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RHYTHM GUITAR

Rhythm guitar playing is truly an art. It is an essential part of a complete guitarist's vocabulary. Rhythm playing is usually accomplished using chords or combinations of chords, double stops (two notes at a time) and single note lines. The rhythm guitar supports and accompanies the vocal part or other lead parts. It must be solid, in time and help move the song forward. The key word is *rhythm*. One must learn to work with the drummer, bass player and often the keyboard player to provide a band with a solid *rhythm section*. Every lead player is sometimes part of the rhythm section!

Besides learning chords, the guitarist must learn many left- and right-hand techniques that add interest and intensity to a rhythm guitar part. Let's talk about the right hand.

In general, when learning to play rhythm patterns, use down strokes with the pick for the first part of the beat and up strokes for the second. Later this can be varied for the purposes of shifting *accents* (emphasis).

Remember, another useful right-hand technique is to damp the strings near the bridge with the side of the right hand palm to mute or muffle the sound. You must touch the strings very close to the bridge or you will lose the sound completely. This is called palm muting (PM) (see page 27).

Practice the rhythm patterns in Examples 57 through 61 using open chords, following the picking indications. Notice that the Roman numeral designation for each chord is given. Try to be aware of them as you play. It is important to learn the sound of each of these common chord progressions.

57

Track 35

Swing the eighths in Example 58.

58

Track 36