



Lesson Eighteen

Gigajam Guitar School Lesson 18 IGS ITTF

Introduction to Triplets and Triplet Feel (12/8 and Shuffle)

Lesson Objectives

- Introduce the concept of *Triplets*.
- Understand and be able to play *Triplet Eighth notes*.
- Apply triplet feel to 1,4,5 chord sequences.
- Introduce and develop the *Shuffle* feel.
- Introduce *12/8* feel.
- Introduce the concept of Simple and Compound Time.

Understanding Triplets

So far on the course we have learned how to subdivide a beat into Whole notes, Half notes, Quarter notes, Eighth notes and Sixteenth notes. These subdivisions of the beat are collectively referred to as **Simple Time**.

We are now going to look at **Triplets**, at the beginning of our study of what is called **Compound Time**.

Introducing Eighth Note Triplets

Triplets can be defined as where a rhythm would have two notes there are three. The best way to understand this is to look at an example. Look at our first exercise below.

We count triplets in the following way;

1-trip-let 2-trip-let 3-trip-let 4-trip-let

You will see that we abbreviate the triplet count throughout these lessons to;

1-t-l 2-t-l 3-t-l 4-t-l.

In our first exercise you will see that we have a bar of Quarter notes, a bar of Eighth notes and a bar of **Triplet Eighth Notes**.

Watch and listen to the multimedia files to help you understand the feel and count of the Triplets in relation to the Quarter and Eighth notes. Once you can hear the triplet, play along by picking an open E string using only down strokes.

Exercise 1 lesson018.igsittf.01



1 2 3 4 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + 1 t 1 2 t 1 3 t 1 4 t 1

Understanding Shuffle Feel

Shuffle describes a rhythmic feel and is well understood by experienced musicians. To develop the feel of shuffle from a learners point of view requires us to understand the role of triplets in producing a shuffle feel.

Shuffle is used in many styles of music, particularly, **Blues** and **Jazz**, but it is also well established in Rock music and is used a lot on **Swing** style pop music.

In essence it is quite simple, but regrettably quite difficult to play. Have a look at the following bar of music. You will see that we play the 'beat' and the 'let' of a triplet. By missing out the 'trip', it creates the bouncy feel needed for a shuffle feel. As the first note sustains for the duration of the first 2 triplets, we write the first note as a Quarter Note.

Play the following exercise noticing that the guitar is struck on the numbered beat of the bar e.g. 1,2,3,4, and the let. Play on the open E string.

As always watch and listen to the multimedia files carefully before practising along with the Guitar X tractor.

Exercise 2 lesson018.igsittf.02



Developing Shuffle Groove with 1,4,5 Chord Progressions

We now need to apply the 1,4,5 chord progression learned in the previous lesson to the shuffle feel.

When doing this we will play in the key of A. Consequently the chords will be A, D and E. The shapes we will use for this will be power chord shapes with an embellishment on alternate bars, but that will be dealt with in exercise 4.

Using an Open A Power 5 chord

Firstly, play the shuffle feel on an A5 chord using the open 5th string. To do this place the 1st finger on the second fret on the 4th string. This means that you are playing the A on the open 5th string and the '5' E, on the 4th string. When practicing this play both muted and un-muted.

Now that we know how to play A5 using the open A string, we also need to understand how to play power chords of E5 and D5 utilising the open strings.

Using an Open E Power 5 chord

To play E5 we place the first finger on fret 2 on string 5. When playing the chord we strike string 6 (E string) which will be open and string 5. This creates the chord of E5.

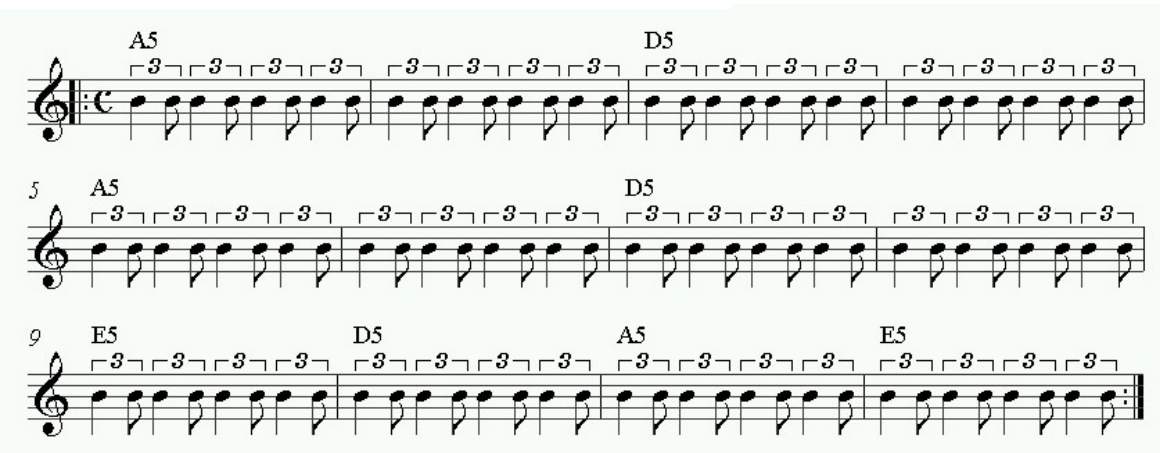
Using an Open D Power 5 chord

To play D5 we place our first finger on fret 2 on string 3. We then play the open 4th string (D string) and the 3rd string which is fretted on the 2nd fret. This creates the chord of D5.

Now that we can play power 5 chords using the open string positions we can now play the shuffle rhythm over the 1-4-5 chord sequence. Watch the video clip very carefully to see how the open position is used. This will be invaluable when we develop the 1-4-5 further in exercise 5.

Exercise 3 Introducing an Open A5 (Un muted)

lesson018.igsittf.03



Developing Rock shuffle

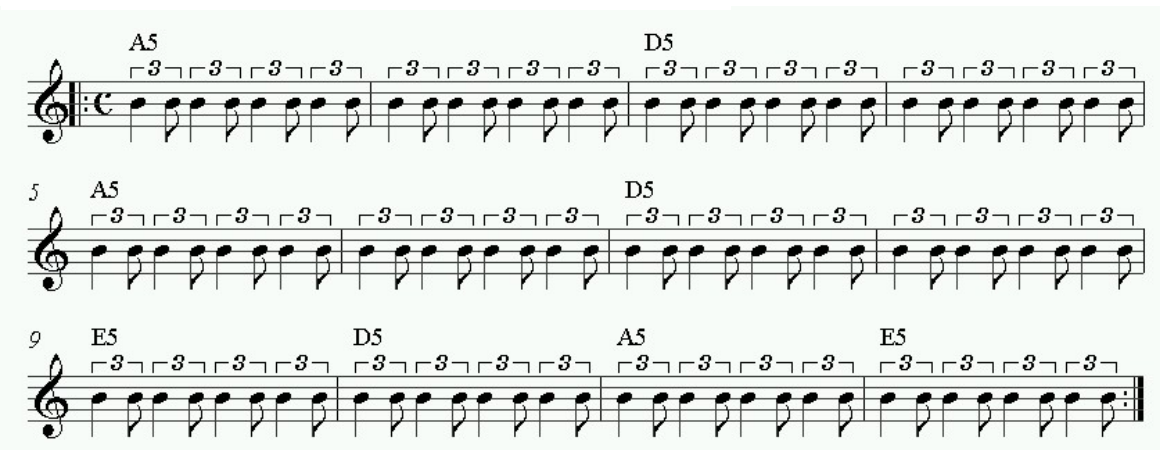
As mentioned previously you need to play the above chord sequence without muting and then with muting. Listen to the stylistic difference between the two.

The muted version is the version which would be most commonly heard being played although there is occasion for the un-muted version.

Play the chord sequence utilising the chords found at frets 5 and 7 as well as the open 5 Chords.

Exercise 4 Introducing an Open A5 (Muted)

lesson018.igsittf.04



Embellishing the chords used in the 1-4-5 Sequence (Adding the 6th)

To make the chord sequence a little more interesting we are going to add a new note on alternate beats. Specifically we are going to add a 6th to the chord.

When playing the A5 at open position place the 3rd finger on the 4th string at the 4th fret on alternate beats, as shown in the exercise below. This is a classic rock shuffle groove. Watch and listen to the multimedia files and then play along when comfortable.

Exercise 5 lesson018.igsittf.05



The musical notation for Exercise 5 consists of three staves of music in 4/4 time. The first staff shows a sequence of chords: A5, A6, A5, A6, Similar....., D5, D6, D5, D6, Similar...... The second staff shows A5 and D5. The third staff shows E5, D5, A5, and E5. Each chord is followed by a triplet of eighth notes.

Understanding Triplets

I would like to start by introducing the idea of **Time Signatures**, without getting too involved in all the permutations. Let's start by looking at the two bars below and discussing the similarities and differences.

Now the first bar is in **Common Time** as usual and we have divided each beat into three notes, giving us 4 beats of **Eighth Note Triplets**. Look at figure 1.

Figure 1-Triplet Eighth notes in a bar of Common Time.



(Introducing 12/8 as a Time Signature)

In our second example below, figure 2, you will notice that we have the same number of notes in the bar. However, you will also notice that we have removed the triplet sign above each group of triplets. This is because this bar is written in a new Time Signature!

Common Time is also referred to as **4/4**. This is because, as we know, a bar of Common Time has 4 beats of 1/4 notes.

So therefore the Time Signature you see at the beginning of the second example, 12/8, means 12 beats of 1/8 notes.

Well, that is exactly what we have; 12, 8th Notes.

Mathematically, these bars are identical, but for reasons we will expand upon later in the course, we tend to write in different time signatures for different reasons. Generally it is to do with the feel we are trying to create.

Figure 2- 12 1/8th notes. Hence the time signature is 12/8.

