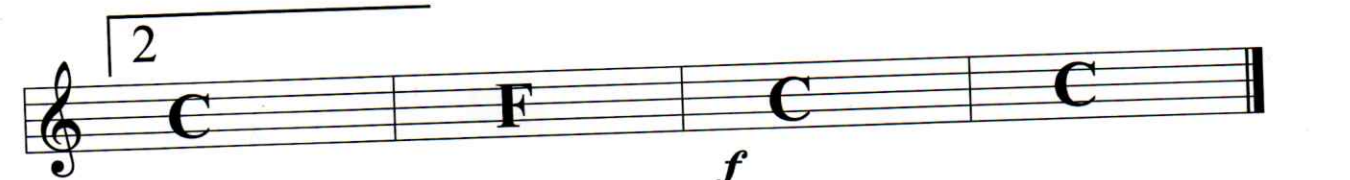


Handwritten musical notation at the top of the page.

Musical notation for exercise 1, measure 1: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature, *p* dynamics. Chords: C, Am7, Dm7, G7.




Musical notation for exercise 1, measure 2: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. Chords: C, Em, G, G7. First ending bracket over the last two measures.



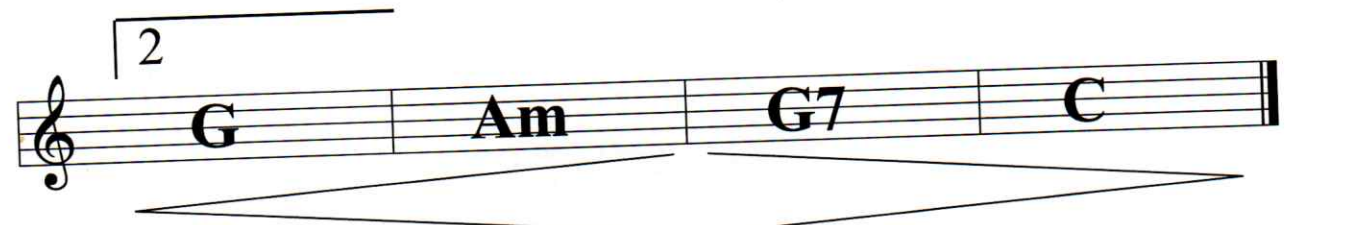
Musical notation for exercise 1, measure 3: Treble clef, 4/4 time signature. Chords: C, F, C, C. *f* dynamics. Second ending bracket over the last two measures.

Tip: Try to accent (play louder) the first beat of the bar.

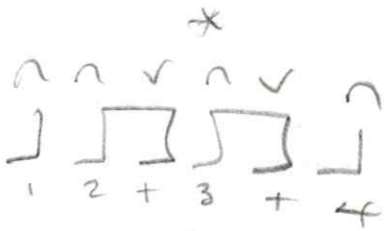
2. With a bounce feel



Musical notation for exercise 2, measure 1: Treble clef, 3/4 time signature. Chords: C, Em7, F, Fmaj7, G, G7. *p* dynamics. First ending bracket over the last two measures.

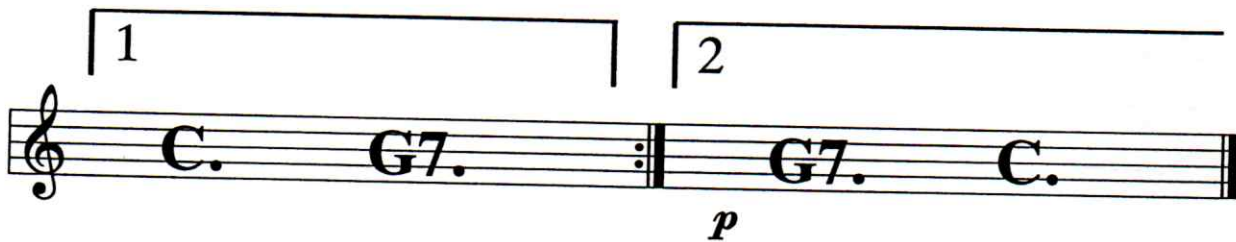


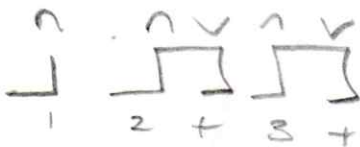
Musical notation for exercise 2, measure 2: Treble clef, 3/4 time signature. Chords: G, Am, G7, C. *f* dynamics. Second ending bracket over the last two measures.



Tip: Try to keep the wrist loose and relaxed.

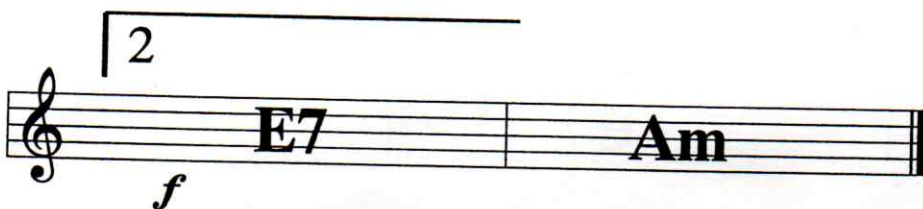
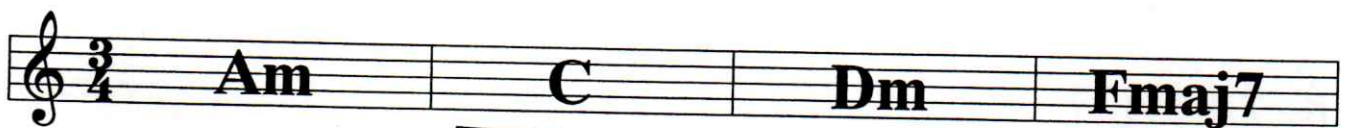
3. Uptempo





Tip: Note how for all of these chords the first finger stays on the first fret. Always lookout for relationships like this to make chord changes easier.

4. With animation



Tip: Try to keep the first finger completely flat against the fingerboard when playing the F#m chord. Don't worry if all the notes don't come out clearly at first.

5. Slowly

Staff 1: *f* D F#m Em G. A7. :|| (Bracket 1 over F#m, Em, G)

Staff 2: G D F#m Em7 (Bracket 2 over G, D)

Staff 3: G. A7. D *f*

Tip: Only strike the strings that you need for each particular chord, e.g. with C7, omit the 6th string.

6. In a blues style

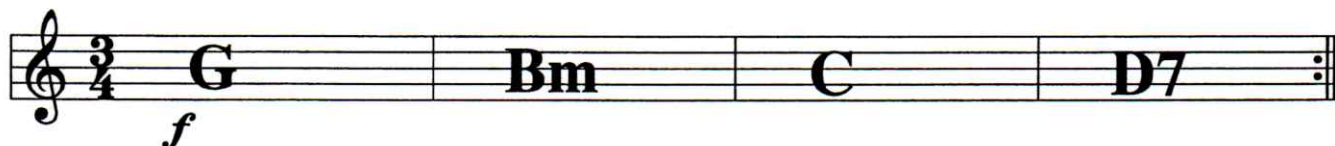
Staff 1: *f* C7 C7 F F

Staff 2: G7 F C7 G7 (Bracket 1 over C7, G7)

Staff 3: *f* F. G7. C7 (Bracket 2 over F, G7)

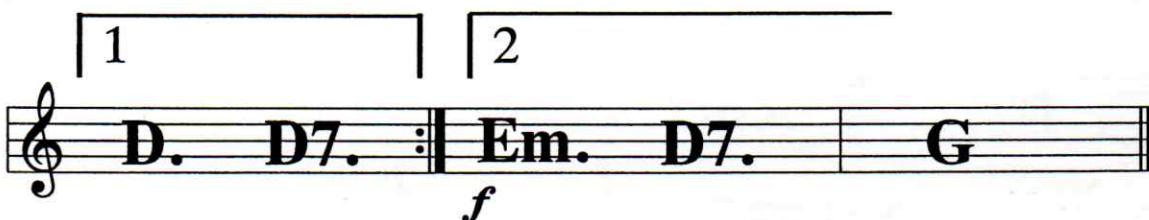
Tip: Try not to 'overgrip' with the left hand thumb at the back of the neck - this will only take strength away from the fretting fingers.

7. With movement



Tip: Never 'rush' your practice; if need be, play the split bar sequence at a slower speed than a sequence with one chord in a bar.

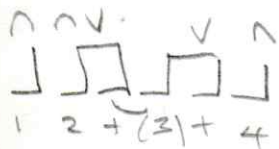
8. Moderate tempo



Tip: Add interest to your rhythm playing by varying the strum in the repeat section.

9. Not too fast





Tip: Don't forget to practise the dynamics; if necessary, go back to page 20 for a refresher before starting this sequence.

10. With a beat

