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Pete Seeger Strum

Obviously you don't want to go on playing the banjo with just a brush stroke strum. For your first experiment in playing single notes and chords together, we're going to stay with "Skip to My Lou." First, try the following strum on an open G chord: index finger picks up (towards you) on the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, or 4th string; middle finger brushes down across the strings (usually all or most strings, but not the 5th string); thumb plays 5th string.



The rhythm is quarter note–eighth note–eighth note, which is played long–short–short. Seeger himself expresses the strum with the words, "bump–ditty, bump–ditty."

Seeger Strum on a G Chord

Seeger Strum on a D7 Chord

Index Middle Thumb Index Middle Thumb Index Middle Thumb Index Middle Thumb

The notation shows the strum pattern (Index, Middle, Thumb) and the corresponding fret numbers on the strings. For the G chord, the fret numbers are 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0. For the D7 chord, the fret numbers are 2, 1, 2, 2, 2, 0.

Below is the music for "Skip to My Lou," with the strum indicated in detail over each word of the song.

Skip to My Lou

(with Seeger strum)

G i m t i m t etc. D7

Lost my part - ner, skip to my Lou; Lost my part - ner, skip to my Lou;

G D7 G

Lost my part - ner, what'll I do? Skip to my Lou, my dar - lin'.

The notation shows the strum pattern (Index, Middle, Thumb) and the corresponding fret numbers on the strings. For the G chord, the fret numbers are 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0. For the D7 chord, the fret numbers are 2, 1, 2, 2, 2, 0. For the G chord, the fret numbers are 0, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0.



CD Track 4: Seeger strum examples; Skip to My Lou (with Seeger strum)