

Music Theory

Rhythm I

Foreword

Musicians tend to focus generally too much on the "what" to play (notes, chords, etc...) and much less on the "when" to play part. However music is half the "what" and half the "when". Thus the rhythm has to be considered as a important topic and not to be left aside.


When composing, trying to be original in the "what" is nice but great things can be made on the "when" part too in order to create interesting sounding musics. So let's get into it !

The basic

Beat : In rhythm everything starts with a steady beat. We use a metronome in order to produce a sound that rings at a regular identical interval.







Tempo : defines the speed of a music piece. Musicians count this with BPM which means Beats Per Minutes. Hence in a 60 BPM song, a beat rings out every seconds. In a 120 BPM song, a beat rings out every half-second.

Measure : it is an abstract group to gather a number of beats in it. A measure is just a group of beats. The most common measure is composed of 4 beats.

Quarter note : A beat duration is equal to a quarter note duration. The symbol for a quarter note is the following :  In a measure of 4 beats we count each quarter notes as is : 1, 2, 3, 4.

The next pages are course extracted from [signal music studio rhythm course](#).

The Basics

		Symbol	Counts
Quarter Note	1 beats		
Half Note	2 beats		
Whole Note	4 beats		
































































Tap your foot on each beat.

Count EVERY quarter note, whether it is strummed or not.





If you do not strum a count, say it quietly.

Only use down-strums (▮).

Beat counts surrounded by parentheses do not get strummed - count them quietly and steadily.

																			
1	(2)	3	(4)		1	(2)	3	(4)		1	(2)	3	(4)		1	(2)	3	(4)	
																			
1	(2)		3	(4)	1	(2)		3	(4)	1	(2)		3	(4)	1	(2)		3	(4)
																			
1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4	
				(4)					(4)					(4)					(4)
1	2		3	(4)	1	2		3	(4)	1	2		3	(4)	1	2		3	(4)
																			
1	(2)		3	4	1	(2)		3	4	1	(2)		3	4	1	(2)		3	4
																			
1	2		(3)	4	1	2		(3)	4	1	2		(3)	4	1	2		(3)	4

Eighth Notes

	Value	Symbol	Counts
Quarter Note	1 beat		
Eighth Note	1/2 beat (two notes per beat)		

Eighth notes are played a speed of two per beat. Two eighth notes can fit into the space of a single quarter note. Play each rhythm with downstrokes while tapping your foot on the downbeats.

 1 2 3 + 4 +	 1 2 3 + 4 +	 1 2 + 3 (4)	 1 2 + 3 (4)
 1 2 3 + 4 +	 1 2 3 + 4 +	 1 + 2 3 + 4	 1 + 2 3 + 4
 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +	 1 + 2 3 + 4	 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +	 1 2 + 3 (4)
 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +	 1 + 2 + 3 4	 1 2 3 + 4	 1 2 3 (4)
 1 + 2 3 4 +	 1 + 2 3 4 +	 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +	 1 2 (3) 4 +
 1 + 2 3 4 +	 1 + 2 + 3 + 4	 1 2 3 4 +	 1 + 2 + 3 (4)
 1 (2) 3 (4)	 1 + 2 3 (4)	 1 2 + 3 + 4	 1 (2 3 4)

Accents

An accented strum is played (and counted) louder than the surrounding strums. Non-accented strums can be created by playing just a few notes of the chord (usually the low/bass notes), while accented strums are performed by strumming the entire chord. Practice each of these measures on a loop.

Accenting the 1 Beat



Accenting the + of 3



A Common Accent Pattern



Tap your foot on each quarter note, and count each strum out loud. Say the accented counts louder than the surrounding counts. Play each line twice, then move on to the next line. Play the two chords, G and Em, as indicated in these charts:

Accenting The Downbeats (1 2 3 4)

Repeat, starting from previous : symbol

Two rows of musical notation for 'Accenting The Downbeats'. Each row contains four measures of 4/4 time, alternating between G and Em chords. The first measure of each row has a G chord box. The first measure of the second row has an Em chord box. The notation shows quarter notes on beats 1, 2, 3, and 4, with accents (>) on the downbeats (1 and 3). Below the notes are the counts: 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +. A double bar line with a repeat sign is at the end of each row. A callout box points to the repeat sign with the text 'Repeat, starting from previous : symbol'.

Accenting The Backbeat (2 + 4)

Two rows of musical notation for 'Accenting The Backbeat'. Each row contains four measures of 4/4 time, alternating between G and Em chords. The first measure of each row has a G chord box. The first measure of the second row has an Em chord box. The notation shows quarter notes on beats 1, 2, 3, and 4, with accents (>) on the backbeats (2 and 4). Below the notes are the counts: 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +. A double bar line with a repeat sign is at the end of each row.

Accenting Upbeats (syncopation)

Two rows of musical notation for 'Accenting Upbeats (syncopation)'. Each row contains four measures of 4/4 time, alternating between G and Em chords. The first measure of each row has a G chord box. The first measure of the second row has an Em chord box. The notation shows quarter notes on beats 1, 2, 3, and 4, with accents (>) on the upbeats (the '+' signs). Below the notes are the counts: 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +. A double bar line with a repeat sign is at the end of each row.

Using Your Hands

Use your Right(R) and Left(L) hands to learn, practice, and play variations of rhythms. Start by playing and counting steady 8th notes with your right hand. Only use the left hand for accented counts - on these counts, both hands will play together. Once this is comfortable, reverse the hands.

play every 8th note with right hand

only use left hand on accented counts

Practice each of these 1-measure rhythms on a loop. Count out loud, say accented counts louder.

Adding The Foot

Tap your foot on each down beat (1 2 3 4)

foot plays steady quarter notes

Once this is comfortable, try the keeping the foot going while playing the other three rhythms shown above.

Syncopation vs Downbeats

Practice this 2-measure loop while counting out loud. Make sure to say the accented counts louder to help get a better feel for saying and playing syncopated offbeats (2nd measure) versus strict downbeats (1st measure) and how they feel against a steady quarter note (the foot)

Alternative Method:

- Clap every 8th note
- Tap your foot on the quarter notes
- Only count/say the accented beats

Palm Mutes

A palm mute is created when the palm of the hand rests against the strings as they're being picked/strummed. The part of the palm that is used is at the bottom of the hand, under the pinkie. It can rest naturally against the strings without impeding small pick movements.

The palm must rest on the strings near the bridge where the strings end. If the palm is too close to the neck, the palm mute will not have any discernable pitch. If the palm is too close to the bridge, it can miss the strings completely and not create the desired sound.

Palm mutes are usually designated with an X symbol or the letters P.M. beneath the note.

Every note in this exercise is palm muted. The switches mostly occur after the 1 beat. It is a similar progression and style to "Rolling In the Deep" by Adele.

8 A5 E5 G5 E5 G5

TAB

7-7-7-7-7-7-7-7 7-2-2-2-2-2-2-2 2-5-5-5-5-5-5-5 5-2-2-2-2-2-5-5-5

5-5-5-5-5-5-5-5 5-0-0-0-0-0-0-0 0-3-3-3-3-3-3-3 3-0-0-0-0-0-3-3-3

P.M.

This progression uses palm mutes to create accents in a straight 8th note rhythm. Write in the accents only. It is a similar rhythm to what is hear in "Everlong" by Foo Fighters.

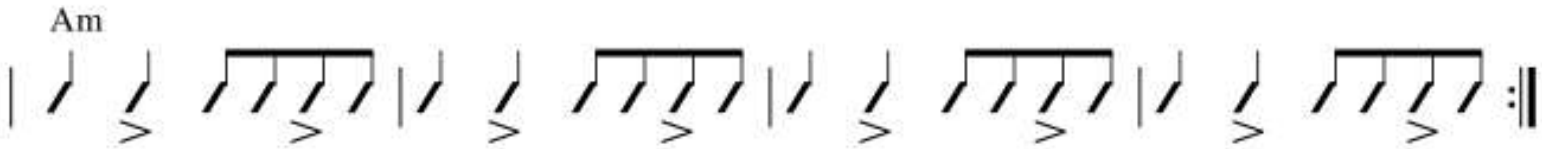
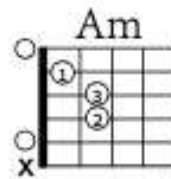
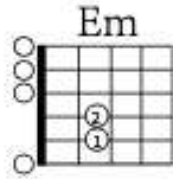
The image displays a musical score for the song "The Sound of Silence" by Simon & Garfunkel. It includes a guitar part (G) and a bass part (B). The guitar part is written in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The bass part is written in bass clef. The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains the first two lines of music, and the second system contains the next two lines. The guitar part features a complex, melodic line with many accidentals and ties. The bass part is a simple, rhythmic accompaniment consisting of a series of eighth and sixteenth notes. The score is presented in a clean, black-and-white format with standard musical notation.

Upstrokes + Strumming Technique

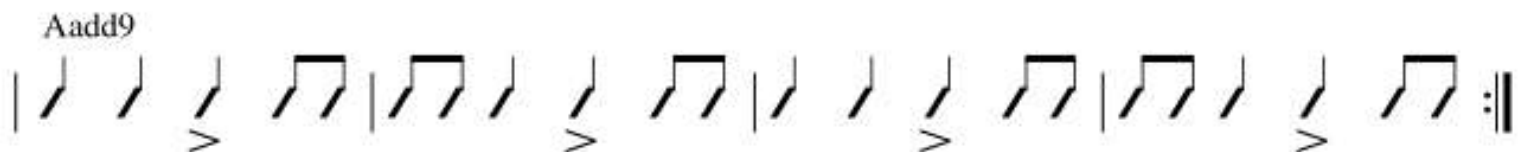
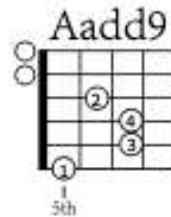
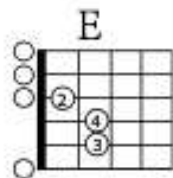
A proper strum takes many hours of practice to develop. It should feel and sound smooth in both directions. The strumming motion is created by twisting your forearm in a spindle-like fashion, while maintaining a slight bend in the wrist. Add in a slight amount of arm movement (generated from the elbow, up and down), and you have a strum that can contact all the strings without digging in to them. While you'll need to grip the pick tightly, it is important to **keep your arm and wrist loose**.

Downstream Upstrum **V**

Play the following exercise with and without accents. Focus on developing a consistent, smooth strum.



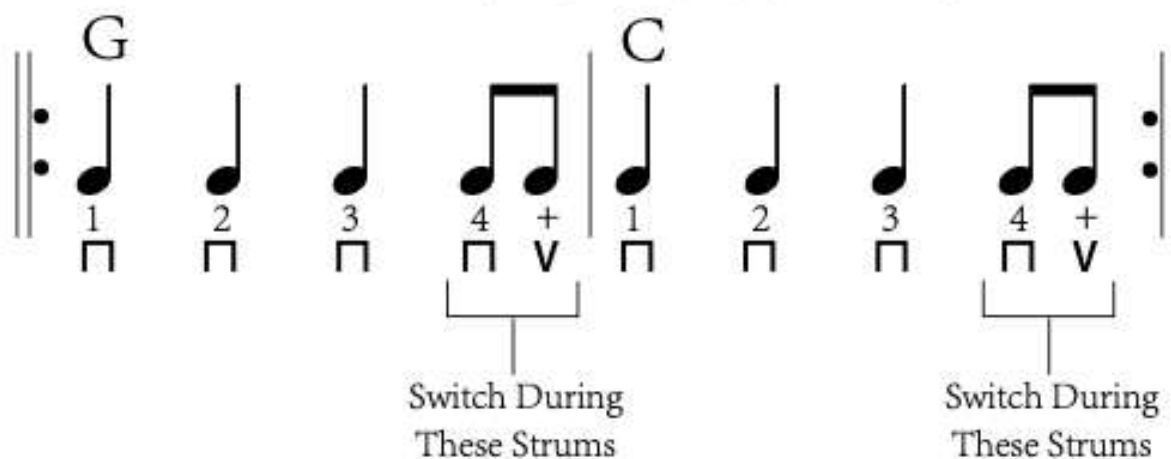
Play the following exercise with and without accents. Make sure you are tapping your foot on each quarter note, and speaking out loud on each strum.



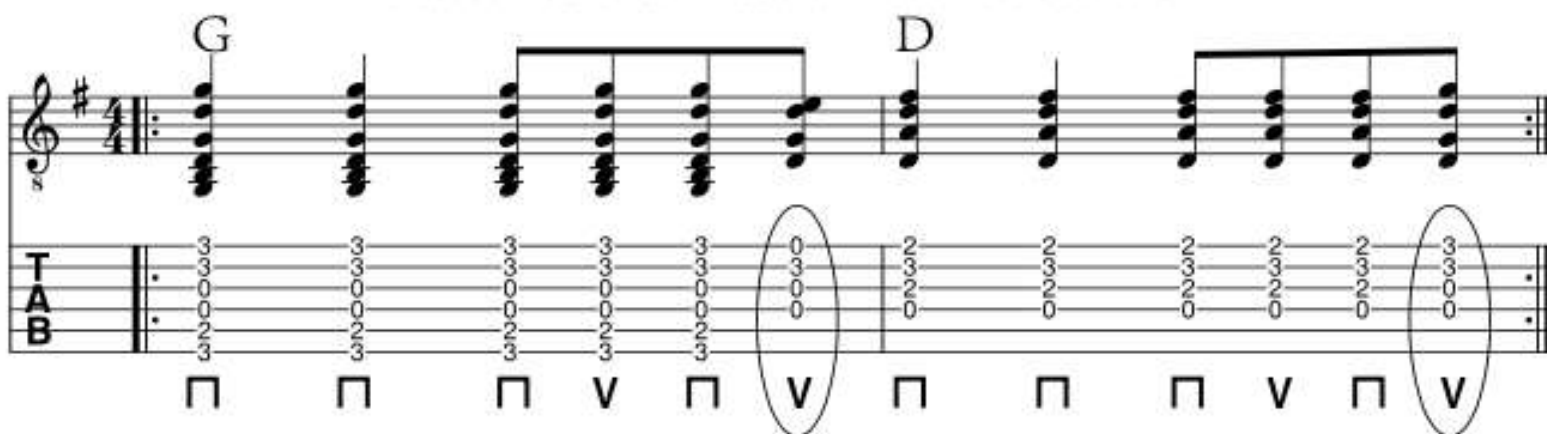
Faster Chord Changes

The last few strums of each measures can be thought of as a transitional moment. During these strums, the fingers can begin moving towards the next chord, in order to land there right on the one beat.

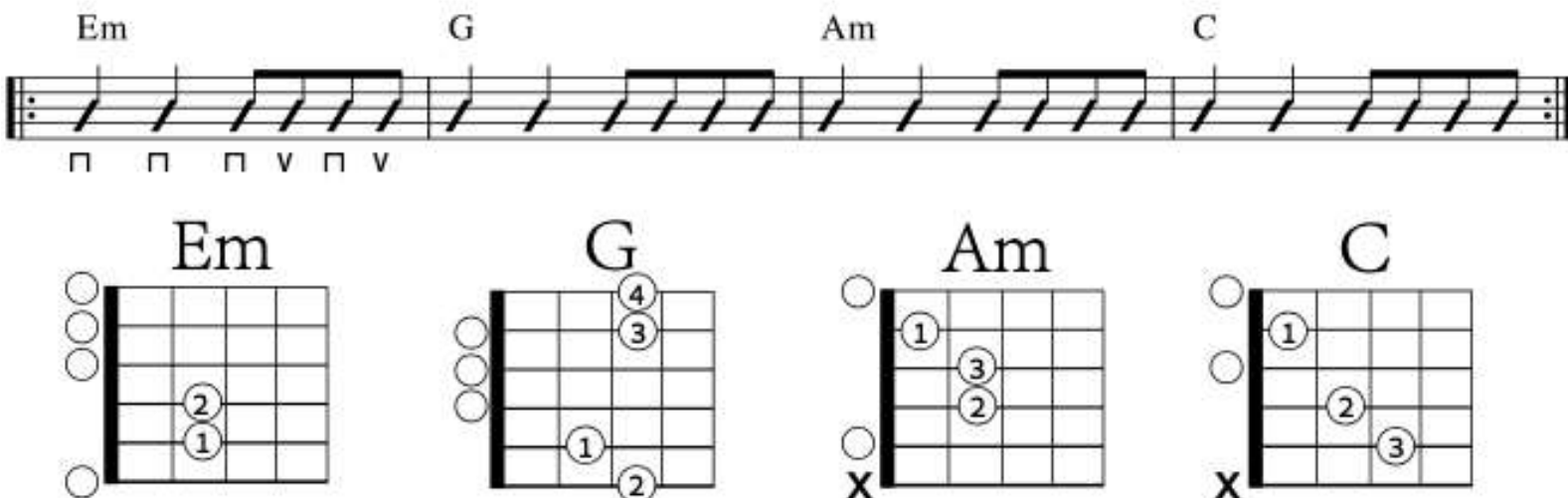
It sounds better to play the wrong thing at the right time, than it does to play the right thing at the wrong time. Missing the 1 beat is a guaranteed way to sound sloppy, but playing sloppy chords BEFORE the 1 beat doesn't sound bad (as long as they're played in time!)



In this exercise, we switch between G and D while keeping the ring finger anchored on the second string. The last 8th note of each measure will be a transitional strum.



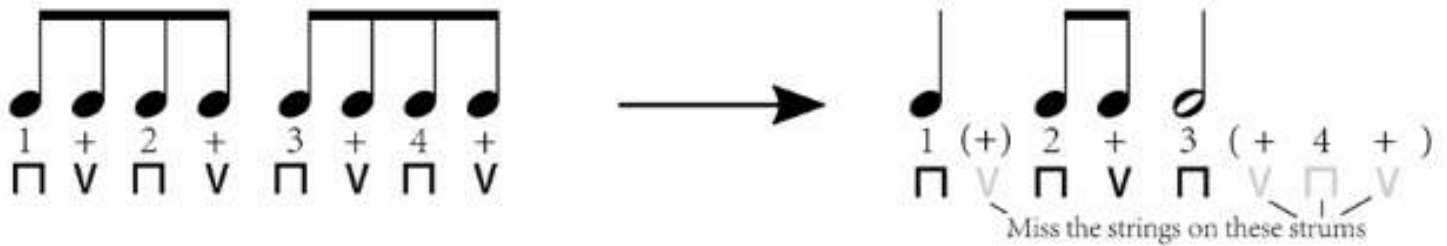
Practice the above techniques on this simple 4 chord loop using the chord shapes and fingerings provided.



Alternate Strumming

A very common way to organize strumming patterns is to only play downstrokes on the downbeats, and upstrokes on the upbeats.

When you are not strumming a note, your hand should continue to move up or down, and completely miss the strings to create the spaces in between strums.



This is the same exercise from an earlier lesson, but is meant to be played with alternate strumming instead. Write in the correct counts and strums (down strum on 1 2 3 4, up strum on "+"). Tap your foot on each quarter note and say the counts out loud while strumming. Keep your hand moving!

Exercise 1: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 2: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 3: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 4: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 5: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 6: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 7: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 8: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 9: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 10: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 11: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 12: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 13: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 14: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 15: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 16: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 17: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 18: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 19: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 20: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 21: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 22: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 23: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 24: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 25: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 26: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 27: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 28: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 29: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 30: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 31: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 32: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 33: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 34: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 35: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 36: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 37: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 38: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 39: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 40: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 41: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 42: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 43: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 44: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 45: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 46: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 47: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 48: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 49: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 50: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 51: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 52: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 53: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 54: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 55: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 56: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 57: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 58: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 59: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 60: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

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Exercise 62: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 63: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 64: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

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Exercise 79: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 80: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 81: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

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Exercise 83: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

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Exercise 85: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 86: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 87: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 88: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 89: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 90: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 91: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

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Exercise 93: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

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Exercise 95: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 96: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 97: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 98: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 99: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4

Exercise 100: 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4 | 1 2 3 4