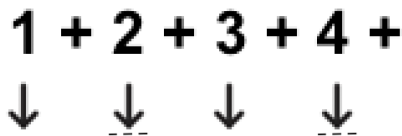




# DAMPENING TECHNIQUE



The dampening technique can also be referred to as 'choking' or left hand muting and basically means to cut off the tail end of a chord or note once struck to give it a snappier 'STACCATO' feel, which signifies a note of shortened duration, separated from the note that may follow by silence and has been around since at least 1676.

To help you spot where this technique should be played, the arrows representing the down strums, as illustrated above, have a thin dotted line underneath the beats which are to be dampened. In this case beats 2 and 4. To master this technique, you should start off slowly to ensure there are no unwanted overtones ringing out when dampening. To make this alternative dampened strum effective, try combining thumb strums on beats 1 and 3 with fast index finger strums on beats 2 and 4 and remember to relax the pressure on your fretting hand as the dampening technique is performed.

- OPEN CHORDS:** This is probably the trickiest method because as well playing the open chord shapes, you need to use what fingers you have free on your fretting hand (*usually the ring finger or pinky*) to gently rest onto the strings to cut off the ringing sound after you have struck the chord. Try not to apply too much pressure otherwise other unwanted notes may ring out. The key is to relax the fingers onto the strings gently and lift them off in time for the next strum. Alternatively, you can use the palm of your strumming hand to place it over the strings as soon as you have struck the chord if the song is a steady pace.
- DAMPENING BARRED CHORDS:** The second method shows you how to dampen chords that utilise all four fingers on those barred chords and chords played further up the neck that require fretting on all four strings. All you need to do is simply release the pressure on those fretted fingers once you have struck the chord, but don't take them off the strings completely.
- ALTERNATIVE START POSITION:** The third way to achieve the dampening technique, especially using open chords, is to gently place your unused fretting hand fingers over the strings before strumming and simply remove them as you strike each chord and gently placing them back down onto the strings again.

**TASK:** Try dampening the following chords shapes and notice how the different shapes require the different methods of dampening.

