Nutfactory Shuffle

Gil Anderson, crica1981

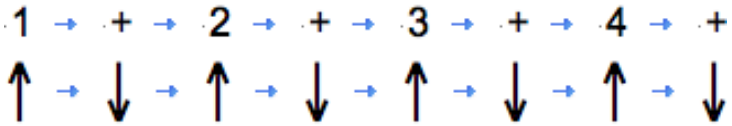
Tips for Playing and Smoothing Out Your Strums

One of the appeals of "Nutfactory Shuffle" for me as a teacher and player is the simplicity of its chord structure and progression making it an ideal way to teach D-G-A (I-IV-V) chords to beginners. If you're a beginning level player and are new to chords, practice fingering the chords and saying each chord name as you strum using a simple single strum on the beat. You'll succeed much better with the rhythmic strumming if you're not struggling with your left hand.

The rhythm of this piece with its calypso feel can be a bit tricky, especially because it alternates between the "bum-diddy" rhythm to the slightly offbeat, calypso strum. The best way to master the strumming is to keep your strum swing steady like a pendulum—out-in-out-in-out-in-out-in, or the reverse if you're an in-strummer. Notice in Exercise 1 that the strums on beat are all in the same direction and that the strums off beat are in the opposite. Practice the following strumming exercises on open strings.

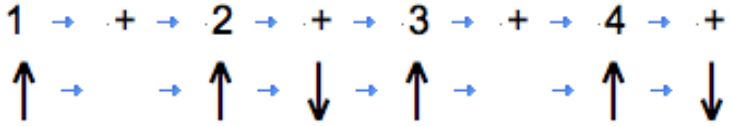
Download the sound (MIDI or TEF) and the PDF files for the strumming exercises so that you can hear the rhythms and practice by playing along.

Exercise 1:



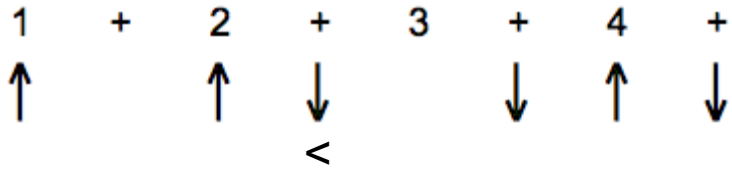
Now try the bum-diddy strum in Exercise 2. Again all the strums on beat are in the same direction and the offbeat strums are in the opposite. After beats 1 and 3, do an "air strum" so that your strum swing passes over the strings. Practice on open strings.

Exercise 2:



Now try the "calypso" style strum in Exercise 3. Notice that you'll do air strums after beat 1 and on beat 3. One trick to getting the "bounce" in your rhythm is to accent (indicated by the "<") the offbeat strum after beat 2.

Exercise 3:



Finally, practice switching between the bum-diddy and calypso strums. See the PDF for the strumming exercises.