

## Lesson

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## Learn the “Percussive Muted Strum”

Percussionists and drummers make music simply by hitting things. It always contributes a lot to the overall feel and “groove” of the music when you add some percussion to the sound. You can do this yourself with the guitar.

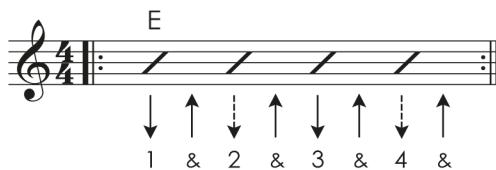
If you watch guitarists playing rhythm guitar (strumming and chords), you may notice that sometimes their strumming is really *rhythmic*. This “rhythmicness” is achieved by adding a simple percussive sound, created by hitting the muted strings with the right hand.

We shall call this “percussive muted strumming”, but you want to know that this is not an official music or guitar term.

Take your pick and hit the open strings and make sure the side of your right hand hits the strings before your pick. It should make a “thump” noise and there should be no ringing of any of the strings.

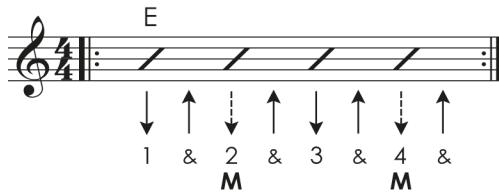
Work on getting that sound for a bit. The secret is to not over-think it—just make the motion and go for the sound.

Now, grab an E major chord. Then do the percussive muted strum and immediately do an up strum. Work on this for a few minutes. Next, take this strum pattern we’ve worked with before and review it. Spend a few minutes strumming it and getting comfortable with it.



Let’s put this percussive muted strum into the strum pattern and see how it all sounds together.

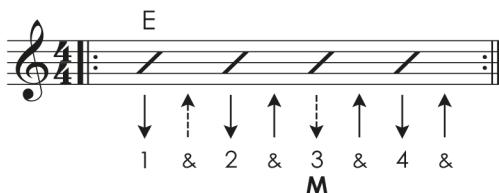
**M** = percussive muted strum



By putting the muted strum on beats 2 and 4, we've given the strum pattern extra groove and rhythmic feel.

By the way, beats 2 and 4 in a bar of 4/4 are referred to in music as the **backbeat**, which is the foundation for most rhythmic music: rock, funk, pop, dance, reggae, etc. The percussive muted strum in this strum pattern emphasizes the back beat and therefore is very effective in creating a heightened rhythmic element to the strumming.

Here's another example. Again, work with the strum pattern as it is for a few minutes to get comfortable with it, then add the muted strum on beat 3.



Experiment by putting this percussive muted strum into any of the strum patterns we worked on so far (both 8th-note patterns and 16th-note patterns). You can substitute a muted strum for any *down arrow*.

This approach to strumming can add a lot of energy to your rhythm guitar playing.