

Putting Chords to Work



Chord: a group of three or more notes sounded together, usually creating a harmony.

Strummed Chord Back-up: Chords are formed and strummed in rhythm. This type of back-up provides depth and a steady rhythm for one or more players playing melody. In a mixed instrument group, the guitar or bass playing often fills this roll. Choose chord forms that are lower in pitch or otherwise different from or complementary to the forms the melody player is using.

Chop Chord: A chord that is strummed then immediately muted producing a percussive effect. The strum may be on beats 1 and 3 or beats 2 and 4. This technique is often used in rhythm guitar and mandolin technique. On dulcimer, a chord can be muted by lifting the fingers of the fretting hand or muting the strings with the strumming hand.

Arpeggio: (Italian) the notes of a chord played sequentially one after the other (individually). Arpeggiated chords add texture and beauty to pieces that do not include a lot of filler notes in the melody arrangement.

Broken Chord: The notes of a chord played one at a time in any order.

Example 1:

A basic D chord as a full chord and as an arpeggiated chord with quarter or eighth notes. (4/4 time)

If you take the basic D chord above and its reverse, and use all 5 pitches from these 2 forms, you can make a fully arpeggiated D chord.

Example 2:

Let's do it with a basic G chord.

Using all 5 pitches:

Try it using these chord forms. Play them as a full chord, then play them arpeggiated, then fully arpeggiate them across all 5 pitches.

D chord		G chord		F#m		Bm	
2	0	3	0	2	4	2	0
0	0	1	1	2	2	1	1
0	2	0	3	4	2	0	2

D chord		G chord		F#m		Bm	
2	4	5	3	4	6+	5	7
3	3	5	5	5	5	5	5
4	2	3	5	6+	4	7	5

Find more on your own!

Bile (Boil) Them Cabbage

Chords: D G D A

Chords: D G D A D

Full Chord/Rhythm Back-up

Chords: D G D A

Chords: D G D A D

Chop Chord Rhythm Back-up

Musical notation for 'Chop Chord Rhythm Back-up' in 4/4 time, key of D major. The piece consists of two systems of music. Each system includes a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. Above the treble staff, chords are indicated: D, G, D, A, D, A, D. The guitar part is shown on a six-string staff with fret numbers (0-4) and fingerings (1-4) for each string. The first system covers measures 1-4, and the second system covers measures 5-8. The notation includes a repeat sign at the beginning of each system.

Arpeggiated Quarter Notes Back-up

Musical notation for 'Arpeggiated Quarter Notes Back-up' in 4/4 time, key of D major. The piece consists of two systems of music. Each system includes a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. Above the treble staff, chords are indicated: D, G, D, A, D. The guitar part is shown on a six-string staff with fret numbers (0-8) and fingerings (1-4) for each string. The first system covers measures 1-4, and the second system covers measures 5-8. The notation includes a repeat sign at the beginning of each system.

Arpeggiated Eighth Note Back-up

1 D A D

2 0 0 0 0 0 2 0 0 0 0 0 3 1 0 1 1 0 1 1 2 0 0 0 0 0 4 1 0 0 1 0 0

5 D A D

2 0 0 0 0 0 6 3 1 0 1 1 0 1 7 2 0 0 1 0 0 8 0 0 0 0

Fully Arpeggiated Back-up

1 D A D

0 2 0 2 0 2 2 0 3 1 0 3 0 1 3 3 0 2 0 0 2 0 0 2 4 1 0 0 0 0 1 1

5 D A D

0 2 0 2 0 6 0 3 1 0 3 0 1 3 7 0 2 0 1 0 0 1 0 0 8 0 0 0 0

Simple Gifts

Tablited by Melanie Johnston

D A

1 2 3 4 5

D A D

0 0 | 0 0 1 2 0 2 3 | 4 4 3 2 1 0 | 1 1 1 0 | 1 2 1 2 0 0 0

Detailed description: This block contains the first system of music for 'Simple Gifts'. It features a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is written on a single staff. Below the staff is a guitar tablature with six lines. The first line is labeled '1' and contains the numbers 0, 0, 1, 2, 0, 2, 3, 4, 4, 3, 2, 1, 0, 1, 1, 1, 0, 1, 2, 1, 2, 0, 0, 0. Above the tablature, the letters 'D' and 'A' are placed above the first and fifth measures respectively. The letters 'D', 'A', and 'D' are placed to the left of the first, second, and third lines of the tablature.

D A G D

6 7 8 9

D A D

0 0 1 2 0 2 3 | 4 4 3 2 1 0 | 1 1 2 1 | 0 0 0

Detailed description: This block contains the second system of music. The melody continues on the treble staff. The tablature for measures 6-9 is: 0 0 1 2 0 2 3 | 4 4 3 2 1 0 | 1 1 2 1 | 0 0 0. Above the tablature, the letters 'D', 'A', 'G', and 'D' are placed above the first, second, third, and fourth measures respectively. The letters 'D', 'A', and 'D' are placed to the left of the first, second, and third lines of the tablature.

A

10 11 12 13

D A D

4 2. 1 | 2 3 2 1 0 0 1 | 2 2 4 3 2 | 1 1 1 0

Detailed description: This block contains the third system of music. The melody continues on the treble staff. The tablature for measures 10-13 is: 4 2. 1 | 2 3 2 1 0 0 1 | 2 2 4 3 2 | 1 1 1 0. Above the tablature, the letter 'A' is placed above the fourth measure. The letters 'D', 'A', and 'D' are placed to the left of the first, second, and third lines of the tablature.

D A G D

14 15 16 17

D A D

0 0 0 0 1 | 2 1 2 3 4 3 2 | 1 1 2 2 1 | 0 0 0

Detailed description: This block contains the fourth system of music. The melody continues on the treble staff. The tablature for measures 14-17 is: 0 0 0 0 1 | 2 1 2 3 4 3 2 | 1 1 2 2 1 | 0 0 0. Above the tablature, the letters 'D', 'A', 'G', and 'D' are placed above the first, second, third, and fourth measures respectively. The letters 'D', 'A', and 'D' are placed to the left of the first, second, and third lines of the tablature.