



Rhythm Guitar Lesson #2. 8th note feel. Introducing tied 8th notes

Using ties can really make your rhythm guitar playing sound natural and free. Before you start on this lesson make sure that you have got your basic rhythm guitar down - especially the Bar 4 from the earlier rhythm lesson. Maybe have a quick brush up on it before you look at these. Always try to count along when you start and be sure you are getting it right and keeping your hand moving!

Ties are written as small curved lines that join two notes together. The effect of them is that the first note is sustained for the duration of itself and the note it is tied too.

Look at the **first bar** in the example above. It is the same as Bar 4 from rhythm lesson #1.

Missing the down strum.

In this **second bar** the 4th and 5th notes are tied together. These are on the + after 3 and the 4. The note on 4 (being the second note) is not played, instead just let the note sustain through it. This will result in the strumming pattern Down, Down, Down Up, Up. There is a down missing.

Make sure that you keep your hand moving evenly but just don't let the pick touch the strings for the down strum (4) This may feel a bit weird at first but it really adds life to your rhythm guitar. Make sure that you continue to tap your foot evenly, and still on the beat 4 even though you will not play the note. Your foot should always tap on 1 2 3 and 4.

Move it to the middle

Once you have the second bar down try the one in **bar 3**, it is essentially the same as bar 2 but just starts in a different place.

Two ties

Once you feel you have that one down (and not before) have a go at the rhythm in **bar 4** which has two ties in it. You will miss two down strums in a row. Down Up, Up, Up, Down.

Keep your hand moving in silence

Only when you have all of the ones down so far, have a go at **bar 5**. Notice that this one has a quarter note (no tail) joined to an eighth note so the note will be sustained for one and a half beats. The strumming will be Down, Down, -, Up, Down, be sure to keep your hand moving all the time, even for the missing beat. Don't let it stop. You must keep your hand moving the whole time, evenly. Watch it and be very strict about it. An unsteady hand will make a jerky rhythm.

Other Important Stuff

Be sure to use a metronome with all the patterns that you practice. Always start very slowly and try to not only get it right, but to make it sound good. Make sure that you are not hitting strings that you should not play (for certain chords, like say D), as this can form a bad habit and check too that your chords are clean and ringing out clearly.

It is important at this stage that you try to experiment more with your strumming. The technique shown here (strumming down on 1, 2, 3, 4 and up on the ands) is completely natural and you should aim to use it for everything you play. It is also used for many skills you will learn in the future. It is not my way, it is the way that everyone plays that is any good. Really.