

TIME VALUE OF NOTES

COMMON TIME

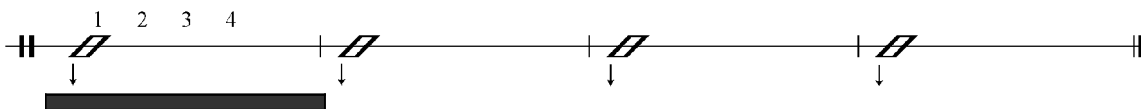
The *time signature* of a song tells us how to keep the rhythm by counting beats. The majority of songs are played in $\frac{4}{4}$ time, also known as *common time*. This time consists of four beats per measure. So in order to keep the rhythm in common time, we count from 1 to 4 and then we start over, following the beats of a metronome.

The rhythms below are in common time. The numbers represent the downbeats. The arrows represent pick strokes. A down pick stroke is always used on the downbeat and an up pick stroke is used on the 'and' or upbeat. When counting time, pat your foot as you count. Your foot goes down on the downbeat as you say the number. Always use a down stroke with your pick on the downbeat, and an up stroke on the upbeat. Notice we use upstrokes on eighth and sixteenth notes only.

Note: Some instructors prefer using the metronome only, and discourage patting the foot. However, it is common practice in most folk traditions.

WHOLE NOTES

A whole note represents a sound that lasts four beats. It takes a whole measure. To play this note while you are counting from 1 to 4, you strum down on the count of 1, and the sound sustains while you keep counting 2, 3, 4. Repeat the process in the measures that follow. Note the graph under the staff is not a musical symbol. It has been added here just to illustrate that a whole note takes a whole measure.



HALF NOTES

A half note represents a sound that lasts two beats. Two half notes take an entire measure. You play down strokes on the beats 1 and 3 of each measure. Some musicians call this playing *two to the bar*. Again, the graph under the staff has been added to illustrate that two half notes take an entire measure.

